

Interfacing Science, Literature, and the Humanities / ACUME 2 Vol. 1

Martin Procházka / Markéta Malá /
Pavλίna Šaldová (eds.)

The Prague School and Theories of Structure



Interfacing Science, Literature, and the Humanities / ACUME 2

Volume 1

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Preface

The main purpose of this volume is not to celebrate the achievement of the Prague Linguistic Circle, but to explore the present state and future prospects of structuralism, and specifically the contribution of the Prague School to the theoretical thought of structures, signs and language systems.

This pursuit includes the reassessment of the theoretical legacy of some Prague structuralists, which has not yet been sufficiently researched, as in the case of Bohumil Trnka; or has been studied in a different context, as in the case of René Wellek.

Today, it is possible to fully appreciate the legacy of structuralism thanks to the lively debate on its limits carried out by the major theoretical developments of the last three decades of the twentieth century, including deconstruction and New Historicism. One of the important contributions to these discussions has been the discovery of the significance of the notions of dynamic and open structure, present already in de Saussure's reflections on language and in the thought of the Prague School.

The second, and equally important feature of this project is the study of transformations of structuralist approaches in recent and contemporary theories of structures and systems. For instance, the New Historicist re-readings of Foucault have contributed to the understanding of the limitations of a structuralist notion of »immanent« literary history and pointed out the significance of historical context.

Finally, the book develops the tradition of the Prague School in the direction of interdisciplinarity. After the Moscow Linguistic Circle and the OPOYAZ of St. Petersburg, the Prague School was one of the first interdisciplinary movements in modern humanities, diverging from the traditions of positivism, historical philology and academic criticism. The structuralist tendency towards the methodological integration of the humanities and the natural sciences has anticipated present research of their interfacing and established a new level of understanding discourses in cultures and literatures (e.g., in Clifford Geertz's study of culture).

The contributors to this volume aim to proceed further in terms of theoretical research as well as international integration. The book is a major output of a wide-ranging interdisciplinary project of 78 European universities from 23 countries within and without the EU, including participants from many regions outside Europe, including the United States, Israel or New Zealand.

The main topic of the European Thematic Network Project ACUME 2, coordinated by the University of Bologna, is »Interfacing Sciences, Literature and Humanities« As a consequence, theories of structure and methodologies of interfacing are dominant themes in this book.

In the first part, interfacing is studied in terms of specific functions of language systems (e.g., autosegmentality, semantic function, co-referentiality, attention-getting devices).

The second part explores the problems of interfacing first in the translation and reception of literature (e.g., in neo-formalist »structural stylistics,« the Lacanian reinterpretation of Jakobson's »poetic function,« Burke's theory of rhetoric focused on language as »symbolic action« or comparative theories of verse). Then it focuses on the potential of structuralist approaches to transcend the limitations of closed systems based on linguistic models. This potential is seen in de Saussure's notion of »transmission,« Bakhtin's heteroglossia, Luhmann's systems theory or in the theory of »hyperliteracy«

The volume is concluded with chapters on recent notions of structurality manifest in open systems of asymmetrical differences, transversal relations or dynamic semantic situations, and characterized by interfaces between organization and structure, imagination and reasoning, culture and cosmos.

The volume demonstrates not only the importance of Prague structuralism for recent and contemporary theories of systems, signs, communication, language, translation and literature but also its remarkable transformative potential of producing methodologies capable of bridging the gap between the »two cultures« of the sciences and the humanities.

Part 1 Structuralism and Language System

Introduction

In the field of linguistics the theories of the Prague School are generally characterized by the term functional structuralism. While the term ›structuralism‹ is common to several linguistic trends initiated by Ferdinand de Saussure's innovating approach to language, the attribute ›functional‹ is regarded as a distinctive feature of Prague scholars. In their conception description and explanation of language phenomena as a structured whole rather than a mechanical agglomerate was not an end in itself: this structured whole – language – should be understood as a functioning means of communication.

This dual aspect of the Prague School approach is fully reflected in the topics of the individual chapters. ›Structure‹ immediately invokes the first generation of the Prague Linguistic Circle. Rather predictably, of its representatives foreign authors concentrated on N.S. Trubetzkoy, while Czech contributors turned to Bohumil Trnka. Among the Czech founders of the Circle it was indeed Bohumil Trnka, with whom the term ›structuralism‹ was primarily associated. The attribute ›functional‹, on the other hand, embodies the approach of the founder of the Circle, Vilém Mathesius.

Apart from the chapters on Trubetzkoy and Trnka, this part contains articles concerned with the higher levels of the language system, viz. syntax and the utterance level. Chapters dealing with the highest level address different aspects of utterance, in particular information structure, discourse markers and text build-up. Two chapters are devoted to points from the field of lexicology and phraseology.

Both Trubetzkoy and Trnka are the topics of two chapters. Trubetzkoy is presented as a phonologist, phonology having been the leitmotif of his short life. It was his pursuits of this language level that closely linked him with the Circle's spheres of interest prevailing before World War I. Michel Viel's presentation of Trubetzkoy's approach to phonology covers the broader context of his relation to England and the English language. In view of Trubetzkoy's wide knowledge of Caucasian and Slavic languages, in addition to French and German, his command of English was poor. However, this did not prevent him from including the

phonological system of English in his phonological analyses. Trubetzkoy found the English vowel system absurd because it flouts the rule of mutual exclusiveness of quantity and stress as phonological elements. Another vexed problem of the English vowel system was posed by the asymmetry between the system of short and long vowels. Here Trubetzkoy's close association with the Circle is most obvious in his criticism of Vachek's and Trnka's treatments of this point.

In his general appraisal of Trubetzkoy's linguistic merits Michel Viel comes to the same conclusion as the author of the second chapter on Trubetzkoy, Craig Callender: Trubetzkoy was a pioneer with ideas to be drawn on by further research. In Callender's chapter the point under discussion is the segmental status of geminates as viewed by autosegmental phonology on the one hand, and by Trubetzkoy on the other. The author poses the question of whether the representation of geminates within the framework of autosegmental phonology had a precedent in Trubetzkoy's work. Focusing on medial geminates he argues that Trubetzkoy anticipated the modern approach in his monophonemic conception of geminates on syllable boundaries and biphonemic conception where they occurred on morpheme boundaries. Autosegmental phonology has provided a theoretical model to represent geminates and a vast amount of cross-linguistic data in support of this view.

The two chapters devoted to Bohumil Trnka were both written by his former students. Rostislav Kocourek's comprehensive chapter first acquaints us with Trnka's academic career and achievements, recalls his definitions of linguistic structuralism, and discusses his views on such topics as langue and parole, laws and rules, the language of science and terminology, historical and comparative linguistics and disciplinarity. The main part of the chapter presents a thorough interpretation of Trnka's original and very broad concept of the linguistic sign, its asymmetry and transitivity. The distinctive and semantic sign functions pervade all four hierarchical levels of language, serving, in utterances, as instruments of intersubjective communication. This adds a humanizing aspect to language structure, and constitutes the basis of Trnka's epistemological strategy, namely construction of the language system on the basis of utterances.

The chapter by Libuše Dušková deals with a recurrent point in Trnka's work, the concept of neutralization. According to Trnka neutralization operates on all structural language levels, but in his own work it is mostly elaborated in phonology and morphology. The problem it poses on the higher language levels is the number of features involved. While in morphology neutralization involves form and meaning, in syntax, apart from form (structure) and semantic roles and/or sentence semantics, it also involves syntactic functions. On the utterance level the conditions for the instantiation of neutralization become even more complex, since here the basic units are the functions constituting the functional sentence perspective (the theme-rheme structure, topic-focus articulation),

which are determined by four factors, context, semantics, linearity and intonation, and lack a distinctive realization form. Instances complying with these conditions, if any, are a matter of future research.

The utterance level from the aspect of information structure is the topic of three chapters written, respectively, by Eva Hajičová, Martin Adam and Jana Chamonikolasová.

Eva Hajičová discusses information structure from the viewpoint of the relation of form and function. The reader will welcome an introductory survey of definitions of these two concepts as given by members of the Prague School, collected from different, not readily accessible sources. The body of the chapter is concerned with the communicative role of language and the position of topic-focus articulation in the form – function hierarchy. The author argues that topic-focus articulation is a semantically relevant part of the description of the sentence at the underlying level of language description. As such it belongs to language, the language system, rather than to parole understood as the domain of communication and discourse. From the point of view of the form – function relation as defined by the Prague School it is not precise to characterize topic-focus articulation (the theme-rheme structure) as an interplay of four factors since linearity and intonation are means or forms in the hierarchy, while semantics and context belong to the underlying level.

Martin Adam's chapter presents an application of the theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP) to a communicative macrofield constituted by a passage of biblical narrative. Whereas the FSP analysis of a basic distributional microfield, the clause, is a horizontal process with syntagmatic relations between the constituent segments, the FSP analysis of a macrofield involves two types of vertical relations, viz. co-referential strings (chains of communicative units with the same referent) and dynamic-semantic tracks formed by all the respective thematic, transitional and rhematic elements of the text. The horizontal and vertical relations ascertained in FSP analysis correspond to Ferdinand de Saussure's basic relations between the units of the system, viz. syntagmatic and associative. The extension of FSP analysis to communicative macrofields appears to enrich the set of methodological tools available to the analysis of text.

An FSP analysis applied to spoken language is outlined in the chapter by Jana Chamonikolasová, who compares accentuation of pronouns in English and Czech. As largely contextually bound elements, pronouns are disposed to function as themes, and hence carry low amounts of prosodic prominence. The author concentrates on instances where they carry the intonation centre (the nuclear tone) and become the rheme proper of the sentence. This is found where the pronoun is contrasted with, or selected from, a set of elements or where the accentuation is motivated by emotive attitude. While the English dialogues under examination display both types of rhematization, the Czech pronouns are

rhematized almost exclusively as a result of contrast or selection, emotive colouring of a message being achieved by lexical rather than prosodic means.

Chapters on the discourse and textual aspects of the utterance level are introduced by a detailed corpus study of the attention-getting devices *look*, *see* and *listen* by Karin Aijmer. Pragmatic markers of this kind appear to be context bound and indexically linked to a number of sociolinguistic features such as age, class and gender of the speaker. The author concentrates on the question of how adolescents use these devices differently from adults. Young people of equal status use many attention-getters to show that they belong to the same social group or network. Adults use them less frequently especially in the interruptive and floor-seeking function. In adults' speech, *look* and *listen* serve to draw added attention to an utterance, to provide metaphorical urgency for emphasis. In general *look* and *listen* are multifunctional as a result of their grammaticalization or pragmaticalization from imperatives of perceptual verbs. They have meanings related to discourse-management tasks as well as the social function to establish or maintain intimacy and social solidarity.

