

NOTES AND DISCUSSION

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STRUCTURALISM AND SEMIOTICS IN THE USSR

I. LITERATURE

In the Soviet Union, structural research has had certain distinctive features. Structural research, not only in language, but in literature and art too, is deeply rooted in Russian science. Quite apart from such distant forerunners as the Kharkov philologist Potebnia, one cannot forget the great group of philologists of the twenties, who dealt with questions of poetics, and whom contemporary criticism to a greater or lesser extent identifies with "formalism." Soviet literary criticism of the twenties is well-known throughout the world; it has many times been discussed, from various points of view, in the press, and there is no need to dwell on its characteristic features. We need only emphasize the variety of theoretical standpoints that marked the Soviet philologists of the twenties and the differences between their subjective views, and also the fact that there are differences of principle that divide the majority of these workers from the

Translated by Nicolas Slater.

“structuralism” of the fifties. Let us bear in mind that in the twenties V. M. Zhirmunsky and V. V. Vinogradov (who are usually numbered among the “formalists”) were in fact in dispute with the real members of *Opoyaz** (and subsequently adopted a reserved attitude towards structuralism as well). M. M. Bakhtin, who in his brilliant works has given a complete analysis of the complex semantic structure of great literary works, does in fact make use of the concept of a world image, and has a fine understanding of the “play” of oppositions at different levels, etc. His influence on structuralist research in modern literary criticism is undeniable; but he can certainly not be numbered among the “formalists” of the twenties, whom he vigorously opposed. It is noteworthy that even today both the structuralists and certain of their direct adversaries invoke the authority of Bakhtin.

V. Ya. Propp, who actually laid the foundations of structural research in folklore with his *Morphology of the Fairy-tale* (1928), did not feel that he was a “formalist,” and the “formal” and rigorously synchronic description of the fairy-tale served merely as an introduction to the historical and ethnographic study of this sort of tale. Claude Lévi-Strauss was wrong to criticize Propp, from the structuralist stand-point, as a formalist. Propp certainly was in a sense a pioneer of structuralism, but he concentrated entirely on the structure of the storytelling, on its linear syntagmatics, and not on its logical paradigmatics as Lévi-Strauss did.¹

The basic difference between the “formalists” and the “structuralists” is to be found in the fundamental ideas of the two movements: those of “procedure” and “structure” respectively. For instance, for V. B. Shklovsky and B. M. Eikhenbaum during the twenties (though they later altered their position), to study “procedure” meant to set form above content as the

* Society for the study of the theory of poetic language [*Translator's note*].

¹ For a more detailed account of Propp and his disputes with Lévi-Strauss, see E. M. Meletinsky's article “Strukturno-tipologicheskoe izuchenie skazki” [A structuro-typological study of the fairy-tale], appended to the second edition of *Morfologija skazki* [Morphology of the fairy-tale] by V. Ya. Propp (Nauka, Moscow, 1969). This article has been translated into German and French (Vladimir Propp, *Morphologie du conte*, followed by *Les transformations des contes merveilleux* and by the above-mentioned essay by E. M. Meletinskij: Paris, 1970, Editions du Seuil, Collection “Points,” pp. 256).

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vehicle of artistic specificity. In the concept of "structure," content and form are not juxtaposed, but united, since what is form on one level is structure on another, and vice versa. It is interesting that at present Shklovsky rejects structuralism. It is worth noting the special attention that is paid to functional and to purely structural aspects in the words of Yu. N. Tynyanov. It was no accident that his pupils G. A. Gukovsky and L. Ya. Ginzburg kept and developed their ability to operate with cultural, literary and stylistic categories and models, even when, in the thirties, they turned to purely historical and sociological studies. R. O. Jakobson played an undeniably important part in bridging the gap between formalism and structuralism, principally in the linguistic field proper; but his activity took place very largely in the scientific world of Western Europe and the United States. P. G. Bogatyrev, starting out from a position close to Jakobson's, studied the hierarchic systems of functions in folklore texts from a different point of view from Propp's and thus prepared for the structural study of folklore. He is still working now, and a collection of articles by him is to appear shortly.

It is worth remarking that Soviet literary criticism of the thirties and forties, which was more interested in the *Weltanschauung* of the writer, his socio-historical roots and the like, than in the poetic forms he used, saw some interesting attempts at a typological study of the ideas and attitudes of the writers and their heroes (for example, V. R. Grib, L. E. Pinsky, or G. A. Gukovsky and L. Ya. Ginzburg). One might note in passing that certain of Marr's disciples who took up the problems of the theory of literature and folklore (Freydenberg, Frank-Kamenetsky) produced some approximation to a structural approach, though a rather inconsistent one.

For various reasons, Soviet literary criticism has not shown the sharp distinction between the genetical-historical approach and the synchronic descriptive approach that has developed in the West. The deepest roots of this "syncretism" are perhaps to be found in the works of Academician A. N. Veselovsky, the founder of the Russian school of comparative literature at the end of the last century. It is worth noting that the development of historical typology in the field of folklore during the fifties and sixties, which was partly inspired by Veselovsky's ideas (cf.

the works of V. M. Zhirmunsky, V. Ya. Propp, E. M. Meletinsky and B. N. Putilov), has been slowly coming closer to a structural typology (except in Propp's case, where the opposite is true). This has incidentally been noted in a review published abroad.² On the other hand, "pure" structuralists such as V. V. Ivanov and B. N. Toporov were chiefly interested in historical reconstructions from the start.

After this short excursion into the prehistory of Soviet "structuralism," let us turn directly to the structural research proper that has taken place in the Soviet Union in the last decade. This is no easy task, as a matter of fact. In the course of a discussion of structuralism in the journal *Voprosy literatury*, the critic S. V. Lominadze exclaimed "Structuralism! Structuralism!" It is no easy matter to make out what structuralism means in our literature. "The names of the members of this school themselves are best known for P. Palievsky's invective against them; the 'structuralists' themselves talk different languages."³

As in other countries, so in the Soviet Union too, the immediate impetus for structural studies in literature and folklore was the acknowledged success of structural linguistics. Even now, it is principally the linguists who are trying to use structural methods in fields far beyond the boundaries of linguistics. The Section for the structural study of Slavonic languages of the Institute of Slavonic and Balkan Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (V. V. Ivanov, V. N. Toporov, I. I. Revzin, D. M. Segal, T. V. Tsiv'yan and others) has played an important part in organising the research: several collections of works on structural typology have been published, the first colloquium devoted to general questions of semeiotics was held in 1962, and so forth. A. Zholkovsky and Yu. Shcheglov passed directly from the linguistic problems of machine translation to the theory of literature. A number of Indianists from the Institute of Oriental Studies and elsewhere (Pyatigorsky, Ogibenin, Syrkin) have for a long time been participating in various semeiotic

² Vilmos Voigt, "Toward balancing of Folklore Structuralism," *Acta ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungariae*, Tomus 18, Budapest 1969, pp. 247-255.

