ROUTLEDGE INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON LITERATURE

Theoretical Schools and Circles in the Twentieth-Century Humanities

Literary Theory, History, Philosophy

Edited by
Marina Grishakova and Silvi Salupere

ROUTLEDGE

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"[The] West in our twenty-first century continues to digest and transcend the past—a dense tangle of ideas coursing back and forth across the North Atlantic in the twentieth century, through wars and peace, in a number of languages as well as English. Authors in this volume survey those centers and movements, finding their distinctive and overlapping and enduring features. The volume is indispensable for anyone seeking to understand the human sciences in either century."

—Myrdene Anderson, Professor of Anthropology and Linguistics, Purdue University

"Schools and Circles is an exciting collection of essays filled with literary and historical insights. Everyone needs to read this book who aspires to understand the way critical movements operated in the century since the end of World War I, as groups with common programs and internecine differences, acting upon and reacting to the external intellectual and political forces that surrounded them."

—David H. Richter, Professor of English, Queens College–CUNY

"This volume really provides two books for the price of one. On the one hand it offers a succinct and very readable introduction to many important schools and circles of the twentieth century; on the other its various contributors with ties to the groups in question also give the inside view. The result is a collection that is pertinent and fun."

—Luc Herman, Professor of Literature in English and Narrative Theory, University of Antwerp, Belgium

Schools and circles have been a major force in twentieth-century intellectual movements. They fostered circulation of ideas within and between disciplines, thus altering the shape of intellectual inquiry. This volume offers a new perspective on theoretical schools in the humanities, both as generators of conceptual knowledge and as cultural phenomena. The structuralist,

semiotic, phenomenological, and hermeneutical schools and circles have had a deep impact on various disciplines ranging from literary studies to philosophy, historiography, and sociology. The volume focuses on a set of loosely interrelated groups, with a strong literary, linguistic, and semiotic component, but extends to the fields of philosophy and history—the interdisciplinary conjunctions arising from a sense of conceptual kinship. It includes chapters on unstudied or less studied groups, such as Tel Aviv School of poetics and semiotics or the research group Poetics and Hermeneutics. The volume presents a significant supplement to the standard historical accounts of literary, critical and related theory in the twentieth century. It enhances and complicates our understanding of the twentieth-century intellectual and academic history by showing schools and circles in the state of germination, dialogue, controversy, or decline, in their respective historical and institutional settings, while reaching simultaneously beyond those dense settings to the new cultural and ideological situations of the twenty-first century.

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

First published 2015
by Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

and by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Theoretical schools and circles in the twentieth-century humanities : literary theory, history, philosophy / edited by Marina Grishakova and Silvi Salupere.
pages cm. — (Routledge interdisciplinary perspectives on literature ; 42)
Includes index.
1. Literary movements—History—20th century. 2. Literature and society—History—20th century. 3. Literature—Philosophy—History—20th century.
I. Grishakova, Marina, editor. II. Salupere, Silvi, editor.
PN597.T47 2015
809'.91—dc23 2014041620

ISBN: 978-1-138-80461-6 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-315-75291-4 (ebk)

Typeset in Sabon
by codeMantra

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Preface

Schools, circles and other scholarly communities have been a major force in twentieth-century intellectual movements. They fostered the circulation of ideas within and between disciplines or scholarly traditions, thus altering the shape and direction of intellectual inquiry. As Jonathan Culler argues, "theory is not a disembodied set of ideas but a force in institutions." However, schools and circles in the humanities most often arise from common interests and agendas, common distinctive features in research or writing, and, finally, from informal ties rather than institutional affiliations. They are related, on the one hand, to the intellectual climate of the age, and, on the other hand, to individual trajectories and destinies—often making the very notion of "school" an overstatement. Hence, schools and circles, as more tight-knit associations, appear within broader intellectual movements without being separated from the disruptive events of their age: wars, political fights and repressions, migrations, and catastrophes. They function as fragile heterogeneities that are permanently on the verge of falling apart, calling for extra effort for survival.

The volume provides a new outlook on twentieth-century theoretical schools, circles, and associations, both as generators of conceptual knowledge and as cultural and social phenomena. It seeks to answer the following questions: What was the impact of schools and circles on the intellectual climate of the twentieth century? What are the modes of communication within a given group, and between the group and its academic environments? How does conceptual knowledge translate into cultural environments? What is the set of interpretative engagements and epistemological preferences that a school or a circle perpetuates? What is the impact of internal and external reception on a school or circle's functioning? How and why do schools and circles emerge and disintegrate?

Each school or circle has its own peculiar historical form and "face." This volume aims, on the one hand, to contextualize theoretical and conceptual frameworks that stem from specific historical configurations and, on the other, to show their role in the modification of academic and cultural environments. The chapters in this volume convey complex and variegated episodes of the yet-to-be-written intellectual history of the twentieth century. They address the history of unstudied and understudied

groups, introduce new historical data and shed new light on already familiar phenomena. The book looks at what defines these schools and circles, in their respective historical and institutional contexts, and traces how their dialogues and controversies resonate in the scholarly discourse of the twenty-first century. The conjunctions between the humanities and social sciences visible in theoretical discourses of the twentieth century anticipate new major developments and robust forms of transdisciplinary knowledge.

Rather than pursuing an anthologizing and unifying ambition or offering a master narrative of major theoretical schools or movements, this volume presents a series of interrelated episodes of intellectual divergences and convergences, associations and disseminations, family resemblances and divorces. It dives deeper than is typical of standard overarching histories. For example, it shows that what is erroneously called the "Paris School of semiotics" turns out to be a conglomerate of various groups and movements; what is called the Constance School of reception aesthetics emerges as a small nucleus within a larger group of Poetics and Hermeneutics and against the backdrop of the "reformation" movement in the German academy. This volume focuses on a set of loosely interrelated associations, with strong literary, linguistic, and semiotic components, but extends to the fields of philosophy and history—the interdisciplinary conjunctions arising from a sense of conceptual or heuristic kinship or similar problem-driven intuitions. It discloses the unstable position of literary theory and literature as *res nullius* between politics, aesthetics, and social systems.

The first chapters provide a complex picture of the often controversial and, at the same time, frequently complementary intellectual movements of the first half of the twentieth century. These movements fostered cross-disciplinary synthesis and aimed at the formation of a self-reflexive and methodologically sound science of the humanities, as distinct from the positivist and blindly empirical trends of the nineteenth century. In the early twentieth century, the tendency toward synthesis and the cross-disciplinary transfer of knowledge manifested itself in various disciplines, privileging a holistic and descriptive approach over genetic ones: in psychology and philosophy (Husserl, Brentano, and Titchener), linguistics (Saussure and Jakobson), literary studies and semiotics (Russian Formalism and Prague and French structuralism), mathematics, and biology. Those early scholarly groups branched into hermeneutical, philosophical, semiotic varieties whose potential, impact, and heterogeneity peaked at the end of the century.

This volume presents a significant supplement to the standard historical accounts of literary, critical and related theory in the twentieth century—accounts that trace the history of the so-called theory revolution: the rise of the formalist "new critique" in various guises; the breakdown of the new-critical orthodoxy with the rise of reader response as well as the influences of first structuralism and then poststructuralism in its Derridean deconstructive branch and its Foucauldian power-knowledge branch; and, finally,

the rise of political criticism of all kinds (feminist, postcolonial, critical race theory), and the emergence of New Historicism and its own broadening into cultural studies. Our volume focuses on less studied aspects of "theory" and shows that what is called "theory" is often more ambivalent, controversial, and historically ambient than the standard academic account implies.

Without a significant effort on editors' part, the chapters of the volume resonate with each other: a person or event mentioned once in a chapter appears again in a new guise and perspective in other chapters. The volume reveals that texts that are published in textbooks and anthologies are fragments of complex "speech events" (Bakhtin) and life events: they arise as a reply to a colleague or defense against a rival's attack. There is no development without the sense of interconnection. The "thick descriptions" that these chapters develop are meant to restore textual fragments to the life-worlds wherein the texts and discourses operated, to reach human *agents* and to show their role in the production of their own environments. The goal, then, is to enhance and complicate our understanding of the twentieth-century intellectual and academic history by showing schools and circles in the state of germination, change, or decline, in their respective historical, cultural, and social or institutional settings, while reaching simultaneously beyond those dense settings to the new cultural and ideological situations of the twenty-first century.

—Marina Grishakova and Silvi Salupere

Acknowledgments

First and foremost, we thank our friends and colleagues at home (University of Tartu, Estonia) and abroad (in Aarhus, Bournemouth, Columbus (Ohio), Dublin, Freiburg, Groningen, Jerusalem, Kolding, Leicester, Leuven, London, Madrid, Oslo, Paris, Prague, Stockholm, Tampere, York, Örebro, and many other places) for their friendly support and the opportunity to share and discuss our ideas over the years preceding the realization of this project. Our deepest thanks go to Myrdene Anderson (Purdue University), Luc Herman (Antwerp University), and David H. Richter (Queens College–CUNY) for reading the manuscript and providing invaluable comments and criticism. We are grateful to the anonymous reviewers whose critique and advice helped to shape and amend this book, to Routledge's editors Liz Levine and Nancy Chen, who shepherded the book to print, to Paul Earlie and Helena Taylor (Oxford), whose meticulous work helped to clothe French thought in an English guise, and Montana Salvoni (University of Tartu) for help at different stages of the book's germination. The publication has been supported by the Estonian Research Council (Grants ETF 8874, PUT 192 and IUT2-44) and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory, Estonia).

—M.G. & S.S.

1 The Russian Formalists as a Community[1]

Tomáš Glanc

The theory of literature developed by the Russian Formalists in the late 1910s and 1920s revolutionized twentieth-century humanities. Described by its most distinguished historians as a "turbulent," "irreverent" (Erlich 1965, 153, 286) and "unruly" (Steiner 1984, 43) movement, Russian Formalism still escapes easy definition. Historically, however, it may be seen as a radical effort to establish the study of literature as an autonomous discipline. Undertaken in the mid-1910s by a number of young students of literature and linguistics, it was loosely organized in two distinct groups: the Petrograd Society for the Study of Poetic Language (OPOYAZ) and the Moscow Linguistic Circle (MLC). However different the two branches of Formalism were, they shared a few basic ideas: (1) poetic (literary) language is opposed to everyday (practical) language; (2) the former is defined as violence over, or the creative deformation of the latter; (3) "Art as 'Device'"[2]: in art, "how?" and "for what purpose?" are more important than "what?" and "for what reason?"; (4) literature should be regarded as a phenomenon *per se*, and not a manifestation of extra-literary phenomena, such as social relations (as in Marxism) or psychic complexes (as in Freudian psychoanalysis). To these fundamental postulates we should add: (5) the close interaction of linguistic and literary scholarship,[3] and, last but not least, (6) the desire to make the study of literature an exact science (see also Erlich 1965 and Pilshchikov 2011).

Although Shklovsky's first programmatic statement was published as early as 1914, the OPOYAZ group officially started to function in 1916, and dissolved after 1923. Its core members were Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Eikhenbaum, and Yuri Tynyanov. The MLC was established in 1915 and functioned until 1924. The first president of the MLC was Roman Jakobson, who held this office until leaving Russia in January 1920. Among the members were the folklorist Petr Bogatyrev (a cofounder), the linguist Grigori Vinokur (president, 1923–24), the medievalist Boris Yarkho, the philosopher Gustav Shpet, and others. Roman Jakobson, the leftist critic Osip Brik, and the textologist and poetry scholar Boris Tomashevsky were active participants in both OPOYAZ and the MLC. If OPOYAZ, as Eikhenbaum put it, represented "journalistic" (anti-academic, but not amateur) criticism, then the MLC represented academic scholarship: it was founded

within Moscow University and officially sanctioned by the Imperial Academy of Sciences.

At the same time, the MLC was not homogeneous. In the early 1920s, some of the young MLC members (namely, Maksim Kenigsberg and Nikolay Zhinkin) were followers of Shpet, the main proponent of Husserl's ideas in Russia. In contrast to the empiricists, who dominated in the Circle when Jakobson was its president, the phenomenologists wanted to build a system of poetics based not on phonology, but on semasiology: they considered language a semiotic phenomenon par excellence (Shapir 1994, 75–77, 82–83). The empiricists conceived of poetics as part of linguistics (Jakobson, Boris Yarkho), while the phenomenologists regarded poetics as part of semiotics (Shpet, Kenigsberg). Although this dichotomy led to the collapse of the MLC in the 1920s, Jakobson synthesized these two approaches in his later work.

Even after OPOYAZ and the MLC ceased operation, the activities of their members continued in the State Institute of the History of Arts (GIII, established in 1912 and closed after the Stalinist monopolization in 1931) in Petrograd/Leningrad and the State Academy of Artistic Sciences (GAKhN, 1921–1930) in Moscow. The disciples of Tynyanov and Eikhenbaum at GIII (Lidiya Ginzburg and Boris Bukhshtab, among others) are known under the label of "Junior Formalists" (*mladoformalisty*). In 1926, Jakobson became a cofounder of the Prague Linguistic Circle (whose name reflects the name of its Moscow predecessor) in Czechoslovakia. Hence Formalism and its later incarnation, Structuralism, started to spread over Europe and, after Jakobson's emigration to the United States, in North America as well. Jakobson (1971) considered the MLC and PLC to be an organizational pattern and a programmatic model for research in Slavic structural linguistics and poetics.

The Russian Formalists' endeavor to establish literary studies as an autonomous discipline is often considered the groundwork for modern literary theory and its sub-disciplines such as narratology, verse studies, and so on. Many ideas first put forward by the Formalists, such as the notions of "defamiliarization," "emplotment," "device," and "motivation," were vital to the development of the modern understanding of literature and were discussed in New Criticism (in the middle decades of the twentieth century), poststructuralism (in the 1960s and 1970s), as well as other movements and schools.

At the same time, due to the essentially reactive, polemical nature and lack of coherence and unity in Formalism, much of the Formalists' conceptual achievements and legacy are considered methodologically fragile. The breakdown and dissolution of the movement under the political pressure of the Stalinist Soviet regime in the late 1920s is thus also seen as the result of its theoretical exhaustion. As a further consequence, the ultimate influence of Formalist ideas is put down mostly to their successful transfer into subsequent traditions such as structuralism or, less conspicuously and directly, in the Bakhtin Circle and the Tartu–Moscow School (TMS). Thus, Russian Formalism is nowadays almost always perceived through the prism of one

of these paradigms, to which it served as a still immature and transitory forerunner—"an 'interparadigmatic stage' in the evolution of Slavic literary scholarship," as Steiner put it (1984, 269). On the other hand, recent investigations (e.g., Dmitriev 2002; Dmitrieva and Espagne 2009; Flack 2014; Romand and Tchougounnikov 2009; and Svetlikova 2005) have demonstrated that Russian Formalism was embedded in the rich and complex theoretical context of the early twentieth century deeper than earlier scholarly scholarship had surmised. They have revealed the extent to which it was not simply a transitory and immature preparation phase that was transcended by subsequent, more robust paradigms, but a crucial episode of intense debate and dialogue in its own right, the potential of which was not fully recycled by later traditions. Therefore new approaches are required to understand Russian Formalism, in particular for its complex, subtle structure as a living scholarly community.

The study of Russian Formalism as a generator of specific ways of thinking, behaving, and communicating—rather than as a set of unique concepts or theoretical arguments and strategies—calls our attention first and foremost to the phenomenon of the "circle" as a special type of performative, supra-individualistic activity.

This type of inquiry is not devoted to the devices, terms, categories, and concepts put forth or applied by authors in some way connected to Formalist literary scholarship. The focus on circles instead uncovers the group's intellectual history from a number of other angles. It is seen as a retroactive attempt to consider the theoretical postulates of the humanities disciplines in terms of a collective practice; as something of a platform, with social and political dimensions; as a position that represents not only a range of formulas but, also, numerous types of cooperation and collaboration, group identification (or challenges to it), and strategies of exclusion and delimitation. The analysis of Russian Formalism as a circle does not presume an exclusive focus on the biographical connection of the scholars and the history of informal and formal organizations that they created. Rather, the question of the circle concerns to a greater extent the effects created by its participants or indeed characteristic of them as a sort of community. It may be possible to describe certain Formalist practices as the activity of an association, as the aggregate of acts, procedures, and effects connected with Formalism, as the intellectual activity of distinct authors who, regardless of their individual differences, co-created an (albeit heterogeneous) whole.

FIRST STEPS: ACTS OF INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND DISPUTED MEMBERSHIP

Though they transcend the bounds of individual authorship, theoretical aspirations do not always assume the form of a community. On the other hand, a community does not always undergo conventional institutionalization,

that is, the transition from self-directed, self-organized processes or forms of private activity toward organized and managed forms that constitute an institutional identity. That said, Formalism was institutionalized in the second part of the 1910s in OPOYAZ and the MLC. The role of the two distinct networks of scholars has been emphasized by the prominent historian of Russian philology Maksim Shapir, who drew attention to the function of institutionalization in the process of Formalism's canonization. At the same time, Shapir rehabilitated the considerable—and, in his opinion, insufficiently acknowledged—role of the MLC in establishing Formalism: "But in the absence of its own publishing base and official publications, the lack of avant-garde flashiness in the organization of scholarly life, and the deep internal contradictions [in the MLC] resulted in the world-famous OPOYAZ becoming the symbol of Formalism while the primary work of creating a new philology was produced within the MLC" (1996, 361). In this quotation, terms such as "official," "base," and "organization" reveal the tactical and strategic potential of institutionalization. Similarly, the mechanisms of canonization ("known world-wide") reveal that the institution is the primary instrument and even inevitably condition for the internal cultivation of the group's own position and, simultaneously, for external influence. The establishment of an institution is one of the most decisive methods of constructing a collective position and its recognition, an identification in the act of reception. Eikhenbaum defines the Formalists through institutional membership (a rather traditional, administrative feature): "By 'Formalists' I mean in this essay only that group of theoreticians who made up the Society of Poetic Language (the *OPOYAZ*) and who began to publish their studies in 1916" (1965, 102). This view deeply influenced that of others who came after despite Jakobson's efforts to "pair" OPOYAZ and the MLC. René Wellek expressed this common vision when he stated that it was OPOYAZ, rather than any other group, that "became the nucleus of the Russian Formalist movement" (1961, 106). The question of whether Moscow Formalism existed at all remains under discussion (Depretto 2009, 162–76; Dmitriev 2009).

These kinds of doubts are themselves based on one aspect of the Formalists' self-reflexivity: in their works they deliberately deny that Formalism exists as such. Indeed, Steiner, who views Formalism "metapoetically," as a focus on the "machine," "organism," or "system," argues that the movement distinguishes itself by a kind of "immunity" against attempts to understand it synthetically (1984, 9–10). While he ultimately attempts to trace a certain continuity in the tendencies of literary scholarship, Steiner had first concentrated on the famous examples of the Formalists' rejection of Formalism. We cannot agree with Steiner that Tomashevsky denied the existence of Formalism altogether in his article "Instead of an Obituary" (1925, was presented as a report already in 1922). In his letter to Shklovsky of April 12, 1925, Tomashevsky equated the Formalist method with posing new methodological problems rather than with "simple statement of formal categories of style, rhythm or even plot" (Fleishman 1978, 385–86). On the other hand, Eikhenbaum, who belonged to the core Formalist group, openly

declared that the Formalist method does not exist (1924, 3). Zhirmunsky (1923) likewise doubted the existence of Formalism as a method.

Curiously, while some of the Formalists' statements denied their own existence, their main critics emphasized the shared positions of the Formalists, apophatically strengthening them. See, for example, Leon Trotsky's "The Formalist School of Poetry and Marxism," published on July 26, 1923, in *Pravda* (no. 166) and included in the collection *Literature and Revolution* (2005), Boris Engelgardt's ambiguous apologia (1927), Rosalia Shor's excellent analysis (1927), or Pavel Medvedev's 1928 monograph *Formal Method in Literary Scholarship: A Critical Introduction to Sociological Poetics*. It is interesting to note that Medvedev is a theoretician with extraordinarily rich background in creating working groups and institutions. Medvedev became the last democratically elected mayor of Vitebsk in 1917, organizing, in the following year, the Vitebsk National University and the Association of Free Aesthetics at this university; planning, as chairman of the organizing committee, the creation of the Institute of Arts and Humanities; and, from the 1920s, working as one of the organizers of the Vitebsk Bakhtin Circle. Moreover, in 1923, Medvedev was elected to the Board of the Petrograd branch of the All-Russian Union of Writers. Since Medvedev and other prominent representatives of early Soviet philology or politics criticized Formalism, it is possible to speak of Formalism's "negative canonization," of its critical or negative evaluation that only added to its relevance and significance in the eyes of its proponents. But in the subsequent campaign against Formalism (see the tragic rejection of Formalism by Shklovsky 1930) none of the Formalists were as severely persecuted as Medvedev, who was arrested and shot in 1938. However, in connection to the historical persecution of Formalism, the image of the victim has played a rather significant role that must be subjected to further examination.

IMPOSSIBLE UNITY, INOPERATIVE COMMUNITY

Among other expressions of skepticism toward Formalism as a unified theoretical position we also find the frequent emphasis on the difference between the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the Petersburg OPOYAZ (Gasparov 1990). Likewise, scholars of Formalism frequently undertake a detailed division of Formalism into wings, phases, and tendencies (Hansen-Löve 1978). Steiner believes (1984, 28) that the Formalist theories should be understood first and foremost as a polemical reaction—fueled and strongly conditioned by the artistic and theoretical radicalism of the Russian Futurists—against the schools of literary criticism dominant in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, namely the socio-historical approach of Semen Vengerov, the historical poetics of Aleksandr Veselovsky, and the psychological-linguistic poetics of Aleksandr Potebnya. However, we can interrogate this assumption by considering the example of the development of Jakobson's relation to Potebnya. Initially, Jakobson considered Potebnya his main adversary (as can be seen in the 1919 protocols of the Moscow Linguistic Circle) but later

(in his 1935 lectures on the Formalist school) came to regard him, together with Veselovsky, as the main forerunner of Formalism. The presence of these two names in the same context is not purely accidental. Following Boris Engelgardt, we can trace the antinomy of two Formalist schools back to the dichotomy of the approaches proposed by their predecessors: while the OPOYAZ and MLC empiricists developed the tradition of Veselovsky, the phenomenologists of the MLC and GAKhN developed the tradition of Potebnya.

Contemporary intellectual historians discover within the Formalist community certain principles which the Formalists themselves developed, albeit with somewhat different designations, in the mid-1920s: the heterogeneity and the "bricolage" poetics, the absence of a unified conceptual apparatus, and so on. Thus Sergey Zenkin begins his essay on the Formalist "discovery" of *byt* (literary mores) by summarizing the attempt to form a community whose (futile) efforts to formulate joint positions proved to be one of its distinctive attributes: "The Russian 'Formalist method' stands out by its paradoxical *nonformalization* of its conceptual apparatus" (2012, 305).

How can Formalism be understood as a constructed community, if it distinguishes itself by its nonformalization, if even Formalism's protagonists dispute their membership in the informal group they are creating? In fact, these repeated statements about the absence of a unified foundation constitute the precondition for the community to function as "impossible" or, more precisely, "nonfunctioning"—in the sense of the title of Jean-Luc Nancy's influential book *Inoperative Community* (1986). The possibility of examining Formalism from this angle—to which the French philosopher Maurice Blanchot responds in his essay "The Unavowable Community" (1988)—would require its own analysis, particularly since the theme inspired an extensive scholarly debate.[4] However, the basic point of this politicized debate so accurately captures the experience of collective (self-) identification in modernist communities, including the Formalist community, that it should be mentioned here at least to signal future research. To quote the best Russian scholar of Nancy's work, Elena Petrovskaya, "The works of the 1980s provide a multifaceted analysis of the phenomenon of community (*communauté*), identifying it not as an organic totality but as a network of singularities expressed to each other at their margins (singularity for Nancy is not only distinct individuals but also groups, communities, institutions, and discourses)" (as quoted in Stepin 2001, 12). Indeed, understanding community as a fascinating possibility, and a trajectory whose endpoint cannot be reached, constitutes a rather compelling interpretive apparatus for understanding the entire project of Formalism.

OVERCOMING ANCESTORS: *RES NULLIUS* AND THE DIALECTIC OF FORMALISM

Theories of community lend some solidity to the fragile identity of Formalism, linking the tendencies of literary scholarship with the great political

and cultural projects of modernism, wherein the constructed "we" gains considerable significance. This "we" constitutes the basis for expression, it assumes and creates positions that have the possibility of being shared. Indeed the Formalists' texts occasionally reveal self-identification through grammar—the authors discuss their views in the first person plural. In 1927, Eikhenbaum mentions the "so-called" Formalist method, writing this adjective in scare quotes. And yet, the "we" is unmistakable: "In principle, the question for the Formalist is not how to study literature, but what the subject matter of literary study actually is. We neither discuss methodology nor quarrel about it. We speak and may speak only about theoretical principles suggested to us not by this or that ready-made methodology, but by the examination of specific material in its specific context" (1965, 102). Shklovsky formulates an undefined collective "we" in a similar manner: "the important thing is that we approached art industrially (*proizvodstvenno*). We had to start from sounds" (1926, 65; 2002, 38).

In connection to the instability of the community, it is interesting to consider Aleksandr Veselovsky's assertion that the history of literature is a *res nullius*. The author of *Historical Poetics* (1893) and a precursor of the Formalists (as well as their adversary), Veselovsky writes in a frequently quoted passage from his introduction to *Historical Poetics* that the history of literature recalls a geographical boundary consecrated by international law as a *res nullius*. This is a zone or territory (in the metaphorical sense) where everyone is allowed to enter, it belongs to no one, it has no identity or, more precisely, this identity is indeterminate. The historian of literature and the scholar of aesthetics, the erudite and the researcher of social ideas, each hunts in this territory and takes what he likes. Jakobson refers implicitly to this very thesis in his ironic anecdote, where he juxtaposes the literary scholar who turns to extra-textual facts with the policeman who arrests everybody on his path in an attempt to catch a murderer. In this case, the circle of philologists constitutes a community of guardians of a "zero" treasure, of dwellers in *res nullius* per Veselovsky, or of policemen with ambitions so radical that they direct themselves exclusively at the enemy, differentiating him from everyone else who is only indirectly connected to the murder (i.e., to the work of art). The Formalists build their utopian empire precisely on the territory of Veselovsky's *res nullius*, insisting that, in contrast to his ethnographic, genetic, and psychological determinism (Hansen-Löve 1978, 230–31), they know which laws must be enacted in the new country, and what political order inheres there.

In Viktor Shklovsky's *Third Factory* (1926), Formalism is construed as a unity. Polemicizing Veselovsky, *Third Factory* also reveals the significance of Veselovsky and of *res nullius* for the Formalists. With regard to the existence of the community, the oscillation between the collective voice and the individual one is particularly relevant. It expresses the intense and unstable character of the Formalists' collective identification. In one instance, for example, Shklovsky writes about a "school" (referring exclusively to OPOYAZ, not

Formalism), but shifts right away to an "I" form without motivating or explaining this transition: "The distinction between the school of OPOYAZ and the school of Aleksandr Veselovsky lies in the fact that Veselovsky views literary evolution as an imperceptible accumulation of slowly changing phenomena. I assume that a plot develops dialectically, spurning its original form and sort of parodying itself" (2002, 57–58). Shklovsky's conception of conflicts and turns in the literary process, close to Tynyanov's understanding of "evolution," based on parody, appears in this formulation as an individual achievement, automatically adopted by the OPOYAZ group. This kind of oscillation seems to be symptomatic for the Formalist fragile community.

Shklovsky's assumption, that "a plot develops dialectically" marks a self-reflexive examination of Formalism as a dialectical phenomenon. A specific understanding of dialectics is one possible tool of constructing group identity, especially in late 1920s. From the second half of the 1920s, the sensitivity of the Formalists to dialectics emerges to the surface and reveals itself in the attempt to construct sociological additions to the Formal method. In his 1935 Brno lectures on the Formalist method, Roman Jakobson juxtaposes "dialectical materialism" with "blind empiricism."

Besides the sociology of the Formalist science, it is also worthwhile to consider its ideology. The dialectical method is an element of the Formalists' self-critique. Residing in Czechoslovakia before is occupation by Nazi Germany, Jakobson refers to a stylistics that recalls the contemporary Marxist discourse: "Formalism proved to be incapable of assimilating a consistent dialectical concept of the evolution of art and relation to other components of social life" (as quoted in Glanc 2011, 83). Jakobson views a "sound core" in the 1920s campaign against Formalism. The "stagnation of Formalism," in his view, "was due not only to external encroachments but also to the internal contradictions that Formalist scholarship had encountered" (83). The history of Formalism, still fresh when it was written by Jakobson in the 1930s, ends in a crisis. Evidently, in Jakobson's opinion, the application of some fundamentals of Marxist science, namely its version of dialectics, could successfully help to overcome this crisis. In his lectures, Jakobson praises dialectical materialism as the optimal foundation for the study of "the problem of form" (as quoted in Glanc 2011, 24). Dialectical materialism, in his view, "considers form the fundamental component of the dialectics of thinking, according to Hegel's teachings, and has more points of contact with the classics of idealist philosophy than with the teachings of mechanistic materialism" (121).

FORMALIST APARTMENT GATHERINGS AND FORMALISM AS A PRIVATE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Formalism combined institutional structures with informal activity. This phenomenon later repeated itself in the Prague Linguistic Circle as well as in Scandinavian groups initiated by Jakobson after his immigration from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. Each group must be analyzed separately

because of the significant differences between them. Nevertheless, a productive tension between the "official" and the "private" seems to be crucial.

Shapir (1996, 363) reports that the Moscow Linguistic Circle was an official organization from the fall of 1918, had a legal entity and an official stamp, and was included in the network of the General Directorate of Scientific, Artistic, and Museum Institutions (Narkompros), receiving subsidies from the state budget until 1923. Yet, the early meetings occurred in the private space of Jakobson's house. A similar situation repeated in the Prague Linguistic Circle—the meetings often took place in a café or in Prague wine cellars. The conjunction of intense private scholarly work with the group's official institutional status consolidated the community that would create the tenets of Formalism. The intimate space of the private apartment would lend the Formalist activity an informal quality. The themes proved to be so alive that they entered the intimate space of the private apartment. The discussions proved so important that they took place in impromptu settings and times outside of the academy and work. Moreover, this activity bore to some extent the partisan, unofficial character of the opposition against the established institutions and against their science, which was strictly localized in the programs of various establishments. Indeed, the circle would find itself outside of a framework whose confines prove too narrow. The views of the circle were so unusual that, on a symbolic level, they would not fit into the existing organizational structures.

The Formalist school took the form of a real educational establishment, producing Formalist scholarship. Eikhenbaum and Tynyanov taught students at the GIII who, with their teachers, formed a unique community based on the seminar—on learning, teaching, and on intergenerational exchange. Lidiya Ginzburg emphasizes her status as a student in the group. At the same time, she remarks in her recollections, she chose her own way and version of a Formalist heritage that not only seemed to contradict a simplified definition of Formalism, but represented the diversity of positions that actually constituted the movement. "I began as a student of former OPOYAZ participants," she says, "But I was mainly Tynyanov's student. Tynyanov's influence and, indeed, probably my own predispositions made me uninterested in the purely text-immanent study of literature" (Ginzburg and Latynina 1978, 195).

An important aspect of the Formalist seminar seems to be its intimate, domestic, private, and informal character. In 1924, Eikhenbaum writes in his diary: "The home seminar makes me happy—good company. There was a very commendable report by A. G. Barmin on the pun. Stepanov, Skipina, Bukhshtab, Zilber, Gurevnin, Ginzburg—all quite formidable." (as quoted in Ginzburg 2002, 445). Another source, the writer and chronicler Veniamin Kaverin (Zilber), emphasizes the meeting place—a private apartment: "after graduating from the institute the most talented students […] started to gather at Tynyanov's or Eikhenbaum's apartments and a seminar was created of the highest order, so to peak" (as quoted in Kaverin et al. 1988, 210). The educational dimension gives Formalism a canonic significance.

Whereas, a few years later, the Prague Linguistic Circle would attempt to validate its position through international congresses and programmatic theses directed abroad,[5] Russian Formalism, due to various circumstances, remained largely in the domestic intellectual "market."

The role of the "school" and "seminar" of the Russian Formalists remained obscure not only as a result of the ideological campaign against Formalism but also because of the program's relatively short life, which ended in 1927. "We have nothing more to teach them, Boris Mikhailovich [Eikhenbaum] said," records Lidiya Ginzburg (2002, 445), one of the most outstanding among the *mladoformalisty*. In fact, in Tynyanov's view, the dissolution to the seminar stemmed from the disappointment of its "teachers," who did not wish to see their ideas elaborated by the next generations. Formalism, it seems, was unprepared to evolve into a stable canon during the lifetimes of its representatives. They had hoped that their students would develop entirely new perspectives and they were dissatisfied: "This generation is anemic, we have proven to be poor nourishment and they—poor eaters, and I have already refused, a while ago, to edit the young people's collected writings on contemporary literature because I disagree with them" (Tynyanov 1977, 569).

It is, nevertheless, possible to trace a range of positions taken by the students of the Formalists that disproved some of their predecessors' views quite articulately and judiciously. These views consequently appear to constitute a unified platform—and a community, albeit unstable and diverse. Stanislav Savitsky discusses some vivid examples of the polemical relation between the Formalists and their students (with references to the respective sources which we skip in the quotation): "B. Bukhshtab presented a report called 'Critique of Text-Immanent Theory of Literature' in Eikhenbaum's seminar in 1926. V. Gofman presented a report that questioned the applicability of a Formal method based on the Futurist aesthetic to a range of literary phenomena, including Ryleev's works […] By 1926, he managed to quarrel with all these maîtres, declaring a search for a new object of study, and after a few years he published a sharply critical review of Shklovsky's sociological work. Ginzburg also entered into an argument with her mentor Y. Tynyanov" (2012, 50; see also Savitsky 2006, 129–54).

Both "sides" of the seminar, "teachers" and "students," took an active part in its dissolution. The idea of teaching and continuity with the next generation was obviously attractive, although none of the main participants were ready for loyalty and the compromises necessary for the process of education.

HEADQUARTERS AND INTERMEDIATE ZONES

At first glance, the physical size of the Formalist circle—the number of its members—seems to be a banal circumstance. The reception of Formalism was influenced by a natural phenomenon that they themselves jokingly

called "the history of generals."[6] Some of the school's leading representatives entered into history, while others remained not only uncanonized but even virtually unknown to most inheritors. For the Moscow Linguistic Circle (as for the Prague Linguistic Circle from 1926), the question of membership was crucial—regardless of the fact that the exact identification of membership and its temporal boundaries could not always be determined. The lists of members were nonetheless compiled. They count dozens of names of scholars from different specializations and age groups. In the case of the Prague Linguistic Circle, the assortment of criteria that determine membership is especially colorful, as recent research has shown. It constitutes not only an invaluable historical document but also an inspiring methodological example of working with the difficult phenomenon of membership (Čermák et al. 2012, 357–401).

In the reference books (and in the collective scholarly consciousness) there is space only for some of the "principal" personalities of each circle.[7] But the community played a key role for the circle as a whole, and it consisted of people who at first, from today's perspective, seem less significant. However, their active participation was crucial to the circle's positioning in the scholarly milieu and in the social context.

Disputes of a person's relationship to the circle constitute a typical genre of scholarship on the circle. There are doubts and vacillations even regarding the involvement and membership of such an outstanding Formalist as Tomashevsky; and the ambivalence regarding Tomashevsky is explored in Denis Ustinov's work. Unfortunately, Ustinov does not clarify the sources of his claim that Tomashevsky is regarded as all but external to the general line of Formalist thinkers: "Likewise, the theoretical explorations of B. V. Tomashevsky appear at times to lie almost entirely outside of the purview of Formalist work, whereas the materials quite definitively prove that, like the critics and opponents, the 'undisputed' Formalists (Shklovsky and Tynyanov, at least), considered Tomashevsky both a full participant in the work of the Formalist school and a key member of the OPOYAZ circle" (2001, 297).

The historical context of Formalism, like its contemporary soul-searching, reveals intellectual activities that can be seen as pursuing community. Seeking a community, often through polemic, these activities produced certain intermediate zones of contention. For instance, from the mid-1930s on, Jan Mukařovský protests against the identification of Prague structuralism with Russian Formalism.[8] In his view, the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Czech "formism" of Josef Durdík, Otokar Zich, and his teacher Otokar Hostinský also constituted the major influence on Prague structuralism. It is commonly thought that for Mukařovský what was at stake was the true version of a personal history, of roots and predecessors. However, as Jakobson's mid-1930s lectures confirm, Formalism proved to be diachronically universal. Therefore, the possibility of a virtual community—synchronic as well as diachronic—stands to be examined. In his lectures, Jakobson demonstrates the primordial, teleological Formalism inherent in

the entire history of Russian culture, from Svyatoslav's *Izbornik* manuscript to the *skomorokh*s through Pushkin, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Tyutchev to Veselovsky, Andrei Bely, and Potebnya (Glanc 2011).

IN THE FRONT LINES AND THE REARGUARD: CLAIMING COMMON VISIONS

The phenomenon of membership implies leadership and indicates hierarchy—or its absence, but in one way or another, some kind of decision regarding the organizational structure of the members (the community). Interesting here is Shklovsky's hyperbolic remark, which he must have made during a dispute between the Formalists and the Marxists: "You have an army and navy, and we have four people. What are you worried about?" (as quoted in Ginzburg 1991, 146). This deliberate reduction of the number of members has a paradoxical effect, per Shklovsky's great gift for rhetoric. While unnamed, the four Formalists seem to indicate to the Marxists that there is nothing to fear. Boldly spoken by a supporter of the Socialist Revolutionary (SR) Party, however, the phrase implies the opposite meaning. The unnamed Formalists indirectly appear as powerful and influential as the army and navy.

Shklovsky was perhaps the most active participant of the Formalist movement and, particularly during the revolutionary years, combined his effort to create a community of literary scholars with the attempt to influence the political atmosphere as a member of the SR Party. Indeed, at the time when he was developing the theory of prose, Shklovsky was actively participating in the SR party and even in the so-called anti-Bolshevik conspiracy. After the conspiracy was disclosed, Shklovsky traveled to Saratov, hiding in a psychiatric hospital. Tradition holds that as an SR activist he sent a large sum of money to Petrograd, was discovered by an agent of the Cheka, the Soviet security police, and, in an attempt to flee arrest, even jumped from a train.

While Shklovsky was an activist in politics as well as philology, Osip Brik assumed the position of an anarchist, initiating the spontaneous return of any order that limited intellectual creativity, leveling it to a common denominator. An outstanding participant of the Formalist movement, called a "genius" and "Columbus" by his colleagues, he wrote only two papers during his entire life and dismissed his literary credo with the phrase, "I want to make noise" (Svetlikova 2005, 130).

As the first chairman of the Moscow Linguistic Circle, Jakobson was only eighteen years old when the Moscow Linguistic Circle was placed under the auspices of the Imperial Academy of Sciences in 1914. Yet he was surprisingly aware of the necessity to protect the circle's collective beginnings, which he initiated with his peers, fellow philology students. Indeed, the idea of giving the chairmanship of the Moscow Linguistic Circle to the septuagenarian

philologist Fedor Evgen'evich Korsh might be considered the circle's first act of self-canonization. Korsh was a classic, a scholar of Persian philology at the Lazarevsky Institute of Eastern Languages (where Jakobson studied). In 1895, he became a corresponding member of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences and in 1900 a full academician. His authority proved to be excellent legitimation of the aspirations of his very young scholars, despite the fact that he did not manage to actually chair the Moscow Linguistic Circle, passing away in 1915.[9]

Another factor that endowed the Moscow Linguistic Circle with wider significance, beyond its contribution to linguistics and literary scholarship, was its active collaboration with the best poets of time. Besides Mayakovsky, Pasternak, Aseev, and Mandelshtam, there was also Aleksey Kruchenykh, who entered the Moscow Linguistic Circle with a presentation on "Anal Eroticism in Russian Poetry."[10] Jakobson had undertaken the involvement of contemporary poetry in scholarly discourse in his first monograph on Khlebnikov's poetry, published under the title "Modern Russian Poetry" (Jakobson 1921a). He repeated this move in the Prague Linguistic Circle, collaborating with Karel Teige, Vitězslav Nezval, Vladislav Vančura, and other representatives of the avant-garde group Devětsil (Čermák et al., 222, 255, 614, and *passim*).

BETWEEN ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND ITS ANALYSIS, ABOARD HISTORY AND POLITICS

The artistic practices of the Formalists—for instance, Shklovsky's memoirs, Jakobson's *zaum* experiments, or the later prose of Tynyanov—are an independent mode of self-identification, somewhere between the boundaries of artistic creation and theorization. Their collaboration with poets indicates a desire to shape public discourse about contemporary literature. It also reveals an ambition to connect with history as such, to be involved in the shaping of history as a community not of like-minded associates but rather of opponents in many regards.

Historical relevance, however, proved to be a challenge due to the pressure of various outward forces, including the factor of key members of the community temporarily or permanently residing abroad. Jan Levchenko writes that Shklovsky felt the "shock of falling out of history" in Berlin, where he lived in the first half of the 1920s (2012, 69). Levchenko refers to both Shklovsky's position and Eikhenbaum's self-identification as "construction of historical subjectivity" (69) In Levchenko view, the Formalists, "having gathered together again" in 1924, establish their own sphere of influence.

On one hand, they dedicate their works to the iconic poets of the time—for instance, Tynyanov's study of contemporary poetry, called "The Interval," was dedicated to Pasternak and published in 1924. On the other hand, they shape a mutual, sturdy connection via these dedications. Tynyanov

dedicates his essay "Literary fact" to Shklovsky and his *Theory of Prose* to Eikhenbaum. The dedications "transform programmatic texts into coded messages to friends and colleagues where one and the same problem is retold from perspectives familiar to them" (Levchenko 2012, 70). It is interesting to consider the extent to which the focus on the scholarly circle as a structural form influenced the Formalist practice itself, particularly their study of similar circles in the history of Russian literature and in literary *byt* in general. Eikhenbaum discusses the intimate and domestic nature of literature, its passage into daily life (Eikhenbaum 1929). Tellingly enough, the *mladoformalisty* favored literary circles and salons as objects of their studies (Aronson and Reiser 1929 and Eikhenbaum 1929).

The concept of the scholarly circle was likewise ambivalent in its political dimension. On one hand, there was a focus on pure scholarly inquiry that deliberately excluded any ideology, any politicized framing of questions, and any nonscientific aspects. Literature and other expressions of cultural activity were considered immanent; the approach to these phenomena was, likewise, sought and formulated without the interference of external factors. Such was the attitude even toward the study of literary *byt*, which would seem to be by definition extra-textual, and literary only in the wider, contextual sense—albeit entering the literary work through the *ustanovka* (intention). But as a scholar of Formalism Victor Erlich insightfully remarked, the Eikhenbaumian idea of *byt* constitutes a somewhat paradoxical attempt to create an "immanent sociology" of literature (1965, 126).

On the other hand, however, the Formalists' connection with various political forces is unquestionable. At the Moscow Linguistic Circle's five-year anniversary the linguist and folklorist Aleksei Buslaev (the president of the circle in 1920–1922) used a topical political term to state that "the main task [of the Moscow Linguistic Circle] is methodological revolution" (Shapir 1996, 363). Jakobson likewise adhered to the terminology of revolution, imagining philological arguments as a "fight" or "battle." Eikhenbaum, too, emphasizes, "The so-called 'formal method' grew out of a struggle for a science of literature that would be both independent and factual; it is not the outgrowth of a particular methodology" (1965, 102).

Some members of the communities connected to Formalism watched the political events rather closely, transforming them into elements of their own scholarly discourse. Although Jakobson's work about the influence of revolution on the Russian language (1921) had an exclusively linguistic focus and did not evaluate the event of revolution from any angle except that one, certain authors of the Moscow Linguistic Circle as well as the later Prague Linguistic Circle were clearly interested in certain political motifs. Briefly mentioning the first meeting of the Union of Soviet Writers, Jakobson himself spoke surprisingly enough positively about Lenin—and about Bukharin and his evaluation of Formalism (Glanc 2011), although Jakobson lived in democratic Czechoslovakia (working to the end of 1920s for the Soviet diplomatic mission) and never supported explicitly the Soviet regime.

In Prague, the members of the Prague Linguistic Circle studied writings of the first Czechoslovak president, Tomáš Masaryk (Jakobson 1930a, 1930b). Jakobson took great pains to organize Masaryk's visit to the Soviet Union.[11] Already after Mazon's book *Lexique de la guerre et de la revolution en Russie* (1914–1918), published in Paris 1920, two Jakobson's colleagues produced their own works on the subject of war, societal change, and linguistics: Sergey Kartsevsky (1921, 1923) and Ekaterina Rempel (1921).

RECONSTRUCTION–REHABILITATION OR TWILIGHT–DISSOLUTION?

Crucial to understanding Formalism as a community are the conflicts, disagreements, processes of exclusions, and crises within it. Perhaps the most vivid of these proved to be the disbandment of the Formal school in the first part of the 1920s which, however, coincided with the plans to rebuild OPOYAZ. The Formalists' internal disagreements[12] overlapped with the external destruction of Formalism by Soviet authorities. A practice common to other groups during the avant-garde period also took root in Formalism: the establishment of collective beliefs accompanied by strategies of exclusion. Added to this change in the intellectual environment was "the exacerbation of the class war on the theoretical front" launched by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the 1930s.[13]

While Soviet cultural politics were being "reconstructed" for greater centralization and censorship, the community of Formalists discussed the possibility of ascending to a new level of work. One manifestation of this was supposed to be a new history of Russian literature—Shklovsky's writes, "I plan to collaborate with Tynyanov and Eikhenbaum on a history of literature from our perspective" (as quoted in Chudakova 2001, 445). The same constructive tone pervades the Formalists' discussion of the actual dissolution of their group. The perception of former colleagues' work as decadence and heresy, the "disorder," as Jakobson called it, is seen as a mobilizing factor.

This dramatic development in Formalist thought is evident, for example, in the late 1920s correspondence between Jakobson and Shklovsky. The latter calls on Jakobson to return to the USSR from Czechoslovakia where he had officially relocated in 1920.[14] Shklovsky wanted to renew and further develop Formalism, since earlier they worked, in his words, "by instinct" whereas now "the problems have clearly been uncovered" (as quoted in Chudakova 2001, 445).

However, not all of the studies of the Formalists' colleagues are considered reliable by Shklovsky. Regarding Eikhenbaum and his study of literary *byt,* Shklovsky writes to Jakobson: "Boris Mikhailovich in his last works has regressed to eclectics. His literary *byt* is the most vulgar Marxism"

(as quoted in Chudakova 2001, 120; see also Galushkin 2000). The new Formalism is expected to be more programmatic and to exclude deviations even among most prominent representatives of the scholarly doctrine.

The assertion of collective ideas by way of confrontation was characteristic of Jakobson as well, who wrote to Shklovsky, "Tynyanov and I, as I wrote to Trubetskoy, have decided to rebuild OPOYAZ at all costs and in general to begin a fight against deviations such as Eikhenbaum's" (as quoted in Chudakova 2001, 445).

As we know, the ultimatum rhetoric ("at all costs") did not manifest in actions. In the following years, the "fight" was led not by the Formalists but against the Formalists. The deviations were proclaimed by their adherents, and in the 1930s sociology became one of the areas where the Formalist method was most productively applied.

IN THE SERVICE OF OBJECTIVE REASON, SPIRIT, AND *TELOS*

The aspiration to renew OPOYAZ was connected to the faith in Formalism's scientific objectivity, which constituted one of the central slogans that shaped Formalist categories not as analytic instruments but as a social movement originating in an unwavering scientific doctrine (albeit a multifarious and, therefore, vague one). In this regard, Galin Tihanov suggests that "Formalism attempted to show that the writer is alienated from his writing desk by forces that, although they are unknown to him, lend themselves to scholarly study and rationalization. The writer thus becomes a subject to the laws of plot, device, rhyme, and rhythm. It is worth remembering the (unfortunately) well-known phrase by Osip Brik, that even if Pushkin never existed, *Evgeny Onegin* would have nevertheless been written" (2001, 279). In his essay against Formalism, Leon Trotsky insightfully commented on this rallying behind the slogan of reason and its high reputation: "the Formalist school is the first scientific school of art. Owing to the efforts of Shklovsky—and this is not an insignificant virtue!—the theory of art, and partly art itself, has at last been raised from a state of alchemy to the position of chemistry" (2005, 138). The complementary power to the power of reason and science was a philosophical system, which was expected to provide a new dimension of the philological tools and heterogeneous community of its protagonists. Jan Levchenko (2012) suggests that a philosophical paradigm allows us to see an inherent tendency to intensive, philosophically inclined community in Formalist aspirations themselves. Jakobson has seen this program in (a simplified version of) Husserl's phenomenology, another important source of philosophical background was vitalism.

Trotsky, in his aforementioned essay, critiqued the connection between Formalism and vitalism, "In biology, vitalism is a variation of the same fetish of presenting the separate aspects of the world-process, without

understanding its inner relation" (2005, 1). Formal method is (in Jakobson's lectures from 1935) a tool that transcends historical time: it is a functional analogue to the biological dimension of Bergson's vitalism.[15]

At the end of the 1920s, the biological and teleological tendency in Jakobson's thought is connected to his study of the linguistic unity (*Sprachbund*) and of the ideology of Eurasia. However, this brief period, in which Nikolay Trubetskoy had a decisive impact on Jakobson's ideological position, is not the only factor that led Jakobson to claim that processes do not occur accidentally in language and in culture. The frequent adjective in Jakobson's vocabulary is "inevitable" (*zakonomerny*)—artistic creativity is immanent and inevitable, as well as the Slavic culture is (especially in his *The Kernel of Comparative Slavic Literature* from 1953). Along the same vein, reviewing Eikhenbaum's book on Lermontov, Konstantin Antonovich Shimkevich, then head of the department of contemporary literature in the State University of the History of Art, observes that Eikhenbaum regards the accidental as given, or almost always necessary (Chudakova 2001, 214, 443).

The Formalists insist in some of their statements not only on the creation of a workshop for rational theorists but also on the position of a group of philosophers studying culture and its ultimate purpose—toward which poetic language, culture as a whole and even, it would seem, history as such all aspire.

ON THE WINGS OF LOVE: A GOOD SKIRMISH REFRESHES THE SOUL

This universal and essentially metaphysical plan, reminiscent of Hegel's philosophy of the Spirit, contrasts greatly with the building of the community as an intimate space based not only on the common professional interests but also on relationships, mutual sympathy, and love. Seldom in the history of scholarly circles has there been such an intensity of feeling together with a theoretical method that at first glance seems to establish an impersonal organization of literary material, a rejection of biographism and a focus on language.

One must, of course, reckon with the mixture of incompatible genres that has hold here, and one can doubt the validity of discussing opuses of literary scholarship alongside private letters and numerous dedications (see above). However, this seemingly invalid combination can reveal the main "springs" of Formalist strategies. Indeed, certain scholars thematized this mixture of the public and private, of the private communication as a subject of scholarly interest, demonstrating the significance of that trajectory. Thus, Shklovsky insightfully combined scholarly themes with (stylized) personal experiences in *Zoo, or Letters not about* Love (1923), subtitled "epistolary novel." And Nikolay Stepanov, a student of Tynyanov, dedicated a separate work to the historical genre of friendly correspondence (Stepanov 1926). Jakobson,

responding to the suicide of his friend Vladimir Mayakovsky, likewise canonized biography's dependence on poetics in "The Generation that Squandered its Poets" (1930). These works differ in many ways, but they are all dedicated to the intersection between biographical experiences and to their conceptual figuration through the epistolary form. They also prove in different ways that the Formalists' private "circle-ness" was simultaneously becoming subject to their scholarly examination, creating in this way a specific field of tensions between the object of study and self-reflexivity.[16] The genre of the letter thus ceased to belong only to private communication that had been separated from scholarly praxis. Instead, we see such examples as Shklovsky's *Podenshchina* (Journey-work, 1930). In a section called "Correspondence," Shklovsky and Eikhenbaum discuss the question of the nineteenth-century epistolary mode in, rather felicitously, letters to each other.

The interrelation of private expression, of biography on the one hand and scholarly correspondence on another, was also noted by Lidiya Ginzburg: "Shklovsky is a person who begs for a biography—to encounter him is to experience the urge to 'write him down.' When you listen to him, you simultaneously recall his books; when you read him, you recall his conversation" (1999, 7). The back-and-forth sometimes reaches the pitch of confessions: "You know how much I love you" writes the classic theorist of literary evolution Tynyanov to Shklovsky in 1929, continuing: "It is very difficult to imagine life without you. One doesn't acquire new friends at our age, only fellow-travellers" (Tynyanov 1977, 569; in 1935 Tynyanov was 35 years old). And at the end of the 1920s, Shklovsky suggests to Jakobson not only further collaboration on theoretical postulates, but also a significantly more radical version of a common cause: "to be together and to work together" (as quoted in Chudakova 2001, 445).

The motif of love can also be found in the history of the Formalists' relation to the generation that began to supplant them in the mid-1920s. This young generation was first regarded as intellectual inheritors and developers of the Formalists' ideas but, with time, came to be seen with disappointment, envy, or incomprehension. Nevertheless, the reaction was—love. One of the main participants in this confrontation was Lidiya Ginzburg, who wrote in a letter to Shklovsky, "You berated me (my essays) in Leningrad, and especially in Moscow, berated me as no one ever had. I snapped back, perhaps I was angry for a few days […]. You know, after all this, I do not love you any less—perhaps, if anything, I love you more because a good skirmish refreshes the soul" (as quoted in Ustinov 2001, 296–321).

WHAT KIND OF COMMUNITY?

The most profound reflection on Formalism from one of its representatives was probably delivered by Jakobson—in his *Lectures on Formalism* in 1935 and many times during the last period of his life (most famously, in his "Dialogues" with Krystyna Pomorska).

Nevertheless, for Jakobson the term "community" is exclusively connected with a singular language (speech community) or with an ethnic "unity" ("Slavic peoples").

Thinking of Formalism as a circle, a group or a community (with the specific semantic connotations related to each of those terms) involves the risk of attributing unity and coherence to a range of heterogeneous projects and intentions. The aspirations of theoreticians identified or associated with Formalism obviously transcend the bounds of individual authorship. Nevertheless, the division of Formalism into wings, phases, and tendencies seems to be inevitable. Formalists operate together as a network of singularities, as a trajectory without any endpoint. However, they have an enormous impact on the various fields of humanities. The Formalists' fundamental question about what constitutes the subject matter of literary study became one of the great theoretical, but also political and cultural projects of modernism. Despite numerous attempts to declare a "we" identity in order to stand up for shared scholarly strategies and in some cases also a personal friendship, the heterogeneous movement was always dominated by self-criticism and by productive doubts about any final postulates. The Formalists found Formalism incapable of assimilating a dialectical concept of the evolution of art and relation to other components of social life, they did not agree with each other, with their students and sometimes even with their own earlier works. Therefore, the issue of their incessantly broken unanimity not only offers a new perspective on Formalism, but also provides a record of methodological strategies in the scholarship in general.

NOTES

1. I am grateful to Patrick Flack and Igor Pilshchikov for the help kindly offered to me in the preparation of this chapter. In particular, Igor Pilshchikov contributed greatly to the introductory part of the chapter (see also Pilshchikov 2011 on the essential characteristics of Formalist theory). In other places, he suggested valuable additions and clarifications. I am also grateful to the translator Anna Aizman for her help.
2. The title of Shklovsky's groundbreaking essay (1916).
3. It may be argued, however, that "despite this common basis, they developed different approaches: whereas the MLC was more linguistically oriented, for the OPOYAZ, linguistics was merely a related and helpful discipline from which methodological innovations in the study of literature could be gained" (Grzybek 1998, 551).
4. See also Agamben 1993.
5. First in the Theses of the Prague Linguistic Circle, presented at the first International Congress of the Slavists in Prague 1929.
6. Yuri Tynyanov wrote about it in the essay "On Literary Evolution," dedicated to Boris Eikhenbaum: "The theory of value in literary science has created the danger of studying the few main phenomena, causing literary history to become a type of 'history of generals'" (1977, 569). See also Tynyanov (1929, 30).
7. In the case of the Moscow Linguistic Circle, these are Jakobson, Vinokur, Tomashevsky, Yarkho, Brik, and Bogatyrev. Among the members were famous poets: Vladimir Mayakovsky, who actively participated in the debates; from

1923—Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelshtam, Nikolay Aseev (see Depretto 2009; Shapir 1996, 362; 2001).

8. Jan Mukařovský 1935/1936, 14–15 and Mukařovský's war-time correspondence, where he complained "they slap onto our backs the label of Russian Formalism."
9. Regarding the significance of Korsh for Russian philology at the time, see Shakhmatov 1915.
10. As quoted in Jakobson 1996, 371.
11. For a description of the events see M. Y. Sorokina (2000, 116–42).
12. For instance, Shklovsky and Jakobson's rejection of Eikhenbaum's work on literary *byt*.
13. The resolutions "O zhurnale 'Pod znamenem marksizma'" and "O rabote Komakademii" (1931) are vivid examples of the increasing regulation of the intellectual sphere.
14. And where he served in the Soviet mission. Czechoslovakia recognized the Soviet Union only in 1934.
15. Evidently to a larger extent than we have previously thought, see Levchenko's discussion of Bergson and Shklovsky and Bergson and Eikhenbaum (2012, 46–58).
16. This topic is developed in more depth in Kurganov 1998.

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2 Bakhtin and His Circle

Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan and Sergeiy Sandler

The title of this chapter and the context of the entire volume require some preliminary consideration of the terms that would legitimize the grouping of fellow intellectuals under the label of a "circle." Some obvious parameters are either the real-time self-perception of members of the group as to their common ground, or the prevalence of distinctive commonalities in their respective works, an institutional connection that serves as a cohesive framework for the group, or a retrospective scholarly consensus about a shared agenda that informs its diverse projects. None of these parameters is unproblematically evident in what we, in retrospect, call "The Bakhtin Circle," a group—at times loosely interconnected and not clearly defined—of young intellectuals who were associated with the Russian thinker Mikhail Bakhtin in the years 1918–1930, first in Nevel and Vitebsk and from 1924 in Leningrad. The purview of this circle was, in fact, retroactively defined and shaped not by the context of the period in which the Circle's members were alive and active, but by scholarly agendas that developed from the 1970s on, and were initially closely related to the prolonged and unresolved debate over what came to be known as the "disputed texts."

The disputed texts are the books *Freudianism: A Critical Sketch* (1927) and *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) by Valentin Voloshinov (1986; 1987) and *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship* (1928) by Pavel Medvedev (1978), as well as a series of articles published by Voloshinov and Medvedev between 1925 and 1930 (Shukman 1983), and a single article published by Ivan Kanaev (Bakhtin 1992). The scholarly dispute revolved around the claim that these texts were, in fact, authored by Bakhtin, a claim made by Russian scholars in the early 1970s, after having "circulated as oral folklore among the intelligentsia since at least 1960" (Hirschkop 1999, 126),[1] that became the topic of an often-acrimonious scholarly debate since the 1970s. The stakes were, indeed, high, as the positions taken on this issue revolved not only on the integrity of these disputed texts, but on the various readings of Bakhtin's ideological position and his entire work as well.

In the absence of any solid written evidence for any party in this controversy, the dispute appeared to exhaust itself and the question of authorship remained moot.[2] It should be noted, however, that neither Voloshinov nor

Medvedev explicitly acknowledged Bakhtin as the author,[3] that Bakhtin himself was evasive about the issue, and that—long after the death of Voloshinov and Medvedev—he flatly refused to sign a copyright declaration of his own authorship of these texts (Clark and Holquist 1984, 148). It seems, then, that at least on the technical and legal level, Voloshinov and Medvedev should continue to be credited as the authors of the writings published under their names. On the substantial question of what role, if any, Bakhtin played in composing these works, no hard evidence exists that would either confirm or rule out entirely any of the possibilities. Perhaps we should simply acknowledge that we don't know the answer, and probably never will.

The authorship controversy, unresolved as it is, is important in another sense. Arguably, the very idea of the Bakhtin Circle would not have existed if it were not for the rumors about Bakhtin's authorship of Voloshinov's and Medvedev's publications, which positioned these works, long after they were published, as worthy of renewed scholarly attention. As the conversation around the "disputed texts" reached a dead end, scholarship turned (following Averintsev 1988, 259) to the looser and less problematic conception of a "circle," a discussion of common philosophical antecedents, shared interests and beliefs, and reciprocal influences, as a mode of neutral reference that elegantly elides the authorship dispute.

In the 1990s, when the focus in Bakhtin's reception shifted toward a more critical examination of the intellectual history of Bakhtin's ideas, the notion of the Bakhtin Circle gathered new momentum and significance, as it allowed scholars to examine the social and intellectual context for the development of Bakhtin's work (e.g., Brandist 2002a), and conversely, made it possible to decenter the Circle, and devote independent attention to the work of other Circle members and their intellectual traditions (e.g., Brandist, Shepherd, and Tihanov 2004). Taking the Kantian seminar in Nevel (see below) as the Circle's starting point also helps support a narrative that places Bakhtin's work squarely within the bounds of the German neo-Kantian tradition (e.g., Brandist 2002a, 2002b; Poole 1995, 1997)—an approach that, we believe, does not do full justice to the novelty and originality of his thought.

But this is not to say that the conception of a "circle" is merely a convenient default position. We should recall Bakhtin's response to a query put to him in the early 1960s by the young scholars who "rediscovered" him, about Voloshinov's *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* and Medvedev's *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*. "These books and my work on Dostoevsky," Bakhtin wrote, "are grounded in a *shared* conception of language and of the verbal work of art" (letter to V. V. Kozhinov, January 10, 1961, quoted in Alpatov 2005, 98; emphasis in the original). As we have already noted, scholarly attempts to formulate that "shared conception" have been largely based on the authors' diverse conceptions of Bakhtin's own work, and the present discussion is no exception in this respect, inasmuch as Bakhtin's work serves as its conceptual matrix. But to take the discussion a step further, we focus on Bakhtin's philosophical analysis of self-other

relations, and would attempt to draw the "dotted lines" (1984, 91), between his early works, mostly written during the Nevel–Vitebsk phase of the "circle" (1918–1924) and the later work of the Leningrad phase (1924–1930), highlighting their continuity in relation to some of the work of other prominent members of the Circle, with a special focus on Matvei Kagan and Valentin Voloshinov. Following a brief historical outline of the itinerary of the group, the discussion will focus on Bakhtin's early work as a departure from the Neo-Kantianism that informed the work of Kagan, and then move on to what is sometimes dubbed Bakhtin's "linguistic turn" in relation to the work done by Voloshinov. If we follow the thread that runs through these apparently diverse phases, the originality of Bakhtin's philosophy and its ongoing relevance for the humanities today will become apparent.

SUBJECTIVITY AND ETHICS: 1918–1924

The Circle formed in 1918 in the provincial town of Nevel (today near Russia's border with Belarus), where its members—Bakhtin himself, philosopher and mathematician Matvei Kagan, literary scholar Lev Pumpyansky, musicologist, composer, poet (and later linguist) Valentin Voloshinov, pianist Maria Yudina, and poet and philosopher Boris Zubakin—formed what they called a "Kantian seminar."[4] The "seminar" was in some ways reminiscent of the sort of gatherings students in German and Russian universities at the time would often attend at their professor's private residence, but mostly, it was a forum of a circle of friends, preoccupied with philosophy and other intellectual pursuits and passionate about ideas, who met regularly for long discussions, complete with "strong tea and conversations all through the night" (as Voloshinov later put it in a letter to Kagan; see M. Kagan 2004, 638) and long walks in the countryside around Nevel. On one such walk, as both Bakhtin (2002, 268–69) and Yudina (1999, 232) recalled many years later, Bakhtin laid out before his friends the basic ideas of his philosophy, after which they decided to nickname one of the many small lakes in the area "Lake Moral Reality." The significance of the "lake of Moral Reality" for our discussion is not only anecdotal. Bakhtin's notion of moral reality soon became the focus of discussions in the group and seems to have been important in the further development of the thought of at least some of its members (Nikolaev 2001, 199–201; Pumpyansky 2000, 576–89). We would suggest that this notion (at least as we reconstruct it from Bakhtin's works written a few years later) can serve as a point of departure for an overview of Bakhtin's early philosophy and his breach with the Neo-Kantian position of Matvei Kagan, his friend.

Kagan is an important figure in our story. At the time he had just returned to his native Nevel from Germany, where he studied with all the major philosophers of the Marburg School of neo-Kantian philosophy (then enjoying its last days as the leading philosophical current of the time): Hermann

Cohen, Ernst Cassirer, and Paul Natorp, who also became his dissertation advisor in Marburg. Kagan was highly thought of by his mentors (Poole 1997), and he clearly played a central role in the discussions of the Nevel Kantian seminar, both as a conduit for the latest Marburg ideas and as an original philosopher in his own right (see also Iu. Kagan 1998).

It is impossible, of course, to do justice to the philosophical complexity of the Marburg School or to Kagan's own thought in the space of this brief article, but a very schematic presentation is necessary to contextualize the discussion that follows. Immanuel Kant argued that we see the world not directly as it *is*, but as it appears in and through our faculties of perception and conceptualization. But the world of phenomena—that is, the world as it appears to us—albeit mediated—is nonetheless objectively real, due to the essential similarity of human beings and their perceptual and conceptual faculties (Kant 1929). Hermann Cohen and his followers in Marburg modified this picture, first by offering an explicitly idealist philosophy, and then by focusing on the central role of science in our knowledge of the world. On the neo-Kantian account, the sciences do not merely explore the world, but actually constitute it for human subjects. The world as we know it is thus shaped by our scientific theories. It is, Cohen claimed, *posited* before science as an *ideal*, and knowing it—as a goal to strive for. As science advances, it comes ever closer to this goal, like a mathematical series that approaches its limit, but—in accordance with Kant's tenet that the world is not knowable as it is in itself—it will never reach and fully overlap it. The world, in the Marburg School picture, is this limit or ideal that the progress of science marks as its horizon (see Brandist 2002a, 16–18).

Kagan generally remained loyal to Cohen's teachings, but his focus was the philosophy of history, and history is a special kind of subject matter.[5] Unlike phenomena studied by the natural sciences, the events of history are not merely *given* to people in perception, but are a product of human activity: history is actually *created* by human beings, by communities, by humanity as a whole. Historical being is the product of free, purposeful human action, subject to *ethical* evaluation. Nevertheless, Kagan applies to historical being the general principles of the neo-Kantian account of science (after all, the sciences, as opposed to their objects of study, are historical human creations too). He thus argues that human history has a purpose, an ideal (in this case—an *ethical* ideal) which it asymptotically approaches but never quite fully attains. Moreover, this ideal must be *anticipated* within history, that is, some notion of it must be available not only to a deity standing outside the historical world, but also to people, the "makers of history" themselves. In line with Cohen's (1972) philosophy of religion, Kagan identifies this ideal as the messianic ideal of universal community, of the union of all human beings at the end of time (M. Kagan 2004, 199–237).

There can be little doubt about the affinities between Bakhtin and Kagan, most notably in the use of neo-Kantian terminology. Brian Poole, an important advocate for the role of Kagan's philosophical legacy in Bakhtin's work,

stresses the fact that many central terms and categories of Bakhtin's philosophy were used earlier by Kagan—he lists "answerability" (*otvetstvennost'*), "the ought" (*dolzhenstvovanie*), "I" and "thou," and "act" and "deed" (as ethical categories) (Poole 1997, 164); we could also add further examples, such as "event" (*sobytie*) and "uniqueness" (*edinstvennost'*), and the "given"/"posited" (*dan/zadan*) distinction.[6] For some scholars, these parallels, as well as others, are enough to present the Bakhtin Circle of the Nevel period as essentially monolithic, to speak of a "productive symbiosis" (Poole 1997, 169) between Bakhtin's and Kagan's thought.[7] This approach fits well within a narrative that attempts to place Bakhtin squarely and unequivocally within the context of Marburg neo-Kantianism (e.g., Brandist 2002b), where Kagan plays the role of a biographical link, a simple conveyer of influence. We would argue, however, that correspondence in terms does not necessarily imply correspondence in substance (and cf. Nikolaev 2001, 198–203); that in fact, these two thinkers can be seen to use George Bernard Shaw's famous aphorism, as "separated by a common language."

A more nuanced treatment of the Kagan–Bakhtin relationship has been offered by scholars such as Coates (1998) and Nikolaev (2001), who highlight not only the affinities but also the profound discrepancies between these two thinkers. Thus, while for Kagan the given/posited distinction corresponds to the distinction between natural phenomena and human subjects, Bakhtin sees the human subject as "displaying both 'given' and 'posited' modes in his or her situation in being, depending on the architectonic viewpoint in operation at any one time. In my nature as subject, in the I-for-myself, I am incomplete and developing, whereas in my capacity as object, as other, I am finalized and whole" (Coates 1998, 18). Both Kagan and Bakhtin, Coates observes, set out from a religious orientation, understanding the universe as "flawed," and seeking a unifying principle to harmonize the immanent and the transcendent poles of existence, thus "*overcoming the curse of the fall*" (Kagan 2004, 199, emphasis in the original). For Kagan, that principle is "labor," mediating between natural being and historical being. For Bakhtin this role is played by the deed (*postupok*)—a concept on which we will elaborate shortly. However, the distinction between these thinkers is, once again, telling: whereas Kagan depersonalizes God into "a principle," Bakhtin relates to a personhood of God and embraces a relational rather than a systemic approach (Coates 1998, 21–25).

We would argue that Bakhtin's focus on the concrete, the personal, and the relational rather than the systemic (abstraction) is where he parts company with the neo-Kantians and this is probably the most significant and innovative aspect of his philosophical project. The constituents of the Bakhtinian conception of "moral reality" and the fundamentals of his disagreement with the neo-Kantians are given expression in a text he was working on (but never completed) in the early 1920s, that was meant to become a systematic philosophical treatise. The surviving fragment of this text was eventually published under the title *Toward a Philosophy*

of the Act (Bakhtin 1993). Notably, although the word "act" (*postupok*; perhaps better rendered as "deed") implies a particular action, Bakhtin uses it to refer to human existence more generally: "For my entire life as a whole can be considered as a single complex act or deed that I perform" (1993, 3). *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* is thus a philosophical study of human existence, and is explicitly concerned with the very foundations of Bakhtin's understanding of "first philosophy" (1993, 8) and with ethics, of which it offers a phenomenological and existentialist, rather than a neo-Kantian, conception.

To introduce this argument, let us note the wording of the quote brought above: "For *my* entire life," "a […] deed that *I* perform." In his early works, Bakhtin typically uses the first person singular instead of voicing claims in the third person about "the subject," "the self," or "the I." This is not merely a matter of style. Rather, Bakhtin uses this linguistic device to express the deeply personal nature of the act/deed: "That which can be done by me can never be done by anyone else" (1993, 40).[8] The deed in Bakhtin's early terminology is the world of a human being's first-person experience in all its richness. It is not, to be more precise, the world of passive experience, but the world of action, with its aims and motives, which makes first-person experience meaningful. This first-person world of the deed is thoroughly value-laden (or, in Bakhtin's terms—to which we shall return below—*intonated*). A person living in the world and situated in it does not merely perceive what is around her. In her first-person experience, everything in the world is intimately related to where she is and what she does. Space itself is perceived in categories related to her location and orientation (*right*, *left*, *in front*, *behind*, *above*, *below*, *near*, *far*, *here*, *there*), and to what matters to her (*home*, *away*). What she is doing at this moment colors how she perceives the world around her—if she is going somewhere, places around her are perceived as related to her destination; if she is focused on performing some activity, sounds in the environment could be perceived as *noises*, and *disturbing* ones too; if she is making herself a cup of tea, the kettle and the teabag are not perceived in the same manner as the nearby soup bowl or the wall behind it are; even if she is just idly gazing at the wall, she is focusing her gaze on one spot rather than on another at any given time, that is, until *now* becomes *time to do* something else.