Pavlna Šaldová and Markéta Malá discuss discourse-pragmatic functions of modifying and adverbial participial clauses in non-final positions. Generally, more complex clause elements tend to be positioned after the verb (the principle of end weight), hence participles in preverbal position can be considered marked. The authors focus on identifying the discourse-pragmatic factors which cause participial clauses to be placed medially and initially. When considered from the viewpoint of the macro-structure of the text, the non-canonical position of these clauses appears to contribute to establishing and maintaining cohesive ties, to facilitate the introduction of a new topic into the text and may also serve as an explicit means of textual organization. The attachment rule is shown to obtain across the sentence boundary, its non-observance resulting in additional pragmatic inferencing of stronger semantic relations. The interaction between the micro- and macro-structure is pragmatically conditioned, which involves not only cohesive ties but also coherence semantic relations.

Renata Pípalová addresses the content aspect of textual themes. Textual theme is seen as the most static, unifying element embodying the subject matter treated in the respective text. It constitutes a thematic area which encloses three distinct layers arranged from the broadest to the narrowest, resembling a kind of a pyramid. The broadest, most diffuse layer derives from and reflects the comprehensive structure of the communicative event. The central layer of the theme is a complex hierarchized (cognitive) structure, in monologic text selected by the author, whose strategic decisions perspective the content in a particular way. In the narrowest layer the selected item is focused, thus gaining extra prominence. Even if a discourse subject remains the centre of attention throughout the discourse, it is always foregrounded against the respective

background, the broadest and the central layers, which are activated even if only implied.

The last three chapters have meaning in common. Vladislav Smolka seeks to identify the aspects that help resolve ambiguity. The questions he asks are to what extent ambiguities are detected, which factors render one interpretation easier to arrive at than another, whether they always have to be resolved and whether ambiguities in language communication reflect ambiguities in reality. Ambiguities are a matter of perception rather than production and hence are rarely intentional. Ambiguity of a syntactic structure is much more easily identified out of context since in authentic texts a structure is interpreted in a manner that fits into the context. Structural ambiguities are often resolved by semantic and pragmatic factors, including the language users' expectations about what is going to come next. As regards the last two questions, a fine discrimination of meaning is largely unnecessary, underspecification and approximation being the norm in language communication. The author concludes by noting analogies of ambiguous or indeterminate language structure in other fields, even in such as epitomize accuracy and exactitude.

Ambiguity is also dealt with in Stanislav Kavka's chapter on whims of context in the interpretation of idiomatic expressions. As in the case of structural ambiguities, indeterminacy between literal or figurative meaning of idiomatic expressions interpretable in both ways is resolved by the ›omnipotent‹ context. However, here context has to be conceived as a complex phenomenon in which the primary role is played by its co-situational component. The author presents two prototypical cases, one showing the process of biasing interpretation on the interlocutor's part, the key to the interpretation being provided by the context. The other example illustrates the way of selecting a proper idiomatic expression on the speaker's part. The choice from the available synonymous idiomatic expressions is shown to depend not only on the context which calls for a commensurate degree of expressivity, but also on the momentary mood of the speaker which the idiomatic expression reflects.

The chapter that closes the first part of the volume revokes one of Bohumil Trnka's topics, analogy, in regard to its impact on word formation. Aleš Klégr and Jan Čermák address the question of whether neologisms of the ›on-the-pattern-of‹ type demonstrate the operation of analogy as a word-formation process. Basing their analysis on the etymology block of the electronic *Concise Oxford Dictionary* they show that presumed analogical formations can be assigned to all major word-formation processes. From these they differ in displaying certain characteristic features: irregularity or unpredictability, morphemic reanalysis and semantic links between the pattern-providing word and neologism, which leads to the formation of lexical fields. The examined sample thus confirms the existence of analogy at two levels, viz. local analogy (the

traditional idea of analogy as a local mechanism) and extended analogy (providing a pattern for a series of formations). The authors conclude that rather than constituting a distinct word-formation type analogy is a motivated way of exploiting all word-formation processes to fill some immediate need.

As a whole the linguistic part of the present volume appears to display a shift of interest from the lower to the highest level of the language system, which reflects the general trends in the development of linguistics since the first decades of the last century. At the same time, it shows the wide coverage of present-day language studies encompassing diverse points outside the mainstream, approached by diverse methodology and from diverse aspects, needed to capture the multifarious nature of language facts.

I
Prague Structuralism: Founders' Legacies

N.S. Trubetzkoy, England and the English Language

In this chapter I intend to explore the complex relationship between (Prince) N.S. Trubetzkoy (Moscow 1890 – Vienna 1938) and languages, focussing on the one language he felt particularly uncomfortable with, i. e. English. Trubetzkoy never mastered the language, and consequently had limited access to literature in English. While he cherished Caucasian and Slavic languages,¹ used German and French as tools for communication, there was a language that was not close to his heart. Oddly enough, England and the English were strangers to him just as their language was.

1. Portrait of the Phonologist as a Polyglot

According to V. Poržezinskij, who supported Trubetzkoy's application to a post at the University of Moscow in 1913, besides his native Russian, the young prince mastered no less than three other modern European languages: German, French and Italian.

A quick computation of Trubetzkoy's bibliography (Havránek 1939) gives the following figures: with 51 references German comes first, just ahead of Russian (46 references); French lags far behind with 20 references, Czech is fourth (6 references, all contributions to the Prague Circle journal *Slovo a slovesnost*). There is one reference to Italian, and one to Polish. As for English there are none, apart from an entry in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Nevertheless these figures are misleading. Trubetzkoy's language *par excellence* was Russian. Most of his extensive correspondence is in Russian, in particular his letters to R.O. Jakobson, some of which could pass as unedited copies of articles. In Russian too are some of his works on Slavic philology and all

1 Both families are of special interest to him but only Caucasian languages are said to be inebriating: »это у меня всегда вроде запоя.« (Letter 81, 7 May 1931, 202).

his political and philosophical literature. There is also evidence that at least some of his pieces originally published in German had been translated from Russian.²

The main problem was that there was hardly any readership in Russian. From the day Trubetzkoy left his home country, it was clear that he would have to switch to French or German. French was his first choice. There is reason to believe that Trubetzkoy was more fluent in French than in German even though he had spent a year in Leipzig (1913). Jakobson (Trubetzkoy 1975, Letter 49, 9 July 1929, 137) trusted Trubetzkoy's French and he requested his help for his »Remarques sur l'évolution phonologique du russe comparée à celle des autres langues slaves« (1929). In Letter 162 of 11 August 1936 Trubetzkoy disclaimed any authority over French, and yet the suggestions he made were correct. Conversely *he* warned Jakobson that his German manuscripts should be subjected to revision by a German editor. For instance, concerning his German article »Zur allgemeinen Theorie des phonologischen Vokalsysteme« (1929), he says: »As for the manuscript I have to tell you first that I did not give it to a German for checking, so that here and there the language might be clumsy.« (Letter 43, 28 March 1929, 119)³ There is no evidence that he needed any such help in French.

However as time went by German took over from French. German had had a considerable influence on the making of the scientific terminology of Russian.⁴ The Russian aristocracy learnt French through their French governesses, but science was different. In Letter 49 mentioned above, Trubetzkoy complained about French; in this language, he said, instead of naming things, one has to describe them. However there were more serious matters to deal with. The German language was his paymaster so to speak, and he had to yield to pressure from his employers to write in German. »I *pray* you to publish my article about vowel systems in German« [»Zur allgemeinen Theorie der phonologischen Vokalsysteme«, 1929], he tells Jakobson. »Its appearance in French might cause me trouble here. The thing is there are always people here who don't like me, as a professor in Austria, writing in French« (Letter 44, 16 April 1929, 121).⁵ French would have done as well, for his French was flawless. By the time Trubetzkoy had reached the last year of his short life, he had stopped writing in French.

Czech he could read, but slowly, and all the more so as he had a cataract on one

2 For example »Gedanken über das Indogermanenproblem« (in German 1939, Russian original published in *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*, 1958).

3 »По поводу рукописи замечу, во первых, что я ее не давал проверять немцу, так что в ней вероятно есть шероховатости в смысле немецкого языка.«

4 See examples in Sériot (2006, 12).

5 »Мою статью о системах гласных *очень прошу* напечатать по-немецки. Появление ее по-французски могло бы здесь создать для меня неприятности. Дело в том, что здесь кое кто вообще недоволен тем, что я, будучи австрийским профессором, пишу по-французски.«

eye. He complains that his wife could do nothing for him in this respect because she could not read Czech. However he was lucky enough to secure the help of a student, Miss G. Hendenreich of Brno (Letter 139, n. 2, 7 March 1935, 325) and she opened to him the gates of *Slovo a slovesnost* although he had been critical of this periodical, and had blamed Jakobson for devoting too much of his time to it when he should have been at work on his book on Russian phonology (Letter 137, 25 January 1935, 363).

In fact it was letters and studies in *English* for which the help of Vera Petrovna was required, as she passed as an expert in this language (Letter 109, 25 July 1932, 252, n. 2). Otherwise a computation of Jakobson's Index of Trubetzkoy's *Letters and Notes* (Index revised by Sériot 2006) shows that Nikolaj Sergeevič had little interest in it. Out of the 188 languages or families of languages in the Index, English comes thirtieth, with only seven references.

2. Crossing the Channel

Trubetzkoy never crossed the Atlantic but he did cross the Channel twice. The first occasion was an invitation from the University of London, where from May 19 to 21, 1934, he gave three lectures on the North Caucasian languages (the third was still unprepared by May 13 but he rightly trusted the urbanity of his hosts). The second occasion was the Second International Congress of Phonetic Sciences held at University College, London, from July 22 to 26, 1935.

The two »London« letters (130 [Vienna, May 1934] and 139 [Swarzenau, August 3–4, 1935]) are certainly the most amusing in the bulk of Trubetzkoy's correspondence. The man who was the most serious of all as a man of science, could also be a satirist.