³ Beginning of the article "Verna li tochnost?" [Is precision accurate?], *Voprosy literatury*, 1967, No. 10, pp. 136-142.

studies conducted by V. V. Ivanov and his collaborators. Since about 1964, the University of Tartu has been a centre of semeiotic studies: Yu. M. Lotman, a specialist in Russian literature and language, has given courses of lectures on structural poetics and organized three summer courses on "the study of secondary systems giving rise to models." The Proceedings of the University of Tartu regularly publish structural works on the semeiotics of literature, art and culture (*Trudy po znakovym sistemam* [Works on systems of signs], I-IV, Tartu, 1964-9). In the course of the last few years, the folklorist and mediaevalist E. M. Meletinsky, of the Institute of World Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, has organised and directed a collective work on the structural study of folk tales. Most of the structural research in the domain of literature and folklore is in the form of articles and notes on various subjects. Many of these works have been published in Tartu University collections. There is only one general work on the structural theory of literature, the lectures of Yu. Lotman (1964).⁴ Although they largely anticipate the works in which Lotman and other experts made a number of important clarifications and suggested new techniques and theoretical interpretations, these lectures not only played a very great part in the popularization of structural methods, but even today they can still be considered as an interesting attempt to found a structural poetics. The interest of this work lies, in part, in the link it establishes between the traditional and the structural theories of literature, and in the fact that it sets out to analyse familiar notions of literary criticism on a semeiotic basis. Lotman's book aims to confirm the theory that the content of a work is to be found at the level of its expression. Lotman examines the relationship between poetry and prose, and, using the terminology of structural poetics, he expresses the conception of a literary prose, that is to say the negation of a predetermined and preexisting poetic system. He is introducing here the notion of a negative element of culture. Again, in another chapter of the work, he explains the relationship between the text and the "trans-textual" background. A large part of these lectures is devoted to establishing the specificity of poetry in the light of structuralist ideas (the relationship between idea

⁴ Yu. M. Lotman, *Lektsii po struktural'noy poetiki* [Lectures on structural poetics], Fasc. 1. (*Introduction. Theory of verse*), TZS I.

and structure, the setting up of models, the relationship between “metaphoric” and “metonymic” aspects, etc.). The author examines the semantic role of rhythm, rhyme, repetition and parallelism. On the basis of the ideas of Yu. N. Tynyanov, he examines in detail the lexical and grammatical specificity of poetic semantics: he shows how the meaning is renewed under the influence of the elements of the structure of the verse. He makes an instructive analysis of the poetic semantization of the meanings attached to grammatical categories, using Lermontov’s “*Duma*” as an example.

Lotman accords a special place to the analysis of the notion of a “text,” which, according to him, is compulsorily inserted into a number of contexts, and which exists within a system of oppositions in relation to structures that are external to it.

In a further article, written in collaboration with A. M. Pyatigorsky, Lotman has enlarged the concept of the text in opposing it to that of the “non-text.”⁵

The text is here defined by its social function in the cultural context where it is seen as a unique and fixed communication (written or spoken). Here the notion of a “text” becomes an operational model of a culture and is used for the semantic and pragmatic study of the culture. Subsequently, for Lotman, the theory of the “text” becomes increasingly bound up with certain general questions arising from the typology of culture.⁶ Lotman

⁵ Yu. M. Lotman and A. M. Pyatigorsky: “Tekst i funktsiya” [Text and function], *LSb* III, pp. 74-88; see also Pyatigorsky’s article “Nekotorye obshchiiye zamechaniya otnositel’no rassmotreniya teksta kak raznovidnosti signala” [Some general comments on the idea of a text as a variety of signal], *STI*, pp. 144-154, in which a text is defined in terms of signalization theory as a communication, fixed in space, and susceptible of non-random decoding. Lotman leans heavily on this article.

⁶ “O modeliruyushchem znachenii ponyatiy ‘nachala’ i ‘kotsa’ v khudozhestvennykh tekstakh” [On the role of the concepts of “beginning” and “end” as generators of models in literary texts], *LSb* II, pp. 69-74; “K probleme tipologii kul’tury” [The problem of the typology of culture], *TZS* III, pp. 30-38; “O metazyazyke tipologicheskikh opisaniy kul’tury” [The meta-language of typological descriptions of a culture] *TZS* IV, pp. 460-477; “O nekotorykh printsipial’nykh trudnomyakh v strukturnom opisaniy teksta” [On some difficulties of principle in the structural description of a text], *TZS* IV, pp. 478-482. See also two theoretical essays of Lotman’s: “O razgranichenii lingvisticheskogo i literaturovedcheskogo ponyatiya struktur” [On the delimitation of the linguistic and literary concepts of structures], *VYa*, 1963, No. 3; “Literaturovedeniye dolzhno byt’ naukoy” [Literary criticism must be a science], *VYa*, 1967, No. 1, pp. 90-100.

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shows that the hierarchy of codes within a culture makes the study of various cultural types particularly complicated. As examples of different cultural types, Lotman opposes the "mediaeval" type, with a rich semeiotic content (a purely textual culture in which things are defined by the meaning of what they represent) and the "Enlightenment" type, in which the utilization of signs becomes virtually a symbol of a lie (cf. the well-known comparisons of various cultural types made by Lévi-Strauss, according to notes by Charbonnier). In his article on "The metalanguage of typological descriptions of a culture," he uses numerous examples (the "Lay of Igor's Campaign," Lomonosov, Pushkin, Tyutchev, Pasternak, Tsvetayeva and others) to establish the theoretical premises of a textual analysis of cultures, and shows the possibility of a spatial analysis of a cultural model based on a few simple topological representations (interior, exterior, limit, inclusion, direction). In another note he studies the possibility of classifying a text into a series of subordinate systems. Thus Lotman starts from a purely philological approach to the text, to arrive at a "culturological" approach. The works of G. A. Leskiss,⁷ and those of I. P. Beletskaya (Sevbo), E. V. Paducheva, Yu. I. Levin, on the formal signs of various types and levels of texts, adopt a diametrically opposite methodology. The sound writings of Leskiss, who has subjected an immense corpus of scientific, political, social and literary texts to statistical analysis, have, by means of a statistical study of syntactical and grammatical differences (beginning with the simplest of indicators such as sentence length) established the individual character of literary prose and some of its genres, of the elements of composition, etc.

The works of I. P. Beletskaya and E. V. Paducheva deal directly with the syntactical and lexical laws that are observed in continuous texts as opposed to simple strings of sentences. They establish the rules for organising units greater than sentences, such as the paragraph, by the use of anaphoresis, antecedents of relative pronouns, etc.

⁷ G. A. Leskiss, "K voprosu o grammaticheskikh otlichyakh nauchnoy i khudozhestvennoy prozy" [The grammatical differences between scientific and artistic prose], *TZS* II, pp. 76-83; *Dva sposoba opisaniya vneyazykovykh situatsiy. — Lingvisticheskie issledovaniya po obshchey i slavyanskoy tipologii* [Two methods of describing extra-linguistic situations. — Linguistic studies in general and Slavonic typology], Moscow, 1966.

Before reviewing the concrete research that has been done, it is worth recalling A. K. Zholkovsky's and Yu. K. Shcheglov's general theory,⁸ which differs from that adopted by most other "structuralists," and which V. V. Ivanov⁹ criticized for taking too little note of, in the first place, the role of the historical background, and in the second place, scientific intuition, without which no model can be set up. These authors pose the problem of creating a "generative poetics," basing themselves less on semantics (as do most attempts at structural analysis in the USSR) than on certain techniques of composition which arouse emotion in the reader: "reinforcement" (which consists in achieving the "great" by means of the "little," mechanical procedures ("*deus ex machina*"), the movement of "refusal," conversion (change of effect), etc. They regularly take as examples simple subjects such as detective stories.¹⁰

One can find theoretical and general observations of great perspicacity in many and varied articles by one of the most active exponents of structural linguistics—V. V. Ivanov: particularly in the article already mentioned, which appeared in *Voprosy literatury*, or in the note entitled "Poetika," which appears in the fifth volume of the *Kratkaya literaturnaya Entsiklopediya* [Shorter Literary Encyclopaedia].

Concrete structural studies have dealt above all with poetry. Prose writings (with the exception of folklore) have been the subject of only a few articles by Lotman (on artistic space in Gogol),¹¹ Chudakov (on Chekhov), and the above-mentioned note

⁸ Cf. A. K. Zholkovsky and Yu. K. Shcheglov "O vozmozhnostyakh postroyeniya struktural'noy poetiki" [The possibility of constructing a structural poetics], *SS*, pp. 138-142; A. K. Zholkovsky and Yu. K. Shcheglov, "Iz predistorii sovetskikh rabot po struktural'noy poetike" [The pre-history of Soviet works on structural poetics], *TZS* III, pp. 367-377; A. K. Zholkovsky, "Ob usilenii" [On reinforcement], *STI*, pp. 167-171; A. K. Zholkovsky, "Deus ex machina," *TZS* III, pp. 146-155; A. K. Zholkovsky and Yu. K. Shcheglov, "Struktural'naya poetika, porozhdayushchaya poetika" [Structural poetics and generative poetics], *VL*, 1967, No. 1, pp. 73-89.