The most important point about the notion of the deed, the reason why it matters, is that in Bakhtin's philosophy, the deed is *actual*, while objective knowledge about the world is merely potential. Science may (correctly) predict the content of what an observer would experience under certain conditions, but it does not tell us whether there is an observer there, and whether that observer actually has an experience of the right kind. A moral theory may determine the right thing to do in a particular situation, but merely knowing the right thing to do is not the same as actually doing it. What an *actual* person (*I*) *actually* does and *actually* experiences belongs to the realm of the deed. This idea of the actuality of the deed, its "moral *reality,*"

is central to Bakhtin's philosophy, and in particular to where it parts ways with the sort of mainstream neo-Kantianism exemplified by Kagan.

Bakhtin's focus on the actuality of the deed flies in the face of philosophical tradition. Metaphysics tells us that what is objective is real, that what remains constant when things change or is common to the many *underlies* the fleeting and the uniquely individual. Bakhtin (1993, 37ff.) reverses this order of priorities. Two people may be traveling on the same train from station A to station B, but for one of them this is part of a journey she makes as a tourist to a place she has never seen, while the other is commuting back home from work. "A train ride from A to B" is a correct objective description of both journeys, which holds equally for both, while such descriptions as "going home" or "traveling to a new place" are subjective and only hold for one of the two. And yet, Bakhtin tells us, the objective description—correct as it is—is merely an abstraction, derived from what this train journey actually is for these two people, from the two very different things the two of them are doing and experiencing.

Although Bakhtin had lifelong respect for neo-Kantian philosophy and is known to have referred to himself, at least in those early years, as a Kantian or neo-Kantian (1996–2012, 2.567, 2002, 40, 161), his insistence on the actuality of the deed also involves a philosophical critique of neo-Kantianism (Sandler, forthcoming).[9] He explicitly says that despite its merits and achievements, neo-Kantianism cannot claim the mantle of first philosophy (Bakhtin 1993, 19). It is with the Marburg School in mind—with its central claim that the world is constituted by the theoretical sciences, which are, in turn, grounded in logic—that Bakhtin uses the term "theoretism" to label the approach he argues against in *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* and that he criticizes "the prejudice of rationalism […] that only the logical is clear and rational" (29).

The problem with theoretism, according to Bakhtin, is that it prioritizes the objective knowledge obtained by the theoretical sciences over the actuality of the deed, and as a result, the deed remains forever outside its scope. In the grand scheme of things, space and time can be represented geometrically, and the entire content of human experience can be located in a small corner of this geometrical object. However, a person's actual experience of space and time and of their content remains outside this representation. The geometrical representation does not have a point of view on the world; people do, and their entire experience of space and time is situated and essentially differs from the "view from nowhere" a geometrical representation offers. A geometrical representation of space-time can tell us nothing about how people view their past and their future. Neither can it account for the significance of some objects in space for a person, as opposed to others. And while a different kind of theory—a psychological one, for instance—may claim ability to explain such subjective matters, this remains an exploration of potential content (*what* a person *might* experience under a particular set of conditions), which tells us nothing about whether a person actually does experience this, and what is it like. A theoretical account of reality strives to

be objective, and precisely because of this, it is also inherently incomplete. What is needed instead, says Bakhtin, is a first philosophy that would be grounded in actual lived experience and action, and that offers not a theory of the world, nor a theory of the subject, but a phenomenological description of subjectivity (1993, 31–32).

Of course, a first philosophy grounded in the deed faces its own challenges, but unlike the challenges facing theoretism, these difficulties can be surmounted. The obvious question here is how to account for objective phenomena, for what *is* common to all. Bakhtin's simple answer is to note that theoretical knowledge and the content of experience, on which it is based, is itself part of people's living experience and deeds (1993, 3 and *passim*). A picture of the world based exclusively on science leaves no room in it for the first-person perspective of the scientist expounding it, but there is ample room for science in the scientist's experiences and deeds. A map showing the train's route from station A to station B tells us nothing about whether the journey it describes is a touristic adventure or a ride home from work, but the travelers' experiences do contain and are compatible with the objectively correct data encoded in the map. It is important to note, then, that Bakhtin's philosophical project is explicitly not a relativist or even a pragmatist one (e.g., 1993, 9ff.); he disputes not the correctness or objectivity of facts, but their relative philosophical importance.

But this in itself is not enough. So long as one remains locked within her first-person life, the outside world remains a mere conjecture. But the subject cannot be locked within itself, argues Bakhtin, because it is not self-sufficient: it lacks a coherent image of itself. One cannot see one's own body in the world, cannot see one's own face. It is true that one can see one's face in a mirror, but this creates a split, incoherent, image—the face in the mirror is a face as seen by other people, and it never forms a coherent unity with the way one senses one's body and expressions from within (e.g., Bakhtin 1996–2012, 5.71). The first-person world of the subject can only be made complete (and that too as an ideal, approached but not attained) with the aid of *others*.[10] This is where Bakhtin's next early project, another abandoned treatise titled "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity" (1990a) takes up the issue of the role of the other in the formation of subjectivity. It is predicated on an analogy between the author–hero relation in aesthetic activity and the self-other relation in lived experience.[11]

The dependence on others, Bakhtin claims, is essential to the subject on all levels. Others bestow on the self not only the gift of her own image but indeed any kind of form to shape experience into: concepts, words, tones are all acquired from other people. As Bakhtin put this much later, "Just as the body is formed initially in the mother's womb (body), a person's consciousness awakens wrapped in another's consciousness" (1986a, 138). Moreover, the principle of "absolute self-exclusion," reflected in one's inability to perceive oneself as a whole, serves as "the starting point for altruistic morality" (Bakhtin 1993, 75).

Obviously, Bakhtin's focus on the relation of self and other is not an innovation in and of itself. Indeed, the theme of "I and thou" is no stranger to Kagan's (2004, 175) and his mentors' writings, nor is the claim that the other plays a role in the constitution of the self. This analysis of self-other relations is a commonplace in German philosophy (following Hegel 1977, 109–111), but—from Hegel to Kagan—the "I" and "thou" are both subsumed then under a "we," under a general and universal law. The other is merely a stage on the way to the community, in which self and other merge (Kagan 2004, 224), thus circumventing the first-person perspective in the philosophical account.

Bakhtin, on the other hand, uses these very same terms to express the irreducible actuality of the personal, first-person perspective and action, and the radical asymmetry of self and other. Indeed, Bakhtin at one point explicitly draws this contrast in a theological context: "one of the most important moments in Revelation is its being personal. That is why the problems of Revelation could not be even touched upon by M. I.[12]" (2001, 220). Thus, rather than a continuation of the neo-Kantian philosophical tradition, Bakhtin's work seems to offer a break from it, inasmuch as it develops a phenomenological approach to subjectivity, predicated on the boundary between self and other, the asymmetry of perspectives, and the irreducible singularity of the subjective context. This architectonic of self-other relations that Bakhtin develops in his early works, with its "three basic moments" of I-for-myself, I-for-the other, and the other-for-me (1993, 54),[13] forms the kernel of his philosophy, and—as we shall presently see—underlies his later contributions in other fields and the subsequent development of the Bakhtin Circle's work.

SUBJECTIVITY AND DISCOURSE: 1924–1930

In May 1924, Bakhtin moved to (newly-renamed) Leningrad, where most of the other members of the group had moved in previous years (Brandist, Shepherd, and Tihanov 2004, 262). The Bakhtin Circle reunited, albeit without the regular format of the Nevel Kantian seminar. This new period in the Circle's work is the time in which the disputed texts were written and published, together with Bakhtin's only significant publication until his "rediscovery" in the 1960s, the first edition of his book on Dostoevsky (Bakhtin 1984), published in 1929.

It is almost a scholarly commonplace to posit a shift in Bakhtin's work in the period in question, a transition variously described as a "linguistic," "discursive," "communicative," or "sociological" turn (Gardiner 2000, 44; Hirschkop 2001, 21; Morson and Emerson 1990, 118). Indeed, the transition from "Author and Hero," with its preference for an authorial position of "transgredience" and "consummation" in relation to the hero, to the book on Dostoevsky, emphasizing the polyphonic relationship that entails

an abdication of the authorial prerogative and the dialogic quality of the characters' discourse does seem like a change of orientation. This, to follow the conception of a "turn," is the point where an ostensibly "mature" (or simply better known) Bakhtin comes into his own; the Dostoevsky book is a point of departure for Bakhtin's subsequent work on discourse in the novel and on the generic evolution of the novel, and for his later work on discourse in general. In terms of orientation, this is clearly the point where Bakhtin's work shifts from "finalizability" to "unfinalizability" (Morson and Emerson 1990, 66 and *passim*).

We would suggest, however, that the seeds of Bakhtin's mature conception are already sown in his earlier work: his insistence on the irreducibility of the relational, concrete, and personal deed to any systemic and universal set of abstractions; the conception of the architectonic tension between the immanent and the transcendent, the given and the posited; the phenomenological a-symmetry of "I-for-the-other" and "I-for-myself," and, by extension, of "author" and "hero"—all of these philosophical principles continued to inform Bakthin's later work throughout. And, as we shall now argue, they are also reflected in the later work of other Circle members. In other words, the "shared conception" to which Bakhtin referred in relation to the work of Voloshinov and Medvedev is grounded in Bakhtin's early architectonics of intersubjectivity.[14] In this sense, we can indeed speak of a *Bakhtin* Circle (rather than, e.g., a Kagan Circle) working in the late 1920s.

These early indications of what was to mature into a discursive conception of subjectivity are already evident in "The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art" (Bakhtin 1990b), an article Bakhtin prepared for publication in 1924 (as the first in a two-part series; initial arrangements made for publishing it at the time fell through, and like most of Bakhtin's works, it was published posthumously). In this essay, Bakhtin opposes the Russian Formalist notion of the autonomy of art, the "givenness" or "pure factuality": "isolated meaning is a *contradicio in adiecto*" (1990b, 260). Significantly, the critique of Formalist poetics is related to its adherence to linguistics which, Bakhtin says, generates a sort of "material aesthetics", which is only productive when confined to the technical aspects of artistic creation, but cannot account for the axiological relationships involved (1990b, 264). The artistic act "lives and moves not in a vacuum but in an intense axiological atmosphere of responsible interdetermination" (275).[15]

Here, too, Bakhtin uses the term "architectonics" to describe the inner structure and dynamics of the artistic work, i.e., the relations between the "given" and the "posited": "Aesthetic individuality is a purely architectonic form of the aesthetic object itself: what is individualized is an event, a person, an aesthetically animated object" (1990b, 269). Culture, too, is treated in the same terms as Bakhtin treats the human subject:

> A domain of culture should not be thought of as some kind of spatial whole, possessing not only boundaries but an inner territory. A cultural

> domain has no inner territory. It is located entirely upon boundaries, boundaries intersect it everywhere, passing through each of its constituent features. […] Every cultural act lives essentially on the boundaries, and it derives its seriousness and significance from this fact (274).

Thirty-seven years later, attempting to characterize the worldview informing Dostoevsky's writing, Bakhtin echoes his early work:

> A person has no internal sovereign territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary; looking inside himself, he looks *into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another* (1984, 287).

Another ostensible difference between Bakhtin's early philosophical writings and later work—both his own and that of other Circle members, especially Voloshinov—is that language and discourse become a central theme for the Circle from 1926 on. But while it is true that language was not yet a major concern in Bakhtin's early philosophy, the little he does say already at this stage is very telling:

> I think that language is much more adapted to giving utterance precisely to [concrete] truth, and not to the abstract moment of the logical in its purity […] Historically, language grew up in the service of participative thinking and the deed, and it begins to serve abstract thinking only in the present day of its history (1993, 31; translation modified).

This passage from *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* and the brief discussion that follows it mark a break with centuries of philosophical tradition. The view that language is limited to expressing propositions of general validity and is wedded to logic was an assumption shared by practically all philosophers and linguists at the time (and is still accepted by many today). The tradition that Voloshinov (1986) later calls "abstract objectivism," from Aristotle to Saussure and beyond, views language as inherently akin to a formal system. For Bakhtin, already in his early works, such approaches to language misidentify their object of study, and substitute a theoretical transcription of language for the thing itself (1990b, 292–94), and Voloshinov (1986, 52–82) levels the exact same charge against Saussure and his followers.

Bakhtin's position is closer to the German philological tradition that Voloshinov (1986, 83–98) labeled "individualistic subjectivism," which viewed language as essentially the instrument of expression, but here too, the expression in the final account is of a collective Spirit (Vossler 1932), or is eventually subsumed under logic (Natorp 1922, 232–33). Thinkers who shared Bakhtin's emphasis on concrete first-person experience, most notably Georg Simmel, concluded that such experience must be ineffable (e.g., Simmel 2010, 14), because language cannot express it (indeed, in the

passage cited above Bakhtin responds precisely to this ineffability claim). Voloshinov's (1986, 39–41) later discussion of Simmel's philosophy follows Bakhtin's line: he holds Simmel in high regard, but rejects his pessimism about the rift between culture (including language) and life.

The assumption Bakhtin challenges may seem unassailable. After all, don't words denote general concepts, rather than concrete experiences? Doesn't the word "wall" refer to any wall, rather than to this particular wall one is staring at right now? Bakhtin's response is to go beyond reference:

> The expression of a deed from within […] requires the entire fullness of the word: its content/sense aspect (the word as concept) as well as its palpable-expressive aspect (the word as image) and its emotional-volitional aspect (the intonation of the word) in their unity. (1993, 31; translation modified)

Among these aspects of the word, Bakhtin (1993, 32ff.) devotes special attention to intonation. Intonation, as we already mentioned, is for Bakhtin more than a linguistic category. Everything in the world constituted by the deed is intoned, not just words. Intonation expresses a person's attitude toward, and evaluation of, the content of her experience, what this content means to her. Again, this emphasis on intonation and its link with expression is shared by Voloshinov (e.g., 1986, 103–05).

Most importantly, Bakhtin's early remarks on language clearly suggest a way of extrapolating a full theory of language from his architectonics of intersubjectivity. Such an extrapolated theory would stipulate that:

1. As speaking is one way of doing deeds, we can relate to deeds that are performed in language (e.g., Bakhtin 1990a, 70, 98). Both Bakhtin and Voloshinov later adopt Lev Yakubinsky's (1997) term "utterance" (*vyskazyvanie*) to refer to such a deed, and some thirty years later Bakhtin (1986b) offers a definition for the utterance as a unit: a stretch of discourse delimited by the change of speaking subject.
2. A deed is not merely an action; it involves the evaluation, intonation, of the entire world as it exists for the acting person. As such, it can only be meaningful if considered as part of the situation to which its motives and aims pertain. Similarly, an utterance bears meaning only in the context of the situation in which it is uttered and the evaluation of the situation by the speaker. Voloshinov (1983a, 10–11) makes this same point when analyzing the single-word utterance "Well!" in his 1926 article, "Discourse in Life and Discourse in Poetry." The word "well" itself offers us no insight into the meaning of the utterance. It is only when we look at the utterance as part of an actual situation (where two people look out of the window and see snow beginning to fall) and consider also the speakers' and audience's shared knowledge and value judgments about this situation (they know it is the month of May and

wish the winter to end and spring to begin), that its meaning becomes clear to us.[16]

3. Just as one cannot simply see oneself, so one cannot simply express oneself exclusively on one's own terms. Perception and speech are refracted through the eyes and the voice of the other. Both Bakhtin (e.g., 1981, 293–94, 1986a, 138) and Voloshinov (1986, 86ff.) explicitly make this claim, although for Voloshinov the role of others is always played by a social group, rather than an individual interlocutor. This brings up the most significant tension between the two: while Bakhtin is always careful to emphasize the fundamental asymmetry between self and other, the other's excess of seeing (1990a, 22–27 and *passim*), Voloshinov tends to stress the *shared* perspective and evaluation (1983a, 10–11) between speaker and audience, and to refer to the role of others as that of a "*supporting chorus*" (14)—a chorus that he eventually (whether sincerely or due to pressure to conform to official doctrine) identifies with class. On some occasions, Voloshinov essentially lets the class swallow the individual person whole (e.g. 1983b, 102–07), but Bakhtin's personalism is nevertheless allowed to enter Voloshinov's linguistics through the back door, as the fourth and last implication of Bakhtin's philosophy we shall examine illustrates.
4. These forms of seeing and speaking, originating in or refracted through others, are themselves subject to evaluation, and are always intonated. It is by applying one's personal intonation (in Bakhtin's extended sense; any form of manipulation by the speaker would count as intonation) to the received forms of language that one is able to express oneself. Both Voloshinov (e.g., 1986, 9–10, 15, 23–24) and Bakhtin (e.g., 1984, 202, 276) speak in this context of *refraction* (rather than reflection) of others' words and points of view in one's own.[17] Both also integrate this insight into their linguistic analysis, when they show—as Voloshinov (1986, 109–59) does with regard to free indirect discourse and Bakhtin (1984, 185–203) does in his notion of double-voiced discourse—how two different individual voices can be heard simultaneously in the very same words. Parody—a form of double-voiced discourse—illustrates this well: the parodied person's utterances are the origin of the words and forms of expression being parodied; we can hear the original voice in the utterance, but it is overlaid the intonation of the parodist, expressing her (hostile) evaluation of the original utterance.[18]

Bakhtin and Voloshinov were not the first to stress the interactional nature of language, the context-dependence of utterances, or the role of action in language—in this they could, and did, cite Leo Spitzer (1922), Karl Bühler (1990), and Lev Yakubinsky (1997), among others. But Bakhtin's model of self–other relations allowed this reconceptualization of language to run deeper, to affect the methods, and especially the units, of linguistic analysis. Instead of studying languages as self-contained systems, the Bakhtin Circle

examines utterances as links in the chain of dialogue (Bakhtin 1986b), and from within, utterances are broken down not into sentences and words—the units of traditional grammar reflecting a logical approach to language—but into voices, the interaction between which shapes the utterance and its meaning.

Tracing the Bakhtin Circle's conception of language back to Bakthin's early philosophy is more than an exercise in intellectual history. Nearly a century after it was conceived, the Bakhtin Circle's conception of language is still alive, still productive, and still relevant to the language sciences today. Bakhtin and Voloshinov are frequently cited by linguists and communication scholars not just as venerable ancestors, but rather as direct sources of inspiration for innovative work and new developments. This unusual endurance and vitality has much to do with the origins of this theory of language in Bakhtin's philosophical approach and his architectonics of subjectivity (Sandler 2013).

CODA

By 1928, the Stalinist regime in the USSR was coming into its own. The relative freedom of the previous years was gone, and brutal repression took its place. Bakhtin, who was close to religiously oriented intellectual groups, was the first in the Circle to be arrested. He was tried and subsequently sent to exile in 1930, a point of time that marks the end of the Circle's existence. In the fifteen years that followed, almost all members of the Circle perished—most from illness, often exacerbated by abject poverty, and some (like Medvedev and Zubakin) in the purges. Bakhtin himself, ironically protected by his early encounter with Stalinist repression, by his enforced exile, and by the small pension he received due to his physical disability, was among the few to survive. He lived long enough for a new intellectual world to discover him in the 1960s, long enough to generate interest in his own work and that of his fellows, long enough to—rightly—give his name to the Bakhtin Circle.

NOTES

1. Thus, classicist Olga Freidenberg, in an unpublished memoir written in the late 1940s, recalls her few encounters with Voloshinov in 1930–31, referring to him as "the author of a linguistics book written for him by Blokhin [sic!]" (quoted in Braginskaya 2006, 40). This indicates that we are indeed dealing here with oral history, not with a latter-day fabrication designed to bolster the "Bakhtin industry." On the other hand, the fact that rumors about Bakhtin's authorship of the disputed texts had circulated before Bakhtin's rise to fame in the 1960s does not in itself mean these rumors are correct.
2. For a full and illuminating overview of the controversy, see Hirschkop (1999, 126–40).

3. Though Ivan Kanaev did acknowledge Bakhtin's authorship of his 1926 article "Contemporary Vitalism" (Bocharov 1994, 1014).
4. Others—including literary scholar Pavel Medvedev, biologist Ivan Kanaev (whose names were already mentioned in the context of the disputed texts controversy), orientalist Mikhail Tubyansky and poet and writer Konstantin Vaginov—joined the group in later years and other cities, after the original Kantian seminar had ceased to exist, while Boris Zubakin lost contact with the Circle early on.
5. History had a special status in German idealist philosophy, going back to Hegel's (1977) attempt to build a grand philosophical system that integrates within it the whole course of (Western intellectual) history. History, in this tradition, is seen as more than just a course of events linked together by a historian's narrative. It is instead an aspect of the totality of the world, which the philosophical system describes. Its unfolding is the necessary instantiation of the system's main principles. For Kagan (e.g., 2004, 153–70), a major task was to reconcile the necessity of historical progress—a necessity in which he, too, firmly believed—with people's freedom to stray from this necessity in their actions.
6. Though, in most cases, Kagan's terms are in turn Russian renditions of German terminology.
7. Interestingly, some of these parallels only surface in Bakhtin's writings much later (Poole 1995).
8. This position, both in style and in substance, can be traced back to Bakhtin's engagement with the thought of Søren Kierkegaard (Fryszman 1996; Sandler 2012, 229–32; Shchittsova 1999), which he came to know as early as 1913 (Bakhtin 2002, 41–43), and to some extent also with the work of Max Stirner (Nikiforov 2006, 323–40).
9. To put things in context, many contemporary philosophers, brought up within the neo-Kantian tradition, developed a similarly conflicted attitude toward their mentors (see e.g., Dmitrieva 2007).
10. The solution to the metaphysical problem of accounting for the existence of objective phenomena which is implied by this move goes along the usual lines of Kantian philosophy: what is objectively true is true for all subjects (only Bakhtin's subject is no longer the formal, general, subject of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*). However, this solution remains implicit. Bakhtin does not spell it out in any of his extant writings.
11. For a full discussion of this text as a phenomenologically-oriented essay on subjectivity, see Erdinast-Vulcan (2013).
12. Translation modified. The initials probably refer to Kagan, not to Mikhail Izrailevich Tubyansky, as stated in the English translation (see N. I. Nikolaev's note in Bakhtin 1996–2012, 1.876 for a discussion of both options). See the remarks on Christ in Kagan (2004, 175) for Kagan's side of the argument.
13. For a more elaborate discussion of Bakhtin's architectonics of subjectivity, see Erdinast-Vulcan (2013).
14. Which is not to deny the various other influences on the Bakhtin Circle's conception of language, e.g., from the works of Karl Bühler or Lev Yakubinsky (Alpatov 2005; Brandist 2004, 2006).
15. Interestingly, Bakhtin adds a comment that the Formalists would certainly have agreed with: "the artist conquers language, as it were, with its own verbal weapons—he forces language, in the process of perfecting it linguistically, to surpass itself" (1990b, 297). If we bear in mind Jakobson's definition of poetic

form as "organized violence" committed on language (1923, 16), we may certainly read this comment on the artistic act as a version of Shklovsky's notion of "making strange" (*ostranenie*). Bakhtin's relationship with the Formalists was, then, more ambivalent and complex than that which emerges in Medvedev's work (Erdinast-Vulcan 2013, 55–63).

16. The Soviet linguistic circles in which Voloshinov was involved at the time were developing a view of language as context-dependent and interactional (Brandist 2003, 2006; Yakubinsky 1997), which is also clearly reflected in most Bakhtin Circle texts from the mid-1920s on. But Voloshinov's emphasis on the role of *evaluation* in this context, nevertheless, betrays the influence of Bakhtin's philosophy.
17. For a full discussion of the role of refraction in Bakhtin's work, see Erdinast-Vulcan (2013, 76–97).
18. To reiterate, "intonation" is used here in an extended sense typical of early Bakhtin (actually, in his discussion of double-voiced discourse he prefers to use the term "intention" as an equivalent). Parody is often indeed realized by changing the intonation, in the narrow sense, of the parodied words, but this needs not be the case. Thus, one can mimic the tone of a person's voice, while expressing one's attitude toward that person through cleverly manipulating one's choice of words.

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3 Prague Linguistic Circle

Lubomir Doležel

SHORT HISTORY

The Prague Linguistic Circle (PLC), in Czech "Pražský lingvistický kroužek" (PLK), also known as *Cercle linguistique de Prague* (CLP), was founded in 1926 by Vilém Mathesius (1882–1945), director of the English seminar at Charles University, and his colleagues Roman Jakobson (linguistics), Bohuslav Havránek (general linguistics and Slavic philology), Bohumil Trnka (English language and literature) and Jan Rypka (Turkish and Iranian languages and literatures). The interdisciplinary character of the PLC was later strengthened by philosophers and psychologists, but its core continued to be formed by linguists and literary scholars. Among its members it counted prominent Czech scholars, such as Jan Mukařovský (literary theory), Jaroslav Průšek (sinology), and Pavel Trost (general and comparative linguistics), as well as Russian emigré scholars Nikolay Trubetskoy, Sergey Kartsevsky, Petr Bogatyrev, and Dmitry Chizhevsky. During the 1930s, younger scholars were accepted as members of the circle, first Josef Vachek (in 1931), and shortly afterward the Czechs Vladimír Skalička, René Wellek, Felix Vodička, Jiří Veltruský, and Karel Horálek and the Slovaks L'udovít Novák and Jozef Ružička,[1] later called the second generation of the Prague School. The most popular of the Circle's activities was its regular lectures followed by long, exciting discussions (see Součková 1976). The forum also attracted many prominent foreign visitors, such as Edmund Husserl, Rudolf Carnap, Karl Bühler, Otto Jespersen, Yuri Tynyanov, Boris Tomashevsky, Nicolaas van Wijk, Émile Benveniste, Giulia Porru, Giacomo Devoto and others. The lectures continued in private houses even during the dark wartime years (see the list of PLC lectures in Matejka 1976c).

The strongest influence on PLC theory came from Ferdinand de Saussure; the second source of inspiration was Russian Formalism (Moscow linguistic circle and OPOYAZ; see Glanc 2005, 13–14; for the MLC–PLC connection, see Jakobson 1971d).[2] Jakobson spoke of a "symbiosis of Russian and Czech thought," but he also emphasized that the circle adopted "the experience of western European and American science." This was, Jakobson continued, "nothing extraordinary, because the position at the crossroads of various cultures was always characteristic of the Czechoslovak world" (Jakobson 1971e, 547–48).

The close contact and cooperation between linguistics and poetics (literary theory) reflects the impact of Russian Formalism. In contrast to the typical divorce between the study of language and the study of literature, especially in the Anglo-American domain (Vachek 1999, 38–39), the Prague School scholars were convinced that literature, being art in/of language, could not be adequately studied without the aid of linguistic concepts and models. On the other hand, they argued, linguistics that disregards verbal art leaves out the most powerful force of language creativity. Eventually, structural poetics and literary history became equal partners to linguistics, as statistics of PLC lectures prove: from a total of 305 lectures, 80 were devoted to poetics or literary theory (Vachek 1999, 114).

The PLC belongs on the list of the prominent post-positivist schools and trends sometimes referred to as "the last blossoming of Central European culture": Husserl's phenomenology, Freud's psychoanalysis, Saussure's theoretical linguistics and semiotics, the philosophy and logic of the Vienna Circle, Gestalt psychology. The PLC's addition to this list is structuralism. The term was coined and defined by Roman Jakobson in 1929 (in an article written in Czech): "Were we to comprise the leading idea of present-day science in its most various manifestations, we could hardly find a more appropriate designation than *structuralism*. Any set of phenomena examined by contemporary science is treated not as a mechanical agglomeration but as a structural whole, and the basic task is to reveal the inner, whether static or developmental, laws of this system" (1971f, 711). For Mukařovský, structuralism was primarily "a noetic (epistemological) stance," the manner in which scientific concepts are arranged into a system (1982, 68).

The strength and international influence of the PLC was the result of its members' collaboration, demonstrated especially in collective publications: the program for structural linguistics presented in 1928 at the First International Congress of Linguists (jointly with the Geneva School of linguistics), and the yearly publications of papers—in French, English, and German—titled *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague* (TCLP) and collected in eight volumes (1929–1939). In the 1930s the Prague linguistic circle became a force in Czech culture. Its first collective Czech publication was a tribute to the philosopher president of the Czechoslovak republic T. G. Masaryk (Mukařovský and Jakobson 1931). In another collective publication, *Standard Czech and Language Culture* (Havránek and Weingart 1932), the Circle formulated the anti-purist principles of language planning and culture. The title of the Circle's Czech journal *Slovo a slovesnost* (The word and verbal art), launched in 1935, exploits the etymological connection that in Slavic languages links the terms for "language" and "literature." A jubilee volume, *Torso and the Mystery of Mácha's Work* (Mukařovský 1938), a programmatic work, *Readings on Language and Poetry* (Havránek and Mukařovský 1942) and a cycle of radio broadcasts by Havránek, Mukařovský, and Vodička *On Poetic Language* (1947) reinforced close

contacts between theoretical scholarship and artistic practice. Many of the prominent members of the PLC, especially Jakobson, Mukařovský, and Havránek, cultivated friendships with Czech avant-garde poets, while some writers published their essays in the PLC journal (see Kubíček 2010, 50–51). As the Circle's influence grew, so did the voices of its critics, especially Marxists. The polemic with Marxist publicists (1930–1934) was probably the first confrontation between structuralism and Marxism. In 1951, structuralism became target of merciless Marxist critics backed by the totalitarian pro-Soviet regime that aimed at erasing the heritage of the Prague School from the history of Czech scholarship.

Once the political conditions for scientific work improved in the years leading to the Prague spring of 1968, a group of young scholars, sometimes called the third generation of the Prague School, started reviving the PLC tradition. These included (among others) the linguists František Daneš, Karel Hausenblas, Jan Firbas and L'ubomír Ďurovič (a Slovak), students of literature Miroslav Červenka, Milan Jankovič, Jiří Levý, Eva Strohsová, Lubomír Doležel, and the philosopher Josef Kalivoda. However, their careers were terminated with the restoration of the totalitarian regime in 1969. Only after the Velvet Revolution in February 1990, did a group of linguists and literary scholars revive the name *Prague Linguistic Circle* once again.

While the heritage of the Prague School has not been forgotten in Czech scholarship, the post-war reception of Prague structuralism on the international scene was far from smooth. This is especially true of its reception by French structuralists. In 1946, Jan Mukařovský presented a lecture (in French) on structuralism in Paris, but the lecture never appeared in French. A volume of French translations of Mukařovský's works, prepared in the 1960s, was never published. Most of the Western interpreters of structuralism (Culler 1975; Hawkes 1977; Jameson 1972; Jefferson 1982) further reinforced the historical discontinuity in twentieth-century structuralism, identifying structuralism exclusively with its French stage. It is instructive to quote Merquior's history of European structuralism. While he acknowledges that "the foundations of structuralism in criticism and aesthetics were laid down in Eastern Europe," he treats the Prague School as a mere "strategic background": "the real location of the story is the *haute culture milieu* of modern Paris" (Merquior 1986, 19). Only two Western histories of structuralism, Broekman (1971), and Fokkema and Kunne-Ibsch (1977), acknowledge the significance of the Prague School. Sériot in a brief but pointed comment—"*Structuralism* is not only Paris of the 1960s" (1999, 11)—expressed the fact that without considering the Prague school the image of twentieth-century structuralism is incomplete both historically and theoretically.

Prague School scholars established structuralism in three primary areas of scientific enquiry: linguistics, poetics and literary theory, and semiotics. I will examine their contribution in next chapters. But allow me first to insert a brief chapter of personal memories.

THE PRAGUE SCHOOL SCHOLARS IN MY PERSONAL MEMORIES

In June 1945, Czech universities finally reopened after Nazi occupiers had closed them on November 17, 1939. I registered at the philosophical faculty of Charles University in Prague because I knew that several prominent members of the faculty representing the discipline I wanted to study, Czech and Russian language and literature, were members of the PLC. I could not study with Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), who had emigrated in 1938, nor with Vilém Mathesius, who died in April 1945. My teacher, later my thesis supervisor and finally my "boss" was Bohuslav Havránek (1893–1978). His research encompassed general and Slavic linguistics, but at the center of his attention was Czech language. He produced two synthetic works on Czech and Moravian dialects and on the history of Czech standard language. He became widely known as the coauthor of high-school textbooks, editor of a Czech dictionary, and editor-in-chief of the PLC journal *Slovo a slovesnost*. Havránek was an outstanding teacher who could hold his students' attention on even the driest subjects by connecting them to more general issues or historical trends. He taught us the art of close reading, a prerequisite for the analysis of texts both literary and nonliterary. He instilled in us the conviction that the solutions to scholarly problems require thorough thinking and rethinking.

When I started work on my doctoral dissertation, I had a consultation with Jan Mukařovský (1891–1975). Earlier, I took his course "Art and Reality" during my undergraduate study. I met the grand man of PLC literary theory and aesthetics again in 1956, but by then his position in the Czech academy was radically different. After the Marxist denunciation of structuralism in 1951, Mukařovský performed a "self-criticism" and rejected his structuralist past. I wanted to ask him a single question: how should we judge the structuralism that he himself had so sharply rejected? I remember his answer almost literally: "If I had to write my *Chapters from Czech Poetics* today, I would not change anything except for a few idealistic philosophical assumptions." Since I could not find any philosophical assumptions in this work, I concluded that I had a green light to use structural poetics in my own work. So did several young and talented literary theorists at Mukařovský's Institute for Czech literature, which became the breeding ground for the third generation of PLC scholars.

I followed Mukařovský's principles of structural poetics, but in my own work I was more indebted to his disciple and second-generation PLC member Felix Vodička (1909–1974). My occasional contacts with Vodička became more regular when he acted as external reader at my thesis defense. Unfortunately, the second flowering of structural poetics was rather short; after the Prague spring was crushed in 1968, Vodička and his young collaborators were expelled from academic institutes and universities. The interference of political power in scholarly life was a permanent threat to Czech

scholars from 1939 to 1989. One cannot fully understand the history of the PLC without taking into account this basic social condition.

I met Jiří Veltruský (1919–1994), another prominent representative of the PLC (together with his wife Jarmila, herself a literary scholar) in Paris during my sabbatical year (1977/1978). His life was also very much affected by political upheavals and his university studies interrupted by the closure of Czech universities, but he managed to write and publish, throughout the war, pioneering works of structuralist dramatic theory. He continued this activity after his emigration to France in 1948. His interest in political issues is manifest in three books published under the pseudonym Paul Barton. One of these, published in 1959, reveals the existence of the system of Stalinist labor camps that Solzhenitsyn later designated the "Gulag archipelago."

The life of my friend Ladislav Matejka's (1919–2012) had also been affected by the war and the postwar political turmoil—his university studies were interrupted in 1939, and his journalistic career terminated in 1948. After going into exile in Sweden and then becoming Jakobson's doctoral student at Harvard, he graduated as a linguist, but maintained a keen interest in verbal art. As professor in the Slavic department of the University of Michigan he founded and for many years oversaw the publication of the series Michigan Slavic Materials, Michigan Slavic Publications and the yearbook of Central European studies *Cross Currents*. He compiled, together with Krystyna Pomorska, the fundamental textbook of Russian Formalist contributions (1971) and promoted the work of the PLC scholars in several publications (especially Matejka 1976c; Matejka and Titunik 1976).

In 1945, René Wellek (1903–1995), another first-generation PLC member, with whom I crossed paths occasionally, did not return to Prague from his position at the London School of Slavonic and East European studies, but headed to the United States. There he became a prominent member of the American School of New Criticism and enriched its bibliography with the popular textbook *Theory of Literature* (1949), written in collaboration with Austin Warren. The book presented to the American readership an instructive survey of the teachings of Russian Formalists and a somewhat one-sided picture of Prague structuralism. In 1966, I met Wellek for the first time at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where he lectured. He was a tall and very confident man, totally Americanized, but spoke Czech with me. In 1988, he came to the University of Toronto, lecturing about the "destruction of literary studies," meaning the wave of deconstruction that at that time swept through English and comparative literature departments in North America.

Finally, let me end here with a warm memory of my friend Miroslav Červenka (1932–2005), both the recognized leader of the Prague School literary theorists of the third generation and a prominent poet. He was devoted to the pursuit of precision in literary studies and therefore focused on prosody, where conceptual rigor is at home, but also tackled other more complex problems of literary theory, such as the semantics of literary texts

and the fictional worlds of lyric. He did not give up after his expulsion from the Institute of Czech literature in 1968. Making his living as a librarian, he continued writing and published his work in the German Federal Republic, in Poland, and in samizdat publishing. After the Velvet Revolution, he returned to his position in the Academy and to his work. In his obituaries, he was recognized as a major figure of Czech culture.

PRAGUE STRUCTURAL AND FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS

Prague theoretical linguistics rests on two Saussurean distinctions—*langue/parole* and *synchrony/diachrony*. It shares this foundation with the so-called Copenhagen School (glossematics) and to a degree with American descriptivism, emphasizing, however, the functional conception of language and language communication. Even officially, in the PLC statutes of 1930, the method of PLC is called "functional-structural." In 1963, Jakobson stated that the functional approach, "the means-ends model," underlies the work of many prominent interwar linguists.

Using the functional-structural method, Russian PLC member Nikolay Trubetskoy created the new linguistic discipline of phonology (1929; synthesizing work is Trubetskoy 1939). Its elementary unit is the phoneme, the result of a structural-functional interpretation of language sounds. Phonology provided a new, widely accepted link between sound and meaning. Trubetskoy undertook a meticulous analysis of phonological systems of diverse languages and created a conceptual system for phonology that provided the "algebra" for a general analysis of structures—binary opposition, correlation, neutralization, marked and unmarked units, and so on. Phonology became a "star" discipline among Prague linguistics because it was a theoretical challenge and an opportunity to study the phonological systems of various languages (see Jakobson [1929] 1971a; Mathesius 1929, 1931; Vachek 1932, 1957; Trubetskoy 1935; Trnka 1935; Skalička 1936, and Havránek 1939). Mukařovský (1931) opened the link between phonology and poetics.[3] In 1930, the PLC organized a very successful first international phonological conference. The phonologies of various languages were examined by the various methods used in Prague: structural, contrastive, historical, and quantitative. Significantly, Vachek considers Trnka's discovery of the phonemic motivation of the "great vowel shift" in medieval English (Trnka 1959) one of the great achievements of Prague School phonology. A subdivision of phonology, morphonology, studying the phonological changes occurring in declension and conjugation, was also Trubetskoy's discovery.

The formation of phonology greatly enriched the functional-structural study of language. However, traditional grammar study was not abandoned—rather, it was transformed by the functional-structural approach. Among the Prague School scholars studying morphology we find Jakobson on Russian

verb structure (1971b [1932]) and on the grammatical case ([1936] 1971c), Havránek (1928) on verbal voice, Poldauf (1942*) and Průšek (1948*) on verbal aspect, Skalička on grammatical case (1941) and on morphological typology (1943). Some of these studies are known only as the titles of PLC lectures (here marked with an asterisk).

The study of syntax was greatly enriched by Mathesius's concept of functional sentence perspective (FSP). His original aim was to uncover the principles of Czech word order, which is very flexible—so much that it was considered "free." Mathesius revealed the regularity of Czech word order in the semantic (or logical) structure of the sentence, specifically in the ordering of theme, the given, known information, and rheme, the new information. Since the identification of theme and rheme requires one to consider the sentence in context, the FSP is the first venture of structural linguistics beyond the "sacred" sentence boundary (Mathesius 1947). Jan Firbas, a disciple of Mathesius and a linguist of the third-generation Prague School, pursued Mathesius's FSP project beyond its original aim and demonstrated that FSP is a general principle of the semantic structuring of sentences and provided evidence of it in the English language (Firbas 2010). It is one of the signs that PCL's impact on Czech linguistics was not weakened with the dissolution of the Circle. Firbas was joined by other linguists of the third generation at a conference on FSP organized and its proceedings published at a time when the PCL was no longer active (see Daneš 1974).

Vilém Mathesius joined Trubetskoy in creating a new linguistic discipline, synchronic comparative linguistics. Traditional comparative linguistics, the fruit of nineteenth-century historical research, succeeded in reconstructing the history and prehistory of languages and language families; Mathesius used the comparative method to uncover similarities and differences of synchronic language structures, to describe the "linguistic characterology" of languages (1927). He was most interested in the comparative study of English and Czech, revealing surprising structural similarities between these two languages that belong not only to two different branches of the Indo-European family but also to two linguistic types, the analytic and synthetic. Second-generation PLC member Josef Vachek pursued the project of synchronic comparative linguistics—again, with a special focus on the characterology of English as compared to Czech (see Vachek 1975). In the English speaking world, he became known for presenting fundamental information about Prague School linguistics (Vachek 1966) and compiling an anthology and a dictionary of PLC research (Vachek 1964; 2003).

The work of Trubetskoy, Jakobson, Mathesius, Havránek, and other linguists of the PLC resulted in the design of a general model of language structure. It is a stratificational model representing language as a hierarchical system of levels, phonemic, morphonemic, morphemic, lexical, and syntactic (see Daneš 1971). The levels are linked by the operation of integration: units of a lower level controlled by the rules of the specific language combine and fuse into units of a higher level. The operation of integration

is a mereological unification, such as the higher-level units acquire new, emergent properties that the lower level units do not possess. The mereological stratificational model is the emblem of Prague School structuralism.

Some prejudiced critics of structuralism (for example Eagleton 1983) accuse structuralism of being ahistorical. This criticism certainly does not apply to Prague structuralism, which cultivated historical study but replaced the traditional "atomistic" approach of young grammarians with the conception of the history of language as the evolution of a system (Vachek 1999, 31). The structural approach was extended to the study of history and the term "historic structure" justified (Galan 1985; Skalička 1960). Diachronic and synchronic linguistics thus became complementary.

The second, no less impressive achievement of Prague School linguists is the theory of functional languages.[4] Unlike deconstructive and analytic philosophers, the PLC linguists did not see language as monofunctional (see Holenstein 1976; 1981). Language, just as other sign systems, fulfills various needs of its users and serves a number of functions. Language cultivates functional variants; natural languages are by necessity multifunctional. The original inspiration for PLC functional linguistics came from the Viennese psycholinguist Karl Bühler's system of three functions—expressive, appellative, and referential. Havránek, Mukařovský and Jakobson enriched this system by a fourth aesthetic/poetic function that allowed poetic language to be treated as a special functional language. Later Jakobson, inspired by then-emerging general theory of communication, reached the apex of the multifunctional conception in his well-known system of six functions—referential, poetic, expressive, conative, phatic, and metalingual (1981a).[5] Jakobson's second important contribution is his introduction of the notion of dominant. Language functions do not operate singly, but in "bundles" arranged hierarchically under the direction of a dominant function. Jakobson was thus able to explain complicated and seemingly deviant communicative situations. His famous example "I like Ike" (the slogan of Eisenhower's election campaign) shows how an utterance with a dominant conative (political) function acquires a subordinate poetic function to strengthen its effect. Jakobson's much quoted "projection principle" is a special operation of the poetic function that imposes "regular reiteration of equivalent units" on poetic texts.

Bohuslav Havránek used the notion of language functions to develop a functional stylistics. Functional stylistics is not restricted to the idiosyncratic characteristics of creative literary personalities, but accommodates also supraindividual styles of various human activities—conversation, science, legal, business and political transactions, and the like. The theory of written language is a distinct domain of functional language theory, elaborated especially by Josef Vachek. Here, PLC linguistics overcame the view of written language as an "imperfect record of spoken utterances" and "rehabilitated written utterances […] by pointing to their specific function, clearly distinct from the function of spoken utterances" (1973, 72).[6]

The theory of functional languages testifies to the fact that the Prague School extended the scope of linguistics beyond the study of language systems toward the study of language communication. One of the lasting results of this expansion was the formulation of the principles of language policy and standardization. In Prague, these considerations were named the theory of standard language. The principle that language *codification* has to respect the *usus* (the living speech) of the language bearers formed the basis of this theory (Havránek 1936). Guided by this principle, the Prague School scholars rose collectively to the defense of avant-garde Czech poets and their daring linguistic innovations against the criticism of conservative Czech purists (see Havránek and Weingart 1932). The alliance of Prague School scholars with avant-garde Czech poets was one of the major events of Czech interwar culture.

Just as the PLC linguists bridged the division of synchronic/diachronic study, so did they stimulate the study of *parole* side by side with the study of *langue* (Skalička 1948). Following this stimulus, some third-generation scholars were ready to participate actively in the significant post-war expansion of linguistics into text theory (Daneš 1985; Doležel 1960).

STRUCTURAL POETICS AND THEORY OF LITERATURE

Structural poetics joins structural linguistics as part of the fundamental PLC inheritance. Two principles of the PLC study of literature still deserve our attention. The ontological principle claims that literature is a form of verbal art, vitally connected to other art forms—theater, visual arts, music, or art cinema. The epistemological principle states that the study of literature must proceed according to the standards of "contemporary scientific thought" (Mukařovský). The study of literature cannot achieve the level of precision common to the natural sciences, but there is no excuse for conceptual and methodological sloppiness, semantic ambiguity, and logical incoherence in literary research.

The PLC study of literature was empirical in the sense that theoretical problems and concepts were not formulated and resolved by speculation but were derived from the analysis of literary works. Miroslav Červenka expressed the gist of the approach briefly but succinctly: "Today there is much speculation about the relationship between Marxism and structuralism, existentialism and structuralism, etc., as if we were dealing with a confrontation of contradictory philosophical trends. However, structuralism as conceived by Mukařovský, Jakobson, Vodička and their disciples […] is not a philosophy, but a methodological trend in certain sciences, especially those concerned with sign systems and their concrete uses" (Červenka 1969, 331–32). Thanks to this epistemology, Prague structuralism was able to avoid the postpositivist split between nomothetic sciences of nature (*Naturwissenschaften*) and idiosyncratic human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*). Some French

structuralists restricted literary theory (poetics) to the nomothetic study of literary categories and regularities, but the Prague epistemology combines, in the spirit of Wilhem von Humboldt, the abstract poetics of universal categories and general laws with analytic poetics of individual literary works. Mukařovský's 1928 monograph already demonstrated this synthesis. In the "Introduction," Mukařovský developed a theoretical system and then used its categories and concepts to describe a particular poem (Mácha's *May*) in the uniqueness of its sound patterning, its semantic organization, and its thematic structure. Later, inspired again by Mácha's work, Mukařovský proposed and explored the concept of semantic gesture, a poet's idiosyncratic constructional principle, "which is applied in every segment of the work, even the most minute, and that results in a unified and unifying systematization of all the constituents" (Mukařovský 1948, 239). Both in its (metonymical) name and in its sense, semantic gesture ties literary structure to the creative subject. Semantic gesture has become one of the most cultivated concepts inherited from the Prague School (see especially Burg 1985; Doubravová 2001; Jankovič 1972; Merks 1980; Procházka 1969; Schmid 1982).[7]

The culmination of Jakobson's poetics, his postwar cycle of analyses of poetic masterworks (the analysis of Baudelaire's "Les Chats" written together with Claude Lévi-Strauss), known as the "poetry of grammar and grammar of poetry", preserves the two-pronged approach of the Prague School. He uses general categories of grammar to discover the idiosyncratic grammatical patterning in diverse poems. For example, the Hussite battle song, Alexandr Pushkin's love poem, and a political poem by Bertolt Brecht, all "play" with personal pronouns, but at the same time they are different in their use of the pronouns. Furthermore, each of Pushkin's poems is "unique and unrepeatable in its artistic choice and use of grammatical material" (Jakobson 1987, 136). Jakobson's method, as Krystyna Pomorska noted, "allows us both to generalize and individualize the phenomena under investigation" (1983, 230).

Since PLC scholars took for granted that literature is art of/in language, they recognized that the study of literature is necessarily linked to linguistics. Mukařovský and Jakobson shared this view. Jakobson maintained that poetic language is not a "deviant" language phenomenon, but an expression of the "very foundation of language" since in it "culminates the creative ability of language" (1985, 92). Jan Mukařovský should be counted among the most prominent twentieth-century theorists of literature. Unfortunately, writing in a minor language and using a minor literature for his analyses and examples hampered the international reverberations of his work. Despite his efforts to reach the international scholarly community with works written in French (Mukařovský 1939, 1976, 1977), the catastrophic political developments in Europe of the 1930s and 1940s prevented the full and just international recognition of Mukařovský's opus.

Felix Vodička perfected the combination of nomothetic and ideographic poetics in the foundational work of structural narratology, *Počátky krásné prózy novočeské* (1948) (see Doležel, 1982, 1989; Fořt 2008; Kubíček 2010, 92–120), but only a fragment of this text is available in German (Striedter 1976). Vodička adopted not only two Humboldtian modes of poetics, but his compositional pattern of 1799 as well, alternating analytic segments with theoretical reflections. (Roland Barthes's *S/Z* [1970] is a more recent and more celebrated example of this composition.) Thus, for example, Vodička reformulated the traditional system of narrative thematics by defining action, character and setting in terms of elementary narrative units—motifs and demonstrated how, in François-René de Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801), the motifs of setting (of nature, human habitats, social and cultural customs, etc.) become polyfunctional and impact the structuring of character or action. Overall, Vodička developed a systematic theory of narrative on both the thematic and the verbal levels and analyzed, within this theoretical framework, the rise of modern Czech prose fiction.

While semantics (including thematics) of literature was the favored child of PLC poetics, the sound structures of poetry also received a lot of attention. As is well known, Romantic poets cultivated sound patterning in their poetry and the Symbolists saw in music, in the art of sounds, the model of poetic art. Poetics followed suit, first in Russian Formalism where pioneering studies of sound figures (Osip Brik) and verse rhythm (Boris Tomashevsky) were written. Explicitly connecting with these Formalist endeavors, Mukařovský analyzed in detail the sound patterns of *May* in his Mácha monograph (1928) and devoted much effort to the study of Czech verse rhythm and its evolution (1923), as did Jakobson ([1923] 1979a). They found a devoted but critical follower in Miroslav Červenka (2006) who sharpened the methods of prosody and pursued a systematic history of Czech verse.

My survey of the PLC theory of literature would be woefully incomplete, if I did not include an account of the search for a structuralist literary history. Just as PLC linguists, who, while accepting Saussure's stimulating opposition synchrony/diachrony, did not neglect historical linguistics, so the literary scholars did not turn their back on literary history. "What most sharply distinguishes Czech structuralism from the other twentieth-century literary theories is its commitment to literary history" (Galan 1985, 2; see also Grygar 1968, 2006; Günther 1973). Early Formalism was inclined to see history as an immanent process of continuous formations and transformations of forms brought about by the forms' inner imbalances or shifts. The Prague School literary historians proceeded to build their theory of literary evolution on the assumption that structural poetics, with its concepts and models, was a prerequisite for literary history. The efforts to build a structuralist literary history continued in Wellek's astute essay (1936) and culminated in the work of Vodička (1942, 1948, 1969).

SEMIOTICS

PLC structuralism was substantially enriched and refined in the 1930s by absorbing the new science of signs—semiotics—foreseen by Saussure. It was, however, only later that Russian Saussureans and PLC structuralists applied the semiotic model of language outside its original scope as a universal representation of many and diverse sign systems. The time had arrived for an interdisciplinary semiotic model to replace the organic (morphological) model that had dominated both the natural and cultural sciences since Goethe elaborated his "morphology of living nature."

The entry of semiotics into PLC structuralism can be precisely dated as marked by Mukařovský's French paper "L'art comme fait sémiologique," which he presented in September 1934 (published in 1936). Mukařovský applied the semiotic model to his own discipline, poetics, and aesthetics. It is instructive to follow Mukařovský and define the semiotics of art and literature in negative terms by first stating what it is not: "Lacking a semiotic orientation, the theorist of art will always be inclined to regard the work of art as a purely formal structure or, on the other hand, as a direct reflection of the psychological or even physiological states of its creator or direct reflection of the distinct reality conveyed by the work or direct reflection of the ideological, economic, social or cultural situation of the milieu in question" (1976, 8). Obviously, semiotic aesthetics stands in contrast to all forms of determinism, represented especially by expressive, mimetic and sociological conceptions of art. The entire domain of art—literature, visual arts, theater, cinema, architecture and even music—becomes the realm of aesthetic signs. Let us add that Mukařovský's semiotics of art is part and parcel of a new aesthetics that turned away from traditional abstract speculations about "beauty," from "the metaphysical and substantive conception of art" (Chvatík 1981, 133), to pursue aesthetic research in close connection with art theory and history. PLC scholars laid the foundations for the semiotics of theater (see especially Bogatyrev 1940; Honzl 1976; Veltruský 1964, 1976, 2012), which attracted special attention because it involves numerous semiotic systems and thus challenges the semiotician to explore "the interrelationship of semiotic systems and the problem of their unity" (Matejka 1976a, xxv).

A fundamental PLC contribution to general semiotics has to be ascribed to Russian ethnographer Petr Bogatyrev. In his studies of folk costume and folk theater (1976a, 1976b), he developed a conceptual framework for the semiotization of material objects that generally serve utilitarian purposes. However, "any item of nature, technology, or everyday use can become a sign whenever it acquires meaning beyond the bounds of its individual existence as a thing in and of itself." Bogatyrev exemplifies this transformation with the case of a stone. If stone is used for its "natural" purposes, it is a purely material object. "However, if we take a stone, paint it white and then place it between two fields, something different happens. Such a stone will

accrue a specific meaning […]. It will become a marker [and a] sign to mark the border between two plots of ground" (1976a, 13–14). Bogatyrev's semiotics opens new vistas on theater, cinema, visual arts, architecture, fashion, food, and, generally, on any domain of material culture.

From traditionalists to Marxists, the critics of structuralism often make the claim that its emphasis on the autonomy of art leads to the divorce of art from its social context. There is no trace of this split in PLC thought. On the contrary, the arts as semiotic systems are not isolated entities, but in their functioning and evolution are inevitably bound to other social semiotic systems. A semiotic conception of art and literature is equally opposed to immanentism as it is to determinism.

The Dutch historian of structuralism Jan Broekman noted that Prague School semiotic theory of art encompassed three domains of inquiry: "the subjectivity of the artist, the inner structure of the work of art and the relationship between art and society" (1974, 85). Ladislav Matejka, a tireless interpreter of PLC writings, made the point of emphasizing the reach of Prague School aesthetics beyond the autonomy of art:

> Although the work of art remains at the center of attention as a semiotic system with certain autonomous properties, there is no intentional disregard for its relationship to the general domain of language and to other cultural and social systems. At the same time, neither the creator and the corresponding problems of the genesis of art nor the reader and his evaluation are removed from consideration. (1976b, 276)

Indeed, in semiotic poetics the literary work in its formal, semantic, and thematic dimensions, remains at the center of the scholars' attention. However, after the absorption of the semiotic impulse, the PLC poeticians refined the model of the poetic structure. The opposition between material and form is relativized when all constituents are assigned a "meaning-creating value": "All constituents," writes Mukařovský, "traditionally called formal are […] vehicles of meaning, partial signs in a work of art" (1978, 10). From the semiotic perspective, a literary work is a totally semanticized structure. The semantization also affects the linear dimension of the poetic work. The poetic text generates semantic accumulation, a bidirectional growth of sense within the sentence and beyond. Semantic accumulation is the force behind the coherence of the poetic text and the totality of the poetic work: "Every new partial sign that the receiver apprehends during the process of reception […] not only associates with those that have penetrated previously into the receiver's consciousness, but also changes to a greater or lesser extent the sense of everything that has preceded. And, conversely, everything that has preceded affects the meaning of each newly apprehended partial sign" (10). Mukařovský's concept of semantic accumulation, recognized by many literary scholars as a historic achievement (see Doležel 1990, 158), has the same purpose as Husserl's diagrams, representing the projection of a

temporal sequence of parts on the simultaneous axis of a whole (see Steiner and Steiner 1976).

The conception of literature as a specific sign system required a theory of the *pragmatic* factors of literary activity, particularly the author, the reader and the social conditions of literature. Again, Mukařovský and Jakobson led the way, but Felix Vodíčka later made a substantial contribution to this theoretical development. In the classical division of semiotic study into syntactics, semantics and pragmatics, as suggested by Charles Morris, pragmatics studies the relationships between the literary work and its "extrinsic" factors. At the same time, the semiotic conception of these relationships guards against all forms of pragmatic determinism.

Primarily, the pragmatics of literature is responsible for elaborating the concept of the literary subject. In literary communication the subject appears in two guises, as the author (creator) of the work at the input, as its reader (recipient) at the output. PLC theoreticians developed a semiotics of the subject in critical exchange with expressive and phenomenological theories of literature. The most resolute criticism was directed against the determinism of expressive theories that is against the claim that poetic invention is a reflex of the author's psychology. In Jakobson's succinct statement, expressive explanations are "equations with two unknowns." Jakobson went beyond epistemological to substantive criticism when he challenged the unidirectionality of psychological determinism. Using a private text (diary) and a public text (the poem "May") of Czech Romantic poet K. H. Mácha, Jakobson demonstrated that the poet's "life" and his "work" are mutually substitutable. According to Jakobson, both texts record a set of possible events that were all experienced by the poet: "All are equally valid, regardless of which of the given possibilities were realized in the poet's private life and which in his *oeuvre*" (1987b, 374).[8]

Mukařovský criticized psychological determinism on similar grounds, insisting that "the relationship between the poet's work and his life does not have the character of unilateral dependency but of a correlation" (1982a, 81). Turning to the characteristics of the receiving subject, Mukařovský found his most lucid formulation in the critique of the phenomenological concept of reception, represented by Julius von Petersen in his *Die Wissenschaft von der Dichtung* (1939). While Mukařovský agrees with the phenomenological claim that the mental states and attitudes of different receivers of one and the same literary work are far from identical, especially if we take into account that the receivers may belong to different historical periods or different cultures, he emphasized that poetics does not (and cannot) study individual mental states, but only "the *conditions* of the induction of this state, conditions that are given equally for all receiving individuals and are objectively identifiable in the structure of the work" (1982b, 343). The fundamental thesis of the semiotic theory of literary reception states that the subjectivity of reception and interpretation is constrained by the objectivity of the literary work.

In the final stage of the semiotic conceptualization of the literary subject, Mukařovský suggests a far-reaching differentiation between "psychophysical individual" and "personality." While the individual is a being of flesh and mind, the personality in both of its manifestations is a role that the being performs under the constraints of the objective conditions regulating the genesis and the reception of literature. "The conception of the work of art as a sign offers for aesthetics a deep insight into the problems of the role of personality in art precisely because it liberates the artwork from its unequivocal dependence on the individuality of its author" (1982a, 74).

The concept of personality is applicable not only to individuals, but also to "collectivities" engaged in literary communication. On the sender's side, such collectivities are literary groupings, schools and generations; on the receiver's side they are constituted by the public. Postulating the work of art as "a sign with respect to society no less than with regard to the individual," Mukařovský opens the way for treatment of the relationship between art and society as "highly variable." Mapping the range of possibilities he sets them between two poles, that of "a consensus between art and society" and that of "mutual separation." Regulated and tendentious art is close to the first pole, while the second pole is the space of *l'art-pour-l'art* trends and of the *poètes maudits* (1982a, 74ff.).

While Mukařovský focused on the creative subject and its role, Vodička, who shared the conception of literature as an aesthetic sign system, proceeded to elaborate a semiotic theory of reception: "A literary work is understood as an aesthetic sign intended for the public. We must, therefore, always keep in mind not only the work's existence but also its reception; we must take into account that a literary work is aesthetically perceived, interpreted and evaluated by the community of readers" (1976, 197). Vodička contrasts his semiotic approach with two extant alternatives. First, he is dissatisfied with the traditional collecting of "echoes" of literary works that takes stock of mutual influences. Second, he carefully differentiates his position from the phenomenological theory propounded by the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden.[9] He borrowed Ingarden's term "concretization" for particular acts of reception, but redefined it as "a reflection of a work in the consciousness of those individuals for whom the work is an aesthetic object." Vodička had no need to decenter the literary text; reception is a dynamic process precisely because its target is a work of art. The potential for various "concretizations" is an inherent quality of the literary work: "The work of art displays properties of a structure and is an ensemble of signs; but the communicative definiteness of these signs is so disrupted by the aesthetic function that they can evoke many different semantic associations. Therefore, one can generally assume that the perceived work will admit of several aesthetic and semantic interpretations" (Vodička 1982,109).

Vodička's statements leave no doubt that a semiotic approach to reception is different from its phenomenological counterpart, the postwar

Rezeptionsästhetik of the Constance School.[10] However, the main difference has not been properly recognized. For Vodička, reception is a phenomenon of literary history; it is the fate of literary works in the open post-production stage. Consequently, only *recorded* concretizations—diaries, memoirs, letters, critical reviews, analytical essays and studies, and the like—are objects of the study of reception. In the postproduction stage, the literary work meets the historical changes that characterize literary evolution. The study of reception is thus a study of the tests and confrontations to which the literary work is exposed, as long as it remains "a living part of literature."

I have repeatedly stated that the nucleus of literary study is the concept of literary communication. However, some post-war, third-generation representatives of the Prague School expanded the concept beyond the single act. The initiative here belongs to Jiří Levý and his theory of translation. He realized that the activity of translating creates "a complex literary communication chain in which the result of one message becomes the starting point of another message" (1963, 37). The author produces the original text, the translator acts as its receiver, but in turn he produces a text in a different (foreign) language and sends it to potential receivers—speakers of a language different from the work's original language. Inspired by Levý's ideas, a group of Slovak scholars (joined by Miroslav Procházka)[11] extended the study of communication chains to the study of other phenomena of this type—quoting and alluding, imitating, rewriting a literary text in a different literary text or in a different genre or medium, parodying, in short all phenomena studied today under the heading of intertextuality. Just as with reception theory, so also with the theory of intertextuality does the Prague School's ideas radiate into current, often passionate debates.[12]

NOTES

1. A structuralist grouping in Slovakia, the Bratislava Linguistic Circle, was formed in 1945 (see Ďurovič 1976).
2. Sériot (1999) offers a meticulously researched information about the scholarly background of the "Prague Russians" and about their contribution to the transformation of the organic into the structural model of language.
3. Ladislav Matejka succinctly expressed the historical significance of PLC phonology: "The complex concept of the phoneme, which had been proposed by Baudouin de Courtenay and Ferdinand de Saussure, appeared at the very center of the Prague school quest and was submitted to a close scrutiny, directly or indirectly laying the foundations for Roman Jakobson's distinctive feature theory" (1976a, xi).
4. For a detailed presentation of the PLC theory of functional languages see Doležel 1990, 149–55.
5. Jakobson's system of functional languages is one of the examples of his transfer of problems from the PLC period to the American (Harvard-MIT) period, the other one being his theory of distinctive features. In this contribution I focus my interest on Jakobson's linguistic work from the PLC period.

6. A curio: Vachek is the only linguist referred to in a footnote of Derrida's *On Grammatology*.
7. "Semantic gesture" can be designated as the first macrostructural concept of poetics. In this respect, the macrostructural concept of "fictional world" that was developed in the 1970s and 1980s was rightly perceived as a part of the Prague school inheritance (see Sládek and Fořt 2009).
8. In her summary of Jakobson's reconstruction of Pushkin's "sculptural myth" (Jakobson 1979b) Pomorska pointed to another mode of the work–life exchange: "According to the results of Jakobson's analysis, not only is the life situation active in the process of literary creation, but the product created is likewise active and often decisive in the poet's actual biography" (1977, 373).
9. The link to Ingarden reconfirms the international outlook of the PLC theoreticians. Let us note that in the 1930s, when Ingarden laid the foundations of phenomenology of literature, there also emerged in Poland a school of structuralism and semiotics that became very active and productive in the postwar years.
10. A claim, according to which Vodička's theory of reception was "established on the foundations of *Rezeptionsästhetik*" (Jauss 1970, 246) is contrary to historical facts. In spite of Vodička's explicit dissociations his borrowing of the term "concretization" led to a spontaneous linking of his theory of reception with *Rezeptionsästhetik* and resulted in a confusion that has not as of yet been generally refuted.
11. The group became known as the Nitra School.
12. It is not only in these two points that PLC theory relates to the postwar, poststructuralist developments. For a detailed discussion of this aspect of the Prague School inheritance, see Doležel 2000.

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4 From Circles to the School (and Back Again)

The Case of Polish Structuralism

Adam F. Kola and Danuta Ulicka

PRESUMPTIVE HISTORY

Ideally, it would be perhaps a particularly captivating starting point for this article to trace the pedigree of Polish modern literary scholarship back to Jan Baudouin de Courtenay and name him the founding father of several generations of scholars that followed. De Courtenay, the teacher of OPOYAZ members in St. Petersburg, had a greater impact on the Moscow Linguistic Circle than Ferdinand de Saussure. Roman Jakobson considered him the founder of the phonetic alternation theory (Glanc 2005, 30–31; Jakobson and Pomorska 1983, 21). To add even more luster to his academic position, one should mention that he established the Kazan School of linguistics and from 1918 lectured at Warsaw University. Had it all been that simple, he would rightly be called the pivot of Russian, Polish and Czech traditions of academic linguistics. All this, however, belongs to the realm of historical fiction, for we simply do not know, whether the students of Warsaw University, who later became the architects of modern Polish literary studies, had been apprenticed to Baudouin de Courtenay or not.

To make things even worse, this is just one of many gaps in our knowledge on the heroic era of "the struggle for a renewal of literary studies" (Kridl 1957). We have to admit that having undertaken a daring reconstruction of the earliest stages of just these "renewed literary studies," we have been more often forced to conjecture rather than comfortably discuss some well-established facts. The cruel twists of fate are to be blamed for all this: natural disasters and raging wars, scholars in exile or running to safety, archives and libraries (public and private) severely damaged or vanished altogether. Baudouin de Courtenay had to leave everything in the city when escaping from Petrograd (St. Petersburg) after the October Revolution. Another hideous and bitterly ironic twist of fate fell upon the whole release of the anthology of Russian Formalists edited by the Circle of Polish Studies Society at Warsaw University under the supervision of Roman Jakobson. It was supposed to come out in 1939, prefaced by Manfred Kridl, the "Vilnius formalist," and with an afterward by Dawid Hopensztand, the "Warsaw formalist," and it would have been the first anthology of this kind globally, twenty-five years prior to the book by Tzvetan Todorov, *Théorie de la*

littérature: textes des formalistes russes (1965)—had it not been reduced to ashes in September that year in the fire of the printing house in the war-stricken Warsaw.

The poor shape of this precious heritage, so severely devastated in the war and its immediate aftermath, was aggravated even further due to the negligence of their inheritors, not only in the physical sense, but also, very sadly, intellectual. Leaving grief aside, we need to concentrate on the precious little that has not perished in the turmoil. Thousands of ephemera of all sorts (correspondence, notes, diaries, photographs, etc.) that documented the context in which the modern literary studies began have been lost forever.[1]

It may seem paradoxical, but an immense wealth of information can be gleaned from obituaries and other commemorative articles, as well as memoirs more often than not written in old age (hardly credible due to author's frailty or opportunism). We should not be discouraged by the lack of solid archival material for this study, for the attempt at reconstructing the beginnings of the modern Polish literary studies is far from resurrecting the long forgotten ideas. On the contrary, the two interwar wonder decades of the first literary studies circles in Poland were crucial to the postwar Polish structuralism. Thus, the ideas that crystallized in the small groups of fellow students and were further developed in the 1960s had been sown thirty or even forty years previously, often by the same eminent scholars or by their direct successors. A great many of these still thrive, however, their form has been adapted to the requirements of postmodernity.

DYNAMISM OF MODERN POLISH LITERARY STUDIES: FROM CIRCLES TO THE SCHOOL

The beginnings of modern Polish literary studies can be safely dated back to 1912–1914. "Modern" in this context refers to all studies in this field that evinced a considerable degree of critical self-awareness and complex methodological reflection, which preceded all enquiry and was particularly focused on conceptualizing the subject and the method. Secondly, it refers to this sort of literary studies, which gave rise to new disciplines: theoretical poetics and literary theory. Thirdly, the self-awareness of all these "modern" disciplines resulted in their sovereignty and independence from the historicist, sociologist, and psychologizing attitudes that had been almost customary in literary studies of the time.

Having dealt with the definition of "modernity," we should focus on the directions taken by Polish literary scholars. From the very beginning, the modern study of literature went along the lines of formalism: the formalism based on philosophy and the formalism based on linguistics. These two approaches were not fiercely opposed, nor was there any intense competition between their representatives (apart from purely mundane reasons,

such as struggling for institutional predominance). At the end of the 1930s and after the war, both approaches often teamed up against common enemies: nationalism in the late 1930s and post-war official Marxism. Purely methodological issues were seldom controversial between the two, especially when compared to other issues over which they strongly dissented, such as their views on culture, the role of literature and literary studies, the social role of scholarship, and, finally, the institutional framework of scholarly work. As a result, one can say that the Polish formalism and its inheritor, the postwar Polish School of structuralism, greatly differ from their Central and Eastern European counterparts, especially with respect to their methodological tolerance, nondogmatism and even eclecticism, for example, absorbing personalism, phenomenology, and *Geisteswissenschaften*.

"The Old" and "The Young" ("Archaists and Innovators")

Taking an evolutionary view, it can be said with a reasonable degree of certainty that modern Polish literary studies began in 1912 with the work of Kazimierz Wóycicki (*Sound Form of Polish Prose and Polish Verse*). At the outset, these studies were characterized by a predominating formalist orientation (philosophy and aesthetics), which continued until 1931, when Roman Ingarden published his book entitled *Das literarische Kunstwerk*.

The methodological patterns in this period were mostly borrowed from German aesthetics and also from the "new philology" (developed by German and French scholars), which was focused mostly on stylistics. This approach was only slightly different from the existing positivist order and it soon lost its momentum: the initially bold and bright ideas rapidly withered and gradually turned to produce conservative, dry descriptions of literary history. It is little wonder, given that its representatives were employed at universities and other academic institutions, that by necessity it evolved into a number of traditional academic schools. The representatives of this approach were born mostly in the 1890s and educated mostly (and very tellingly) at German and Russian universities. Their literary set of mind was strongly determined by the literatures of Romanticism and Neo-romanticism (symbolic-Parnassian).

More generally, it can be stated that scholars who originated and developed this philosophical-aesthetic orientation represented traditional European academic humanism with its usual characteristics: sacralization of the so-called spiritual values, divinely guaranteed freedom of artistic expression, independence of art and studies on art subjects, which amounted to an outright refusal of all civic engagement of scholars. It may be easily deduced from how their crucial studies (books and articles) were entitled: Wacław Borowy, *Ignacy Chodźko: Artism and Mentality* (1914); Zygmunt Łempicki, *On the Matter of Immanent Poetics* (1920); Eugeniusz Kucharski, *For the Method of Aesthetic Literary Analysis* (1923); Ostap Ortwin, *About Lyric*

Poetry and Lyric Values (1924); and Juliusz Kleiner, *Studies on Literature and Philosophy* (1925).

This particular sort of humanism, cherished mostly by the intellectual elite of aristocratic provenance, was necessary and well timed especially in 1918 and soon thereafter, when Poland was in the process of regaining its independence after 123 years of partition. At that time, even the writers and scholars who had evinced their pro-civic agendas for years (e.g., Stefan Żeromski in his speech in 1915: *Literature and Polish life*) advocated the "pulling down of the banner of literature that was fluttering over the stronghold of the state" (Shklovsky 1990, 79). In the early 1930s, this aristocratic haughtiness began to be seen as increasingly anachronistic and ineffective in the face of the economic slowdown and the growing nationalist and fascist attitudes. It seems that the literary scholars, locked in their ivory towers, were slow to understand the changing circumstances and failed to address these issues with relevant theories.

However, the other group—the linguistically oriented literary scholars—were notably more interested and did voice their response to these profound changes. Even though they also advocated the autonomy of literary studies, they clearly shared a different understanding of this autonomy. These scholars represented the younger generation and their work was determined not by schools but rather by informal circles.

The "Linguistic Turn"

It is hard to determine precisely when the generation of "linguists" entered the stage. That said, we need to specify the *terminus a quo*, which is 1931—when Roman Ingarden published his dissertation that closed the preceding period and the next period began with a publication of *A Theory of Poetics* by Konstanty Troczyński, known as the formalist from Poznań University. *Terminus ad quem* is perfectly obvious: September 1939, when, as it has been said already, the anthology of Russian Formalists went up in smoke. It was a significant and fateful event: one of the most important books of modern Polish literary studies, linguistically oriented, collecting the results of earlier works, and prepared in cooperation with the Prague Linguistic Circle—it perished altogether.