It all comes down to what the English have or do not have. Most strikingly, they do not have linguists, i. e. »linguists in the true sense of the word«, »real linguists«, »what we call linguists at home«. True, they do have a certain Firth but he is not good at general questions, and of course they have Gardiner (but he is not a linguist). Now what they have is an interesting medley: boisterous children playing different sorts of games under the benevolent supervision of Daniel Jones, shops which take registered letters, the right to walk on lawns, and most of all a monetary unit which divides into twelve sub-units, the said monetary unit ineptly called the shilling like the Austrian *Schilling*). Among the games they play is one about sounds and phonemes, whose ultimate goal is to find two sounds, as far apart as possible, that are members of a single phoneme.

The irony of the situation was that of the four volumes of *Travaux du Cercle Linguistique de Prague* already published, Trubetzkoy had read numbers 1, 2 and 4, and the sportive non-linguists who killed time playing with sounds and

phonemes had read number 3. Writing to Jakobson, Trubetzkoy did not have to say why: the book, B. Trnka's *On the Syntax of the English Verb from Caxton to Dryden*, Prague, 1930, is *in* English and *about* English.

Double fault.

During his first stay in England, Trubetzkoy was lucky enough to be surrounded by playful French-speaking gentlemen. Not so the following year.

Ignorance of English had been a source of frustration for several years. As a specialist of Caucasian and Slavic languages he had managed without English but as his interest in more general questions grew, he could not do without it. During his year in Leipzig, he had had Bloomfield as *tovarišč*, but now, with Bloomfield writing in English he could not even read *Language* without looking up every third word in the dictionary. In Letter 142 (17 May 1935, 335), convinced that the book might be of interest to him, he suggested that they should give it to some intelligent third party that could speak English, and have him sum it up for practical use.

By that time, Trubetzkoy had ceased once and for all to expect anything from the members of Jones's school, and had turned his attention to the works of specialists of African and Native American languages, anthropologists and ethnologists, either British or American. As a specialist of Caucasian languages, who as a young man had done some field work, he liked these people, and felt at ease with them. The English did a good job describing »exotic languages«, and although they did not have the slightest theoretical notion, he could »translate« their language into that of phonology (Letter 141, 30 March 1935, 332–23). On different occasions he praised Boas, Swadesh, Kurath and many others, all field-workers at one point in their lives and careers, and he spoke highly of Sapir, whom he undoubtedly considered to be his counterpart in the New World. He concluded the above-mentioned letter by saying to Jakobson: »If you and me lived in Anglo-Saxon countries, the phonological description of the world would be over.«⁶

His second stay in London was an unqualified disaster. Back in Vienna, he wrote to Jakobson:

I take no delay to give you my impressions of the congress. These are subjective impressions but I have had enough. It's always the same, same people who say the same things. Of course this is very subjective. I don't know if anyone feels the same. But I really think that there is no use getting together so often. (Letter 149, 3–4 August 1935, 341)⁷

6 »Живи мы с Вами в англосаксонских странах, фонологическое описание мира было бы уже готово.«

7 »Первым долгом сообщаю Вам впечатления от конгресса. Субъективное впечатление : надоело, всё тоже самое, всё те же люди, и говорят всё тоже. Но это, конечно, очень

Then comes a »less subjective« reason: »The vast majority of the communications were in English, so that I could not understand half of them.«⁸ His frustration was at its worst when he heard a French-speaking Dane, his friend V. Brøndal, speak in English.⁹

Not only was the Congress frustrating, it was also a setback for phonology. His followers elaborated on the nature of phonology or the difference between sounds and phonemes at too general a level. They did not make a good impression and gave the young science a bad name. Trubetzkoy himself failed to enrol new members. He also failed to join the discussion session on time . . . but it was cancelled anyway because there was nobody there who wished to talk. Generally speaking the organization was poor. There was no time for discussion between communications. The only comfort was that the worst enemies of phonology had not come because their leader (Doroszewski) had a broken leg.

The Congress dinner was worse than anything Trubetzkoy could have imagined:

After the farewell dinner, several members of the Congress produced pieces for entertainment, the one a humorous speech, the other a comic song. Under the present circumstances, it should be noted that the word *phoneme* always produced unanimous bursts of laughter. Horn read a poem in Middle English of his own invention, which described the Congress and ended with the following words:

wat is phonemes, wat is sunds?
twelf men haf twelf difinitiuins.

After that everyone quoted these lines, drawing unanimous applause (Letter 149, 3–4 August 1935, 344).¹⁰

In fact entertainment and social functions were plentiful. On Monday, 22 July »the members of the Congress were invited to tea by the Authorities of University College, London, and tea was served at 5 p.m. on the lawn in the front quadrangle of the College«. Bad luck, this is when and where Trubetzkoy who

субъективно. Незнаю, было ли это чувство у когонибудь другого. Но мне положительно кажется, что съезжаться надо пореже.»

8 »Громадное большинство докладов было по английски, так что половины я не понял.
Fifty communications were in English, eleven in German, and six in French.

9 However Trubetzkoy ascertained that there was no heresy in Brøndal's paper (Letter 149, 3–4 August 1935, 341).

10 »После прощального банкета были устроены »дивертисменты«, т.е. разные члены конгресса выступали, кто с шуточными речами, кто с песенками и т.д. Замечательно при этом, что слово »фонема« каждый раз вызывало дружные взрывы смеха. Horn прочел сочиненное им самим стихотворение на средне-английском языке, описывающее конгресс и кончавшееся словами
wat is phonemes, wat is sunds ?
twelf men haf twelf difinitiuins.

Эти слова потом всеми цитировались и вызвали дружные апплодисменты.«

was watching »some idiotic film« (Letter 149, 342) missed the discussion . . . that never was. The following day »there was a Reception at the Mansion House to which a number of the members went by kind invitation of the Lord Mayor« (who was inevitably absent), but the Lady Mayoress was not, and tea was served, and »the members were shown around the House«. Later there was an »excellent performance« of *Pygmalion*. On Wednesday, 24 July »there was a Government Reception at Lancaster House. The members of the Congress were received by the Rt. Hon. Oliver Stanley, M.P., President of the Board of Education«, and refreshment was provided (no mention of tea this time) and »the members spent a most enjoyable evening in Lancaster House and its delightful grounds«. On Thursday afternoon, »a number of the members had an opportunity, through the generosity of the Port of London Authority, of making an excursion by boat down the Thames«, and »tea was served on the boat,« and »they very much appreciated the kindness of the Port of London Authority in providing for them the most enjoyable trip«. As for the Congress Dinner that evening, »Prof. Lloyd James proposed the toast of the Phonetic Sciences« and there were further speeches (one by Prof. Daniel Jones), and »an informal entertainment given by members of the Congress«, which included recitations, a mock lecture on Middle English, »A Phonetic Experiment«, a demonstration of Sign Language, a recitation of Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale* (by the said Prof. Daniel Jones), and a humorous song entitled *The Modern Phonetician*, written and sung by Dr Palmer. »This programme was very much enjoyed by a large audience of the Congress and the guests, and the evening as a whole provided a fitting end to the social engagements of the week.«¹¹

But the Prince was not amused.

Trubetzkoy's English improved with time and practice, and two reviews of books in English were eventually published (admittedly in German), one about Ibo, the other about Hottentot. However the entry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (not so surprisingly »Caucasian languages« when Sapir's entry is »Central and North American Languages«) is obviously a translation.

11 Apart from the reference to the »idiotic film« all quotes in this paragraph are from *Proceedings of the Second International Congress of Phonetic Sciences* (Jones, Fry (eds) 1936, 318).

3. Twelf men haf twelf difinitiuins (indeed, indeed), and oon man hath tweye

In his *Grundzüge* (1939a, 108–110), Trubetzkoy refers to Jones's renowned *Outline of English Phonetics* (1932). In spite of the use of the word *phonetics* in the title, Daniel Jones was not free of all theoretical or phonological ambition.

Jones used the word phoneme frequently but his idea of the phoneme was poles apart from Trubetzkoy's. His main definition was somewhat reminiscent of set theory.¹² Considering he had taken a first degree in maths at Cambridge, this is not so surprising.

191. A phoneme is a family of sounds consisting of an important sound of the language (i. e. the most frequently used member of that family) together with other related sounds which take its place in particular sound-sequences.
(Jones 1932, 48)

All the examples given happen to be of consonants.

Jones goes on to complete the main definition:

198. Phonemes are capable of distinguishing one word of a language from other words in the same language. There is an English word /sin/ and another English word /sinj/. [...] The existence of such words is a proof that /n/ and /ŋ/ are separate phonemes in English.
(1932, 49–50)

So far, so good, still . . . If we turn to the chapter »The English Vowels in Detail«, we read:

241. There exist many shades of pure vowel-sound in Southern English. Of these twelve are of special importance for the foreign learner of English. They are represented in this book by the notation /i:, i, e, æ, a:, ɔ:, ɔ:, u, u:, ʌ, ə:, ə/.
(1932, 62)

Note the way Jones puts it: »Twelve are of special importance for the foreign learner of English.« As a foreign learner of English, I am entitled to ask for more but I am afraid that »more« could well be as unpalatable as Oliver Twist's gruel. See the following:

12 Eleven quotations are from the second edition of *An Outline of English Phonetics*, Leipzig, 1932, because it is the edition used by Trubetzkoy, but there were no substantial changes during the book's prolonged career.

242. Four pairs of these vowels may be considered as belonging to simple phonemes, viz long /i:/ and short /i/, long /ɔ:/, and short /ɔ/, long /u:/, and short /u/, long /ə:/ and short /ə/.
(1932, 62)

»More« is not exactly what we expected.

Let us now turn to the English vowels in detail. Consider English Vowels No 1: /i:/, and No 2: /i/, and let us have /æ/ as well, to make sure that we are not misreading Jones.

246. /i:/ is the member of the English i-phoneme used when the vowel is relatively long. [...] The letter /i/ without its length-mark stands for the members of the English i-phoneme used when the sound is relatively short.
(1932, 63, 65)

Compare now /æ/.

276. The English phoneme represented by the symbol /æ/ may be regarded as comprising only one sound.
(1932, 70)

There is no quibble about this. /i:/ and /i/ are sounds, both members of the English i-phoneme while /æ/ is a phoneme of its own. Even though /i:/ and /i/ are sounds, members of the English i-phoneme, Jones warns foreigners against confusion: »258. It is by no means uncommon to meet with foreigners who pronounce *rich* too much like *reach* and *sit* too much like *seat*.« (1932, 66) However this is a non-issue. These »sounds« are treated separately just because they are »of special importance for the foreign learner of English«.