⁹ V. V. Ivanov, "O primenenii tochnykh metodov v literaturovedenii" [The use of exact methods in literary criticism], *VL*, 1967, No. 10, pp. 115-125.

¹⁰ Yu. K. Shcheglov: "K postroyeniyu struktural'noy modeli novell o Sherloke Kholmse" [The construction of a structural model of the Sherlock Holmes stories], *SS*, pp. 153-4.

¹¹ Yu. M. Lotman, "Problema khudozhestvennogo prostranstva u Gogolya" [The problem of artistic space in the works of Gogol], in *Trudy po russkoy i*

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by Zholkovsky and Shcheglov, and Zaretsky and Revzin. The works of Zholkovsky, Shcheglov and Revzin are angled towards the "generation" of syntagmatic links in an adventure-story, and those of Lotman towards the "paradigmatics" of artistic space. Lotman emphasizes the special role played by spatial language in Gogol (flight in *Viy*, the prospect in *Nevisky Prospekt*, the road in *Dead Souls*) in order to express the deepest ideas of the author. He describes the opposition between the external and the internal world in *Old-world Landowners*, the endless space of *Taras Bul'ba*, the fragmented non-space of *The Tale of how Ivan Ivanovich and Ivan Nikiforovich quarrelled*, etc. In another article Lotman studies the relationship between geographical space and moral and religious ideas.¹² In these studies, Lotman uses Likhachev's formulation of the problems of artistic space.

The study of verse is particularly tied to structuralism¹³ by its

slavyanskoy filologii [Works on Russian and Slavonic philology], XI, Tartu, 1968, pp. 5-50.

¹² "O ponyatii geograficheskogo prostranstva v russkikh srednevekovykh tekstakh" [The concept of geographical space in Russian mediaeval texts], *TZS* II, pp. 210-220.

¹³ See particularly: A. N. Kolmogorov, "Ob analize ritma *Stikhov o sovet-skoy pasporte* Mayakovskogo" [Analysis of the rhythm of *Poem on a Soviet passport* by Mayakovsky], *VYA*, 1965, No. 3; idem, "K izucheniyu ritmiki Mayakovskogo" [A study of Mayakovsky's use of rhythm], *VYA*, 1964, No. 4; A. N. Kolmogorov and A. M. Kondratov, "Ritmika poem Mayakovskogo" [The use of rhythm in Mayakovsky's poems], *VYA*, 1962, No. 3; A. N. Kolmogorov and A. V. Prokhorov, "O dol'nike v sovremennoy russkoy poezii" [The "dol'nik" in contemporary Russian poetry], *VYA*, 1963, No. 6, and 1964, No. 1; M. L. Gasparov, "Statisticheskoe obsledovanie russkogo trekhudarnogo dol'nika" [A statistical study of the tri-accented Russian "dol'nik"], in *Teoriya veroyatnostey i ee primeneniya* [Probability theory and its applications], 1963, vol. VIII, No. 1; idem, "Vol'nyy yamb i vol'nyy khorey" [The free iambus and the free trochee], *VYA*, 1965, No. 3; idem, "Aktsentnyy stikh rannego Mayakovskogo" [The accented lines of the early Mayakovskogo], in *TZS* III, Tartu, 1967; idem, "Yamb i khorey sovetskikh poetov" [The iambus and trochee in Soviet poets], in *K probleme evolyutsii russkogo stikha* [The problem of the evolution of Russian verse], *VYA*, 1967, No. 3; S. P. Bobrov, "Opyt izucheniya vol'nogo stikha pushkinskikh *Pesen zapadnykh slavyan*" [Study of the free verse in Pushkin's *Songs of the Western Slavs*], in *Teoriya veroyatnostey i ee primeneniya* [Probability theory and its applications], 1964, Vol. IX, No. 2; V. V. Ivanov, "Ritm poem Mayakovskogo *Chelovek*" [The rhythm of Mayakovsky's poem *Man*], *P* II, pp. 243-276; idem, "Ritmicheskoye stroeniye *Ballady o tsirke* Mezhirova" [The rhythmic structure of Mezhirova's *Circus ballad*], *P* II, pp. 277-300. See also the collection of essays *Teoriya stikha* [Theory of verse], Leningrad 1968.

very nature, to such an extent that it is hard to distinguish between works of structuralist research proper, the various attempts at the application of mathematical systems (in particular those of Academician Kolmogorov and his followers), and the works of authors who adopt a neutral attitude towards structuralism (M. L. Gasparov) or who are unfamiliar with it (V. M. Zhirmunsky, I. N. Golenishchev-Kutuzov). Structural research into versification undoubtedly relies on the principles of the quantitative approach already elaborated by A. Belyy, B. Tomashevsky and B. Shengali. The new contribution of such scholars as Kolmogorov and Gasparov consists above all in their starting from a statistical concept of metre as something that leads (like a sort of probability mechanism) to a metric text, and not as an ideal norm in the face of which every real text must be treated as a deviation or distortion (the rare changes of rhythm can be signals of a change of theme).

Using this method, Kolmogorov studies regular di- and tri-syllabic metres, and the various types of "*dol'nik*" and accented verse. For instance, he defines the iambic tetrameter as a model in which the accent never falls on a weak syllable in any word in the line (the alternation of strong and weak syllables is laid down according to a definite scheme). Within this framework of forms that he has established, he studies a number of variants which appear in conjunction with one or another way of dividing the words, and he also studies the rules governing the appearance of supplementary accents (beyond those imposed by the scheme). The "natural" distribution of one or another form or variant is determined by calculating the probability of the successive occurrence of words with a prescribed rhythmic structure in a prose text. Gasparov and Bobrov also study the diachronic aspect of the form of a line of verse. The work of Ivanov and Levin on poetry is oriented towards semantics.

For the Soviet structuralists, the plane of the contents invades the description of purely formal structures. M. I. Lekomtseva,¹⁴ who in part follows the principles of Jakobson, attempts to establish a link between the originality of the phonological system and the peculiarities of the system of versification. S. M. Tolstaya

¹⁴ M. I. Lekomtseva, "O sootnoshenii yedinitz metrichekskoy i fonologicheskoy sistem yazyka" [On the interrelation between the units of metric and phonological systems of language], *TZS* IV, pp. 336-344.

(Shur), in an article on the phonology of rhyme, suggests applying the theory of distinguishing phonological marks and uses a new method for measuring the exactitude and the richness of rhyme; basing her argument on pertinent calculations, she formulates a number of observations on the evolution of Russian rhyme. D. M. Segal¹⁵ poses the problem of the distribution of the statistical structure of the phonologic level in various types of poetry and prose. For instance, he shows how the influence of Russian poetry on Julian Tuwim has modified the statistical distribution of sounds in some of his poems.

In a certain number of articles and notes, V. N. Toporov singles out and analyses the phonic composition of texts which, at the lowest phonic level even, have a deliberately meaningful symbolic structure (cf. the ideas of F. de Saussure on phonetic anagrams in ancient poetry). In certain lines of one of the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*, he has discovered more than six identical phonemic segments in different words, and also hidden repetitions, referring to the being to whom the poem is addressed (the goddess of speech). Toporov reaches equally interesting conclusions on the phonic aspect of verse, referring to Lithuanian ballads, Batyushkov, Verlaine and Rilke. In Rilke, for instance, he has discovered a distinction in meaning between broad and narrow vowels.¹⁶ In an analysis of a poem by Verlaine ("*O mon Dieu, vous m'avez blessé d'amour...*"), Toporov performs his analysis on several levels and in particular considers the syntactical and morphological peculiarities in the poem, which already contain a distinctive aesthetic element. The formal perfection of each verse is combined with the development of the principal lyrical theme, of "dissolution" of the subject in the object, and also with the unity of the composition at every level (reflecting the stability of the genre). This analysis, performed with great subtlety, is characteristic of a whole group of studies made by the Soviet "structuralists" and devoted to a "monographical" analysis of various works of poetry. Clearly they are inspired

¹⁵ D. M. Segal, "Nablyudeniya nad fonologicheskoy strukturoy pol'skogo stikha" [Observations on the phonological structure of Polish verse], in *Sovetskoye slavyanovedenie* [Soviet Slavology], 1967, No. 2.