Linguistic orientation is characterized by considerable radicalism, both scientific and social-political. Its creators belong to the generation of the 1910s—students or just graduated, educated at Polish universities, new or revived establishments after the independence was restored in 1918. This generation entered intellectual maturity in the early 1930s, at a time of strong political tensions: in Poland, there was little concern to keep up appearances of democracy, especially after the *coup d'état* in 1926 and to a still greater degree with the April Constitution in 1935, when the illusion of liberal parliamentary state vanished completely. The political tensions were exacerbated by economic crisis, which particularly affected young

scholars: only few were fortunate enough to hold permanent posts in the academia and the rest had to content themselves with poorly paid jobs in administration. They frequently represented strong left-wing views, some of them held radical communist opinions. It is understandable, given that they came from other social groups than the older generation and were often of Jewish descent.

What is significant, this generation was brought up and educated on different literary-artistic patterns than the older one: no longer romantic-symbolic, but rather rationalist and anchored in the Enlightenment. Methodological options also changed: the German *Geisteswissenschaften* and dated phenomenology were replaced with the neo-positivism of the Vienna Circle—well established in Poland owing to the contribution of Lvov–Warsaw School of Kazimierz Twardowski, whose followers moved to the universities of Warsaw (Kazimierz Ajdukiewicz, Tadeusz Kotarbiński, Stanisław Leśniewski, Jan Łukasiewicz, Alfred Tarski, and others) and Vilnius (Tadeusz Czeżowski). Their lectures were attentively listened to by "the young" and it can be said that "the linguistic turn" of that generation had a thorough logical-philosophical grounding, which can be discerned in Polish formalism of later generations.[2]

The activities of "the young" were aided by the academic institutions that were mostly in the making (Warsaw University resumed its functions in 1915, Vilnius in 1919 and, in the same year, Poznań University was founded). The originators of the linguistic approach went against the grain of the well-established institutions and preferred to work in student societies. Small wonder then, that the Warsaw, Vilnius, and Poznań circles were detached from the traditional scientific schools. A cursory look at the map will suffice to see that in the 1930s the "schools" were associated with old universities, in Kraków and Lvov (present day Lviv), with their ageing staff members, rigid hierarchies and work patterns, great scholars, and towering academic figures with their circles of devoted disciples. At "younger" universities, informal groups of friends created student societies based on personal connections common artistic taste and shared values. These study circles were only loosely associated with the universities and emphasized their independence from and their objections against the petrified anachronic structures, habits, and methods of scholarship.

There may have been dozens of such circles, some of them only ephemeral, with a minimal printed record of their existence. They referred to a long tradition in Poland, related not only, as in other European countries, to the idea of self-education, inspired by the famous book of Samuel Smiles (*Self-help*, 1859; Polish translation in 1863). The Polish mistrust toward educational institutions was caused by the fact that official education had been poignantly "foreign," that is, organized and managed by the partitioning powers: Russia, Austria, and Prussia. Counter-official education is generally deeply rooted in Polish tradition, well known and developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (partitions, World War II, communism).

The idea of the "Flying University," which functioned in Warsaw from the mid-1880s as a conglomerate of informal and semiprivate courses, was institutionalized in 1905 as a nonprofit organization that took the name of the Society of Scientific Courses. Such was the framework in which the inspiring protectors of the young Polish formalists gave their lectures, among them Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, Kazimierz Wóycicki, and Manfred Kridl. This quasi-official structure was a good starting point for the institutional and methodological independence of modern Polish literary studies.

The three Polish student societies that played the most significant role in the linguistically-oriented modern literary studies were the ones in Warsaw, Vilnius, and Poznań. The Warsaw Circle, with its clear methodological self-awareness, the subjects taken up and the contact with Russian and Czech scholars, was by far the most important. The Poznań Circle, rather unimpressive in terms of academic merit (apart from their translation of works by Boris Tomashevsky 1935), was characterized by exceptional civic activities, which helped create the local intellectual and artistic elites. Seen on this background, the Vilnius Circle held a separate position. It came into being soon after Manfred Kridl[3], who lectured previously in Warsaw (in the 1920s), received a professorship in Vilnius. The Vilnius circle followed the Warsaw way of academic thinking and applied a "formal method" in their analytical practice. In contrast to the other circles, it developed robust institutional structures for their activities despite (or owing to) the fact that it was the only circle the leader of which belonged to the older generation than its young adherents (Kridl was fifty years old when he took the chair in 1932). Kridl played a crucial role in securing institutional support, gathering, and integrating the community of Polish literary studies, as well as fostering the young talented scholars. Also Vilnius University, reinstated in 1919, together with other thriving intellectual and artistic circles in the town, provided a particularly conducive environment for creating a wide group of young people, students, and teaching assistants, who were involved in the development of Polish modern literary studies. In the long run, many adherents of this circle made significant contributions in the field after 1945, including Maria Rzeuska, Czesław Zgorzelski, Rachela Gurewicz Kapłanowa (after World War II known as Maria Renata Mayenowa[4]), Eugenia Krassowska, Jerzy Putrament, Irena Sławińska, Dina Abramowiczówna, and Janina Zienowiczówna. This group can be perceived as a kind of laboratory of theoretical humanistic ideas. Kridl wrote in the Introduction to his main theoretical book, *Introduction to the Study of the Literary Work*:

> Many questions discussed in the following were the subject of papers, studies and discussions of the seminars on Polish literature at Stefan Batory University [in Vilnius]. It was our common effort to learn what had been made in the field and form our own opinion. Similarly, the arguments that follow should be also regarded, to a large extent, as the results of our collaboration. (1936, 11; KM, F-115, 496, k. 1–3; 465–66)

The activities of Vilnius circle come to an abrupt end in 1939 and, as it can be easily calculated, its golden age lasted for merely seven years. The turmoils of war dispersed the group, and gruesome wartime experiences had an immense impact on the later years of its members. A number of them were imprisoned (Rzeuska), some went into hiding (e.g., Abramowiczówna, Gurewicz Kapłanowa), or fled like Kridl himself, who left for the USA in 1940 (likewise Jakobson or Victor Erlich). After the war, some Vilnius scholars gave up literary studies and entered politics, e.g., Krassowska—long-term vice-minister of education, or Putrament, who apart from being a writer, also served in communist diplomacy as a diehard apparatchik (perpetuated in *The Captive Mind* [1953] by Czesław Miłosz as Gamma). However, when compared with the fate of Warsaw literary scholars, those from Vilnius at least survived.

The origins of the Warsaw Circle, in its turn, are hard to determine (see Adamiak and Ulicka 2008). There is only scanty evidence that it might have been formed as early as 1916 or 1917. The list of members is not known exactly, either. The Circle did not have a status of official organization, did not collect fees or handed certificates. It consisted, among the others, of Ludwik Fryde, Zdzisław Libin (Libera), Janina Kulczycka-Saloni, Jan Kott, and Józef Kuroczycki. The member list changed with years, but the leading group included Stefan Żółkiewski, Franciszek Siedlecki, Kazimierz Budzyk, and Dawid Hopensztand. It was extremely short-lived: only three years between 1936 and 1939. The group worked under the leadership of Żółkiewski, and the literature sociology section was led by Hopensztand. In 1937 the circle formed a debating club (with Karol Wiktor Zawodziński, a friend of Viktor Zhirmunsky, as its leader), there was also a section of literary critics under Fryde and a theatrical group with Kuroczycki. These were the years of significant academic achievement—some authentically pioneering works were published, unprecedented in the inherited tradition of this circle that paved the way for new disciplines: theoretical poetics, versification, and stylistics.

Żółkiewski, who oversaw the work of the whole group, was tireless in criticizing the German predilection for *Der Geist*, phenomenology and hermeneutics. His speeches on their meetings held regularly on Sundays were often ironically termed as "the gospel of the day," for all his tremendous influence on the colleagues imposed a firm neo-positivist methodology on the work of the whole circle (Jakobson 1968, 668).[5]

Siedlecki based his systemic approach to Polish poetry on this methodology, seasoned with de Saussure's approach. His contribution was even more remarkable, given that there was no previous tradition of similar studies in Poland. This two-volume work served as the foundation for the post-war Polish structuralist prosody, continued after the war by Maria Dłuska and Lucylla Pszczołowska. It is worth noting that, unlike Russian Formalists and Czech structuralists, Siedlecki worked on classic syllabic and accentual-syllabic verse rather than modern literary material of futurist and surrealist provenance (the poetics of Polish avant-garde poets was described only after the war, by Warsaw structuralists).

While Siedlecki concentrated on systemic recognition, building the *langue* of the Polish verse, Budzyk emphasized the *parole*. He was interested in the *langue-parole* dynamics and the transfer of individual artistic language accomplishments into systemic phenomena. This inspired him to formulate a project of historical poetics, based on his studies on linguistic stylistics, very close to Tynyanov's and Jakobson's (and Prague) dialectics of synchrony/diachrony. Today, however, other achievements of Budzyk are regarded as particularly inspiring: namely his work in the field of textual criticism and pragmalinguistics. In textual criticism, his contribution was immense in the field of editing Polish literary and law works from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with a particular emphasis on the material aspects of texts (fonts, writing materials, page layout). These studies by him, at the time, were absolutely innovative.

Valentin Voloshinov, whose influence was only tangentially discernible in Budzyk's work, clearly inspired the research of Hopensztand. Hopensztand was killed in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in April or May 1943, and his preserved output is limited to just two theoretical papers—both of them, however, were undoubtedly innovative. The subject of the first one was the free indirect speech analyzed with a fresh sociological approach, markedly different from the customary French and German view on this matter, and referred to the type of speech of World War I soldiers. The other dealt with the dialogues in the eighteenth-century satire and the transitions from monologue to dialogues that reflected the intellectual history of Polish Enlightenment. Hopensztand's contribution was foundational for the development of sociological poetics or, more precisely, the sociology of literary forms.

"It was the crop of the fall of the 1930s. The war came," summarized Żółkiewski. Unlike myriads of artistic or academic groups, which lose their momentum and eventually disappear, the life of this circle ended abruptly with a deadly blow. The declarations "to be continued," often found in the archival material of the Warsaw Circle, were never to be fulfilled.

Poetics and Politics

The collaboration between the Warsaw and Vilnius circles, apart from the development of modern Polish literary studies, resulted in a number of new institutional forms of non-academic scientific work which included:

1 A series with foundational texts in translation—*The Archive of Translations from Literary Theory and the Methodology of Literary Studies*. It began in 1934 with *Introduction to Poetics* by Viktor Zhirmunsky. In 1937, another collection followed (*On the Issues of Stylistics*) with papers by Vinogradov, Leo Spitzer and Karl Vossler, and, still in the same year, *The Morphology of the Novel* by Dibelius. Translations of texts by Lukacs and Walzel, as well as an anthology *The Morphology of the Novella* were announced as forthcoming, but never materialized,

which was similar to the fate of the anthology *Russian Formalist School (1914–1934)* that perished in the flames during the war. There is evidence that the contents of this anthology were discussed with Jakobson, who even promised to write a text to serve as its epilogue.

2 The meticulously edited series: *On the Issues of Poetics*. Three important studies were published in 1936 (*Introduction to the Study of the Literary Work* by Kridl, *Structure of Prus's Short Stories* by Jerzy Putrament and *Outline of Polish Versification* by Zawodziński) and two volumes by Siedlecki, *Studies in Polish Metrics,* in the following year. There were also other publications in preparation (especially *Outline of Poetics* by Kridl and a dictionary of theory of literary terms) which, very sadly, did not appear due to the outbreak of the war. This work was resumed soon after the war ended (Głowiński, Kostkiewiczowa, Okopień-Sławińska, and Sławiński 1976; Głowiński, Okopień-Sławińska, and Sławiński 1962; Mayenowa 1949, 1974).

3 Some important collective projects were also initiated, at times with close cooperation with Russian and Czech colleagues, for instance the book in honour of Kazimierz Wóycicki, edited in 1937, which contained articles by Trubetskoy, Hrabák and, Jakobson (Mukařovský was also invited). It demonstrates the vivid contacts between the Prague Circle and the young Warsaw scholars. Czech scholars held their work in high esteem and perceived them as their great allies in the attempt at transforming literary studies into a modern and autonomous academic discipline.

4 There was also a marked emphasis on fostering the young academics, which can be seen in several examples of collective research work, such as the lectures in Vilnius (the "literary Wednesdays") and in Warsaw (at the debating club, working from 1937 at the Warsaw Circle; Żółkiewski 1989, 22, 26), and also the student conferences, which later evolved into strictly academic events under the aegis of the Institute of Literary Studies.

5 There was also some informal but fruitful cooperation with literary critical journals, as well as outreach campaigns. The members of the circle were greatly innovative in using the new media to disseminate the results of their work, particularly on the radio, but also (even though more rarely) by means of artistic-literary cabaret.

6 The open lectures and meetings open to the public played a significant social and ideological role. The group of experimental theatre "Reduta" organized regular "Sunday mornings," to present analyses of theatre and drama writing in the light of the latest theories (it was also a forum to present new poetry). Similar social function was also attributed to the lectures on the sociology of literature—these meetings would often take vivid ideological turns.

This kind of activity, as a rule, was not taken up by the "old" literary scholars from the previous generation, who disparaged such actions as unfitting

to their professorial dignity. The "young," on the contrary, would choose carefully where to discuss their favorite issues (particularly by means of leftist circles) and would manifest their ideological views quite openly. The members of the circle held fast to their definition of humanism that was truly radical or revolutionary, with a pronounced emphasis on the left-democratic social convictions, emancipation and a missionary understanding of the role of scholarship in social life.

The members of the Vilnius Circle shared similar views and their activities also had to do with the lively movements of young socially engaged literature. The literature in question was written mainly in Polish (the Żagary group and their most famous member Czesław Miłosz), but also in the languages of ethnic minorities: Yiddish, Lithuanian and Belarusian, which is significant in the multicultural Vilnius of the time. The members shared leftist, at times even communist attitudes and apart their slogans of tolerance and equality they often voiced their bold opinions on the national democrats, anti-Semitism, and the national-Catholic options. What is fairly common for those young people coming from ethnic minorities, is that they often chose Polish language and literature as the subjects of their university education (a nightmare for the nationalists). It should be noted that Polish authorities in the 1930s began to limit the number of students of Jewish descent (in the course of time they were completely banned from participation in academic circles), no matter if they were assimilated or not. However, the Warsaw Circle and the Vilnius Seminar remained open to Jews. At Warsaw University, the Circle was the only student society that welcomed Jewish members. Kridl initiated the countrywide protest against these new regulations, but this initiative met with little response from Polish university professors (KM, F-115, 441–450, 530a, 531a, 532a, 533a, 558, k. 47, 50–51). All this attracted to both study circles a number of "progressive" young people with leftist orientation, who were to play the key roles in Polish intellectual life after 1945.

A personalized look at Polish modern literary studies perhaps tells more than an institutionalized one (Ulicka 2007, 2013). The dynamics of its development demonstrates a particular regularity—the transfer from informal and anti-official circles to institutionalized schools with close links to academic institutions. However, personal contacts and the community of shared ideas (but not methodologies, which has to be emphasized) were more important for their development than the institutional backing. These contacts not only kept the Warsaw circle together as a group of scholars, but also helped its members to survive the hard times possibly unscathed (e.g., Budzyk and Hopensztand were employed in the National Library, the latter who was paid rather poorly, moved to Vilnius to work for YIVO—the Yiddish Scientific Institute, in which he used the support offered by Kridl. In Warsaw under German occupation, Hopensztand initially found shelter in Żółkiewski's apartment and later his friends from the Warsaw Circle tried to ransom him from the Warsaw Ghetto with the money obtained by selling illegally produced alcohol).

The "young" modern humanists were almost typical in their distinguishing between their private liking and public engagement from strictly academic work. In the latter, they evinced the highest level of academic professionalism and held autonomous cognitive values. The problem is that the 1930s were markedly different from the previous decade in terms of the concern for intellectual autonomy. In the 1920s, it meant fighting against the usurpations of sociological-psychological positivism, whereas in the 1930s, particularly right before the war, it was a defensive strategy that protected the scholarship from interventions of the state and its official ideology (a similar situation could be observed after World War II, but the official state ideology has changed—from nationalistic to Marxist). This isolation was definitely enhanced by the time and place of the meetings: the circle would meet on Sundays in the Potocki Palace, near the Visitationist Church, which gave it a markedly religious touch.

THE "SECOND WAVE" OF MODERN POLISH LITERARY STUDIES—STRUCTURALISM

The postwar Polish literary studies of the "second wave" inherited from the earlier generations not only the methodologies and projects, but also the intellectual and ethical standing. In this way, the widely renowned and recognized Polish School of structuralism was undoubtedly the direct inheritor of the formalistically oriented student circles of the interwar period. A quick look on the map: before 1939, the formalism was formed by the activities of the "young" from Warsaw, Vilnius, and Poznań. Postwar structuralism thrived in Warsaw and Poznań (Vilnius already belonged to the Soviet Union, while the Vilnius "formalists" moved to Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and the Catholic University of Lublin. They did not keep up the formalistic tradition, nor did Kridl, who immigrated to the United States (even though he promoted it there to some extent). Mayenowa is an exception, because she moved to Warsaw and revived the tradition broken off by the war. The year 1946 saw the publication of a collective volume prepared by Budzyk and entitled *Theoretical Stylistics in Poland*, which today can be seen as a symbolic connection between the two periods divided by the war. It was published within the Vilnius series *On the Issues of Poetics*, but it did not bear the series number. However, they successfully managed to place on the last page a list of interwar volumes published in the series with the prewar numbering, but—what is significant—without the places and the dates of their publication. The editors managed to keep up appearances and satisfy the communist authorities by stating that the series was discontinued, even though for the literary studies circles it was obvious that in fact the series was preserved. What is even more significant, Budzyk made direct remarks in the Introduction, that the prewar series had a distinct "revolutionary" character. He wrote also that apart

from the great war losses in Polish literary scholarship, the presence of Kridl was sorely missed, for "[he] would now—as it used to be—hold the steering wheel with his experienced hand and against all these losses and unfavorable conditions he would bring enthusiasm and rekindle the traditions that are still alive" (Budzyk 1946, 5). This brief, but poignantly personal introduction had a form of a letter addressed to Kridl, encouraging him to return. It was not the only cry for the return of Kridl, there were also others, expressed usually in private or official correspondence, but the history of literary studies went on.

There were no further publications in this stealthily reborn series. Other books of Kridl's students, that belonged to the prewar current (e.g., doctoral theses of Zgorzelski and Sławińska, both completed after the war) were published independently. Nevertheless, if we consider all this according to the people engaged in the process, not the institutions, it can be stated that: the Polish structuralist school was founded after the war by these interwar scholars from the circle of the 1930s who survived the war and remained in Poland: Mayenowa, Żółkiewski, and Budzyk (Hopensztad, Siedlecki, Troczyński, and Fryde died). They were the teachers of the great Polish structuralists (familiarly known as the "Warsaw triplets"): Michał Głowiński, Janusz Sławiński and Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska. They also resumed the cooperation with Czech, Russian and Estonian structuralists and semiotics specialists, but also with scholars from the West, who—owing to the immigrants Jakobson, Kridl, and the like—*de facto* introduced structuralism after the war. This transnational collaboration, despite the Cold War divide, brought surprisingly good results. It still existed with a varied intensity in the following decades and in many countries, against the popular image of two independently developing scientific camps, against Great History. It should be mentioned that, in the postwar period, Kridl and other emigrant intellectualists helped substantially the scholars who stayed in their countries. That help, the scale of which was unprecedented and still awaits further studies (Kola 2010), was carried beside official aid programs and contributed to the development of the revived or newly established universities (e.g., Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń).

Here is how Żółkiewski, still in the late 1940s, diagnosed the situation in a private letter, with his characteristic acumen and irony:

> The condition of literary theory in our country is dramatic. There are no people. Polish philology is ruled by Szweykowski, Kubacki, Krzyżanowski. Auntie Skwarczyńska (with her religious obsession) and partly Saloni (who is just crazy) are the pioneers of modernity. Siedlecki, Hopensztand, Troczyński, [indecipherable] are dead. Rzeuska is still in Vilnius, acting as a Polish representative. There are luckily some who remained: Budzyk, Rzeuska, Dłuska. Your immediate return is a burning social necessity. Only your return, establishing an Institute of Literature and gathering people around you can save us (MKP, Box 5, a letter of Żółkiewski to Kridl from May 14, 1946).

That situation changed in the early 1950s together with intense ideological pressure exerted by the communist government on the academia. The cross-national exchange, however, did not stop altogether. The structuralists at that time could not count on such support in the dissemination of their studies in the West as it was the case of the Marxists. Nevertheless, the intellectual exchange in the following decades was continued, in spite of the Iron Curtain.

SURVIVAL AFTER THE WAR—BETWEEN STRUCTURALISM AND MARXISM

Postwar ideological choices of scholars are hardly surprising. Emancipation, anti-nationalist attitudes, radically left-wing opinions of young apprentices of literary studies not only survived the war, but also intensified in the postwar literary studies. Several members of the prewar study circles (Żółkiewski, Kott, Putrament, and Krassowska) became involved in and rose to high positions in the communist ministry of education and culture. It was not a manifestation of mere opportunism: lost in their historical thinking, they saw in communism a fairly straightforward continuation of their prewar left-wing orientation, which they endorsed as columnists (Hopensztand) and as literary critics and translators (Siedlecki). No matter how we judge their utopian beliefs today, it is significant that in spite of often radically opposite political views, the personal bonds and friendship survived the years. Mayenowa was able to continue her research, which required long-term financial support, owing to Żółkiewski, who headed the Culture Department at the Central Committee of Polish communist party (her Vilnius friend, "Hyena" Krassowska, was also a high ranking party activist). Żółkiewski, after the anti-Jewish campaign in March 1968 resigned his post pointedly and became, apart from Mayenowa, one of the most important Polish propagators of Russian structuralism and semiotics. He was a crucial person behind the International Semiotics Conference in Warsaw (August 1968) which was to host papers by Umberto Eco, Émile Benveniste, and Julia Kristeva (RJP, Box 4, folder 52, Poland 1951–1980; see: Box 46, Folder 7 Semiotics, Correspondence 1961–1973 M-Z).

The 1940s and the 1950s saw some serious changes in academic structures, leading to dissolution of several faculties (especially philosophy), expulsion of "disloyal" scholars or limiting their research work, in particular their contact with students. It was at this time that the Institute of Literary Research was created.

The project of creating an independent modern research unit that would serve as a formal and organizational agenda of contemporary literary studies and providing the necessary autonomy from the petrified university structures was first formulated before the war. Such institutionalization was aimed to transform all unofficial circles into an official structure—a school—but still independent from the universities. Its autonomy was not limited to substantial questions, but also consisted of the organizational matters, staff management and editorial policies. Projects of incorporating *Towarzystwo*

Polonistów R.P. [The Society of Polish Studies] to this end, which was partly successful, began even before the war, but eventually it was decided that the Institute should be founded as a brand-new establishment. This plan was introduced by Żółkiewski, who in 1948, in cooperation with Budzyk and Mayenowa, set up the Institute of Literary Research. Ironically, the later seat of the Polish structuralist school in the first decade of its existence was officially treated as the workshop of Polish Marxism, which only unofficially served as a "shelter" for all friends who opposed the official Marxist ideology that ruled in the academia. Hence, the bonds of friendship, which we mentioned above, loyalty to other members of the same generation and the community of ideas enabled all these people to survive the hardest times of the late 1940s and 1950s. The research work was continued and the evasive actions put to practice—thematic, ideological, institutional—all these could serve as a fabric for heroic tales of antisystemic resistance. The experiences of opposition in the 1930s and the involvement in the underground during World War II turned out to be extremely useful. The further development of the Institute of Literary Research demonstrated clearly that the ideas of formal circles and structural school did not disappear completely and it contributed to the achievements of Polish structuralism of the "second wave."

1956, REBIRTH PERIOD: STRUCTURALISM OF THE "SECOND WAVE"—TOWARD A SCHOOL

The beginnings of the "second wave" structuralism can be dated back to the turn of the 1950s and have a few characteristic features. First—the Congress of Polish Studies in 1958, very important in the development of the postwar literary studies, which clearly defined the tendency to liberate the academic discourse from the predominantly official "aberrant Stalin Marxism" (Głowiński 2010, 235). The changes of 1958 derive from the political changes in 1956 in the USSR, as well as in other countries of the Soviet Bloc. Poland after 1956 benefited from a true political thaw, which after 1968 broadened the sphere of what was permitted by the authorities, even though to a limited extent.

Secondly—in 1955 Kazimierz Budzyk created the Chair of Literary Theory at Warsaw University and also initiated the publication, at the turn of the 1950s, of several works in the field of literary studies, which were absolutely crucial for the Polish structuralism. What is important—they followed the ideas of the "first wave" which were formulated before the war and left incomplete. These publications included, first of all, a textbook—*Outline of Theory of Literature* (1962) by Głowiński, Okopień-Sławińska and Sławiński. This publication was preceded in 1957 by the scripts for teachers entitled *Theory of Literature Report*, which also continued the "organic work" in didactics, initiated by the scientific circles before the war. These books went in the wake of *Descriptive Poetics* by Mayenowa (1949), which we mentioned above—it was designed as a remedy for the lack of textbooks

that resulted from the war and was published in an enlarged and reworked version as *Theoretical Poetics* in 1974.

The other publications, important also for the humanities in a global scale, include the results of the visits of Roman Jakobson, who came to Poland in regular intervals for a decade from the late 1950s onward (RJP, Box 4, folder 52, Poland 1951–1980; Box 44, Folder 15 Correspondence Mayenowa, Maria Renata; Box 46, Folder 7 Semiotics, Correspondence 1961–1973 M-Z; Box 47, folder 35, Correspondence Żółkiewski Stefan). The results of these international meetings, conferences and workshops took the form of two volumes of *Poetics/Poetyka,* edited by Polish Scientific Publishers PWN and Mouton (vol. 1 in 1961, vol. 2 in 1966), in cooperation with Roman Jakobson. The political thaw reflected in the intellectual life could also be seen in translations; there were intensive efforts to make up for the time of war and postwar negligence. Thanks to the volumes edited by Mayenowa, the publications in *Pamiętnik Literacki* and the multiple volume anthology edited by Henryk Markiewicz (*Modern Theory of Literary Studies Abroad*), the Polish literary scholars had an opportunity to learn from the most important theoretical trends in the world literary studies, from which they were cut off by the Iron Curtain.

That was also the period of bustling conference life, which gathered not only the scholars from Warsaw and Kraków, but also those from other universities. The most significant role for the integration of Polish scholars was that of the annual meetings entitled the Literary Theory Conferences of Polish Scholars, which have been held ever since. The editorial series documenting these events, "History of Artistic Forms in Polish Literature," started in 1963 and has produced about a hundred volumes to date.

Another initiative, born in a different social context of the 1970s—was *Słownik terminów literackich* [Dictionary of Literary Terms] edited by Głowiński, Kostkiewiczowa, Okopień-Sławińska and Sławiński. It was printed for the first time in 1976 and had many later updated editions: it was the greatest achievement of Polish structuralism of the "second wave" and has been the basic Polish literary studies lexicon ever since, an unprecedented initiative in a global scale.

All these undertakings and publications contributed to the dominating position of structuralist paradigm in the Polish literary science and it greatly influenced the popular thinking about literature through the work of Polish literature and language teachers. The "second wave" of Polish structuralism achieved what the first, the formalists, only dreamed about.

1968: FROM A SCHOOL TO A CIRCLE, OR THERE AND BACK AGAIN

1968 marks another caesura in the history of scholarship and its social role in Poland. Of course, the revolutionary year 1968 itself was connected with other political, social and cultural changes that were taking place elsewhere,

which in Poland had a distinct intellectual tinge and were concentrated mainly in university life. The sequence of related events in Poland had a different trajectory than in the West. The key period was March 1968, which exposed the political crisis in the communist state. The ensuing student riots were in fact the first manifestation of the intellectual democratic opposition. Their direct cause was the ban imposed by the censorship on the performance *Dziady*—based on the canonical Polish Romantic masterpiece by Adam Mickiewicz—directed by Kazimierz Dejmek at the National Theatre in Warsaw (the performance was regarded by the government authorities as aimed against the Russians, i.e., the Soviet comrades). The movement of protest was led by, among others, history students at Warsaw University: Karol Modzelewski, Adam Michnik, and Henryk Szlajfer, who in the next decades played eminent roles in the opposition. The political upheaval greatly influenced the literary studies in Poland, particularly the structuralist school, which was regarded as ideologically foreign and antagonistic toward official Marxism. It was hardly tolerated in academic institutions that had been established for research, but it was ruthlessly eradicated from universities, where both distinguished researchers and doctoral students were expelled on the suspicion of structuralism (i.e., anticommunism). This group included Budzyk's students and colleagues in the Institute of Literary Theory at Warsaw University, who were fortunate to find refuge in the Department of Historical Poetics of the Institute of Literary Research.

This particular standing of the structuralist school, officially anti-official, may have strengthened its impact. Its exceptionally rapid development during the two decades, between 1956–1968, "between the October events and the March disaster" (Głowiński 2010, 248), strengthened the structuralist paradigm. In the aftermath of March 1968, the favorable period for Polish culture ended, but it was a markedly different end from that of 1939. World War II dramatically stopped the development of formalism, just before its fulfillment, while the structuralism of the "second wave," even though politically condemned, was gathering its momentum and developed in its own way. While the "first wave" of interwar formalism was limited to scientific circles, the period of the "second wave" can be called an academic school with no limitations, for the paradigm worked out within it was shared by the community of literary researchers and supported by official academic institutions: in the first place, by The Institute of Literary Research of Polish Academy of Sciences, but also by conferences, editorial series, textbooks, and dictionaries.

The changes in the wake of 1968 placed the Polish structuralism on a new track—the voices of authors got increasingly individual, which deepened in the 1970s and 1980s. A new communicative variation of Polish structuralism came up, which joined the inspirations of Jakobson with Ingarden's phenomenology and Bakhtinian dialogism. The studies on address and addressee also developed, as well as the sociology of literature and pragmalinguistics, or in a wider sense—the theory of literary communication developed by mentioned Sławiński, Głowiński, Okopień-Sławińska, but

also by Edward Balcerzan, Kazimierz Bartoszyński, or Janusz Lalewicz. This variation was parallel to (but independent from) the emerging poststructuralist paradigm in the global literary discourse. This independence is evident in how the views of Polish scholars differ from those of their French or American colleagues. They all have a common ground, however, which is history, the role of the context, accentuation of the *parole* and Bakhtin's text theory and Ingarden's inspirations (and here is why Sławiński, the leading representative of the "second wave" structuralism in Poland, can be regarded as the first postmodernist; Bolecki 1999).

There was yet another change that took place after 1968. In the mid-1970s, the intellectual, artistic and political opposition against the official Marxist ideology gained momentum. A strong movement for independent culture emerged with its own publications, radio stations, printing houses etc., which was closely connected with emigration circles—its activities for obvious reasons did not suit the institutional structures. This situation forced the return to that peculiar form of anti-institutional academic institution, like the interwar study circles. This tradition survived in the dissident home seminars, the so-called "Society of Science Courses," open lectures held in churches, for instance in the same Visitationist church, nearby Warsaw University, where in the neighboring building the young members of the Circle of Polish Studies would meet for their Sunday workshops in the 1930s. Within the opposition movements against the communist state, the private sphere took up activities for the common good. This tradition, which relived the forms of resistance known from the nineteenth century, the partition period, and the times of the German occupation during World War II, turned out to be very useful in the struggle against communism. It was not the tradition of rebellion and outright defiance, not revolutionary actions, but the ability to organize the self-support structures independent from the state—this is what counted especially in the sphere of intellectual freedom and education.

CONCLUSION

The history of twentieth-century Polish modern literary studies went from informal circles to a research school, only to fall apart into circles again. The 1980s were the years of waiting, the years of standing still. They announced openness, a paradigmatic polyphony, which will bring the fall of communism in 1989. Making up for the time lost in the 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century is symptomatic for a transformation period not only in terms of politics and economy, but also in intellectual spheres. The thirst for the "novelties" from the West and a provincial complex toward the global scholarship relegated the memory of our own achievements to the storerooms of our intellectual history. The heroic and tragic history of the twentieth century is still to be rediscovered, but it also remains a "presumptive history" to some extent.

NOTES

1. Significant exception confirming this rule are materials of Manfred Kridl, which are located in two archives: the first one which contains materials until 1939 is located in Vilnius (Lithuania), in Lietuvos mokslų akademijos Vrublevskių biblioteka; the second one, after 1940, is located in New York City, in the Bakhmeteff Archive, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University Libraries, Manfred Kridl Papers. This cultural–historical geography, yet, and localization of both archives reflects the influence of the Great History on the modern Polish literary studies on the one hand, and troubles with reconstruction of its history, on the other.
2. After World War II, this logical-mathematical orientation is continued particularly by Maria Renata Mayenowa (see note 4).
3. The academic career of Manfred Kridl in Poland divides into two stages. During the first period, until 1932, interrupted by World War I, Kridl was working in high schools and part-time at the universities in Warsaw and Brussels. Initially, he was involved in traditional literary studies, editing works of Polish Romantic poets and writing textbooks on the history of Polish literature. The second period, between 1932 and 1940, started with taking the Chair of Polish Literary Theory at the University in Vilnius, and is crucial for the presented story. At the time, Kridl succeeded in assembling and supporting a group of young talented people form Vilnius, Warsaw, and Poznań, who introduced a modern approach to literature. It was a fundamental *novum*, change in the Polish academic milieu, while Kridl became a coryphaeus of a new methodological revolution and theoretical turn. He focused on the development of the "integral method" (his own term for the Polish school formalist/structuralist approach), presented in his *Introduction to the Study of the Literary Work* (in Polish, 1936). In 1940 he immigrated through Belgium, France, and Portugal to the United States. His stay in America could also be divided into two periods. During the first one, from 1940 to 1948, Kridl was working at elite Smith College for women in Northampton. Intellectually, it was a time of stagnation. Kridl was teaching Russian language, conducting popularizing lectures and writing articles about Polish literature, culture, and current political situation. In the next period of American emigration, he accepted the Adam Mickiewicz Professorship of Polish Studies at Columbia University, and stayed at this post until his death in 1957. His main work of the time was *A Survey of Polish Literature and Culture* (1956).
4. Maria Renata Mayenowa was Kridl's student and a member of the Vilnius circle in the interwar period. After the World War II, she became a cofounder, researcher, and professor of the Institute of Literary Research. She was a leading figure in postwar Polish structuralism and semiotics and a proponent of the logical-mathematical trend within structuralism. In the 1960s, she set about to create mathematical poetics. She was an initiator and editor of the collective volume *Poetics and Mathematics* (1965). Mayenowa sought to combine inspirations of Twardowski's Lvov–Warsaw school with attempts at clarification stylistics undertaken by Wóycicki (1912; 1938) in interwar poetics. Together with Żókiewski, her role was crucial in establishing the international semiotic movement. Yuri Lotman proposed her candidacy for the post of editor-in-chief of the journal *Semiotica*. Lotman believed that—due to her friendship with

scholars from all over the world—Mayenowa could bind Eastern (especially the Tartu–Moscow School) and Western scholars. She also edited translated works of Russian Formalists (1970) and Czech structuralists (1966), the monumental *Dictionary of 16th Century Polish Language* (this work is continued after Mayenowa's death by younger scholars) and authored numerous books, including *Descriptive Poetics* (1949) and *Theoretical Poetics* (1974).

5. Siedlecki formed this sharp remark in his letter to Jakobson written from wartime Warsaw on June 3, 1941. It explains the critics which he made scolding him for the motto to *Kindersprache, Aphasie und Lautgesetze*: "the quotation from Husserl, the father of phenomenology" (Jakobson 1968, 669).

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5 The Greimassian Semiotic Circle

Eric Landowski

Every encounter is a form of interrogation. Whether existentially or professionally, one has to account for what one "is." "Are you by any chance a poet? A novelist? Or perhaps a philosopher?—Not at all, a simple semiotician.—Then, what kind of a semiotician: *Peircean* or *Lotmanian*?—Neither of those: *Greimassian*!" These adjectives should not be taken for signs of some personality cult or marks of allegiance. They are simply labels. While they do perpetuate the memory of the founders—Charles S. Peirce (1839–1914), Yuri M. Lotman (1922–1993), Algirdas J. Greimas (1917–1992)—they also serve to identify the main theoretical trends within semiotics as a discipline today. Rather than three rival schools or, the opposite, kindred approaches engaged in a dialogue, they may be viewed as separate circles of thought, at once independent and mutually complementary. This at least will constitute the background of the present attempt to describe, from inside, the way the group of intellectuals and semioticians formed by Greimas in the sixties functioned, how it evolved, and thereby to understand the nature and the extent of its influence, as well as the reasons of its limitations.

THE FOUNDER

Although our purpose is not here to focus on properly theoretical matters, options or problems, a very rough sketching of what distinguishes the three leading semiotic trends from one another is necessary as a start. While Peirceans have developed a theory of *signs* which led to an interpretative semiotic philosophy and Lotmanians proposed a semiotic theory of *culture*, Greimassians have sought to construct a general theory of *signification* which claims to account for the conditions of emergence and for the modes of articulation of sense, or meaning, not only in discourses but also in practices and objects of all different domains. These diverging orientations are inseparable from the specific historical, intellectual and political contexts within which their founders devised the basis of their respective theories.

As regards Peirce's work, the paradox is that in spite of its being today widely recognized as a major contribution to the American pragmatist tradition, its author, during his lifetime, was an academically marginalized thinker,

almost deprived of publishers, of disciples and, with a few exceptions, of interlocutors. His philosophy, and particularly his semiotics, only began to be systematically published in the 1950s, long after his death. For totally other reasons, Lotmanian semiotics also grew out of a somewhat unfavorable environment. Drawing on the previous works of the Moscow and Prague Linguistic Circles, themselves broken up in the political turmoil of the 1920s and 1930s, it developed in the ideologically hostile climate of the Soviet Union after World War II. In contrast, the circumstances surrounding the development of the Greimassian enterprise turned out to be surprisingly propitious.

This was not to have been foreseen. Born in Tula to parents who had had to flee Lithuania during World War I (and were deported to Siberia at the beginning of World War II), Greimas spent the first half of his life a victim of the tragic upheavals of history. It was only at the price of exile and settling in France at the age of almost forty that he found the stability necessary for his vocation of researcher to blossom. Better still, the flourishing intellectual milieu of postwar Paris provided the perfect environment for him to think out his research project. Effectively, amid the intellectual effervescence that reigned there, a powerful trend of thought that would shortly become known as *structuralism* was already beginning to reshape the French scholarly field.

In this context, Greimas was from the start recognized as both a language theoretician and, more generally, as one among the pioneers of a new epistemology for social sciences at large. This entitled him to contribute, between 1956 and 1966, to most of the key journals in which a new generation, composed of thinkers who had just discovered Saussure's work (albeit fragmentarily), was in the process of defining its position in relation not only to the phenomenological approaches of the previous generation but also to Marxist theory and, more marginally, to psychoanalytical doctrine. Along that decade of crucial debate, Greimas's signature actually appears by turns in *Arguments* (the journal of political philosophy founded in 1956 by Edgar Morin, Roland Barthes, and Jean Duvignaud), *Annales* (created in 1929 by the historian Lucien Febvre and relaunched in 1951 under the direction of Fernand Braudel and Robert Mandrou), *L'Homme* (the anthropological journal directed by Émile Benveniste and Claude Lévi-Strauss, the first edition of which was published in 1961) and—which might seem more unexpected from a self-declared defender of the structural perspective—*Les Temps Modernes* (founded in 1947 by Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty).[1]

This clearly means that in these early days, far from suffering persecution or isolation in his adopted Parisian milieu, the future preeminent figure of semiotics "à la française" found himself supported, in the development of his most innovative ideas, by an influential current of collective intellectual activity. By this point, Greimas had not yet assembled around him any sort of circle, discussion club or team of collaborators, and certainly not a "school."

But he found himself integrated into a powerful scholarly family, whose principal members welcomed him (as did Claude Lévi-Strauss, who housed his seminar at the *Collège de France* from 1967 to 1969), inspired him (like Roland Barthes, a close colleague), or supported him (as Charles Morazé at the *Fondation de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme*). However, things were soon to change, and rather dramatically. Two important elements contributed to that: the intransigence with which Greimas had to defend his moral and political options in the French context after having had to emigrate to the West and somehow to change camps during the Cold War, and, a few years later, the split that was to occur between the various approaches that had, for a while, been housed under the generic term "structural."

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However, between leaving Lithuania in 1945—a country with which he never severed his ties—and settling definitively in France in 1960, Greimas spent a long transitional period in Egypt, prolonged by a shorter stay in Turkey. This was marked by reflection, study, and important acquaintances. While he taught history of the French language at the University of Alexandria (from 1949 to 1958), he got to know, among others, Roland Barthes. Their common curiosity and questioning about culture, literature, and language ensured that they became friends. The philosopher Charles Singevin also took part in their exchanges, as well as other figures who would go on to play decisive roles in the renaissance of social and human sciences in France. Urged on by Greimas and united by a common taste for debating innovative ideas, a regular discussion circle, made up of an informal and interdisciplinary group of thinkers, set about gathering. In many respects, this initial Alexandria circle was an early version of Greimas's ideal intellectual collective. Such a kind of community, which he liked to call a "club of equals," actually took shape about twenty years later, in Paris.

Indeed, during the 1970s, it was as a sort of voluntary club, founded on the principle of mutual intellectual respect and a subtle sense of conviviality that a team of collaborators developed around its inspirer. The group was diverse in terms of the disciplinary backgrounds of its members, but unified by a common epistemology, shared conceptual rigor, and, this time, commitment to a long-lasting intellectual enterprise. Greimas did not wield any power. He did not dispose of any funds or appointments to distribute around. Unlike most of his native French peers, graduates of the Ecole Normale and *agrégés*, Greimas was an immigrant, educated for the most part abroad, far away from the ever so influential "old boys' clubs" made up of former students of the Parisian *Grandes Ecoles*. Never affiliated to any professional corporation, he was also throughout his life practically ignored by the media. At no time was he given a prominent place among the key players in the French intelligentsia. Moreover, it seemed beneath his dignity and more than his strength could bear to force himself to strategically exploit the administrative machinery of the academic institution he

belonged to. Even for a good cause! In a word, he always remained more "bear" than *mondain*: throwback, perhaps, to the wooded Suwalkija of his ancestors, on the borders of Lithuania and Poland.[2] Intransigent, proud and obstinate: a true Lithuanian in Paris.

However, none of this prevented him from being a charismatic leader, a constructor of "collective actants," to use his own expression. Throughout his life, he imagined or actually created all sorts of collectives, either ephemeral or long lasting, informal or, more rarely, based in institutions, with specific vocations such as teaching or publishing, or pursuing more "political" aims. As a common feature, they were all based upon some moral engagement in relation to a definite intellectual project rather than just upon personal links. As a boy scout, like most teenagers in Europe during the 1930s, it was not enough for him to submit to the spirit of discipline that was in the air at that time, but he wanted, it seemed, to reform the very kind of bonds uniting the troop; likewise, a little later, during the German occupation, he attempted to set up a resistance party (Broden 2011, 4). And towards the end of his life, in the hope of rallying and channeling the energies of a Lithuania whose independence had just been restored, he worked to bring to the attention of both his compatriots and president Landsbergis an ideal vision of the Lithuanian nation as an "actant," subject of its own history.[3] In the meantime, from the 1960s, throughout his career as a researcher and professor, Greimas, as a theoretician convinced of the necessity of group work and anxious to promote his own semiotic theorizing, had tirelessly devoted himself to setting up research groups and spaces of collective reflection.

THE GROUP

The most significant of these spaces was the seminar on "General Semantics" given in the *VI^e section* of the *Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes* (which soon became the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*). This seminar developed and changed shape over time.

Retrospectively, its initial phase—just before the "events" of 1968 and the many ruptures they entailed—seems atypical. At that point, instead of a space in which participants would be contributing jointly to a common design, it was hardly more than a place of encounter between fiercely independent intellectuals who had little in common and looked forward to tracing each one his own autonomous route. From week to week, a considerable number of figures who would later be regarded as representative of the so-called "French thinking" attended it, thereby testifying of Greimas's aura. Still, prestigious as this seminar might be, no "Greimassian Semiotic Circle" existed at this stage. Neither the narratological project that Gérard Genette presented in its early stage, nor the pragmatic theory sketched out by Oswald Ducrot, nor Christian Metz's part-semiological and part-narratological approach to film theory was consonant with a perspective that one could define as "Greimassian." Nor, a fortiori, was the "*séméiotique*" that Julia

Kristeva, already one of the most influential members of the *Tel Quel* group, asked an acquaintance to present. Nor were the works of Claude Brémond, Tzvetan Todorov, or Tomas Pavel, other participants of the time. While these authors might all engage in heated confrontations with Greimas, this was not sufficient, of course, to make them "Greimassians." Indeed, for most of them, it had the opposite effect and the disagreements that surfaced in these encounters would only be confirmed later on. This was in particular the case regarding the deep and already patent epistemological and stylistic divergences that opposed the "Greimassians" to the "Tel Quellians": on one side, privileging coherence and clarity in dealing with concepts, a style of collective research marked by classicism and aimed for the anonymity and systematicity of "science"; on the other side, in contrast, a more "baroque" style of thinking, authorizing all forms of eclecticism and that would eventually lead to an unabashed defense of subjectivism.[4]

However, the crisis of 1968 brought a new generation of researchers and with it came a different sort of seminar practice. In the place of those mentioned above, other important figures—Michel de Certeau, Paul Ricœur, Louis Marin, Georges Kalinowski, Bernard Pottier, Bruno Latour, Paul Zumthor, Umberto Eco, Italo Calvino, among others—would make periodic appearances and debate the questions posed by the burgeoning semiotic project. Just as renowned outside the semiotic sphere as familiar within the Greimassian circle, their critical insights proved all the more useful as emanating from theorists at heart sympathetic to the overall project. Customarily, these weekly meetings were, however, not so high profile but rather more modest and austere, concentrating on the consolidation of one or other technical aspect of the global semiotic construction. Discussions were quite open, but strictly within the boundaries of the group's common project. Over many years, the "Master" would present his own work-in-progress, testing it out before publication.[5] Later, his collaborators were given more opportunity to present specific contributions to the development of the theory. In order to stimulate and orient the efforts, the seminar's work was then structured around themes that would be renewed from one year to the next, resulting, in the best cases, in multi-authored research publications.[6] "One has to organize democracy," was the research strategist's ironic comment on his own strategies.

Furthermore, in this period, smaller working teams, with more specific objectives, used to gravitate around the seminar. Firstly there were the "workshops"—about half a dozen—with both heuristic and didactic functions. Each of those specialized in one particular field: semiotics of scientific discourse under the guidance of Françoise Bastide, of religious discourse with Jean Delorme, of literary discourse with Denis Bertrand. And alongside these *ateliers* devoted to the analysis of texts were those, equally productive, which developed a semiotics of social practices or of the objects of the so-called "natural world": workshops of ethnosemiotics (Joseph Courtés 1995), of sociosemiotics (Eric Landowski 1989, 1997), of semiotics of space

(Manar Hammad 2006) and of visual semiotics (Jean-Marie Floch 1985, 1997), in which groundbreaking work on image-theory took place (from painting to photography to advertising). Another specialized unit consisted in the editorial team, at a time responsible for two collections of books, one in French, the other in English,[7] and, from the beginning until today, for the group's journal, *Actes Sémiotiques*. This publication, created in 1978 at first as a simple *Bulletin*, was accompanied from 1979 on by a series of single-authored *Documents* published by the CNRS (*Institut National de la Langue Française*) and, from 1989, by the University of Limoges. More than thirty years after their foundation, the *Actes Sémiotiques* currently represent the main, if not the only journal of semiotics in France.[8] There was also the *Association pour le Développement de la Sémiotique*, responsible for various tasks connected with research management and for which, at one point, Paul Ricœur was president. Finally, subsuming all of these organizations was the *Groupe de Recherches Sémio-linguistiques*, the only entity that had a formal institutional status—that of a unit of both the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique* and of the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*.

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Dealing with such collective bodies, in which each member's participation was motivated by the will to contribute actively to the realization of a common objective, was familiar to Greimas. Moreover, he had had the opportunity to theorize the processes of their formation and transformation (Greimas 1971). How best to negotiate the tension between free individual initiative and the demands of a collective undertaking? Can the self only be fulfilled in the transcendence of the collective? It was perhaps questions like these that the young scout tried to resolve during the 1930s. In any case, the model that Greimas coined forty years later is still valuable today. It helps understanding the different possible ways to pass from a multiplicity of atomic *units* to a *totality*—that is, to some sort of collective—according to the latter's diverse possible modes of existence.

In sociosemiotic terms, a "unit" can be viewed either as being *integral*, like an individual conceived in his irreducible singularity, or *partitive*, in the sense that every individual, however singular he may be, necessarily shares some traits with some others and, in this respect, is potentially part of an encompassing whole. As a result, the form of a collective can, in turn, be understood in two ways. Either from a quantitative perspective, in which it is regarded as a totality that is itself "partitive," that is, obtained by the mere juxtaposition of individual units with certain similarities (like the mosaic of the twenty-eight countries which, by all sharing certain characteristics that condition their entry, come together to create the so-called European *Union*). Or, it can be understood from a qualitative perspective, thus permitting the multiplicity of the basic components to be transcended in the mold of a totality once again "integral," forming one sole block, a single "moral person" (as would a *nation*, looked at as an indivisible whole in spite of its

internal plurality). Underlying this construction is a philosophy of history and an ethics of the Self pointedly opposed to postmodern individualism: the unit of departure, the "ego," this "evanescent form,"[9] is only able to find justification for its problematic existence by seeking to fade as such, for the benefit of a transcendent and all-encompassing totality.

Although this schema initially aimed to account for the processes behind the construction of collective formations, it also makes it possible to predict the terms of their dissolution. This dual perspective thus encapsulates the destiny of the majority of the collectives prompted by Greimas, and in particular that of the most important one in operational and institutional terms, since it directly or indirectly commanded everything else—research, publications, teaching, and even the seminar: the late *Groupe de Recherches Sémio-linguistiques* of the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*.

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From the end of the 1960s, this group began to come together haphazardly in the gatherings of a diverse range of intellectuals, each with different research interests and approaches. It was then quickly united under the guidance of its director—or, more exactly, by the charm of its "*destinateur,*" a figure little interested in fixing rules or giving orders, but capable of investing intended actions with sense and value. For the most part, everything in the group was indeed conducted as concerted actions, be it the consolidation of a theoretical common position, the definition or redefinition of the object of knowledge (from textuality to interaction) or the extension, field by field, of the terrains of empirical investigation. Hence, the title of Semiotic *Acts* chosen for the journal. The personal capacities of each member were thus mobilized in campaigns of conceptual exploration or conquest, the results of which would, if possible, be worked into the overall theoretical model. Sometimes, faced by obstacles encountered during attempted (and often risky) advances, strategic retreat was necessary, while new arguments were being developed.

For more than twenty years, the group thought and published in this way, as a real if small *integral totality*—a rarity, at least in France, in the domain of social science. Of course, neither the cultural and educational heterogeneity of its members' background nor their differences in theoretical and philosophical orientation were miraculously erased. Nor were the disparities in status, the rivalries, jealousies and personal ambitions. But all this tended to be transcended through the pursuit of a project that was sufficiently mobilizing to exercise a strong federative power. No doubt, it did happen from time to time that one or other member of the team would succumb to the temptation of *partitivity.* Greimas had then only one antidote to administer, but it proved efficient: in his virile, generous and insidiously compulsive way, he would exhort one to look at things from a broader perspective—"Stand up and look around!" And matters (if not life itself) would make sense again. It was the happy period of the 1970s and 1980s.

Yet, even before the death of its founder, this masterpiece of mutual trust regressed in a few years to the status of a *partitive totality* made up of different rival subgroups. The existence of these divisions was not itself new. On the contrary, disagreements and internal criticism had always been the order of the day: they constituted the main propellers of the group's intellectual dynamism.[10] But it was no longer the same once the expression of theoretical differences began to be used to justify the formation of rival clans or particular clienteles. Inexorably, the club of equals of the previous decades, this republic of free and unfettered young researchers, was in the process of transforming into a sort of fragmented feudal society, subject to tactical games of alliance between "mandarins" and "sous-mandarins" (to employ further terms coined by Greimas). After the peak, it was the beginning of the end. Not the end of Greimassian semiotics as a theoretical project, but, as far as the two can be distinguished, of the Greimassian circle as a group of peers, collaborators, and friends.

The splitting of the group into a series of autonomous tendencies—a series of *partitive units*—did not, however, destroy the family likeness the former associates had acquired when united by a feeling of collective interest. Although they had become, for all intents and purposes, strangers, or even, for some, rival brothers, they all remained "Greimassians" to the outside world. And in fact, the majority of the troop continued to carry forward this heritage, though they modulated it in increasingly diverse ways. That was how Greimassian semiotics, that had once been seen, perhaps too idealistically (but as a result of a deliberate strategy of its initiator[11]), as "one and indivisible," was taken over by a large diversity of approaches. While still situating themselves within the same epistemological framework, they offered distinct alternatives with a common intention of renewing, extending and enriching, each one in his own way, the basic semiotic project. Today, the most widely disseminated post-Greimassian theoretical options, which illustrate this nuanced relationship with their common heritage, are Jacques Fontanille and Claude Zilberberg's "tensive" semiotics (1998), Jacques Geninasca's "modular" semiotics (1997), and Eric Landowski's "sociosemiotics" (2005). They promote diversification and renewal without denial of the past or rejection of its achievements, nor epistemological rupture or Oedipal psychodrama.

For others, on the contrary, being considered as Greimassians, or even ex-Greimassians, became an unwelcome stigma. In their eyes, in order to exist individually as free *integral units* and no longer as parts of a whole, as disciples or ex-team members, not only was it necessary to kill the father figure; it was also convenient to disassociate oneself publicly from the group. Such attitudes were understandable but counterproductive, and even, briefly, catastrophic. They came very close to the point where the end of the story might have been a simple return to its beginning: after an ephemeral Republic of the Equals, a return to the reign of the Egos, each for himself in a world of purely "subjectal" concerns. Fortunately, however, once the crisis

of the 1990s had passed, cohesive forces came into play once again in such a way that under new forms and with more autonomous participants the spirit of the undertaking essentially survived.

Visible signs of both this persistence and this renewal are to be found at various levels: in the present-day six-monthly issues of the already mentioned journal, *Actes Sémiotiques*; in the book series "Formes sémiotiques" which has been published ever since the 1970s by the Presses Universitaires de France; in the activities of the general Seminar of semiotics at present attached to the *Fondation de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme ("la Maison Suger")* and which over the years never ceased providing a place for the presentation and discussion of innovative perspectives; and finally, abroad, from Bologna and Urbino to Vilnius or São Paulo, in the development of important Greimas-oriented semiotic research centers, themselves accompanied with their own publishers, journals, university curricula, and often playing a prominent part in local associations for semiotics.

THE OTHERS' VIEW

These clues about the birth of the group and its evolution as seen from the inside overlook many other significant elements which now need to be considered in order to understand the nature and the limits of its impact. How did the group present itself to the outside world? Whether intentionally or not, what image of itself did it offer to its most immediate and natural context, the French intellectual milieu and, more broadly, international academia?

In 1982, at a time when no handbook of semiotics existed and beginners had to strive either with *Sémantique structurale* (Greimas 1966a), a founding but arduous work, or with Greimas's equally difficult semiotic *Dictionnaire* (Greimas and Courtés 1979–86, which seemed written more to test the coherence of the theory than to initiate someone to its use), a short book (200 pages) was unexpectedly published by an influential university press and marketed as the first reader in semiotics: *Sémiotique. L'Ecole de Paris* (Coquet 1982). This pompous title was presumably chosen for commercial promotion. The eight contributors (M. Arrivé, Cl. Calame, Cl. Chabrol, J. Delorme, J.-M. Floch, C. Geninasca, P. Geoltrain and E. Landowski) were not consulted. Nor was Greimas. He did not formally object to seeing himself thus enthroned as the leader of a *School* and, in keeping with his usual irony, even found it humorous that he should thus be turned back into a *schoolmaster.* But "Paris School" is a phrase he would for his own part never employ to describe the intellectual community he had constructed. This syntagm does not figure in any of his writing, and during twenty-five years of collaboration we never heard him use it, except with derision.

There were good reasons for this. The most basic is that it is neither socially convenient nor semiotically relevant to glorify oneself, either individually or collectively. A true consecration of an academic group as a

"School" might only come from an external judgment, that of the larger intellectual community. On the contrary, conferring upon oneself such a title amounted to achieving a failed performative utterance of self-satisfaction. In spite of that, it is true that, as time passed, the expression "Paris School Semiotics" eventually became common usage. This does not obliterate the fact that it went against everything which, in the eyes of a majority of the group founders, constituted the very reason for their collective existence: the pursuit of a common *intellectual adventure*. For a School, with a capital "S," is also a school, with a small "s": not a shared adventure, but an institution responsible for transmitting established knowledge. However, neither Greimas nor his closest collaborators ever regarded semiotics as an established form of knowledge. This was not out of modesty; rather, it fitted a precise notion of scientific research conceived as an active endeavor, a chain of advances, homologations, constant critical reexaminations and new steps forwards—and of semiotics itself as an ongoing project that would by nature ever remain under construction and in search of the conditions of its own scientificity. At the same time, the very asseveration of these basic epistemological principles constituted a necessary warning against dogmatism.

These warnings were not heeded. And it is precisely because they were not and because Greimas's most provisional formulas or ad hoc schemas were erected as gospel by some of his entourage[12] that the label "school" so much prospered. It actually has served two diametrically opposed camps. First, it was perfectly suited to those integrists of the Greimassian camp who viewed the so-called "standard" semiotics (that of the 1979 volume of Greimas's and Courtés' *Dictionnaire*) as unmodifiable knowledge, requiring to be applied in the most scholarly fashion possible. And, as taken up literally by the "anti-Greimassians," it ironically turned into a denunciation of the short-sightedness of their opponents: "Of course the Greimassians are right at claiming that they form a School! What have they been doing all the time apart repeating the lessons of their schoolmaster?"

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School or circle, club or simply group? This is not just a trifling question. Each of these possible labels reflects differently the idea that the members of a given collective may have of their own participation—which, in turn, affects the perception of those on the outside. In the present case, the reputation of Greimas's group as forming a closed and arrogant cabal is the exact reflection of the image that part of its members insisted on projecting of their "School." Assuredly, nowhere in the world does semiotics enjoy a very good reputation, whatever the specific group, circle or school considered. And as for Greimassian semiotics, it is probably in France that it has the worst reputation of all. But the very reasons why it never enjoyed a large popularity among public opinion might be precisely the same as those that account for its influence in depth.

The problem does not arise from doubts concerning the scientific consistency of the group's propositions or productions, which indeed has rarely been systematically contested. Instead, one of the elements that posed an obstacle to the theory's diffusion was the style of thinking and writing that accompanied the group's endeavor to gain scientific recognition. Very early and from different sides, Greimassian literature was interpreted as demonstrating a regrettable propensity towards the abuse of meta-linguistic jargon. As everyone knows, in the realm of the social sciences, a slightly baroque style, open to interpretation and even a little hermetic (as that for instance of Barthes, the *Tel Quel* group or Lacan), is better received than a pure metalanguage, conceptually univocal but resistant to intuitive understanding.

Quite naturally, during a brief initial period, the preference for a hard science approach, armed with concepts, models and a terminology of its own, had placed the semiotic project at the heart of the episteme of the moment. But once the great vogue of structuralism passed, the Greimassians' determination to keep on the same line had the effect of relegating them, mechanically, so to speak, to a backward and outmoded position. Affected, as all social sciences were, by the ebbing movement which followed the cultural turn of 1968, semiotics found itself attacked on two fronts: by traditionalists who from the beginning had judged it to be unbearably "scientific" and by the new wave of postmodernists inclined to suspect a form of untenable positivism in any approach oriented towards formalization or the construction of models. And both forms of criticism logically focused their attack on what semioticians considered to be the very condition of a coherent theory and of an operative methodology: metalanguage.

Popularity, however, is not a reliable criterion on which to measure the in-depth impact of a theory. In fact, the way in which Greimassian semiotics spread among the intellectual spheres mirrors the mode of presence of the very object of its study, *signification*. Invisible on the surface, signification is nevertheless present everywhere, throughout texts and discourses, under the surface of objects and in the background of practices. Somehow, so too is Greimassian semiotics. On the one hand, the conceptual vocabulary specifically constructed to account for the conditions of emergence of meaning, of its forms and its transformations, was never widely accepted. Except for the most orthodox Greimassians, nobody "speaks semiotics," let alone "Greimassian," whereas by contrast, in the related field of psychoanalysis, "psychoanalytic speech" or, failing that, "Lacanian speech," is not exclusively used by psychoanalysts. On the other hand, the semiotic thought behind this vocabulary did penetrate wider spheres in the social sciences.

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It has had an influence on a vast range of disciplines, from anthropology to the philosophy of law and psychiatry, from art history to communication sciences, marketing and design, from architecture to strategic studies (including

military ones), etc. And it has explicitly inspired all sorts of researchers contending with problems of signification in many specific domains, be it in terms of analysis or the construction of new objects bearing sense (e.g., Calabrese 1984; Calame and Kilani 1999; Ciaco 2013; Jackson 1995; Joxe 1991; Klein and Darrault 2007). In a more diffuse manner, semiotic thought also influenced many who, after becoming familiar with it through teaching or reading, abstained from adopting it as a regular working tool but derived lasting profit from the theoretical perspective upon the world in general which it provides. Furthermore, the group's work exercised still another kind of influence, one that lies in between remote intellectual solidarity and formal interdisciplinary cooperation. This is best attested by its reception in Italy, a country where semioticians have successfully managed to bring semiotics out of the ghetto. Taking the key concepts of the theory without abusing its language, using its models as tools for reflections on concrete life and adopting a style of writing close to the essay without renouncing scientific consistency, their work is published by mainstream journals and presses, thus rendering the discipline an actor engaged in critical debates concerning today's society.[13]

The "circle" has thus spread far beyond its own limits, influencing such a wide range of domains that it contradicts the stereotypes of its mixed reputation. Often seen as a problematic confined to the empirical analysis of literary texts (which was not false in its origins), it has in fact continually gone beyond purely textual analysis. For over thirty years, it has explored the implicit layers that are presupposed by both the production and the apprehension of all sorts of signifying objects or processes, nonverbal as well as verbal. More recently, it has concentrated on the analysis of the organization of the sensitive component of meaningful objects and of the interactional configurations within which the world acquires meaning (Greimas and Fontanille 1991; Landowski 2004; de Oliveira 2013). This is what has facilitated, much beyond the literary domain, the outreach of semiotics to neighboring disciplines.

These developments, however, question the temporal limits commonly assigned to structurally based semiotics. Should one see it as a mere relic of the 1960s? It is true that this group's foundational publication came out in 1966, with *Sémantique structurale,* a book whose aftermath was such that Greimas would tend to remain forever "the author of *Sémantique structurale*" as if he had never written anything thereafter. And it is also on the basis of the reading of this book, which appeared at the height of the structuralist movement, that the reputation of the whole circle was built for the following forty or fifty years, regardless of the fact that during this time neither Greimas nor his collaborators or successors ever ceased to exist, to work and, therefore, to evolve. Nevertheless, whether structuralist or poststructuralist, semiotics continued—and continues. While remaining faithful to a few basic epistemological principles (which in fact leave considerable room for invention), it has changed substantially. The last Greimas, author of *De l'Imperfection* (1987), a book in which he opens the way for a semiotics of the sensitive component of meaning, had

very little in common with the Greimas of the early days. As for the work of his successors, the current researches focusing respectively on questions of tensivity, on aesthetic apprehension or on the relation between regimes of meaning and regimes of interaction, have completely renewed the framework of reflection, not only in comparison with the semantic perspective of the pioneering essay of 1966 but also in relation to the narrative grammar summarized in the *Dictionnaire* of 1979.

Finally, one more image needs correcting: that of Greimassian semiotics as a purely Parisian product. Although it was formed on the banks of the Seine, the Parisians who contributed to it were there, for the most part, only intermittently, accidentally, or by adoption. Three quarters of those attending the seminar in the group's heyday were foreign students or colleagues and it is largely through being exported beyond France that it has subsequently developed. Today, as much as in the Latin Quarter, the Greimassian circle lives in Bologna, Siena and Palermo, Rome and Turin, São Paulo and Lima, Vilnius, Zürich, Meknes and Tehran, and many other even more exotic locations. *Actes Sémiotiques* is published in five languages.

NOTES

1. See Greimas 1956a, 1956b, 1958, 1963, and 1966b.
2. For a study on the relationship between his character traits and his work, see Landowski 2009.
3. See "Pro memoria: ponui Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidentui Vytautui Landsbergiui," letter to the President of the Republic (June 25, 1990), published posthumously (*Baltos lankos*, 1997, 8). The same militant purpose inspires the historical presentation leading to a political agenda coauthored with Saulius Žukas, *La Lithuanie, un des pays baltes* (Vilnius: Baltos lankos, 1993—in Lithunian and French). See also, extracts (in Lithuanian) of the correspondence published in "Dialogo monologai (1958–1991)," *Kultūros barai* 4 (1993).
4. In a less exacerbated manner, a similar opposition reappeared much later within the Greimassian group (Leone 2013).
5. For example, his *Maupassant. La sémiotique du texte* (1976), and his last work *De l'Imperfection* (1987).
6. See, in particular, Greimas and Fontanille 1991 and Greimas and Landowski 1979.
7. A dozen volumes appeared in the series "Actes Sémiotiques" and "Semiotic Crossroads" published from 1984 to 1990 by Hadès-John Benjamins (Paris-Amsterdam-New York). Among these, for example, was J. Fontanille, *Le savoir partagé* (1987), H. Parret, *Le sublime du quotidien* (1988), as well as two overviews of the group's work: E. Landowski et al. (eds.), *Sémiotique en jeu. A partir et autour de l'œuvre d'A.J. Greimas* (1987), and Paul Perron (ed.), *Paris School Semiotics* (2 vol., 1989).
8. Under the direction of J. Fontanille and E. Landowski acting as successors to Greimas since 1992, *Actes Sémiotiques* is published online since 2007 (http://epublications.unilim.fr/revues/as/index.php).
9. A formula dear to Greimas, borrowed from Michel de Certeau.

10. The second volume of Greimas and Courtés's (1986) semiotic dictionary, which was written by twenty or so contributors, all members of the group, shows the great diversity of positions adopted among Greimas's collaborators.
11. On this point, see Geninasca 1994, which is included in E. Landowski (ed.), *Lire Greimas* (Limoges: Pulim, 1997).
12. This was in particular the case of Greimas's phrase, "Outside the text, there is no salvation." Though it had been pronounced in a very specific context it was soon interpreted, and then endlessly repeated as an ukase fixing *ad aeternam* the limits of orthodox semiotics.
13. Two of the last publications by Gianfranco Marrone are particularly good examples: *Addio alla Natura* (Turin: Einaudi, 2011) and *Stupidità* (Milan: Bompiani, 2012). See also Paolo Fabbri, *Segni del tempo* (Rome: Meltemi, 2004), i.e., notes initially published in the daily paper *L'Unità*.

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6 *Tel Quel*
Theory and Practice

Patrick ffrench

Tel Quel is neither strictly speaking a school nor exactly a circle. In the most primary sense, it is the title of a quarterly review that appeared from 1960 to 1982, totaling 94 issues, and published by Éditions du Seuil in Paris until a shift that led its most consistent participants, Philippe Sollers and Marcelin Pleynet, to Éditions Gallimard, which would publish a new review, *L'Infini*, from 1983 to the present.

The duration, regularity and materiality of *Tel Quel* as a periodical review[1] are defining features, yet the name itself, *Tel Quel*—meaning "such as it is"—seems rhetorically to deny any further ambition to embody an ideology, a specific literary aesthetics or an intellectual or theoretical agenda.[2] However, as Roland Barthes points out to his younger colleagues in the first of two interviews published in the review, this explicit call to champion and to pursue literature "such as it is," intended as a countermovement to the Sartrean literature of "commitment" (this in the midst of the Algerian war of independence) is itself highly ideological (Barthes 1981). At this very early moment in the history of the review, the appeal to "literary quality," to a literary "essence" is justly criticized by Barthes as a naïve recourse to an argument from apparent self-evidence, the same kind of logic he would demystify in his *Mythologies* of 1957.

However, other constituents of *Tel Quel*, which inform the title, and which exist in tension with the ideology of literature "such as it is," suggest a different account of what the review embodies. An affirmative response to Maurice Blanchot's 1959 book *Le Livre à venir* connects the notion of literarity, of an "essence" of literature to the statement, which comes from Blanchot: "Literature is moving toward itself, toward its essence that is disappearance" (Blanchot 1959, 136).[3] This account of what *Tel Quel* means and embodies, as a title, will prove more permanent in the review's fortunes. It connects to Barthes's diagnosis in an essay of 1953 of a contemporary predilection for the "zero degree of writing," to a post-Mallarmean awareness in literary practice and thought of the autonomy of literature in relation to the real and communicative social discourse and to the proximity of literature to absence, death, and negativity.

This Blanchotian tenor is certainly there throughout the life of *Tel Quel*, and in its climactic moments, for example, in the work of Julia Kristeva,

who joined the editorial committee in the early 1970s but who had worked closely with the review since the mid-1960s. Her 1968 essay "Poésie et négativité" engages with the work of nineteenth-century French writers Mallarmé and Lautréamont to argue that poetic language puts to work a transformative negativity that alters the system and the logic of language itself (Kristeva 1969). There are crucial distinctions to draw, however; while Blanchot's negativity persists as an unworked or unworkable, permanent disaster into which literature constantly threatens to be absorbed, negativity, as *Tel Quel* conceives of it, is put to work, in a manner which reveals a lot more faith in and acceptance of an albeit problematized Hegelian dialectic. Writing is a practice of negativity that redistributes and reshapes both the symbolic order of words and things and the psychic life of the subject ordained by it. It has, then, a socially transformative power, at least in potential.

This brief opening sketch implies a number of ways of further delineating the identity of *Tel Quel*: firstly, it embodies a way of thinking about literature. But, secondly, what it embodies is mobile, subject to change, and cannot be encapsulated in a static "theory of literature." At levels above the bare title of the review, which is, nevertheless, what it is in *fact*, the name *Tel Quel* may be said to designate the following: firstly, the group constituted by the members of the review's editorial committee; secondly, the group constituted by these writers and a wider circle, many of whom published work either in the review itself or in the "Collection Tel Quel," about which more below; thirdly, a phenomenon in the history of the practice and theory of literature in France in the 1960s and 1970s, representing a specific approach to literature and to its place and function in the world.

To begin with the group of writers who in forming the editorial committee of the review were affiliated to the values embodied and expressed in the review, one can say that *Tel Quel* thus designates something like an editorial policy shaped consensually by a group of individuals. Like other literary and artistic groupings, the committee was highly volatile and saw numerous additions, departures and splits over its twenty-two year existence. A brief survey of the major shifts in personnel can give a sense of both the consistency and the volatility of the phenomenon:

Renaud Matignon 1960–1963
Jean-Edern Hallier 1960–1963
Boisrouvray 1960–1963
Jean-René Huguenin 1960–1960
Jacques Coudol 1960–1963
Philippe Sollers 1960–1982
Jean Thibaudeau 1960–1971
Jean Ricardou 1962–1971
Michel Maxence 1961–1963
Michel Deguy 1961–1962
Denis Roche 1962–1973
Jean-Louis Baudry 1962–1975
Marcelin Pleynet 1962–1982
Jean-Pierre Faye 1963–1967
Jacqueline Risset 1967–1982
Pierre Rottenberg 1967–1979
Julia Kristeva 1971–1982
Marc Devade 1971–1982

We see here that the editorial committee as it was initially established was relatively short-lived and that an internal crisis in 1962–1963 led to the departure of a number of early adherents and the constitution of a new group. Hallier, Matignon, Boisrouvray, Huguenin, and Coudol all resigned or were ejected from the committee around 1963 or earlier, to be replaced by Thibaudeau, Pleynet, Roche, Ricardou, Faye, and Baudry. A core group was thus established which persisted until the early 1970s, with the significant exception of Jean-Pierre Faye, whose departure in 1967, around the time of the review's explicit shift toward an affiliation with the Communist Party, was thus the second of three major schisms in the committee's history. The addition of Risset and Rottenberg in 1967, and of Kristeva in 1971, consolidates the dominant strain in the committee, around Sollers, such that the next schism, in 1971, when the political ideology of the review veers toward Maoism, leads to the departure of Ricardou and Thibaudeau. Excepting the departures of Roche and Baudry in the 1970s, the committee will remain relatively stable throughout the decade, with Sollers, Pleynet, Kristeva, Risset, Rottenberg, and Devade. This brief history of the committee points to the fact that the personnel of the editorial committee of the review reflects the ideological trajectory of *Tel Quel*. The major schisms coincide with shifts in direction—toward Formalism in 1962/1963, toward Marxism and the PCF in 1967, away from the PCF (Parti Communiste Français) and toward Maoism in 1971.