Foreigners are always a problem!

We saw that the capability of distinguishing one word from the other was a defining property of the phoneme. If sounds cannot even do this, they are not phonemes, but if they *can* do this, it does not mean that they *are* phonemes. The capability of distinguishing one word from another is a necessary condition for a sound to be upgraded to phoneme but it is not a sufficient condition. Actually it appears – in the sense that there are no counterexamples – that it is a sufficient property for consonants but not for vowels.

Vowels are always a problem!

How come there are four pairs of vowel-sounds, each belonging to single phonemes? It seems that there is an unwritten rule specifying that when two vowels have the same place of articulation on the celebrated Jonesian trapeze, they are »sounds«. If they do not have the same place on the trapeze they are phonemes, unless they are »varieties« or »shades« of sounds. /i:/ and /i/ are

members of the i-phoneme, i. e. sounds with a subsidiary difference in articulation... How do we know all this? Well, well, well... The proof of the pudding could be in the symbol /i/ as if the symbol were not an artefact. To cut a long story short, the whole thing is rather chaotic, and Trubetzkoy was fully entitled to be sceptical about the phonology of Daniel Jones.

Jones claims that there are also nine diphthongs, all phonemes: /ei, ou, ai, au, oi, iə, εə, əə, uə/. And yet he says: »385. For the purpose of practical language teaching it is convenient to regard a diphthong as a succession of two vowels.« And just in case you missed the point he adds: »Thus in practical teaching it is convenient to regard the diphthong /ei/ as a succession two vowels /e/ and /i/, etc.« (1932, 96).

As a matter of fact, in individual entries rising diphthongs are defined in terms of grapho-phonemics (e. g. »/ei/ is the so-called long sound of the letter *a* as in *came*«), and centring diphthongs are defined in those of articulatory phonetics (e. g. »/iə/ is a diphthong which starts at about the position of the English short /i/ and terminates at about /ə, /«). There is no theoretical discussion at all in the chapter about diphthongs. It is not without reason that Jones assigns a number to each vowel and diphthong: from 1 to 21. The idea that there could be a structure underlying the vowels is unknown to him. From 1918 to 1964 *An Outline of English Phonetics* ran through nine editions each with at least »minor alterations« but Jones never reconsidered his theory. On his deathbed he still considered /i:/ and /i/ (the latter soon to become /ɪ/ in Gimson's revised edition) »members« of a single phoneme.

4. The Trouble with English

Each time Trubetzkoy mentions English he grumbles and complains: »As for English I have formed no opinion as yet.« (Letter 74, 28 January 1931, 191).¹³ The English language suffers from excessive interest. Reporting to Jakobson on Vachek's study of diphthongs (1933), he admits that Vachek is a brilliant young man but regrets that he should be misdirected:

It remains that I am not satisfied with Vachek's concrete conclusions, or more precisely with his theses. In my opinion, this is a »phonetic deviation«. It is difficult for a specialist of English to study phonology because the phonetics of English is very well documented and you fall under its influence against your will. Even

13 »Об английском языке я еще не составил себе никакого мнения.« Interestingly enough, this remark follows a discussion about the use of *Silbenschnittkorrelation*, or correlation of syllable cut, in German. See 5.

Vachek did not avoid this danger.
(Letter 115, 10 May 1933, 272)¹⁴

Thus, here he blames phoneticians for this constant dissatisfaction with English, there it is the language itself which is at fault. Referring to a new book by Trnka, *A Phonological Analysis of Present-Day Standard English*, Prague, 1935, he says that »the part on vocalism turns out to be poor« but this is because the English vowel system is »extraordinarily absurd« (Letter 142, 17 May 1935, 334).¹⁵

Trubetzkoy had toyed with the idea that there could be a relationship of some sort between the language of a people and the character of this people. In Letter 30 (22 December 1926, 98), he takes Czech to elaborate on this assumption:

For me, subjectively and intuitively, it is perfectly clear that between the general acoustic impression made by the Czech language and the psychological (and even the psycho-physical) features of the Czech people (the national character) there is some sort of internal link. This is an irrational impression, but who knows if beyond this the first inkling of a rational law is not hiding? To cut a long story short, I find fully justified the question as to not only why a given language, having chosen a particular path, has evolved this way and not that, but also why the said language, belonging to a certain people, has chosen this evolutionary path and not another one.¹⁶

In 1926, Trubetzkoy was indifferent to English. After a few years he was disturbed by this language. The account of his first visit to London in 1935 is reminiscent of the idea expressed in this passage. English did not follow the rules, any more than the English did. English was not a language among many, it was a puzzler, just like the English shilling or the right to walk on lawns. Trubetzkoy did not have the key to English phonology, or rather the key that had opened a hundred doors so far was useless with English. Actually, in 1935 Trubetzkoy was still

14 »Но, тем не менее, конкретными выводами, точнее тезисами Вахка я неудовлетворен. По моему, это – »фонетический уклон«. Англисту трудно заниматься фонологией, потому что уж очень хорошо разработана английская фонетика и невольно попадаешь под ее влияние. Этой опасности не избежал и Вахек.«

15 »В книге Трнки отдел вокализма слабават, но надо сказать, что английский вокализм – исключительно нелеп.«

16 »Для меня субъективно-интуитивно совершенно ясно напр., что между общим акустическим впечатлением чешской речи и чешским психическим (даже психофизическим) обликом («национальным характером») существует какая то внутренняя связь. Это есть иррациональное впечатление, – но кто знает, не скрывается ли за ним предчувствие какого то рационального закона? Т.о., в конце концов вполне правомерен вопрос не только, почему данный язык, выбрав такой то путь, эволюционировал так, а не иначе, – но и почему данный язык, принадлежащий данному народу, выбрал именно такой то путь эволюции, а не другой.«

unable to make sense of English phonology, and Jakobson failed to provide any help.

Jakobson and Trubetzkoy were convinced that if a given language did not meet the requirements of »phonology«, it was likely that the responsibility was with the linguist, not the language. If the problem could *not* be solved by phonologists (in the true sense of this word of course), this meant that the language in question was some sort Unidentified Phonetic Object. Thus they agreed that English was a hybrid:

Your considerations about the historical origin of the absurdity of English [...] and about the similitude with the Russo-Norwegian and Russo-Chinese jargons could very likely be true. I have talked a lot with the above-mentioned student of Jones's,¹⁷ and I have come to the conclusion that there was not one, but several systems in English, which differentiate partly by regional marks. As far as the standard language is concerned, it is an artificial compromise regulated by the orthoepic authorities (given that in America these authorities are not the same as in Europe). It is clear that under such circumstances the phonological aspect of language doesn't have much weight? (Letter 137, 25 January 1935, 317–18).¹⁸

Russo-Norwegian and Russo-Chinese were two languages that, at a certain point in history, were each used by two restricted communities in contact, for the purpose of communication. This is clear: the language of Shakespeare, Doctor Johnson, Queen Victoria and George Bernard Shaw is ... a pidgin.

Then, how did English possibly manage to force its way into the *Grundzüge*?

When Trubetzkoy met Jones in 1934, he had already definite ideas of what a phonological system could, and could not, be. For instance an arithmetic progression is not a model for a phonological system. Counting vowels from one to twenty-one in the Jonesian fashion is phonologically meaningless.

Consider now the following figures:

17 A. C. Lawrenson, Jones's man in Vienna and Prague (Letter 137, 25 January 1935, 135). Lawrenson had been sent by Jones to study phonology with Trubetzkoy.

18 »Ваши соображения об исторических причинах нелепости английской (и французской) фонологии и о сходстве с руссконоर्व. и русскокит. жаргонами кажутся мне чрезвычайно правдоподобными. Я теперь много говорил с вышеупомянутым учеником Джонса и пришел к заключению, что в английском языке не одна, а несколько систем, дифференцированных отчасти по локальному признаку. Что же касается до стандартного языка, то это есть искусственный компромисс, регулируемый ортоэпическими авторитетами (при чем в Америке авторитеты не те же, что в Европе). Ясно, что при таких условиях фонологическая сторона языка оказывается мало существенной.«

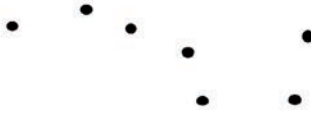


Figure 1 The Great Bear

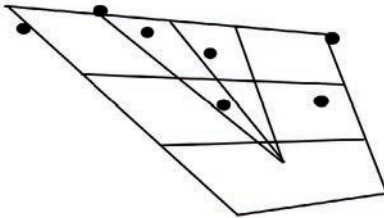


Figure 2 The Great Bear in Jones's trapeze

No human language, dead or alive, even yet unborn, has looked, is looking, or will look, anything like this, trapeze or no trapeze. In other words, the Great Bear is not a candidate for a vowel system.

Now is Figure 3 below a candidate for a vowel system?

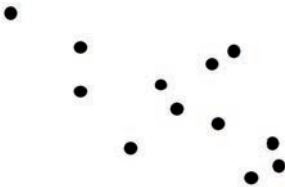


Figure 3 The English vowels (after Daniel Jones)

Don't say *no* too soon, because the dots are Jones's English vowels (with the omission of the trapeze), so let's have it back:

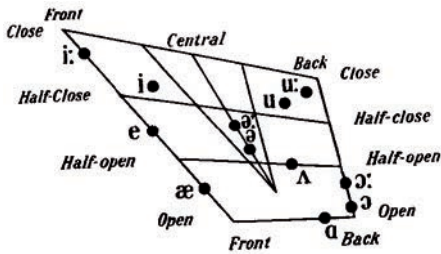


Figure 4 The English vowels in Jones's trapeze (1932, 63; adapted)

This figure is a magnified representation of the articulation of English vowels in a simplified geometrical figure, but phonology is not phonetics made simple. For Jakobson and Trubetzkoy I would say that this figure is at best the pumpkin in the fairy tale, and a pumpkin that it is a long way from turning into Cinderella's carriage.

So, let us forward the question to Jakobson and Trubetzkoy. They were genuine discoverers, and they firmly believed that they had found the rules or the laws of phonology. And that it worked!

Take Jakobson. Inspired by the contact with Czech after he moved from Moscow to Prague in late 1920, he set up a rule providing that quantity and stress as phonological elements were mutually exclusive. In fact, in Jakobson's native Russian quantity is not used for the intellectual differentiation of words, while stress can be, and often is: *ja plaču* = *I weep* ~ *ja plaču* = *I pay*. Czech works the other way round. Quantity is a phonological element: *dal* with short *a* means ›gave‹ and *dál* with long *a* means ›further‹, while stress is ›fixed‹ (always on the first syllable) and thus deprived of any phonological function. In Jakobson's own words (1922, SW 5, 23):

Dynamic word stress is to be found as a phonological element only if it is accompanied by non-phonological quantitative relations.