¹⁶ V. N. Toporov, "K analizu neskol'kikh poeticheskikh tekstov." [The analysis of some poetic texts], *P* II, pp. 61-120; "*Istochnik* Batyushkova v svyazi s *Le torrent Parni*" [The *spring* by Batyushkov and *Le torrent* by Parny], *TZS* IV, pp. 306-335.

by the study of Lévi-Strauss and Jakobson on Baudelaire, but they are not a direct imitation on them.¹⁷ In all these cases, the small size of the poem under analysis increases the chance of an optimal view of the whole, but at the same time it makes the methods of description more subjective and haphazard. A research tool which is well-adapted to a given object can be unsuitable for another; the “immanence” of these analyses has its weakness in that it isolates works from their environment and their source. All these works are characterised by a very clear tendency to seek for a deep “meaning” at every level, and a desire to “semanticize.”

The studies of Segal and of Levin, who (especially the former) are to a certain extent inspired by Lévi-Strauss—studies which are in the tradition of Toporov’s analyses, but remaining quite original—are based on the poetic works of Mandel’shtam. Segal performs exhaustive, chiefly semantic, analyses of single poems conceived as global phenomena, bringing to light a poetic image of the world, themes which are proper to the poet (little “myths”), and internal signs (in binary opposition), which are intuitively perceived on reading and which demand a more rigorous aesthetic and logical interpretation. Levin goes beyond the immanent analysis of a poem by using one of his previous works,¹⁸ that is to say a frequency vocabulary of the poet and the “world-image” that can be deduced from it. The conclusions he reaches certainly make the research-worker’s task easier.

However, dividing the words of the frequency vocabulary into semantic categories is a task based on an intuitive idea of a meaning assigned *a priori* (Z. Mints and T. Tsiv’yan also have

¹⁷ D. M. Segal, “Nablyudeniya nad semanticheskoy strukturoy ne’eticheskogo proizvedeniya” [Observations on the semantic structure of a non-ethical work], in *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*, The Hague, 1968; idem, “Mikrosemantika odnogo stikhovoreniya” [Microsemantics of one poem], (in the press); Yu. I. Levin, “O nekotorykh chertakh plana sodержaniya v poeticheskikh tekstakh II” [Some characteristics of the plan of contents in poetic texts, II] (in the press); B. L. Ogibenin, “K analizu stikhovoreniya R. M. Rilke” [Analysis of a poem by R. M. Rilke], *LSb* II, pp. 31-33; I. I. Revzin, “Belyy, Birkhof i vopros ob izmenenii khudozhestvennogo tvorchestva” [Bely, Birkhoff and the question of changing artistic production], *LSb* III, pp. 49-55.

¹⁸ See Yu. I. Levin, “O nekotorykh chertakh plana sodержaniya v poeticheskikh tekstakh” [Some features of the content of poetic texts], in *Strukturnaya tipologiya yazykov* [Structural typology of languages], Moscow, 1966.

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recourse to frequency vocabularies in their studies of the poetry of Blok and Akhmatova).

We have seen that Soviet studies in structural analysis are characterized both by an insistent search for "meaning" in formal and stylistic categories, and also by the use of the diachronic plane in the reconstruction of archaic strata or the making of historical comparisons. Leaving "traditional" philology to one side, these authors make use of specific procedures: they distinguish between "paradigmatic" and "syntagmatic," they study the distribution of the various elements, bringing out significant oppositions, they carry out analyses by differential characteristics, stratification, and so forth. Their point of departure is almost always the text itself, as a phenomenon.

The article by V. N. Toporov already referred to (on the translation of Parny by Batyushkov) is an example of an analysis of a lyrical poem that is at the same time synchronic and diachronic. Toporov compares the original to the translation, and draws attention to a fundamental difference between Parny's poem (*Le torrent*) and the translation by Batyushkov in the treatment of the themes of time or of death. These themes appear closely linked with one another, specifically in Batyushkov, and this at all "levels." Batyushkov reinforces in particular the metaphorical bond between the scene of the meeting and the idea of the ephemeral nature of earthly joys, raising it to the level of a philosophical generalisation. The poem *Istochnik* [The spring] is one of three variations on this theme (the three poems are inspired by Parny).

In an article on a poem by V. Khlebnikov,¹⁹ V. V. Ivanov also studies a problem characteristic of traditional literary criticism, that of influence; but he deals with a non-linguistic source, an Indian miniature representing Vishnu riding on an elephant. This miniature also attracted the attention of Eisenstein, who in his analysis of it pointed out its two planes. This quality (abstract worship of a deity on the one hand, amorous passion on the other) is shown up in Khlebnikov by a detailed analysis of the rhythmic, phonetic and syntactic levels and the identification of binary oppositions (up/down; men/maidens; unity/plurality,

¹⁹ V. V. Ivanov, "Struktura stikhotvoreniya Khlebnikova *Menya pronosyat na slonovykh* [Structure of Khlebnikov's poem *Journey on an elephant*], *TZS* III, pp. 156-171.

etc.). The phonetic analysis is particularly interesting (the reproduction of phonetic elements of the "key-word" *slon* [elephant]; see above for analogous observations by Toporov on Indian texts).

It is obvious that the works of Ivanov and Toporov, which provide solutions to problems which properly belong to literary criticism, are markedly different from the traditional research carried out in the USSR, not only in their methods but also in their manner of analysis and exposition, in their language and in their terminology, which is in large part taken over from linguistics. Lotman, a specialist in Russian literature of the 18th and early 19th centuries, has tried consciously, as we have seen, to establish a terminological link between the semeiotics of literature and traditional literary criticism, and to interpret the notions generally admitted by this traditional form of criticism in the Soviet Union on the basis of structuralism and semeiotics. This is the most interesting thing about the first part (already published) of his lectures on structural poetics (viz. the *Introduction* and the *Theory of Verse*). The same tendency can be seen in his articles on the structure of lyrical poems, which show that the principles of structuralism can be associated, or at least peacefully coexist, with traditional methods.

In a number of articles Lotman approaches literature either from a purely "structuralist" point of view, or in a purely traditional way. In his "Analysis of two poems,"²⁰ he juxtaposes some lines of Lermontov's ("*Rasstalis' my, no tvoy portret...*"—We parted, but your picture...") with Pasternak's poem *Zamesitel' nitsa* [The Substitute], and not only compares them on the diachronic plane but links this comparison with an interpretation of their literary tendencies. Within the limits of an analysis of two poems, he considers each text as a global system of relations between subject and object (basing his argument in part on the theses propounded by Jakobson in his famous article "La poésie de la grammaire et la grammaire de la poésie.")

The relationship between "I" and "thou," and the two terms that constitute it, are modified, in the works of Lermontov and the other Romantics (according to Lotman), in connexion with the theme of "substitution" of the real "I" and "thou" by ideal

²⁰ Yu. M. Lotman, "Analiz dvukh stikhotvoreniy," *LSb* III, pp. 191-224.

terms (other people, people of the past, portraits, etc.). The semantics of the substitution seems to have the structure of a metonymy and a synecdoche. The syntagmatic transformations corresponding to the principal relationship of subject/object are sustained by the rhythmic movement and the correlation between consonantal phonemes that differ in the manner and place of their formation. Pasternak's poem, according to Lotman, is oriented towards the romantic tradition (Lermontov, Heine, Schubert), but it upsets the romantic scheme. The semantic analysis also relies on a rhythmic and phonetic analysis. Since the author was working with a limited object of study, his solution of this interesting problem has turned out to be somewhat fragmentary—which proves once again that an analysis must concern itself with a broader field of study and cover it as a "whole."