What is perhaps more evident from this list is that the sole permanent and consistent figure is Philippe Sollers. It was in effect partly around Sollers, seen as a promising young novelist on the strength of *Une curieuse solitude* (1958), with the backing of François Mauriac and Louis Aragon, that the review was initially constituted at Seuil, under the aegis of Jean Cayrol and Francis Ponge (though the same can be said of Jean-René Huguenin). And it was equally because of Seuil's refusal to publish Sollers' novel *Femmes* (1983), a major shift of direction from the "permanent publication" in the review itself of the unpunctuated novel *Paradis* (1980), that *Tel Quel* came to an end, at least in name, with the shift to Gallimard, who did publish *Femmes*, and *L'Infini*. Sollers, then, is there at the beginning and the end; although not ostensibly the "director" or in any sense the "leader" of the group, which up to a certain point functioned democratically, Sollers' activity as a writer but also as a strategist gives the review its shape and its direction. With Sollers, Marcelin Pleynet, who joined the committee in 1962, also has the most longevity as a member of the editorial board. His activity as "secrétaire de redaction" (having taken over this role from Jean-Edern Hallier in 1962), is also constant until its demise, and continues with *L'Infini*.

The pairing of Sollers, a novelist, and Pleynet, a poet, is significant, in the sense that the philosophy of literature embodied by the review may be said to reside in the dynamic tension between prose and poetry. *Tel Quel* thus continues the long history of the "crisis" diagnosed by Mallarmé in Oxford in 1894 (Mallarmé 1897) when he spoke of a "crise de vers"

["crisis in verse"], a crisis of which some of the salient moments are the transformations wrought by Baudelaire upon his own verse poetry in the volume *Le Spleen de Paris: Petits poems en prose* (1869), the formally innovative experiments of Rimbaud's *Illuminations,* Artaud's shattered fragments, and the incomplete and self-negating fictions of Georges Bataille. At the core of the review, then, is a persistent focus on the inflections that poetic language provokes in prose and on narrative, pursued in the novels of Sollers and others, and on the fragmentation and disruption of "la belle poésie," pursued in the poetry of Pleynet and others. Exemplary texts in this regard are the series of novels published by Sollers from 1965 to 1973—*Drame* (1965), *Nombres* (1968), *Lois* (1971), and *H* (1973) and the texts of poetry published by Pleynet—*Paysages en deux* (1963), *Comme* (1965), *Stanze* (1973), and *Rime* (1981).

In the context of the development of the French novel in the postwar period one can see in Sollers's novels a movement away from the concern with the ambivalence of real and imaginary that characterizes the work of Alain Robbe-Grillet, or the endeavor to explore the tropistic turns of the individual consciousness in the work of Nathalie Sarraute, and a movement toward textuality "as such." The self-referential aspects of the Nouveau Roman, the extent to which the novel is "about" its own production, are, nevertheless, very evident and more pronounced in *Tel Quel* novels. These novels eschew orthodox narrative structure and psychology to focus on the moment of writing itself, often with recourse to a structural motif (the chess-board in *Drame*, the square in *Nombres*, the cube in *Lois*). The lines between fiction and theory are blurred, and what we read often resembles a process of writing theorizing itself in the process of its own composition. But where this practice distinguishes itself from a "merely" formalist "play" (although the semantics of play—*jeu* as both play, game, and strategy—are often to the fore) is in the exploration of the implications and effects of the process and practice of writing on the writing subject. In keeping with Barthes's critique of the authority of the stereotypical author figure, standing behind the text as its ultimate origin and truth (Barthes 1984a), the writing subject is enmeshed in the dynamics of meaning of the text, often reduced to a pronoun, "je" or "il" (these novels lack Proper Names). *Tel Quel* textuality, which is one of the most significant and yet underemphasized aspects of the legacy of the review, is thus in some sense a radical reduction of the novelistic enterprise, a divestiture of the elements of narrative, of *histoire*, or psychology (of the whole apparatus of "characters" along with the Proper Name that functions as the hook upon which character "traits" may be hung). To some extent, then, the title *Tel Quel* resonates here in a specific manner, echoing the phenomenological *époché*, Husserl's suspension or bracketing out of all that which is extraneous to the attention to experience, to the experiencing of things "as such." *Tel Quel* textuality can be viewed as an extension of the phenomenological enterprise into the context of writing and of literature, an attention then to the experience of writing "as such," to

its process and to the particular kind of subjectivity that it induces. And in keeping with the Lacanian account of the subject as that which serves to link one signifier to the next, as always already imbricated in the structure of language, the subjectivity of this writing is not one that stands in a relation of exteriority to the writing or its meaning, but one which is subsumed in the process of writing itself, giving rise to a recurrent preoccupation with what one might call a sacrificial register—the dissolution of the subject of writing in the process of writing itself. While differences of emphasis, of style and of structure are evident, Sollers's novels are exemplary of the novels produced by other *Tel Quel* prose writers (such as Baudry, Risset, Rottenberg, and Henric), and there is a degree of homogeneity in this literary production. To some extent it is here that it might make most sense, ironically, to speak of *Tel Quel* as a coherent group, insofar as the prose fictions produced by *Tel Quel* participants tend toward homogeneity, the particularities of plot and of psychology having been abandoned, and the stylistic attributes of the "author" having become redundant. *Tel Quel* textuality, in and across the novels of Sollers, Baudry, Henric, Rottenberg, or Risset demands a different kind of critical apparatus to determine its internal differences, one that is attuned to the rhythms of language, to the vocality of the text. Roland Barthes's *Le Plaisir du texte* (1973) perhaps functions as a kind of handbook or manual for the reading of this material, with its emphasis on the pleasures of transgression as experienced by the reader, pleasures experienced specifically at the microlevel of language, where meaning exceeds itself or where codes clash or rub together.

The influence of *Tel Quel* on French literary production in prose since the 1960s is hard to underestimate. Sollers's immense unpunctuated multivolume *Paradis* (published serially in the review from the mid-1970s and then in one volume in 1980, to be followed by a second volume in 1986, with Gallimard) is a significant event in its history, even if it remains largely unread. *Tel Quel*'s influence in the field of poetry is no less significant. Here again, despite the differences between writers such as Marcelin Pleynet, Denis Roche, and Jacqueline Risset, it is possible to situate all three of them as exponents and exemplars of a current in poetry which has had a lasting influence. All three of them pursue the legacy, I would argue, of the "hatred of poetry" named by Georges Bataille (with the original title of the book which appeared in 1957 under the title *L'Impossible*—"La Haine de la poésie"), and of the destructive energy of Antonin Artaud, not as theorist of the theatre of cruelty, but as the exponent of a radical and embodied destruction of language and logic (Artaud 2004). To put it bluntly, this legacy would be summarized by the proposition that only that poetry that takes upon itself the destruction of "poetry" is worthy of the name poetry. In the work of Pleynet, this proceeds through a violent pulverization of the line, a shattering of the continuity of verse (after Mallarmé), or a no less intrusive irruption of "unpoetic" fragments; poems become fraught amalgamations of partial objects, without integration into whole bodies. In the work of

Denis Roche, particularly *Le Mécrit* (1972), the signs whereby poetry points to itself as poetry are progressively eroded and eradicated, leaving only the pure flow of sense, again, in bits, or as detritus, spittle. Significantly, Roche would "abandon" poetry in the early 1970s, moving toward a generically unidentifiable kind of writing practice, incorporating his own photographic work (Roche 1980).

This suggests a further defining characteristic of *Tel Quel*: a permanent insistence on the priority of textual or poetic practice. Alongside the many theoretical and critical essays which appear in the pages of the review, one sees a regular commitment to the publication of excerpts of work in progress, on the practice of writing. As I mentioned above, this is perhaps most salient in the publication of Sollers's novel *Paradis* in almost every issue of the review from the mid-1970s onward, culminating in the publication of the novel in the "Collection Tel Quel" in 1980. For as well as the review itself, the name *Tel Quel*, and the values it embodies are pursued through the series, also of course published by Seuil, which collects some seventy-three book publications under the same graphic and visual emblem, the brown edges of the front covers of the books reproducing Seuil's brand, but specifying affiliation to *Tel Quel* through the color. The mobile and multiple identity of *Tel Quel* is, thus, wider than the review itself, extending to the context defined by the "Collection." The list of publications under the rubric "Tel Quel" does not, however, rigorously define a group nor a circle, nor, strictly speaking, a defined ideology. But neither is it wholly open to the contingencies of publication, to the market. A definitive list of "Collection Tel Quel" publications exhibits multiple factors of affiliation and strategy. The series includes most of the book publications of the committee members for the period of their adherence, thus thirty-six works by Sollers, Pleynet, Kristeva, Risset, Denis Roche, Rottenberg, Thibaudeau, Ricardou, Faye, and the collective publication *Théorie d'ensemble* (1969). But it also gives a good picture of the extent to which the influence and significance of the review extends beyond the group formed by the committee. Often emerging out of shorter publications in the form of excerpts or articles in the review itself, the extended sphere of *Tel Quel*'s influence is salient in the publication of novels by Jacques Henric (1969, 1975, 1980) Maurice Roche (1966, 1972), Guy Scarpetta (1972), Severo Sarduy (1980), Vivianne Forrester (1978), translations of texts from adherents of the Italian *neoavanguardia* Nanni Balestrini (1972) and Edouardo Sanguineti (1969), of works of criticism by Gérard Genette (1966, 1969), by the art historian Jean-Louis Schefer (1969), psychoanalyst Daniel Sibony (1974), significantly, most of the work of Roland Barthes from the mid-1960s until his death, and two important books by Jacques Derrida (1967, 1972).

While some of these publications, particularly those in the early years of the review, may be attributed to transient associations (a "first version" of Flaubert's *Education sentimentale* (1963), a translation of Ungaretti (1968), a translation of interviews with Allen Ginsberg (1979), a collection of essays

and a book of conversations with Pierre Boulez (1966, 1975), other more consistent patterns emerge, which give a picture of the shifting identity of *Tel Quel*, but also of its consistent strategy. We see, for example, the significant association of *Tel Quel* with the work of Jacques Derrida, through the appearance of two of Derrida's most important books, *L'Ecriture et la différence* and *La Dissémination* in the Collection. The affiliation is the sign of a profound, if transient, resonance; Derrida had published a number of essays in the review, significantly "La Parole soufflée," on Artaud (1965), "La Pharmacie de Platon" and "La Double séance," both included in *La Dissémination* (1972). The third and final chapter of the latter book is an analysis of Sollers's novel *Nombres*. Reciprocally, from the mid-1960s on, many of the theoretical statements of the review and its adherents would be informed by Derridean affirmation of concepts of writing (reversing the primacy of speech), difference, dissemination, the trace, and the critique of the metaphysics of presence. The fact that after *La Dissémination* in 1972 Derrida's later publications in the 1970s do not feature in the "Collection Tel Quel" is symptomatic of a divergence of views, which is focused around the political positioning of the review, in 1971, closer to Maoism and to Mao's revision of Marxist philosophy and implying a distance from the PCF, with which *Tel Quel* had previously been in dialogue. Derrida's apparent hesitation over this question was a reflection, according to *Tel Quel*, of an idealist rather than materialist mode of thought.

Exhibiting a similar pattern, the fact that the first two volumes of Gérard Genette's *Figures* were published in the Collection is a symptom of the affiliation of *Tel Quel* for a certain time with the impetus of structuralist and formalist literary analysis. The work of Barthes (of the early to mid-1960s), of Genette, and of Tzvetan Todorov was effective for a certain moment in displacing any recourse to the referential real or to an agenda of social *engagement*, thus to approaches to literature premised on a representational model of the relation of writing to the real. For a time, then, *Tel Quel* is identifiable with a formalist approach to literature, and this is most apparent in the publication in 1965 of Todorov's anthology of the Russian Formalists, under the title *Théorie de la literature* (1965). However, the static and supposedly objective account of the structure or the text, conceived as autonomous, was insufficient to account for the transformative effect of the practice of writing, and of the imbrication of the transgressive nature of this practice with subjectivity. In short, the socially and subjectively transgressive and transformative force of literature had to be accounted for; formalist literary criticism, or structuralist textual analysis, was not sufficient to the task. The shift to a theoretical framework capable of imbricating the transformative nature of textual practice, or poetic language, with the transformation both of the subject and of social structures was provided by the work of Julia Kristeva, whose involvement in the review from the mid-1960s slightly predates the publication of her first, magisterial book in the series, *Séméiotike: recherches pour une sémanalyse* (1969). With some

minor exceptions (*Des Chinoises* with the publishing series *des femmes*), all of Kristeva's publications in book form, and many of her critical essays, are published in the series and in the review from then on; she becomes a member of the editorial committee in 1971, marking the formal affiliation. This is significant, because Kristeva is the only member of the editorial committee throughout the history of the journal not to have been involved (at that time) in a writing practice that produces novels, poetry or other sometimes generically less identifiable texts. While many of those involved in the editorial committee of *Tel Quel* also write critical essays, only Kristeva is solely involved in critical practice. This suggests to me that from this point on the core identity of *Tel Quel* involves the dynamic pairing of the practice of writing described above (between prose and poetry) with a theoretical practice the main focus of which is poetic language itself and its relation to subjectivity. The consistent core identity of *Tel Quel* thus resides, one might say, in the practice of writing and the practice of the theorization and analysis of this practice. The main impetus and the most well-established form of this theoretical practice is the work of Kristeva, but it is also present in critical works by Sollers such as *Logiques* (1967), a collection of key essays on the recognizable "canon" of Sade, Lautréamont, Mallarmé, Artaud, and Bataille, but also including Dante, *Sur le matérialisme* (1973), a collection of essays on Marxist philosophy, in Pleynet's *L'Enseignement de la peinture* (1971) and *Art et littérature* (1977), both significant extensions of *Tel Quel*'s critical practice into the sphere of the visual arts.

The firmly integrated dynamic of textual practice and critical practice is perhaps nowhere more clearly articulated than in the only volume in the collection to bear the name *Tel Quel* in the place of the name of the author: *Théorie d'ensemble*. This publication marks both the turn of the review away from formalism and toward the theory of the text, a turn toward an explicitly Marxist political ideology, an affiliation with Derrida (through the publication of his essay "La Différance"), and a reminder of the earlier support of Michel Foucault through the inclusion of the essay "Distance, Aspect, Origine," which identifies, in the novels of Sollers, Thibaudeau, and Baudry, and in the poetry of Pleynet, a significant distinction from the Nouveau Roman. Barthes's consistent attention to the work of Sollers is represented by the inclusion of an essay on Sollers's novel *Drame*, titled "Drame, poésie, roman." The enterprise of *Théorie d'ensemble* as a whole proposes a radical shift in the theorization of literature, which emphasizes a move away from the notion of *representation* and a consistent stress on the practice of the text. The concepts of the author, the work, the representation of the real or the exploration of the imaginary are replaced by notions which have now become familiar in critical practice—textuality, intertextuality, the practice of writing, production, process. *Théorie d'ensemble* also opens a significant period of the review's theoretical strategy in which the terms and dynamics of a Derridean theory of writing—with an emphasis on the notion of the trace—will be allied, or put in parallel, with an account of writing

as a production, equivalent to the place held by work in Marx. Writing is a work, *un travail*, the exchange of which in the form of meaning is equivalent to the way in which labor is turned into capital (this is amply represented in the work of Jean-Joseph Goux, who contributes a key text "Marx et l'inscription du travail" to the book, and who will go on to extend this critique in the same vein in a substantial essay "Numismatiques," in the review). The traditional terms of literary criticism—the notion of the author, of the work, of "inspiration," "creativity," and so on—are from this point of view elements of an idealist ideology whose function it is to support the political system in place. At one of its key, defining moments, then, we can see that *Tel Quel* succeeds in drawing together a number of strands of critical theory as it was developing in France in the 1960s, strands which have now become much more familiar in their own right and with their own histories—the Derridean theory of the trace and the deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence, Barthes's critique of the ideology of literary criticism, which itself draws on the work of *Tel Quel*, an Althusserian account of the importance of ideology in the reproduction of the forces of production and the maintenance of the current hegemony, an emphasis on the determining role of language in the formation of the subject and a stress on the "other scene" of the unconscious, drawing here on Freud and on Lacan. The "time of theory," for *Tel Quel* depends on a convergence of a series of movements in critical theory, which are strategically inflected by the review's writers toward the socially and subjectively transformative potential of the practice of writing, and of writing a specific form of poetic language that departs radically from traditional literary genres and forms.

Some of these aspects are clearly articulated in one of the key programmatic statements of *Tel Quel*, the appropriately titled "Programme" by Sollers, published both in the review itself and as the opening text of his collection *Logiques*, in 1967. The text is typical of the *style* of *Tel Quel*'s critical practice for a time. Structured as a series of numbered points resembling those in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, the text exhibits in its structure and style a rhetoric, or one might say a semiotics, of scientificity that is intended to displace, not without a certain violence, the previous "signs" of literarity and of literary criticism. *Tel Quel*'s "theoretical terrorism" stems from the violence with which the codes and the rhetoric of hard science are imported into the language of literary criticism. To some extent *Tel Quel* is identifiable through this kind of rhetoric, which is often visually evident, for example in the work of Kristeva of the 1960s, which featured strings of mathematical formulae employed to clarify the logics at work in the poetry of Mallarmé, or Lautréaumont (see for example Kristeva 1998). This is not to say however that the statements are devoid of content. Sollers's opening point, in "Programme," articulates a dominant emphasis of *Tel Quel* at this point: "A comprehensive theory [*théorie d'ensemble*] derived from the practice of writing demands to be elaborated" (1983b, 5). "*Théorie d'ensemble*" here, which reproduces the title of the collective volume, signifies not only

the drawing together of some of the salient theoretical trajectories of the time, but also an aspiration for the theory of literature to attain some of the logical hardness and rigor of mathematics, since *théorie d'ensemble* also suggests *théorie des ensembles*—set theory. But if the reference to Derrida, Althusser, and Marxism will wane, the insistence on the *practice of writing* expresses the significant and consistent emphasis of *Tel Quel* throughout its history, on the status of literary practice as refractory to social codes and conventions of communication, yet having the potential to transform them.

In this light Kristeva's work, which has been widely disseminated and exported outside France and outside the limits of linguistic theory and literary criticism, and which has a more international profile than that of Sollers or other *Tel Quel* adherents, indeed than *Tel Quel* itself, gives a coherent and integrated expression to the theoretical practice which defines the review. In very crude and simplified terms, one can account for it as a theory that postulates the transformative potential of art and of literature. This transformation is both subjective and social; Kristeva's work thus engages both with Freudian psychoanalysis and with the broadly Marxist emphasis on social change. This is a fundamentally dialectical account, which proposes that art plays a crucial role in inflecting social discourse through the incorporation of a language that it denies or represses; this "accursed share," to use the language of Georges Bataille, is also at work in Kristeva's account of the "subject in process," a subject who through the process of incorporation of preverbal, "semiotic" forces in the system of representation moves toward a repositioning both of themselves and of the social fabric (Kristeva 1977). In tandem with the trajectory of the review itself, Kristeva's early work (in the mid- to late 1960s) featured a stress on the linguistic basis of this account, while her work in the 1970s moves increasingly toward a psychoanalytically inflected approach, wherein art and analysis both propose parallel accounts of individual and social transformation.

The consistent emphasis on the transformative potential of literature informs an account of it, or more specifically of a certain "canon" of literary texts—notably Dante, Sade, Mallarmé, Lautréamont, Artaud, Bataille, Céline, and Joyce, as fundamentally refractory in relation to normative social discourses and orthodoxies. This informs a number of strategic positions and affiliations on the part of *Tel Quel* across its history. However, the emphasis on the *mobile* character of *Tel Quel*'s identity informs here the importance of *strategy*. If, for example, the *Nouveau roman* is initially supported and affirmed in the review and by its adherents in the early 1960s, through the inclusion of extracts from Robbe-Grillet and of affirmative reviews of work by him, of extracts by Pinget, Sarraute, and Simon, and through the agency of Jean Ricardou, a member of the editorial committee until 1971, this affiliation wanes in the mid to late 1960s. The *Nouveau Roman* was useful in displacing the contextual focus on a literature of social *engagement*, with a stress on its realist and representational agenda, but after a certain point the apparent dichotomy of real and imaginary,

subjective and objective in *Nouveau Roman* texts was seen as limited in relation to the emphasis on the practice of writing in *Tel Quel* texts by Sollers, Baudry, and others. The debates on prose and on poetry, and the key article by Michel Foucault, "Distance, aspect, origine" were instrumental in this shift, as we have seen (Foucault 1968). Similarly, *Tel Quel's* dialogue and loose affiliation with the PCF from 1967 on was shifted in 1971 toward an affirmation and interest in Maoist China, displacing the focus toward the "other scene" of China and lasting until 1976. For this period, during which *Tel Quel* assumes most explicitly its refractory and dissident position with regard to the mainstream even of left-oriented intellectual commitment, the review proposes a significant presence of Maoism in the French intellectual context. Sollers's translation of Mao's essay "On Contradiction" was a key event in this vein (1973), as was the "voyage en Chine" of Sollers, Kristeva, Pleynet, Barthes, and Seuil editor François Wahl in 1974. In the late 1970s, however, after the collapse of Chinese communism with the death of Mao and the trial of the Gang of Four in 1976, China ceases to meaningfully play this role of displacement and refraction; *Tel Quel* will accordingly shift again and affirm, rather, a practice of dissidence (in relation to the USSR), or of global openness (via a special issue on the avant-garde in the United States, for example, in 1977).

A significant aspect of *Tel Quel*'s place in the intellectual history of post-war France thus stems from the impetus of its strategy, a strategy effectively of dissidence and displacement. From this derives a certain degree of suspicion that the "strategy" of *Tel Quel* is wholly expedient and transient, without consistency and substance. However, the evidence for the consistent affirmation of the exceptional and critical value of literature is strong, especially if one considers the alternative canon of writers that *Tel Quel* succeeded in establishing on the critical map in France and in some cases outside it. Through the agency of Sollers and of Jean-Louis Houdebine, for example, *Tel Quel* makes a considerable impact on the status of Joyce's work in France, particularly the later work. *Tel Quel*'s consistent affirmation of the work of Artaud and Bataille was instrumental in bringing these writers to critical prominence; a number of unpublished texts feature in the contents of the review, and *Tel Quel* will publish significant studies by Denis Hollier, on Bataille (1968), and Paule Thévenin on Artaud (1965), as well as organizing a major conference at Cérisy on Artaud and Bataille in 1972. Through translation, too, the review plays a significant role in the dissemination of foreign writers (Denis Roche of Ezra Pound, Jacqueline Risset of Dante). It is in the nature of a periodical review also to respond to the contingencies and opportunities of the moment, and in some instances *Tel Quel*'s strategy was particularly prescient and influential; symptoms of particularly significant punctual instances of this were the publications of excerpts from the work of Pierre Guyotat from the mid-1960s on (1970), an early essay by Helène Cixous[4] on Joyce (1965), essays by Philippe Muray on Céline (1974) and on the nineteenth century. *Tel Quel* also drew

on the authority of established figures such as Joseph Needham, on China, or semioticians of the Tartu school of Semiotics in a special issue of 1968 (issue 35).

While, as argued above, the theoretical practice of the review is pursued most explicitly and representatively in the work of Kristeva, *Tel Quel* also entertained throughout its existence a close proximity to the work of Roland Barthes, and the shifting nature of the trajectories of the review and of Barthes himself perhaps best exemplifies the wider influence and extent of *Tel Quel* as a group. Barthes was never a formal member of the editorial committee, although most of his publications in book form from 1964 until 1982 appeared in the "Collection Tel Quel," with the significant exceptions being *Système de la mode* (1967), *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (1975), a commission for the "Écrivains de toujours" series at Seuil, the collaborative publications *Poétique du récit* (1977c) and *Littérature et réalité* (1982), *L'Empire des signes* (1970) and *La Chambre claire* (1980). An early interview, referenced above, manifests Barthes rather avuncular relation to the review, and the fact that he belonged to a rather earlier generation, thus lending to the review through his association with it the authority of his proximity to figures such as Foucault (whom he joined for a time of the advisory committee of *Critique*, the review founded by Georges Bataille in 1947). But from 1964 onward Barthes's trajectory follows that of the review, often referring to the work of Kristeva, for example, or of Sollers, in a series of critical displacements—away from too formal an adherence to semiology (with *S/Z*). Barthes's trajectory was always to veer away from any fixed position, any stand which would threaten to congeal around a sign or a topos. It was a trajectory which was subjectively motivated, by a nausea or even a phobia for the stereotype, the same sense of impatience to which Barthes refers in the preface to *Mythologies* (1957, 9). That Barthes remained close to *Tel Quel* throughout its existence, and throughout this period of his life, is a sign not only of friendship (specifically with Sollers and Kristeva) but also of the fact that the topos of *Tel Quel* was also one of displacement and dissidence; it shifted with and alongside him. The shifts can be expressed as shifts in the subjectivity of the writer, shifts in voice and tone. If with the early work of the 1960s Barthes's work tends toward the impersonal voice of the critic, with *S/Z* (1969), *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* (1971), and *Le Plaisir du texte* (1973) the voice is that of a reader, and in the last, of a reader attentive to the affective register, to the affective body. In *Fragments du discours amoureux* (1977b), and in a number of essays in *Tel Quel* itself, this attention to affect becomes more prominent. Apparently liberated from the burden of having to speak "in the name of" semiology, or according to its codes, Barthes speaks in his own voice, or in a voice only slightly displaced from his own. It is this facility which, on his own account, he finds in *Tel Quel*; in an entry in the pseudo-autobiography *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* he writes, under the title "Ses amis de Tel Quel":

> Ses amis de *Tel Quel*: leur originalité, leur *vérité* (outré l'énergie intellectuelle, le genie de l'écriture) tiennent à ce qu'ils acceptent de parler un langage commun, general, incorporel, à savoir le langage politique, *cependant que chacun d'eux le parlent avec son propre corps* (Barthes 1975, 177). [His friends on *Tel Quel*: their originality, their *truth* (aside from their intellectual energy, their genius for writing) derive from the fact that they must agree to speak a common, general, incorporeal language, i.e., political language, *although each of them speaks it with his own body.* (1977a, 175)]

Thus Barthes gives an insight into the coherence of the *Tel Quel* "group," as he knew it. He describes it as functioning not in terms of an adherence to a specific ideological line, but in terms of a commitment "in the body" to the practice and to the singularity of writing, a commitment he discerns in himself in *Roland Barthes by Roland Barthes* in the decision to include only those images that belong to the imaginary of writing and of the text, not to the imaginary of the biography, which belong to "pre-history" and are there as a gift to himself in the first few pages of the book. The coherence and consistency of *Tel Quel* can thus be said to relate to this "passion pour le signifiant," to the lived history of an experience of literature. It is also significant that Barthes points to the consistency of *Tel Quel* as a group through the motif of an "incorporeal" language that each individual nevertheless speaks "with their body." This suggests that something of the specificity of *Tel Quel* lies in the tension between the language and style of "theory" and the singularity of the writing body, that is, of the writing subject. If it is a significant aspect of the theory promulgated by *Tel Quel* that writing is a practice in which the subject is dissolved and dispersed, in favor of an impersonal writing, then this points to the relation between individual and group, theory and practice, as a sacrificial relation. The individual authority of the writer is sacrificed for the generality of a writing that "writes itself." Each writer, nevertheless, sacrifices themselves differently, and with a different style.

NOTES

1. Much of the material published in *Tel Quel* and many of the books published in the Collection are unavailable in English translation. A representative selection is included in Patrick ffrench and Roland-François Lack (eds.) *The Tel Quel Reader* (London: Routledge, 1998), which also features a bibliography of *Tel Quel* material in English.
2. For a detailed history of the review, see Forest 1995, ffrench 1996.
3. See also "Notes de lecture" in *Tel Quel* 1 (Spring 1960), 94.
4. Cixous contributed a translation of Joyce and an essay on *Portrait of the Artist* under her married name Hélène Berger to *Tel Quel* 22 in Summer 1965.

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7 Tales out of (the Yale) School

J. Hillis Miller

> Tell tales out of school: to reveal confidential or sensitive information; to gossip.
>
> —*Wiktionary*

What I shall say about the so-called Yale School is not all that confidential or sensitive, unless demystifying some misconceptions comes under the heading of telling tales out of school.

Let me affirm three presuppositions about schools like the "Yale School" and circles like the "Prague Circle":

1 The uses of both "school" and "circle" for such groups are figurative transfers. They are neither literally schools nor literally circles. Nevertheless, we take the terms for granted as adequate names for something real. Such schools or circles are names given to a group of scholars and teachers who appear more diverse, the closer you look at details, from inside the circle, so to speak. The Yale School is a good example of that diversity. What Derrida forcefully says in a very late interview expresses the resistance, taking a different form in each case, against assimilation into a "School" of all five members of the so-called Yale School. Derrida is responding to a question from Maurizio Ferraris asking what he meant by saying, "I am not one of the family":

> I'm not one of the family means, in general, "I do not define myself on the basis of my belonging to the family," or to civil society, or to the state; I do not define myself on the basis of elementary forms of kinship. But it also means, more figuratively, that I am not part of any group, that I do not identify myself with a linguistic community, a national community, a political party, or with any group or clique whatsoever, with any philosophical or literary school. "I am not one of the family" means: do not consider me "one of you," "don't count me in," I want to keep my freedom, always: this, for me, is the condition not only for being singular and other, but also for entering into relation with the singularity and alterity of others. (2001a, 27)

Nevertheless, in spite of these complexities, a Yale School did exist. It existed as a group of friends teaching and writing in the same place at the same time, with closely related orientations, though with important differences too, but with a considerable sense of working together. The Yale School was an event that took place and that had wide-reaching consequences.

2 Such "schools" or "circles" are rarely the result of conscious planning or collaboration. They happen more or less contingently, accidentally, fortuitously. Frank Lentricchia, notoriously, speaks of the Yale School as a kind of Mafia, with Paul de Man the *capo di tutti capi*, meeting secretly in some member's kitchen to plot collectively the overthrow of the Western tradition (Lentricchia 1980, 283–84). The historical fact is that the five primary members of the Yale School, Harold Bloom, Geoffrey Hartman, Jacques Derrida, Paul de Man, and me, never once met together in a bunch, for example to plan our so-called "manifesto," *Deconstruction and Criticism* (Bloom et al. 1979). Whatever we did was all done rather casually two by two by telephone or in lunchtime or teatime encounters, also two by two.

You will notice that these original members were all men. That is a big limitation. It is hard these days to remember the unconscious sexism that dominated in American higher education in those days. It was only when Shoshana Felman, Barbara Johnson, and others were added to the Yale Humanities Faculty, as part of a second generation at least loosely representing the Yale School or at least "theory" at Yale (Felman was an avowed Lacanian), that this injustice even began to be rectified. Their appointments, chiefly in the Yale French Department or in Comparative Literature, were primarily the work of Paul de Man, first Chair of French, then of Comparative Literature. De Man often made these appointments in the teeth of objections from his departmental colleagues.

3 The primary interest of the work in teaching and publication of such schools or circles, certainly of the Yale School, is not their formulation of some "theory," as is often mistakenly thought to be the case, but the new "readings" of traditional literary or philosophical works that are facilitated by novel theoretical presuppositions or orientations. These originalities, for the Yale School, meant a new sort of attention to figures of speech and other formal features of language, such as irony. De Man called this "rhetorical reading," that is, close analysis of linguistic details, especially tropes, in the text being read.

"Rhetorical reading" is a better name than "deconstruction" for what the members of the Yale School were in different ways doing. That was the term for the study of figural language that Paul de Man often used for his enterprise, as does his distinguished interpreter, Andrzej Warminski. When Wayne Booth uses the term "rhetoric," as in the titles of two of his books, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* and *The Rhetoric of Irony*, he means primarily rhetoric as persuasion, whereas de Man or

> I mean by it primarily the other branch of the ancient study of rhetoric, the investigation of figural language. The subtitle of de Man's first book, *Blindness and Insight*, is *Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism*, while the subtitle of his *Allegories of Reading* is *Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche, Rilke, and Proust*. For de Man, "rhetoric" and "figural language" are more or less synonymous. The so-called Manifesto of the Yale School, *Deconstruction and Criticism*, stands or falls by the persuasiveness of the readings of Shelley's "The Triumph of Life" it contains, not by the cogency of some theory that might be formulated in a sentence beginning, "Deconstruction is …" Harold Bloom and Geoffrey Hartman informed the other three of us that saying something about Shelley's poem was the one requirement for our essays. De Man, Derrida, and I carried out this program somewhat more conscientiously than the other two. We did extensive readings of Shelley's poem. That poem was a brilliant choice, for a number of reasons. "The Triumph of Life" is a wonderfully challenging, controversial poem. It is also a poem about reading and about the Western literary and philosophical tradition. It is a poem, that is, that concerns itself with just what the so-called "Yale School" was asking questions about and trying to get right. Choosing a poem by Shelley was also, as in Bloom's choice of Shelley as the topic of his PhD dissertation at Yale, another slap in the face of the dismissal of English romantic poetry and especially of Shelley by the New Critics. Citations from Shelley regularly appear in Brooks and Warren's *Understanding Poetry* as demonstrations of how not to do it: a passage from a Shelley poem ("Death is here, / Death is there, / Death is busy everywhere") is taken as an example of meter and rhyme lamentably failing to match the subject matter of a poem. All five members of the so-called Yale School were in one way or another both specialists in the eighteenth century (think Rousseau, Blake, etc.) and specialists in the then current revival of Romanticism (think Wordsworth, Friedrich Schlegel, etc.).[1]

Here is an account of how the Yale School was assembled, and then how it functioned. I swear I am telling the historical truth as well as I can remember it or reconstruct it. I am, however, neither an innocent spectator of the Yale School, nor a disinterested, objective scholar doing research about it. I was a participant. I attended that school, and I still have a deep investment in it. "Caveat Lector!"

Space limitations forbid a detailed account of the various encounters among the members of the so-called Yale School prior to their actual gathering together as senior faculty members at Yale. All had read some of one another's work. The various members had also already met, primarily at conferences, but more or less by accident and usually two or three or at a time.

One such conference was a Colloquium at Yale around 1964 on the current state of literary criticism (see Miller 1966). I first met de Man at that

conference. He delivered there the admirable paper on Lukács that subsequently appeared in *Blindness and Insight* (1971). In our first private conversation, walking down New Haven's Wall Street at lunch time during the conference, I told de Man I was deeply interested in "later Heidegger." "Oh no," said de Man, with great urgency, "later Heidegger is very dangerous. If you must read Heidegger, read *Sein und Zeit*." I only understood much later on that he was warning me not only against the nationalist, Nazi-sympathizing, Germanophile tendencies of Heidegger's later essays, but also against Heidegger's misreadings, for example his erroneous interpretation of Hölderlin as an apocalyptic poet, whereas Hölderlin, as Andrzej Warminski puts it in an e-mail note to me, "precisely warns us against such an apocalyptic temptation—and the certain crypto-Nazism that comes already with it." I took de Man at his word, and spent some time early every morning over the next year (on a fellowship in London) reading a few more pages of *Being and Time* (in English because my German was not up to it). So much for the mistaken idea that de Man was a Heideggerian (which for some is a covert way of saying he was a Nazi). Quite the reverse was true.

A better case can be made for saying that Derrida was a specialist in Heidegger. Most of his seminars sooner or later come back to Heidegger, often as a main theme, as in the very last seminars, "Beast and Sovereign II" (2002–2003), which juxtapose Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Heidegger's seminars on "World, Finitude, Solitude." Derrida once told me that he had written ten thousand pages on Heidegger. His remarks on Heidegger almost always end, however, by showing or asserting that Heidegger has it all wrong, for example in buying the traditional Western distinction between human beings and animals. Derrida invented the word "deconstruction" as an ironic modulation of Heidegger's *Destruktion*. This neologism is a way of saying that Heidegger claims to go beyond "metaphysics" by "destructing" it, but that metaphysics imperturbably reconstructs itself in his work. Hence "de-con-struction," a negative and a positive in the same word.

Next came the celebrated Hopkins Symposium of 1966, "The Structuralist Controversy." Derrida gave "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" at that conference (1970). Paul de Man was also present at that Symposium, though I don't remember any conversations with him during those days. Derrida's superb paper at the Hopkins Symposium was the inaugural "deconstructive" lecture in the United States. I missed hearing it because I had a class to teach at that hour, though of course I read it later. I met my Hopkins colleague Georges Poulet on the Hopkins campus after Derrida's lecture (and my class). He told me, with great generosity, that Derrida's paper was against everything in his (Poulet's) current work (which had to do with space as against Derrida's temporality, Geneva School consciousness as against Derrida's attention to language), but that it was without doubt the most important paper in the conference. It was more important, for example, than Jacques Lacan's somewhat pretentious and obscure talk, if I may dare to say so.[2]

When Derrida later began coming to Hopkins to give seminars, he and I used to meet for lunch, he at first speaking French, I English, until his spoken English far out-stripped my spoken French, to my shame. I went to Derrida's first seminar at Hopkins more or less to see if I could still understand spoken French. The seminar set side by side Mallarmé's prose poem, "Mimique," and Plato's "Phaedrus," under the rubric of double mimesis. I thought it was a spectacular seminar and still do. I thereafter attended all Derrida's seminars (except a few I had to miss) at Hopkins, Yale, and Irvine for all the years after that until Derrida's death, just as I attended, along with many other faculty, de Man's graduate seminars at Yale.

Early in 1968, de Man sponsored and organized, with money from the Humanities Center of the Johns Hopkins University, then directed by Charles S. Singleton, an important international "Symposium on Interpretation." It took place in Zürich from January 25 to January 27, 1968. The proceedings of this Symposium have unfortunately never been published, though publication was intended. John N. Kim, of the University of California–Riverside, is assembling, with the aim of publishing them at last, what remains of the papers, discussion, and correspondence. That symposium brought together in one small room for the give and take of intimate dialogue (no audience was present) representatives of so-called deconstruction (Derrida, de Man), Geneva School criticism (Poulet, Starobinski, Richard), Konstanz reception theory (Jauss), German hermeneutics (Gadamer), Zürich Germanistics (Staiger), and British criticism (Donoghue, Tanner). I also gave a paper at that conference (Miller 1968).

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After de Man's appointment at Yale in 1970, my appointment in 1972, and Derrida's agreement to come to Yale as a visitor each year for five weeks to give a course in lecture and seminar form, all five of the primary members of the Yale School were now assembled as colleagues in different departments at Yale. No idea yet existed of any formal collaboration. We each went on about our separate business of teaching, writing, and administering.

A move in the direction of organization took place when I published in *The New Republic*, on November 29, 1975, a small solicited essay on "The year's books: Literary criticism" (reprinted in Miller 1991). At the end of that essay, I had the temerity to announce the existence of a new group of literary critics at Yale. It happened that most of my colleagues in that group had published one or more books that year, though I was not among them, having published nothing but four essays, not counting the one in *The New Republic*. I am happy to say that in the latter I stressed the differences among the works by my colleagues, not the similarities that would have made them like a school of fish all swimming in unison.

Harold Bloom picked up on my brief article. He then concocted, with his remarkable gift for publicity, the idea of a collective volume gathering essays

by each of the five of us and to be published by Seabury Press, where he had an "in." Behold! With the publication of *Deconstruction and Criticism* the Yale School was born! I need to amplify a bit, however, what I said in that *New Republic* article of 1975, almost forty years ago now, about the sharply different stances and procedures in criticism of the five members of the Yale School. In the *New Republic* essay I focused most on the differences between Bloom and Hartman, my then new colleagues at Yale. What can I say now about the differences among Derrida, de Man, and myself, not to speak of their differences from Hartman and Bloom and them from one another? Published work by de Man and Derrida is so abundant, so challenging, and even so diverse that saying something brief but accurate about them is almost impossible. I have published a whole book just trying to say something cogent about Derrida's work and two long essays trying to specify just what de Man says in two of his signal essays, the one on Walter Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" and the one called "Allegory of Reading" (Miller 2009, 2012). An essay on de Man's "The Resistance to Theory" is forthcoming in a book coauthored with Claire Colebrook and Thomas Cohen (Miller, forthcoming). You must read de Man and Derrida for yourself to identify their differences, but a few basic points can be made here.

Hartman, at the time *Deconstruction and Criticism* was published, insisted that he and Bloom are "criticism," while the other three of us are "deconstruction." That is true enough. I mentioned in my *New Republic* article the way Bloom's work at that time was motivated by a resistance to de Man's thinking, in spite of his personal friendship with de Man. Bloom and Hartman have always been more "logocentric" than Derrida or de Man. Bloom wants to identify, celebrate, and preserve the "Western canon," in a way almost like T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in spite of Bloom's avowed distaste for Eliot.

Hartman, as I said in my *New Republic* piece, has a somewhat covert nostalgia for some solid transcendent ground for poetry, as in his wonderful essays, "False Themes and Gentle Minds" or "Romantic Poetry and the Genius Loci," in *Beyond Formalism* (Hartman 1970). The book's title is gently polemical, with its implicit jab at the formalism of critics that might even include Paul de Man, in spite of the latter's reservations about formalism in the New Critical or Russian Formalist sense. I might have made more explicit in my *New Republic* essay that Hartman's positive use of the term "word" often has, as a shadow behind it, Word in the sense of the Logos, the governing concept of so-called "logocentrism."

Derrida, de Man, and I, on the contrary, notoriously, wanted, in different ways, to put the Western tradition, what Derrida calls "logocentrism," or "metaphysics," in question. That putting in question goes by way of close attention to the texts in question, especially to the role of figurative language, word play, and irony, in order to show that their apparent logocentrism is copresent with its denial, its "deconstruction," if you want to call it that. You do not have to "deconstruct" a text, as one dismantles

a building. It deconstructs itself in internal complexities that rhetorical reading identifies.

My own primary interest in teaching and writing has always been accounting for literary texts by reading them for myself and trying to see what they really say and how they say it. Theory, for me, is ancillary to reading literary works, a handmaiden, not an end in itself.

Derrida was after all trained as a philosopher, not primarily as a literary critic, though he wrote brilliantly on many literary works. He puts logocentrism in question in part by strikingly new and revisionary readings of the masterworks of Western philosophy and literature, from Plato and Aristotle down through Shakespeare, Descartes, Rousseau, Kant, Shelley, Hegel, Melville, Nietzsche, Mallarmé, Freud, and many others, to Heidegger. These new readings show that the writings of these worthies are inhabited by something different from what they are traditionally assumed to be saying.

De Man puts in question thematic or "hermeneutic" readings through attention to what he beguilingly calls "stylistics," that is, to the complexities of "rhetoric" in the sense of figurative language. That is what de Man means by "rhetorical reading." He distinguishes sharply between these two kinds of reading, as in a notably ironic passage in "Conclusions: Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator'":

> When you do hermeneutics, you are concerned with the meaning of the work; when you do poetics, you are concerned with the stylistics or with the description of the way in which a work means. The question is whether these two are complementary, whether you can cover the full work by doing hermeneutics and poetics at the same time. The experience of trying to do this shows that it is not the case. When one tries to achieve this complementarity, the poetics always drops out, and what one always does is hermeneutics. One is so attracted by problems of meaning that it is impossible to do hermeneutics and poetics at the same time. From the moment you start to get involved with problems of meaning, as I unfortunately tend to do, forget about the poetics. The two are not complementary, the two may be mutually exclusive in a certain way, and that is part of the problem which Benjamin states, a purely linguistic problem.
>
> (de Man 1986b, 87)

Well, why try to do stylistics if you won't succeed anyway? De Man's answer, in a striking passage near the beginning of "The Resistance to Theory," is that trying and failing is a way of accounting for (not escaping from; there is no escape) the lies told by ideology:

> What we call ideology is precisely the confusion of linguistic with natural reality, of reference with phenomenalism. It follows that, more

> than any other mode of inquiry, including economics, the linguistics of literariness is a powerful and indispensable tool in the unmasking of ideological aberrations, as well as a determining factor in accounting for their occurrence. Those who reproach literary theory for being oblivious to social and historical (that is to say ideological) reality are merely stating their fear at having their own ideological mystifications exposed by the tool they are trying to discredit. They are, in short, very poor readers of Marx's German Ideology. (1986a, 11)

This passage invites extensive commentary, which I have attempted in another essay (Miller, forthcoming). De Man does not say, you will note, that mastery of "the linguistics of literariness" will cure you of ideological mystifications. The "linguistics of literariness," as the rest of "The Resistance to Theory" makes clear, is, first, the semiology of Saussure, Barthes, Jakobson, and others. It is also something quite different: de Manian or Derridean rhetorical reading, that is, the study of the way tropes interfere with unequivocal, paraphrasable, thematic, and hermeneutic meaning. Nothing, as de Man's essay makes clear, as does his other work, will allow an escape from ideology. Derrida was more hopeful, as in the recurrent use of the phrase, "the democracy to come," in his later work. De Man, on the contrary, just says the linguistics of literariness will account for the appearance of ideological aberrations, not cure us of them, for example, the belief by many Republicans in the United States these days that cutting taxes on the rich will "trickle down" as more jobs for the poor, or the widespread denial of human-caused climate change on the grounds that God or Mother Nature would not allow such a thing to happen, or the idea that the poor are poor just because they are lazy and do not work hard enough, with its racist overtones, or the belief that Obama is a communist Kenyan who hates America, or the belief that single-payer health care would not work in the United States. Political actions based on these ideological mystifications have already caused much suffering and will cause much more.

How does Derrida's work differ from the basic de Manian assertions in my two citations? Derrida and de Man would seem to be barking up the same tree. De Man taught and wrote brilliantly about a lot of the same texts Derrida taught and wrote about: Rousseau, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Mallarmé, Heidegger, and others. Each expressed his total allegiance to the work of the other. The answer to my question lies partly in their strikingly different procedures in a given essay or seminar, about which I'll say something below, but also in a fundamental difference in orientation that Derrida specified only near the end of his life.

This he did in the paper ("Typewriter Ribbon") he delivered at a conference in April 1998 at the University of California at Davis celebrating Paul de Man's work well after the latter's death in 1983 (Derrida 2001b). Even after all those years of close friendship and collaboration at Yale,

and even after Derrida's courageous defense of de Man after the revelation of de Man's wartime writings,[3] Derrida still remembers de Man's attack on his reading of Rousseau in the Derrida essay in *Blindness and Insight*. Derrida now in 1998 claims (when it is too late for de Man to answer back, because he is dead) that de Man misread him in that essay. He, Derrida, was, says Derrida, already saying in *Of Grammatology* what de Man says he ought to have said. It was not he who misunderstood Rousseau, but de Man who misunderstood what Derrida was saying about Rousseau.

Derrida then goes on to specify exactly what, in his view, was the main difference between them. Quite surprisingly, to me at least, the difference Derrida insists on is that between de Man's almost exclusive focus on language, especially tropes, and Derrida's primary interest in the "other of language," what Derrida in many places and contexts in his late work calls "*le tout autre*," "the wholly other." In a passage in the very late book already cited, *A Taste for the Secret*, Derrida affirms: "I do the best I can to mark the limits of the rhetorical—this was the crux of my profound debate with Paul de Man, who had a more 'rhetoricist' interpretation of deconstruction" (Derrida 2001a, 76). Beyond the limits of the rhetorical, for Derrida, is "the wholly other," *le tout autre*. De Man would be unlikely to speak of such a thing. That is a "profound" difference all right. It forbids anyone to speak of them as representing some univocal "deconstruction."

Two additional ways to get at the differences between de Man and Derrida are:

1 To set Derrida's magisterial essay, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy" (1986), against the passages from de Man about the linguistics of literariness I cited above. Though both agree that ideological error is a result of mistakes involving figurative language, Derrida's attention in "White Mythology" to "catachresis" in Aristotle's *Poetics* is a way of gesturing toward an "other" of language that did not concern de Man, except in occasional hints and whiffs, for example in what he says about the materiality of the letter.
2 To set against one another their readings of what Nietzsche says about rhetoric and tropes in "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," and in the extant notes for his lectures on rhetoric and language, not to speak of the later notes gathered as "The Will to Power." "Truth," says Nietzsche, is "a mobile host of metaphors, metonymies, and anthropomorphisms" ([1873] 2014). This is a way of saying it is not "truth" in the sense of a literal, constative statement of the way things are. Nietzsche was crucial for both Derrida and de Man. Space limitations, however, forbid showing in any detail how their readings of Nietzsche differ. Once again, however, de Man's "take" on Nietzsche is more purely "rhetoricist" than Derrida's (see de Man 1979a; Derrida's work on Nietzsche is too abundant to be listed here).

Nietzsche's work on rhetoric and on tropes has also been important for my own thinking, teaching, and writing, but that is another tale out of school too long to tell here.

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I have suggested that the distinctions among the five original members of the Yale School were a matter of differing "theoretical" presuppositions. They also differed fundamentally in their procedures of writing and teaching. (Hermeneutics against stylistics once more!) All four of my colleagues were spectacular teachers and immensely gifted writers, but they did both of these things quite differently from one another. If form is meaning, as to some degree it is, then the difference in strategic form of essays by members of the "Yale School" is of crucial importance.

Harold Bloom is so talented, so learned, and so original that his teaching and writing are *sui generis*. Nobody is like him, so he is hard to characterize. Bloom has read everything and has more or less total recall of everything he has read. That may be why he has interested himself in the anxiety of influence. If you have read everything, how can you be sure any of your thoughts are your own? You may have picked a given idea up somewhere in your reading. Most of us do not have that problem, at least not so acutely.

Bloom is a gifted inventor of theoretical schemata that use unexpected terms, as in the use in *Kabbalah and Criticism* (1975) of Kabbalistic terminology or of Gnostic terminology taken from Isaac Luria (1534–72). He uses Greek terms, however, for the "six revisionary ratios" in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973): *clinamen*, *tessera*, *kenosis*, *daemonization*, *askesis*, and *apophrades*. This somewhat wild terminology is partly a cheeky response to the use of traditional Greek terms for tropes (metaphor, metonymy) by the New Criticism and by later theorists, including Paul de Man. Bloom's unorthodox terminology is one way of asserting his originality and detachment from any "School."

Bloom has a strongly spatial imagination, as in books like *The Anxiety of Influence* and *A Map of Misreading* (1975). He has a penchant for using spatial diagrams on the blackboard in a seminar. As in the case of Northrop Frye, an early influence on his thinking, the whole of Western Literature, it seems, is simultaneously present at all times before Bloom's mind's eye as a vast interconnected unity. Following one of his great models, Samuel Johnson, Bloom has taken upon himself the right to discriminate decisively between good and bad among Western writers, as in his championship of Shakespeare as the greatest Western writer, or in his praise for Ammons, Ashbery, Bishop, and Merrill as against W. C. Williams, Ginsberg, and others. among modern American poets. Bloom is wont to lay down the law pro and con with a voice of magisterial authority.

In spite of Bloom's penchant for theoretical schemes, his abiding goal has not been the creation of a new literary theory but the rescue of what he calls, in the title of one of his later books, *The Western Canon* (1994). He

wants to protect the Canon from the threats of "the School of Resentment," meaning cultural studies, feminism, and the like, as well as from what he saw as the destructive effects of "deconstruction" or rhetorical reading as practiced by de Man and Derrida. That did not keep Bloom from supporting Paul de Man for a Sterling Professorship at Yale. He rejoiced in having worthy antagonists. Bloom's creation of the Yale School through inventing the project carried out in *Deconstruction and Criticism* was only a moment in the long trajectory of a career in lecturing, teaching, and writing that has had wide influence (for a fuller account and bibliography see the Wikipedia entry for Harold Bloom).

Geoffrey Hartman's model is the "essay," not in the sense of Montaigne's or Charles Lamb's informal essays, but in the quite specific sense of the sort of essays that used to appear in the German-speaking world in newspapers such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* or the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. György Lukács long ago wrote an essay on this genre (2010). Walter Benjamin's essays are models of such works. Paul de Man's essays bear the traces of the model. Such essays presuppose a large highly educated nonacademic newspaper-reading community, such as the U.S. has not really ever had, then or now. Hartman's essays are highly allusive, witty, learned, full of wordplay and indirections. They do not follow a clear logical sequence from here to there. They consist, rather, of a series of hints, suggestions, and somewhat enigmatic formulations that often depend on figurative comparisons. The European essay as a genre becomes to some degree mixed in Hartman's work with the quite different conventions of an article for an American academic journal such as *ELH*, *PMLA*, or *Philological Quarterly*, the latter of which published "False Themes and Gentle Minds."

The New York Review of Books and *The New York Times Book Review* are not quite a valid parallel to those German dailies. What would the average reader of either make of Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator," not to speak of Hartman's "False Themes and Gentle Minds," or of de Man's "The Resistance to Theory"?

Hartman has nevertheless persisted in writing, as if there were in the English-speaking world an audience like that for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. He has perhaps to some degree helped to create a fragile one, namely the community of those who read Hartman's essays. Hartman, in his entry in the Yale English Department website, affirms his commitment to the essay in this sense. "My interests," he says, "are predominantly in the study of poetry and issues of interpretation. But I suspect I am at heart an essayist always finding something of basic human and social interest" (Hartman 2014).

Just as Bloom after the dispersal of the Yale School has gone on following in teaching and writing his commitment to saving the Western canon, so Geoffrey Hartman has in recent years turned to wonderful work on the Holocaust, not only in his own writing, as in *The Longest Shadow: In the*

Aftermath of the Holocaust (1996) and in *A Scholar's Tale: Intellectual Journey of a Displaced Child of Europe* (2007), but also in all he has done to establish Jewish Studies at Yale and to aid in the recording of memories of Holocaust survivors. Hartman's wife and her sister are survivors, and he was saved from the Holocaust by being a member of the *Kindertransport* that took children from Nazi Germany to England.

Most of my own recent essays begin by interrogating some term or other, often the theme-term I am supposed to be writing a commissioned essay about, such as this one you are now reading. It begins, you will have noted, by worrying about the meanings of the words "school" and "circle." The essays then go on at some point to do what I like best to do, that is, to try to figure out what a given text, often a literary text, but sometimes a "theoretical" or philosophical one, "really says." I do this by closely reading, as best I can, its rhetoric in the sense both of persuasive argumentation or story-telling (hermeneutics) and in the sense of the text's uses of figurative language that complicate or even contradict that logical or narrative coherence (stylistics). As de Man says will happen, I try (and always fail) to do a purely "stylistic" reading rather than a thematic or hermeneutic one. Or I try to reconcile the two, which cannot be done, since rhetorical reading, study of "the linguistics of literariness" in a given case, always upsets thematic readings. That, you are welcome to say, is a basic feature of the deconstructive moment in reading.

That leaves de Man and Derrida. How do their procedures in teaching and writing differ? It has taken me a thirty-page essay to spell these differences out in detail, using their two essays about religion as examples (de Man's "Allegory of Reading"; Derrida's "Faith and Knowledge") (Miller 2014). Here I must be brief, but I hope succinctly accurate, about a complex matter.

De Man's essays characteristically proceed in four logically progressive steps: (1) first a summary of what previous critics have said about a given text; (2) then a close reading of the text that shows the previous critics were demonstrably wrong, often absurdly wrong; (3) then a conclusion about what the text really says drawn from his close reading of it; (4) finally a challenging concluding generalization, for example the last sentence of the essay in *Allegories of Reading* on Rousseau's *Profession de foi*: "One sees from this that the impossibility of reading should not be taken too lightly" (1979b, 245).

De Man's superb graduate seminars took the same form. Attendees knew the two hours were going to involve a lot of close attention to the text at hand that would involve much intellectual agility to follow. Even when I knew the text in question quite well or thought I knew what de Man would be likely to say about it, I was always surprised. My assumptions about the text's meaning and rhetorical strategies were decisively challenged. You knew also that you must keep alert and attentive waiting for that final enigmatic formulation at the very end, which was the most important moment

of the whole two-hour performance, its upshot. The right to make the quietly and ironically defiant concluding formulation was "earned" by the close reading.

Derrida's rhetorical procedures, I assert, are the reverse of de Man's. "Faith and Knowledge," like so many of Derrida's essays and seminars, begins with an enigmatic formulation. Other examples out of many are the opening of "Psyche: Invention of the Other" (also in part about religion): "What else am I going to be able to invent?" (Derrida 2007, 1); or the quotation from Montaigne, who cites a remark attributed to Aristotle, that opens every session of the seminars published as *Politics of Friendship:* "O my friends, there is no friend" (Derrida 1997, vii); or the first line of "Literature in Secret: An impossible Filiation" (also about religion; the epigraph is: "'God,' if you'll pardon the expression"). I must give the first line of the essay proper in French, since it is so multiple in meaning: "*Pardon de ne pas vouloir dire.*" Derrida says (in the translation) this means "Pardon for not meaning (to say)" (1995, 119), but the meaning is much more complex than that, as I have elsewhere argued (Miller 2009, 198–199).

In the case of "Faith and Knowledge" the enigmatic initial formulation is the allusive, and parodying subtitle: "The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone." Note that "Religion" is in quotation marks, as if to stress that its meaning cannot be taken for granted. The allusions in Derrida's subtitle are to Henri Bergson's *The Two Sources of Morality and of Religion* (1932) and to Immanuel Kant's *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone* (1793). The immensely complex, wandering, discontinuous, contradictory, paradoxical, and rich essay that follows Derrida's subtitle is an elaborate digressive deciphering, explicating, or unfolding, of what that initial formulation means or implies. This deciphering is never complete and can in principle never be complete, since it leads everywhere. The essay, like all of Derrida's work, is full of puns and wordplay, as were his seminars, which were almost always preparatory versions of his published work. "Faith and Knowledge" does not end with some challenging final formulation like those that ended de Man's seminars and essays. It just stops, with an allusive coda referring to Freud's *Gradiva* essay and to Jean Genet's *Genet et Chatila.*

This radical difference in rhetorical strategies between Derrida and de Man shows that so-called deconstruction is by no means a unitary "theory" or a unitary method of reading or a unitary set of ideas. This duplicity should not be taken too lightly in attempts to say what the deconstruction of the so-called Yale School "is" or to say where we are going, or ought to go, "after deconstruction," whose death has been prematurely announced.

I suggest that the difference in rhetorical strategy between Derrida and de Man derives from that distinction Derrida identifies. De Man has "a more 'rhetoricist' interpretation of deconstruction," that is, he focuses on the discrepancy between *what* is said, the meaning of a given text that he reads, and *how* it is said, its use of figurative language and other rhetorical

devices. Derrida, on the contrary, tries to "mark the limits of the linguistic and the limits of the rhetorical." What is beyond those limits is given the name "religion" in "Faith and Knowledge." Elsewhere he repeatedly calls it "the wholly other."

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I conclude by saying a few words about how the work of the Yale School members was to some degree institutionalized at Yale and then assimilated in universities and colleges in the United States and around the world. As Andrzej Warminski quite correctly asserts (2013, 227–28), this institutionalization at Yale and the diffusion elsewhere took place always in the teeth of resentment and strenuous resistance (the "resistance to theory"!). Far from being dominant at Yale, the so-called Yale School remained a somewhat beleaguered minority that many Yale humanists were glad to see the last of when it disappeared. That happened partly through the refusal of tenure to most (but not all) of those associated with the "Yale School" who received nontenured appointments at Yale and might have carried it on. Yale and other Ivy League schools tenured only few of their assistant professors, even though the appointments were labeled as "tenure-track." That was changing a bit even during my time there, which ended in 1986, with the tenuring of, for example, Barbara Johnson and Margret Ferguson, both of whom soon left Yale but who had gained tenure. Nevertheless, the policy of not tenuring assistant professors resulted, whether consciously or not, in preventing the Yale School from getting permanently institutionalized at Yale. De Man, a week before his death, said to me, "I have not changed Yale one bit." I protested by specifying all the ways he had changed Yale, but he insisted that he was right. He pretty much *was* right.

The institutionalization at Yale of rhetorical reading and its national and global influence happened, in spite of much opposition, in the obvious ways: through teaching, publication, lecturing, and through the appointment at Yale and elsewhere of younger scholars who had been influenced by the work in teaching and writing of the original five Yale School members. Generations of Yale graduate students attended de Man's seminars, or Derrida's annual lectures, or the graduate seminars of the other three of us. All five of us directed many PhD dissertations. The Literature Major taught generations of Yale undergraduates rhetorical reading. The Literature Major was originally founded by Michael Holquist and Peter Brooks as an undergraduate comparative literature program with a pronounced structuralist bent, but when Paul de Man, Geoffrey Hartman, and I began to teach in it, later joined by Andrzej Warminski, Barbara Johnson, Keven Newmark, and others, the Literature Major became the most conspicuous institutionalization at Yale of rhetorical reading at the undergraduate level. This was especially centered in "Lit Z," "Reading and Rhetorical Structures," the third of the basic Freshman/Sophomore courses. The lectures were given by Paul de Man with one or another additional faculty member from year to year:

Hartman, Warminski, or I (for one year), with graduate students to lead the discussion sections. I remember de Man asserting to me at one point with obvious pleasure that we were demonstrating how teaching "rhetorical reading" could be pedagogically successful.

The second generation of those committed to rhetorical reading included as faculty members at Yale: Barbara Johnson, Ellen Burt, Shoshana Felman, Andrzej Warminski, Cathy Caruth, Kevin Newmark, Margaret Ferguson, and others. All have done since then extremely important work in teaching and writing. Warminski, for example, has become, among other things, in his writing and teaching the most distinguished, perceptive, and authoritative reader of Paul de Man's work. He has also been one of the few critics who can extrapolate beyond de Man's readings of such authors as Kant and Hegel. He has published a wonderfully cogent, detailed, and accurate account of "Deconstruction at Yale" as he participated in it. This account was in response to interview questions by Stuart Barnett (Warminski 2013). I am grateful to Warminski for advice and comments on this present essay.

All these second generation scholars ultimately left Yale for other universities, thereby further spreading the word in their distinctive ways. But many others who were students at Yale rather than faculty there deserve mention as influenced by the "Yale School," for example Cynthia Chase, a graduate student of de Man's at Yale and now a professor at Cornell, or Ian Balfour, now a professor at York University in Toronto, or Marc Redfield, who was an undergraduate at Yale at that time. Redfield has gone on to a brilliant career in teaching and scholarship and is now a professor at Brown University. He is at work on his own history of the Yale School. Redfield published recently a powerful collection of essays by various scholars called *Legacies of Paul de Man* (2007). The volume contains admirable essays by Cynthia Chase, Jan Mieszkowski, Ian Balfour, Andrzej Warminski, Sara Guyer, Arkady Plotnitsky, Rei Terada, and Redfield himself.

What is most conspicuous about all those I have mentioned in the last two paragraphs is the striking diversity and independence of their work. So-called "deconstruction" seems to foster thinking and reading for oneself, though no doubt close attention to details of language is in one way or another a presupposition for all I have mentioned.

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After de Man's death in 1983 and my subsequent departure in 1986 with Jacques Derrida to join the faculty of the University of California–Irvine (Derrida as a five-week-a-year visitor), and after the moves of Andrzej Warminski and Ellen Burt from Yale to Irvine, the Yale School began to be dispersed as a distinguishable entity, even if always a somewhat fictitious one, at Yale. That means it lasted about ten years. It lived on, however, in its national and global diffusion. That continues even now, as I am writing this essay in 2014. *Wikipedia* has an alphabetical "List of thinkers

influenced by deconstruction" that was first posted in 1996 and since greatly augmented. It goes on for pages and is pretty heterogeneous, but even so does not include such obvious names as Thomas Cohen, Kevin Newmark, Andrzej Warminski, Claire Colebrook, Peter Krapp, and many others I can think of offhand. A full list would be very long indeed, especially if it were expanded to global proportions, since scholars from all over the world have been influenced by Yale School publications and lectures.

All five of the original Yale School members lectured all over the world. Those lectures often had a marked influence on members of their audiences. A modest example is the more than thirty lectures I have given from 1988 to 2012 at various universities in the Peoples Republic of China. Derrida lectured all over the world, for example in Brazil, in Russia, and also in China. I know from talking to people who attended his lectures here or there that they found hearing him speak a turning point in their lives. That was my own experience. I still at Irvine attended all Derrida's public seminars there, along with many other faculty and students from universities all over southern California and indeed from around the United States and the world. People kept dropping in from all over.

The so-called Yale School is far from dead. To borrow a word from the title of Derrida's essay in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, it is a case of *survivre*, "living on," in its dissemination. Deconstruction and rhetorical reading have dehisced, to borrow yet another Derridian word, like a seedpod opening and releasing seeds blown by the wind. The resulting new plants are not necessarily true to type, however. They tend to be productive and unpredictable mutations.

NOTES

1. It may seem surprising nowadays to emphasize their eighteenth-century orientation and it is hard to remember how important eighteenth-century studies were in the formation of members of my generation. Though I became officially a Victorianist and wrote my PhD dissertation on Dickens, I had many undergraduate and graduate courses in eighteenth-century writers and hardly any in either romanticism or Victorian literature. One need only remember such a distinguished essay by Geoffrey Hartman as "False Themes and Gentle Minds" to see that he approached Wordsworth from an eighteenth-century perspective. The long friendship between Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida began when they first met and discovered each was interested in an obscure essay on language by Rousseau. Rousseau and other eighteenth-century theorists of language are crucial in Derrida's first masterwork, *Of Grammatology*. The whole second section of de Man's *Allegories of Reading*, more than half the book, is a series of admirably innovative "rhetorical readings" of works by Rousseau. "*Allegories of Reading*," says de Man somewhat ruefully in its Preface, "started out as a historical study and ended up as a theory of reading. I began to read Rousseau seriously in preparation for a historical reflection on Romanticism and found myself unable

to progress beyond local difficulties of interpretation" (de Man 1979c, ix). Harold Bloom knows everything and has written on the whole Western canon, with important books, for example, on the "modernists" W. B. Yeats and Wallace Stevens. His first book, *Shelley's Myth-making*, based on his PhD dissertation at Yale, was a reaction against the hegemony of eighteenth-century specialists (Pope, Boswell, etc.) at Yale. Bloom's Shelley book, along with Hartman's great book on Wordsworth, initiated a major shift to study of Romanticism.

2. Lacan was also wrong about the relation between zero and one, but that is another tale out of school. Lacan says the difficulty is to get from one to two, whereas the actual difficulty is to get from zero to one, since zero is and is not a number, whereas one and two are both numbers, therefore commensurate. (Miller 2003a, 2003b, 377–80).
3. I would not wish to exonerate de Man, but I strongly believe that explaining some features of "deconstruction" (aporias; undecidability, etc.) as caused by de Man's attempts at self-exoneration is a big mistake. It is a non sequitur, the aboriginal *post hoc ergo propter hoc* error. If this connection were correct, it would have to apply also to Derrida and many others, since they agree so closely about how to read, but Derrida was not guilty of de Man's misdeeds. The procedures, assumptions, and conclusions of so-called "deconstruction" or of "rhetorical reading" must stand or fall on their own merits. They cannot be explained or accounted for by references to the biographies of de Man, Derrida, or others. For a different take on this question see Jacques Derrida's elaborate reading of de Man's essay, "Excuses (Confessions)" in Derrida 2001b, 284 and *passim*.

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8 The Chicago School

From Neo-Aristotelian Poetics to the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative

James Phelan

I start with two disparate facts: (1) In standard histories of twentieth-century literary criticism, such as Vincent Leitch's *American Literary Criticism Since the 1930s*, the Chicago School, the name given to a group of like-minded literary critics and theorists at the University of Chicago in the mid-twentieth century, occupies a minor place. (2) Just about any contemporary discussion of narrative theory would place rhetorical theory in the mainstream of the field—and, whether the discussion acknowledges the point or not, current rhetorical theory is part of a tradition that started with the first generation of the Chicago School.

The disparity between these facts is due in part to narrative theory's own lowly place in the hierarchy of schools and movements operating in histories such as Leitch's and in most anthologies of critical theory, and, indeed, I do not mean to disparage the combination of impressive learning and sound judgment that I find in Leitch's book.[1] However, I start with the disparity because it provides the ground for the twin goals of this essay: to offer a succinct and coherent account of the work of that first generation and to revise the standard narrative about their importance and influence.

The standard narrative says that the group tried to found a criticism upon principles derived from Aristotle's *Poetics* (hence, they were also known as neo-Aristotelians), that they proposed their method as a superior alternative to that of the New Critics, and that they failed in that effort. In addition, the School's limited influence did not last beyond the lives of its first-generation members and those of a few of their students—with the notable exception of the work of Wayne C. Booth in the second generation. The revised narrative counters that the first generation's failure to dislodge the New Criticism has obscured the success of the Chicago School over the long term. More specifically, the principles, methods, and (some of) the conclusions of the first generation drew the attention of numerous later critics, a significant subset of whom found this work especially powerful for the project of understanding narrative.[2] These later critics, spread across several generations, deepened, extended, and revised the project of that first generation with the result that their neo-Aristotelian poetics has morphed into the rhetorical theory of narrative. Furthermore, rhetorical theory is an ongoing enterprise that has a major place in contemporary narrative theory, itself

an increasingly important field in the age of the Narrative Turn. Rhetorical theory has established itself as a distinctive and appealing approach by conceiving of narrative not as a structure of meanings but rather as a rhetorical action, a multilayered purposive communication from author to audience. This conception leads rhetorical theorists to emphasize and to unpack the interactions of form, affect, ideology, and ethics in both the construction and the reception of narrative.

CHICAGO SCHOOL PLURALISM

The main members of the first generation, R. S. Crane, Elder Olson, Richard McKeon, Norman Maclean, W. R. Keast, and Bernard Weinberg, each contributed at least two essays to *Critics and Criticism* (1952, edited by Crane), the volume that most fully describes their critical program. Collectively, they defined that program as having two dimensions, one critical or interpretive and the other metacritical. I begin with the metacritical dimension because it helps contextualize the interpretive one and because it has shaped editorial practices at two important journals and one book series. The metacritical dimension addresses the question "How do different methods of conceiving and analyzing literary works relate to each other?"

Crane and his colleagues answer the question by adopting a pluralist position.[3] Booth, who was a student of Crane's, extends their arguments in *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism* (1979). Although Booth considers Crane as just one of three exemplary pluralists (Kenneth Burke and M. H. Abrams are the others), *Critical Understanding* reinforces the first generation's commitments to and ways of thinking about pluralism.[4] This position rejects (1) relativism or skepticism, the view that all methods and their findings are equally valid and productive (or invalid and unproductive); (2) syncretism or eclecticism, the view that each method is partially valid and the best results are to be found by combining their partial truths; and (3) monism or dogmatism, the position that there is one best method. Chicago pluralism contends that there are multiple legitimate conceptions of literature and, thus, multiple valid and productive critical methods, even as it also holds that not all conceptions and all methods are equally valid and productive. These positions entail three other important principles:

1. The knowledge generated by literary criticism depends upon both the nature of the literary object and the conceptual lenses through which one views it.
2. The nature of the literary object is itself plural (it is simultaneously an autonomous formal system, a situated historical production, a site for the revelation and exploration of the relations between gender and power, and many other things as well). Thus, any systematic method,

however adequate in itself, will produce only one of many possible kinds of knowledge about it.

3 The larger enterprise of literary criticism benefits from the coexistence of multiple methodologies and the different kinds of knowledge they generate.

What happens when two different methods claim to generate the same kind of knowledge, as happened when both the Chicago Critics and the New Critics proposed their incompatible accounts of literary works as distinctive formal wholes? In such cases, the important steps are to identify relevant common ground and to determine which method offers a more adequate account of that ground. In the case of, say, a lyric poem, we can ask which method is more likely to yield an analysis that better passes three tests germane to the concept of a formal whole:

1. *Coherence*—how well does each method's account of the poem demonstrate how its parts work together (or even against each other) to produce (or fail to produce) something that is greater than their mere sum?
2. *Comprehensiveness*—how well does the account succeed in explaining all the parts of the poem?
3. *Correspondence or precision*—how well does the account explain the specific contributions (or interferences) of the poem's parts to the larger whole?