This is perfectly clear because more than once we perceive strength difference more weakly than differences in duration. From this alleged law derives another: *If in the phonological system of any language, following phonetic change, came to coexist two independent elements, dynamic word stress and quantity, then either is forced out of the phonological system.*¹⁹

19 »Динамическое ударение слова как фонологический элемент возможно лишь постольку, поскольку ему сопутствуют внеграмматические количественные отношения.

Это вполне понятно, ибо мы различия в силе слышим в несколько раз слабее, чем различия в длительности. Из приведенного закона вытекает другой закон:

An avid reader, Jakobson had found in Husserl (1913, 261 – 266) a model for the formalisation of what he could hear in the street. Husserl's *Verhältnisse der Fundierung*, i. e. relations of foundation, were well adapted to describe phonological systems, confirming the philosopher's claim that »the generality of these relations [left] a clear field for all kinds of differences« (1913, 264).²⁰ Basically, as revised by Jakobson (1929, 22) they come up as three implicational rules:

- If *a* exists, *b* also exists;
- If *a* exists, *b* is missing
- If *a* is missing, *b* is also missing.

The exclusion of either quantity or stress as »phonological elements« falls under the second rule.²¹ There are many similar rules which come under one or another of the three Husserlian *Verhältnisse der Fundierung* but the mutual exclusion of stress and quantity is of special interest to us because it disqualifies English as a human language for it appears that English has both dynamic stress and quantity »as phonological elements« (*an insult* ~ *to insult* and *reach* ~ *rich*).

For Trubetzkoy, it was not Czech, it was fresh air that did the trick. It all happened during the summer of 1928 as he was vacationing in the Austrian countryside. The weather was gorgeous, and he took many walks (Letter 41, 19 September 1928, 116). As he did not have the right books with him, he took it upon himself to reconstruct the vowel systems he knew by heart (34 altogether). Back in Vienna he added a dozen more. The main conclusion was this: all the systems boil down to a small number of types and can be represented by symmetrical patterns (as by quadrangular or triangular patterns ...).²² The rule applies to »correlations«, as recently defined by Jakobson.²³ If the description

если в фонологической системе какого-либо языка в результате фонетических изменений возникает сосуществование двух независимых элементов: динамического ударения слова и количества, то один из этих элементов исключается из фонологической системы.«

- 20 »Die Allgemeinheit dieser Verhältnisse läßt ja reichlichen Spielraum für die mannigfaltigsten Unterschiede.«
- 21 Jakobson stood by this rule to the end. »Languages where both length and stress appear as distinctive features are quite exceptional, and if the stress is distinctive it is mostly supplemented by redundant length.« (Jakobson, Halle 1956, 481)
- 22 The concept of markedness which introduces some sort of in-built asymmetry in language was still to be discovered.
- 23 »A phonological correlation is made of a series of binary oppositions defined by a common principle which may be construed independently of each pair of opposite terms.« (»Une corrélation phonologique est constituée par une série d'oppositions binaires définies par un principe commun qui peut être pensé indépendamment de chaque couple de termes opposés.«), »Proposition au Premier Congrès international de Linguistes«, 1928 (endorsed by N. Trubetzkoy and S. Karcevskij). Quantity is a correlation in Czech, but not in French even if

reveals that the system is asymmetrical, the description has to be wrong.²⁴ As can be guessed there is much cleaning to do to turn Jones's pumpkin into a phonological carriage. Many at the time were prepared to meet the challenge. I will say a few words about the four that are cited in the relevant passage of *Grundzüge*, Vachek, Trnka, Lawrenson, Malone, beginning and ending the last part of this chapter with the Master.

5. Picking up the Gauntlet

There is no criticism of Jones's inconsistencies in Trubetzkoy's published writings. It is enough that he should report in one of the letters to Jakobson that people say that Jones is a simpleton (Letter 130, [May] 1934, 299).²⁵ Instead he blamed Vachek for a frontal attack against the Great Man that he thought was a blunder (Letter 112, 30 November 1932, 262).²⁶ As he would not have two enemies, »General« Jones and the English language, he chose the English language, and used Jones's *Outline* as phonetic evidence from a native.

The first reference to English in Trubetzkoy's scientific works is in the German article »Zur allgemeinen Theorie der phonologischen Vokalsysteme« (1929, 53). Roughly, there are three problems with English.

- *Problem no. 1* is the apparent coexistence of quantity and stress as phonological elements.
- *Problem no. 2* is the constitution of the subsystem of the so-called short vowels.
- *Problem no. 3* is the constitution of the subsystem of the so-called long vowels.

Problem no. 1. In the first part of this article, Trubetzkoy had pledged allegiance to Jakobson's phonological flag (1929, 42). It is understood once for all that stress and quantity are mutually exclusive. Explaining that it is either one or the other, but never both, he used intensity as a blanket term. Intensity can be realized either as stress or as quantity. It can be maximal or minimal. Minimal intensity is realized at phonetic level by unstressed or short vowel phonemes. Maximal intensity is similarly realized either as stressed or long vowel phonemes. Nev-

we take the opposition short a (*patte*) ~ long a (*pâte*) to differ phonologically in terms of quantity.

24 Letter 44 contains a refutation of Jakobson's presentation of Old Slavic, because it is asymmetrical.

25 »Он порядочный балда, говорят.«

26 J. Vachek (1932) »Daniel Jones and the Phoneme«, in *Charisteria Gvilelmo Mathesio quinquagenario a discipulis et Circuli linguistici Pragensis sodalibus oblata*, Prague.

that Trubetzkoy's analysis could be improved. He had no second thoughts about short vowels and adopted Trubetzkoy's view without batting an eyelid, but he reshuffled the long vowels to include the rising diphthongs /ai/ and /au/ (but not /ɔi/) which had been left out by Trubetzkoy.

Figure 7 The vowels of English (J. Vachek 1933, 133)

i:	ɜ:	oʊ		i	aʊ			
eɪ	ɔ:	oʊ		ɛ	ɒ		i	ə
aɪ	a:	aʊ		æ	ʌ			
Extensive vowel phonemes				Limited vowel phonemes			Vowel phonemes in unstressed syllables	
Vowel phonemes in stressed syllables								

As for Jakobson's law, he quite agreed with it. He simply denied the existence of quantity because he acknowledged the existence of only two quantitative pairs in English, /i:/ and /i/, on the one hand, /u:/ and /u/ on the other, while rejecting /ɔ:/ and /ɔ/ and insisting that it takes at least three pairs to make a »correlation«. In the French article »La phonologie actuelle,« Trubetzkoy (1934, Pariente (ed.) 1969, 152) gives examples with three pairs of correlated phonemes but he never says that two is not enough.

Trnka (1935, 13) confirms the validity of Jakobson's law as well. He also confirms that there are quantity and stress oppositions in English. What's the trick, then? Easy does it. *To insult* ~ *an insult* is a *morphological* opposition, not a phonological one. Once again Jakobson's law is saved.

Trnka (1935, 15) may have taken his cue from Trubetzkoy (1929, 43), in which the author states that there is after all a difference between phonetic stress and quantity, in as much as there is one and only one stressed vowel in a word while there might be several long vowels, but adds that this is not an objection to the phonological principle of phonological equivalence of stress and quantity because this remark belongs to the domain of morphology, not phonology.

Trnka (1935, 13) further agrees with Trubetzkoy and Vachek about the system of short vowels. »If we put Prince Trubetzkoy's theory to the test for English, it certainly holds good. The system of English stressed short vowels is a quadrangular one.« However he does not think much of Trubetzkoy's view of long vowels, and offers the following:

Figure 8 The long vowels of English (Trnka 1935, 14)

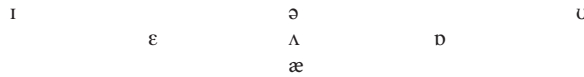
i:	iə	uə	u:
eɪ	ɛə	əʊ	oʊ
aɪ	aɪə	aʊə	au
ɑ:			ɔ:

At that point in the development of phonological theory, references to the linguistic consciousness were judged scientifically valid, and Trnka disqualified Vachek's argument about the pair /ɔ:/ and /ɔ/ by appealing to the linguistic consciousness of natives: »English speakers« he claims »feel the three long vowels unmistakably correspond to the short ones and this feeling of correspondence entitles us to the assumption that the correlation of quantity is represented in English.« (1935, 11)

The next authors cited by Trubetzkoy (1939, 1949, 127 – 28), Lawrenson and Malone, are both native speakers of English. It is interesting to see if they are of the same mind.

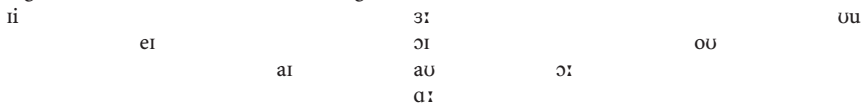
A.C. Lawrenson (1936, 133) rejects the quadrangle for short vowels in favour of a triangle:

Figure 9 The checked vowels of English (Lawrenson 1936, 133)



As for long vowels, he makes a point of including /ɔi/, and uses the middle row as shelter for the homeless, /ɜ:/, /ɔi/, /aʊ/ and /ɑ:/. Referring to /ɔi/ and /aʊ/, he specifies: »In the strictly phonetic sense, they are not central vowels or diphthongs at all; from the point of view of the correlation of timbre [front vs back], they must be allotted the mixed row.« (Jones and Fry (eds) 1936, 133) The reason is that /ɔi/ has a back nucleus and a front glide, and /aʊ/ has a front nucleus and a back glide. Interestingly, Lawrenson suggests that where we thought was a correlation of quantity, there is a correlation of checked and unchecked vowels – which is called *Silbenschnittkorrelation* in German, a correlation of syllable cut. Once again, Jakobson's law emerges unscathed.

Figure 10 The unchecked vowels of English (Lawrenson 1936, 133)



Last in Trubetzkoy's bibliography comes the American scholar Kemp Malone (1936). Malone blames Trnka for his definition of /ɔ/ as a mid vowel, and of /ʌ/ as a low. He also disagrees with the treatment of the unstressed vowel, taking /ɪ/ as one phoneme, whether stressed or unstressed, and regards /ə/ in Trnka as a mere variant of /ʌ/. Unlike Trnka he claims that the centring diphthongs and triphthongs are not diphthongs or triphthongs at all but sequences of several independent phonemes.