At Tartu, Z. G. Mints (Lotman's wife and collaborator) has been trying to define a certain number of literary categories by considering a poet's work in its entirety.²¹ She and Lotman are studying the question of certain antonyms that appear in a fairly broad field (series of verses, the complete works of a poet, a literary movement), in the form of permanent or occasional oppositions (art/life, the poet/the crowd—in the Romantics; night/the cock—in Symbolist lyric; Lotman has pointed out similar oppositions in ancient Russian literature and in Pushkin). For a semantic analysis founded upon oppositions, Mints uses not only "antonyms" but also the paradigmatic oppositions brought out by the analysis of lexical composition in the framework of a poetic structure (cf. the analysis of two temporal models dating from the beginning and the end, respectively, of the career of Solovyov, in the perspective of a diachronic evolution). Finally, she attempts to describe the specific character of what is absolutely "unique" in a work of art, on the level of the text and not the world-picture. "Uniqueness," in her view, must be analysed by the usual methods, but in the

²¹ Z. G. Mints, "Antonimy v poeticheskom tekste" [Antonyms in a poetic text], *LSb* I; "Dve modeli vremeni v lirike Vl. Solov'eva" [Two models of time in the lyric poems of Vladimir Solovyov], *LSb* II, pp. 96-104; "Ob odnom sposobe obrazovaniya novykh znacheniy slov v proizvedenii iskusstva" [A method for forming new meanings for words in a work of art], *TZS* II, pp. 330-8.

framework of a more limited text, which, in the present case will of course be that of a single work.

In her analysis of Blok's *Neznakomka* [The Stranger], Mints attempts to establish pertinent semantic correlations with the use of lexico-phraseological data. The combination of words used as symbols in the *Stikhi o prekrasnoy dame* [Verses about the Beautiful Lady] (the diachronic plane once again) with a more "vulgar" vocabulary, not only results in an ironic reinterpretation of these symbols but also produces a complex double effect (the incompatibility is given as only relative), thus preserving a delicate lyricism. Thus, the functioning of a particular procedure is analysed on the basis of data regarding a previous state of the literary system. Mints has tried to find more objective methods of analysis by establishing a word-frequency count for the *Verses about the Beautiful Lady*.²² With this count, she lays down broad semantic categories ("heaven," "beautiful lady," "nature," "I," "people," etc.) and the modes in which they interact—which vary from one text to another. The world-picture as it appears in this work gives rise to a number of interpretations (spatial, ontological, sensory, affective, aesthetic, ethical), and these create a semantic coordinate system.

As we have already pointed out, Levin has taken up the question of frequency-counts of polysemic words.²³ With these counts (based on the poems of Pasternak and Mandel'shtam), he clarified the essential semantic peculiarities of cycles of poems and demonstrated the functional reality of the concept of a cycle or of a book. Levin compares the frequency count established for the cycle *My sister Life* by Pasternak with a cosmogonic world-picture. He also analyses the poetic figures, using the instruments of modern logic.²⁴ In his study of Akhmatova's

²² Z. G. Mints *et al.*, "Chastotnyy slovar' stikhov o Prekrasnoy dame i nekotorye zamechaniya o strukture tsikla" [A word-frequency count of the *Verses about the Beautiful Lady*, and some observations on the structure of the cycle], *TZS* III, pp. 209-316.

²³ Yu. I. Levin, "O nekotorykh chertakh plana soderzhaniya v poeticheskikh tekstakh" [Some features of the content of poetic texts], in *Strukturnaya tipologiya yazykov* [Structural typology of languages], Moscow, 1966.

²⁴ Yu. I. Levin, "Struktura russkoy metafory" [Structure of the Russian metaphor], *TZS* II, pp. 293-299; "Russkaya metafora" [The Russian metaphor], *TZS* IV, pp. 290-305.

"*Anno Domini*,"²⁵ Tsiv'yan develops the paradigmatic lexico-semantic method of analysis. He compares a frequency count established from the verse of Anna Akhmatova with data obtained for *Kiparisovyy larets* [The cypress casket] by I. Annensky (the "diachronic" plane), and with counts drawn up by Levin for Akhmatova's contemporaries (a "synchronic" comparison). It appears that a large number of adjectives, including those composite ones that Annensky uses in his poems to designate colours and forms, are eschewed by Akhmatova, in her movement towards a more austere style. The author gives us an interesting analysis of families of roots, in the course of which he shows how those roots with the greatest semantic burden attract the largest number of related words (the words *smert'* [death], *dusha* [soul], *pesnya* [song] and some others are among the most commonly used nouns and belong to the largest families of words). In his analysis of antonyms, Tsiv'yan distinguishes certain characteristic semantic oppositions in Akhmatova's poetry (life/death, happiness/sadness, tranquillity/alarm, purification/degeneration). The stock of figurative procedures (such as "light" or "dark") changes according to which of the two fields the particular poem falls into.

While dealing with studies of lyrical poetry, it is worth mentioning an article by Shcheglov on two elegies by Ovid; in this article he deals exclusively with the semantic level and he has a synthetic conception of the limitations of the text.²⁶

Russian researchers in structurology have chosen lyric poetry as the favourite field for their studies. Epic and even lyric-epic poetry has been as little studied by them as has prose. H. M. Meletinsky's work on the *Edda* treats the problems of the "folk"-style and of mythology; V. L. Ogibenin, in his works on the *Rig-Veda*, studies the semantics of myths. Shcheglov's original article on Ovid's *Metamorphoses* remains an isolated phenomenon.²⁷ This study is one of the first and most successful Soviet models of semantic analysis of a poetic text, aimed at establishing

²⁵ T. V. Tsiv'yan, "Materialy k poetike Anny Akhmatovoy" [Notes on the poetic technique of Anna Akhmatova], *TZS* III, pp. 108-208.

²⁶ Yu. Shcheglov, "K nekotorym tekstam Ovidiya" [On some texts of Ovid], *TZS* III, pp. 172-179.

²⁷ Yu. Shcheglov, "Nekotorye cherty struktury *Metamorfoz* Ovidiya" [Some features of the structure of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*], *STI*, pp. 155-166.

a poet's world-picture. Shcheglov shows that the *Metamorphoses* are inspired throughout by the feeling of the extraordinary unity of the world in all its diversity. This feeling of unity proceeds from the way in which things are likened to one another on the basis of their very simplest mechanico-geometrical properties (curvature, emptiness, hardness, liquidity, elongation and so forth), which are given by epithets. He is particularly interested in the semantic relationships between these epithets. Ovid, as it were, divides up his things according to their characteristic signs, so as to assemble them together again and expose their initial connectedness (in the real world, things are divided). Ovid's simplified and synthetic worldpicture is inseparable from the very charm of his work. In this connexion, it may be noted that Shcheglov has in particular seized upon those peculiarities of the *Metamorphoses* which are related to Ovid's mythological sources. This is the reason for the conspicuous similarity with Lévi-Strauss's descriptions of mythological world-pictures.

II. FOLKLORE

There is no doubt that folklore and mythology are privileged objects of structural research. There is a large number of works whose content bears only an indirect relation to the arts of language, and is situated at the frontier between semantic linguistics and the history of religions or the study of cultures: mythology will here be considered essentially not from the point of view of a narrative but as a secondary semeiotic system which, as such, is subjected to a paradigmatic analysis. These works are, however, definitely relevant for the understanding of artistic creation at various stages of social development. This is the point of view of V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov, specialists in Indo-European linguistics who have gradually moved away from both linguistics and Indo-European matters in their work on the mythology of the Slavs²⁸ and in a large number of articles.²⁹

²⁸ V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov, *Slavyanskije yazykovye modeliruyushchiye sistemy* [Slavonic linguistic modelling systems], Nauka, Moscow, 1965.