After I explicate the interpretive dimension of the Chicago School project below, I consider how well the Chicago Critics' claims for superiority to the New Critics stand up in a specific case.

Deeply influenced by the first generation during his PhD training at Chicago in the mid-1950s, Sheldon Sacks in 1974 founded a new journal of critical theory on pluralist principles. Although Sacks wanted *Critical Inquiry* to be an occasional outlet for strong work in the neo-Aristotelian tradition, neither he nor his coeditors, Booth and Arthur Heiserman, wanted it be a house organ blaring hymns of praise for the Stagyrite and his followers. As Sacks put it in his Editor's column in the first issue:

> Pluralists all, [Booth, Heiserman, and I] wanted to encourage a wide diversity of critical approaches in our unborn journal. Yet, prone to regard eclecticism as a term of disparagement rather than praise, the three of us were united in our desire to gather together inquirers from a variety of fields who, no matter how disparate their interests and philosophical commitments on other issues, conceived of criticism as responsible exploration. We sought critics who value examination of the assumptions underlying particular discriminations about works of art and insist upon the highest standards of evidence relevant to conclusions drawn in practical criticism. (1974, iii)

Under Sacks's direction until his untimely death at the age of forty-eight in 1979, *Critical Inquiry* established itself not only as one of the premier outlets for cutting-edge work in critical theory but also as the sponsor of important debates between and among critics with different views, including one between M. H. Abrams ("Deconstructive") and J. Hillis Miller ("Critic") under the rubric "The Limits of Pluralism." Without Sacks's firm commitment to pluralism, the journal would have been neither so successful nor so influential.

I had studied with both Booth and Sacks at Chicago during the period that they were launching *Critical Inquiry,* receiving my PhD in 1977, and that experience led me, when I became editor of *Narrative* in 1992, to make pluralism one of the foundational principles of the journal's editorial policy. Peter J. Rabinowitz had studied with Booth just a few years before (PhD, 1972), and, thus, it is not surprising that, when we began to coedit the Theory and Interpretation of Narrative Series at the Ohio State University Press in the early 1990s, we readily agreed that pluralism should be one of our first principles. We have always done our editorial work with the twin beliefs that the field of narrative theory is best served by the flourishing of multiple approaches and that the field is ill served by a commitment to multiplicity for multiplicity's sake. Whatever influence the journal and the book series have in the field is due in large part to our commitment to the pluralism advocated by the first generation and passed down to us by our own teachers.

CHICAGO SCHOOL THEORY AND INTERPRETATION

In section III of his "Introduction" to *Critics and Criticism*, R. S. Crane explains how he and the other contributors view the relation between the *Poetics* and the interpretive dimension of their project. I start with two especially salient passages:

> The important thing in Aristotle for [the contributors to this volume] is not so much the statements of doctrine and history contained in the *Poetics* itself as the method through which these statements are derived and validated in the arguments of the treatise when it is read in the light of the methodological principles stated explicitly in its author's other works or inferable from them. The Aristotle [the contributors] have thus reconstructed is not [identical to] the Aristotle of [his scholarly] commentators. […] It may not, indeed, except in a general way, be Aristotle at all! They think it is; but, whether Aristotle's or not, the poetic method which they credit to him can be […] made accessible […] as a method for common use today.
>
> (Crane 1952a, 17)

This passage puts the "neo" in "neo-Aristotelian" in two related ways. (1) The Chicago Critics are less interested in Aristotle's conclusions (his "statements of doctrine") than in his method of reasoning about poetics, a method that they characterized as reasoning back from the effects of a work to their causes in the work itself. As Crane says later in the "Introduction," since the *Poetics* discusses only Greek tragedy and epic, critics should not assume that its conclusions will apply to "the achievements of writers of all kinds since antiquity" (Crane 1952a, 19). (2) The Chicago Critics are less interested in getting Aristotle right or in being "true" to the *Poetics* than they are in using his treatise as a springboard to their own viable system for dealing with those diverse achievements of writers since antiquity.

The second paragraph from *Critics and Criticism* continues this thought:

> Aristotle, uniquely among systematic critics, […] grasped the distinctive nature of poetic works as *synola*, or concrete artistic wholes, and made available, though only in outline sketch, hypotheses and analytical devices for defining literally and inductively, and with a maximum degree of differentiation, the multiple causes operative in the construction of poetic wholes of various kinds and the criteria of excellence appropriate to each.
>
> (Crane 1952a, 17)

This single sentence is packed with many concepts crucial to the first generation's adaptation of the *Poetics*.

1. "Systematic critics"—Crane and his colleagues were in full agreement with the New Critics about the need to develop an interpretive method rooted in a principled understanding of the nature of literary works. Their disagreements were about the specifics of that understanding and its consequences for method.
2. "S*ynola,* or concrete artistic wholes"—In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle defines a synolon as a composite of matter and form, but one in which the form determines the specific shape of the matter. In Aristotle's famous definition of tragedy in Chapter 6 of the *Poetics* as the imitation of an action arousing pity and fear and leading to the purgation of those emotions, the "action imitated" is the matter shaped by the tragic form—and it is shaped so that it can generate in its audience those emotive effects. The neo-Aristotelians, then, viewed "concrete artistic wholes" as designed to shape their various elements in the service of generating particular effects in their audiences. This combination of shaping and effect constitutes the work's "power" or purpose. Different forms do their shaping in different ways for different ends, and thus, a worthwhile critical project is to identify those different forms and analyze how they work.
3. "Multiple causes operative in the construction"—Here too the Chicago Critics go beyond the particulars of the *Poetics* and draw on Aristotle's

discussion of causation in the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. Aristotle distinguishes among formal, efficient, material, and final causes, and the Chicago Critics align them with the objects, manner, means, and purposes of imitation. Thus, the formal cause of a prose fiction corresponds to the objects of imitation (plot, character, and thought); the efficient cause to the manner of imitation (the various techniques through which the objects are revealed); the material cause to the means of imitation (language); and the final cause to the work's purpose or "power."

4. "Hypotheses and analytical devices for defining literally and inductively"—Although the *Poetics* reads as if it advocates a deductive approach to analyzing tragedy, the Chicago Critics emphasized the inductive method by which Aristotle arrived at his conclusions. They regard the whole treatise as arising from Aristotle's experiences and his observations of others' experiences as members of the audience for tragedy and epic. If the audience feels pity and fear and a purgation of those emotions, what has the poet done in his shaping of the object, manner, and means of imitation to give them that affective experience? In this way, the first generation committed themselves to an a posteriori rather than an a priori method of analysis.
5. "With a maximum degree of differentiation"—Like Aristotle (and unlike Plato), the first generation were splitters rather than lumpers. They regarded literary works as offering a wide range of experiences to their audiences and they believed that in order to do justice to that range, they needed to distinguish among genres (tragedy, comedy, satire, and so on), subtypes of those genres (punitive comedy such as *Volpone* versus comedy of fulfillment such as *Twelfth Night*), and the distinctive powers of individual works. This interest, as well as the influence of Aristotle's emphasis on the emotional effects of tragedy, led them to make a broad general distinction between mimetic works such as comedies and tragedies in which emotional effects are dominant, and didactic works such as satires and thesis novels in which emotional effects are subordinate to thematic ones.
6. "The criteria of excellence appropriate to each"—The main criterion for judging the excellence of a work is its capacity to move its audience in a significant way. The main criterion for judging the parts of a work is their functional contributions to the work's purpose or power.

Critics and Criticism offers multiple examples of these principles in action, none better than Crane's "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*." Crane's project is to use Aristotle's discussion of plot in tragedy as a model for fashioning an updated concept appropriate to drama since Sophocles and to the novel, with Fielding's widely discussed comic plot as his test case. Crane develops his concept in several steps, with each one adding an important layer: (1) plot is a "composite of three elements"—the objects (action, character, and thought), manner (techniques), and means (language)

of imitation; (2) plot is "the particular temporal synthesis" (1952c, 620) of the elements of action, character, and thought (with manner and means playing a significant supporting role in that synthesis), and, thus, we can differentiate among plots of action, plots of character, and plots of thought, depending on which element is given the greatest prominence; (3) plot is the particular temporal synthesis of its elements "endowed […] with a power to affect our opinions and emotions in a certain way" (621); and (4) that power in turn "is a result of our state of knowledge at any point in complex interaction with our desires for the characters as morally differentiated beings" (622). Crane notes that this conception transforms plot from a means or framework by which or within which a novel does its work to "the final end which everything in the work, if that is to be felt as a whole, must be made, directly or indirectly, to serve" (622). In this way, neo-Aristotle makes even greater claims for plot than Aristotle.

Crane's analysis of *Tom Jones* demonstrates the explanatory power of his concept when deployed by a perceptive critic. He begins with a detailed analysis of the "dynamic system of actions" in *Tom Jones*, an analysis that corresponds to his first two theoretical steps and that he labels an account not of the "plot proper of the novel" but rather of its "necessary substrate of unified and probable action" (Crane 1952c, 631). He then moves to an account of the novel's emotional effects on its audience and the textual sources of them, an account that corresponds to his third and fourth theoretical steps. Crane gives special attention to the "comic analogues" of fear and pity that result from Fielding's representation of Tom as an ethical being (fundamentally good but prone to imprudent and even foolish behavior) in combination with the pattern of events in which he is consistently threatened but never ultimately harmed. Furthermore, the presence of these analogues as well as our awareness that Tom's ultimate good fortune depends upon a series of "hair's breadth" escapes means that the particular quality of Fielding's comedy is mixed: it is neither punitive nor amiable but serious. "We are not disposed to feel, when we are done laughing at Tom, that all is right with the world or that we can count on Fortune always intervening, in the same gratifying way, on behalf of the good" (638). All in all, Crane's essay provides an exemplary model of both neo-Aristotelian theorizing and analysis. At the same time, its conclusions remain hypotheses subject to testing and revision—and I'll discuss one significant revision when I take up the work of the second generation.

THE CHICAGO SCHOOL AND THE NEW CRITICISM

The first generation's interpretive project, with its emphasis on the multiple causes of the artistic whole, its understanding of language as the means rather than the end of that construction, and its emphasis on the affective power of literature, constituted a genuine alternative to the New Criticism. The New Critics also regarded literary works as distinctive formal wholes, but they

located that distinctiveness in literary language and the meanings it generated. Literary language, they argue, is different from nonliterary language, especially the language of science, because it puts a greater premium on connotation than on denotation. Indeed, as Cleanth Brooks (1951) contends in "Irony as a Principle of Structure," literary works achieve their formal integrity and excellence by means of their capacity for balancing the multiple, often paradoxically opposed, connotations of their language. This emphasis on literature as a special kind of language also undergirds the twin pillars of the New Critical method articulated by Monroe Beardsley and W. K. Wimsatt, the Intentional Fallacy and the Affective Fallacy. The first confuses the meaning of the text with its origins and the second with its results. These confusions are not only deplorable but also unnecessary: the meaning resides in the language of the text and that is where interpreters should direct their attention.

Crane, Elder Olson, and W. R. Keast all contribute essays to *Critics and Criticism* that seek to demonstrate the inadequacy of this New Critical conception of form. Indeed, the essays are so strongly negative in their assessments that they end up generating sympathy for their respective targets, Cleanth Brooks, William Empson, and Robert Heilman. Despite the over-the-top quality of these attacks, they are, finally, on target. By attributing the construction of form to a single cause, language, the New Critics offer a view of literature with noticeably less explanatory power than the neo-Aristotelians. Furthermore, by stipulating that literary language has the same recognizable properties across literary history, the New Critics are susceptible to the pitfalls of a priori analysis.

Consider, for example, Cleanth Brooks's discussion of Wordsworth's "She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways" (1798) in his influential essay, "Irony as a Principle of Structure." Brooks analyzes the poem to support his thesis that poetry works by establishing tensions between opposing meanings (his definition of irony) and that the "thrust and counterthrust" of linguistic meanings provide a poem's stability (1951, 737).

> She dwelt among the untrodden ways
> Beside the springs of Dove,
> A Maid whom there were none to praise
> And very few to love:
>
> A violet by a mossy stone
> Half hidden from the eye!
> —Fair as a star, when only one
> Is shining in the sky.
>
> She lived unknown, and few could know
> When Lucy ceased to be;
> But she is in her grave, and, oh,
> The difference to me!

After quoting the poem, Brooks asks, "Which is Lucy really like, the violet or the star?" and then argues that

> the violet and the star […] balance each other and between themselves define the situation: Lucy was, from the viewpoint of the great world, unnoticed, shy, modest, and half hidden from the eye, but from the standpoint of her lover, she is the single star, completely dominating that world, not arrogantly like the sun, but sweetly and modestly, like the star. (1951, 735)

From the perspective of the second decade of the twenty-first century, we are likely to find Brooks's reading inadequate because of its narrow focus on this balance of linguistic meanings and its neglect of context, ideology, and politics. The Chicago Critics, though, would have a more fundamental objection, finding it to be a weak account of the poem as a concrete artistic whole, and, thus, flawed on its own terms. Although they would find the reading to be admirably clear and coherent, they would point to problems with its precision and comprehensiveness. The opposition between the two metaphors arises less from the poem than from Brooks's a priori theory of irony as a principle of structure. It is Brooks not Wordsworth who poses the question, "Which is Lucy really like?" Furthermore, an a posteriori examination of the poem reveals that it is *not* structured on the binary oppositions between violet and star and between speaker and "great world." Instead, in all three stanzas, the speaker describes Lucy in language consistent with the violet metaphor, indicating that he holds the view Brooks attributes only to the great world. The second stanza adds the star metaphor to convey the speaker's perception of her *beauty*. It reveals that, for the speaker, Lucy is not the star but rather the half-hidden-violet-who-is-as-fair-as-a-star.

As for comprehensiveness, Brooks considers his analysis complete once he makes his case for the tension between the two metaphors. Because language is both means and end for Brooks and the New Critics, structure denotes "the thrust and counterthrust" of linguistic meanings rather than the organization and patterning of nonlinguistic building blocks such as stanzas. As a result, Brooks's reading gives most of its attention to the two allegedly oppositional metaphors and subordinates the little he has to say about the rest of the poem to that opposition.

A first generation Chicago School reading would be quite different—and would do better on the tests of precision and comprehensiveness. It would start with the poem's overall effects as indicative of the final cause: Wordsworth captures the poignancy and depth of the speaker's feelings of loss and grief and guides his audience to see those emotions from the inside. In reasoning back from these effects to their causes, the neo-Aristotelian would note that Wordsworth takes his objects of imitation (the speaker, Lucy, her death, and the speaker's responses to her) and renders them in a manner (the speaker's evolving perspective over the structural sequence of three stanzas)

and through particular means (his linguistic choices) in order to maximize these emotional effects. More specifically, Wordsworth uses his three-stanza sequence to move from the speaker's past-tense characterization of Lucy in life (stanzas 1 and 2) to the report of her death and his present-tense feelings of loss (stanza 3). Lines 11–12 are the emotional climax of the poem both because of that shift to the present and because all the language of the first two stanzas underlies his final general lament, allowing readers to feel (at least some of) "the difference" he feels between Lucy in life and Lucy in the grave.

If it's fair to conclude (as I perhaps inevitably do) that this neo-Aristotelian reading and the method on which it is based have more explanatory power than Brooks's reading and the method on which it is based, two important questions follow: Why did the New Criticism emerge relatively unscathed from the attacks in *Critics and Criticism*? Why didn't the Chicago School develop a broader following? Vincent Leitch, drawing in part on Grant Webster's assessment of the Chicagoans, offers a good summary of the reasons, which are not about the relative intrinsic merits of the respective systems but rather about other factors: (1) The New Critics wrote more practical criticism and created more anthologies and textbooks for the classroom than the Chicago Critics. (2) The New Critics were located in more institutions, while the neo-Aristotelians, for the most part, remained on the western shore of Lake Michigan. (3) The New Critics typically wrote in a more accessible style than the Chicago Critics. To these reasons, I would add two others: (4) The New Critics' identification of language as both means and end of literary form had an intuitive appeal that the Chicago School's insistence that language is a means but not an end lacks. (5) The Chicago method has many more moving parts (those multiple causes, that interest in both textual structures and the audience's responses), and that feature makes the method more difficult to master—and thus to teach—than the search for linguistic ironies, tensions, and ambiguities. Putting together these various reasons, we can conclude that the first generation was fighting an uphill battle with lousy strategies.

Although it is no wonder that they did not succeed, one can't help speculating about how the history of Anglo-American criticism would have been different if they had. What if most contemporaries of Wimsatt and Beardsley decided that "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy" were themselves fallacies? If Yale deconstruction had never been in vogue? If the profession had devoted itself to developing a robust theory of genre? If there was no need for a "New Formalism" because the evolution of Chicago School thinking about form (see below) had a wider following? Indeed, how might that wider following have influenced that evolution? Or to consider things from another perspective, which aspects of Chicago School theory would have generated the most resistance and rebellion from later generations? To all these questions, I have more guesses than answers, and so I leave it to you to paint your own alternative history.

THE SECOND GENERATION

The most prominent successors to the first generation, especially for the project of understanding narrative, were Sacks, Booth, and Ralph W. Rader.[5] Both Booth and Sacks received their PhDs from Chicago when the first generation was in its heyday (Booth in 1950 and Sacks 1957), while Rader began to work in the tradition after being introduced to its principles by Sacks while they were colleagues at the University of California, Berkeley, between 1958 and 1966. These three men both expanded and revised different aspects of the first generation's work, and, thus, each opened up avenues for yet further expansions and revisions. In broad terms, Sacks and Rader continued to develop a neo-Aristotelian poetics, whereas Booth reoriented the first generation's critical project by subordinating poetics to rhetoric.

In *Fiction and the Shape of Belief* (1964), Sacks returns to Aristotle's category of thought and Crane's essay on *Tom Jones*, as he poses the question of how an author's ethical beliefs get incorporated into his individual works of fiction. Sacks answers that it depends on the generic status of each individual work because the generic aims shape the role those beliefs play in that work. In developing this answer, Sacks proposes to divide novels into three broad kinds: satires such as Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* designed to ridicule objects external to the fiction; apologues such as Johnson's *Rasselas* designed to convince their audiences of the truth of one or more propositions about the world; and actions such as *Tom Jones* designed to move their audiences emotionally through the representation of one or more characters progressing from an initial unstable situation to a final one. Sacks further subdivides the class of actions into three: comedies, which give their audiences assurances that the sympathetic characters are progressing toward a desirable fate; tragedies, which signal to their audiences that an at least partially sympathetic character is progressing toward a doom; and serious actions, which give no clear assurances about the eventual fates of their protagonists. In satires, the author's ethical commitments do influence the choice of objects to ridicule but those choices fall short of revealing the author's own positive ethical commitments. In apologues, the author's ethical beliefs are aligned with the truths at the core of the fiction. In actions, the author's ethical beliefs provide the grounds for the judgments he guides his audience to make about the characters and their choices.

In "Novelists as Storytellers" (1976) Sacks further develops his generic distinctions, analyzing Jane Austen's *Persuasion* as an example of a comedy that incorporates a lyric progression. For Sacks a lyric progression is one in which the forward motion of the action gets put on hold as the author gives a thick description of a character in a fate. Sacks focuses on the section of *Persuasion* in which Anne Elliott visits her sister Mary at Uppercross and finds herself repeatedly in the company of Frederick Wentworth, the man she loves but had been persuaded to reject eight years earlier. Sacks argues that Austen both explores Anne's state of unhappiness as she witnesses

Wentworth become increasingly involved with Louisa Musgrove and gives readers assurances that Anne and Wentworth will eventually be reunited. The segment of lyric progression contributes to the power of the novel by deepening the audience's understanding of the significance of that reunion and thus deepening our satisfaction in it. Among other things, this analysis of lyric progression suggests that Crane's taxonomy of plots of action, plots of character, and plots of thought is too simple, and it opens up the wider territory of hybrid progressions, a territory I have sought to explore further in *Living to Tell about It* (2005) and *Experiencing Fiction* (2007).

Ralph W. Rader developed the first generation's poetics in two directions: toward the integration of history and biography and toward a taxonomy of lyric forms.[6] The key principles underlying Rader's work in both directions are that literary forms are writers' responses to their experiences in and of the world and that the purposes of different forms can be analyzed by attending to different configurations of the relationships among (1) the author in a particular historical and biographical context; (2) the objects represented (self, others, and the world in some combination); and (3) the audience's positioning toward both author and objects.

Rader said "yes, but" to Crane's essay on *Tom Jones*, arguing that its ahistoricism actually led Crane "to miss the full dimensions of the [novel's] effect as actually intended and felt" (246) because it fails to account for the historical Fielding's thematic investment in the novel's marvelous series of events that brings about Tom's escape from the gallows and his happy reunion with Sophia. For Crane, as we have seen, this series is an example of the vagaries of blind Fortune that adds to the moral seriousness of the novel by showing that Tom's fundamentally sound moral character is no guarantee of his eventual happiness. For Rader, this series of events shows that something more than mere chance is behind Tom's sudden reversal of fortune. It is an implicit and powerful *demonstration* of Fielding's specific mid-eighteenth-century Latitudinarian belief in the hidden providence governing human life. In this way, Rader's account does better on the test of precision than Crane's, and, in so doing, provides a more persuasive account of Fielding's novel.

Rader's work on form in history led to his incomplete but suggestive sketch of a history of the English novel. Rader distinguished among three main forms, the action/fantasy novel (roughly synonymous with Sacks's "action"), which began with Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* and continues to be the dominant form; the pseudo-factual novel, an imitation of a true story such as Defoe's *Moll Flanders*; and the simular novel, a fictional version of an author's life such as Joyce's *Ulysses*. The action/fantasy form "offers the reader a focal illusion of characters acting autonomously as if in the world of real experience within a subsidiary awareness of an underlying constructive authorial purpose which gives their story an implicit significance and affective force which real world experience does not have" (Rader 2012, 206). The pseudo-factual form does not offer the reader this complex illusion of autonomy within construction but instead the pleasure of following the

many extraordinary adventures of the protagonist. The simular novel, by contrast, represents the author's actual life through the veil of fiction.

Rader's work on forms of the lyric rejects the New Critical principle that the author and speaker of a poem are never the same in favor of a much more fine-grained taxonomy. At one end of the spectrum is the expressive lyric (Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey") in which the author is the speaker, and at the other end is the dramatic monologue (Browning's "My Last Duchess") in which the speaker is wholly other. In between are the dramatic lyric ("She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways"), in which the author is close to but not identical with an uncharacterized speaker, and the mask lyric (Tennyson's "Ulysses"), in which the author uses a characterized speaker to give expression to his own thoughts and feelings.

Finally, Rader argues that these forms are all subject to adaptation and modification by various extraformal matters. His best example is what he calls "Johnson's Rule," the stipulation Samuel Johnson made in *Rambler* No. 4 that novels should have ethically flawless protagonists and totally unsympathetic villains. Rader envisions the sequence of the English novel from Richardson's *Pamela* through *Charles Grandison*, Fanny Burney's *Evelina* and on to Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma* as a struggle with "Johnson's Rule," as the search for a form of morally serious comedy that will be simultaneously acceptable to the ideology of the age and dramatically effective. Austen resolves the conflict by constructing her heroes and heroines with traits that temporarily keep them from happiness with each other, correctable character flaws that nevertheless do not amount to serious moral faults.

Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961), the most influential work of the first two generations, does not foreground its neo-Aristotelianism, engages in many excellent close readings, and delivers its argument in a far more reader-friendly style than anyone in the first generation possessed. Booth's innovation was to shift the emphasis of the Chicagoans' project from poetics to rhetoric. Booth himself offers an apt description of the shift. In his original conception the study was "to be what parts of it still are, a polemical essay accepting the main premises of the various 'schools of autonomy,' [including those of the Chicago School and the New Critics] and defending the artistic respectability of the visibly 'rhetorical' elements that have been under attack at least since the time of Flaubert" (Booth 1970, 160). This part of the argument is wholly in line with the first generation's reasoning: the criterion for judging the appropriateness of such elements is not any abstract rule such as "show, don't tell" but rather how much and how well they contribute to the novel's larger purposes. Like other parts of a novel, these elements are means to an end, and like other elements, they can be deployed poorly, brilliantly, and everything in between.

Over time, however, another conception of the project emerged and became a strand of the book's argument: the idea that all elements of fiction are rhetorical in the sense that they are devices an author uses to affect an

audience in some ways rather than others. In the original, poetics-based conception of the book, the author of a novel is considered to be "*making a concrete form*" (Booth 1970, 160), whereas in the new, rhetoric-based conception, the author is considered to be "*making readers*" (161). Where poetics subordinates the author-reader relationship to its role in the construction of "a concrete artistic whole," rhetoric subordinates that whole to its role in a developing author-reader relationship.

Understanding Booth's shift from poetics to rhetoric also helps explain Booth's introduction of and attachment to the now much debated concept of the implied author. For Booth, the implied author is the constructive agent of the concrete artistic whole (the Fielding who designed that marvelous plot), and in that sense a second self, whom we come to know through engaging with his various constructive choices. Booth's concern with the nature and the quality of the implied author-reader relationship governs almost all his work. That concern leads to his analysis of the *Rhetoric of Irony* (1974), since that trope depends on author and reader rejecting the literal meaning of textual language and meeting on some higher plane of understanding.[7] It also leads him to expand the concerns of neo-Aristotelian criticism into ethics.

In fact, Booth makes an initial foray into ethical questions in the final chapter of *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, "The Morality of Impersonal Narration." Booth argues that certain techniques (center of consciousness narration, character narration) tend to generate sympathy for characters even if those characters act in ethically deficient ways, and thus the techniques can work against an implied author's efforts to guide her readers' ethical judgments of such characters. In other words, he is concerned about how these techniques complicate the implied author's project of making the readers she wanted. Many of Booth's readers criticized that chapter for what they saw as Booth's privileging of ethical clarity over ethical complexity, and in the "Afterword" to the second edition (1983), Booth deflects that accusation but acknowledges that sometimes his own personal beliefs overpowered his critical judgments. Booth returned to these issues in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* (1988), a study that, among other things, demonstrates that Booth's commitment to the significance of the implied author-reader relationship had only deepened over the course of his career. Booth now approaches the ethics of reading through the metaphor of books as friends, and, as he develops the metaphor, he makes three key points: (1) friends are of different kinds—some are good for us and some aren't—and their effects on individual readers may vary depending on when, where, and why they are encountered; (2) many of these effects follow from the ways in which these friends guide one's trajectory of desires (one can hear Crane and Sacks behind this point); (3) one of the key functions of narrative fiction is to expand readers' experiences as they follow these trajectories of desire. Booth offers numerous exemplifications of these principles, most notably in extended analyses of ethical virtues and deficiencies in Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel* and Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

THE THIRD GENERATION

David Richter, Peter J. Rabinowitz, and I have further extended the work of the first two generations as we have worked within the broad rubric of rhetorical narrative theory. Richter, a student of Sacks's (PhD, 1971), has continued the Chicago School's work on poetics, pluralism, literary history, and ethics, among other topics. *Fable's End: Completeness and Closure in Rhetorical Fiction* (1974) dives much deeper into the form that Sacks called the apologue, showing how novelists after Johnson adapted techniques developed for the action form to serve their persuasive ends. Richter's second book, *The Progress of Romance: Literary Historiography and the Gothic Novel, 1790–1830* (1996), asks a literary-historical question—why did the gothic novel in England achieve such prominence between 1790 and 1830?—and argues not just that there were multiple causes but that the best way to get at those causes is to answer the question three times, that is, from the perspective of three different ways of doing literary history: one rooted in Marxist literary theory, one rooted in reception theory, and one rooted in Chicago School poetics. Richter does not try to synthesize the answers but rather in good pluralist fashion contends that, while each approach can explain the phenomenon well on its own terms, he can do more justice to the vogue of the Gothic by endorsing all three accounts. Richter has also extended Booth's work on ethics into the realm of film, analyzing what he calls "film cheats" ("Your Cheatin' Art") and the ethics of nonfiction films ("Keeping Company").

Peter J. Rabinowitz has followed Booth in emphasizing the rhetorical aspects of the Chicago tradition. One of his earliest publications, "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences" (1977), unpacks the term "readers" in Booth's phrase "making readers." Rabinowitz distinguishes among actual (or flesh-and-blood) audiences, authorial audiences (the hypothetical readers authors both anticipate and construct and who in fiction tacitly remain aware of the "focal illusion" Rader talks about), and narrative audiences (who believe in the reality and thus the autonomy of the fictional world and its characters). The authorial and narrative audience positions are ones that actual audiences move into as they read. Rabinowitz's *Before Reading* ([1987] 1998) further expands our understanding of the activity of reading. In Part One, Rabinowitz identifies four kinds of rules that govern actual readers' processing of narrative: rules of notice (that guide readers in paying more attention to some parts of a text than others), rules of signification (that guide readers in moving from textual details to larger interpretive constructs), rules of configuration (that guide readers in shaping textual details into larger patterns of intelligibility), and rules of coherence (that guide readers into synthesizing details and patterns into intelligible wholes). In Part Two, Rabinowitz analyzes how these rules interact with the politics and ideologies governing canon formation to influence evaluations of individual narratives. In *Authorizing Readers* (1997), Rabinowitz and his coauthor,

Michael Smith, consider the pedagogical implications of authorial reading (that is, seeking to take on the role of the authorial audience) and argue for its benefits in contrast to reader-response pedagogies that ignore the author's shaping of the text. Rabinowitz and I have also co-authored the sections on rhetorical theory in *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates* (2012), which I discuss below.

I regard my work as a project in rhetorical poetics, one that posits the making of readers and the making of concrete wholes as mutually reinforcing activities. Defining narrative as somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purposes that something happened, I emphasize the purposes of the somebody telling (the implied author) in relation to the somebody who is told (actual audiences who take on the roles of authorial and narrative audience). However, since we can discover purposes only through their realization in the matter of narrative as shaped into form, I seek to understand the various components of that matter (style, character, perspective, narration, plot, temporality, place, and so on) and their multiple ways of interacting. The ultimate goal of rhetorical poetics is to develop knowledge of the multi-layered life we live as readers of narrative and its consequences for the rest of our lives. In this respect, rhetorical poetics draws on the earlier generations' interest in formal construction and the affective power of literature even as it rejects the mimetic–didactic distinction as too rigid and seeks to develop Booth's concern with the ethical dimensions of writing and reading narrative. I have developed the project in five books whose subtitles identify their specific concerns: *Worlds from Words: A Theory of Language in Fiction* (1981)*; Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (1989)*; Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (1996)*; Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration* (2005)*; Experiencing Fiction: Judgments, Progressions, and the Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (2007). I have also deployed the principles of rhetorical theory in a study of the American novel from Edith Wharton to Jonathan Franzen in *Reading the American Novel, 1920–2010* (2013). In addition, Rabinowitz and I have co-authored the sections on rhetorical theory in *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates* (2012), a book that in Part One presents how four different approaches to narrative theory (feminist, cognitive or "world-building," and antimimetic are the others) treat the fundamental elements of narrative (character, plot, perspective, and so on), and in Part Two offers each approach's response to the other three. In short, this rhetorical poetics has sought to offer fuller accounts of the means, objects, manner, and purposes of narrative, even as it emphasizes the multiple layers of engaging with rhetorical form.

As I write in 2014, I can identify a burgeoning fourth-generation group. Restricting myself to critics who have books published or forthcoming, I mention just five: Gary Johnson, *The Vitality of Allegory* (2012), Katherine Nash, *Feminist Narrative Ethics* (2014); Dan Shen, *Style and Rhetoric of*

Short Narrative Fiction (2014); Katra Byram, *Ethics and the Dynamic Observer Narrator* (2015), and Kelly Marsh, *In Search of the Mother's Pleasure* (forthcoming). It is too early to tell how much influence this fourth generation will have or just how they will further revise and expand the work of the Chicago School. But their work testifies to the ongoing value and vigor of what is now a very long and very rich tradition.

NOTES

1. The status of narrative theory in histories and anthologies of critical theory deserves its own essay. Here I just note that volume 8 of the *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* is unusual in its allocating a chapter to "narratology" (written by Gerald Prince).
2. Regrettably but inevitably, this revised narrative and the space limitations of this essay combine to make me streamline the history of the School. Important members of the second and third generations whose work I do not discuss include Richard Levin, Mary Springer, Janet Aikins, Michael Boardman, Harry Shaw, Marshall Gregory, and Elizabeth Langland, and my colleague at Ohio State for many years, James L. Battersby. See also Booth (1982).
3. See especially McKeon's chapters in *Critics and Criticism* and then Crane's *Languages of Criticism* (1953).
4. For a more thorough treatment of Booth's book, see Phelan (1983, 1984).
5. For a more extensive discussion of the second generation, see Richter (1982).
6. For a fuller account of Rader's work (2012), see the "Introduction" to his *Fact, Fiction, and Form*, coauthored by David Richter and me. This discussion repeats parts of that essay.
7. Note Booth defines irony very differently than Brooks does.

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9 The Geneva School
Form and Signification in Motion

Olivier Pot
translated by Helena Taylor

"The Geneva School" was the term used from the 1950s and 1960s to describe a group of literary critics who belonged to the movement known in France as the *Nouvelle Critique*, following the confrontation between Picard and Barthes over *Sur Racin*e in 1963. Like the American *New Criticism* of the 1940s, the Geneva School practiced "close reading" and promoted stylistic analysis that was based on the intimate relationship between the structure of a text and its meaning (*signification*). However, unlike New Criticism, the Geneva School was also committed to looking "outside" the text, taking into account intentionality (authorial consciousness), readers' reactions (reader-response theory), and even historical and cultural contexts (history of ideas). Employing phenomenological and hermeneutic methods, these critics conceived of the literary work as representing the deep structures of an author's consciousness, revealing his experience of the physical world. This approach, which is also called "criticism of consciousness" and "criticism of identification," invites the interpreter to identify "empathetically" with representations and meanings as they appear in the structures of the work. Broadly speaking, the School's methodology can be summarized as the desire to resolve the tension between form and meaning.

SCHOOL OR COMRADESHIP: A "TOTALITY" OPEN TO THE FUTURE

The "Geneva School," technically speaking, does not exist—not, that is, in the same way that the Frankfurt School or the Saussurean School exists. "It was a bit misleading to have coined this name," reflected its inventor, Georges Poulet (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 257). The "mythical Genevan school," or the "so-called Geneva School,"[1] which was in fact a sort of informal intellectual society, or at the very most a "laboratory" in which to circulate ideas, formed in the winter of 1937–1938. Poulet, while teaching at Edinburgh University and reading Albert Béguin's thesis, *L'Ame romantique et le rêve* (1937), came across the name of its author's supervisor, Marcel Raymond, whose work he already admired, and to whom he would go on to dedicate the first volume of *Etudes sur le temps humain* [*Studies in Human*

Time] in 1949. Toward the end of 1949, Raymond and Poulet embarked on a long correspondence reporting on and discussing their respective work. In 1950, the three names René Wellek (1992) associated with "The Geneva School" were Raymond (1897–1981), Béguin (1901–1957), and Poulet (1902–1991).

Later, two of Raymond's students, Jean Rousset (1910–2002) and Jean Starobinski (1920) joined this initial circle. Poulet, who from 1952 had taken up a post at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, introduced Starobinski to the circle in 1954, and in the same year he became acquainted with Jean Rousset's thesis (Rousset 1953). Historians sometimes also add Poulet's doctoral student, Jean-Pierre Richard (1922; Richard 2002, 47–48) to this group. The term "Nouvelle critique"[2] appears for the first time in Poulet's preface to Richard's book, *Littérature et sensation* published in 1954. In 1956, Poulet accepted a chair in literature at Zurich University, probably because it afforded him greater proximity to both Geneva and to Raymond who had supported his application for this position. As for Albert Béguin, having held the chair at Bâle from 1937 to 1946, he went on to pursue political activities, culminating in his editorship of the journal *Esprit*. His premature death in 1957 made the group aware of its comradeship: this is attested by the collection, *Albert Béguin—Essais et témoignages*.

During the 1960s, theoretical thinking intensified. In 1962, Rousset dedicated the preface, "Pour une lecture des formes" ("Toward a Reading of Forms"), of *Forme et Signification* (1962) to Poulet. In this preface he unequivocally sided with "Nouvelle critique," which he claimed included Russian Formalists, American New Criticism[3], the art historian Focillon, as well as the artists who had forged modern critical consciousness (Flaubert, Mallarmé, Proust, Valéry). 1963 was a particularly fruitful year. According to Rousset, who had been Raymond's student since 1935, Raymond and his fellow scholars opened the way between Charles Du Bos's criticism of identification, "more attentive to the 'milieu intérieur' than to style," and "the formal analysis of Wölfflin" (Rousset 1963, 469). Poulet published an extremely detailed study on Raymond (later reprinted in *La Conscience Critique*). In the same year the Geneva School paraded its visibility at the Congress held in Paris on July 26—for which these two critics had carefully put together the program.[4] The first part was to include "three presentations informing the audience on developments outside France since 1920; and two presentations on France": "Cl. Pichois on traditional, historicizing criticism" and Starobinski on the "trends of New Criticism." The second part aimed to bring together, once again in relation to France, three presentations given by "representative critics": Georges Blin ("to avoid only giving the floor to the 'anti-Sorbonards,' which would have been ridiculous"), Gaëtan Picon and Poulet (or, failing that, Richard). In addition, papers were to be given by Paul de Man, René Wellek, Arnaldo Pizzorusso, Giovanni Macchia, Lucien Goldmann, Yves Bonnefoy, Boris de Schloezer, and others. Behind this apparently eclectic program, the genesis and focus of the Geneva School

were given priority: "by hearing Rivière, Du Bos, Raymond and Béguin, Bachelard and Richard, Blanchot and Staro(binski)" in succession, the intention was to trace "the progress of consciousness from 1920 to the present," so that the "predecessors" would only be taken into account "in so far as they have enlightened and guided us" (letter of January 2, 1963). Jacques Derrida attests to the fact that the Geneva School had become a point of reference: two of his articles published in 1962 and 1964, and repeated in *Grammatologie* in 1967, used the studies of both Rousset (on "*forme et signification*") and Starobinski (on Rousseau) as starting points.

The Geneva School undertook a project of "critical renovation"; this triumphed in 1966 thanks to the meetings organized in Cerisy by Poulet (Poulet and Ricardou 1967). Other like-minded figures, such as Gérard Genette, Hélène Tuzet, and Serge Doubrovsky, joined the group. The same year an article by J. Hillis Miller (1966) made the label, "The Geneva School," official; Sarah Lawall (1968) then integrated this into her analysis of "criticism of consciousness". "The myth began to take shape—before it broke up, that is," Raymond comment wryly; for him, the "Geneva School" was at most a "family," "attesting to our friendship," rather than a movement with a formalized corpus of methods and techniques. Poulet takes this further: "Mme Lawall saw the world through glasses of my making. And thus, a whole series of other—even more contestable—myths joined the principal one" (letter of October 12–23, 1968). The Geneva School is, therefore, somewhat the *snark* of criticism.

Furthermore, by reworking previous studies on his critical affinities and friendships in *La Conscience critique* in 1971, Poulet set out to trace the history of a research project that was constantly evolving, rather than give the impression of methodological coherence: "*a totality that was open to the future* from each publication date" (letter of December 29, 1970). The expression "criticism of identification" (the term "identification" comes from Du Bos) was at best a genealogical fiction intended to connect Madame de Staël, Baudelaire, Proust, the NRF critics, Du Bos, Raymond, Béguin, Rousset, Picon, Blin, Bachelard, Richard, Blanchot, Starobinski, Sartre, and Barthes. Although Poulet and Starobinski, along with René Girard, still took part in conferences on "Nouvelle critique," organized by Franco Simone in Milan at the end of the 1970s, the conference at Cartigny in 1975, which reconsidered the basic principles of Raymond and Béguin, was the only one that evoked "the 'Geneva group' (let's lose the term 'school')" (letter dated December 14, 1975).[5]

ANTECEDENTS, PRECURSORS AND INTERCESSORS: FROM PSYCHOANALYSIS TO STYLISTICS

Even though it did not promote a collective—and therefore all the more dogmatic—program of thought, the Geneva School did not hide its focuses

of interest. The first of these was German Romanticism, a tradition inseparable from the posture of "ferryman" (*passeur*) that had first been assumed by translator-poets such as Gustave Roud[6] and Philippe Jaccottet. In the Genevan tradition, it was expected that young intellectuals would spend some years "improving themselves" abroad in Germany. Raymond was a lector in Leipzig from 1926 to 1928; he immersed himself in Kierkegaard, Gundolf, Dilthey (who had also influenced Du Bos), and every angle of the "metaphysics of poetry and metaphysical poetry."[7] Until he was forced to leave Germany, Béguin was a lector at the University of Halle an der Saale from 1929 to 1934, a position Rousset would then go on to hold from 1939 to 1942 before he went to Munich. This period of critical "incubation" was marked for all of them by translation projects: the Romantics for Béguin, Baroque poets for Rousset, Wölfflin for Raymond, and Kafka for Starobinski.

Epistemologically, the Geneva School was also inspired by the antipositivism of the German school of philology, and thinkers such as Vossler, Curtius, Spitzer, Auerbach, Friedrich, as Poulet notes (letter of January 7, 1963). They opposed the stance of the neogrammarians; the latter was also being questioned by Saussurean linguistics, which Raymond and Béguin were the first to incorporate into their work, without making it a dominant tool ("appareillage lourd," Starobinski 1979b). Raymond, who had defended his thesis on *L'Influence de Ronsard sur la poésie française (1550–1585)* at the Sorbonne in 1927, later regretted having "given in to the need for the tangible and the pragmatic in literary history." By contrast, the "participant reader" method he adopted in 1933 for *De Baudelaire au surréalisme* felt like a sort of liberation (Starobinski 2000, 133, 135). This approach, which "reached far beyond historical positivism," was for Starobinski "the common denominator of the Genevans" (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 257, 267). He highlights the group's distrust of "systematic" or "structuralist" research. By presenting "subjective intuitions as scientific view points," Barthes's *Sur Racine* reminded Raymond of the excessive German neopositivism with which he had become familiar during his time in Germany in 1927.[8]

In this respect, did the stylistic method of Leo Spitzer, who Poulet and Starobinski encountered at John Hopkins between 1952 and 1954, also offer similarities with "criticism of consciousness"? Was style not a "spiritual *etymon*" denoting the "individuality of a writer" (Compagnon 1998, 219)? In place of the myopic fragmentation of philological knowledge propagated by neogrammarians, Spitzer thought that "every detail contributes to the constitution of a whole in a process of becoming. Important connections, contrasts and similarities become apparent, not only between facts of a similar register (style, composition, sonority), but also between values of different levels: the syntax of a sentence could resemble a whole body of thought. Put together, correlations such as this could metaphorically be identified as an organism, or, more prosaically, a structure or system."[9] In this to and fro between microscopic explanation and global

comprehension—or, to use the distinction established by Dilthey, between *erklären* ("to explain") and *verstehen* ("to understand")—the relationship is constantly being renewed, evoking an uninterrupted movement of interpretation. Spitzer, following Schleiermacher and Dilthey, called this the "hermeneutic circle"; Starobinski redefined this as the "critical trajectory," that is, "the series of variations in the course of which the relationship between the reader and the work is modified. From decoder, the reader becomes questioner, desiring to go further, following the direction of his interest" (Starobinski 1970, 36–37).

If required to define its method, the "Geneva School" did so, as we have seen, indirectly, metacritically, employing "criticism of criticism" (Béguin), and by inventing "precursors," "predecessors," or "intercessors." In the 1920s, Poulet had devoured the notes on "Bergsonism" by Albert Thibaudet (1874–1936), who then taught at Geneva from 1925 to 1936. For Starobinski, Thibaudet's *Physiologie de la critique* (1930) revealed "the power of fiction" and a skill for critical "sympathy" that merged with "the *élan profond* of romanticism" (1970, 28–31). The NRF critics, such as Du Bos, Rivière, and Fernandez were also part of the prehistory of the "criticism of identification": they thought that the critic should "unite with a creator to recreate" (Pot 2004, 74–75).

Bachelard features prominently in the correspondence between Poulet and Raymond from 1962 to 1963, and very early on they incorporated him into "criticism of consciousness." Through his attention to "material reveries", he heralded Jean-Pierre Richard's *Littérature et sensation*[10] and also influenced the analysis of metamorphoses in Rousset's *La Littérature de l'Age baroque* (Rousset 1962). Furthermore, Raymond thought he could trace the influence of Bachelard on Starobinski, except that the latter "was able to extricate himself from being preoccupied with the collective unconscious, and achieve an examination of a particular work, privileging form and symbol, as they remained in touch with a collective stratum, and also went beyond it" (letter of February 3, 1963). The singularity of a work and its formal originality remained the principal object of Genevan criticism; in contrast, Bachelard's approach, affirmed Poulet, was "marvelously apt for reaching poetry" but "not at all apt for reaching the specificity of individual poems" (1971, 214).

While refusing traditional biography, which it considers too positivist, "criticism of consciousness" did not ignore the "personal equation" ("*équation personnelle*," to quote Doubrovsky). This explains the acknowledged affinities between the Geneva School and the psychoanalytic approach. As Starobinski says, "psychoanalysis casts the old problem of the relationship between the author's life and his work in a new light. The work, sustained by the being that created it, is itself an act of desire, a revealed intention" (1970, 319).[11] By arguing that Romantic creation was sustained by the unconscious, Béguin's *L'Ame romantique et le rêve* won him the admiration of the Surrealists. And indeed, Raymond had already noted, in 1933, "the effusion of

deep structures of the unconscious" that were present in Surrealism (1933, 290). In his capacity as a poet, Raymond wondered whether "this language which came to him as the equivalent of automatic writing was nothing more than an illusion"; or whether it came from "a deep zone in his psyche" (1975, 32).[12] In 1964, an introductory study (Fayolle 1964) placed the work of Béguin and Starobinski in the section on "Psychoanalytically inspired criticism" (under the rubric of "The first wave of New Criticism"), while asserting that their "para-psychoanalytical and thematic" studies were lacking in "real scientific authority," an authority that was demonstrated instead by Charles Mauron's "psycho-criticism."

This misunderstanding is important. It shows that the Geneva School actually effected a rereading of psychoanalysis that was both phenomenological and existential. At the conference in Cartigny, Starobinski, himself coming from a psychiatric background, defined the poetic use of psychoanalysis: "Raymond's ideas coincide with those of Béguin. They both share the same distrust of the Freudian approach; and the same confidence in the unconscious creator, active at the very *source* of psychic activities" (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 57). In "Psychoanalysis and literary knowledge" (Starobinski 1970, 295–325), he was more interested in the debt of psychoanalysis toward literature, than in the contribution psychoanalysis had made: psychoanalysis takes its examples, illustrations, and forms from literature so that the latter ultimately only ever "takes back what belongs to it" ("reprendre son bien," to use Mallarmé's expression). As shown, psychoanalysis activates the tension between *forme* and *signification*: if criticism "privileges the exploration of latent content and involuntary structures," wrote Rousset, "it tracks the intentions of the work, rather than those of the author" (1963, 469–70).

That is not to say that the interpreter has nothing to learn from Freud, indeed, he gets "a lesson on the technique of exegesis," to quote Starobinski. Through "vigilant neutrality," through "the psychoanalytic principle of free floating attentiveness—a kind of vigilance held in suspense, a watchful benevolence," the critical act, free from all "psychological surplus," will improve its perceptive acuity and its receptive capacity by constantly differing the fulfilment of the work's potentiality "without rushing to identify the definitive structures within it." In this "existential psychoanalysis," inspired by Sartre's phenomenology as much as by Spitzer's method, it is the form of the work, its linguistic manifestation, which emerges triumphant. "In criticism, the convergent operations of phenomenology and psychoanalysis can be called 'stylistics'" (Starobinski 1970, 318, 282).[13]

LITERARY HERMENEUTICS AND THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

The anti-positivist approach of the Geneva School treated history no better than it did biography. History, and in particular literary history, could only

ever be "a means employed in the service of criticism and interpretation," as Rousset writes in *Forme et Signification*. It is true that in 1965 Raymond was critical of the fact that his own early work on Ronsard "was missing historical and social context." He had remedied this in 1955 with the publication of *Baroque et Renaissance poétique* that proposed categorizations that were both aesthetic and historical. However, all periodization remained, in essence, nothing more than a framework for better revealing certain literary phenomena: *De Baudelaire au surréalisme* did not offer a full picture of literary history; instead, dramatization, plot, "story" (Ricoeur would say: "narrative") were necessary to attain "the mysterious coherence" of works that otherwise resist definition.

> My intention here is not historical; I do not seek to determine causal relationships or to identify filiations and influences. Instead, I want to *discern the essential features of an adventure or a drama*, in which a certain number of privileged beings have participated, and are participating; *to record the premises underpinning a dialectic that has developed through history* and that borrows the place and possibilities of its self-fulfillment from human time; *to trace on the spiritual plane an ideal cycle, a collection of approaches and aspirations* between which a *mysterious coherence* is revealed.
>
> (Raymond 1933, 13)

History should also form a shape and meaningful structure, should change into a scene of reading: it should produce the background scenario necessary for the interpreter to accomplish his task.

Similarly, in his critical autobiography, Rousset retrospectively highlights the *flottements chronologiques* ("chronological vacillations") in the concept of the "baroque" to the extent that they serve to undermine the very relevance of this category. All periodization is simply a "hermeneutic" process intended to reveal what otherwise would escape us (Rousset 1998, 31–34). The baroque period—as a historical moment—is one part of a "history of perspective" that unfolds in successive cycles, in which each cycle "presents a regular alternation between two stylistic poles, a necessary passage from one mode of vision to another, from a classic vision of reality to a baroque vision […] *This is not a process of evolution*, but of *opposition of two modes of vision,* of *two solutions that are fundamentally different*, each one produced in its own order" (Rousset 1953, 281–87). The "ideal baroque imagination" necessitates privileging "theoretical criteria" that are heuristic, rather than the analysis of facts themselves; it necessitates "an attempt at synthesis before total analysis has been achieved" (Rousset 1968b, 239–45). "One can find nothing without imagining the scenario of one's research," Rousset concludes.

It is in this domain that the Geneva School established its sympathy for "reader-response theory" in the sense meant by the "Constance School."

"A literary work requires my identification with it; and phenomenologists and linguists (Ingarden, Mukařovský) also argue that a work gains its existence though its *actualization* in a receptive consciousness," states Starobinski (1970, 39), who went on to write the preface for the first French translation of the study by one of the principal representatives of this school: Hans Robert Jauss's *Pour une esthétique de la reception* (1972). It is also as a hermeneutician that Rousset approached baroque literature; since Schleiermacher and Gadamer, the interpreter finds that he must multiply, for the sake of "the fusion of horizons," the alternation between the historical perspective that attempts to "coincide with how the past saw itself" and the "contemporary perspective, shaped by current experience and reacting to works as if they were written in the present-time." Rousset defined himself as a *glaneur d'écarts* ("gleaner of discardings"); his interest lies in single works, conceived in their historical variations and in the diversity of their actualizations. For example, modern stagings of Molière's *Don Juan* interpret this classic play in light of contemporary sensibilities; Robbe-Grillet's *Jalousie* (1957) brings new meaning to Prévost's l'*Histoire d'une Grecque moderne* (1740). Once more, meanings are only made in the successive forms of their representations and in the transformations of their morphology.[14]

Starobinski was particularly attentive to the form of words, to their diverse linguistic strata, their cultural and conceptual avatars. He opens *Remède dans le mal* with a discussion of the vicissitudes of the word "civilization" (Starobinski 1989, 11–59); *Action et réaction* retraces "the life and adventures" of a mythical couple (Starobinski 1999). Of the members of the Geneva School, Starobinski was also the most receptive to Saussurean linguistics, especially evident in his expansion of Benveniste's thought. However, it was still a case of "reconciling structure and history" in a game in which the poetic word made the "existential dimension" dominate over social and cultural facts, by introducing "a dimension of history and subversion" into culture: "the *structured* structure of a work returns us to a *structuring* subject, just as it returns us to the cultural mode to which it makes a contribution, by causing a disturbance or a challenge" (Starobinski 1970, 43, 46).[15] The *tremblement de la pensée* inherent in the interpretative act reduces the risk of rigid structuralism.

From literary hermeneutics, we are led to the history of ideas. Starobinski is, professionally, the most representative theoretician and practitioner of this discipline within the Geneva School because of his work on the history of medicine (in particular on melancholy), which he always incorporated into the specifically literary field.[16] However, Georges Poulet's "criticism of identification" had already developed the *history of consciousness* and of *subjectivity,* understood—beyond its entirely potential "point of departure"—in its diverse manifestations and cultural concretizations. At Johns Hopkins, Poulet was involved in the History of Ideas Club established by Lovejoy (*The Great Chain of Being*), and surrounded by the best

intellectual historians of the time, including Alexandre Koyré (*Du monde clos à l'univers infini*), Marjorie B. Nicolson (*The Breaking of the Circle*), and disciples of Cassirer (*Individuum und Kosmos*), who had worked at Yale until his death in 1945. At the conference in Cerisy, Poulet concluded that the history of ideas ("the history of the imagination, of emotions and of consciousness") should "greatly enhance the development of modern criticism" that is, "just like *Geistgeschichte*, thought upon thought […] consciousness upon consciousness" (Poulet and Ricardou 1967, 274). Furthermore, from the first volumes of *Etudes sur le Temps humain* the "points of departure" of creative consciousness emerge against a background of history intended to emphasize discontinuities and ruptures (Bachelard referred to "epistemological breaks"). Curiously, Poulet never questions these traditional periodizations: consciousness of time and its representation in literature evolve, generally, in an array of distinct phases from Montaigne to Pre-romanticism, from Romanticism to the end of the nineteenth century, and from this point to its contemporary manifestations. Individual works stand out from the general framework: the "personal case" of Mably, for example, contributes to a modular history of the consciousness of time. Up to this point, philosophy had been dominated by the Augustinian notion of continual creation: the Enlightenment introduced nothing more than "*a difference, though a radical one"* in this ongoing scenario. The conservation of the universe and of its creatures *was no longer* unquestioningly considered to be the immediate effect of the creative act.[17] And yet, "no other text" managed better than that of Mably to give form and meaning to such "a change in 'ideas and emotions." In the twentieth century, existentialism, "*re-discovered and re-conceived* of [Augustine's] concept of continual creation" as the form of "a choice; that is, an act at the root of which lies a creative decision" (Poulet 1949, xxii, xliv). Continuities are less important than these emergent instances: *Le Point de départ* privileges all "new *beginning*," all "*sentiment of starting again*." For example, the refusal of both the scientific conception of time as "clock time" and the Bergsonian theory of "the melody of existence pursuing its variations" expressed, between 1890 and 1914, "the need to re-discover a *new and authentic contact* with existence and with time" (Poulet 1964, 7). Periodization is a means of giving particular emphasis to the peripatetic adventures of consciousness in a form of "collaboration between literary history and the thematic method" (Poulet 1966, 136).

In his *Trois Essais de mythologie romantique* (1966), Poulet reconsidered the necessity "of finding *all of the 'idées fixes' and dreams* that men of that time held" or order to fully "know a period." This explains the importance of "books that strive to *reveal the general emotional and intellectual state of people living contemporaneously*" for our understanding of literary history. Such books include: Paul Hazard's *Crise de la conscience européenne*, *The Great Chain of Being* by Lovejoy, Raymond's *De Baudelaire au surréalisme,* Béguin's *L'Ame romantique*

et le rêve, Rousset's *La littérature de l'âge baroque, L'Invention de la liberté* by Starobinski and *Le Cosmos et l'imagination* by Tuzet, one of Poulet's students. The value of all these books comes from the fact that they "*collate a series of wonderful texts* whose juxtaposition highlights the *historical homogeneity* of *certain ways of thinking*" (Poulet 1966, 136–37).[18] As Starobinski said, Poulet's *Métamorphoses du cercle* perfectly realizes "the relationship between the intimate exploration of individual thought and wider history" (1979, 8). The general is formed by the particular, history is made up of texts, and meaning derived from form. And these relationships are reciprocal.

This has methodological implications. The Geneva School favors case studies over preconceived theory. Rousset's paper "Meandering Thoughts" ("Réflexions à bâtons rompus") confirms, as one of his "disciples" Cl-G. Dubois stated, giving priority to "case studies without [a] preconceived theoretical approach" "by disseminating a series of 'minimal' propositions that contrast ad hoc and synthetic analysis" (Dubois 2002, 174). *Forme et Signification* had already made the case for "a series of applied readings" and "not a work of speculation" (Rousset 1962, ii).[19] For Starobinski, the approach that "negotiates the difficult application of the general to the particular" (Jarrety 1990, 32) is, perhaps, that of the psychiatrist, a role he himself practiced. In each case, this approach requires significant attention to the "remainder" (*reste*) intended to safeguard criticism from the illusion of totality: "hermeneutics is a practice that confronts opacity, and does not delight in it, but registers its distrust with a forced transparency. It accepts that the remainder has a meaning, as a remainder and not in the imminence of reduction to an interpretative system that has perfected its capacities of inclusion" (Bonnet 1985, 19–20).

Furthermore, method can only ever be informal, fragmentary, without systematic value or totalizing pretensions: "it resists being codified in a way that is directly teachable and transmissible," Starobinski notes (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 42). Rousset admired Flaubert's writing because it was always ready to foil its own plans: "invention is connected to execution; the work becomes comprehensible in the very operations through which it is realized." If there is a method of any sort, it is constructed and tested in the critical act itself through a sort of "mise en abime" similar to that which occurs in Proust's writing (Rousset 1962, 133, 134). Sometimes the method comes "after the event." As Starobinski says, "methodological reflection accompanies the critics' work and indirectly sheds light upon it; but it can only really be explained in an epilogue" (1970, 11). So, if there is a method of any sort, it is always a method that emerges from the study of the work itself, a "situated" method. Ion Pop even said that for Starobinski, the critic has to "be open to being inconsistent with regard to his own method" (Pop 2002, 216). Style, *savoir-faire*, and the aesthetic of the critical gesture are more important than the method: the ethics of interpretation prove more effective than pure and hard theory.

FORM, FORCE, AND SIGNIFICATION: CRITICISM OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND DECONSTRUCTIONISM

"Criticism of consciousness" or "criticism of identification" relies, as we have seen, on the dialectic between *forme* and *signification*. This question gave rise to an internal debate in the Geneva School. Poulet argued that "critical identification"—the need to reduce the self through the other—takes place initially as an "objective identification" between the subject (the writer) and the object (the external world). And it is only later that it becomes a "subjective identification" between the reader and the author (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 22–24). But for Raymond, who confesses himself to be "a little distorted by close reading"[20], the aim of criticism is "less to melt into another mental life" than to reach the *form* it espoused in the work; attachment to the 'formal' prevents one from "identifying with another subject *without dwelling on the form* his thought takes" and without "attaching oneself *to verbal and stylistic realities"* (letters of November 21 and 25, 1973). "Literary work" or "states of consciousness"? The concepts of "receptivity," "sympathy" and "communion" entail a phenomenological dimension, which, with reference to Bergson, Max Scheler, and Merleau-Ponty—but in contrast to Valéry—requires their particularization and their incarnation in a perceptible form (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 27–29). Starobinski also found that it was "schematic" to posit sympathy as a point of departure when criticism actually derives "rather from a confused worry, from embarrassment. The first meeting with a text is not without misunderstanding" (Starobinski 1990, 19). "The appearances in which the work presents itself do not immediately adjust to the internal meanings of which is it composed," confirms Rousset (1968a, 30). This gives rise to the desire to maintain *distance* to the point of the greatest *proximity*, the desire to keep a "distance de loge" (Starobinski)[21] in so far as the *obstacle* is inherent to *transparency.*[22] The relationship between the reader and the work is always one of "approximation," as Du Bos said.

As early as 1959, in "A propos de la Vie de Marianne (letter to M. Georges Poulet)," Spitzer, like any good philologist,[23] contrasted his own method, "immanent in the work" and that takes note of the *form*, with the "existentialist" or a priori method promoted by Poulet that "destroys the integrity and the unity of particular works through consideration of the whole *oeuvre*" (Spitzer 1970, 367). (In this instance, "l'existence marivaudienne" is supposed "to have existed before Marivaux's entire *oeuvre*" [369]). The Poulet–Raymond correspondence is particularly marked by this "old quarrel about form" between 1960 and 1961 and then again between 1968 and 1971. "Pure consciousness," according to Poulet, transcends particular works in "an immediate, total and eternal identity," which is like a quintessence of all works [*oeuvres*]. In this perspective, "form is a screen, it is like a mirror one has to break," concluded Poulet, for whom Amiel's "archetypal" time became a "sort of algebraic

configuration." "I have read Shakespeare many times. Each time, I have only ever found Shakespeare, never Macbeth, Lear or Hamlet. They are, literally, ghosts." He reported his legendary trip to San Rocco in Venice with his "dear Jean Rousset" as follows: at the end of the journey, it was "possible for us to *forget* Tintoret's paintings and to reach that which, passing through every painting, has not been fixed by any of them" (January 2, 1962). Using Focillon's theory ("Prendre conscience, c'est prendre forme") Raymond refused to disassociate subject and object, meaning (*sens*) and form. The subject, rather than being "antecedent," is instead "immanent." "I prefer to think that the subject adheres to the form. The primary intuition of the subject, this *primary act*, which allows me to interpret the 'objects' (the forms), can only be carried out on the basis of an *intuition that is already formal.*" (August 11, 1968). This explains this "little excursion toward phenomenology" in order to "deny the distinction between the latent and the patent, the noumenon and the phenomenon. Being is not obliterated by what appears, on the contrary, it is revealed" (January 3,1961).[24] Starobinski confirmed: "form does not clothe 'content.' The reality of thought consists in being appearance; writing is not a questionable surrogate for inner experience, rather it is experience itself" (1970, 40).[25] And for Rousset, "the artist transmutes the universe into its spiritual equivalent—to use Proust's terms—that is also a verbal equivalent, a collection of words, figures and rhythms" (Rousset 1963, 469). The Geneva School took the gamble of keeping hold of both ends of the chain: the immediacy of consciousness and the mediations of the work. "Art resides in this solidarity between the world of the mind and a perceptible construction, a vision, a form," proclaims the first page of *Forme et Signification* (1962).

Form, however, is not formalism, far from it. Raymond later established his distance from the formal categories of art historian Wölfflin, which "considered forms abstractly without having identified that these schemas were provisional and that the 'modes of vision' were in fact connected to what is most deeply-rooted in vision" (August 11, 1968). The concept of "form" is potentially misleading as it gestures toward "structuralism"; the ambiguous terminology is not always easy to avoid, however, as is shown by *Forme et signification*. In this study, Rousset's analysis reveals, for example, how a "loop-shaped" or "spiraling" movement creates "the Corneilian *form* of a theatre of exaltation" (Rousset 1962, 7), while the subtitle reads "Essay on literary *structure* from Corneille to Claudel" and the preface, "Towards a reading of *forms*" opens with a quotation from Henry James evoking the "sacred mystery of *structure*." Does not the concept of a "participant reader" necessitate a distinction between "form" and "formula"? Rousset admitted to this later: "a formula can be analyzed from the outside, from the perspective of a (possibly structuralist) observer; form can only be understood, and its only sense grasped, by someone who, identifying with Rousseau, experiences it through Rousseau himself, in a quasi-mimetic and intimate relationship" (1967, 68). Raymond also employs the term "structure," he intends this to mean a

nongenerative source: the gesture of identification is intended for the unity of the work, "its internal and secret principle of structure" (January 3, 1961), and it places *us*, adds Rousset, "at the central source from which all structures and meanings are generated" (1962, xv). The position of the Geneva School in relation to structuralism was summed up by Starobinski: "there is no structure without a structuring consciousness" (1965, 276). *Form* does not obliterate the *force* that produced it.

In denouncing the "structuralism" of Rousset in *Forme et Signification*, contrasting *force* and *forme*, Jacques Derrida (1963) was only half right. Granted, Rousset demonstrates a liking for schematic constructions, evident, for example, from the narrative categories that offer a choice of "points of view" in his *Narcisse romancier* (1973) or his interest in the narratological systems of Genette. However, for Rousset formalism always remained subordinate to the singularity of works, to the specific visionary power inscribed into their style and expression. "All work is form, as far as it is a work," proclaims *Forme et signification*, which has this quotation from Balzac for its epigraph: "to each work its own form." Rousset encourages the critic to leave all "initiative to the work," each one considered "as a sensitive species, through the resources of its language," which prove to be different each time (1981, 106). The intention is to be able to grasp the dynamism of both deep intuition and of morphology "in a simultaneous act" (Rousset 1962, xxii). Did the "anti-structuralism" of the Geneva School, if not inspire, at least guarantee the movement of "deconstructionism"? Poulet's criticism of consciousness, in which he stretches subjectivism to the absolute in all its radicalness and immediacy, found a surprising new usage. By reducing "*all the categorical modes"* (time, space, relationships, cause, number) to *"the great categorical activity of consciousness of the self*," the reader "finally arrives," thought Poulet, "at perceiving in an author, or a work, or even in oneself, nothing more than a field of study or of metamorphoses, traversed by the internal movement of the solitary consciousness of the self." And one is able to imagine the model of "a *form of consciousness of self that is as abstract as possible, so impersonal* that it almost becomes inhuman, no longer the consciousness of a particular person, but the product of a *depersonalized spiritual activity* that has *almost become the opposite of the ego*," "*a superior ego, detached from the person*, evident in Amiel, Mallarmé, Valéry." With his provocative suggestion at the conference at Cerisy that the impersonal consciousness no longer has *form*, but only "the disruptive eruption of an *underground force*" (Poulet 1977, 274–76)[26], Poulet demonstrated his sympathy with the post-structuralist turn. While Genette, invited to represent structuralism, criticized Thibaudet for taking a Bergsonian stance and locating "the forms of a *literary 'élan vital*" (Genette 1967, 132) in genres, Doubrovsky maintained, on the contrary, that true criticism seeks, as noted by Raymond Jean, "to find, in an existential perspective, *the interior modulation of a work, the creative élan* that goes thought it" (Jean 1967, 103). Doubrovsky highlighted how the refusal of "structuralist objectivity"

underlined both the "contradiction between consciousness and existence" and the difficulty of reconciling "existentialism with the definition of literature as 'nobody's language', as the writing of no writer, as the light of a consciousness stripped of the ego." If "the subject discovers its absence at the heart of language", "language is not pure absence of the subject", nor "is language itself the only subject". In short, referring to Blanchot and Sartre who found common ground in the *Transcendance de l'Ego*, Doubrovsky concluded that "the *transcendental consciousness* is an instance of *impersonal spontaneity.* The subject is not pure illusion: it is the inevitable and derivative form in which *fundamental subjectivity* appears in the reflexive act" (Doubrovsky 1967, 150–51). Such a return of the subject, albeit paradoxically in an impersonal mode, probably constitutes the most unexpected and significant contribution of the "criticism of consciousness" propagated by the Geneva School.[27] Doubrovsky attests that Starobinski's article, "The style of autobiography," had inspired his thinking about autobiography as "autofiction."[28]

Poulet's position was also of interest to the founders of the Yale School in the United States: J. Hillis Miller, Paul de Man, and Geoffrey H. Hartman, who were developing theories of deconstruction in the 1960s and 1970s. They recognized their debt to Poulet—the latter two were also, incidentally, invited to teach at Zurich.[29] Significantly, it was at the conference at John Hopkins in Baltimore organized by Poulet in 1966 that Derrida, who became close to Paul de Man at this event, advanced his theory of "deconstruction" in opposition to "structuralism," and thereby sanctioned, to a certain degree, the Poulettian refusal of form (Derrida 1970).[30] In the same year, at Cerisy, Paul de Man and Poulet adopted a common position on the transcendental nature of "consciousness." Paul de Man offered an alternative to Foucault's archaeology that denied "the possibility of understanding consciousness from the interior, through self-reflexion" and that sought instead to apprehend "the transformative action of this consciousness" through "the structures that exist on the level of empirical and concrete functions" (1967, 44). Paul de Man instead preferred what I will call the 'meta-empirical' route, a route opened up by Binswanger's book on *Selbstrealisation in der Kunst* (1949): "analysis is orientated toward *the final form of the ego:* that of the *author such as he is interpreted and modified by his work*" (47). The influence of Poulet's pioneering work on Paul de Man is revealed by statements such as: "the primary ego must become other than the empirical ego" and "*the generality of the aesthetic work* is founded on the need of consciousness to purify[31] itself of everything that *is not absolutely immanent in it. Literary criticism, in our century*, has greatly contributed to establishing the crucial distinction between *the empirical and the ontological ego*. The critical act, conceived not as intersubjectivity, but as linked to being, and insofar as we have overlooked it for *a transcendental ego which speaks in the work*, *remains an exemplary act*." (47–58)[32]. How could Poulet not recognize his own thought in de Man's argumentation that

refused "the archaeology of surfaces" in favor of "the primary phenomenon *of consciousness as a* constitutive *power*," "capable of seizing *itself at the root of its history*" (44)? Indeed, in his conclusion to the congress of Cerisy, Poulet adopted the concept of the "mythical ego" also presented by Schloezer in his paper, "L'oeuvre, l'auteur et l'homme" (Schloezer 1967, 97): "The subject that finds itself revealed to me in individual works or in the work as a whole is not the author. The *subject that presides over the* work can only *be in the work*" (Poulet 1967, 277). *Pensée indéterminée*, Poulet's final work, which is symptomatically unfinished, established this disintegration of the *ego* into "an almost completely indeterminate *self*" that would also "almost" identify with *language* if not for this mystical and Gnostic inflexion absent from the concept of the "undifferentiated" proposed by Deleuze at the same time. Later, in 1975, at Cartigny, Paul de Man dared to extend the deconstructionist potentiality to the founders of Geneva School: he saw in "their suspicion toward *language*," in "the *anxiety* that runs through the writing of Béguin and Raymond" a connection with "the *distress* caused by some of the results of *rhetorical and semiotic* analysis" (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 254–55). As if these existential and linguistic anxieties ultimately contained, and indeed had contained all along, what was needed to go beyond the opposition between *language* and *pure consciousness*, between *form*, *force*, and *signification*.

DOES THE GENEVA SCHOOL STILL HAVE A FUTURE?

In 1988, during a round table discussion, Rousset argued that any notion of a "school" was in conflict with Raymond's teaching. The only common ground they all shared, at the very least, was the priority given to the texts and works themselves. However, "a specific position" was needed, as one participant commented, which explains the success of Genevan criticism.

From 1935, the two seminal books by Raymond and Béguin were influential abroad and injected new life into the conventional and academic context of the French university, particularly during the Occupation. Rousset's work on the Baroque inspired a number of students and disciples in France and Italy. From 1974, in Eastern Europe, notably in Poland and Romania,[33] the Geneva School provided a means of refusing "socialist realism." Starobinski, the only one of the early members of the Genevan School still active, is often the subject of conferences, analysis, festschrifts, and official recognition in Europe and in the United States; his works have been translated into several languages. In Geneva itself, critics, such as George Steiner, Michel Butor, and Yves Bonnefoy, found themselves perfectly in tune with "Genevan thought," so named to attract and form a third, and even fourth generation of researchers and teachers. In Swiss universities most of the chairs in French literature are occupied by followers or sympathizers of the Geneva School, almost in a direct line of succession (Suter 2001).

Whether it was planned or not, the prestige of the Geneva School is due to the fact that these generous critical convictions represent a fragile and unique historical moment when it was still possible to think about a balance, however problematic, between *forme* and *signification*. That was before their unfortunate disassociation led, on the one hand, to the impasse of structuralism, which was soon victim of the renewed interest in the subject, and on the other hand, to the failure of deconstructionism, condemned in the end to dump literature in with a whole range of extra-philological disciplines.[34] In this respect, according to those involved themselves, the image of the Geneva School harbors a sort of nostalgia for a bygone state of grace. Commenting on Raymond's "the style of criticism," and his manner "of talking about books that was both meditative and vivid," Starobinski evokes a "golden age" of criticism before the "age of suspicion": "in our time of highly technical criticism, one no longer writes as poetically and figuratively about poetry. Is this really an advantage? Poets themselves read Marcel Raymond" (Starobinski 2000, 139). Such an evolution is probably irreversible, and in the order of things, trivializes and homogenizes scholarship in the human sciences. If the model of the Geneva School continues to fascinate, this is perhaps because it remains a "critical fiction," inviting us to reconsider and to continually question, both for the future and in the immediate, the sense and the vocation of the interpretative act. And it allows us to imagine other 'yields of pleasure' open to reconciling the general discourse of literary criticism with the creative power of literary works.