Figure 11 The vowels of English (Malone 1936, 162)

Short vowels		Long vowels		glides	
i	u			ii	uu
e	ʌ		ɜ:	ei	ou
æ	ɒ	ɑ:	ɔ:	ai	au

Following the 1929 article, Trubetzkoy is back with the *Grundzüge* (posthumous, 1939). He first claims that the so-called »short« vowels pose no problem at all. All four researchers, he says, agree that they form a quadrangular system comprising two classes of timbre (understand »front« and »back«) and three degrees of sonority (understand »open«, »mid«, »closed«). Not all, in fact. As we saw Lawrenson has a triangle with three degrees of timber and three degrees of sonority. True, the rest have a quadrangle, but Trubetzkoy (1929), Vachek (1933) and Trnka (1935) put /ʌ/ on the bottom line, and /ɔ/ just above. As we have seen, Malone does not agree, and reverses the position of /ʌ/ and /ɔ/.

Trubetzkoy ignores Malone's criticism. Yet evidence is on the side of Malone.²⁸ None of the phonologists concerned takes the trouble to justify his choice. And yet the case is clear. Trubetzkoy, Vachek and Trnka join together a mid front vowel with a low back, and a low front with a mid back. If for the sake of phonology such an operation is permitted, then we are just within a step of turning the Great Bear into the representation of a phonological system.

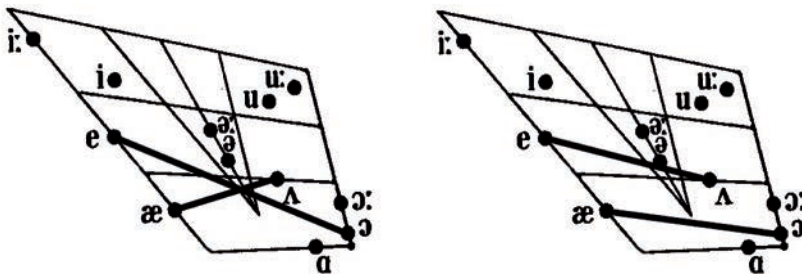


Figure 12 Phonology at the crossroads (Left: Trubetzkoy 1929, Vachek 1932, Trnka 1935; right: Malone 1936)

Of the five writers studied, Trubetzkoy is the one who goes the furthest into the monophonemetic hypothesis, taking in all types of diphthongs, including centring diphthongs and the so-called triphthongs as phonemes, excluding only /ɔi/. As for the critical question of whether there is a correlation between any of the so-called short and long vowels, Trubetzkoy (1939, 1949) comes to the conclusion that what we have is a *Silbenschnittkorrelation*, as in some German

28 In their celebrated *Sound Pattern of English*, 1968, Chomsky and Halle stand by Malone with a [- low - high] feature bundle for /ʌ/, just like /e/.

dialects. A short vowel in fact is a vowel which is interrupted in its development by the following consonant while a »long« vowel is »fully developed«.

Silbenschnittkorrelation is the key Trubetzkoy had long been looking for while refraining from using it when he first found it. It is more than likely that he had passed on word and concept to Lawrenson. As early as 1931 (Letter 74, 28 January 1931, 227) he had made use of *Silbenschnittkorrelation* to describe German dialects but he had been unable to make up his mind to apply it to English. He eventually took the plunge. Once again Jaksobson's law was spared. The system of »long«, or »uninterrupted« vowels of English (*»voffablaufendun Vokalphoaneme«*), possibly the richest of all of his descriptions of phonological systems in *Grundzüge*, respects his own laws of symmetry as well. It looks as if English had at last been readmitted into the concert of languages.

Figure 13 The uninterrupted vowels of English (Trubetzkoy 1939a, 109)

i:	iə	ə:	uə	u:
ei	ɛə		ɔə	ou
ai	aɪə		auə	au
		a:		

Yet the real nature of the phonological difference between »long« and »uninterrupted«, and the reason why quantity precludes the existence of stress as a phonological element, while *Silbenschnittkorrelation* does not, remain unclear.

Comforted by the opinion of the majority as far as short vowels were concerned, Trubetzkoy had changed his mind radically about long vowels. In 1929 he was desperate to show that diphthongs were not diphthongs but long vowels. Writing in 1937 – 38, he was eager to show that long vowels were not long vowels but diphthongs. In the meantime he had read Vachek and Trnka, he had taken their criticism into account, and he knew that the younger generation was eagerly waiting for the Prince-Professor to put a final end to the debate. He was perfectly conscious that his »ingenious theory« was not as yet clear on »minor points« (Trnka 1935, 10). He was no less eager to comply.

There is no doubt that the system that Trubetzkoy put forward is »elegant« and more »powerful« than those of his predecessors. Whatever his intention was, he had captured the reflexes of the Middle English long vowels (outer columns) and the output of *r* influence (inner columns).

As in many other languages though, the English phonological system is not fully symmetrical. Once upon a time there was a triangular system for short vowels. In some Northern dialects the system has remained unchanged. In Southern British English, English /u/ has given birth to /ʌ/. /u/ is still alive though, and very much so. /ʌ/ is a maverick, which, starting from the /u/ po-

sition, has been drifting for several centuries through the wilderness of the centre of the trapeze, a strange bedfellow for front /æ/ (see Figure 12). Unlike its look-alikes /ai/ and /ei/, the phoneme /ɔi/ does not take part in any alternation. The idea that English is made up of different dialects was far from ridiculous after all, but what language is not?

Many objections to Trubetzkoy's presentation of the English vowel system come to mind. He adopted Trnka's definition of /ai/ as front and /au/ as back. This is fine if you take the etymons, Middle English /i/ and /ū/, but it is more difficult to swallow that /au/ is a back vowel. How come the triphthongs, by definition characterized by bisyllabicity, are treated as simple phonemes? Nobody will deny Trubetzkoy the right to take the vowel of *lore* as a centring diphthong if he sees it that way, but not that of *law*. He simply forgot, or just did not know, that when followed by *r*, the reflex of long *o* as in *lo* has merged with the sound of *law*, but that only the former has a diphthongized variant. Where has /ɔ:/ as in *law* gone then? *On pourrait multiplier les exemples*, Trubetzkoy himself used to say.

Talking at the Prague Structuralism and Language System Conference, Craig Callender (2007) said: »Trubetzkoy was a pioneer, he was ahead of his time, he did not have the modern apparatus of phonology, but he had the ideas.« I could not agree more. His treatment of English is an exception. The so-called phonemes of English have been forced into a beautiful but rather artificial arrangement.

As this chapter is coming to a close I am inclined to see Trubetzkoy both as prisoner of Jakobson's law and of his own laws, as *heautontimoroumenos*, the self-punisher, a great mind, but one that made its own shackles. Meanwhile though, phonological shibboleths are respected. All is well that ends well.

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Trubetzkoy, Autosegmental Phonology and the Segmental Status of Gemimates¹

1. Introduction

The most commonly-accepted approach in modern phonological theory for the representation of gemimates is the Autosegmental framework, according to which gemimates constitute one phonological segment, but are long and occupy two X-slots (or morae) in a timing tier. In this chapter I will argue that Trubetzkoy anticipated this approach in two ways. First, he claimed that gemimates were long monophonemes at syllable boundaries, and as such closed one syllable and opened another. Second, he said that gemimates were biphonemic in languages where they occurred at morpheme boundaries. Both of these claims were later fleshed out by linguists working within the framework of Autosegmental phonology (cf. Goldsmith 1990).

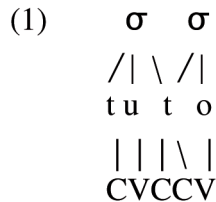
The chapter has the following structure: in section 2 we will discuss the representation of gemimates in Autosegmental phonology. In section 3 we will discuss some cross-linguistic evidence for the representation described in section 2. Section 4 will cover true and apparent gemimates, with attention to the importance of morpheme boundaries to our analysis of the segmental status of gemimates. Section 5 will discuss the extent to which Trubetzkoy anticipated the ideas of Autosegmental phonology, and section 6 will offer some concluding remarks.

1 For their helpful suggestions, I would like to thank Eric Holt and Kurt Goblirsch, along with Jan Čermák and the participants of the 2007 Prague School and Theories of Structure meeting. Mistakes and omissions are my own.

2. Gemimates in Autosegmental Phonology

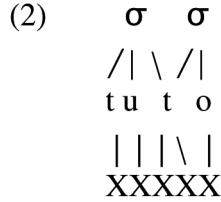
Let us begin with a working definition of gemimates. A geminate can best be understood as a long consonant at a syllable boundary. Gemimates are monosegmental, yet bisyllabic, are in phonological opposition to singleton consonants in a language, and are produced in one articulatory gesture. Because gemimates occur at syllable boundaries, they are typically found word-medially, yet there are some cases of gemimates in non-medial position (see Callender 2006, 30–43 for an overview of non-medial gemimates).

Goldsmith (1990), originally published in 1976, formulated the Autosegmental analysis of gemimates. He made four generalizations about gemimates. First, gemimates act like sequences of consonants, rather than consonants marked [+long]. This is accounted for in Autosegmental theory by the fact that they receive two positions on the timing tier. Second, gemimates are allowed in positions where sequences of consonants are disallowed. Third, epenthesis rules that break up consonant sequences fail to apply if they would split the halves of a geminate. Finally, gemimates are inalterable; rules either affect an entire geminate, i. e., both halves, or fail to affect it at all (1990, 77). In order that we might see Autosegmental theory in action, example (1) shows how it would model the Italian word *tutto* ›everything‹, which contains a geminate /t/.

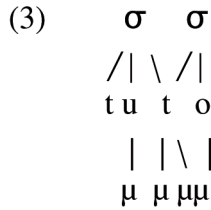


We see that there are three tiers in the model. The top tier, the syllabic tier, shows us that we are dealing with two syllables. The second tier is our segmental tier, where we see that our geminate /t/ is only one segment. It is, however, connected to two syllable nodes. The bottom tier is a timing tier, and represents length. Our monosegmental /t/ is connected to two C-nodes, which shows us that it is long. With one model we are thus able to capture the facts that gemimates are 1) bisyllabic, 2) monosegmental, and 3) long. Most phonologists who work on gemimates agree with this model (see for example Kraehenmann 2001, 29).