²⁹ A. A. Zaliznyak, V. V. Ivanov, V. N. Toporov, "O vozmozhnosti strukturno-tipologicheskogo izucheniya nekotorykh modeliruyushchikh semioticheskikh sistem" [On the possibility of a structuro-typological study of some semeiotic systems generating models], *STI*, pp. 134-143; V. V. Ivanov and V. N. To-

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But their attempts to reconstitute the archaic state not only of languages but also of mythological systems (the Hittite, ancient Indian, Celtic, Roman, Slavonic, and even proto-Indo-European), are partly related to their position as specialists in Indo-European matters.

The question is one of structural reconstruction, of using structural methods for "diachronic" purposes, with a wide-ranging use of etymology and other linguistic data. Moreover, Ivanov and Toporov tend (like Jakobson and—to some extent—G. Dumézil) to see the myths of the Indo-European peoples, including the Slavs (by which inclusion they rehabilitate some ideas of the mythologist-Slavists of the last century such as Afanas'yev) as broad, rich and hierarchically organized systems. In a paper presented to the Congress of Slavonic Studies at Sofia, they reconstitute the syntagmatic sequences of proto-Slavonic language and folklore not only on the level of phonemes, morphology and syntax, but also on that of metric form and subject-matter, using quasi-logical symbols to describe thematic "functions" (borrowed from Propp's *Morphology of the Fairy-tale*). In a monograph on the religious and mythological conceptions of the Slavs, they recreate the ancient pantheon, with they then submit to a rigorous analysis level by level, with a clear juxta-

porov, "K rekonstruktsii praslavyanskogo teksta" [The reconstruction of a proto-Slavonic text], in *Slavyanskoye yazykoznanie* [Slavonic linguistics], Moscow, 1963, pp. 88-158; V. V. Ivanov and V. N. Toporov, "K opisaniyu nekotorykh ketskich semioticheskikh sistem" [The description of some Ket semeiotic systems], *TZS II*, 116-143; V. V. Ivanov, "Lingvistika i gumanitarnye problemy semiotiki" [Linguistics and semeiotic problems relative to the humane sciences], *Izvestiya AN SSSR, seriya literatury i yazyka*, Vol. XXVII, 1968, fasc. 3; V. V. Ivanov, "Zametki o tipologicheskoy i sravnitel'no-istoricheskom issledovanii rimskoy i indo-yevropeyskoy mifologii" [Notes on the typological and comparative historical study of Roman and Indo-European mythology], *TZS II*, pp. 44-75; V. V. Ivanov, "Dvoichnaya simvolicheskaya klassifikatsiya v afrikanskikh i aziatskikh traditsiyakh" [Dualistic symbolic classification in African and Asiatic tradition], *NAA*, 1969, No. 5, pp. 105-115; K. Toporov, *The Several Parallels to the Ancient Indo-Iranian Social and Mythological Concepts—Pratidanam. Studies presented to Franciscus Bernardus Jacobus Kuiper on his Sixtieth Birthday*, The Hague, 1969; V. N. Toporov, "K rekonstruktsii nekotorykh mifologicheskikh predstavleniy" [The reconstruction of some mythological representations], *NAA*, 1964, No. 3, pp. 101-111; V. N. Toporov, "K rekonstruktsii mifa o mirovom yaytse" [Reconstruction of the myth of the cosmic egg], *TZS II*, pp. 81-99; V. Ivanov and V. Toporov, "Le mythe indo-européen du dieu de l'orage poursuivant le serpent. Réconstitution du schema," *Mélanges Cl. Lévi-Strauss* (to be published).

position of the attributes of the various divinities and an identification of their semantic distinguishing marks. Their division into various levels is based on a degree of abstraction of functions, on the character of the bond with the social whole, on the complementary relationships with different genres, immediate impact, etc.

The reconstruction of the content is carried out with the help of abstract semantic classifiers. In the authors' opinion, some fundamental oppositions, which are synonymous among themselves, actually determine the structure of the mythological system of the ancient Slavs. It appears that the greater part of these binary oppositions, seen as a whole (of the type "life/death," "sky/earth," "self/other," "left/right") is not limited to the Slavic world but extends over the whole world, as is shown by examples quoted by the authors, and as anyway becomes obvious on reading the *Mythologiques* of Lévi-Strauss, who makes wide use of identical binary oppositions in his study of the myths of the South American Indians.

Ivanov and Toporov at times leave the realms of Indo-European mythology. This is the case in their study of the mythological hierarchy of the Kets, to whose territory they had already (in 1962) organized a special expedition; and in some of their research on the cosmic tree and its equivalents as the basis for a cosmological model found among different peoples. V. N. Toporov considers that the cosmic tree marks out a whole epoch in the history of mythological ideas of humanity, and he has devoted an important study to this question.

Closely related to the works of Ivanov and Toporov are those of Ogibenin, which are essentially concerned with the Indian *Rig-Veda*.³⁰ Ogibenin studies the semantics of the Vedic cosmogony, and identifies the structural distinguishing marks (the attributes) of the Vedic divinities. These attributes are interpreted mainly as variations on the fundamental cosmogonic act—the

³⁰ B. L. Ogibenin, "K voprosu o znachenii v yazyke i nekotorykh drugikh modeliruyushchikh sistemakh" [Meaning in language and in some other model-generating systems], *TZS* II, pp. 49-63; *Struktura mifologicheskikh tekstov Rigvedy*, [The structure of the mythological texts of the *Rig-Veda*], Moscow 1968; "Iz oblasti vediyской mifologii" [On Vedic mythology], *NAA*, 1967, No. 3; "Sur le symbolisme du type chamanique dans la *Rig-veda*" [On shamanistic symbolism in the *Rig-Veda*], in *Trudy po vostokovedeniyu* [Eastern studies], 1, Tartu 1968, pp. 140-151.

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creation of the universe, which is organized in a definite way around the cosmic tree or its symbolic substitutes.

The Indianist A. M. Pyatigorsky has a more original attitude³¹ towards mythological research; he attempts chiefly to analyse the categories of psychic activity in terms of the psychology of ancient India, and is particularly interested in the problem of introspection in ancient Indian tradition. He studies the semantic field of Indian psychological terms, showing their operational value and comparing them with European psychology, particularly with that of Jung. Pyatigorsky's research has made it easier to put the most inaccessible aspect of the semeiotic process into the form of a model: the relation between the meaning (its influence) and the psychological content. A. Ya. Syrkin and L. Maile have also studied the semeiotics of the Indian philosophical text.

Among works devoted to the psychological problems of the sign, outside the field of Indian studies, one might mention the notes in which D. M. Segal³² reflects on the existence of an objective psychological substrate of the sign.

Segal devotes a long article³³ to the semantic and narrative structure of three versions of a single myth of the north-western Indians; it occupies an intermediate position between works on mythological semantics and those directed at the syntagmatics of the story itself. (As we have seen, syntagmatic problems were only of marginal interest in the works of Ivanov and Toporov.) Taking inspiration from the new ideas of Lévi-Strauss, the author analyses his texts at the level of the sentence, attributing a certain supra-textual semantic content to each one. A total of ten predicates, each one of which can bear the opposite meaning, turns out to be sufficient to describe the subject of all three myths. The text appears as a sequence of repeated symbols,

³¹ See A. M. Pyatigorsky, "Nekotorye obshchie zamechaniya o mifologii s tochki zreniya psikhologa" [Some general observations on mythology from the psychologist's point of view], *TZS* II, pp. 38-48; "Zamechaniya o strukture teksta dkhamasangani" [Observations on the structure of the text of Dhama-sangani], *TZS* IV, pp. 159-163 and other works on a philosophico-psychological level.