NOTES

1. Grotzer 1981, 125 and letter of August 1, 1963. All subsequent citations from Raymond-Poulet correspondence refer to this volume.
2. The term and the concept actually therefore date to much earlier than the controversy Picard initiated against Barthes's *Sur Racine* in 1963, which is usually considered the beginning of this movement in France.
3. Poulet deplored the indifference shown by *New Criticism* toward French literature (letter of January 7, 1963).
4. Every presentation, apart from those of Paul de Man and Poulet, was published in no. 16 of *Cahiers de l'Association internationale des Etudes Françaises* (1964).
5. Choosing to hold the conference in Cartigny, Raymond's village, suggests an unwillingness to present the group as a school: "Starobinski pointed out to me that at Cerisy the atmosphere would perhaps be pernicious" (same letter).
6. See Fornerod and Grotzer 1974.
7. Letter to Poulet of March 15, 1955. In his letter of April 9, 1966, Raymond prefaced his discovery of existentialism, which would come up later, with his encounter with "Kultur-, Form- or Geistesgeschichte" and the "Hegelian notion

of the spirit," and the thought of Burckhardt, Dilthey, Gundolf, and Huizinga. See also, Raymond 1970 and 1955.

8. Raymond was surprised by Barthes' arrival in Geneva "with his hermetic language and closed ideologies" (letter of November 25, 1970). Nevertheless, Poulet included a chapter on Barthes in *La Conscience critique*; and Rousset, Starobinski, and Butor cosigned the "Hommage à Roland Barthes" (*Journal de Genève*, March 29, 1980).
9. Starobinski, "Leo Spitzer et la lecture stylistique," préface to *Etudes de style*, 1970, 30–31 (the first version appeared in *Critique*, no. 206, July 1964, 579–597). In the same volume, Poulet presented a posthumous study of Spitzer: "Quelques aspects de la technique des romans de Michel Butor."
10. See the ch. "Bachelard et Richard" (Poulet 1971, 173–218).
11. Switzerland, and Geneva in particular, was a "route" through which Freud's work got to France, especially thanks to Raymond de Saussure, the son of the linguist.
12. Raymond did not know Jacques Rivière's study on Proust and Freud (*Quelques progrès dans l'étude du coeur humain*, 1930), which explored, for the first time in France, the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature.
13. On the contribution of the Geneva School to the stylistics of "psychoanalytic phenomenology of the literary text," see Compagnon 1998, 73–74, 219.
14. In *Le Mythe de Don Juan* (1978) and *Leurs yeux se rencontrèrent. La scène de première vue dans le roman* (1981), Rousset is increasingly interested in "variations," but in his work the preference given to what he calls "morphology" tends to lead to "typologies" (in the sense intended by Bachelard).
15. On the whole, literary criticism should demonstrate how writers changed modes of historical perception.
16. Starobinski 1963. On the "metacritical" production of Starobinski, see Starobinski 1970, 1971, 1974, and 2013.
17. As we have seen, "criticism of consciousness" limited itself to a somewhat limited corpus: Poulet does not consider any work prior to that of Saint-Augustin.
18. In the same way, does "writing a history of 'la pensée indéteminée' 'at the very least reveal multiple variations across different times and places?"
19. Roger Francillon (2001, 152) notes that Rousset "limits himself to a modest critical tool the aim of which is empirical rather than theoretical"; its sole use is in establishing some order in the disorder of unusual phenomena.
20. For Poulet, Raymond's sensitivity to form leads him to a "form of stylistic imitation" and "an intentional effort to practice the verbal forms used by the authors the critic is interpreting" (Poulet and Grotzer 1979, 38).
21. See Starobinski 2013.
22. "I have a very close and passionate relationship with the people I study," said Butor in 1976, "it's a passionate study, but it contains as much coldness as possible" (1999, 137–38).
23. "The philologist's innately chameleon-like nature is better able to mould itself on what is tangible in an artistic work than the 'systematism of philosophy'" (Spitzer 1970, 392).
24. According to Raymond (1970, 82), Dilthey's work, *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, is "a phenomenological study of the poetic imagination."

25. On the phenomenological method of Starobinski, inspired in particular by Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, see Colangelo 2004.
26. For Poulet there nevertheless exists "a final 'category' of the consciousness of the self": "critical consciousness."
27. Poulet repositioned himself thus in contrast to structuralism in this movement in which the "subject" received new value, illustrated, for example, by Paul Ricoeur, "La question du sujet: le défi de la sémiologie," in *Le Conflit des interprétations*, 1969, p. 250 sq. and even later by Foucault in *Le Souci de Soi* (1984).
28. Letter to Starobinski of June 28, 1971, now held at the BN, Berne.
29. De Man 1971, Miller 1970, Hartman 1972, Macksey et al.1982, and Grotzer 1990.
30. Poulet had invited Barthes to represent "structuralism."
31. The term *se purifier* [to purify oneself] heralds the expression *se laver* [to wash oneself] that Poulet attributed to Valéry in *La Pensée indéterminée*.
32. With reference to Bachelard's *L'Air et les Songes*, which affirms the "suspended nature of the poetic self" bringing about a "leap beyond everyday and historical temporality," Binswanger mentions "*poetic transcendence*," which is the "joyful creation of the pure state."
33. See, among others, Chudak 1995.
34. Paul de Man would later regret that the affirmation, according to which literature does not "signify" anything, that caused English departments in the United States to become "large organizations in the service of everything except their own subject matter" (de Man 1986, 26). The study of literature became the art of applying psychology, politics, history, or other disciplines to literary texts in order to make the text "mean" something. What would the American critic say now, considering the current proliferation *cultural studies*, *gender studies*, and *digital studies*?

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10 A School in the Woods

Tartu–Moscow Semiotics

Marina Grishakova and Silvi Salupere

The works of the Tartu–Moscow School (TMS) translated into Italian, French, English and German in the late 1960s-early 1970s were often presented to the international reader under the umbrella heading of "Soviet structuralism and semiotics" (Baran 1976; Eco and Faccani 1969; Eimermacher 1971; Lucid 1977; Maranda 1974; Matejka et al. 1977; Seyffert 1985). However, upon a closer look, the appropriateness of both "Soviet" and "structuralism" proves to be questionable and "Structuralism" not of primary importance for the "Soviet structuralists." In a wider perspective, the conception of structural poetics refers to the general interest in the formative principles and formal organization of texts, expressive (musical, poetic) systems, the systems of thought and belief, which only, for TMS scholars, provide access to their meaning—or, rather, they are meaning-making and, thereby, semantic forms. The "structural" methodology confronts ideological criticism that circumvents the formal organization of texts and discourses, while operating with large, pre-given blocks of meaning and thereby leveling varieties and nuances, suppressing differences and highlighting similarities. The various intricate and sophisticated forms that attracted TMS scholars' attention included limericks, jokes, riddles, narrative formulas, logical paradoxes, elements of composition and perspective in medieval art, styles of editing in art-house cinema, personological classifications, gestures in Arabic languages—those peculiar meaning-generating devices whose function was to increase the complexity and richness of information, beyond a limited practical purpose. Forms relate to the specific historically changeable constructions of reality. Hence, the TMS interest in forms and modes of signification embraced the diachronic dimension: historical semantics, the history of artistic conventions and principles (Panofsky's "symbolic forms," Eisenstein's "ideograms"), and the history of ideas. From this perspective, semiotics was a natural extension of the TMS interest in modes and strategies of making meaning across various systems, media, and cultures and the awareness that no artefact, medium or cultural system stands alone.[1] On a broad scale, the TMS work was part of the transdisciplinary system-theory developments that were manifested in the works of many prominent scholars, from Talcott Parsons to Ilya Prigogine.

The story of the TMS is one of cultural gathering and preservation that, despite the depressive Soviet context and a lack of an institutional home, produced an outburst of intellectual energy, touched upon many lives and left an imprint within and beyond the immediate environment. The polemics on the origins and significance of the TMS in the late 1980s–early 1990s[2] revealed that what is currently termed a "school" was a virtual community rather than a monolithic whole.[3] The core group that appeared at the early gatherings was subject to constant flux and renewal; besides, participants were associated with other cognate or distinct circles or schools, such as the philosophical "Moscow School of Methodology" (Merab Mamardashvili, Aleksandr Pyatigorsky, David Zilberman, and others) or the informal Zholkovsky–Meletinsky seminar that came together in private apartments in Moscow from 1976 to 1983.

The school brought together differing approaches and research habits, though the aspiration to a common structural-semiotic language and conceptual vocabulary surfaced in many publications and discussions. In his article "On the problem of the genesis of the Tartu–Moscow semiotic school," Boris Uspensky offers two definitions of the "school": (1) the school as a tight-knit association unified by a certain program and presenting itself as a certain whole; (2) the "school" as a concept used by external observers to describe the activities of a group perceived from the outside as a whole, which the members of the group did not claim themselves to be. The second definition applies to the TMS (B. Uspensky 1987, 18). The study of forgotten texts or texts prohibited by Soviet censorship as well as contacts with writers, philosophers and defenders of human rights testified to the school's programmatic cultural openness. In a recent interview (2012), Lazar Fleishman, currently Professor of Slavonic Studies at Stanford, recalled his visit to Tartu as a student of Riga University in the early 1960s: "There was a sense of absolute freedom, non-Sovietness, without any excesses […]." Publication of archival materials and works of scholars and thinkers of the past and the present, such as a prominent Czech structuralist and semiotician Jan Mukařovský,[4] Russian philosophers Gustav Shpet and Pavel Florensky,[5] literary scholars Boris Eikhenbaum, Boris Tomashevsky, Olga Freidenberg,[6] and Boris Yarkho, biologist and philosopher Aleksandr Lyubishchev, and the Estonian philosopher Uku Masing in Tartu's *Sign Systems Studies,* as well as Vyacheslav Ivanov's effort to have Vygotsky's book *The Psychology of Art* (1965) published were clear signs of the school's cultural policy.

The TMS emerged at the intersection of various historical and personal trajectories at the time of the Soviet political "thaw" of the 1960s—a period of changes that, albeit not powerful enough to prevent a new stagnation in the 1970s and 1980s, nevertheless, provoked the eventual collapse of the Soviet system:

> When did the Berlin Wall come down? However much this event took us by surprise in the autumn of 1989—indeed, no one foresaw

> either its rapidity or its consequences—I believe that the fissures in the wall began to be clearly felt in the early 1960s. A few unknown scholars—thinkers expressing disturbing ideas in hermetic idioms—were regrouping, like a colony of ants, to carry out subversive labors. Too complex for the already nascent media culture, their work was, of course, invisible from Paris or New York; but the masters of the Kremlin were not unaware of its undermining effects. Yury Lotman was one of these scholars.
>
> (Kristeva 1994, 375–376)

Two significant domestic traditions that the TMS absorbed were Moscow linguistics and Petersburg poetics and literary studies. The latter, stemming from Russian Formalism and comparative studies (Veselovsky, Propp, Zhirmunsky), reached Lotman and his wife and fellow scholar Zara Mints via their teachers in Leningrad (Petersburg) University. Such figures as Petr Bogatyrev and Roman Jakobson bridged the TMS with Russian Formalism and Prague structuralism. The TMS oriental, ethnological and folklore studies were rooted in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European and Russian scholarship. Aron Gurevich's research on medieval European culture, stemming from Bakhtin's work and the French tradition of *Annales* (particularly Le Goff and Duby, see Jacques Revel's chapter in this volume), introduced an important historiographic and anthropological trend.[7]

A contrast between the handicapped Soviet reality that was artificially isolated from the rest of the world, and the rich and colorful worlds beyond it was always perceptible in TMS scholars' works and life choices. Some of them emigrated to the West long before the lifting of the iron curtain: indologists Boris Ogibenin (1974; received professorship of Sanskrit at the University of Strasbourg in 1988) and Aleksandr Syrkin (1978, Hebrew University of Jerusalem); linguists Aleksandr Zholkovsky (1979, the Universities of Amsterdam, Cornell and California, Los Angeles); Yuri Shcheglov (1979, Wisconsin University, Madison), and Boris Gasparov (1980, Columbia University, New York). In 1974, the philosopher and Buddhologist Aleksandr Pyatigorsky who, besides a close cooperation with Tartu scholars, became involved in philosophical and Buddhist circles in Moscow, fled from Soviet prosecutions to Britain where he taught in the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London. Boris Uspensky had been teaching in various American and European universities in the late1980s and 1990s before settling in Naples. Vyacheslav Ivanov taught at Stanford from 1990 to 1991 and received a position at UCLA in 1991.[8]

SUMMER SCHOOLS

Let us return, however, to the beginnings of the school. Though genetics, abstract art, and "formalism" in various guises were still deemed ideologically

suspect and malign "bourgeois phenomena" in the early 1960s, the efforts of leading Moscow linguists to legitimize structural linguistics, information science, and machine translation yielded certain results. Among those scholars were Vyacheslav Ivanov—an expert in Indo-European studies and, more narrowly, Hittite language, fired from Moscow University for his support to Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* in 1958—and Vladimir Uspensky, a mathematician and an expert in computational linguistics. In 1956–1958, Ivanov and Uspensky led a seminar in computational linguistics at Moscow University. The Council for Cybernetics of the Soviet Academy of Science was set up in 1959, and the division for structural typology of Slavic languages was opened at the Institute of Slavic and Balkan studies in 1960. The division organized the 1962 Symposium on the structural studies of sign systems. Moscow linguists cherished a plan to open the institute of semiotics, as an umbrella institution for structural linguistics and other semiotic disciplines, and to launch a semiotic journal. The institute was never established, however: a harsh critique by Soviet ideologue Leonid Ilyichev, who charged semiotics with "formalism" and "abstractionism," prevented its instutionalization (see V. Uspensky 1992).

By that time, Lotman, who had been teaching in Tartu, became interested in structural studies. In 1962, he started a course in structural poetics. He sent his student Igor Chernov to meet participants of the 1962 Symposium and, afterward, himself met with Moscow linguists and forged a plan to organize summer schools. Lotman had the stroke of genius to invite the Moscow scholars to transfer their activities (informal semiotic gatherings and publications), which had turned out to be impossible in Moscow, to Tartu.

Further rapprochement between the Tartu and Moscow groups occurred when Vladimir Uspensky, who spent the summer of 1964 with his family in a small town of Elva (17 miles from Tartu), befriended Lotman. Uspensky was a man of diverse interests and encyclopedic knowledge. At the time, he was immersed in reading a duel codex: various types of ritual and highly formalized behavior may have served as a point of common interest for the mathematician and the literary scholar. During long walks in the woods and around the lake, the summer schools of semiotics were under constant discussion. By that time the word "semiotics" had already fallen into disrepute, and would only have annoyed those in power. However, the concept of "modeling semiotic systems," introduced in the proceedings of the 1962 Moscow Symposium, inspired Uspensky to suggest "schools on secondary modeling systems" as a title for the summer schools. Uspensky himself wrote: "For me, this title had the following important values: (1) it sounded very scientific; (2) it was completely incomprehensible; (3) if really needed, it could have been explained: primary modeling systems that model reality are natural languages, and all the rest that build upon them are secondary." Uspensky continued: "I did not hide from Lotman the mocking and hooliganish character of my suggestion, but to my surprise he became immediately attached to it. He explained that incomprehensibility is not

a property of parody, as I mistakenly believed, but a characteristic of a sophisticated science" (V. Uspensky1995, 106–07).

No doubt, the very term "summer school" may have prompted outside observers to ascribe a common agenda and a methodological unity to the participants of the gatherings by applying the label of "school" in an extended sense, as it is used in the history of science. An exchange of ideas and interdisciplinary cross-fertilization were far more important than a common methodology. The first summer school was held in Kääriku, at the University sports center, in August 1964. Kääriku is a beautiful place in Southern Estonia, amongst lakes and woods. Although the Kääriku lifestyle was rather Spartan (wood-plank bunk beds and simple country food), the secluded and quiet space was favorable to informal communication and intense discussion.

The second Summer School took place from August 16 to 26, 1966. Roman Jakobson, who was attending a Congress of psychologists in Moscow at the time, joined the gathering. Due to the presence of a Soviet garrison, Tartu was a "closed" town: to travel to Tartu, Western guests needed a special permission that was not easy to obtain.

In a letter to Boris Uspensky on May 16,1966, Lotman, while asking Uspensky to take care of the Moscow group, suggested keeping to the "first line-up" without considerably extending the number of the participants (1997, 475). The selectiveness could be hardly surprising given a situation in which academic structures were infiltrated with KGB agents. A number of scholars associated with the TMS were subjected to political obstructions after the protests against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968). After Natalya Gorbanevskaya, a friend of Lotman's family, protested on Red Square and published a documentary book on the protest,[9] security police conducted a search of Lotman's apartment. Lotman was prohibited to travel abroad on the suspicion of liaisons with dissident movements.

Another guest from the U.S., the linguist and semiotician Thomas Sebeok, attended the fourth summer school (August 1970). This session of the school laid the basis for further developments in the semiotics of culture, the focal topic of the gathering. In 1973, a manifesto document, *Theses on the Semiotic Study of Cultures*, coauthored by Lotman, Ivanov, Pyatigorsky, Toporov, and Boris Uspensky, identified the new field of study—the semiotics of culture, necessary to account for the interaction and complexity of various sign systems. The *Theses* discussed the concept of "culture" as opposed to (and therefore defined via) "nonculture." Culture and nonculture appear as two interrelated domains that need each other. Culture produces nonculture and vice versa: "each type of culture has its corresponding type of "chaos" (Lotman et al. 2013, 54). In different contexts, the slot of "nonculture" may be filled with "nature," "chaos," the "exotic," "barbarian," "infantile," "subconscious," or "deviant." The *Theses* introduced the broad semiotic concept of "text" or a text in a "secondary language" (including nonverbal languages), as distinct from natural language.

The extension of the concept of "text" to the whole sphere of culture was a radical move from separate disciplines to general semiotics: "the notion of texts may be interpreted as serving to free semiotics from the dominance of the linguistic model over all others" (Portis-Winner and Winner 1976, 108). In their response to the *Theses*, Irene and Thomas Winner note, however, that certain concepts used by the authors may seem problematic from the perspective of contemporary Western anthropology and semiotics of culture. For instance, Geertz, who considers his own concept of culture "semiotic" and seems to be in tune with the TMS scholars as regards the emancipatory effect of the broad understanding of textuality, holds the notions of "code" of "system" to be reductive. The Winners point to the tendency towards the synthesis of polarities, such as synchrony and diachrony, statics and dynamics, that manifests in "Eastern European semiotics" (Jakobson, Mukařovský) and might help addressing the tenets inherent in *Theses*.

With four Summer Schools successfully concluded, dark clouds began to gather above semiotics in Tartu. Proceedings were increasingly difficult to publish: the volumes grew thinner; papers were censored in Tallinn and Moscow, leading to ever lengthening delays in publication. There was also quite a bit of envy and obstruction within the university itself. In his letter of September 18, 1966, Lotman wrote: "Kääriku provoked a huge outburst of envy from Ariste[10] and others. But let that be as it may" (1997, 196). After Rector Klement left his position in 1970, Lotman lost a strong backer and supporter, and cooperation with the new Rector Arnold Koop failed to thrive. At the about the same time, the Moscow publishing house Iskusstvo (Art) was subject to repression after publishing Lotman's *The Structure of the Artistic Text* and Uspensky's *Poetics of Composition* in the series "Semiotic Studies in the Theory of Art" (237).

SIGN SYSTEMS STUDIES

Along with the *Summer School Theses* issued regularly from 1964–1970, a new (and the first in the world) semiotic periodical was launched: *Sign Systems Studies* (*SSS*).[11] Again, there was seemingly nothing directly oppositional or anti-Soviet in the journal, yet neither its format nor content was standard for academic publications in the Soviet humanities. The articles, particularly in early issues, were rather short, even pronouncedly laconic (from 1 to 12 pages),[12] or consisted of a series of theses and notes forming a single longer paper, with the abundant use of mathematical or logical symbols, statistical data, schemes, diagrams or musical notation. The main language of the journal was Russian, with the contents in Russian, Estonian, and English. Eventually, one of the papers was published in German (Masing) and two in English (Masing, Pyatigorsky). Unlike the simplistic, dull and ideological mainstream Soviet-time academic writing, *SSS* abounded in

references in various languages. Moreover, the journal cultivated a dandyish habit of citing Latin, English, French, German and other major European languages without translation.[13] Topics ranged from mythology, folklore, religion, medieval art, music, theatre, cinema and painting, to etiquette, card games and cartomancy, prophecies, divination, and nonsense poetry. With the print run of about 1,000–1,500 copies, the periodical gained enormous popularity: copies were distributed and sold out immediately, and the university library used them in book exchange as "hard currency."

In the editorial to the first issue, the series was announced as a united effort of literary scholars, linguists, and mathematicians aimed at creating a new methodology for the humanities by introducing exact and structural approaches. According to the editorial, the established terminology of the humanities was vague, non-transferable to other domains and, thereby, heuristically and methodologically inefficient. The new approach was meant to improve this situation.

However, that specific agenda was eventually replaced with a more capacious and flexible program that accommodated various approaches and research interests. In 1985, the *SSS* editors distributed a questionnaire on the results and perspectives of semiotic research amongst various authors. Some answers were published under the title "Results and problems of semiotic research" in the twentieth issue (Redkollegiya 1987). The selection implicitly addresses some tenets of the 1973 *Theses* (see above).

Both Lotman and Ivanov observed the shift of interest from the sign (as the Saussurean binary structure of meaning) to the text as the site of emergence and interplay of multiple semiotic languages. For Lotman, those new orientations marked a point of departure from the "Saussurean-Prague-Formalist program." Lotman saw complex texts as privileged objects of study in the new semiotics, with its reversal of the Saussurean-Jakobsonian model where "language" (code) determines "speech" (message). On the contrary, in the new approach (1) text (message, *parole*) precedes language (code, *langage*); (2) text is richer than language; (3) text functions as a generator of new languages. The idea that an individual text (in a broad semiotic sense, which includes literature, art, ritual and everyday behavior) may beget new semiotic languages and serve as a codification means for subsequent texts had a significant impact on the further work of the TMS. Lotman was interested in how an individual case that initially may appear as a "deviation" becomes a "norm," in how texts of literature and art impact reality, and how artistic models determine people's behavior. By the 1980s, Lotman retained only a functional difference between "code" and "text" (see Schönle 2006 on the kinship of "code" and "discourse" in this new paradigm).

In his answers to the *SSS* questionnaire, Ivanov envisaged new developments and new fields, such as catastrophe semiotics or neurosemiotics. Yuri Levin[14] praised semiotics for the sense of interconnectedness of various fields of research and called it "a shelter for homeless ideas" referring

to such topics as semiotics of behavior, alchemy, or divination that are hard to accommodate in standard disciplines. For Levin, semiotic search for universal models and languages had failed. Yet, he observed, semiotic models are still useful and may prompt further research on simple or highly formalized semiotic systems, such as minor and popular genres, or the theatre of the absurd. The most promising fields were, in Levin's opinion, personology and the semiotics of everyday behavior, the study of "hypersemiotic" texts (such as the "Petersburg text"—conceptualizations of Petersburg in arts, literature, architecture, memoirs, urban mythologies or rumors), and metasemiotic reflection. Levin considered the emerging free research community "beyond schools and systems" (!) the greatest success of semiotics.

Thus, the TMS was in a state of metamorphosis through more than two decades. Despite the hardships of censorship and the dispersal of participants of the early gatherings, new, irregular gatherings, such as the seminar on Petersburg semiotics (*SSS* 18, 1984), joint seminars of Lotman's laboratory of semiotics and Deglin–Balonov's laboratory of neuropathology at the Institute of Evolutionary Physiology and Biochemistry in Leningrad (*SSS* 16–17 and 19, 1983–1984, 1986), Lotman's laboratory's work on the project of a Dictionary of Emblems and Symbols[15], guest lectures as well as continuing discussions and coauthorships were characteristic of the late, "latent" stage of the development of the school. In 1986, Lotman attempted to resume the tradition of the summer schools. It was a lively, stimulating gathering that brought together participants of early schools. Times had been changing, however: centrifugal forces seemed to be stronger than centripetal, and the regularity of gatherings was broken.

The seminars with Deglin-Balonov's laboratory linked neurosemiotic research on the brain's functional asymmetry (see Ivanov 1978) to TMS conceptions of dialogue, multilinguality and the necessity of at least two heterogeneous languages for a semiotic system to be functional. Tatyana Chernigovskaya's engaging lectures based on experimental research demonstrated that there was, indeed, a difference in perception of logical syllogisms and metaphors by people with repressed functions of either hemisphere.[16]

In what follows, we shall touch upon certain conceptions that emerge as focal points in TMS thought and define the TMS as an entity—albeit a heterogeneous and vague one. Nevertheless, in the eyes of younger generations, the TMS still existed as a school, as a nurturing environment that formed certain research habits and conceptual preferences, even if the dispersal of younger generations was even more drastic in the decade of 1990–2000.

MYTHOLOGICAL AND MYTHOPOETIC MODELS

Reconstructions of proto-Slavic and Indo-European mythology and the study of literary myths and archetypes are important branches of TMS

scholarship. In his introduction to the proceedings of 1962 Symposium, Ivanov observed that world models, including divination, magic, religious and mythological systems, functioned as practical programs regulating relations between ancient communities and their environments. They served the most important social or anthropological needs and were passed on from one generation to another by learning and memorization (Ivanov 1997).

In addition to Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology, Cambridge ritual theory and Olga Freidenberg's cultural-anthropological approach may have served as landmarks for the reconstruction of proto-Slavic mythology by Ivanov and Toporov. This work was text- and language-oriented. It started with basic semantic oppositions that were, arguably, central to the description of the systems under reconstruction (the names of gods and basic symbols in Slavic mythological systems). Ivanov and Toporov (1965) saw their work as a path breaking for general linguistics, with its concern for a metalanguage that would enable a universal semantic description of natural languages. Generative semantics, or the analysis of names and semantic elements that remain constant in mythological transmission, served as a methodological tool for reconstruction.

At the center of the "basic myth" (presumably, the basis for Indo-European mythologies) that Ivanov's and Toporov's research disclosed is the battle between the god of the thunder (Perun in Slavic mythologies; respectively, Sanskrit Parjanya, Lithanian Perkunas, Prussian Perkuns, Norwegian Fjörgynn, and Germanic Thor) and the chtonic god Veles (a cattle god in Slavic mythologies, Veles may take a form of a dragon, dog, or other being of chtonic origins). The motif of the cosmic tree or world tree that connects all mythological spheres (the heavenly, intermediate and subterranean world) is a focal component of the basic myth.

Neomythological poetics, or the components of modern literary works that are mythological in origin, also attracted Ivanov's and Toporov's attention. Toporov's interpretation of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* as well as Eleazar Meletinsky's research on old and modern mythologies (including European and Russian twentieth-century neomythologism) are examples of TMS mythopoetic analyses. As compared with the Cambridge ritualists' or Northrop Frye's classical works, Toporov's and Meletinsky's research places stronger emphasis on the historical and context-specific transformations of mythological plots and symbolic constellations—on mythology as a structuring and interpretative tool of historical consciousness rather than the mythological substratum of literature as such.

The dynamics of Dostoevsky's novels, as Toporov suggests, originate in the contrasting relations between the ontological "openness" of the main character and archetypal pre-given features of the narrative: chronotopic coordinates, symbolic colors and numbers, elements of setting—doors, thresholds, rooms—as unique mythological objects in Raskolnikov's world. Whereas the character is "ambivalent" or "undecided," often in a state of

illness, hypochondria, mental confusion, hallucination, or day-dreaming, capable of unpredictable and unmotivated deeds that introduce a high degree of indeterminacy in the development of the plot, the archetypal elements, on the contrary, trigger "scheduled moves" and introduce deterministic causality into the narrative sequence (Toporov's works on Dostoevsky are collected in Toporov 1995).

Meletinsky's early work of the 1960s focused on the amendments in Propp's schema of the fairy tale. His *The Poetics of Myth* (1976 Russian, 1998 English) and *On Literary Archetypes* (1994) introduced Western theories of myth and explored historical transformations of myths starting with fairy tales up to the modernist fiction (Joyce, Mann, Kafka). Meletinsky observes literary revision of (1) the mythological archetype of the "hero" in modern literature, such as hero's desacralization, the development of individual and psychological aspects; (2) the hero's double and his ultimate separation from the heroic double, of which it is initially a hypostasis; and (3) the archetypes of cosmos and chaos. Meletinsky (1994) points out that the mythological "infiltration" evokes an increase in narrative complexity of nonmythological texts: a growing number of characters associated with the protagonist and the resulting complications of plot structure; dramatic conflicts, accumulation of similar and contrasting motifs or motif reversals; negative parallels (failed attempts); metonymic and metaphorical transformations.

In many respects, Meletinsky's theory of literary archetypes was a continuation of Lotman's conception of fictional narrative (Lotman 1979; Lotman and Mints 1981) as a result of interference (as in the case of light or sound waves) of mythological, normative texts, which describe the structure of the world as it evolves through the cycle of time, with everyday vernacular stories, which follow the historical principle of linearity and irreversibility and describe events and accidents breaking the course of the normative, predictable occurrences. From this perspective, the "plot" appears as a result of fall from the mythological, holistic "state of grace." However, as a component of textual world, fictional narrative retains a connection with the holistic world of mythology. Fractal relations are characteristic of the artistic text as a finite model of the infinite universe: every level and component reflects the whole. The fractal semantics also extends to narrative dynamics: plot originates in the split between immobile and mobile characters, multiplication of the latter and their crossing the borders of semantic spaces (or, otherwise, events).

SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

The TMS owes its appearance to developments in structural linguistics, machine translation and information theory (Seyffert 1983; Shukman 1977; Uspensky 1987). Obviously, simple systems, such as artificial languages, signal systems, mythological systems or rituals are amenable to formalization and structural description. To describe such a system a researcher needs to

compile a vocabulary and reconstruct a grammar of the system. By getting ahold of the vocabulary (a full inventory of the minimal units of the system) and the grammar (the rules of combination and transformation of those units), it is possible not only to describe the existing systems but prognosticate their functioning or generate new ones.

However, there was a split in opinions as to the possibility of formalization of complex systems among TMS scholars. The Moscow linguist Isaak Revzin[17] argued that the structural method is applicable only to relatively simple systems, whereas Zholkovsky and Shcheglov envisaged the possibility of the formalization of complex texts and developed a model of generative poetics to prove this. The use of the model included a rather cumbersome and highly formalized four-level description procedure.

The orthodoxy of linguistic models was questioned by the group of literary scholars, with Juri Lotman and Boris Uspensky as the leading figures in the group. Lotman's first article on structuralism was entitled "On the Delimitation of the Concept of Structure in Linguistics and Literary Scholarship" (Lotman 1963) where he approached the text as an instance in a communicative loop between text, context, and reader rather than an immanently structured object. As regards the text-reader dynamics, Ann Shukman refers to Pyatigorsky's possible influence on Lotman's thinking: already in his early work, Pyatigorsky discussed the text's communicative status between the producer and the receiver. However, Pyatigorsky's stance is rooted in his philosophical background rather than in the "realist trend" he represents in the TMS, as Shukman mistakenly suggests (Shukman 1977, 21). Pyatigorsky was the philosophical Other for the TMS (which was probably of mutual interest for both the TMS and Pyatigorsky): he was (tacitly) developing a phenomenology of semiotics and later distanced himself from semiotics altogether (*Symbol and Consciousness*, coauthored with Mamardashvili; his project of "observational philosophy," developed with David Zilberman).

Rather early, Lotman came to the conclusion that the concept of "language" is not easily applicable to "continuous" (iconic) types of texts, as distinct from the "discrete" ones.[18] The former included not only architecture, painting or dance (the texts whose meanings are not easily broken into discrete units) but also imaginative verbal works, such as fictional narratives and poems (see Lotman 1974). In the first type, meaning arises as a result of a transformation of the whole textual configuration, in the second type it derives from the sequence of individual elements. For Lotman, these two types of texts are mutually untranslatable, yet they could be put into the relation of equivalence or transcoding (such are, for instance, verbal paraphrases of dreams).

The paradigmatic shift in Lotman's works of the 1980s (from "signs" to "texts," from the binary understanding of meaning to the complex "clusters of meanings") was just a further step in his permanent effort to illustrate tension between the individual-singular and the systemic-holistic. In the *Structure of the Artistic Text* (1970), Lotman highlights multilingualism as

a distinctive feature of art. The interaction of different languages introduces indeterminacy in the artistic whole: the artistic text appears as a set of complex and dynamic, constantly shifting, relations. The innovation is explained in terms of transcoding (switching over from one code to another) or interplay of distinct codes (languages), which endows even formal (phonological and syntactic) elements of natural language with meaning. At this stage, random elements are deemed meaningful only as elements of (another) system: what is "extrasystemic" in reality becomes "polysystemic" in art (Lotman 1971, 96). The term "polysystemic" refers to a conjunction of multiple codes and languages within a single text. Unlike (poly)system theorists, Lotman was primarily interested in the singularity of an artefact. Everything that becomes involved in the semantic field of a poem or a prose narrative, with its interplay of languages, becomes a representation, an artifice: a document or a sample of oral discourse included in the novel, or a "piece of nature" as part of a sculptural installation.

In the late 1980s, Lotman became inspired by the works of Ilya Prigogine on complex self-organizing systems (see Lotman 2009). The processes of self-organization provide an interesting link between "nature" and "culture," unifying them in a common process of evolution. The traces of Prigogine's influence on Lotman's work are at their most obvious in the articles "On the role of random factors in the evolution of literature" and "Culture as a subject and an object-for-itself" (Lotman 1989a, 1989b) and the books *Universe of the Mind* and *Culture and Explosion*. By introducing random factors that interact with regular, iterative processes and whose role is much more prominent in art than in science and technology, Lotman revises the Formalist theory of literary evolution. At this stage of his thinking, randomness becomes a catalyst of change, an inherent stimulus for development rather than an occasional component of systemic transformation. Lotman highlights the relevance of complex systems theory in the study of historical processes that are neither wholly anonymous and subliminal nor entirely personal and conscious. History has its own "bifurcation points" with a sudden increase in unpredictability. Yet the role of random factors is traditionally downplayed by historiographers: historical development is, *post factum*, construed as predetermined. A nodal point of evolution that surfaces as a cluster of alternative opportunities is later construed as the outcome of a causal chain due to the fact that the predominant path of development apparently cuts off other alternatives. Unfortunately, Lotman's illness and death (1993) prevented his further development of these stimulating ideas.

MODELS OF AND MODELS FOR: TEXT AS A MEANING-GENERATING MECHANISM

As TMS semiotics stemmed, at least initially, from cybernetic and information science, terms such as "machine," "mechanism," or "device" had

a prominent place in its vocabulary (see, e.g., Salupere & Torop 2013 on the difference between "mechanism" and "device" in Lotman). Contrary to expectations or hostile critiques, the "technical" vocabulary was meant to *render* rather than reduce the complexity of objects under discussion. A paramount role was ascribed to "culture" as a semiotic environment, a sign medium where the text belongs: while scooping information from their environments, textual "machines" and "devices" augment its complexity and, therefore, the value of information. They work as "amplifiers," as Zholkovsky puts it in his paper on textual machines. Both the author and the reader participate in this complex operation: the author uses the automatisms of our imagination "to bring our thoughts and feelings to the scheduled points of the itinerary that is called 'plot'" (Zholkovsky 1967). The text works as "a machine that eventually reorganizes reader's consciousness." However, instead of exploring the nature of this transformation, Zholkovsky, in a quite poststructuralist vein, focuses on literary descriptions of various machines and devices that may serve as metaphors of the plot, taking examples from Conan Doyle's and Wilkie Collins's stories.

The notion of meaning-generation and amplification and the view on the artistic text as a device that performs a very important and complex work by activating linguistic, cultural, and psychological resources became a key topic in many TMS publications. As Lotman observed, artistic complexity results from intensified meaning-generation at the expense of inner language resources (see for example the chapter "The Text as a Meaning-generating Mechanism" in *Universe of the Mind*, summarizing his earlier work). In a work of art, the creative function of language, its ability to produce new meanings, is especially and intensely felt, thanks to which the text becomes a capacitor of cultural memory: an increase in complexity results from constant re-contextualization and re-reading that amplifies the text's informational richness. Already in *Lectures on Structural Poetics* (1964), Lotman refers to the work of art as a complex model as compared with the "simple models" that reproduce objects in a reductive or schematic form in order to manipulate them or to prognosticate the emergence of identical objects. On the contrary, the work of art appears as a "model for" able to generate *hypothetical* objects that do not yet exist: it forges its own image of the world.[19]

To capture the dynamics between the "mechanism," "device," and "complexity", it would be helpful to conceive of sign systems (or modeling systems) in terms of *restraints* rather than capacities.[20] For the TMS, Vygotsky's view of the function of signs as regulators and controllers of human behavior was foundational (see Ivanov 1997, 4). From this point of view, bringing these interiorized, ontogenetically and socially stipulated restraints to consciousness (in linguistics, psychology, or semiotics) increases the human capacity to use them more effectively, to overcome or to modify them. In artistic languages, the introduction of additional restraints—rhythm, rhyme, perspective, editing (montage), and others—are accompanied by a significant increase in the semantic capacity and flexibility of linguistic resources. As

Lotman puts it, the lack of rules and restraints, absolute freedom, opening an infinite number of opportunities would bring about the death of communication. On the contrary, a system of complex rules leaves more freedom for the internal expressive capacity.

What Lotman and Uspensky called "convention in art" or "semantic form" (perspective in visual arts and literature; frame in literature, painting, and film; screen; camera; stage in theatre; beginning and ending and other narrative conventions)—are actually restraints put on material media. As Uspensky notes in *The Semiotics of the Russian Icon* (1976), the observer takes these conventions for granted as quite natural, yet, similarly to Panofsky's "symbolic forms," they are neither natural nor a perfect match to our psychophysiological perception mechanisms (on the contrary, as in the case of the Byzantine inversed perspective, they often contradict the psychophysiological "common sense"): they are projection mechanisms and, as such, forms of defamiliarization. Lotman's favorite example of the "frame" made visible and "denaturalized" was Titian's painting *Penitent Magdalene* (1533) whose frame in the Hermitage Museum at St. Petersburg includes the representation of two semi-naked men with dashing moustaches—the representations that comically contrast with the image of penitent Magdalene. To continue Lotman's and Uspensky's thought, all art is "unnatural" from the viewpoint of physical "reality": it is dissociated from the familiar, routine experiences and forges its own alternative reality.

Uspensky extends "perspective" as a principle that has bearing on the whole construction also to verbal narrative arts. Rather than building his *Poetics of Composition* (1970) on a linguistically oriented model, in Genette's vein, he employs the Bakhtinian concept of "text architectonics"—a supralinguistic configuration of narrative patterns. Not unlike protonarratologists, such as Percy Lubbock or Henry James, Uspensky draws a direct parallel between verbal and visual arts: similarly to perspective in painting, verbal perspective serves as a vehicle for the meaningful translation of an object of representation into the language of certain artistic conventions, media, or individual style.

As Lotman's "poetics of everyday behavior" illustrates, a system of restraints serves as an interpretive frame or a template for human agency: a convention or a cliché may be used to convey an individual message (see Grishakova 2009, 182–83 on the works of Spranger, Vinokur, Tomashevsky and Goffman as possible sources of Lotman's poetics of everyday behavior). His favorite example was Pushkin who often turned a most unfavorable life situation into a creative success. Pushkin's duel was taken as an example of "conventional behavior" endowed with individual meaning (Bethea 2000). While building his "semiotics of everyday behavior", with the ritual behavior of nobility at the center of the project, Lotman was as much interested in deviant cases as he was in "norms": pathological liars, irreparable brags, desperate *bretteurs* provoking suicidal duels, or incredible dandies and fops whose sole aim was outrunning their fellow dandies' fashionable effort: if

big buttons are in, the foppiest fop is expected to wear buttons as big as dinner plates. Moreover, for Lotman, the meaning of "norm" and "deviation" was relational. Maintaining the "normal" patterns of behavior in certain circumstances requires additional effort. In the age of Enlightenment, "rules" and "folly" were polar opposites, with a positive and a negative meaning. In medieval culture, the rules were manifestations of the highest, unattainable "norm" (such as knightly or Christian-ascetic behavior) that may look like "folly" from the commonsense point of view. Thus, the "norm" may become the highest expression of individualism. On the other hand, a high degree of normativity may be perceived as perversion or deviation since misunderstanding and misinterpretation are part of the process of communication: absolutely predictable, normative behavior would make communication redundant and impossible.

MODELING SYSTEMS AND METALANGUAGES

Discussions on complexity evoke the problem of metalanguage—the core problem that any "school" meets at various stages of its evolution. As we have already seen, there was an aspiration for a conceptual vocabulary and framework borrowed from structural linguistics and information theory at the early stages of TMS development. Yet both structural linguistics and the conceptual framework of formal logic and mathematics proved to be of limited applicability in the study of complex texts and systems.

In their coauthored article, "On the semiotic mechanism of culture", Lotman and Uspensky present a refutation of Benveniste's linguistic "imperialism" and his idea of natural language as the universal metalanguage. Instead, the authors suggest, natural language, albeit at the core of the cultural universe, serves only as a premise or a precondition for communicability and comprehension. They conclude with the statement that reverberates with a dynamic perspective on metalanguage and with Lotman's own steady interest in metareflexive cultural forms (mirrors, doublings, self-reflexive Baroque art, rhetoric): culture develops its own metalanguages, such as metapainting, metatheater, and the like (Lotman and Uspensky 1978).

Sociologist and philosopher Yuri Levada[21], who attended the fourth summer school (as Olga Revzina testified in a brief overview of the gathering, *SSS* 6, 1972) made an interesting comment on Lotman's presentation on the role of language as a mediator between semiotic systems. Levada suggested that "language" is an analytical construct, a research fiction invented by linguists: in reality, language, as it caters to the communicative function, forms a diffuse part of any "secondary modeling system" and, in such a diffuse capacity, enters culture.

Levada's comments to Lotman's paper are in tune with Jakobson's insights in his presentation on translation theory in Moscow in 1958 (V. Uspensky

1992): Jakobson argued that so-called metalanguage is part of a general linguistic capacity rather than a special logical tool. Without the metalingual component, communication would be hardly possible. For instance, any communicative feedback (re-asking, re-play, double-checking) performs a metalingual function. In their philosophical treatise *Symbol and Consciousness*, Mamardashvili and Pyatigorsky call such elements "pragmemes," as they arise in the interaction between the speaker and the communicative environments. Nonwestern types of grammar, such as Indian, include the metaelements of language as the basic conditions of its functioning.

At its later stage, the distinction between text ("speech") and language ("grammar") in TMS vocabulary began to blur. Lotman's definition of "code" as "language plus history" in *Culture and Explosion*, as well as Boris Gasparov's research on the pragmatics of oral discourse, are symptoms of further revision of this vocabulary. At this new stage, text (or, rather, textuality in a broad sense) was considered not only as a meaning-generating but also as a self-generating mechanism, and culture as a form of auto-communication—insofar as they encompass the metalingual mechanisms of self-organization and self-generation.

Within this context, the "secondary modeling system" could be revisited as a metalingual or a metasemiotic system—a system of restraints at the core of any "primary" or "object-language" originating in specific pragmatic (semiotic) situations—or as an analogue for "discourse"[22]. Such a revision, implicit in the TMS work, would enhance the potential of the concept.

COMMUNICATIVE CONTEXTS AND SEMIOTIC ARCHAEOLOGY

Historical reconstruction (of world-images, models, languages, texts) was an essential part of TMS research. Interest in the "paleontological method" prompted some critics to see "Marrism" as a hidden premise of TMS historical-structural studies. However, mention of the controversial Georgian scholar Nikolay Marr (1864–1934) as well as the interest in his "paleontological method" characteristic of Olga Freidenberg cannot serve as evidence of either Freidenberg's or TMS adherence to Marr's bizarre linguistic theories, particularly his "new teaching about language" tainted by questionable political games. Engaged in research on historical poetics and the semantics of archaic literary forms and their relation to rituals, Freidenberg owes much to Cambridge ritualism, Usener's and Veselovsky's comparatism, and Lévy-Bruhl's notion of the primitive mind, rather than to Marr's linguistic theories. As documents published in Freidenberg's electronic archive testify, she sympathetically observed Marr's worship of what he considered his scholarly mission, his love of archaeology and ancient sources. She owed him personal protection, which

was not a minor favor in the Stalinist era. Yet she used many other models in her own research.

While pointing to a combination of correct intuitions, errors, and fantasies in Marr's work, Ivanov identifies a group of experts in ancient Mediterranean and Western Asian cultures (such as Frank-Kamenecki) who, though institutionally supported by Marr, developed independent proto-structuralist approaches. The works of Freidenberg—who was influenced by Veselovsky and Frank-Kamenecki and was, in addition, well versed in Western ethnology and natural science—resonate with contemporary (late twentieth-century) scholarship (Ivanov 2013, 51).

Lotman's sympathetic reference to the paleontological method in his essay on Freidenberg (Lotman 1973) reveals the common interest in structural-historical poetics and semantics of texts of the past whose context is lost to the contemporary reader. However, even when devoid of their immediate context, the old texts retain the material-structural traces of the past (memory), and traces of the formative context in which they originate—traces that make reconstruction work possible. Lotman saw a useful combination of structural linguistics and historical poetics in Freidenberg's work. He drew a parallel between Freidenberg and the Formalists (Tynyanov and Eikhenbaum): at the same time as Freidenberg was looking for the ritual origins of mythological and literary narratives, the Formalists extended their interest in text-generating principles to the literary *byt* (literary mores, the literary everyday), and Propp found the origins of fairy tales in the initiation ritual. The idea of a semiotic medium wherein texts and discourses originate, which serves as a precondition of any communication or understanding and which, at the same time, may be reached via its materialized "fragments," lays at the basis of Lotman's conception of semiosphere, with its organic, biological underpinnings.

In his letter of March 19, 1982 to Boris Uspensky (Lotman 1997, 628), Lotman informs his long-standing friend and colleague that, while engaged in reading Vernadsky's works, he was struck by the biologist's observation that life always needs life in order to emerge and, therefore, the living, organic counterpart coextensive with "inert matter." That notion deeply resonated with Lotman's own thoughts about texts and cultures that can only be apprehended as meaningful (brought to consciousness) against the background of other, preceding texts. Lotman's letter brings us back to Pyatigorsky's "observational philosophy" that was developed, in various versions, over the course of at least two decades until finally separating it from pure semiotics. His essays on observation (Pyatigorsky 1971, 1981) bring together the semiotic quality of "sign-ness" (as the disposition or condition necessary to be perceived as a sign) and the phenomenological concept of the "observer" (since only the latter is able to apprehend and, thereby, "objectivate" the sign as a sign); bringing them together may serve, Pyatigorsky suggests, as the phenomenological basis of semiotics and, on the other hand, may help to overcome the subject–object division—a perennial crux for philosophers.

The TMS' initial impetus toward "exact knowledge" in the humanities branched into a whole array of various approaches, developed by the school's participants: bright thinkers whose paths ultimately drifted apart. Their dialogue considerably increased reflection on their own theoretical premises, frameworks, and procedures, yet did not yield a general synthesis. Certain concepts and interpretative frames examined in this chapter served as nodal points that, like convex lenses, converged rays of various TMS conceptualizations. However, the openness and often incompleteness of these conceptualizations, partially stemming from the specific conditions of TMS functioning, pressures of time and milieu, the sense of urgency, leaves them amenable to further rethinking and revision. Their potential does not seem to be exhausted.

NOTES

1. What has been called the TMS "integrative culturology" (see Eimermacher 1974).
2. These polemics began with Boris Gasparov's essay "The Tartu school of the 1960s as a semiotic phenomenon" published in *Wiener Slavistischer Almanach* in 1989. The essay evoked a series of polemical responses in the Tartu newspaper *Alma Mater* and the Moscow journal *The New Literary Observer.* Later the materials contained in the polemics were collected in two volumes, partially duplicating one another: *Y. M. Lotman and the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School* (ed. by A. Koshelev. Moscow, 1994) and *The Moscow-Tartu Semiotic School. History, Reminiscences, Reflections* (ed. by S. Neklyudov. Moscow, 1998).
3. It is not without certain reservations that Price's (1963) and Crane's (1972) concept of the invisible college may be applied to the TMS. For Crane, "invisible colleges" are scholarly groups that emerge on the boundaries of disciplines, are open to external ideas and foster interdisciplinary exchange—as distinct from tight-knit and homogeneous "schools" that work within rigorous conceptual frameworks. The Rosicrucian connotations of the term are definitely pertinent, taking into consideration Lotman's and Pyatigorsky's deep semiotic interest in the history of secret masonic orders. Less pertinent are the notions of scientific progress and linear growth of knowledge that underlie the invisible-college approach, however.
4. In 1971 Viktoria Kamensky, Oleg Malevich, and Yuri Lotman prepared the annotated two-volume Russian translation of Mukařovský's works for the Iskusstvo publishing house. According to Kamensky, it was Lotman who initiated the translation and publication. However, Czechoslovakian authorities considered the publication of Mukařovský's works not recommendable at the time. The one-volume edition with Lotman's preface and the commentary by Lotman and Malevich was published only in 1994, posthumously in Lotman's case (Kamenskaya 1995).
5. Pavel Florensky, an Orthodox priest, philosopher, mathematician, physicist, and engineer, was arrested by Bolsheviks on false accusations of conspiracy, sentenced to ten-year imprisonment in labor camps and later to death. His most celebrated works are *Imaginary Numbers in Geometry* (1922), *Iconostasis* (written in 1919–1922, published in 1972), and *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* (1914).

6. A prominent classical philologist whose work was in many respects akin to the Cambridge ritual school and, on the other hand, to the contemporary tradition of interpretive anthropology, Olga Freidenberg was fired for ideological reasons from Leningrad (Petersburg) University where she founded the department of classical philology. Earlier, in the 1930s, her book on the poetics of plot and genre in ancient Greek and Latin literature was subjected to ideological critique and withdrawn from sale.
7. Aron Gurevich's works include *Categories of Medieval Culture* (1985*), Historical Anthropology of the Middle Ages* (1992). Gurevich began his career as an expert in medieval England and Scandinavia, but the significance of his work extends far beyond medieval studies: he is justly considered the pioneer of historical anthropology in Russia.
8. Yuri Lotman, who was separated from the majority of his fellow TMS scholars by a generational divide (he was recruited to the Soviet Army in the age of 18 and served up to the end of World War II), being surrounded by family and children and urged by the slight belatedness of his (brilliant, even if belated) career, probably never seriously considered moving abroad.
9. Maxim Waldstein's search for transparent "selection criteria" (be it Jewishness, "true intellectualism," or "virtue") does not seem convincing (Waldstein 2008). The organizers' desire to preserve a core initial group, on the one hand, and unwillingness to expose themselves to security police, on the other, are sufficient reasons for not increasing the number of the summer school participants.
10. Paul Ariste was an Estonian linguist renowned for his studies of Finno-Ugric languages, Yiddish and Baltic Romani language, and the only professor at Tartu University who could have been compared with Lotman in terms of his number of publications.
11. *Sign Systems Studies*, with a new editorial board, continues to be published in English to this day.
12. Tartu orientalist Linnart Mäll was particularly and notoriously laconic in his articles, such as "The Zero Way"(*SSS* 2, 3 pp.), "On the Problem of Tetralemma" (*SSS* 3, coauthored with I. Kull, 4 pp.), "Dialogue in Bodhičarjavatara" (*SSS* 17, 3 pp.), "Dharma as text and text-generating mechanism" (*SSS* 21, 4 pp.), "SHUNYATA within the semiotic model of DHARMA" (*SSS* 22, 7 pp.), "1, ∞ and 0 as text generators and as states of consciousness" (*SSS* 23, 2 pp.).
13. E.g., citations in original languages in Ogibenin's "Remarks on the Structure of Myth in the Rigveda" (*SSS* 2), Shcheglov's "On some of Ovid's texts" (*SSS* 3), Zhivov's "Blasphemous Poetry within the System of Russian Culture" (*SSS* 13), Yampolsky's "Rag and bone man. An essay on urban mythology" (*SSS* 24) and others. Lotman also introduced this habit in the teaching practice: students were allowed to cite in original languages without translations in their seminar papers.
14. As a Jew, Levin was not able to enter Moscow University in 1952. He studied mathematics in the less prestigious Institute for Pedagogy and defended a candidate's degree (the equivalent of PhD in the Soviet academic system) in differential geometry. He worked as a lecturer and published works in mathematics until 1963, before switching to applied linguistics and humanities. Levin is the author of more than a hundred publications, including the brilliant theses "On the semiotics of the lie" and "Theses on the problem of misunderstanding of texts."

15. The project was not brought to completion due to Lotman's illness and death and change in academic paradigms in the early 1990s, yet a manuscript catalogue of symbols and "symbolic situations" was compiled and a series of articles published in SSS, including a manifesto article by Barsukov et al. 1987 (later reprinted in the Italian volume of TMS works *Il simbolo e lo specchio,* 1997).
16. See, e.g., Chernigovskaya 1999.
17. A structural linguist and proponent of mathematical methods in the humanities, the author of *The Models of Language* (1962, English 1966).
18. Lotman may have been inspired by Christian Metz's observations (in his 1964 essay "Le cinéma: language ou langage?") on systems, such as cinema, that do not have "language" (in the Saussurean sense, i.e., vocabulary and grammar) but only have "speech."
19. The distinction between "models of" and "models for" was introduced by Clifford Geertz. See also Waldstein 2008, 111.
20. See Żółkiewski 1984 on the "cybernetic" (negative, as distinct from positive, causal) explanation in Lotman.
21. A leading figure in Russian sociology and founding director of the Public Opinion Research Center and the famous nongovernmental Levada Center of sociological research and polling, Levada was deprived of his professorial rank for "ideological errors" and repeatedly suffered from political obstructions.
22. See Greimas and Courtés 1993 on the TMS "secondary modeling system" as the "inadequately defined discourse" (104).

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11 Small World

The Tel Aviv School of Poetics and Semiotics

Brian McHale and Eyal Segal

> … [*T*]*he formal proceedings of the conference are kept to a bare minimum* […] *the remainder of the day is allocated to "unstructured discussion"* […] *or, in other words, to swimming and sunbathing at the Hilton pool, sightseeing in the Old City, shopping in the bazaar, eating out in ethnic restaurants, and making expeditions to Jericho, the Jordan valley, and Galilee.*
>
> *The Israeli scholars, a highly professional and fiercely competitive group, are disgruntled with this arrangement, since they have been looking forward to attacking each other in the presence of a distinguished international audience, and the tourist attractions of Jerusalem and environs naturally have less novelty for them.*
>
> —David Lodge, *Small World* (1984, 298–99)

INFRASTRUCTURE

If a "school," in the sense of the present volume, implies commonality of thought, a shared intellectual orientation, or theoretical framework, it also implies other, more "worldly" attributes: a "home" in some sense, a time and place (a city, a campus, even a building), some kind of institutional infrastructure (a department or center, journals and other publication venues, conferences and symposia), a whole microsociology. It implies an enclave of some kind, more or less open on the outside, but where inside and outside are nevertheless distinguishable: a *small world,* in effect.

In the case of the Tel Aviv School of poetics and semiotics, time, place, infrastructure and microsociology can readily be established. The school originated in a circle of young literary intellectuals who left the institutional safety of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (established 1925) for the coastal metropolis of Tel Aviv and its brash new university (established 1963). The original circle included Benjamin Hrushovski (who later Hebraized his name to Harshav) and his students and colleagues, including Joseph Haephrati (who died, tragically young, in 1973), Itamar Even-Zohar, Harai Golomb, Menakhem Perry, shortly thereafter to be joined by Meir Sternberg and others. The members of this original group were resourceful institution-builders, especially Hrushovski/Harshav, and most of the

infrastructure that has housed and supported the project of Tel Aviv poetics over the years was laid down by them in the first decades of the school's existence.

The institutional home of the Tel Aviv School, from its inception in the mid-1960s to 2006, has been the Department of Poetics and Comparative Literature (founded 1966), in Hebrew called even more self-assertively *HaChug le'Torat HaSifrut*, the Department of Literary Theory. Affiliated with the department since 1975 is the research center Porter Institute for Poetics and Semiotics. Members of the original circle published much of their early research in the Hebrew-language journal *Ha-Sifrut* (*Literature*), founded in 1968. Publication in the Hebrew language was a matter of policy, with the explicit purpose of promoting systematic, non-ideological literary study in the national language of the young Jewish state.

The group began to make an impact internationally from the mid-seventies with the launch of two English-language journals, the short-lived *Poetics and Theory of Literature* (*PTL,* 1976–79) and its successor, *Poetics Today*, founded in 1979. Instrumental to the Porter Institute's emergence onto the world stage was the hosting of a series of international symposia, under the umbrella title of *Synopsis*, including the one (*Synopsis II: Narrative Theory and Poetics of Fiction*, June 1979) that the British novelist David Lodge so memorably burlesqued in his comic novel of academic life, *Small World* (1984). This symposium provided material for three influential special issues of *Poetics Today* in 1980–1981.

Apart from the "core" first-generation group of Harshav, Sternberg, Perry, and Even-Zohar, other Tel Aviv scholars affiliated with the school (many of them students of the first-generation figures) have included Ziva Ben-Porat, Uri Margolin, Ruth Ronen, Eyal Segal, Yeshayahu Shen, Nomi Tamir-Ghez, Gideon Toury, Reuven Tsur, Tamar Yacobi, and Gabriel Zoran. "Fellow-travelers" whose work has occasionally intersected with Tel Aviv School narrative theory have included Ruth Amossy, Brian McHale, Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, Moshe Ron, and Ellen Spolsky.

Since the late 1980s, for reasons that were personal and institutional as well as intellectual, the Tel Aviv School underwent a dispersal, with Harshav leaving permanently for the United States, Even-Zohar founding a separate unit for cultural research, and several younger researchers choosing to affiliate themselves with other approaches (e.g., cognitive poetics). However, one group of narrative theorists, including Sternberg, Yacobi, and Segal continue to pursue research within the general framework of Tel Aviv poetics, while another group continues the polysystem research inaugurated by Even-Zohar (see below).

INTELLECTUAL ROOTS AND ORIENTATION

The development of the Tel Aviv School should be viewed in both a local and an international context. In Israel, the school defined itself and its goals

in militant opposition to a norm of ideological criticism that was dominant at the time. As the introduction to the first issue of *Ha-Sifrut* (from the spring of 1968) firmly states: "This quarterly […] will not devote its volumes to opinion journalism or ideology. Its role is strictly scientific." A few years later, in a more detached and analytical tone, Ziva Ben-Porat and Benjamin Harshav explain—while surveying the history of Hebrew literary criticism—that given the strong influence of the Russian critical tradition and literature's role as a major cultural force in the Israeli national revival, "it is easy to understand why literature became a tool of indoctrination in the Israeli school system, and why criticism was interested primarily in literature as a vehicle of ideology" (Ben-Porat and Hrushovski 1974, 4). When the Tel Aviv School was formed during the sixties, a first wave of reaction to the established ideological criticism already existed in Hebrew literary criticism, in the form of close readings in the spirit of the New Criticism (which were also an important part of the activity of most Tel Aviv School members)—but there was an almost total vacuum in terms of systematic efforts at creating a literary theory.

A major influence and inspiration in this regard was that of Russian Formalism and its later offshoot in Prague Structuralism, mediated to a large extent by Harshav (with his East European background). Of particular importance here was the Formalists' ambition to establish the study of literature as an independent discipline, and uncover literature's distinctive characteristics—to explore the "language of literature," or its "literariness." More specific Formalist influences, such as those of the *fabula/sujet* distinction and the concept of motivation on Harshav and Sternberg, or of Yuri Tynyanov's writings on literature as a system on Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, will be discussed below. In its self-conscious commitment to extending the legacy of the Russian Formalist and Prague Structuralist Schools and building upon their achievements, the Tel Aviv School can be viewed as paralleling the development of the Soviet (Tartu–Moscow) School of semiotics, headed by Yuri Lotman, from whom the Tel Aviv group derived inspiration and with whom they had much in common.

Another important influence (again mediated to a large extent by Harshav) was the phenomenology of the literary object proposed by Edmund Husserl's Polish student Roman Ingarden, with its emphasis on how "the meanings of the aesthetic object are not presented as such in the literary text but are rather provided by the reader in the process of […] 'concretization'" (Ben-Porat and Hrushovsky 1974, 10–11). This last influence intersects with a more contemporary orientation, which emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s in various places, known as "reader response" criticism. The Tel Aviv School may be viewed as part of this international wave, developing independently of—and in parallel with—some of its other varied manifestations, such as the early writings of Stanley Fish (1967, 1970); Barbara Herrnstein Smith's *Poetic Closure* (1968) with its focus on the sequential dynamics of perception; Roland Barthes's *S/Z* (1974) and "The Death of the

Author" (1977), which supposedly leads to the "birth of the reader"; and the Constance School of Wolfgang Iser (1974) and Hans Robert Jauss (1982).

In order to illustrate some of the above generalizations about the Tel Aviv School's roots, orientation, and dynamics of development, we would like to look at one of this school's seminal texts—"The King through Ironic Eyes." This article, written jointly by Menakhem Perry and Meir Sternberg, was originally published in Hebrew in 1968 (in the second issue of *Ha-Sifrut*), and later appeared in an English translation (in somewhat shortened and revised versions) both as a chapter in Sternberg's *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (1985, 186–229) and as an article in *Poetics Today* (1986). The article performs a close reading of the biblical[1] story of David, Uriah and Bathsheva (*II Samuel* 11), a reading which consistently highlights the analyzed text's irony and ambiguity as aesthetic achievements, very much in the spirit of the New Criticism. This close reading, however, is guided by a firm theoretical perspective and used to illustrate several concepts, particularly that of the "gaps" created by the text and the importance of the reader's gap-filling activity in the reading process. Following the story's analysis, the article also includes two theoretical appendices: one on mutually exclusive systems of gap filling (i.e., cases of ambiguity on the mimetic, rather than the linguistic, level), the other on characteristics of narrators—particularly the importance of distinguishing between their knowledge and their degree of communicativeness.[2]

Perry and Sternberg's analysis of the biblical story connects with a long Jewish hermeneutic tradition of readings of the Bible, but also introduces in this context a literary perspective that was novel at the time. From the viewpoint of English readers, the momentum gained by the "literary approach" to the Bible was highly indebted to the pioneering role of Robert Alter's book *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981), but Alter himself was heavily influenced by "The King through Ironic Eyes" and several later Hebrew articles on biblical narrative published by Perry and Sternberg (or Sternberg alone) during the 1970s. When Sternberg's *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* appeared in English in 1985, it systematized many of the observations made in "The King through Ironic Eyes," expanding them into an attempt at a full-fledged description of biblical narrative poetics.[3] This attempt is presented as important not just for the study of biblical narrative but as a touchstone for narrative studies in general, since the Bible is a text that exhibits highly sophisticated and elaborate poetics—but one very different in many respects from modern Western texts to which narratological studies usually refer.

"The King through Ironic Eyes," moreover, illustrates very well the reader-oriented approach characteristic of the Tel Aviv School, foregrounding the reader's activity and, even more distinctively, the dynamics of the reading process. The biblical story chosen for analysis is instrumental for dramatizing the nature of the reader's sense-making activity of gap-filling, since the text's highly laconic style leaves a lot of room for the reconstruction of implicit meanings. There are clear parallels between this discussion of

gaps and Iser's (1974) use of the same term—both of which may be traced to a certain degree to the influence of Ingarden's phenomenology of reading (e.g., [1931] 1973), particularly his concept of "indeterminacies" (*Unbestimmtheitstellen*). But there are also distinct differences—the most important being that neither Ingarden nor Iser clearly differentiate between a lack of information that is relevant for an understanding of the represented world (or for understanding in general) and a lack that is irrelevant for this purpose, as Perry and Sternberg do—and particularly Sternberg in later studies, in a more systematic fashion.[4]

However, alongside the emphasis put by Perry and Sternberg on the reader's role in constructing meaning from the text, they also consistently point out the various ways in which the text guides or manipulates this construction[5] (as Perry puts it in a later article: "What I term as *the reader* is therefore a metonymic characterization of the text" [1979, 43]). This relates to the tendency of the Tel Aviv School to take a more balanced view of the communicative act compared to most other reader-oriented approaches—one that aims to account for both of its participants: the reader, for whom the text is constructed, as well as the (implied) author, who fashions the text in order to achieve his or her communicative goals.

INTEGRATIONAL SEMANTICS

The intellectual roots of the Tel Aviv School are diverse, as are the research interests and projects of its members—so diverse, indeed, that one might wonder whether the label "school" is even warranted. What makes one group a "school" while another group of equally talented individuals who happen to work alongside each other at the same institution remain just that, a group of talented individuals? Charismatic personalities are one factor; a shared theoretical framework is another. In the case of the Tel Aviv School, the two coincide: it is the charismatic personality of Benjamin Hrushovski (Harshav), and the *unified theory of the literary text* for which he is responsible, and which he refined and disseminated over several decades of teaching, mentoring, and publication, that made the emergence and persistence of a Tel Aviv School possible.[6]

Harshav's unified theory, also called *integrational semantics,* is the "big tent" under which nearly the whole range of Tel Aviv poetics research gathers. Over that big tent an even bigger tent is stretched: Harshav's *three-dimensional model of semiotic objects*, which aspires to accommodate not just literature, and not just verbal texts, but all kinds of signifying forms—buildings, for instance—including forms that were not *intended* to signify, but to which, nevertheless, signification can be imputed—urban spaces or natural landscapes, for instance (Harshav 2007, 114). The model's three dimensions are: the dimension of *speech and position*; the dimension of *meaning and reference*; and the dimension of the *organized text*.

Speech and position encompasses all the aspects of mediation and transmission that other research traditions (Chicago-school rhetoric of fiction, Paris structuralism) handle under such rubrics as *narration*, *perspective*, *point of view*, and *focalization. Meaning and reference* captures the *frame-based* aspect of textual signification. Linguistic analysis of meaning at the lexical or sentence levels is inadequate in the case of semiotic objects such as literary texts, where sense is always produced in relation to some *frame of reference*—e.g., a generic event (party), a scene (room, street), a character, or an ideology. Harshav's theory of frames predates contemporary cognitive poetics, but derives from some of the same sources, including discourse analysis, artificial-intelligence research, and the ethnomethodology of Erving Goffman and others. Frames of reference are themselves components of capacious *Fields of Reference*. Crucial here is the distinction between *External* Fields of Reference, belonging to the real world outside the text—a nation, an era in history, an economic system—and *Internal* Fields produced by the semiotic objects themselves, and reconstructed by readers. Internal and External Fields interact but remain ontologically distinct: "A character cannot walk out of a fictional house and show up in a real café" (Harshav 2007, 28). Literary texts are distinguishable from other kinds of semiotic object by their attribute of producing *at least one* Internal Field of Reference. In other words, positing Internal Fields of Reference is Harshav's alternative to theories of fictionality.

Textual *meaning and reference* are subject to *Regulating Principles*, such as irony or perspective, which filter and color meaning; they "tell us 'in what sense' to take the sense of words" (Harshav 2007, 82). In other words, Regulating Principles are the zone where the dimension of *meaning and reference* interacts with *speech and position.*

Speech, position, meaning and reference are all *constructs*, reconstructed by readers from textual materials upon which "outside" knowledge—frames and Fields of reference—has been brought to bear. But semiotic objects are also organized along a continuum of some kind—linearly in the case of a verbal text such as a novel. This continuum, which Harshav calls the *dimension of organized text*, is sharply distinguishable from the dimensions that comprise the reconstructed level, and is mainly characterized by various forms of *segmentation* and the *motivations* of these segments. Just as Regulating Principles are the place where *speech and position* interact with *meaning and reference,* so motivations are the points where the other dimensions interact with the organization of the textual continuum. Segmentation is typically motivated by shifts in speaker, perspective or frame of reference: "We cannot possibly account for the composition of any discourse on the text continuum level without recourse to patterns which this level uses from the reconstructed level" (Harshav 2007, 106). A demonstration of how a text of prose fiction is segmented and how its segmentation is motivated is Harshav's *tour-de-force* analysis of the episode of Anna Pavlovna's party that launches Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (Harshav 2007, 174–209; originally published in 1976).

Tel Aviv poetics is *constructivist* in spirit—an orientation rooted in Ingarden's phenomenological poetics, perhaps colored by the Constructivist aesthetic practice of the artists who were the Russian Formalists' contemporaries (Aleksandr Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin, Naum Gabo, Antoine Pevsner, Louis Lozowick, and others), and certainly reinforced by a polemical resistance to the *deconstructivism* of the seventies. *Construction* in the Tel Aviv context implies the processes by which readers *make* meaning, in a strong sense of that phrase, by interacting with texts. They do so by linking up textual elements—both widely separated and in close proximity with each other, both of the same kind (e.g., sounds in poetry, or events in narratives) and heterogeneous (e.g., the variety of kinds of evidence that go into the reconstruction of a character)—and producing *patterns* of elements, then *integrating* these patterns into ever more comprehensive patterns of meaning—hence the term *integrational semantics*. The underlying assumption of integrational semantics is that "all possible interconnected constructions of meaning are necessary and that there is a maximal functionality of all elements and all orders of elements in a text" (Harshav 2007, 259; see also 175).

The kinds of patterns that readers produce in their interactions with texts are protean, but a basic distinction may be drawn between *purely literary* patterns, arising from the specific nature of literary texts—such as meter or alliteration in poetry or analogical structuring in novels—and patterns based on *reality-like principles*—such as models of human psychology or of real-world causality (Harshav 2007, 176, 262–63). Typically, textual units function as *junctions*, where materials belonging to *more than one* pattern coincide. A rhyme-word, for instance, obviously participates in a particular sound-pattern, but it may also belong to the poem's metrical pattern, to the meaning of the sentence in which it is syntactically integrated, possibly to an image, an event, a motif or theme, and so on; it is a junction of multiple patterns (263).

It is this shared framework of integrational semantics, more or less explicitly adopted by Harshav's students and colleagues, that turns the diverse theoretical and descriptive projects undertaken by Tel Aviv scholars into the expression of a *school* of poetics. The big tent of the unified theory has provided a home for a variety of more narrowly-conceived projects, which in turn have contributed their share to the development and refinement of the theory itself. Harshav's own "side projects" are a case in point. His theory of sound patterns in poetry, for instance, depends on bidirectional interaction between sound patterns and patterns of textual meaning, each coloring and reinforcing the other, reciprocally (Harshav 2007, 140–60; published in Hebrew as early as 1968, and in English in 1980). His theory of metaphor conceives of metaphor not as a linguistic unit but a text-semantic pattern, wherein two frames of reference interact, and elements of the "secondary" frame—what in other theories would be called the metaphorical *vehicle*—are transferred to the "basic" frame (Harshav 2007, 32–75, originally

published 1984). Thus, in the metaphor (syntactically a simile) that opens Eliot's "Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,"

> Let us go then, you and I,
> When the evening is spread out against the sky
> Like a patient etherized upon a table;

elements such as infirmity, hospitalization, and drugged unconsciousness are transferred from the secondary frame of the etherized patient to the evening excursion, and indeed to the world of the poem generally. The only quality of the secondary frame that is *excluded* from this transfer is its *existence*: "There is no hospital in the streets where Prufrock is walking" (Harshav 2007, 44). This analysis of the "normal" functioning of metaphor in turn allows for Harshav to account for cases where secondary frames *do* achieve existence in the world of the poem, through the device that the Russian Formalists called *realization of metaphor*, so typical of modernist poetry.

Projects by other Tel Aviv researchers similarly find their place under the big tent of integrational semantics. For instance, the important early work by Golomb (1968) on *Combined Discourse*—in other research traditions called *free indirect style*, *erlebte Rede*, *narrated monologue*, or *dual-voice discourse*—both instantiated the unified theory and contributed to its development. Zoran's (1984, 1997) theory of space in narrative, by far the most comprehensive and fine-grained analysis of narrative space ever produced, explicitly derives from Harshav's unified theory. Though nowhere formally acknowledged, integrational semantics nevertheless animates Ben-Porat's theories of allusion (1976) and parody (1979), where the reader's back-and-forth movement between the alluding text and the text being alluded to, or between the parodic text and its parodied target(s), closely matches Harshav's account of the frame-based activity of sense-making. The integrational semantic approach makes its presence felt even where it receives only the barest of mentions, as in McHale's (2009) outline of a program for research into narrative in poetry, based in part on Harshav's account of segmentation and motivation in the textual continuum. Finally, it is the unified theory of integrational semantics that provides the framework for the theory of gaps and gap-filling developed initially by Perry and Sternberg (see above), then picked up by Rimmon-Kenan (1977), then further amplified and elaborated by Sternberg and his circle in the context of a rhetorical-functional theory of narrative (see below).