Levin (1985) proposed X-slots instead of C and V slots, which has the potential advantage of leaving out redundant segmental information. In X-theory, *tutto* would look like this:



Within Autosegmental phonology, Moraic Theory is another alternative to CV and X-slot theories. In earlier uses of the term *mora* (see Trubetzkoy 1938, Lehiste 1970), morae were simply units of phonological quantity, and there was no difference between morae or timing units (X or CV slots), which had not yet been proposed. Within Moraic Theory, Italian *tutto* would be modeled as follows:



Hayes (1989) is a leading proponent of Moraic Theory. His analysis differs from segmental theories that use CV or X structure, in that it attempts to capture the language-specific nature of prosodic structure. Hayes claimed that language-specific weight contrasts are not captured in segmental theories. For example, Hayes claimed that in Latin, CV syllables are light, whereas CVC and CVV are heavy. In Lardil, by contrast, only CVV is heavy; CVC and CV are both light (1989, 254 – 55). Whereas X theory assigns uniform timing slots, moraic theory allows for language-specific mora assignment. In Latin, a VC sequence would be assigned two morae, whereas in Lardil it would only be assigned one. However, as Kraehenmann (2003) notes, moraic theory requires stipulations; ad hoc mora assignment is necessary for each language. In theory, we could just as easily assign only one X slot to the rhymes of CVC syllables in Lardil.

Hayes also claimed that moraic theory accounts for compensatory lengthening better than segmental theories do. For example, Ilokano has a rule of compensatory gemination; stops are lengthened before glides: *bagi + en = baggyen* ›to have as one's own‹.² In X theory, this is accounted for via ›double flop‹. The /i/ in *bagi + en* flops onto the X slot of /e/; /g/ is then lengthened via a

2 In this chapter I have chosen to retain the orthographic conventions used by the authors cited, since they do not interfere with the argument that I am advancing.

second flop onto the X slot formerly occupied by /i/. The problem, according to Hayes, is that /gg/, which is of course in coda and onset position, occupies the X slots that had formerly contained an onset and a nucleus (1989, 272–73). Moraic theory ostensibly eschews the problem in the following manner: /i/ is delinked from its mora, and /g/, which is not attached to a mora, is delinked from its syllable node. /g/ and /i/ are then linked to the following syllable, and /g/ spreads leftward to the mora that had been left stranded by /i/ (Hayes 1989, 271).

Kraehenmann (2003, 26) criticized moraic theory on the grounds that it does not predict word-initial geminates, since syllable onsets are weightless. However, there are some languages that allow word-initial geminates in sandhi, including the Swiss German dialect that Kraehenmann studied. Another problem with moraic theory, Kraehenmann claims, is that not all singletons are weight-bearing, whereas all geminates are. Therefore, it is possible to have languages in which syllables are heavy if closed by geminates and light if closed by singletons. However, she notes that in most languages VC syllables are either categorically heavy or light (2003, 23). Nevertheless, Zec (1995) provides evidence that there are some languages that treat VC syllables as heavy in some cases and light in others, although Zec did not address the issue of syllables being closed by geminates vs. singletons; she was interested in the sonority of the coda consonant.

I think that both X-slot (or CV) theory and moraic theory are able to handle geminates. Because neither X-slot theory nor moraic theory is empirically real, but only a model and expository device, I am not particularly disturbed by the fact that a geminate arising through compensatory lengthening occupies timing-tier slots that had formerly been an onset and nucleus. The existence of syllable-initial sandhi geminates could present a problem for moraic theory's claim that syllable onsets are categorically weightless, but that could be rectified by stipulating that, since geminates are always weight bearing, they are exempt from the rule that syllable onsets are weightless. This could be accomplished by ranking the constraints (as in Optimality Theory, for example), such that the universality of geminate weight (in all positions) is ranked above the rule that onsets are weightless. Furthermore, since a geminate is linked to two syllables, the mora-bearing half could be in the coda of the first syllable, which would allow for word-initial geminates, despite the prohibition on moraic onsets. Therefore, either model will work fine for representing geminates. All we really need is to be able to represent the fact that geminates are long, monosegmental and bisyllabic.

In fact, Keer (1999) saw no need to distinguish between moraic theory and CV or X-slot theory for his analysis; he only compared moraic theory to Selkirk's two-root theory. I agree that, for the purposes of modeling geminates, it is a rather insignificant point whether we use morae or timing slots. Early use of the

word *mora* (cf. Trubetzkoy 1938a, 168) referred simply to quantity, and did not differ substantively from the timing units of X-slot or CV theory.

3. Evidence for a Multi-tiered Account

In this section we will cover some of the arguments that have been advanced in favour of a bisegmental vs. a monosegmental analysis of geminates. In section 3.3, it will become clear why the Autosegmental framework enjoys support by most phonologists working on geminates.

3.1 Bisegmental Analyses of Geminates

Braune and Mitzka (1886) was one of the earliest bisegmental analyses of geminates. We must bear in mind though that they did not specifically address the question of the segmental status of geminates, and were not doing a phonological analysis. They did, however, compare geminates in OHG to orthographic doublets in modern German, and emphasize that geminates were realized as two independently pronounced consonants in OHG (1963, 89).

Catford also favoured a bisegmental analysis of geminates, noting that »in spite of the continuity of articulation the bi-segmental nature of the sequence is made clear by the presence of a syllable division within the period of maintained articulation« (1977, 210). Catford's contribution is also noteworthy for its distinction between »phonetically geminate sequences«, which are found in English *bookcase*, *good dog*, etc, and actual geminates, which are tautomorphic. We shall see below that the issue of morpheme boundaries is important to determining whether we are dealing with *true* or *apparent* geminates, to borrow the terminology of Goldsmith (1990).

Loporcaro (1996) cites a number of Italian dialects in his argument in favour of a bisegmental analysis of Italian geminates. In Tuscan dialects, for example, /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ become diphthongized in open syllables, but not in syllables followed by consonant clusters or geminates: /vʲɛːne/ »comes«, but /ɛrba/ »grass«, /pɛtːo/ »chest«. In other words, geminates pattern like consonant clusters, in that they close preceding syllables and block diphthongization. This, Loporcaro argues, is evidence to support a bisegmental analysis of Italian geminates (1996, 166). However, like the other dialect data that Loporcaro presents, these data are also consistent with an analysis of geminates as long, bisyllabic monosegments.

In the dialect of Lunigiana in Northwestern Tuscany, /ɛ/ and /ɔ/ are raised in open syllables (Bottiglioni 1911, Masetti 1972). Thus we find /meo/ »honey« and /foko/ »fire« alongside /ɛrba/ »grass«, /fɛrːo/ »iron«, /pɔsta/ »handful of hay« and

/fjɔk:o/ ›bow‹. Once again, we find that the geminated forms pattern like the forms with consonant clusters, i. e., the first syllable is closed by the first half of the geminate, and the sound change is blocked (Loporcaro 1996, 167).

In the dialect of Agnone, in Molise in southeastern Italy, /a/ and /i/ are diphthongized in open syllables (Ziccardi 1910): /seane/ ›whole‹, /veçoine/ ›near‹, but /maldə/ ›mortar‹, /kwaλ:ə/ ›rennet‹, /çitrə/ ›boy‹, /fil:ə/ ›son‹. Here we find /a/ → /ea/ and /i/ → /oi/ in open syllables, but not in closed ones. Since we do not find the change before geminates, we may conclude that the first half of the geminate closes the syllable and blocks the change, similar to consonant clusters (Loporcaro 1996, 169).

Selkirk (1991, 126) also argued in favour of a bisegmental analysis, with geminates represented as two root nodes. In an attempt to refute claims about the inalterability of geminates, she cites evidence of laryngeal fission, i. e., modification of one half of a geminate (1991, 128). In Klamath, a Native American language of Oregon, for example, voiceless, voiced and glottalized stops are neutralized, becoming voiceless within syllable rhymes. This rule affects the first halves of geminates as well, such that glottalized [p'p'] becomes [pp'], and [dd] becomes [td]; so when the /d/ of [godɪ:lɑ] ›goes under‹ is doubled, we end up with a geminate with laryngeal fission, namely [gotdɪ:lɑ] ›goes around under‹. The rule apparently applies irrespective of whether the geminate is underlying, or arises via morpheme concatenation or reduplication (Selkirk 1991, 130). What this shows is that it is indeed possible for rules to affect one half of a geminate. This is important, because the claim that geminates either block phonological rules, or undergo them entirely (i. e., with both halves affected), is central to monosegmental analyses. Although such cases of laryngeal fission may be rare, Selkirk's data cannot be dismissed. They indicate that the segmental status of geminates, while typically monosegmental, may be language-specific. So while there is a universal tendency for geminates to be monosegmental, this may not to be an inviolable law. On the other hand, in the case of [gotdɪ:lɑ], we are probably not dealing with a true geminate (see section 4).

3.2 Monosegmental Analyses of Geminates

Trubetzkoy (1938a, 1938b, 1958) was one of the first scholars to offer a monosegmental analysis of geminates. He was aware, however, that geminates differed from singleton consonants. Just like the Autosegmental phonologists working on geminates in the 1970s and 1980s, he knew that geminates sometimes exhibited behavior that was not like singleton consonants. Trubetzkoy's ideas will be the focus of further discussion in section 5. Before then, let us consider some other proposals for monosegmental analyses of geminates.

Abercrombie (1967, 82) defined a geminate as a segment extending across two syllables, as opposed to a long consonant, which was confined to one. Nevertheless, he used the term ›double consonant‹ rather than ›geminate‹. Seynnaeve claimed that there was no real difference between a long consonant and a geminate except syllabification (1987, 435). A similar analysis was also proposed by Goblirsch (1999, 57).

Dieth and Brunner (1943) provided instrumental phonetic evidence for a monosegmental analysis of gemimates, although they were more concerned with the phonetic data themselves rather than their phonological interpretation. They used instruments to determine oral air pressure, air movement within the oral cavity, tongue pressure in dental consonant articulations and movement of the lower jaw and larynx (1943, 739–41). According to their experiments, gemimates are produced in one articulatory gesture, not two, which incidentally was one of Trubetzkoy's criteria for single phonemes (Trubetzkoy 1958, 51–52). Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996, 92) and Kraehenmann (2001, 29) also argued in favour of a monosegmental analysis of gemimates based on the fact that they are normally produced in one articulatory movement in most languages. However, as Jeanette Denton has pointed out, one continuous *series* of gestures may be a more appropriate description of the facts, as closure + release are really two articulatory gestures (personal communication).