³² D. M. Segal, "Nemotivirovannost' znaka" [The arbitrariness of the sign], *LSb* I; "Problema psikhologicheskogo substrata znaka" [The problem of the psychological substrate of the sign], *LSb* III, pp. 21-26.

³³ "O svyazi semantiki teksta s ego formal'noy strukturoy" [The relation between the semantics of a text and its formal structure], *P* II, pp. 15-44.

which are then organized into a matrix; read horizontally, this provides the general semantics of a fragment, and read vertically, it provides its thematic composition. This symbolic representation allows one to define and interpret the invariant element of the three myths, which is an amalgam of the theme of the chthonic cosmological being and that of the rejected hero.

Syntagmatic structures play an even greater part in the studies of E. M. Meletinsky, whose first works were concerned not with linguistics but with the historical and comparative typology of folklore, mythology and mediaeval literature. In his first monograph, which dates back to the end of the forties, *Geroy volshebnoy skazki* [The hero of the magic tale] (Moscow, 1958) he puts forward something of a genetic sociology of the fairy-tale. But this work does contain the elements of a description of the laws which govern the organization of the story into a model, a description which brings to light the constitutive role played by social phenomena like minority and majority, or exogamy and endogamy (the latter is given the same sense as by Lévi-Strauss in his *Mythologiques*). In another work, *Proiskhozhdenie geroicheskogo eposa* [The origins of the heroic epic], (Moscow, 1963), the author shows in archaic epics (those of Finland, of the Turco-Mongolian peoples of Siberia, of the Caucasian and even in the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh) a direct derivation from primitive tales about the hero and cultural ancestor, and he exposes the mythological substructure. In a third work (1968) on the folklore element in the *Edda*,³⁴ he consciously introduces a structural analysis of style and mythology, although his study is on the whole concerned with a problem of historical poetics. He makes a purely synchronic analysis of the stylistic system which confirms the archaic and folkloric basis of the *Edda* (repetitions, parallelism, epithets, commonplaces), while devoting particular attention to phonetic, lexical and syntactical analyses of the structure of commonplaces. It appears that these *loci communes* are organized in combinations of a relatively small number of oppositions (of the type "outside/inside," "one/all," "stay/arrive," "sleep/wake," "tears/laughter,") and that some phonetic models (patterns) are essential. The author makes a

³⁴ E. M. Meletinsky, *Edda i rannie formy eposa* [The *Edda* and early forms of the epic], Nauka, Moscow, 1968.

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special study of the world-image that is built up in these commonplaces (space/time, situations, emotions, etc.).

What is known as “epic variation” and “refrain” appears to be the result of the structural transformation of parallelisms. The archaic character of certain songs of the *Edda* is confirmed by the fact that their subjects are not constructed as stories but like the most ancient myths, both on the syntagmatic plane (“marriage” is not an aim, but a means of acquiring cultural and magical objects, etc.), and as far as the world-picture itself is concerned. This work combines diachrony and synchrony, since the analysis of diverse structures is the principal criterion for establishing the archaic character of the *Edda*, on a basis not only of stereotype as conceived by A. Lord, but also of the truly structural and semeiotic character of folklore. At the same time, Meletinsky resumes a direct study of fantastical stories and myths, but this time from a structural point of view, and he embarks on the study of the narrative syntagmatics of myths.³⁵

In an article on the function of the marriage-theme in the syntagmatics, the semantics and the axiology of the magic tale, Meletinsky attempts, on the basis of certain theories of Lévi-Strauss, to deal with the transformation of subjects and concomitant modifications in semantic codes. Propp’s classic work involuntarily brings to light the abundance of narrative information (involuntarily because Propp studies the tale on the level of a metasubject); it is the examination of the code’s transformations that shows how this abundance is “surmounted” and exploited in practice. This book also shows how in a tale, “mar-

³⁵ E. M. Meletinsky, “O strukturno-morfologicheskom analize skazki” [The structural and morphological analysis of the fairy-tale], *LSb* II, pp. 37-40; “Strukturno-tipologicheskoye izuchenie skazki” [The structural and typological study of the fairy-tale], in the book: *Morfologiya skazki* [Morphology of the fairy-tale], by V. Ya. Propp, 2nd ed., Nauka, Moscow, 1969, pp. 134-166; a German variant of this article: E. Meletinskij, “Zur strukturell-typologischen Erforschung des Volksmärchens,” *Deutsches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde*, Band 15, Teil 1, Berlin, 1969, pp. 1-30. The following have either recently appeared or are printing: “Mif i skazka” [The myth and the fairy-tale], in *Folklor i etnografiya* [Folklore and ethnography], Nauka, Moscow-Leningrad, 1970; “Lévi-Strauss i struktural’naya tipologiya mifov” [Lévi-Strauss and the structural typology of myths], in *Voprosy filosofii* [Problems of philosophy]; E. Meletinskij, *Die Ehe im Zaubermärchen. Festschrift G. Ortutay* [Marriage in the fairy-tale], *Acta Ethnographica Scientiarum Hungariae*, 1970; E. Meletinskij, “Le problème de la morphologie historique du conte de fées” [The problem of historical morphology of the fairy-tale], in the journal *Semiotica*, The Hague.

riage” becomes an instrument of mediation, a means of escape, from the contradictions which appear in the family when the hero changes his social condition.

In a paper presented at the World Congress of Folklorists (Bucharest, 1969), Meletinsky claims that it is possible in principle to reconcile historical poetics and structural poetics. He considers the syntagmatic structure of primitive myths and tales as a sort of metastructure compared with the hierarchical and tiered structure of the classical magical tale, whose formation was accompanied by definite structural limitations. At the same time, in delineating the set of characteristics that differentiate the mutually synchronic myth and fairy-tale, Meletinsky opines that these characteristics only indirectly touch the kernel of the narrative structure. These articles, and in particular the great collective study by E. Meletinsky, S. Neklyudov, E. Novik and D. Segal,³⁶ attempt to pursue the study of the structure of the fairy-story on the basis that was established by Propp forty years ago.

The authors also try to complete the syntagmatic division by a paradigmatic one, bearing in mind the work of Lévi-Strauss and his school (Greimas and others). Meletinsky, Novik, Neklyudov and Segal make Propp's scheme more precise by showing that the functions are grouped syntagmatically into larger blocks which represent tests and acquisitions of fantastical values; in this way a preliminary test provides the supernatural means that is indispensable for the execution of the principal test, the result of this latter being confirmed (verified) by a complementary test aimed at identifying the hero. The opposition between the preliminary test and the principal test is the basis of this syntagmatic chain. The former test is only the verification of the knowledge of the rules of conduct, and introduces the supernatural; the latter test is an exploit, but one whose success depends on magical forces. The rules of conduct (the structure of the act) constitute a rigorous autonomous system of implications linked in pairs

³⁶ The results of these studies have been published in part: E. M. Meletinsky, S. Yu. Neklyudov, E. S. Novik, D. S. Segal, “K postroyeniyu modeli volshebnoy skazki” [The construction of a model of the magical tale], *LSb* III, pp. 165-177; “Problemy strukturnogo opisaniya volshebnoy skazki” [Problems in the structural description of the magical tale], *TZS* IV, pp. 81-135. “Eshche raz o problemakh struktural'nogo opisaniya volshebnoy skazki” [Further thoughts on the problems of structural description of the magical tale], to appear in *TZS* V.