POLYSYSTEM THEORY

Tel Aviv poetics is divided between a theory of the "internal" relations of the literary text and a theory of its "external" relations. The "internal" theory is reflected in Harshav's integrational semantics and its variations and

extensions; its "external" counterpart is what Itamar Even-Zohar and his circle call *polysystem theory*. Interior and exterior interpenetrate in various ways, of course: the literary text reaches out into its circumambient culture through reference to exterior frames and Fields, while the external relations among literary institutions and the other practices and institutions of culture reach deep into the interior of literary texts, structuring the relations among their parts. Harshav, for one, expresses confidence that the two approaches, internal and external, are complementary. "Literature as a phenomenon in society is a different matter" from textual semantics, he writes:

> it is a complex and open-ended conglomerate of genres, norms, trends, writers, institutions, publishing houses, journals, mediating agencies and so on, embedded in the polysystem of a culture (as defined by I. Even-Zohar). The locus, however, of all those phenomena is the individual work of literature.
>
> (Harshav 2007, 31)

In fact, it is unclear that Even-Zohar would have agreed even in 1984, when those words of Harshav's were first published, that the "individual work of literature" was the "locus" of the literary institution. By now, however, after successive revisions of his own theory in the decades that followed, it seems even less likely that he would endorse Harshav's sanguine view of the complementarity of text-internal and text-external approaches.

Harshav's one-time student and long-time colleague, Even-Zohar swerves away from Harshav's text-internal approach, pursuing and extending a path already pioneered by the Russian Formalists, who in their late phase reoriented their project away from textual poetics and toward literature conceived of as a *system* (Tynyanov 1971; Tynyanov and Jakobson 1971) and as an *institution* interacting with its ambient culture (Eikhenbaum 1971). Even-Zohar's own trajectory can be traced through the successive re-titlings of his collected papers, from *Papers in Historical Poetics* (in the Porter Institute's *Papers on Poetics and Semiotics*, 1978) to *Polysystem Studies* (a special issue of *Poetics Today*, 1990) to *Papers in Culture Research* (mainly written or rewritten by 1997, but published electronically in 2005). The 1990 paper, "Laws of Literary Interference" becomes "Laws of Cultural Interference," while "The 'Literary System'" (1990) becomes "A Revised Outline for Polysystem Culture Research" (2005). From literature to culture, from poetics to polysystem: this is the trajectory that Even-Zohar's evolving theory has traced.

Even-Zohar's approach to literature and culture converges with the cultural semiotics of Yuri Lotman, and with Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of culture. For Even-Zohar, literature is not a collection of texts, more or less related to each other and their historical context, but an organized *system*, one among the multiple interacting systems that constitute a culture—hence *polysystem theory*. These systems, literature among them, are structured

by a number of powerfully dynamic functional relations. These include relations between center and periphery, with each constituent system of a polysystem displaying its *own* center/periphery relations (so that the terms really should be plural—centers, peripheries); relations between canonized and noncanonized elements; and relations between "primary" (innovative) and "secondary" (conservative) tendencies (Even-Zohar 1990, 9–26). Over time, actively innovatory elements of a system undergo a process of "secondarization," losing their vitality and stiffening into conservative "stock" elements, while new elements come to fill the "primary" role; this is one of main mechanisms of *dynamism* in the system.

Especially crucial to Even-Zohar's understanding of systems are the ideas of cultural *models* and *repertoires*. What constitutes a culture, or any of its constituent systems, is neither the discrete *objects* that circulate in a given domain—such as texts, in the case of literature—nor even the particular practices associated with those objects, but rather the *repertoire* of *models* for such objects and practices—abstract blueprints or templates for (among other things) the production and consumption of cultural products, for *behaving as* a writer or a reader. The concept of culture as repertoire powerfully demystifies lingering Romantic ideas of inspiration and originality, for, according to this account, artistic production (and the production of literature in particular) is more like selecting Lego blocks from a kit than like "expressing oneself" or being visited by the Muse. Texts, according to this account, are especially valuable because they facilitate the circulation of *models*, rather than the other way around: "It is only in their function as representative of models that texts constitute an active factory in systemic relations" (Even-Zohar 1990, 19). Moreover, it is these models, rather than the texts based on them, that serve to create and sustain our culturally-constructed reality. "The most consequential socio-semiotic product of literature," Even-Zohar writes,

> lies […] on the level of images, moods, interpretation of "reality," and options of action. The products on this level are items of cultural repertoire: models of organizing, viewing, and interpreting life. (2005, no page)

Here we glimpse the radicalism of Even-Zohar's alternative to text-centric literary theory. Not only does *literature* become absorbed into the polysystem of *culture* in his account, but *text* gets demoted in favor of *model* and *repertoire*: "The 'text' is no longer the only, and not necessarily for all purposes the most important facet, or even product, of this system" (Even-Zohar 1990, 33).

Even-Zohar's emphasis on models and repertoires yields one of his most provocative ideas, that of *realemes* and the constraints governing their insertion in texts (1990, 207–18). Introduced around 1980, the neologism *realeme* seems for some reason to have dropped out of the latest version

of Even-Zohar's theory. Modeled on linguistic terms such as *phoneme* or *morpheme*, it designates one of those "items of reality" that a semiotic system recognizes and admits to its repertoire. The underlying assumption here is that not everything that is potentially observable in the world is actually representable in a given semiotic system, but rather only those items that are "semioticized" in that system. Texts give us access not to raw, unmediated reality (whatever that might be), but to prefabricated, ready-made reality, filtered through and shaped by a culture's repertoires and structured according to its system of relations. Different cultural systems semioticize reality differently, and items of reality that have not been recognized or acknowledged by a particular system cannot be represented readily, if at all.

Evidence of realeme repertoires emerges especially clearly in situations of translation, where we often experience the absence in one language of items that are readily expressed (semioticized) in another. In Even-Zohar's example, the bilingual (Dutch and French) promotional copy on the back of a Belgian package of Kellogg's Corn Flakes, purporting to make the same "special offer" of a cereal bowl in two languages, actually reveals the difference between the respective cultures' realeme repertoires. In Dutch, one advantage of the cereal bowl is said to be that it prevents kids from making a mess at the breakfast table; in the purportedly parallel French text, the cereal bowl and the mess are still there—but the *kids* are missing. Even-Zohar concludes that this particular commercial register of French resists direct reference to children (1990, 210, 215–16). Children do not belong to the repertoire of this particular discourse; they literally get lost in translation. The realeme concept, and the insights that arise in its wake, seem a potentially powerful tool for analyzing all kinds of "blind spots" in supposedly mimetic representations—for instance, cultural taboos restricting the representation of sexual behavior and bodily functions (e.g., the ones violated in Joyce's *Ulysses*, prompting the novel's initial suppression and eventual vindication in court), class-based exclusions (e.g., the invisibility of servants in Jane Austen's novels), and so on.

The working hypotheses of polysystem theory imply a whole research agenda. Even-Zohar himself pursued part of that agenda in his own case-studies, many of which address relations of *interference*, *dependence*, and *transfer* among polysystems in contact, for instance, the Russian and Hebrew or the Yiddish and Hebrew polysystems. Over the years he assembled and trained a group of students—including, at one time or another, Nitsa Ben-Ari, Rina Drory, Gisèle Sapiro, Zohar Shavit, Rakefet Sheffy, Shelly Yahalom, and others—who also developed case-studies within the polysystem framework. A number of these students were specifically engaged with translation theory, one of the specialties of the Porter Institute since its earliest days; indeed, the very first *Synopsis* symposium (preceding by a year the one that David Lodge attended) was devoted to translation studies. The first incumbent of the Bernstein Chair of Translation Theory at Tel Aviv University, Even-Zohar himself initially made his mark as a translation

theorist, and remains one to this day. His greatest impact internationally is surely the impetus he gave to the systematic study of translation in places like the University of Leuven in Belgium.

Certainly, polysystem theory is rich in implications for translation studies. Of all Even-Zohar's associates, the one who has pursued these implications most vigorously and systematically, and with the most profound impact, has been Gideon Toury (Even-Zohar's successor in the Bernstein Chair). It is Toury who made the case most forcefully for a *descriptive* translation studies, arguing, in the spirit of Even-Zohar, that translation cannot satisfactorily be viewed as a relation between *texts* (source and target), or even between *languages*, but only between cultural *systems*, indeed polysystems. Toury's boldest proposals hinge on the proposition that translation studies should be *target* oriented, that is, oriented toward explicating the function of the translated text in the *recipient* culture, regardless of the *adequacy* (or inadequacy) of the translation. Toury's perspective legitimizes attention to all sorts of supposedly anomalous or marginal phenomena, such as *pseudo-translation*—the passing off of a text actually composed in the "target" language as a translation from a different (source) language (e.g., Montesquieu's *Lettres persanes*, Macpherson's Ossian poems, Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon*)—or *mediated translation*—the translation of a text *not* from its original source language but from some intermediary translation in *another* language (e.g., Stanisław Lem's *Solaris*, translated into English not directly from Polish but from a French translation of the Polish original).

Somewhat controversially, Toury focuses on the *norms* of the target culture that, in his view, outweigh whatever is given in the source-text, taking precedence over the criterion of adequacy. A convincing demonstration of this proposition is his analysis of Avraham Shlonsky's 1946 Hebrew translation of Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy, where Toury identifies six constraints to which Shlonsky more or less consciously adhered, all of them reflecting the needs and interests of the recipient literary culture, and having little or nothing to do with Shakespeare (Toury 1995, 193–205). A related case study shows how early translations of *haiku* from Japanese into English all reflected prevailing norms of the target literary system, entirely overriding the norms governing the source texts (176–80).

Toury's radical approach to translation—completely consistent with the radicalism of polysystem theory—remains controversial within translation studies. Unfortunately, the controversy with which Toury's name has been linked most indelibly has nothing to do with his intellectual affiliation with polysystem theory, but everything to do with his personal and institutional affiliation with the Tel Aviv School. In 2002, Toury (along with his Israeli colleague Miriam Shlesinger) was summarily sacked from the editorial boards of two translation journals edited by the Egyptian-born British academic Mona Baker, in a gesture of solidarity with an international boycott of Israeli academic institutions. Here is evidence, if any were needed, that

schools and circles of intellectuals, including even the "small world" of translation studies, are deeply implicated in the politics and tension of the "big world" of capital-H History.

THE RHETORICAL-FUNCTIONAL THEORY OF NARRATIVE

Meir Sternberg, summing up his approach to the study of narrative (and literature in general), says in a recent interview: "I am a functionalist: I start by asking, What is the effect, and then I try to see what form(s) can trigger this effect" (2011, 40). He thereby positions himself in opposition to another highly influential narratologist, Gérard Genette, to whom he refers as "my greatest enemy […] not in personal, but in theoretical terms," and with whose work he has often engaged in a sharp polemic: "[Genette] is a typologist—he just wants to group things by and into form" (40).

As a functionalist, one of Sternberg's main sources of inspiration has always been Aristotle, who viewed everything—including narrative (tragic or otherwise)—first and foremost in terms of what it *does*. In the introduction to his first book, *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction* (1978; based on a doctoral dissertation from 1971), Sternberg refers to the *Poetics* as, for him, "still one of the few perennially seminal and challenging works in the history of critical thought" (1978, ix). In this regard, there exists a clear common denominator between Sternberg's orientation and that of the neo-Aristotelian (or Chicago) School, and among the studies produced by this school the influence of Wayne Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) on Sternberg's thought is particularly noticeable.[7] Booth regards "rhetoric" as the art of influencing an audience rather than as a typology of figures and tropes, and inasmuch as he highlights the communicative aspect of fiction, viewing textual phenomena as means for achieving communicative ends, his study serves as a powerful model of functional criticism.

A particularly clear example of how Booth's study operates as a source of influence can be seen in Sternberg's early article "Delicate Balance in the Story of the Rape of Dinah: Biblical Narrative and the Rhetoric of Narrative," originally published in Hebrew in 1973, and later included as a chapter in *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative* (1985, 441–81). Sternberg's reading of the biblical story is guided by a method of analysis very similar to that employed in Booth's chapter on "Control of Distance in Jane Austen's *Emma*" (1961, 242–66). Both readings begin by identifying an overarching rhetorical goal in the analyzed text, a goal which involves, in both cases, considerable difficulties in terms of controlling the reader's moral judgment. Both texts are read as aiming at the creation of a complex balance between sympathy and judgment (or a positive and a negative judgment)—toward the character of Emma Woodhouse, in the case

of Austen's novel, and, in the case of the biblical story, toward the revenge for Dinah's rape exacted by her brothers, Simeon and Levi in particular. The difficulties involved in achieving these desired rhetorical goals require in both cases a virtuoso performance by the author, thus making the texts worthy of detailed study; and in both cases, the textual phenomena examined throughout the analysis are viewed as means utilized and orchestrated to achieve the goals in question.

However, while Booth's focus of interest in his dealings with narrative lay almost exclusively on manipulations of point of view and their effect on moral judgments, Sternberg's rhetorical orientation has always been related to a wider array of narratological issues. Thus, *Expositional Modes*, inspired by the Russian Formalist *fabula/sujet* distinction, explores in depth how narratives manipulate expositional materials and to what ends. The exposition is a particularly suitable phenomenon to highlight the dynamics of *fabula/sujet* relations since it always constitutes the beginning of the *fabula*, but is not necessarily located at the beginning of the *sujet*; thus, throughout his study, Sternberg examines numerous forms and functions of both preliminary and delayed exposition.

Another notable study with a similar orientation, "Literary Dynamics: How the Order of the Text Creates Its Meaning" (1979), was published during the same period by Menakhem Perry, the co-author of "The King through Ironic Eyes." As the article's title indicates, it deals with the importance of the order in which information is presented throughout the sequence of a literary text. Its theoretical section is followed by a detailed analysis of William Faulkner's short story "A Rose for Emily" where the order of presentation, claims Perry, plays a crucial role in determining our impressions concerning the enigmatic main character.[8]

In two programmatic articles titled "Telling in Time" (Part I, 1990; Part II, 1992), Sternberg extended his rhetorical-functional perspective to the very definition of narrative. Systematizing and articulating more thoroughly ideas that already appeared in his studies of exposition and biblical narrative, he developed a conception of "narrativity" (namely, what constitutes the essence of narrative) different in kind from most narratological approaches, which define narrative in the mimetic terms of represented *action*. In contrast, Sternberg defines it in the communicative terms of narrative *interest*.[9]

This interest is aroused in the reader by the creation of informational gaps regarding any aspect of the represented world of the story—be it an event, a motive for action, a character-trait, a relationship, a viewpoint, a picture of society, or even an entire reality-model. Such gaps result from the basic intersequential dynamics of narrative, namely, the relations between the dynamics of the action and the dynamics of presentation, and Sternberg differentiates among three fundamental types of gaps—those of *suspense* (or prospection), *curiosity* (or retrospection), and *surprise* (or recognition). In this trio of master types of interest—which can further combine and interact, separately or in combination, with any number of other communicative

goals at which a specific narrative might aim—lies narrative's functional distinctiveness as a communicative act.

The goal of another major article by Sternberg, "Mimesis and Motivation: The Two Faces of Fictional Coherence" (1983; expanded and updated version, 2012), is, in a sense, that of placing the rhetorical-functional approach itself within the framework of the study of literature. It deals with the concept of "motivation" introduced by the Russian Formalists—though, as Sternberg shows, it is highly relevant for the understanding of many other aesthetic theories as well, beginning with the one developed by Aristotle in the *Poetics*. According to Sternberg, the activity of "motivating" phenomena in works of fiction consists of two distinct yet distinctively associated kinds of reason-giving, or sense-making: according to the aesthetic/rhetorical logic of the teleology of art, and according to the mimetic-referential logic of the fictive world. The former underlies the latter; the latter mediates and objectifies the former. Within this framework, literature's two grand mimetic motivators (and functional mediators) are the (represented) world and the (representing) discourse about it. In the context of the latter, the narrator or speaker is perceived as fabricated as any other textual component, and his speech as mediated as any—always quoted (whether tacitly or not) by the author. This is the channel through which the study of issues related to perspective or point of view is integrated into Sternberg's basic approach. Early examples may be found in the two concluding chapters of *Expositional Modes*, which discuss how the presentation of expositional information is motivated by various types of narration, and the studies of quotation from the early eighties (1982a, 1982b); more recent examples are Sternberg's study of omniscient narration (2007), and his critique of cognitivist approaches to narrative perspective (2009).

Among other members of the Tel Aviv School, Sternberg's influence can be seen most directly in the work of his student, Eyal Segal, on narrative closure (2007; 2008; 2010). Segal applies Sternberg's conception of narrativity to the study of closure, aiming at a synthesis of this conception with the general approach to closure presented by Barbara Herrnstein Smith in her classic study *Poetic Closure* (1968). Smith views the structure of a poem—and by extension, of any text—as consisting of the principles by which it is generated: "What keeps it going?"; this allows the possibility of a corollary and complementary question: "What stops it from going?" (1968, 4). Turning to narrative, Sternberg's definition of narrativity may be said to supply the fundamental answer to Smith's first question—namely, narrative interest, in its three master types, is what keeps a narrative text going. And by an extension of the same logic, the answer to Smith's next question, about what stops it from going, is *the cessation, or termination, of narrative interest*. In other words, an effect of closure is produced by a narrative text when the operation of all kinds of narrative interest is brought to a halt, by the filling in of all the significant informational gaps about the represented world that

have arisen along the textual sequence. Conversely, narrative "openness" results from such significant gaps that remain permanently open—or at least not definitely closed.

Based on this definition of narrative closure, Segal analyzes in detail three literary corpora—the detective genre, the picaresque genre, and the works of Franz Kafka—in terms of their structure of narrative interest, since these corpora illustrate particularly well some basic issues of closure. The detective genre is a paradigm case of strong closure, its classical structure of interest being characterized by an extremely "single-minded," goal-oriented movement of the plot, a simple, determinate, and specific nature of the information required to fill in the main gaps, and a special density of the retrospective patterning which occurs at the end. The picaresque genre and many of Kafka's works, on the other hand, are characterized by a fundamental problematics of closure, the picaresque because of its radically episodic plot structure (manifested in the privileging of short-term—"episode"-length—narrative interest), and Kafka's texts because of their static nature, where time's essential dynamic aspect is annulled, and, with it, the possibility of any genuine resolution of the basic tensions which beset the fictional world.

Another critic from Tel Aviv whose work is closely related to (and highly influenced by) Sternberg's is Tamar Yacobi. Her studies of unreliable narration (1981, 1987, 2001, 2005), for example, build on Wayne Booth's groundbreaking definition and treatment of the concept (1961), but also differ from it—and from most other approaches to the phenomenon—in consistently placing it within a communicative framework which emphasizes the role of the reader and the reading process. Yacobi views unreliability primarily not as a fixed character trait attached to the portrait of a narrator, but rather as a reading hypothesis, formulated in order to resolve all sorts of textual problems. As such, unreliability is never a "given" and its postulation is always an interpretive, hypothetical move. By making this move, we (as readers) set in motion an integration mechanism which brings discordant elements into a coherent pattern by attributing them to the peculiarities of the speaker or observer through whom the world is mediated.

This perspectival integration mechanism is viewed within a wider framework of a theory of integration, which identifies a set of five basic available—and often competing—types of mechanisms, or logics of resolution, which can be activated by the reader to resolve textual problems. (The other four are—in Yacobi's terms—the genetic, generic, existential, and functional.) This framework enables us, among other things, to map and correlate diverse interpretive positions regarding the same text under the umbrella of one theory of interpretation. One can find a large-scale example of such a (meta-) critical undertaking in Yacobi 2005, which is a case study in the reception of Leo Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata*, a text that has generated a lot of controversy with regard to the question of its narrator's reliability.

LEGACY

The Tel Aviv School has survived into the twenty-first century, though the infrastructure that sustained its work has been transformed over time. In 2006, the separate identity of the Department of Poetics and Comparative Literature was lost when it merged with the Department of Hebrew Literature to form a joint Department of Literature. *Poetics Today*, the Tel Aviv School's international showcase, has continued to thrive since the departure in 1988 of its founding editor, Harshav, first under the editorship of Even-Zohar (1988–1993), and since 1993 under the editorship of Sternberg.

The legacy of the Tel Aviv School is somewhat mixed. The school's long-term impact and significance is relatively easy to trace in certain subfields and quarters, harder in others. Sternberg's work on biblical narrative, independently and in collaboration with Perry, has had a lasting impact on academic study of the Hebrew bible. Similarly, the impact of Even-Zohar's and Toury's approach to translation is readily traceable in contemporary translation studies, notably among the translation theorists trained at Leuven, but elsewhere as well. Even-Zohar himself has been called in as a consultant on national culture-building in such places as Galicia in Spain and Quebec and Newfoundland in Canada.

However, the grand synthesis of poetics that Harshav envisioned has never really come to fruition, and the legacy of the Tel Aviv School's project is less widely acknowledged than it probably deserves to be. Mentoring of the younger generation of scholars (except in Even-Zohar's circle) has been less thorough than it ought to have been, with the result that the second generation is few in numbers, and the third generation (the students' students, as it were) almost nonexistent. The continuity of the school's project is threatened. Potentially damaging, too, is the resurgent threat of an international boycott of all Israeli academics, regardless of their ideology or political affiliations (or lack thereof). If, having made a place for themselves on the world stage, the scholars of the Tel Aviv School were to find themselves shut out from full participation by historical forces beyond their control, then the minor scandal of Toury's expulsion from an out-of-the-way corner of the academic "small world" (see above) might prove after all to be a portent of bigger, and worse, exclusions to come.

NOTES

1. Throughout, we are using the terms "Bible" and "biblical" in their Jewish sense—namely, referring only to the Hebrew Bible.
2. The second appendix, on narrators, was dropped from the article's English versions.
3. This systematization began as early as 1970, in a later issue of *Ha-Sifrut* which featured two articles by Boaz Arpali and Uriel Simon, scholars of Hebrew literature, who criticized Perry and Sternberg's reading of the biblical story, largely

on account of its supposed anachronism. Perry and Sternberg countered with a long response, published in the same issue, where they sought to refute this criticism—among other things, by explicitly formulating various characteristics of biblical narrative poetics which implicitly guided their reading in the previous article.

4. See below on the crucial role played by the text's manipulation of gaps in Sternberg's definition of narrativity.
5. See below for more on the "constructivist" tendency in Tel Aviv School poetics.
6. Harshav's publications in poetics and theory are actually relatively few in proportion to their impact, often repetitive, and until recently hard to find. The latter problem has been remedied by the publication of many of his major papers in a convenient monograph form (Harshav 2007). The present account will focus on those major publications in poetics, slighting Harshav's other multifarious activities—as Yiddishist, scholar of Jewish art and culture, prolific translator, and pseudonymous poet. It will also of necessity disregard his landmark contributions to the study of Hebrew prosody, which some consider his greatest scholarly achievement (see Harshav 1971; Ben-Porat 2001).
7. Sternberg wrote an extensive review on *The Rhetoric of Fiction* for the first issue of *Ha-Sifrut* in 1968; Booth's study is also the only work in the Anglo-American tradition mentioned by name in the introduction to *Expositional Modes*.
8. A Hebrew version of this analysis was already published in 1974, in the journal *Siman-Kri'a*. Another important study relating to order of presentation, in this case of non-narrative texts, was conducted by Perry in his doctoral dissertation on the poetics of the Hebrew poet Hayim Nahman Bialik (published in Hebrew in 1976). According to Perry, a significant portion of Bialik's texts are "inverted poems"—poems which, at a certain point along their sequel, cancel out the meaning the reader was encouraged to attach to their earlier part, replacing it with a diametrically opposed meaning.
9. A condensed version may be found in Sternberg 2001; Sternberg 2010 elaborates on the differences between the rhetorical-functional and the mimetic (or "objectivist," in the sense of focusing on the object of representation) approaches to the definition of narrative.

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12 Poetics and Hermeneutics (*Poetik und Hermeneutik*)

Renate Lachmann

The *Poetik und Hermeneutik* (P&H) group was founded by the German scholars Hans Robert Jauss (Romance literature), Clemens Heselhaus (German literature), and Hans Blumenberg (philosophy) at Giessen University. They were joined by Wolfgang Iser (English and American literature). Though the philosopher of religion and theologian Jacob Taubes, then still at Columbia University, declined the invitation to be part of the original initiative, later he also participated in the meetings. The group intended to promote an intellectual change in the humanities.

It is no great exaggeration to say that in the year 1963 such an ambitious project was nothing short of revolutionary in West German academia. The Giessen scholars planned to establish a research group (*Forschungsgruppe*), a meeting ground for philosophers and literary scholars willing to apply hermeneutic methods to the study of poetic texts—the term "poetic" understood in the Aristotelian sense (*techne poetike*). The initiative was inspired by the ideas of the influential philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer who had unsuccessfully tried to form such a group somewhat earlier. The key principle, interdisciplinarity—understood as a confrontation and cooperation of a variety of methods practiced in the analytical endeavor of different disciplines in recurrent dialogue—was adopted against the then current assumption that interdisciplinarity violated the rules of serious professional disciplines. The principle served as an intellectual basis of what became an unconventional forum for the encounter of heterogeneous theoretical and methodological frameworks.

The interdisciplinary approach was applied to the understanding of literary texts and aesthetic phenomena of different kinds from different perspectives. At the same time, the specific nature of these perspectives could be thus clearly demarcated. The common effort of the group showed that the understanding of aesthetic phenomena is not limited to specialists and that the application of hermeneutic methods could be extended beyond literary texts.[1]

The founders soon added new members. In addition to Jauss, Iser, and Heselhaus, literary scholarship was represented by Wolfgang Preisendanz, Herbert Dieckmann (German Studies), Yuri Striedter, Dmitry Chizhevsky, Renate Lachmann (Slavic Studies), Manfred Fuhrmann, Reinhart Herzog

(Ancient Greek and Latin), and Karlheinz Stierle and Rainer Warning (Romance Studies).[2] The group included linguists (Wolf Dieter Stempel, Harald Weinrich, and Siegfried J. Schmidt), and philosophers (Dieter Henrich, Odo Marquard, and Manfred Frank).[3] The historians Reinhart Koselleck, Christian Meier, Arno Borst, and the art historian Max Imdahl[4] were permanently attached to the group.[5] Outside participants were invited according to the subject matter at hand. Initially, it was a small and closed group—unlike, for instance, the Frankfurt School that used media to capture the attention of society.

THEORETICAL IMPETUS

From the very beginnings of P&H, some of its basic conceptual assumptions were challenged by both older or newly discovered and contemporary schools of thought and theories. Most important was Russian Formalism, a movement that had not yet received much attention in Western scholarship. At the end of the 1960s, German translations of essays by Viktor Shklovsky, Yuri Tynyanov, Boris Eikhenbaum, and Roman Jakobson became available. The bilingual presentation of the seminal texts of these authors in a two-volume edition by Striedter and Stempel (1969, 1972), both active members of P&H, became famous, last but not least because of the accompanying lucid essays by the editors. Formalist key concepts such as "defamiliarization," "device"; their theses on "literary evolution"; the emphasis on literature as a primarily verbal art; the neorhetorical approach to texts; the concept of "poeticity" (or poeticalness), and the radical dichotomy between everyday practical and poetical language played a major role in some of the P&H contributions.[6]

Jauss's influential "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (1975), a manifesto of reception aesthetics, based on his inaugural lecture of 1967, was partly inspired by the Formalist assumption that the reception of works of art changes depending on the cultural context (its aesthetic ideals or dominant taste) and that "forgotten" texts can be revived and new texts can fade into oblivion (to be revived in a later period). Reception theory (Jauss 1982) became essential ingredient of the debates of the group. The limitations of the hermeneutic approach, which focused on the given text without taking into account its semantics and aesthetics activated in different cultural contexts, were overcome by addressing text reception, including the reception of its different interpretations and response by real readers. In Iser's reader-response theory, the semantic potential of the literary text was taken as the starting point of interpretation. In developing his theory, Iser referred to the so-called "stratification model" (*Schichtenmodell*) that was introduced by Roman Ingarden as a tool to discern different textual layers and their interrelation. According to Ingarden, the layer of representation implies certain indeterminacies, or vacancies (*Leerstellen*). In a manner of

speaking, the author invites the reader to fill the gaps or, if he is so minded, to leave them open. This notion prompted Iser to postulate the concept of the "implied reader" (see Iser 1978).

In the early seventies, there was a lively intercourse between P&H and representatives of the Prague school of structuralism. Jan Mukařovský's understanding of the aesthetic object, the intentional and the nonintentional in art was of interest to the group.[7] Miroslav Kačer participated in a session and Lubomir Doležel was invited to contribute an article.

The works of the Tartu–Moscow School (TMS) published in *Semeiotike. Trudy po znakovym sistemam* (*Sign Systems Studies*) became widely known thanks to the efforts of Umberto Eco and his colleagues in the Bologna semiotic circle. In Germany, Karl Eimermacher, then teaching Slavic literatures at the University of Constance, established a translation project, which published German translations of seminal texts by Yuri Lotman[8], Boris Uspensky, Vladimir Toporov, Aleksandr Pyatigorsky, and others (1986). Eimermacher's introductions conveyed interpretations of the TMS's concepts, such as system, model (cultural model), primary, and secondary modeling system, negative procedure (*minus-priem*), the plurality, and interrelation of cultural "discourses" in which the literary text is embedded, the opposition of culture and nonculture. Rainer Warning was the one to acknowledge the theoretical and analytical potential of Lotman's key concepts set forth in his *Lectures on Structural Poetics* (1964) and who, despite the initial skepticism of the group, introduced them into its discourse. Thus, Lotmans' understanding of the fictional text as belonging to "the secondary modeling system," is discussed extensively in volume 7, where Warning introduces Lotman's theory, criticizing its sometimes simplified dichotomies. In volume 15 of the group's proceedings (*Memoria*), Renate Lachmann draws on Lotman's conception of memory as a semiotic mechanism of culture.

At the same time, another opening to outside theories, this time from France, took place. After the older generation had passed on the burdensome duty of planning the conferences and publishing the proceedings to younger members of the group, Stierle and Warning introduced French structuralist concepts, the narratological theory of Greimas, Genette's *Palimpsestes*, Todorov's reinterpretation of rhetorical terms, Foucault's *Ordre du discours* and ideas circulating in such journals as *Communications, Poétique*, and *Tel Quel*.

Incidentally, no meeting was explicitly devoted to the discussion of theories as such. Nevertheless, although the sessions focused on specific empirical topics, the analyses of the topics provoked revisions and assessments of theories and concepts. It should come as no surprise that certain theoretical positions, as well as their respective methodologies and analytical results, seemed to be inconsistent with, or at least uncongenial to, the conceptual framework of P&H. There were, of course, attempts to test the heuristic usefulness of theories that seemed, at least at first glance, incompatible, and to introduce them into the ongoing discourse of the

group. For instance, the discussion of Derrida's view (in volume 11 of group's proceedings) that the apparent structure of a text refers to a latent irreducible variety of interpretations. This view differs radically from the structuralist assumption that the only sensible task of textual analysis is the description of manifest structures. All this was taken up in several contributions, as was Derrida's "deconstruction" of binary oppositions and the structuralist assumption that they are balanced. The discussions benefited from Derrida's questioning of the ways we produce meaning by proposing re-readings of philosophical and literary texts, thereby ending up in a kind of interminable analysis.

MEETINGS AND PUBLICATIONS

The first five meetings sponsored by various universities and foundations took place at different locations. Beginning with the sixth (1972), all subsequent meetings could rely on generous grants by the Reimers-Foundation. The foundation housed the participants in a comfortable villa and guesthouse on its premises in Bad Homburg in the Taunus region of Hesse. A spacious, oval-shaped conference room with panoramic windows looking into a park was provided for the meetings. The charming surroundings, walks through the park during coffee breaks, and an excellent kitchen offered ideal conditions for the meetings that usually lasted three days.

Starting from an initial basic and general interest in the history of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*)[9] and the methods of understanding (here, Gadamer's hermeneutic philosophy played a crucial role), problems that were more closely connected to the theory and methods of the participating disciplines, were taken up for consideration. The coordination of different approaches encouraged a new, genuinely dialogical style of conversing. Working papers were distributed beforehand to provide a material basis for the discussion. In a first round, appointed commentators presented the gist of the contributions. Then the most important part of the entire event, the general discussion followed. This workshop-like procedure differed markedly from the academic customs of the period. Initially something of an experiment, it became the routine procedure that, it could be said, was institutionalized by the group.

The published volumes partly recaptured the structure of the meetings. Initially they included the introductory papers followed by the statements on the papers and the corresponding counterstatements. The only lecture was the evening presentation by an art historian; for many sessions this was Imdahl. Later the system was modified. The transcripts of the discussions followed the introductory papers. Finally, in some cases, the subsequent correspondence between the participants, in which they exchanged arguments on what appeared to be unresolved questions, was published in the next volume. In some instances, scholars who did not personally participate in the

meeting were invited to contribute.[10] During the thirty-one years from 1963 until 1994, when the group decided to terminate its activities, seventeen volumes had been published. The volumes of 500–600, some of 700 pages, were usually published two or three years after the meeting. For the last volume, Jauss (1998) had written a retrospective contribution. It included a summary of what the group had intended to achieve and what was in fact accomplished. Jauss died before the volume appeared. The volume, in which this closing statement was published, was dedicated to his memory and to the memory of Blumenberg.

It is evidently impossible to describe all of the sessions and the volumes of papers they produced in detail, just as it is impossible to list all the participants in a brief overview. Hence, my selective characterization of the seventeen volumes does not follow the chronological order of their publication. Several volumes are linked thematically. Others demonstrate how the dynamics of dialogue adapted established theoretical concepts, gave birth to new ones and how the often controversial argumentation determined their final shape. Henrich and Blumenberg were among those who favored an explicitly adversarial style of discussion. They were often the main combatants. Taubes played a rather different role. Not averse to argument himself, he succeeded in defusing tense, potentially explosive dialogues with his informal, even playful manner. Marquard, for his part, frequently managed to lighten the atmosphere with wordplay and philosophical witticisms.

Aesthetic Experience, Fiction, and Reality

"Aesthetic experience reaching toward modernity" seems to have been the idea that inspired the group's enterprise from the very beginning. The participants of the first meeting that focused on *Imitation and Illusion* (volume 1, 1966) were still few (twenty). Among them was a guest from East Germany, the literary scholar Werner Krauss. This was one of the rare occasions in which West Germans came to meet a scholar from "the other side."

Blumenberg opened the session by observing that there is a certain interrelationship between an established concept of reality and the formal and semantic possibilities of the novel. The following contributions by literary scholars examined changes related to the reconceptualization of "reality" in poetics and aesthetics. These changes were prompted by the rise of the novel from Romanticism to Realism and the concurrent poetic theories. It was argued that the new definition of imitation modified aesthetic experience and anticipated modernity. The analyses of texts by Fielding, Sterne, Diderot, Wieland, Goethe, Scott, and Stendhal offered evidence that the novel, indeed, engendered innovation in poetics and aesthetic theory at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The topic of the first volume was revisited in volume 10, *Functions of the Fictive* (1983). Here, the approach to "imitation and illusion" as a problem of historical poetics gave way to interest in systematic poetics and the

formation of a theory of fiction. The meeting demonstrated that changes had occurred in the dynamics of the discussions. Arguments were marked by a greater variety of controversial and competing positions—partially due to the remarkably increased number of participants and to the fact that many of them were infrequent guests.

It is hard to gauge the impact the P&H volumes had on literary scholarship, philosophy, and other disciplines of that period. It is certain, however, that volume 10 considerably affected the debates on the relation of literature to reality. In the extensive introduction to the volume, the editors broke up the duality that opposes the "real" to the "fictive" and introduced a third category, that of the imaginary. It soon became obvious that neither the philosophers of the group, including the invited participants Richard Rorty, Richard Kuhns, and Elisabeth Ströker, nor the literary scholars could agree on a set of assumptions concerning reality and fiction. Epistemological problems became entangled with those of aesthetic theory. Marquard—who generally liked to put the fox in the chicken coop—sketched the complicated process by which reality becomes art and argued that art denies that it is fiction: it is, in fact, anti-fiction. Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht also employed the somewhat paradoxical term "anti-fiction." He turned the opposition of reality and fiction on its head: everyday life was to be considered fiction, whereas the language games (in Wittgenstein's understanding) were anti-fiction. Striedter introduced the concept of "double fiction," analyzing its function in the utopian novel in post-revolutionary Russia. Finally, Jauss reconstructed the historical dimension of the concepts in question and traced the development, which led to the final drifting apart of the real and the fictive. Ströker's investigation of the fictivity of theoretical concepts could have been applied to all concepts used in the discussion.

The session documented in volume 3, *The Arts, No Longer Beautiful* (1968),[11] questioned the limits of aesthetic theory by exploring aesthetic borderline phenomena lacking "beauty": the ugly, the grotesque, or the obscene. Fuhrmann meticulously described the "ugly" in texts of Roman antiquity, for instance, in the striking passages of extreme brutality in the Pharsalia. Stempel analyzed the language of blasphemy and obscenity in French medieval texts. Chizhevsky explored several Slavic literatures for examples demonstrating the Baroque hyperbolism in the depiction of atrocities. Maurer described the dissolution of the genre system in Romanticism and Pre-Romanticism. Throughout the meeting, the traditional notion of what constitutes "aesthetic experience" had been challenged by the aesthetics of experiences outside the canon. Jauss in the already mentioned summary noted an unplanned debate between Blumenberg and Taubes about Gnosis as a particularly memorable event in this session.

The reception of myth was discussed in volume 4, *Terror and Play* (1971), opening with a seminal contribution by Blumenberg, in which he confronted the idea of reality with the effective power of myth. Myth was considered neither as a historical object (concerning issues such as the origin of myths and

the elementary functions of myth), nor as a naive view of reality. In most contributions, Greek myth remained a central point of reference—as a thesaurus of figures and forms—engendering two sets of themes: the "postmythical" transformations of mythical views of reality and the reinterpretations of the "logic" and aesthetic aspects of myths in art and literature. In Blumenberg's question, how myth works in a time that is apparently scrubbed of myths, and in Fuhrmann's reconstruction of Greek tragedy in the twentieth-century drama these two themes materialized. Myth turned out to be a constant feature of postmythical culture. Traces of mythological thinking were detected in theological dogma, philosophical theory, and ideology. Jean Bollack opposed mythical interpretations to the interpretations of myths, thus differentiating between the two modes of using the myth: seeking its assistance in order to understand the world—reading it as a text. The semantic and aesthetic potential of myth was described from different perspectives in Warning's (mythical implications of medieval mystery plays), Iser's (the gradual transformation of myth from Homer to Joyce), and Striedter's (poetry as the articulation of revolution as a new myth of the Russian avant-garde) presentations. Miroslav Kačer gave an idea of how the Antigone myth was reenacted on the Czech theater scene in the 1960s. It was striking to see how often mythical structures did not change essentially, retaining their semantic function.

The comical as an aesthetic category was the focal topic of the seventh meeting. Volume 7, *The Comical* (1976), while tracing the development of the comical from antiquity to modernity, raised the question whether some essential features could be found in all its historical transformations. The session started with Blumenberg's provocative portrayal of "the comical aspect of pure theory." He suggested that "pure theory" is essentially unserious and that this can be demonstrated throughout its manifestations in different periods. Preisendanz, who in his writings often dealt with the comical[12], demonstrated that the aesthetics of the humorous (*der ästhetische Humor*) has to be differentiated from humor in everyday life (*der praktische Humor*).

Iser suggested that a constitutive aspect of the comical is tilting from reality to imagination and back again. The term coined by Iser, "Kipp-Phänomen," was employed repeatedly in the discussions of the group and became not only fashionable but also useful beyond P&H. It captured the semantic status of the comical between the "real" and the "fictive." Striedter demonstrated how a comical situation is "made." He commented on his live performance by referring to Boris Eikhenbaum's emphasis on the "madeness," the construction of art objects. The group did not have the ambition to create a new theory of the comical. It intended finding out whether the collective effort of describing the phenomenon could produce a common interpretive paradigm. That this aim had not been fully achieved was acknowledged in the foreword to the volume.

The topic of volume 14, *The Feast* (1989), is a follow-up to the topics of terror, play, and the comical. The focus was on different types of festivity from antiquity to modern times, its differences in style, purpose, and cultural

function. The volume opened with Jan Assmann's interpretation of a festive ritualized event in Ancient Egypt, the "beautiful day," whose pictorial representations and textual description offered an insight into its sensuality and its transitoriness. It became clear, that there is an elementary relation of feast to time. Richard Kannichts's interpretation of the connection between feast and poetry in Ancient Greece traced the same relation; his examples were banquets accompanied by heroic songs, both time bound. The double function of feast—preserving order and permitting excess—appeared as *Begrenzung* (limitation) and *Entgrenzung* (delimitation), as Joachim Küchenhoff put it in his discussion on order and chaos, order and ecstasy. Herzog (applying Bakhtin's concept of the Menippea to Petronius) and Haug (tracing changes from decency to orgy in Arthurian feasts) explored transgressiveness of the feast. Joseph Koerner analyzed Dürer's *Pleasures of the World*. His question "is there a relation between the kinds of order expressed in a pictorial image and the social order (or disorder) instantiated in festivity" (Koerner 1989, 185) turned out to be at the center of nearly all contributions.

The cultural history of the feast traced its development from courtly to private feast. It is significant that feasts and their routines follow a cultural grammar. Aleida Assmann referred to it while distinguishing between courtesy books for the courtly environment, and conduct books, for the bourgeois world. Modesty and luxury seem to represent two versions of feast that are linked to different levels of society. Wilfried Barner referred to the second in his analysis of literary descriptions of the pomp characteristic of Baroque celebrations. Bakhtin's concept of carnivalization helped to analyze the "anti-feast," in which the feast passes the threshold from order to chaos. Lachmann showed that eccentric and scandalous celebrations form a semantic nucleus of Dostoevsky's novels. Gabriele Schwab used the concept of the "anti-feast" in pointing out the carnevalesque aspect of the travels of the dead body in Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*. Literary texts of this kind articulate forms of feast *in extremis,* including representations of "bad feasts, feasts of badness," such as celebrations of war (Striedter), feasts of the end (Preisendanz) and "feasts of the bad" celebrated in Proust's *La prisonnière* (Warning). The festivals which suppress the disturbing negative constituent were discussed by Dahlhaus (Wagner's *Bühnenfestspiel* as a manifestation of a *Kunstreligion*) and Frank (a return of the Germanic *Thingspiel* and the rise of a new mythology in the *Bühnenfestspiel*).

Hermeneutics and Negativity

Different types of hermeneutics (theological, juridical, literary, philosophical hermeneutics, and the hermeneutics of action theory in the social sciences) were confronted in volume 9, *Text and Application* (1981). The reading of legal, theological and literary texts from the perspective of specialists in these disciplines—and nonspecialists too—revealed a variety of meanings and the hermeneutic value of multiple approaches.

At an informal evening meeting, Imdahl proposed to test the results of the day's discussion by applying them to the interpretation of a picture: the evidence of the arftefact and the process of understanding were supposed to match.

Volume 11, *Conversation* (1984) documents an encounter of P&H with concepts of still another theoretical tradition. After Jürgen Mittelstraß's opening contribution "An Essay on Socratic Dialogue," Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of dialogicity, his concept of the double-voiced word, the communicative role of voice as distinct from writing, and his idea of the mutual responsiveness of texts were at the center of the discussion. The argumentation pro and contra Bakhtin was enriched by revisions of Saussure's *Anagrammes* in Starobinski's *Les mots sous les mots,* Jakobson's *Subliminal Verbal Patterning in Poetry*, and Kristeva's theory of intertextuality. At issue were the originality and singularity of a work of literature, the degree to which it must be seen as part of a historically formed field of interrelated texts, and the degree, if any, to which it can be considered as self-contained.

In these contributions, hermeneutics in its original sense was the dominant but not the only topic alongside other aspects of communication. In his analysis of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy of Dr. Tulp,* Imdahl demonstrated how talking and listening can be captured by the language of gesture. Discussion of the "dialogues with God" in St. Augustine's *Confessions* (Reinhart Herzog) and the mystical dialogue of Mechthild of Magdeburg (Walter Haug) brought up issues that reached beyond literary texts. In *Conversation* (Thomas Luckmann), it was not a matter of going beyond literary texts but of a manner of speaking below them, a conversation as a form of communicative action in everyday life.

Volume 6, *Positions of Negativity* (1975) was meant as a recapitulation of all "negativities" in the preceding volumes. Here, once again, the group assembled all the disciplines represented from the beginning. Gerhard Stickel and Weinrich investigated the pragmatic, syntactic, and semantic aspects of negation in language. Fuhrmann insisted that a historical dimension had to be respected: he associated linguistic pragmatics with the rhetorical doctrine of "status." The linguistic aspect of negation was further examined by Jauss (commandment and prohibition in the Decalogue), Stierle (negation and order), and Stempel (negation in performative speech). Starting with Aristotle, Wolfgang Hübener deployed a historical perspective in his investigation of the logic of negation. From Aristotle, the focus of the debate moved to Heidegger. Taubes discussed Heidegger's concept of nothingness and traced the development of the adverb "nichts" (nothing), into the noun "Nichts" (nothingness).

Identity and Individuality

A basic anthropological concern was evident in the selection and treatment of the problems of identity and individuality. "Identity" was a fashionable

concept in the seventies. The group wanted to free it from the rather trivial connotations it had acquired in the chitchat of the period.

In volume 8, *Identity* (1979), Henrich offered an inclusive system of identity notions in different disciplines (identity in formal logic, identity as a social psychological problem, semantic problems of identity). Borst opened a series of substantive contributions with an analysis of the crucial role played by the figure of Emperor Barbarossa (Frederick I) in the formation of German identity. Contributors discussed the Greek conception of political identity (Christian Meier) and the concept of person in the persona mask of Roman theatrical performance (Fuhrmann). Presenting a series of older historical monuments and juxtaposing them with those of the twentieth century, Koselleck demonstrated their significance for the formation of group and national identities. The example of victory columns, war and victims' memorials showed the potential for clashes between different groups and opposing ideologies. Conflicts may already arise at the planning stage, as in the case of war memorials and concentration camp memorials, and they may continue after the latter have been erected, opposing groups trying to appropriate them by offering their own interpretation of what the monuments mean.

Lübbe maintained that personal identities are closely linked to, if not generated by, stories as told in biographies and autobiographies, suggesting that we capture our own as well as another's identity in such stories. Weinrich amplified the analysis of the narrative constitution of identity by a catalogue of signs that define person's uniqueness (name, age, face, and other information).

In the discussions of the poetical and aesthetic aspects of identity, it was noted how we become aware of a lyrical subject in poetry and that we necessarily presuppose an author (the implied author) when we read fiction. The social aspects of identity were addressed in several contributions. Luhmann presented an extensive account of the concept of identity within the framework of his version of systems theory, whereas Luckmann pointed out different social–structural determinants of social roles as constitutive parts of personal identity and the historical conditions for the emergence of role distance. The anthropological implication of the topic was taken up again in volume 13, *Individuality* (1988). The session was to have an agonistic structure; hermeneutic interpretations and analyses of various aspects of individuality were to be confronted with critical "deconstructionist" ones. This made for the unusually complex arrangement of the session and of the volume in which the proceedings were published. The main protagonists, the editors Manfred Frank and Anselm Haverkamp, opened the combat. Following the "double" approach, philosophical, psychoanalytic, theological, and literary contributions, as well as those from art history entered a complex dialogue. Against the background of a conceptual history of individuality, Frank's presentation showed that leading "philosophers of the ego," Descartes and Husserl, were highly critical of certain philosophical assumptions about individuality.

The negation of the notion of individuality was balanced by what was introduced as archaeology of individuality, as a social history of the individual. Ludwig Jäger applying the hermeneutic method in his interpretation of Humboldt's semiology, showed its pertinence to the discussions on individuality. Freud's case history, in which he gave his patient the pseudonym "wolf man," was taken up by Carlo Ginzburg. Setting it against the historical legends of werewolves, he offered an analysis of Freud's understanding of the individual. Three aspects of treating individuality—"reconstruction," "deconstruction," and "decomposition"—framed the interpretations of individuality in literature. In contributions by Jauss, Haug, and Stierle, Dante and Petrarca were presented as foremost examples of reconstruction. Haverkamp dealt with Hölderlin as a paradigm of deconstruction. In Starobinski's presentation, Valéry stood for "decomposition." The interpretations of the literary texts were focused on the semantic and aesthetic function of different types in the representation of individuality: the stable and self-contained self, the split self, the Doppelganger, the decentered subject.

History and Memory: Continuity and Discontinuity

The fifth volume, *History—Event and Narration* (1973), could well have been opened by Kracauer's essay "General History and the Aesthetic Approach" in volume 3, in which he discusses styles of historiography and critically analyzes schematic modes of writing history, specifically referring to their habitualized metaphors (evolution, progress, growth, and development). The contributors distinguished between the "histories" written before the eighteenth century and the notion of history which developed in that period. Historiography, its roots in mythical thought, new styles of writing history, and the formation of a "modern" philosophy of history were the main topics. The question of how an event becomes a story was also tackled from the linguistic perspective (Stempel). Koselleck explored the ways by which time structure is captured in stories about historical events. Meier's "The genesis of history" was a contribution to the archaeology of historical thinking. Szondi's interpretation of Schiller's historical writing addressed the importance of the philosophy of history for the "modern" enlightened version of historical thinking.

In volume 12, *The Threshold between Epochs and the Awareness of Epochs* (1987), the terms *Epochenschwelle* and *Epochenbewusstsein* were seen as interrelated. The traditional dichotomy between the subjective and the objective was thus avoided.[13] Several contributions investigated the conditions under which epochs and their designations were born. Stierle demonstrated that historical and aesthetic ideas of the nineteenth century created the "renaissance" epoch; Luckmann combined phenomenological and sociological perspectives to analyze a subjective temporal dimension of everyday experience and the socially constructed times of collective memory. Stierle's argumentation relied, in part, on Foucault's concept of discourse

and discursive space. Frank, however, in a critical response to Foucault and poststrucuralism, opposed the underlying assumption that a change of paradigm took place in the eighteenth century.

While taking examples of different historical periodizations from different European national cultures, Koselleck questioned the logic of cutting up history neatly into distinct units. He introduced the metaphorical expression *Sattelzeit* (as in the "pass" or "saddle" in the mountains between two valleys) to refer to periods of transition and presented the period between 1750 and 1800, as an example of such a transitional period during which the modern age emerged. Similarly, Blumenberg's metaphor of a "threshold between epochs," adopted as part of the session's title, refers to the gradual change in the consciousness of historical time, an "imperceptible limes" that is experienced only after the change has taken place. Both metaphors exclude "crisis" or "discontinuity" as characteristic features of historical changes—and thus became popular in academic discourse.

The group tackled the complex issue of memory and approached history from a new angle, acknowledging that historiography as such has a mnemonic nucleus and that mnemonic concepts have their own history. The genesis of memory concepts, their alternations, formation of mnemonic concepts in literature by single authors, collective concepts of memory inherent in different periods, and memory and its interpretations as part of cultural identity were the topics of the session entitled *Memory: To forget and to remember* (volume 15, 1993).

Haverkamp presented a hermeneutic interpretation of the Simonides legend, provided an overview of its reception in Roman rhetoric, and delineated different epochs in the history of mnemonic concepts. He stressed their philosophical, psychoanalytical, and literary implications, as well as rhetorical implementations. Lachmann discussed memory as the "semiotic mechanism" of culture while referring to the mnemonic dynamics of accumulation and annihilation of historical data (knowledge, experience), a central concept in cultural semiotics. The invention of mnemotechnics inspired a hybrid myth containing those tales of memoria that were later to be unfolded. The key elements of these individual tales are forgetting and remembering as mechanisms that produce a culture. Forgetting turned out to be a central aspect of narrative commemorative texts: the "epic oblivion" of *Aeneas* in Herzog's interpretation; oblivion, repression and remembering, which Warning pointed out in Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*. In some contributions, memory was addressed as a space of order: Kemp demonstrated the mnemonic order in medieval imagery; and Graevenitz showed that memory is an ordering factor in realism.

Writing as an act of remembering was the topic of Jürgen Schlaeger's interpretation of Pepys's diary as a case of self-memorizing. Aleida Assmann analyzed the coalition of remembrance and imagination in Wordsworth's poetry against the backdrop of the memorizing style of romanticism.[14] Distinct concepts of memory were outlined in Jürgen Trabant's discussion of

Vico's memoria in its relationship with *ingegno* and *fantasia* as a rhetorical term. Jauss analyzed Valéry's *Cahiers,* which convey a critical stance toward memoirs, and Stéphane Mosès's interpreted Benjamin's "historical consciousness" as simultaneity of *Eingedenken* (retention of the past) and *Jetztzeit* (experience of the present).

The Contingencies of the End

Volume 16, *The End: Figurations of a Cognitive Model* (1996) was meant to be final. Nearly all contributions had "end" in their title, referring to the notion as telos, catastrophe, apocalypse, eternal return, or the unending end. Jan Assmann, who opened the session, gave insight into the significance of what he called "a dual time concept" in Ancient Egypt: the cyclical time, representing the idea of becoming and permanent return, and the linear time, a state of enduring, time that has become stationary. Both concepts are related to ritual actions, both deny the end. In other contributions, "the end" was treated in two ways: it was either discussed in philosophical terms or traced in literary texts as a motive or as a structure. The latter was pointed out by Stierle, who stressed the importance of Aristotle's distinction of beginning, middle, and end of poetic texts. In Arbogast Schmitt's interpretation, this structural triad was applied to Aristotle's concept of the teleology of history. Hendrik Birus interpreted Nietzsche's philosophy as the destruction of eschatology and Christian eschatology seemed to return in Robert Spaemann's critique of the ideology of progress. Alois Hahn applied Luhmann's systems theory a historical analysis of the decline of conceptions of hell. An eschatological aspect could be seen also in Bubner's notion of "closing forms" (*Abschlussformen*) that accompany our understanding of historical processes.

Apocalypse was one of the terms in the interpretation of literary texts in Hansen-Löve's and Reichert's contributions. Hansen-Löve described certain types of apocalyptic discourses in Russian literature that use the rhetoric of revealing and covering "end" messages; Klaus Reichert presented apocalyptic figures–actors in Beckett and Shakespeare. The end was either present, as in Iser's interpretation of King Lear and Macbeth, or it belonged to a poetology of "last things," as in Neumann's interpretation of Jean Paul's *Siebenkäs*. Except for Schläger's "aesthetization of the end in English Romanticism," which he calls a "poetics of death," death is not thematized directly. But it seems to be the main subject in Herzog's "Vom Aufhören" (his last text), and in Marquard's "treatise" on mortality.

It was volume 17, *Contingency* (1998), dedicated to the memory of Blumenberg and Jauss, that completed the series. Aristotle's concept of coincidence (the possible, the impossible) was analyzed by Bubner; Josef Wetz opened a discussion about terminological distinctions and semantic nuances of the concept of contingency (*Zufall*, coincidence, chance, randomness), opposing it to the concept of necessity. Lübbe distinguished between

different types of contingencies, depending on the way the element of chance is built into the rules of the game, for example, in darts versus lottery. Alfred Gierer, a physicist and nuclear biologist, wrote about chance, the necessities of physical laws, and the indeterminacies of natural processes (quantum physics). The experience of contingency and coping with contingency were the topics of two other contributions (Lübbe and Makropoulos). Joachim Küpper examined the role of contingency in the case of a privileged *episteme* that excludes other possibilities, with the consequence that a certain stock of knowledge is canonized. Other contributions demonstrated that in narrative literature contingency is a formal frame for the destiny of heroes: the contingency of birth (David Wellbery), the ritualized contingency of duels (Neumann). Jauss, in his last scholarly contribution, discussed contingency and understanding, suggesting that one should distinguish between the privileged "you" and the contingent "other."

AFTER THE END

Poetics and Hermeneutics group ultimately disbanded because, for the simple reason, it ran out of steam. Perhaps, there was another reason. The group's members felt they had done their job. Furthermore, many members of the younger generation had moved on, developing their own style of thought in literary studies and philosophy. They worked on new projects and published some of their major works after the group's dissolution. Even so, their former engagement with P&H left an indelible imprint on their writings.

Blumenberg had left the group early, maintaining that his ideal of a permanent conversation between different disciplines about their styles of argumentation, methodological approaches, and choice of terminology had failed. The outside criticism gladly borrowed from Blumenberg's verdict that P&H eventually lost its original character and turned into just another academic enterprise. The group's interdisciplinary dialogical mode of procedure, however, was adopted by several academic undertakings in West Germany. The group's research topics had not lost their relevance and were kept alive.

There were other enterprises indirectly connected to P&H. In 1989, Iser and Sanford Budick launched the interdisciplinary international German–Israeli forum "Institutions of Interpretation" at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Among the participants were scholars associated with P&H (Stierle, the Assmanns, and Lachmann) who met scholars from Israel (Moshe Barash, Gabriel Motzkin, Stéphane Mosès, and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan), the United States (Stephen Greenblatt, Sacvan Bercovitch, J. Hillis Miller, and Stanley Cavell), and France (Jacques Derrida). In this way, an indirect interdisciplinary dialogue of P&H with New Historicism and Deconstruction became possible. Some topics discussed in this circle were similar to those that had been treated in Bad Homburg.

Another group, in which P&H members were active (both Assmanns, Fuhrmann, Lachmann, and Luckmann), was modeled on P&H, although its founder explicitly distanced the new group from its predecessor. It was brought to life by Gumbrecht, along with Bernard Cerquiglini and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer. Many of its topics were similar or complementary to those discussed in P&H. In the course of its existence, it moved away from its initial model and, with a substantial increase in the number of participants, developed its own style of proceedings. Incidentally, a basic difference from the P&H was the fact that doctoral students were admitted from the very beginning—thus changing the atmosphere of the meetings. The group met for a couple of years at the Inter University Center in Dubrovnik, which was administered by the University of Zagreb and funded internationally.

In 1979, Aleida and Jan Assmann started the research group *Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation* with cross-connections to P&H, since some invited participants had been associated with P&H. However, the aim of this group was to include disciplines beyond the European Anglo-American scholarship, such as Egyptology, Indology, Assyriology, and other areas within a wide frame of cultural and historical studies. The project "Archaeology of Communication," which combined the interest in writing as an essential part of communication in early civilizations with questions of anthropological relevance, produced eleven volumes.

In the 1990s, the Reimers Foundation hosted an international research group in Bad Homburg. Although only one of its members had been associated with P&H (Luckmann) and although other disciplines were involved (linguistics, social psychology, and sociology), the Dynamics of Dialogue group and its publications followed a procedure that very much resembled that of P&H.

It is difficult to assess precisely the importance of P&H. However, it seems that the impact of its publications on the humanities in Germany and elsewhere was nothing short of extraordinary.

A group that produced remarkable scholarship inevitably became a historical phenomenon itself. A young generation of scholars, studying the "history of knowledge" in the humanities in Germany during the second half of the twentieth century, was, of course, fascinated by the group. The characteristics of the founding members, the organization of the group, and, especially, its early period, are at the center of interest. A project at the University of Constance ("Die Forschungsgruppe Poetik und Hermeneutik") examines the initial intellectual impetus, the origins of the group, its history, and its continuing influence (see, for example, the materials of the 2008 conference on P&H in Möllmann 2008). In February 2014, the Marbach Archive organized a conference, in which some former members and associates participated.

The influence exerted by P&H was partly due to whatever a varied and, for some volumes, wide readership found in its series of publications, and, in a considerable degree, also to the books of its members. Many of those were written during the lifetime of P&H. Significant parts of them were presented

at the meetings, and their final form emerged from the discussions within the group. For example, Blumenberg's most important publications, those written before the beginning of P&H, partly during his involvement in it and partly after he left the group in disillusionment, were a milestone of German postwar philosophy. Blumenberg was practically unknown in the English speaking academic world until his major works appeared in translations (e.g., Blumenberg [1960] 2010, [1966] 1985, [1979] 1985, [1979] 1990, [1975] 1987). One of his posthumous publications, *Beschreibung des Menschen* (2006) is considered a major new work of philosophical anthropology.

Koselleck's work left the widest and perhaps the most enduring imprint on the humanities. His studies of the semantics of monuments and statues and concepts, such as *Sattelzeit*, and the interconnected notions of event, experience, and narration, profoundly influenced recent historiography as well as narrative theories in literature (especially Koselleck 1979). Visiting professorships at the University of Chicago, the New School for Social Research, and Columbia University and one of his works in English translation, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing, History, Spacing Concepts – Cultural Memory in the Present* (2002), ensured that Koselleck's influence was not and is not limited to Germany.

Jauss's and Iser's theories of text reception continue to exert an enormous influence on literary scholarship. Reception theory and reader-response theory, related to each other as far as the focus shifted from the production of the literary text (and its rhetorical implications) to its being read, are fundamentally different as far as the concept of the reader is concerned. Whereas Jauss's reader, a concrete real reader, approaches the text within a horizon of expectation (*Erwartungshorizont*), which is based on his stock of knowledge, Iser's reader is an abstract instance which belongs to the semantic structure of the text. Iser was well known in Anglophone literary scholarship through his publications and his permanent visiting professorship at the University of California–Irvine (see De Bruyn 2012; Iser 2000, 2006). Through numerous guest lectures, Jauss was best known in the Francophone world.

In retrospect, a paradox must be noted. Blumenberg's view on theory was ambivalent. Jauss quoted his famous sentence in "Epilogue to the research group Poetics and Hermeneutics" (last volume, 1998): "a theory is not worth more than the consequences of the descriptions whose possibilities it opens, thus emancipating an object from the limited perspective of a single discipline" (Blumenberg 1976, 122). And, in fact, as was observed, the group avoided focusing exclusively on theory. Yet the discourse "cultivated" by many participants was highly theoretical and abstract. Except for certain formulaic expressions and newly coined terms, the complexity of the discussions in some sessions, at least, could not be easily understood by an outsider, even a learned one. To grasp its meaning, hermeneutics, the art of understanding texts, had to be applied by anyone not fully immersed in the group. Nonetheless, this style possessed a peculiar poetic charm.

NOTES

1. For instance, the polyphonic interpretation of Apollinaire's poem "Arbre" in second volume of proceedings (1966) demonstrated the fruitfulness of the interdisciplinary approach.
2. Jauss, Iser, Preisendanz, Striedter, and Fuhrmann all taught in the newly founded (reformist, at least in its intention) University of Constance from the late sixties onward, precisely when Poetics and Hermeneutics flourished. Somehow the label *The Constance School* became attached to this group, which—despite their common aim and close cooperation—overstates the theoretical cohesion and methodological unity of these scholars.
3. A frequent participant was the philosopher Hermann Lübbe. Occasional guests included the philosophers Elisabeth Ströker, Jürgen Habermas, Jürgen Mittelstraß, and Rüdiger Bubner, as well as Stéphane Mosès from Israel, and Richard Rorty and Martin Schwab from the United States.
4. Other art historians and philosophers of art were Hans Belting, Wolfgang Kemp, Joseph Koerner, Bernhard Lypp, Michael Podro, and Jürgen Wissmann.
5. Law scholars Martin Kriele, Detlef Liebs, and Dieter Nörr contributed to the discussion on the varieties of the hermeneutic method.
6. In the 1960s, Karl Maurer, a scholar of Romance literatures and a onetime guest of the group, founded the journal *Poetica* at the University of Bochum, devoted to literary studies and linguistics. In the introductory note Maurer explicitly referred to the Formalist periodical volume *Poetika* and invited articles on Formalist concepts and their creators. Karlheinz Stierle became the next chief editor of the journal.
7. Some of his and other Prague structuralist's writings had appeared in a German translation: Mukařovský 1974, Červenka 1978, and Vodička 1976.
8. Lotman met Jauss in Constance, when Lotman's wife Zara Mints, also a prominent Tartu semiotician, held a visiting professorship at the University of Constance. For whatever reason, the two men did not seem to take to each other. The single encounter between them was characterized by a degree of stiffness.
9. From the late 1950s onward, many P&H members (Hans Blumenberg, Günther Gawlick, Hans Robert Jauss, Dmitry Chizhevsky, Harald Weinrich, Odo Marquard, Reinhart Koselleck, and Jacob Taubes) participated in the sessions of the German Research Society's Committee of the History of Concepts. Their involvement in the Committee bore on the P&H meetings where a close attention was paid to the definition and historical interpretation of concepts.
10. For example, Algirdas Julien Greimas, Shoshana Felman, and Cynthia Chase.
11. The group owed the title to Siegfried Kracauer, who contributed to this session an essay in English, "General History and the Aesthetic Approach," and participated in the discussion. Kracauer died before the volume was published. It was dedicated to him.
12. One of Preisendanz's best-known books (1963) is called *Humor as the Power to imagine*.
13. Notably, this applied to the contributions by František Graus and Klaus Schreiner, who dealt with the medieval understanding of epochs, to Carl Dahlhaus's presentation of the same problem in the history of music, and to Bernhard Lypp's reflections on the peculiar "presence" of art.

14. See her later works on memory and the culture of remembrance (1999). Memory was one of the main topics of Jan Assmann's works (1992) and of Lachmann's (1997).

VOLUMES

1. *Nachahmung und Illusion*, edited by Hans Robert Jauss (1964).
2. *Immanente Ästhetik, ästhetische Reflexion: Lyrik als Paradigma der Moderne*, edited by Wolfgang Iser (1966).
3. *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste: Grenzphänomene des Ästhetischen*, edited by Hans Robert Jauss (1968).
4. *Terror und Spiel: Probleme der Mythenrezeption*, edited by Manfred Fuhrmann (1971).
5. *Geschichte—Ereignis und Erzählung*, edited by Reinhart Koselleck und Wolf-Dieter Stempel (1973).
6. *Positionen der Negativität*, edited by Harald Weinrich (1975).
7. *Das Komische*, edited by Wolfgang Preisendanz and Rainer Warning (1976).
8. *Identität*, edited by Odo Marquard and Karlheinz Stierle (1979).
9. *Text und Applikation: Theologie, Jurisprudenz und Literaturwissenschaft im hermeneutischen Gespräch*, edited by Manfred Fuhrmann, Hans Robert Jauss, and Wolfhart Pannenberg (1981).
10. *Funktionen des Fiktiven*, edited by Dieter Henrich and Wolfgang Iser (1983).
11. *Das Gespräch*, edited by Karlheinz Stierle and Rainer Warning (1984).
12. *Epochenschwelle und Epochenbewusstsein*, edited by Reinhart Herzog and Reinhart Koselleck (1987).
13. *Individualität*, edited by Manfred Frank and Anselm Haverkamp (1988).
14. *Das Fest*, edited by Walter Haug and Rainer Warning (1989).
15. *Memoria: vergessen und erinnern*, edited by Anselm Haverkamp and Renate Lachmann (1992).
16. *Das Ende: Figuren einer Denkform*, edited by Karlheinz Stierle and Rainer Warning (1996).
17. *Kontingenz*, edited by Gerhart von Graevenitz and Odo Marquard (1998).

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13 *Annales* on the Move

Jacques Revel
translated by Paul Earlie

Founded in 1929 by two major historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, *Annales* is a French journal of history and the social sciences. Still active to this day, the journal has given rise to a wider movement in historiography. While not a "school" in the strictest sense, this movement does have a clear identity and employs a distinctive conception of historical work. Both journal and movement share a number of obvious common characteristics. Their respective importance and *agency*, however, are not entirely equivalent. Managed by a small group of editors, the journal acts as a collective noun, aspiring to be a place of ideas and experimentation—something it has remained throughout its already long existence. The movement, on the other hand, can be understood as composed of all those who, at one time or another, in a more or less consistent fashion, saw themselves as part of the *Annales* project (or projects), which their own research enriched, interpreted, and appealed to in a more or less free manner. The contours shaped by these fellow travelers, whether near or far, are thus not only larger than those of the journal, they are also far less sharply definable. The movement is no less important, however, because it has much to tell us much about the driving force of a proposition and about the successive phases in the situation of historiography.

FROM THE PRESENT TO THE PAST: HISTORY AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Both founding figures were accomplished historians whose respective work had already won them recognition. Born in 1878, Lucien Febvre was a historian of the early modern period. Eight years younger than Febvre, Marc Bloch was a medievalist. Both taught at the University of Strasbourg, a provincial institution that had been returned to France with the province of Alsace after World War I. Aiming to attract the best scholars and professors, the French government wanted to showcase Strasbourg as a center for higher learning and French scientific achievement. In this sense, despite being a provincial university, Strasbourg was by no means a peripheral one. It was here that the *Annales* project was born. To understand the origins of

this project, however, we must first situate it within a wider history. Bloch and Febvre both belonged to an intellectual generation shaped by particular ideas and experiences that it is important to remind ourselves of here.

The first was the sociological school founded by Émile Durkheim towards the end of the nineteenth century. The school's project was new: a science of society whose procedure had been codified by Durkheim in *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1894). The Durkheimian school provided a compelling example of resolute interdisciplinarity. The first, brilliant generation of Durkheim's disciples were committed to the study of economics, psychology, law, geography, history, religion, and ethnography. Their individual research and their critical reflection on the different domains of knowledge nourished the pages of *L'Année sociologique*, the fervent, combative journal that Bloch and Febvre later claimed to have passionately read in their youth and an early model for the *Annales*. The Durkheimians, incidentally, went further than the *Annales*, proposing to unify all disciplines concerned in a single social science, which they naturally conceived under the aegis of "sociology" and the sociological method (Simiand 1903).

The second major influence was somewhat different. *The Revue de Synthèse historique* was founded in 1900 by Henri Berr, a philosopher by training who became a tireless intellectual entrepreneur for more than half a century. Unlike Durkheim, Berr was not a thinker of the first rank. More than anything else he was a go-between, who from a very early stage succeeded in creating a wide intellectual network of specialists not only in the humanities and the new social sciences but also in the "hard" sciences, notably mathematics and physics. If his journal did not privilege one doctrine over another, still less an orthodoxy, it nonetheless acted as a forum for researchers from very different intellectual, disciplinary, and national backgrounds. In the pages of the journal and very soon in the meetings it organized, the major names and European debates of the period were echoed. Providing a fluid medium for information to circulate freely, the *Revue* was sometimes at the origin of unexpected encounters between disciplines, especially in the rather sensitive domain of the epistemology of scientific knowledge (then experiencing a "crisis of foundations"). Febvre and Bloch were party to these encounters; they found there a milieu, an intellectual resource, and a model of open empirical confrontation between disciplines, looser but certainly more flexible than that advocated by the Durkheimians.

The third influence was World War I. Beyond their involvement in the military, for men of archives and books like Bloch and Febvre the war was experienced as an exceptional time to observe and understand a social terrain. Marc Bloch in particular found in the extraordinary rumors circulating at the warfront material that would one day nourish his own research on medieval beliefs and, more generally, on what became known as "collective mentalities." But the wartime experiences of both men were not limited to their historical interest. From the war itself they drew two main convictions. The Great War had brought with it major social transformations, but it had

also imposed a number of new tasks on the historian. In 1917, Febvre wrote to Berr from the front: "I have a sense that social history will be the order of the day when peace returns and the painful and anguished period of social conflict and class upheaval begins" (1997, 40). In this new "ruined world," history would have to be attentive to significant and profound transformations, to ruptures in the contemporary, and to the incessant confrontation between the present and the past. These would become the major preoccupations of the first *Annales*.

Although the *Annales* project was conceived in the 1920s, it would take close to a decade to come to fruition. Bloch and Febvre moved in the same intellectual circles before they became colleagues at Strasbourg. Why did they decide to found a journal? At stake here was far more than a simple scholarly endeavor. The intellectual context of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the emergence and affirmation of the new social sciences. The majority of these new disciplines—sociology, psychology, geography, and the history of religions—were equipped with scientific journals pursuing three broad aims: to claim a firm disciplinary foundation; to promote a particular program of scholarship; and to bring together and invigorate a community of scholars through the publication of works illustrating a common methodological procedure. History was not part of these new disciplines. Unlike the latter, it already possessed a firm institutional foundation and was safely established on university curriculums. History was also a professionalized discipline. It was against this classical version of history, however, that Bloch and Febvre saw themselves as reacting. Contemporaries of the new social sciences, they wanted to open a space for encounters and dialogue between history and the new disciplines. In January 1929, the editorial of the first issue of *Annales* gave explicit formulation to such an aim:

> as historians who have had largely the same experiences, from which we have drawn largely the same conclusions, we have been struck for some time by the difficulties entailed by a now traditional divorce. While historians apply their tried and tested methods to the documents of the past, more and more scholars are devoting their efforts—and not without occasional due excitement—to the study of contemporary societies. What we have, then, are two classes of workers made to understand each other but who normally labor side by side in mutual ignorance. Worse still, among historians themselves, as among those whose concern is with the present, a still greater number of divides exist. The walls are so high that they very often obstruct our view. And yet, how many precious suggestions regarding method and the interpretation of facts, what cultural gains, what progress in intuition could be born from more frequent intellectual exchange between these different groups!
>
> (Febvre and Bloch 1929, 1–2)

These few short lines framed a highly general program of research. The program aspired to renew historical practice by opening it to cross-disciplinary engagement. At the same time, it aimed at redefining perspectives on temporality. The present could no longer be understood solely as the end-point of historical development; it was now called to illuminate the past and to facilitate the problematization of this past in terms that were entirely new.

All that was left was to give concrete form to this project. At a time when resources were scarce for such undertakings, this certainly did not go without saying. As we have seen, Bloch and Febvre were by no means marginal figures; they were well-known historians. Yet from the early 1920s onwards, they recognized the need for the patronage of an older figure of significant international standing: the Belgian historian Henri Pirenne (1863–1935). An eminent scholar in his own right, Pirenne was also a national figure in Belgium whom Bloch and Febvre hoped would bring an obvious legitimacy to the new journal, in addition to a vast network of potential collaborators (Lyon and Lyon 1991).

It is beyond the scope of the current article to examine the detailed procedures and negotiations that preceded the birth of *Annales*. The latter, in any case, enabled Bloch and Febvre to secure a publisher, the Librairie Armand Colin, which took charge of the journal's material costs. They were also able to assemble an editorial committee made up of a number of major figures of the university establishment: the historians Pirenne, Hauser, Espinas, and Piganiol; the geographer Demangeon; the sociologist Halbwachs (one of Durkheim's early disciples); the economist Rist; and one of the founders of political science in France: André Siegfried. Doubtless the multidisciplinary focus of the committee was in sharp relief; it still succeeded, however, in garnering full academic respectability. It is true that the committee would play only a minor role in the journal's direction and that the management of *Annales* remained firmly in the hands of Bloch and Febvre. More interesting was *Annales*'s systematic search for new collaborators. This search was to a large extent an international one, with a particular focus on the English-speaking world. The journal's editors were also keen to mobilize wider capacities than those found in traditional academic environments, notably from the ranks of the *Bureau international du travail* (through the mediation of Albert Thomas), national and international civil servants, colonial administration, as well as from the world of business. Mobilizing a swathe of personal relationships, direct and indirect, this network (or rather network of networks) would sustain *Annales* for the ten years leading up to World War II and would be one of the most striking sources of the journal's originality. Its development can be charted in the correspondence of the journal's editors (Bloch and Febvre 2003–2004).

Firmly managed at its center, the journal's ambition was also to establish a community of work and reflection. This was soon evident in the use of a collective pronoun ("we," "we the *Annales*") and in the emergence of a foundation myth, according to which the birth of the new periodical

heralded a radical break with the "normal sciences" of the universities. A French Historical Revolution (Burke 1990) is indeed still invoked to this day. As we have seen, however, such a myth was only partially true. In its early years, *Annales* was mostly a minority movement and one which encountered much reticence, at least among historians. Throughout the 1930s, the journal's audience was limited to just a few hundred readers. Nevertheless, *Annales* was never truly marginal nor even marginalized. It rapidly gained a warmer reception abroad than it had encountered in France. Most of all, at the initiative of its directors, the journal very early on proposed at least two kinds of collective work. The first, clearly inspired by *L'Année sociologique*, was a policy of privileging critical summaries, especially those relating to methodological debate. The second was the use of collective research, which sought to associate concrete research clusters with major cross-disciplinary objects (such as prices and monetary fluctuation, the comparative history of agrarian structures, the history of technology, and the history of the nobility). Tying scholarly research to reflection on the conceptual frameworks of analysis, these collective enquires attracted researchers from many and diverse disciplinary backgrounds for many years to come.

EMPIRICAL ENCOUNTERS

Is it possible to speak, then, of a theoretical foundation or paradigm underpinning the type of historical enquiry advocated by the new journal (Clark 1985; Stoianovich 1976)? Probably not. Both Febvre and Bloch deliberately distanced themselves from such an ambition. From the very first issue of *Annales*, they made it clear to their readership that it would be "through example and fact," through practical and empirical work, that the *Annales* approach would be illustrated and "not through articles on methodology or theoretical essays" (Febvre and Bloch 1929, 2). There were several reasons why Bloch and Febvre adopted this position. Undoubtedly the first was French historians' oft-cited mistrust of the pretensions of nineteenth-century philosophies of history, although they were by no means unique in this regard. This suspicion was easily extended to any philosophical formulation or even any epistemological reflection, dismissed as "abstract" or prescriptive as soon as it could not be related to concrete research practice.

This is evidenced by the failure of French historians to engage with the debate on the status of historical knowledge as it had developed at the turn of the century, in the work of Dilthey onwards. It is also clear from the abortive dialogue that took place in the 1930s between these historians and contemporary work in the history and philosophy of the sciences. This was in spite not only of the encounter having then effectively taken place; it was also in spite of numerous themes and arguments concerning the potential of an "experimental rationalism" (Castelli Gattinara 1998) being common to

the work of Bloch and Febvre on the one hand, and Alexandre Koyré and Gaston Bachelard on the other.

Central to these debates was a "crisis of foundations" which called into question the certainties of the natural sciences regarding the conditions of scientific knowledge. Central too was the critique of traditional conceptions of causality. There was obvious common ground for reflection here and the encounter did indeed take place. Febvre, for instance, wrote that the ideas of historians were "founded on an outdated philosophy of science [and] must be revised," and "our methods in accordance with these ideas" (Febvre 1953, 143). This encounter was never pursued to its end, however. We thus find ourselves faced with the paradox of a desire for an epistemological break which remained (and would remain) for the most part implicit, despite this desire being palpable in much empirical work of the period.

We can thus better understand why *Annales* chose to situate itself in the field of social sciences at a time when these disciplines still occupied a peripheral place within the French academic system. As mentioned earlier, the first years of the twentieth century had seen an attempt by the Durkheimian school to organize the domain of the social sciences. This attempt was prescriptive because it argued that all disciplines concerned should conform to the general rules of both the sociological method and a unified epistemology (Revel 1979; Revel and Hunt 1996; Simiand 1903). This attempt had not been successful, however, because sociology at the time lacked any firm institutional base. A quarter of a century later, the baton passed, in a certain sense, to Bloch and Febvre. This time, however, it was history's turn, a discipline already solidly established and which benefited from a strong scientific and cultural legitimacy. The cross-disciplinary exchange that Bloch and Febvre conceived and tried to put into practice was this time formulated in pragmatic terms. Whereas the Durkheimians had wanted to unify their new community of method around a particular epistemological canon, *Annales* intended to establish dialogue and exchange around an object common to the different disciplines: man in society. This probably explains why for a long time the French preferred to speak of the "sciences of man" rather than the "social sciences." It also illuminates how we should understand the particular relation between the present and the past that *Annales* aimed to construct, since it was the very complexity of social time which served as an axis for interdisciplinary dialogue. This open and modest "ecumenical" conception of history was still being defended by Fernand Braudel thirty years later: "history—perhaps the least structured of the sciences of man—accepts the lessons of its diverse neighboring disciplines and endeavors to echo them in its own research" (1969, 42).

Such modesty should not prevent us from recognizing the distinctive traits which characterized the work of both the journal and those who chose to follow it. This is not to say that Febvre and Bloch were in agreement on everything—far from it. But they did agree on the essentials and to some degree the sheer élan of *Annales* very early on triumphed over

anything that might have separated them. Their first principle: under scrutiny, everything produced by the human sciences is of some potential value, including its disagreements, so long as they would be stated clearly (hence the essential place devoted to critical reviews in the journal). The system was therefore one of circulation and borrowing. Bloch longed for "the day when the notion of historical experience will be incorporated into our studies once and for all," since all such experiences were potentially worthy of reflection. Their second principle: a shared Durkheimian past prompted Bloch and Febvre to establish a comparative account of social facts as the journal's heuristic principle. The *Annales* was thus receptive to the study of very diverse societies and temporalities. For Bloch, author of an ambitious project for a "comparative history of European societies," the identification of resemblances was less important than the "perception of differences." While these differences require an account of the complexity of historical reality, they also signal a problem (Bloch 1928, 27). Here we find the third and probably most essential principle of *Annales*'s approach to history: it opposed a new "problem-history" to what it called "narrative-history" (*l'histoire-récit*). Rather than following the supposed linear flux of events, research in problem-history was required to conceive a specific experimental procedure aimed at testing an explicit and prior given hypothesis. Modifying the conditions of observation and choosing the specific tools of analysis allowed the historian to record any resulting changes in the object of study. This was in line with the experimental method, constructivist in outlook, advocated by François Simiand at the beginning of the century (Simiand 1903). In François Furet's formulation, this procedure allowed the historian to break with "the immense indeterminacy of his object: time." The historian is "no longer under the pretension of recounting what has happened in history, not even its major events […]. He is conscious that he chooses what to examine in the past and that in doing so he poses questions to this past which are highly selective. In other words, the historian constructs his object of study by delimiting not only the period, the totality of events, but also the problems posed by this period and these events—problems it will later be necessary to resolve" (Furet 1982, 76).

We can thus see how *Annales* consciously distanced itself from the dominant, institutionalized historiographic approaches and why, conversely, it embraced the methods of the human and social sciences. These choices gave way to others which became the identifying features of the movement at its time of greatest flourishing: a quantitative and serial history mobilizing different generations of researchers; an appeal to collective enquiry (already mentioned above); and both a preference for, and rhetoric of, experimentation, which was present from the earliest days of the journal and would become its hallmark.

All of this doubtless involves an epistemology, even if this epistemology remained more often than not implicit. But was it a theory? Probably not. It was certainly not a social theory. The first title given to the review was

Annales d'histoire économique et sociale. As Febvre made clear, however, the journal's content soon began to outgrow this title: "there is no economic and social history. Not only because the link between the economic and the social is not a privileged one […] in the sense that there is no necessity in speaking of the economic and the social rather than the political and the social, or the literary and the social, or the religious and the social, or indeed the philosophical and the social […]. There is just history, in its unity." He went further still: "a word as vague as 'social' seemed to have been created […] to serve as the emblem of a journal which claimed never to fence itself off from other disciplines" (1953, 19–20). There was neither scepticism nor cynicism in these remarks, simply the strong conviction of the underlying unity of all aspects of social life. It is this same unity which justifies the opening up of history to other disciplines with a shared concern for the social, just as it justifies the place of history within the sciences of man. Here again we find a certain conscious distancing of *Annales* from Durkheimian sociology, as from Marxism and from any other exclusive theory. The "social" was here never the object of a systematic and explicit conceptualization. Rather, it was the site of an open-ended inventory of relations, relations which attested to the interdependence of social phenomena. From this point of view, it was not incidental that for both Febvre and Bloch (and later for Braudel) it was geography, the integrative discipline par excellence, that would become a longterm, privileged partner (Bloch 1931; Braudel 1949; Febvre 1922).

THE TERRITORY OF THE HISTORIAN

"The world of yesterday is over." This terse formula is taken from Febvre's "Manifesto of the New *Annales*," published in the opening pages of *Annales*'s first issue after the end of World War II. "*Annales* is changing because everything around it is changing: men, things—in short, the world" (1953, 40; 35). Febvre was here claiming a clean break for the journal, one which stemmed from a desire to remain at the forefront of the avant-garde. This break would not be so radical, however, as to do away entirely with the near past. From this point on, the early period of *Annales* (1929–1939) would continually be invoked as a foundation myth, even by those who had no involvement with it during those years. On the other hand, forgotten were the numerous difficulties of the early period, including the disagreements between the journal's two directors. These tensions had been exacerbated during the war years due to Febvre's sole editorship of a diminished version of the *Annales*, from which Bloch, a Jew and a Resistance fighter, had been obliged to withdraw. Haloed by Bloch's heroic death at the hands of the Germans in 1944, the journal nonetheless emerged stronger from an experience in which its very existence had been threatened.

Much indeed had changed. After four years of occupation and collaboration, the France of the immediate postwar period found itself on the side of the victors. Efforts were focused on reconstruction, one facilitated by an exceptional spirit of public voluntarism. The "*Trente glorieuses*," the thirty years of postwar economic prosperity, was a time of ambitious national projects and achievements that would profoundly rejuvenate an old country long withdrawn into itself. Attentive as always to transformations in the present, Febvre inevitably saw in this period the opportunity for a new order. He was now alone at the helm of the *Annales* (renamed *Annales. Économies. Sociétés. Civilisations*), although he was aided by a close team of younger researchers: the sociologist Georges Friedmann, the historian Charles Morazé, and of course, Fernand Braudel. A key collaborator in Febvre's own work, Braudel would later be anointed as his successor. In the meantime, more developments were on the horizon. The scholarly project of *Annales* was soon supported by an institution which can in some sense be understood as its natural extension and illustration.

At the end of 1947, the newly formed Sixth Section of the *École pratique des hautes études* (which became the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales* in 1975) advocated the same flexible device of interdisciplinary exchange that put history at the heart of the social sciences. An institution of research and training for research, the Sixth Section experienced a period of spectacular growth in the 1950s and 1960s under the direction of Febvre (until his death in 1956) and later under Braudel (until 1972). In a few short years, the Sixth Section (Economic and Social Sciences) affirmed its position as the principle French research cluster in the social sciences, at a time of increasing professionalization for these disciplines following their acceptance to the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). At its core, the Centre de recherches historiques, conceived and headed by Braudel from 1949 onwards, was closely associated with the *Annales* project, to such a degree that it is sometimes difficult to separate the two. What was clear, in any case, was that *Annales* had fundamentally changed in both size and material means. The cottage industry of the pre-war years had been replaced by a far more assured enterprise, one much better integrated into the new structures of institutional research.

Two historians dominated this extended period of growth. The first, born in 1902, was Fernand Braudel, a man of tremendous vision with considerable international experience. Braudel came to prominence through the publication of a major study, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (1949), a text which soon became one of the key reference points of twentieth-century historiography. A prolific historian as well as an energetic organizer of research, Braudel (1969) never abandoned his quest to deepen and reformulate the relationship between history and the other social disciplines. He was also a peerless institution-builder (Gemelli 1995). The second figure, born in 1896, was Ernest Labrousse. Labrousse taught at the Sixth Section as well as at the Sorbonne, where he succeeded

Marc Bloch to the Chair of Economic and Social History—a discipline whose methodology his own work had done much to rejuvenate (Labrousse 1933, 1944). A disciple of François Simiand, Labrousse proposed a model of research founded largely on statistical methods, defining a canon of quantitative history (and, more generally, of "serial history") that became one of the privileged ways of treating historical data in France between the 1950s and the 1970s. More so than Braudel, Labrousse, in both his person and in his teaching, proved adept at attracting a generation of brilliant students who would later form the third generation of *Annales*: Maurice Agulhon, Pierre Chaunu, François Furet, Pierre Goubert, Denis Richet, Jean-Claude and Michelle Perrot, Daniel Roche, among many others.

Braudel and Labrousse were the leading figures in French historiography during this period and were responsible for much of the general orientation and tone of the *Annales*. A new "economic and social history" was then prevalent. This was a history of charts and tables, curves and maps which illustrated the evolution of broad economic variables (such as price, production, or exchange) and the structure of social distribution. The somewhat obsessional use of these illustrations occasionally provoked skeptical or ironic comments from outside observers (Hexter 1972). But this was also a time of wide-ranging collective enquiries and new ways of organizing work and research. It is worth noting, however, that these were not the only trends to emerge during this period. Many *Annales* historians were fascinated by the history of mentalities, the serial treatment of cultural data, and the rise of historical demography—all examples of a continuing interest in the opening up of history to other disciplines (Chartier 1985; Revel and Hunt 1996). Above all, this was a period in which the "territory of the historian"—to use a particularly telling metaphor (Le Roy Ladurie 1973)—seemed limitless; and *Annales* was charged with recording its ever expanding frontiers. "New problems," "new approaches," "new objects": this was the rather triumphalist appraisal of what was beginning to be called, somewhat belatedly, "*la nouvelle histoire*" (Le Goff, Chartier and Revel 1978; Le Goff and Nora 1974). It soon seemed that anything could become an object of historical research: birth, marriage, death, parenthood, myth, climate, sex, illness, feasting, cooking, dreams, and the like. The renewal and expansion of this list can be explained largely by the privileged relationship *Annales* historians maintained with anthropology during the period 1960–1980.

The time of full recognition had finally arrived. As we have seen, from its earliest days the founders of *Annales* sought to situate their project within a vast international network. In the immediate postwar years, it was in Europe that *Annales* historiography first found a growing readership. But everything was to change with the late reception of the *Annales* in the United States and, by way of the latter, throughout the wider world. An English translation of Braudel's *Mediterranean* was finally published in the United States in 1973. Thereafter, a large number of works by historians identified with the *Annales* movement began to appear, while anthologies (or "readers") of articles

originally published in the journal began to multiply. For fifteen years, the *Annales* movement saw itself buoyed by a robust modishness. This recognition was no doubt welcome. But it was also ambivalent in that it often consecrated earlier or partial versions of the *Annales* movement. The history of mentalities is a good example of this *après coup* effect: it was continually invoked during the English-speaking reception of the *Annales*, even while French historians were occupied with critiquing and turning away from it.

Despite this ambivalence, the fact remains that *Annales* experienced a period of accelerated growth and an expansion of research frontiers that lasted for more than three decades. The journal, headed by Braudel until 1969 and thereafter by small groups of co-opted historians, continued to pursue a policy of voluntarism. However, it was now at the center of a much larger apparatus of professional researchers and foreign correspondents. Readers who had been in their few hundreds in the prewar period were now in their thousands, despite the obvious language barrier. In addition to the institutional support received by these new forms of research organization, the effectiveness of which should not be underestimated, it is worth exploring other reasons for the *Annales*'s remarkable vigor during this thirty years period. For want of space, two principal points will be examined here.

The first was the choice and promotion of research standards that were both recognizable and reproducible. Quantitative history played a critical role here, although it was never the exclusive approach adopted. Quantitative history enabled not only large-scale collective research; it also made possible the accumulation, capitalization, and comparison of its results. Long before the use of information technology became second nature to historians, quantitative research facilitated the collation and comparison of data. However, there was more to it than this. A movement without a real theoretical framework, *Annales* invested heavily in methodological reflection, one which would be close as possible to the practical concerns of historians. Through experimentation, debate, and occasional controversy, an analytic vocabulary was formed which was shared by the majority of the *Annales* community. Its keywords were "structures," "conjunctures," and "cycles"—words that could be applied to economical, social, and later cultural data. Finally, one could say that *Annales* was identified to a large extent with particular models of presenting research and results, as well as with a distinctive research style or rhetoric (Carrard 1992).

Probably a second factor was the unique position that history occupied, and continues to occupy, within the social sciences in France. This position is most likely the result of the late institutional recognition of the social sciences in the French academic system in the 1960s. It was in any case history's unique place within the social sciences that facilitated exchange with the new disciplines. Braudel's personal work provides a remarkable example of this exchange. He was dogged in his pursuit of dialogue with geographers, economists, sociologists, and anthropologists (Braudel 1969; Burguière 2006). While this may have been a difficult and occasionally

abortive dialogue, it did signal that a space for interdisciplinary exchange remained open, at least to some extent.

The analysis of time proposed by Braudel in the *Mediterranean* takes on its fullest significance in light of this interdisciplinary dialogue: "whether one is dealing with the past or the present, a clear consciousness of the plurality of social time is indispensable to a methodology common to the human sciences" (Braudel 1958, 726). And who could not see in the privilege Braudel accorded to the *longue durée* in a famous 1958 text—the same year in which Claude Lévi-Strauss published his *Structural Anthropology*—anything but a preemptive response to the emergence of the structuralist wave? More conscious than anyone of a "general crisis in the human sciences," Braudel's talent, and that of the generation that followed him, lay in having sought out and indeed maintained an open and flexible system for the exchange of knowledge—even if this system remained fragile and in constant threat of dissolution. This was an essential characteristic of a new order which emerged towards the beginning of the 1960s. Following a period in which they had been kept in a somewhat marginal position for many decades, the social sciences were finally able to accede to the majority and claim their own full autonomy as disciplines. The problem was not specific to France, but it was perhaps more acute there than elsewhere due to the very particular character of the relationship between the social sciences and history throughout the twentieth century. The structuralist period, whose importance in France is a well known fact, can also be understood in terms of this desire for disciplinary emancipation. It too reminds us that working across disciplines, so constantly encouraged by *Annales*, is far from an easy task and that the relationship between disciplines is always an unstable one.

THE CRITICAL TURN

The 1970s probably brought *Annales* its period of greatest recognition, in France and even more so among historians internationally. In what only seems like a paradox, these years also saw a profound critical revision of the journal and its project. This paradox can be explained in a number of ways. The success of these years brought with it a certain inevitable banalization. What had for many years been the source of the journal's originality had increasingly become common currency. Social history in the larger sense was everywhere on the agenda, even if highly distinctive national styles persisted, for example, in the English journal *Past and Present* (from 1952 onwards) or later in Germany's *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* and Italy's *Quaderni Storici*. At a more general level, historiographic debate became a largely international affair in the final decades of the twentieth century. Ideas, books, journals, and scholars circulated more freely than ever before.

These external factors were accompanied by a number of internal ones. Did the proliferation of objects of historical enquiry not, after all, threaten to

culminate in a "fragmented history"? Or, as it was most severely formulated, "the crumbling of history" (Dosse 1987)? We have seen that for Bloch and Febvre, and later for Braudel, it was the unity of history which was paramount. Was such a conviction still tenable in the 1980s? And if every object of historical enquiry was in some sense important, was it possible to distinguish objects that were really important? The disadvantage of this diagnosis is that it confuses a number of very different considerations. First of all, it registers the inevitable consequences of necessary specialization. Historical demography provides a good example of this. In its early days, it was simply a way of enriching the general questionnaires of social history. After twenty years, however, historical demography had become a mostly autonomous subdiscipline. Second, the dynamic of research enquiry can be accompanied by a certain routinization. For Georges Duby, a medievalist and longtime associate of *Annales*, such routinization was both a source of concern and the inevitable price of success: "intellectual debate is, quite frankly, much less lively than it was thirty or forty years ago […]. Everything has now been conquered, the machine drones on, and interests are becoming more and more fragmented […]. Structuralist history can have a trivial aspect to it" (1991, 217).

Probably the most important factor was situated at a more general level, though its effects would certainly impact the practice of historians. The years 1970–1980 saw the calling into question of the majority of grand functionalist paradigms, which the social sciences had used to develop global models of understanding the social (paradigms such as Marxism, structural functionalism, structuralism, or indeed positivism, whose long persistence in French scientific ideology we have already mentioned). The very conception of society as a totality or system lost its explanatory force at a time when real societies—those in which we currently live—seemed to be more opaque, less assured of their coherence, and less confident in their future and in their present. These major integrationist paradigms had guaranteed that a convergence was possible, if only as a general tendency, between the methods and results of the different social sciences, just as it was between different research programs within history. This conviction could no longer be taken for granted, nor could the project of a unified history fully integrated in all its diverse aspects.

History was not alone in this regard. The problem was posed to the majority of the social disciplines during this period and it led them to reflect critically on themselves, on their ambitions, procedures, and conceptual instruments. This new period of upheaval was not limited to France. Indeed, in a large part of the academic world it sustained the discourse of postmodernism for thirty years. Yet in France, a country in which postmodernism had paradoxically played only a minor role in the social sciences and history (despite its frequent claims to be rooted in "French Theory"), this calling into question was experienced in an especially sensitive way, owing to an existing half-century of interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration. One

consequence of this questioning was that it prompted *Annales* to reflect on the very conditions of interdisciplinary dialogue. The "restrained practice of interdisciplinarity" advocated by Bernard Lepetit did not seek to break with a tradition which was, as we have seen, constitutive of the *Annales* movement from the very beginning. It sought instead to reformulate the terms of interdisciplinarity in taking account of a new situation. This was true as much for historical method as it was for objects of history.

Interdisciplinarity was no longer defined as "a movement of unification of the social sciences through the reduction of their differences, nor as the combination of diverse applied approaches" to a supposedly common object. It was seen as "a controlled process of reciprocal borrowings […] of concepts, problematics, and methods in order to produce new readings of social reality." The demand for renewal was key here: "how can we think otherwise? How can we escape the weight of accumulated traditions? Innovation is by no means forbidden but intellectual invention is less straightforward than it might seem. The practice of interdisciplinarity can ensure a critical distance from each particular mode of representing the real and can also save us, perhaps, from becoming imprisoned within any one single mode" (Lepetit 1999, 310–12). Interdisciplinarity thus supposed that one begins by recognizing the specificity of each procedure in the construction of social objects.

From the late 1970s onwards, there was an attempt to redefine the *Annales* project. This attempt was undertaken in large part by the fourth generation of *Annales* historians—accompanied by sociologists, anthropologists, and economists—and it continues today in the work of a younger generation. In 1994, the journal chose a significant new subtitle: *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales*. At a time when the ambitions of the social sciences were being questioned from all fronts, *Annales* situated itself against the current, laying claim to its own identity and heritage. However, the journal also set itself the task of rethinking the very terms of its project. A collective editorial in 1988 articulated the reasoning behind such a "critical turn," the goal of which was to take into account new uncertainties affecting the scientific field. At the same time, the editorial declared that "we do not yet feel that we have reached a crisis point in history, whose hypothesis some accept far too comfortably. On the contrary, we have the conviction of participating in a new order, one which is still vague but whose definition is essential if the historian is to continue to exercise his craft in the future" (*Les Annales* 1988, 291–93). A series of displacements were thus submitted to collective reflection.

The previous decades had been the most successful of the *Annales*'s existence. Research clusters had multiplied and new data had continued to be collected, all in the broad acceptance (if only an implicit acceptance) of the idea of social continuity. This continuity had guaranteed that the accumulation of studies and enquiries, often conducted within a monographic framework, would eventually produce a unified image of the entirety of the socio-historical world. This conviction was eventually weakened, however,

with *Annales* becoming more attentive to the differential effects of knowledge caused by the conditions and scales of observation—in other words, a discontinuist perspective. In the case of the scale of observation, whether it was a matter of micro-history or a global approach, or indeed any of the intermediate scales, it was not only the size of phenomena that changed but also their configuration and internal arrangement (Revel 1996).

At the same time, the definition of social identities and the mechanisms of social aggregation became the objects of renewed interrogation. In the program of social history which, through Labrousse and his numerous followers, flourished from the 1950s onwards, the identification of a social group was largely founded on the use of a documentary statistical base. Such a base facilitated the counting, distribution, and hierarchization of data. It also allowed the identity of a collective social entity to be taken as given. In recent years, this approach has become the object of intense critical revision. The construction of social groups was one of the privileged fields of debate between historians and sociologists. Many of them now privileged a processual perspective. They were more interested in the way these groups are made and make sense of themselves over time than they were in their sociographical description and measurement. It was probably not accidental that the work of authors like Norbert Elias or E. P. Thompson received a belated but thereafter sustained attention in historiographic reflection and debates in France. Where a functional division of the social space had been content to analyze distributions, today it no longer seems possible to ignore the way social relations are constituted, the explanations actors give to themselves in order to orient themselves and intervene in this space, the resources that are available to them, and the constraints under which they operate. A focus on *agency* can be discerned in numerous contemporary historiographic movements. In the case of *Annales*, such a focus has broken with a set of existing habits. On this point, the thinking of historians has confronted the work of sociologists and economists, who insist on the conventions by which social play is regulated and the positions of "actors" are constructed (Lepetit 1995).

The actor, then, is an emerging and central figure in research that is still ongoing. Not the actor in the traditional sense used by historiographers, the great man or the symbolic figure who supposedly makes or embodies history. *Annales*, and indeed social science history more generally, had always been suspicious of such a figure. This actor was replaced by a focus on powerful collective movements in which he or she was eclipsed by the power of number, by the play of structures and conjunctures under different regimes of temporality. According to this conception, social processes were seen as autonomous, whatever metaphorical model was used to express the dynamic and effectiveness attributed to them. A process without subjects, machines, devices, normative grammars, or structures allowed one to think a society that had no need of actors or action. Economic and social history, the history of mentalities, sociologies of domination and institutional critique,

and structural analysis all proposed lasting schemas of this type. Against such schemas, a pragmatic turn has recently been affirmed in history and the majority of the social sciences. Drawing on the research practices of the latter, this turn has facilitated a rediscovery of the role of actors. Doubtless the failure of regulatory and management institutions in our contemporary societies has played a determining role in this change of perspective since it suggests the existence of a discontinuous social world governed by discrete forms of rationality. The problem posed here, in other words, is not that of the freedom of subjects—a metaphysical problem to which historians are not expected to respond—but rather the part they play, based on a set of positions and relations, in the production of society.

In doing so, historians who recognize themselves today as part of the *Annales* project still feel faithful to the program laid out by Bloch and Febvre eighty-five years ago. In this *longue durée*, the relations between history and the other social sciences have been continually reshaped. The historiographic debate, meanwhile, has become an international affair. Clearly, the experience of *Annales* is less singular today than it was in the 1930s and in the 1960s. Five generations have succeeded each other, each one rich with its own set of ideas, interests and sensibilities—all of which have undergone continual renewal. Yet in the minds of those who continue it today, the *Annales* project remains resolutely attached to the founding program of the journal and movement: it aspires to preserve open and critical exchange with the other social sciences and their methods, borne by the conviction that history, the knowledge of the past, is written in the present.

ANNALES

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1929–1939	*Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*
1939–1941	*Annales d'histoire sociale*
1942–1944	*Mélanges d'histoire sociale*
1945	*Annales d'histoire sociale*
1946–1993	*Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*
1994–present	*Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*

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14 *Lignes*
Intellectual Circle or Intellectual Spacing?

Adrian May

The French *revue Lignes*, founded in 1987 and still publishing today, covers literature, philosophy, art, and politics. With a concern to preserve and develop the legacy of "French theory," it is a rarity in the contemporary French intellectual landscape that has largely rejected the post-structuralist and Marxist approaches of the 1960s. Recent *Lignes* contributors include Jean-Luc Nancy, Alain Badiou, Jacques Rancière, and Étienne Balibar, and their monograph collection features works by—or accounts of—Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Georges Bataille, Maurice Blanchot, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, Daniel Bensaïd, Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, and Henri Lefebvre, alongside more contemporary figures.[1] *Lignes* is, then, a champion and continuation of the broad school known as *la pensée 68*. It could also be seen as a successor to *Tel Quel*, with which *Lignes* shares some key literary predecessors (Bataille, Artaud, and Sade), thematic concerns (literary and social transgression, the relationship between art and revolutionary politics) and contributors (Jacqueline Risset and Bernard Sichère). However, as we shall see, there are some key intellectual and historical factors differentiating *Lignes* from *Tel Quel*. Furthermore, in editor Michel Surya's theorization of *Lignes*, there is an interesting tension between the *revue* form as an open format for thought, and the crystallization of the milieu into a more restricted circle: an oscillation between a *space* and a *position*. Some of the philosophical and political positions they adopt will be investigated below, followed by a brief account of the shifting nature of intellectual circles into the twenty-first century.

TEL QUEL, *LIGNES*, AND LITERATURE

The principal point of convergence with *Tel Quel* is a shared literary heritage. As Patrick ffrench has argued, it is largely due to *Tel Quel* that Artaud, Bataille, and Sade became theoretically important figures (ffrench 1995, 84), and *Lignes* often concerns itself with a comparable canon of early twentieth century writers, including Blanchot, Bataille, Artaud, Proust, Musil, Joyce, Kafka, Borges, Beckett, Celan, and Klossowski. Bataille, especially, was the biggest influence for two of *Lignes*' three original editors, Michel Surya and

Francis Marmande, both having done much to further Bataille scholarship over the last twenty-five years.[2] There is also some theoretical continuity between *Tel Quel* and *Lignes*. *Lignes* follows *Tel Quel* in pitting Bataille against André Breton's surrealism, seen as overly romanticized and idealistic (ffrench 1995, 25). Surya develops the *Tel Quel* emphasis on Bataille's *bas matérialisme*, critiquing Marx for rejecting the *lumpenproletariat* as degenerates incapable of revolutionary activity, and instead eulogizing the heterogeneous elements that society normally rejects as so much waste and rubbish (from prostitutes and the homeless to illegal immigrants—see Surya 2004). Artaud is similarly privileged as a thoroughly materialist and irrecuperable renegade by both *revues*. Paule Thévenin, editor of Artaud's *Œuvres completes*, closely collaborated with *Tel Quel*, and *Lignes* published her monograph on Artaud's fractured relationship with Breton and surrealism, *Antonin Artaud: Fin de l'ère chrétienne*. These readings of Bataille and Artaud also signal a wider trend for *Lignes'* contributors who generally privilege materialism over idealism, immanence over transcendence.

Lignes also shares a similar conception of writing as a sacrificial experience in which the subject is disseminated and dispersed across the literary space. Philippe Sollers's elaboration of *écriture corporelle*, in which "the body is sacrificed to writing," but also in which "the rhythm of pulsions across and through organs" affects the literary syntax and lexicon, is also close to the *Lignes* aesthetic (ffrench 1995, 95). They are, therefore, dismissive of conventionally narrative or genre fiction, and especially hostile to the *autofiction* which became prevalent in France from the 1980s. And just as Bataille placed literature on the side of evil and *Tel Quel* emphasized its subversive nature for political ends, for *Lignes* key themes for writing include madness, perversion, cruelty, and crime: an issue collating literary texts is entitled "Literatures of Cruelty" (*Lignes* 5, May 2001). Subsequently, just as *Tel Quel* defended Pierre Guyotat after the censorship of *Éden Éden Éden*, *Lignes* published his *Carnets du bord* (2005) and *Issê Timossê* (2000). Surya praises the deformation Guyotat enacts to make the French language more bodily and carnal, inventing neologisms to "thicken" his texts (Surya 2000, 46). Surya's own *récits*, such as *Exit* (1988) and *L'Impasse* (2010), eschew punctuation in favor of a flow of dense consonant sounds to similarly foreground bodily affectation.

There are two main factors distinguishing *Lignes* from *Tel Quel* on the literary front, however. Firstly, the psychoanalytical influence, found especially in the works of Julia Kristeva, is largely absent from *Lignes*. Secondly, while Maurice Blanchot was "the precursor [*Tel Quel*] would like to forget" (ffrench 1995, 28), *Lignes* is much more open to his literary heritage. Therefore they also embrace a range of 1960s and 1970s experimental literature in a more Blanchotian mode, in which *écrivains* searched for an entirely writerly subjectivity, yet which did not necessarily operate within the strict theoretical confines developed in *Tel Quel*. Blanchot's friend Roger Laporte is a key example, as he acknowledged being influenced by Sollers, but

distanced himself from *Tel Quel*'s textual materialism. For Laporte, writing preceded theory, whereas for *Tel Quel* writing was increasingly subjected to theoretical demands. In Laporte's writing there are no borders to transgress, just a continual subjective wandering [*errance*] through the space of literature. Surya's account of literature is situated somewhat between Bataille and Blanchot, exemplified in the issue *Literature and Thought* (38, May 2012). For Surya, thought [*la pensée*] is located between literature and philosophy, literature being able to think that which philosophy is ashamed off: lived experience. Thinking through the dense, ontological materiality of life, *la pensée* for Surya (2010b) should be similarly unconstrained, as if being dragged along by an unmasterable dog, impelling the writing subject to follow its instincts to new places. Though this kind of writing has been unpopular in France since the exhaustion of the period of formal experimentation in the 1970s, *Lignes* have continued to publish or draw attention to more recent writers from within this joint Bataillian and Blanchotian genealogy, such as Bernard Noël, Christian Prigent, Jean-Michel Reynard, Jacques Dupin, and Alain Hobé.

A SHIFT IN INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

Yet literature has a much smaller role in *Lignes* than *Tel Quel*. Surya regrets this, but also sees it as a sign of the times. He argues that *revues* become what their epoch makes of them, and that the emphasis on literature that he would like in *Lignes* is only practicable if "political principles upholding a basic and limitless freedom" are maintained: as the era of *Lignes*' creation is perceived as conservative and reactionary, they focus on political and social issues rather than aesthetics "by force of circumstances" (Surya 2007, 20–21). *Tel Quel* was formed in the early 1960s, with the "thirty glorious" postwar years still providing increasing prosperity and encouraging a booming cultural sector, and in which artistic practice and theory, returning to the avant-gardes of the 1920s and 1930s, tied formal experimentation to revolutionary desires. The different historical and intellectual conjuncture *Lignes* found itself in from 1987 is one reason for their more cautious approach to literature and politics.

1977–1978 were significant years in French intellectual culture, perhaps more so than 1968. The belated account of Soviet concentration camps in Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago* prompted a frenzied hysteria surrounding the word "totalitarianism." Fears of the growing popularity of the united front between the Parti Socialiste (PS) and the French Communist Party (PCF) led *revues* such as *Esprit* and *Commentaire* to exaggerate the threat that totalitarianism posed to French society to undermine their electoral chances. By the end of 1977 "a near-consensus" agreed that Marxist discourses led inevitably to totalitarianism (Christofferson 2004, 185). Furthermore, the commercialization of publishing aided the appearance of

the "new philosophers" in the mass media. The likes of André Glucksman, Alain Finkielkraut, and Bernard-Henri Lévy argued for a return to traditional moral and humanitarian values in response to what they saw as the nihilism and irresponsibility of the previous generation. They often presented themselves as former radicals repenting for their past follies, adding to the climate of intellectual repentance. Marxism and Structuralism were presented as intrinsically linked to an intellectual complicity with repressive Communist regimes, and therefore to be driven out of France.

In the 1980s, the dismantling of the radical left heralded a move away from progressive politics to a reactive defense of human rights, and more conservative-minded thinkers took center stage. Central to this reorientation was François Furet, and the new *revue Le Débat*. In its first issue, Pierre Nora argued that it was necessary to "destroy" the current crop of French intellectuals to prompt a "democratic revolution" (Nora 1980, 12). Subsequently, many of the intellectual old guard, such as Pierre Bourdieu, Derrida and Deleuze "didn't exist for *Le Débat*," as well as *Esprit* (Noiriel 2006, 125). Yet while Furet heralded the value of a less polemical, more consensual intellectual climate, critics argued that consensus "functions more as a regulatory idea for conservative thought," holding back creative experimentation (Gaillard 1998, 66). Compounding matters following the failure of their socialist policies, from 1982–1983 on the newly elected PS adopted a neo-liberal economic stance and began a rapid professionalization, cutting itself off from its activist base. Didier Eribon has described the subsequent "conservative revolution" within the PS, an "intellectual, political and even existential" lurch toward the right (Eribon 2007, 19).

These, then, are some of the reasons for the passivity, disorientation and disorganization of the 1980s. With the radical left discredited, *Débat* editors Nora and Marcel Gauchet encouraged Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut to take on Heideggarian "anti-humanism" to complete the overturning of the poststructuralist legacy. Their *La Pensée 68* took on Foucault and Derrida, calling them obscurantist anti-democrats at prey to a reactionary neoconservatism, and after the Heidegger affair in 1987 they renewed their attack with *Heidegger et les modernes*. Intellectual fascism was suspected everywhere, and the spotlight began to be cast on other thinkers in this lineage who held dubious political commitments in the 1930s, especially Bataille and Blanchot. It is this moment, which Surya characterizes as "penitent and puritanical," into which *Lignes* was born and orientated "against"; as such, rather than politically and theoretically ambitious, they would "more often than not be defensive" (2007, 13, 26).

Initially, *Lignes* attempted to be nonpartisan. In early issues, for example, Derrida was criticized for his apologetic response to the Heidegger affair, and also for his aggression toward Jürgen Habermas and John Searle; their willingness to critique those close to their own intellectual positions demonstrated a concern to not be overtly dogmatic in their defense of poststructuralism (see Dobbels 1998, Rochlitz 1990). Yet they were soon attacked

by *Esprit* for their Bataillian heritage, closing ranks with a defensive stance in response.[3] A further moment of crystallization occurred after *Le Débat*'s dossier "What to do with the International College of Philosophy?" (see *Le Débat* 98, January–February 1998).

The College, set up by Derrida, François Châtelet, Jean-Pierre Faye and Dominique Lecourt, is attacked for being an opaque and nepotistic institution that diverts funds away from other higher education institutions. Yet the principal motivation for their critique is the kinds of philosophy privileged by the College. Though funded by the French State, it was created in the 1980s as an independent institution, teaching any strands of philosophy they considered marginalized from the French academy; yet deconstruction was subsequently seen by some as having a too heavy presence.[4] *Le Débat*, and principally Alain Renaut, again used this as an opportunity to attack "French theory." While some attempted to diffuse the debate over the College, for others battle lines were clearly drawn, and the *Lignes* dossier in issue 35 (October 1998), with contributions from College members such as Derrida, Françoise Proust and Michel Deguy, places them squarely in defense of this institution and its broader intellectual genealogy. As Bourdieu argued, for *Lignes* the delegitimation of *la pensée 68* was "as dangerous as the destruction of public services" (Bourdieu 1992, 43). In defense of their own partisan stance, Proust reminds readers that, thanks to their political and media contacts, *Le Débat* was itself "a particularly powerful institution," one geared toward the destruction of *la pensée 68* (Proust 1998, 107). In the face of this assault, *Lignes* consolidated its position in defense, and was much more wary of publishing critical articles of privileged thinkers as a result.

TRANSGRESSION AND POLITICS

It is important to note how different historical conjunctures can impact the formation of intellectual circles. The postwar years of economic growth, and the widely shared belief in the value of a welfare state with progressive social policies, also fostered a climate in which theoretical and artistic creation could conceivably have a strong political role. Since the 1980s, the prevailing neo-liberal orthodoxy in Western democracies favors the withdrawal of the state and the liberation of market forces, and avant-garde activity has become a marketable commodity; subcultures are encouraged to produce new, marketable identities to boost productivity, blunting their critical edge. The French context has also shifted dramatically: while throughout the twentieth century it was largely assumed that intellectuals were intrinsically leftist, a *Nouvel Observateur* cover (February 15–21, 2007) provocatively asked whether today they belong to the right. In *Lignes*, then, the confident conflation of theory, aesthetics and politics of the 1960s has given way, with instead a focus on clarity and acuteness in the description of contemporary issues to re-orientate a toothless left. While the "French theory" generation

is still influential, their analyses are turned toward the sociopolitical rather than the textual-philosophic. While for Surya there is still an intrinsic relationship between literature and philosophy, in *Lignes* the two remain generally separate. Instead of the theoretical terrorism found in *Tel Quel*, texts in *Lignes* are often much more sober and restrained, indulging less in lexical play and the invention of neologisms.

Yet there are also theoretical departures from *Tel Quel* that prompted this more reserved stance. It was the growing confidence in the efficacy of transgressive cultural production that led to *Tel Quel*'s vanguardism. While initially a fairly austere publication interested in high literature and the *nouveau roman*, as Sollers began to exert a greater influence on *Tel Quel* its interest in the subversive potential of literature grew. Their reading of Bataille was at first relatively moderate: Bataille refused to give literature a political function, as the sovereign activity of writing should be unrestrained by servile commitments to other principles. Yet after May 1968, entering its Maoist phase *Tel Quel* became convinced that literature could in fact bring about a cultural revolution. Transgression was placed into a positive dialectical articulation, a politicization of Bataille renounced by Blanchot and Foucault, which alienated collaborators such as Derrida. Yet as the revolutionary *élan* faded into the mid-1970s, their dogmatic Maoist stance quickly dated and began to appear naively utopian. Around 1977, Sollers abandoned collective action and joined the "new philosophers," taking a more pro-American, liberal-conservative stance.

Learning from the *Tel Quel* experience, *Lignes* mined an alternative genealogy through the 1950s and 1960s. They published three important dossiers retracing the political mobilizations of Bataille's friends, Blanchot, Robert Antelme, and Dionys Mascolo.[5] This trajectory runs from Antelme's account of his time in Nazi concentration camps, Mascolo's *Le Communisme* (1953) and his anti-colonial organizations, which culminated in the famous "Manifesto of the 121," through to Blanchot's abortive international journal and participation in May 1968. This group articulated a new form of political mobilization based on an open, nonexclusive and nonidentitarian community, influencing Derrida's later political texts, especially *Specters of Marx*, and also Jean-Luc Nancy (Crowley 2004, 117). Furthermore, they were acutely aware of the problematic tensions with *Tel Quel*'s attempts to dialecticize transgression. In a letter to Maurice Nadeau, Mascolo complains of the "exploitation" of Bataille and Artaud in "certain intellectual circles" since May 1968 (Mascolo 1998, 194). For Mascolo, a culturally revolutionary act is impossible; the revolution will instead come from outside of culture, politically, retrospectively giving culture a new, revolutionary sense. Blanchot also critiqued *Tel Quel*'s mobilization of literature for political ends, writing that the "poetic revolution" remains "only within the order of literature" (Halsberghe 2006, 35). For both, then, literature could not be placed in the service of a revolution.

By republishing Foucault's prescient warning regarding *Tel Quel*'s project, "Preface à la transgression," *Lignes* also repudiated attempts to politicize Bataille. Indeed, by the issue *New Readings of Georges Bataille (Lignes* 17, May 2005), the influence of Jean-Luc Nancy provides an even more restrained reading of transgression. Several articles, referring to Nancy and Foucault, argue against the *Tel Quelian* flouting of conventions to describe Bataille's transgression as "ontological," a conception of "being" as always in excess of itself, locating its borders only in exteriority, in contact with others (Capéran 2005, 88). This, then, is a more intimate and personal, rather than political, conception of transgression. In a similar vein, Surya's most elaborated account of political art is found in his discussion of Bernard Noël in *Le Polième*. For Noël, literature can have an infrapolitical role in that it combats the degradation of language in contemporary society, imposed by political and media *sensure* ('sensorship'). In a subtle distinction, Surya contrasts Rimbaud, for whom it is *life* that should be *changed*, with Marx, for whom the *world* needs *transformation*, to place Noël and himself under Rimbaud's auspices (2011, 64): art is only effective on a restricted, personal level. Such intimate life changes could tangentially produce subjectivities more amenable to revolutionary action, but the link is fragile and difficult to programmatically activate. This theoretical trajectory, coupled with the reactionary political climate and a historical conjuncture in which avant-garde activity seemed impractical, produced the more sober rapport between aesthetics and politics we found in *Lignes*.

INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES OR SPACING?

After the collapse of their revolutionary project in the mid-1970s, *Tel Quel* joined the "new philosophers" in celebrating dissidence as a more ethical position, one that refused to espouse positive programs, but contested human rights abuses and repressively authoritarian regimes. Yet this generation of French intellectuals would often tend to accept a liberal-democratic framework as an unsurpassable political form, and too simplistically opposed this to "totalitarianism." This framework left many French thinkers theoretically and politically unprepared to deal with the post-Soviet world that would emerge at the end of the following decade, especially the Balkans war. As several *Lignes* issues highlight, after Eastern-European dictatorships fell in the early 1990s, fellow dissidents realized they had little political common ground except for their now-defunct oppositional stance, and therefore had difficulty providing a united program to combat the rising nationalism and ethnic conflicts that resulted.[6] *Lignes*, then, attempted to foster a theoretically more sophisticated response to the political challenges posed by the last decades of the twentieth century.

Their stance did share similarities with Sollers's new position, in which dissidence came to imply "the rejection of the very idea of a project and of

the idea of a collective group called *Tel Quel*" (ffrench 1995, 235). Similarly, rather than a defined ideological program, many in *Lignes* would agree that henceforth political action needed to be provisional, uncertain, and conjunctural. The delegitimation of revolutionary politics, a new ethical idiom emphasizing nonexclusivity and an embrace of alterity, the failure of left-wing avant-gardes, and the more reactionary political climate convinced Surya that "the time in which engagement would require solitary individuals to dissolve into a group has passed" (2010a, 79). A form of effective political contestation divorced from ideologically motivated collectives was sought. One model, influenced by the 1960s movements of Blanchot, Antelme, and Mascolo, was developed in the 1980s by Jean-Luc Nancy, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, and Jean-Christophe Bailly, in works such as *La Communauté Désœuvrée*. For Nancy, all strictly defined political grounds and positions are arbitrary and exclusionary, tending toward the dangers of totalitarianism. Yet such a grounding is also unavoidable, and the basis of all contemporary nation states. What is called for, then, is a constant *praxis* to destabilize and question dominant narratives, reminding one that every restricted community is unjustifiably founded and that, as ontologically imbricated, finite beings, we all share an equal right to existence and recognition. As opposed to the conception of dissidence proffered by the "new philosophers," contesting violent abuses of power but leaving liberal parliamentary politics unquestioned, Nancy encourages a constant probing of the injustices and exclusions undertaken by Western democracies.

Influenced by Nancy, *Lignes* attempted to develop a politics removed from ideas of the nation as identity or project, proffering instead an open, nonidentitarian, global community based on coappearance and the *partage* (sharing, but also division) of space. Against a politically blocked era dominated by neo-liberalism, Surya wanted *Lignes* not to be a *new movement*, but to produce new possibilities *of* movement, new lines of thought and theory (2007, 10). Subsequently, Surya emphasizes that *Lignes* is not a community, even in Bataille's sense of a community of those without community. He stresses the absence of a definite project for *Lignes*, the first edition being published without any overt declarations, manifestos, or even an editorial. Rather than a group, Surya calls *Lignes* a "place" or "space," preferring the abstract neutrality of the latter as the former implies a concrete positioning (11). Drawing on Nancy, we could imagine the *revue* as a form of communal spacing and co-appearance (*comparution*): writers present their thoughts together, side by side on the page, touching at their articles' borders without fusing into a common voice. The name itself, *Lignes*, implies an attempt "to trace a gesture in space, a movement, a line" avoiding restrictively closed identities and keeping the possibilities of movement open (10).

However, creating a *revue* implies a desire for more communality than books themselves provide, and collaboration is more conducive to creating the kinds of movement Surya espouses. As well as the "irreducibly singular, individualist" mode of solitary thinking, a *revue* inevitably has "a

collective, even collectivist character," Surya concluding "it is alone that we think together" (2010a, 78). There is a tension, then, between this resistance to group formation, and the drive toward a form that supports communal intellectual developments. Surya also admits that contemporary political circumstances force *Lignes* into trenchant positions, this oscillation between *space* and *position* being a constant throughout the *revue*'s existence.

This anti-identitarian impulse developed into what Christophe Bident describes as an "ethic of impurity," aiming to "fight all forms of sclerotic identities" (1995, 107–08). Issue 24 (February 1995) was thus entitled *L'impur/L'impropre*, "improper" here designating nonproprietary rather than unacceptable behavior. With essentialist qualities having been deconstructed, what remains are hybrid identities over which no one can claim ownership, and which invalidate notions of authenticity or purity. The attempt to produce and defend concrete identities, be they national, racial, religious, sexual, or cultural, is subsequently seen not only as intellectually regressive and ontologically impossible, but politically dangerous, as demonstrated by totalitarianism and fundamentalism. As noted, however, such deconstructive approaches faced resistance in France in the 1980s: in an important passage, Nancy highlights the malaise that prompted the "new philosophers" to reject deconstruction, as they saw it as frustrating our ability to identify things, desiring instead a return to definite, unitary subjects. For Nancy this is a misunderstanding, and it is the principle of infinite differentiation and relationality that rends identity possible: "Our identity, it is us, and 'us' designates [...] an identity necessarily shared and divided, in us and between us" (1986, 98–99). Developing his conception of *being-singular-plural*, Nancy contends that "we are the plural that does not multiply the singular" (101). Identity is composite, fluid and complex, yet these porous borders and shared origins still resist collapsing into an undifferentiated morass. Identity, then, is *impure* because multiple, and *improper* because shared. This impure ontology is embraced by many *Lignes* contributors, and Étienne Balibar represents its politicized counterpart. For Balibar, citizenship should no longer be based on national and racial identities, but instead on active participation within a given political framework: on actions, rather than eternal, essentialised qualities. Balibar, then, is one of the key thinkers for the loosening of border controls, and a fluid, transnational political participation championed by *Lignes*.

Yet Surya maps this discourse more concretely onto the contemporary French context, with the rise of the National Front re-activating discourses of national purity and the *proper*. Surya makes this an explicitly political cleavage: "The right thinks (and this is what makes them 'right'), that we belong to—and identify with—our origins," whereas those on the left "belong to a movement that wants to abandon them" (1998, 10). This is an explicitly anti-nationalist and anti-identitarian left, yet still designates what sounds like an exclusive group of "the left." This is a politicization of the *improper* that runs counter to Nancy's intentions: dividing a population

into an "us" and "them" is the kind of identification Nancy tries to avoid, even if, here, the left is characterized as wanting to abandon this identity. This could be read as a straightforward betrayal of Nancy's thought; yet as Nancy's idealization of a global community without divisive identity formations seems impossible in real political terms, Surya's vulgarization of his position could also be read as a strategic mobilization of the movement toward such a community, well aware of its own residual impossibility. Such a strategic vulgarization of his own desire for his *revue* not to occupy "positions" could also be argued as a necessary response to what *Lignes* perceives as a progressively worsening situation, as French politics drifted toward the right; yet it is perhaps also an inevitable result of editing a *revue* in which tacit circles of readers and writers tend to form over time. *Revues* produce affective ties and so the repetitive adherence of contributors, through which the coagulation into a loosely formed group seems unavoidable.

Perhaps one of the most frustrating aspects of this embrace of deconstructed subjectivity is the consequential rejection of identity politics by many in *Lignes*, something they share with the Republican right. For example, in the *L'Explication* (2010), Alain Badiou and Alain Finkielkraut disagree about everything *except* that under a universal Republican framework identity politics are undesirable because they inevitably lead to divisive communitarianism. However, this leads *Lignes* to ignore important political and social issues: for example, there is no mention of the Parity laws instituted in 2000, or of the inauguration of homosexual civil partnerships as "Pacs," gender and sexuality issues barely registering in the *revue*. This seems particularly strange, as the post-structuralist legacy defended in *Lignes* did much to influence minoritarian politics in Anglophone communities. Yet, for example, Queer Theory and Postcolonial/Subaltern studies, and works by thinkers such as Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, have had difficulty finding an audience in France. This trend has changed somewhat in recent years, but *Lignes* has done little to foster this, and Jean-Loup Amselle, in particular, questions whether the return of an anglicized "French theory" "is really a good thing for the renewal of intellectual debate" (2007, 179). Amselle takes particular issue with Spivak's conception of "strategic essentialism" in which, despite a general suspicion of identity categories, in certain instances Spivak argues that it is useful to inhabit them to combat specific forms of inequality. This strategic approach seems comparable to Surya's, and subsequently that a more nuanced debate on identity politics is rarely forthcoming in the *revue* can frustrate those readers more amenable to its value.

POLITICAL POSITIONS: TOWARD THE RADICAL LEFT

Although broadly situated on the left, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, *Lignes* again attempted to eschew a defined political position. Of the

initial three editors, Surya and Marmande seemed skeptical of François Mitterrand's presidency, while Daniel Dobbels was more sympathetic, and early issues also included interviews with Mitterrand's advisor, Régis Debray. The disorientation and disenchantment of the 1990s was reflected in issue titles such as "The Ruined Left" (*Lignes* 5, February 1989), "Capitulation?" (*Lignes* 8, December 1989), and "An Other Left" (*Lignes* 14, June 1991). Rather than progressive measures, they were defensively concerned with the rise of the extreme-right, critiquing neo-racist discourses and challenging anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial. Yet *Lignes*' increasingly critical regard of the electoral left accelerated during the wave of social movements between 1995 and 1998. As Alec Hargreaves argues, during the 1980s immigration was the only issue in which the left and the right were seen to "be divided by major differences"; yet by the end of the 1990s, the large degree of policy continuity demonstrated that the PS and RPR were equally tightening immigration controls. This policy divide, then, was "more apparent than real" (Hargreaves 2007, 176). Conceiving of citizenship as based on participation rather than nationality, *Lignes* opposed governmental immigration policy. Yet their position crystallized as much by defections than by positive enunciations on their part, as increasing numbers of intellectuals came to support the government as the 1990s progressed. Pierre-André Taguieff, Régis Debray, and Sami Naïr, all close to *Lignes* before rallying to conservative stances on immigration and national identity, are symptomatic examples. Taguieff had been instrumental for his "path-breaking analysis" of neo-racist discourses, which abandoned racial purity to argue in favor of "cultural difference and cultural essentialism" (Silverman 1999, 40–44): however, in his *Sur la nouvelle droite* (1994), Taguieff seemed more intent on attacking the militant, pro-immigration left, producing an empathetic account of the "New Right." The former Socialist, Debray, formed his "National Republican" movement in response to the perceived threat posed by Islam to national identity, a discourse criticized in *Lignes* for explicitly blaming immigrant communities for anti-social behavior and violent crime (see Debray 1998). Lastly, Sami Naïr was one of the most vociferous opponents of immigration policy and argued that cooperation with the government was a form of intellectual domestication: yet following his appointment as an advisor to Jean-Pierre Chevènement in 1997 he became a PS spokesperson, explaining that his new role was to depoliticize the debate and forge a political and intellectual consensus (1998, 159).

Lignes' fate, then, is also that of Éric Fassin, who considered himself center-left but is now labelled an *ultra-gauchiste*: according to him, "it is the intellectual terrain that has changed (not me!) by carrying itself ceaselessly to the right" (2013, 53). Despite Surya's own aversion to collective action, by the end of the 1990s *Lignes* fully supported the social movements and, alongside more activist-orientated *revues* such as *Multitudes* and *Contre-temps*, they "increasingly acted as a 'political avant-garde' constructing new analytical categories and a framework for leftist opposition"

(Waters 2012, 94). The shifting French political and intellectual contexts forced the *revue* to choose sides and close ranks.

This more active political stance is consolidated in *Lignes*' second series (launched in 2000). Shortly after the turn of the millennium, Dobbels and Marmande left *Lignes* and Surya re-assembled a much larger, more militant board.[7] Alain Brossat was the most active new member, bringing with him new contributors from the more radically political university, Paris VIII. Along with Daniel Bensaïd, Brossat was a former member of the Trotskyist "Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire" (LCR), demonstrating a more militant influence on the *revue*. This series is also marked by the participation of Jacques Rancière and Alain Badiou, the latter publishing seven volumes of his *Circonstances* series in the collection *Lignes*, including the hugely successful *The Meaning of Sarkozy* (2007) and *The Communist Hypothesis* (2009). While Jean-Luc Nancy, and other Blanchotians and Bataillians, remained in the *Lignes* milieu, the years leading up to the 2007 financial crisis are marked by these more activist, dogmatic thinkers.

For Badiou and Rancière, politics happens explicitly outside of the parliamentary state. In Badiou's mathematical ontology, elaborated in *Being and Event*, nothing new ever emanates from the given State of a situation, this "State" being both the general, received conception of the world as-is, *and* the political State governing this sensible distribution. The political State is thus ontologically incapable of bringing about profound change, which can only happen via an eruptive and unexpected Event. For Rancière, the ruling order is the "police," concerned with regulating the domain of what is known; politics occurs when a hitherto unknown group demands recognition, and imposes a radical redistribution of the sensible to accommodate them into the social fabric. While these theories share much, they have slightly different emphases: for Badiou, small, elite groups of activists enact the radical changes demanded by an Event, the rest of the population remaining largely irrelevant; whereas, for Rancière, Democracy is "disruptive and exceptional," and the focus is on the "activist role of ordinary people" demanding recognition (Hewlett 2007, 47, 108). Nevertheless, in the face of growing disenchantment with parliamentary politics, the PS having abandoned its roots in the social, activist left, these theories provide the impetus for subjects to enact change themselves, rather than relying on the electoral process.

As we have seen, in Nancy's conception philosophy should abstain from dogmatic positions, and instead asks fundamental questions such as "what is 'capital'? what is a 'world'? what is a 'people'?" and so on (2003, 8). By contrast, Badiou and Rancière operate through radical simplifications of the situation to produce political prescriptions, not only describing but inaugurating a more egalitarian society. Instead of defensive actions, such as protesting against racism, what matters for Badiou is an affirmation of precise and rigorous political goals, such as the regularization of all illegal immigrants. This is what is meant by an egalitarian prescription: finding a

precise enunciation within a given situation that not only demands justice, but goes some way toward instituting it. These prescriptions are targeted and specific, contextually based with concrete goals. Like a mathematician trying to isolate different aspects of a problem step by step, for Badiou an axiomatic, prescriptive approach simplifies the state of affairs to allow concentration on the issue at hand, forcing a practical and effective solution. Compared to the more hermeneutic approaches of those following in the wake of deconstruction, in which the emphasis is on infinite plurality and avoiding the closure of signification, Badiou's axiomatic tendency revels in binary oppositions, right and wrong, and subsequently provides the grounds for more stridently militant pronunciations: you are either for or against Liberal Democracy, anti-imperialist or neocolonial, in favor of a borderless globe or a nationalist.

These simplifications are compelling. The publication of the *Circonstances* series propelled Badiou to fame in France and abroad, and alongside Slavoj Žižek his "communist hypothesis" led to three international conferences on the *Idea of Communism* (2010). However, within *Lignes* political strategies that sidestep the electoral sphere are not universally accepted. Daniel Bensaïd was one key opponent, critiquing Badiou for his "mystical celebration" of the event that, miraculously appearing from nowhere, forecloses the possibility of proactive political strategizing (2001, 221). In his stubborn resistance to consider electoral politics as a viable battleground, Bensaïd calls Badiou misanthropically disenchanted. For Bensaïd, a political party is needed to give ephemeral, social movements the chance of long-term representation, and his conversion of the LCR into the "Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste" aimed to convert the momentum of the social movements into electoral gains. Bensaïd affirmed that at certain historical conjunctures the nation state has, and can be again, an efficient motor for progressive, egalitarian changes.

In the *Lignes* milieu, opinions are split over the use-value of electoral politics. In the inquest "Not 'who to vote for' but 'why vote'?"(*Lignes* 37, February 2012), about half of the contributors defended the electoral process (even if just to avoid a change for the worse), the other half sticking more closely to the Sartrean description of elections as a "trap for fools." Still, these debates signal that, in contrast to the 1980s when intellectual activity was geared toward consensual politics and governmental participation, recent years have seen a return to a more conflictual and overtly critical stance, especially since the financial crisis. And although *Lignes* remains a plural platform, with Badiou especially dividing opinion, since the "winter years" gave way to a rise of social movements and the financial crisis the newly politicized climate has seen a less cautious embrace of militant, progressive theories and approaches: with doubt remaining as to the stability and sustainability of current economic and political frameworks, the taking of a strongly oppositional position is again seen as a legitimate, even necessary response.

INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

To conclude, as one of the few circles in this volume still active, it seems important to note how the means of production and financial support of a *revue* like *Lignes* has shifted in recent years, and how this has gradually affected its content. *Lignes* has appeared with four publishers over twenty-five years. Originally with Éditions de la Libraire Séguier, in 1991 they moved to Éditions Hazan. However, the purchase of Hazan by the Hachette group in 1999 created a mutual incompatibility between Surya's marginal *revue* and the corporate giant. Respite came from Léo Scheer, a philanthropic figure who bankrolled significant yet marginal works of literature and philosophy, before abandoning many thinkers and publications to focus on more marketable books around 2007. Following Scheer's withdrawal, with a lack of viable alternatives *Lignes* became a self-publishing endeavor, attempting to survive from subscriptions and sales. Yet French institutional support has been important for maintaining a healthy *revue* culture. *Lignes* has always received financing from the "Centre national du livre," and after 2007 additional help came from the "Conseil régional d'Ile de France": Surya admits that, left to the whims of the market, *Lignes* would not survive. They also turned to the intellectual community for help, creating the association "Amis de Lignes," essentially a call for financial donations. This move gestures toward alternative methods of funding, such as crowd-sourcing websites, which may have an increased importance in the future of intellectual publishing, especially if public funding becomes more restricted.

A greater internet and social media presence may also become key for the survival of intellectual schools and circles. *Lignes* is not an ideal example, Surya seeming reticent to rely on email distribution. Yet the *Lignes* website is well maintained, and since June 2012 they have opened a Facebook page, something comparable *revues* such as *Le Débat* and *Les Temps modernes* have yet to do. However, the impact of this foray seems minimal: the *Éditions Lignes* Facebook page has only 172 "likes" at the time of writing, compared to *Revue Esprit's* 2,205, and *Contretemps*' 4,876 "friends," symptomatic of an older generation of intellectuals' mistrust of social media.[8] Bensaïd's *Contretemps* was set up as a bridge between activist networks and academia, and militant milieus presumably have a stronger social media presence than more traditional intellectual figures. Perhaps unsurprisingly, though, it is the media-savvy "new philosopher" Bernard-Henri Lévy who has led the way, his *La Regle du jeu* having amassed over 25,500 "likes." It was Lévy's brand of media and sales friendly philosophical marketing that *Lignes* initially reacted against, Surya trumpeting *Lignes*' "aristocratic" withdrawal from the mass media as a sign of intellectual rigour (2007, 43). That they now have a social media presence is perhaps a symptom of the financial pressures they have been placed under, and a signal that increasing participation in such networks could become necessary. As the first series of *Lignes* is out of print, work is also underway to digitize it, making it freely

available online, another excellent practice in step with the academic drive toward open access repository storage on institutional websites.

There has also been a slight but noticeable professionalization of tone and content in the *revue*, potentially due to an aim to accommodate a more academic audience for financial stability. While the first series carried some polemical pieces aimed at other French intellectual circles, the more international emphasis in the second series dampens such Franco-centered infighting. This drive to attract international contributors, as well as to cover significant global affairs, is another factor that differentiates *Lignes* from *Tel Quel*, which was "a specifically French, Parisian phenomenon" (ffrench 1995, 44). Symptomatic is the manner in which Bataille is discussed in the first and second series, respectively. In the first series, especially the round table discussion between Surya, Marmande, and Dobbels, they are concerned to possessively defend Bataille's legacy from the moralistic assaults mobilized by *Esprit*, a largely French debate with little international relevance. By issue 17 in the new series, "New Readings of Georges Bataille," academic contributors are sourced from England, Italy and Bulgaria to give different accounts of this thinker: articles are less polemical, politics is hardly mentioned, and instead they focus on minor areas of Bataille's work of contemporary academic interest.

A corollary to the professionalization of tone is the increased use of special issues devoted to a certain thinker or theme. These have been a frequent recourse of *revues* for years to boost sales: for example, in the 1960s special issue of *Critique* could see sales rise from 1,000 to 4,000, 10,000 for the Foucault issue (Patron 2000, 140). This model has become increasingly frequent; one could argue that all *Lignes* issues since its inception have been thematically focused. However, in the first series issues could be made up of two or three thematic dossiers, with separate pieces covering current French events as well as book reviews. Since the millennium, the reviews have vanished, issues revolve around one key issue or thinker only, and regional French affairs are rarely mentioned unless they have international or theoretical significance. Not only do such issues tend to be more attractive to purchase in the present, they have future academic value; researchers wishing to examine a particular theme may retrospectively wish to buy these focused and targeted collections. Special issues also draw together small, temporary schools or circles of thinkers otherwise not present in the *revue*; specialists in a given field, filmmakers, psychoanalysts, or political actors actively engaged in various struggles often contribute, drawing in writers who previously had no link to *Lignes*. Within the wider, regular milieu of contributors, then, smaller, more academic or socially engaged circles periodically appear, to disperse with the next issue. Issues assembled by editors who are specialists in their subject and not regular members of the *Lignes* board have also become increasingly frequent in the second series. However, often the concerns raised by these special issues resonate and continue to be discussed and theorized in other ways by more regular thinkers, and

occasional collaborators return to become imbedded within the *Lignes* fold. This is both an excellent way to provide focused and attractive special issues, but also to keep the *Lignes* circle open, drawing in new participants with valuable, alternative insights to keep the movements of thought in action.

This chapter has, then, hopefully introduced the largely unrecognized work of the *revue Lignes*, but also demonstrated how historical, political, intellectual and financial contexts can affect the creation and orientation of schools and circles. The current dominance of large commercial publishing concerns places small, radical *revues* in an increasingly difficult situation, one in which institutional support is often necessary (unless alternate, perhaps crowd-sourced modes of funding become available). *Lignes* has moved closer to academic circles in tone and content, another acknowledgment that this may be a necessary audience for future stability. However, remaining relatively independent of large corporate backers has meant that their at times radical political positions have been unaffected by financial pressures.

Historically, however, the late 1980s was not a time conducive to the kinds of theoretical and aesthetic vanguardism available to *Tel Quel* in the 1960s. Instead, *Lignes* mined comparable yet alternative intellectual genealogies to produce a more guarded relationship between art and politics, focusing on acute sociopolitical analysis rather than ludic or revolutionary theoretical extravagance. Although resistant to the reactionary and conservative political climate of the 1980s, *Lignes* was still marked by the anti-totalitarian backlash of the 1970s, and attempted to eschew the dogmatic, collective projects denounced within this historical conjuncture. Yet over their history, from the waves of social movements in France to the questions raised by the recent financial crisis, a repoliticization of intellectual debate has gradually occurred, one welcomed by *Lignes* that became somewhat more comfortable with proactive, militantly orientated positions. Yet this remains a difficult articulation: reliance on institutions seems to be increasing, but academia is also becoming a more professional concern, training students more for the job market than for the pure pursuit of intellectual activity. The space for such radically political intellectual schools and circles may, then, be becoming increasingly restricted, at a juncture where the thought produced by such schools may be at its most relevant.

NOTES

1. See www.editions-lignes.com for a list of publications in the collection *Lignes*. NB: All translations from French are my own.
2. Amongst other works, Michel Surya wrote the award winning biography *Georges Bataille, la mort à l'œuvre* (Paris: Gallimard 1992), and Francis Marmande produced the first French doctoral thesis on Bataille, *Georges Bataille politique* (Lyon: Presses universitaires de Lyon, 1985). *Lignes* has also published seven volumes of works by Bataille, most importantly *La Souveraineté* (Fécamp:

Nouvelles Éditions Lignes, 2012), the third volume of *La Part Maudite* that had never previously appeared as an independent publication.

3. See Olivier Mongin, "Poujadisme intellectuel?" in *Esprit* 164 (September 1990) 91–102 for an example, and *Lignes* 14 (June 1991) for several articles in response.
4. For more on the context and aims of the College see Châtelet et al, *Le rapport bleu* (1998), and for an internal review of its success twenty years on see *Rue Descartes* number 45–46 (2004).
5. See *Lignes* 11 (September 1990), 21 (January 1994), and 33 (March 1998). The Blanchot and Antelme dossiers are translated in Maurice Blanchot, *Political Writings, 1953–1993*, translated by Zakir Paul (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010); and Daniel Dobbels (ed.), *On Robert Antelme's 'The Human Race': Essays and Commentary* translated by Jeffrey Haight (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003).
6. See *Lignes* 10 (June 1990) entitled *Europe centrale: nations, nationalités, nationalismes* and *Lignes* 20 (September 1993) *Yougoslavie: penser dans la crise*.
7. Members of the board during the second series include: Alain Brossat, Medhi Belhaj-Kacem, Jean-Paul Curnier, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacqueline Risset, Bernard Noël, Enzo Traverso, Jean-Paul Dollé, Jacob Rogozinski, Daniel Wilhelm, Georges Didi-Huberman, Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison, Véronique Bergen, Jean-Loup Amselle, Martin Crowley, Boyan Manchev, and Marc Nichanian.
8. See *Éditions Lignes*, https://www.facebook.com/pages/Éditions-Lignes/335225593224036.

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