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(order/execution; prohibition/transgression), each of whose terms may be positive or negative and may refer to the action or to information. Finally, the authors give a semantic analysis starting from the “world-picture” of the magical tale; the relations between the hero and his antagonists are generally constructed on the opposition of “self/others,” which appears on different planes: house/forest (child/witch), our own kingdom/a foreign kingdom (young man/dragon), maternal family/strange family (stepdaughter/stepmother). Every wicked character corresponds to a particular type of wickedness: the stepmother expels her stepdaughter in order to torment her, the witch entices the children in order to eat them, the dragon carries off the princess in order to make her his concubine, etc. In the fairy-tale the opposition “high/low” is linked to narrative mediation. The authors also distinguish binary oppositions based on the system of characters, and they make a special study of the dynamics of the permutations and transformations and of their functional distribution, and the semantics of the language of the fairy-tale in relation to its cosmology and its philosophy. Furthermore, unlike Propp (who limited himself to considering the metasubject), they try to sketch out, even if only very roughly, some differentiating characteristics for distinguishing the principal types of magical tale: using four semantic oppositions, they distinguish ten categories.

An article by B. L. Ogibenin on the role of dialogue in the organization of the thematic structure of Lithuanian tales should also be mentioned.³⁷

One of the participants in the aforementioned collective study, Neklyudov, has published articles on the analysis of the semantics and composition of epic and popular Russian poetry (the *Byliny*).³⁸ He has shown that the subject of a *bylina* can be presented as the trajectory of the movements of the hero in space. Time obeys an analogous dynamic: the more active the hero, the more time

³⁷ B. L. Ogibenin, “Nablyudeniya nad dialogami v litovskoy skazke” [Observations on dialogue in Lithuanian fairy-tales], *TZS* IV, pp. 136-445.

³⁸ S. Yu. Neklyudov, “K voprosu o svyazi prostranstvenno-vremennykh otnosheniy s syuzhetnoy strukturoy v russkoy *byline*” [The relation of spatio-temporal relationships to the thematic structure in the Russian *bylina*], *LSb* II, pp. 41-45; “‘Chudo’ v *byline*” [The “marvellous” in the *bylina*], *TZS* IV, pp. 146-158. There is an article on “Space and time in the *bylina*” in the press (in *Slavyanskiy fol'klor*), and also an Italian version of it.

is accelerated, the rapidity of time being equivalent to its absence on the plane of expression. The existence of a temporal characteristic of a wide space is opposed to the absence of this characteristic in a restricted space. N. Yu. Neklyudov, in his article on the "marvellous" in the *bylina* and its function there, reaches certain conclusions which in part echo the results reached by Ts. Todorov in a new work (Ts. Todorov, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, Paris, 1970).

A specialist in the historical and comparative study of Slav epic songs, B. N. Putilov, has recently taken a step towards structuralist methods. In an article, he explains the motiveless nature of certain thematic elements by the pressure of an archaic structure.

In recent years, studies have been devoted to the "minor," non-narrative genres of folklore (proverbs, sayings, riddles, and spells).³⁹ This is no accident (see the numerous analogous studies by Western research workers: Sebeck, Dundes, Kuusi, Chirese, Holbeck and others), for these studies produce interesting viewpoints and are closely linked to the phraseology of language and to the supra-phraseological units studied by structuralist linguists. For the study of proverbs, Permiakov has worked from a logico-semeiotic structure of stereotyped pronouncements. According to Permiakov, proverbs and sayings are signs of definite situations or relationships between things. The situation is an invariant for proverbs having a particular meaning. There are four main situational variants: the relationship between a thing and its properties, that between things, the relationship of concordance

³⁹ G. L. Permiakov, "Logiko-semioticheskiy plan poslovits i pogovorok" [The logico-semeiotic plane of proverbs and sayings], *NAA*, 1967, No. 6, pp. 52-68; idem, *Izbrannye poslovitsy i pogovorki narodov Vostoka* [Selected proverbs and sayings of Eastern peoples], Moscow, 1968, especially the Introduction, pp. 5-47. Cf. G. Permiakov, "O predmetnom aspekte poslovits i pogovorok" [The objective aspect of proverbs and sayings], *Proverbium* 12, Société de la littérature finnoise, Helsinki 1969, pp. 324-328; his book *Ot zagadki do skazki* [From the riddle to the fairy-tale] is in the press (Nauka, Moscow). M. V. Arapov, "Struktura i semantika narodnogo zagovora" [Structure and semantics of popular magic spells], *LSb* I, pp. 25-29; I. A. Chernov, "K struktura russkogo lynbovnogo zagorova" [Structure of the Russian love spell], *TZS*, II, p. 159-172; V. N. Toporov, "K rekonstruktsii indoyevropeyskogo rituala i ritualino-poeticheskikh formul (na materiale zagovorov.)" [Reconstruction of Indo-European ritual and poetic formulae (spells)], *TZS* IX, pp. 9-43.

Notes and Discussion

between the properties according to the relationship between the things, and the relationship of preference between things according to their properties. Within each invariant class, proverbs play upon the relationship between cause and effect, between the part and the whole, and on the relationship between genre and sign, work and result, principal and accessory, self and other, etc., so that a number of semantic oppositions emerge, often of an axiological order. Permiakov's discovery consists, first, in the definition of a finite set of oppositions, whose mutual relationships are in the last resort the substance of all proverbs; and, secondly, in having established that among the proverbs one can, for a given opposition, find affirmations drawn from all logical categories, and that to each positive affirmation a negative one must of necessity correspond—if there exists an opinion that A is better than B, the opposite, that is that B is better than A, must necessarily also exist). Permiakov's conclusion is in harmony with Lévi-Strauss's theory on the mythological conscience which works through all logically imaginable possibilities. Indeed, proverbs and sayings can be considered as the first step towards the development of "abstract" logic from "concrete" logic. The structural study of magic spells is only beginning. An entirely dyschronic article by Toporov contains a comparison of spells belonging to different traditions and a reconstitution of proto-Indo-European motifs. Articles by I. A. Chernov and M. V. Arapov sketch in the lines of a possible future study of a formal description of magic spells.

The present study shows how close the essays in structural research on literature and folklore in the USSR are to structural studies made in France and in other countries, although they preserve a certain originality both as regards subject (analyses of poems, studies of mythology in various forms, problems of versification) and as regards the theoretical and methodological plane (with a lively interest in the semantic aspect of structures, the use of new methods to study historical poetics, and the reconstitution of literary texts or of methodological systems).

ABBREVIATIONS

- SS *Simpozium po strukturnomu izucheniyu znakovykh sistem* [Symposium on the structural study of systems of signs], Moscow, 1962.
- TZS I *Trudy po znakovym sistemam I* [Studies on systems of signs I], Proceedings of Tartu University, fasc. 160, Tartu, 1964.
- TZS II *Trudy po znakovym sistemam II* [Studies on systems of signs II], Proceedings of Tartu University, fasc. 181, Tartu, 1965.
- TZS III *Trudy po znakovym sistemam III* [Studies on systems of signs III], Proceedings of Tartu University, fasc. 198, Tartu, 1967.
- TZS IV *Trudy po znakovym sistemam IV* [Studies on systems of signs IV], Proceedings of Tartu University, Fasc. 336, Tartu, 1969.
- LSb I *Programma i tezisy dokladov v letney shkole po vtorichnym modeliruyushchim sistemam* [Programme and theses of reports presented to the summer school on secondary systems generating models], Tartu, 1964.
- LSb II *Tezisy dokladov vo vtoroy letney shkole po vtorichnym modeliruyushchim sistemam* [Theses of reports presented at the second summer school on secondary systems generating models], Tartu, 1966.
- LSb III *III Letnyaya shkola po vtorichnym modeliruyushchim sistemam. Tezisy. Doklady* [3rd summer school on secondary systems generating models. Theses. Papers], Tartu, 1968.
- STI *Strukturno-tipologicheskie issledovaniya* [Structuro-typological studies], Moscow, 1962.
- VL *Journal Voprosy literatury* [Questions of literature].
- VYa *Journal Voprosy yazykoznaniya* [Questions of linguistics].
- NAA *Journal Narody Azii i Afriki* [Peoples of Asia and Africa].
- P II *Poetics. Poetyka. Poetika II*, Warsaw, 1966 [ed. Mouton-PWN].