Dieth and Brunner argued that the difference between a long consonant and a geminate is that a geminate contains a syllable boundary, which is ascertainable as a minimum using phonetic tests (1943, 738). The nature of the minimum depends on the consonant in question. For the stops /t, d, p, b/ they ascertained a minimum of intraoral air pressure during production of the geminate. For /t, d, n/ they found a minimum of muscular tension, and for the fricatives /s, ʃ/ they found a tongue pressure minimum, but an air pressure maximum. Similarly, Bohnenberger (1953), working on Alemannic and Swabian dialects of German, claimed that there is an audible pause in the middle of geminate consonants.

One potential criticism of the phonetic evidence in Dieth and Brunner (1943) is that it does not prove that gemimates are one phonological segment, i. e., a bisegmental analysis of geminate stops would not necessarily predict two air pressure curves in an instrumental phonetic analysis. This is a valid point, as phonetics and phonology are separate domains. They are not entirely unrelated however, and while Dieth and Brunner's data do not give us definitive proof for a monosegmental analysis of gemimates, they do provide another piece of the puzzle.

Keer (1999), working within Optimality Theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993), also favors a monosegmental analysis, because gemimates behave like monosegments in several respects. In Faroese, for example, preaspirated simplex velars palatalize before /i/, and so do gemimates. So *va^hki* becomes *va^hçi*

›wake‹, and *la^hk:i* becomes *la^hč:i* ›lower‹. The fact that palatalization affects the entire geminate, and that the form **la^hkč:i* does not occur, is evidence that Faroese geminates are monosegmental (Keer 1999, 22).

Trumper et al. provided evidence for a monosegmental analysis of geminates in Italian based on the fact that vowel epenthesis does not occur in geminates. So while forms like *psicologia* → *pisicologia* ›psychology‹ and *tecnico* → *techinico* ›technician‹ are possible for consonant clusters, geminates cannot be split by epenthesis (Trumper et al. 1991, 332). Thus forms such as **tutito* (<*tutto*) ›all‹ or **solilevare* (<*sollevare*) ›lift‹ are never produced by native speakers of Italian.

Luschützky (1984) made a similar claim for Italian. In his study, participants were asked to insert a CV syllable, either [ta] or [ra] after each syllable in polysyllabic words. In 21 out of 29 cases, geminates were split. Luschützky argued that the remaining 8 cases were evidence that geminates were monosegmental, and that orthographic interference was to blame for the 21 cases in which subjects split the geminates (1984, 154). Although this is possible in theory, there are some problems with Luschützky's study. First of all, if there were only 8 cases in which geminates were not split, this does not provide convincing evidence in favour of a monosegmental analysis. Furthermore, Loporcaro disputes Luschützky's claim on the grounds that some of the syllabifications which his subjects were required to produce violated Italian phonotactic rules. For example, Luschützky reported [pel.lic.cia] ›fur‹ as one syllabification. This would mean that his subject had produced either [peltaličtača] or [pelraličrača]. Since both [čt] and [čr] are disallowed in Italian, either variant would constitute a violation of Italian phonotactic rules (Loporcaro 1996, 155).

While Luschützky's claims may have been successfully challenged by Loporcaro, evidence for a monosegmental analysis of Italian geminates also comes from the tendency of geminates not to break, i. e., the tendency for one half of a geminate not to be changed or lost. Hurch-Tonelli (1982) argued that geminates are not broken in slips of the tongue. Lopocaró disputed this idea, stating that geminates are sometimes broken, as in *sarebbe troppo* → *sarebbe tromp* ›it would be too much.‹ He does admit that such instances are rare, but argues that the tendency toward non-breaking may be a by-product of the close coarticulation of geminates (Loporcaro assumes a bisegmental analysis of Italian geminates). However, in *tromp* (<*troppo*) it is likely that we are simply dealing with consonant shortening because of vowel apocope, since Italian does not have word-final geminates. What is unclear though, is the source of the nasal in *tromp*, which Loporcaro does not discuss.

Zamboni (1976) provided evidence that Italian geminates may be alterable. In *pjalla* → *pjaula* ›planer‹, we have what appears to be the first half of a geminate becoming a vowel. Another possible analysis though, would be geminate shortening subsequent to diphthongization. This would make sense, since

Italian gemimates are dispreferred after long vowels. Thus, VC: could have become a disfavoured syllable type, namely V:C:, before finally becoming another acceptable type, V:C.

3.3 Compromise Analyses

Lehiste (1970, 44) argued that gemimates could be mono- or bisegmental, depending on whether they behave like clusters in the language in question. She cited preliminary studies that she had performed on Estonian, using electromyographic recordings, which, she claimed, show two clear curves for the activity of the orbicularis oris, a sphincter muscle that surrounds the mouth. This, she claimed, may be evidence of bisegmental gemimates in Estonian (Lehiste 1970, 44). She went on, however, to cast doubt on whether this is enough to justify a bisegmental analysis of Estonian gemimates, since the language has a long/short consonant opposition word-finally. This, she wrote, weakens the case for analyzing gemimates as clusters (1970, 45). So while she favoured a bisegmental analysis, she seemed to have been taking note of the type of data which would inevitably lead to the pre-Autosegmental analysis of Kenstowicz and Pyle (1973), which we will discuss presently.

Kenstowicz and Pyle (1973) was one of the first articles on Autosegmental theory. Although they favoured a bisegmental analysis of gemimates, as is evident in the title of the article, they were clearly moving toward an early Autosegmental analysis, in a sense rediscovering what Trubetzkoy knew more than three decades earlier. They cited evidence from Sierra Miwok, an Amerindian language of California, in which gemimates behave like clusters in several respects. For example, vowels are shortened before both clusters and gemimates, as in *tuyá:n* (present) → *tuyánn* (past) ›to jump‹. Furthermore, word stress falls on the first stem vowel if it is followed by a consonant cluster or geminate: compare *nákpa* ›to catch up with‹, *wímki* ›to spear‹, with *lúwwa* ›to speak‹, *mílli* ›to sing‹ (Kenstowicz and Pyle 1973, 28).

Kenstowicz and Pyle also mentioned evidence from metathesis, however, which points to the integrity of gemimates in the language. Past tense stems in Sierra Miwok have the syllable shape CVCVCC (1973, 30). Kenstowicz and Pyle proposed three types of verbs for the language. Type I verbs, as in *kica:w* ›to bleed‹ → *kicaww* (past) achieve the required syllable shape by gemination. Type II verbs, as in *celku* ›to quit‹ → *celukk* (past) achieve the required syllable shape by metathesis and gemination. In Type III verbs however, which have gemimates, no metathesis takes place. One would expect metathesis, as we find in Type II verbs, if the gemimates were composed of two segments. Instead, the geminate is shortened, and a geminate glottal stop is attached to the end of the stem: *hamme*

›to bury‹ → *hameʔʔ* (past) (1973, 28). (Notice that they presume the existence of word-final geminates). Thus, in Sierra Miwok, there are three processes that conspire to produce the required syllable shape (CVCVCC) for past tense verb stems.

They reason that, since medial geminates are not split by an excrescent vowel via metathesis, yet medial clusters are, geminates are not exactly like clusters (Kenstowicz and Pyle 1973, 31). Similarly, they note, geminates are not split by epenthesis in Kasem, a language spoken in Burkina Faso and Ghana (1973, 39) or in Tunisian Arabic (1973, 40). So although the authors cling to a bisegmental analysis, they are nevertheless aware of the phonological integrity of geminates, which is a key reason why most scholars favour a monosegmental analysis of geminates. Kenstowicz later embraced Autosegmental theory (1982), and clearly, he and Pyle were already aware of the odd behavior of geminates.

Leben (1980) provides another early Autosegmental analysis of geminates. He cites evidence from Hausa, where long consonants, which may be geminates, behave like single consonants with respect to plural formation, but have the same distribution as consonant clusters. Hausa plurals are formed in the following manner: 1) in roots with clusters, plurals are formed via epenthesis and suffixation: *kask-* → *kasaakee* ›bowls‹, *birn-* → *biraaanee* ›cities‹. 2) If the root has a short vowel and ends in a single consonant, the consonant is reduplicated, with vowel epenthesis between the two consonants: *dam-* → *damaamee* ›monitors‹, *wur-* → *wuraaree* ›places‹, 3) If the root has a long vowel and ends in a short consonant, -y is added, with vowel epenthesis before it: *zoom-* → *zooaaayee* ›hares‹, *kiif-* → *kiifaayee* ›fishes‹. If geminates in Hausa were CC sequences, one would expect that they be formed via epenthesis between the two segments, i. e., like the first type, *kask-* → *kasaakee*. Instead, they are formed like the third type: *gamm-* → *gammaayee* ›head pads‹, *tall-* → *tallaayee* ›soup pots‹ (Leben 1980, 497). Since geminates are not split by epenthesis in Hausa plural forms, yet clusters are, this is evidence for a monosegmental analysis of geminates.

However, geminates have the same distribution as consonant clusters; the following syllable types are disallowed: *C:V/*CCV, *VC:/*VCC, *C:C/*CC:/ *CCC, whereas VC:V and VCCV are permissible (Leben 1980, 499). In other words, in cases where geminates (represented by C:) are disallowed, clusters (represented by CC) are also disallowed, and conversely, where one is allowed, the other is as well. Since Hausa plural formation points to a monosegmental analysis of geminates, yet the distribution of geminates points to a bisegmental analysis, Leben proposes an Autosegmental account of geminates, utilizing multiple tiers.

Abu-Salim (1980) also knew that geminates could behave in ways that were similar to both single segments and clusters. He provides evidence from Palestinian Arabic that geminates behave like clusters in some respects, and like

single segments in others. As evidence for the monosegmental nature of gemimates, Abu-Salim cites their behavior with respect to epenthesis. In most Palestinian Arabic words with final consonant clusters, the cluster is broken by epenthesis if the word is followed by a pause, or if it has a suffix beginning in a consonant. For example, *furn* ›oven‹ becomes *furun* before a pause, and *furun-ha* when a possessive suffix is added. Not all words conform to this pattern, but the majority of them do (1980, 2). However, if the word has a geminate, it is not broken by epenthesis. *ʔimm* ›mother‹, for example, remains *ʔimm* before a pause, and becomes *imm-na* ›our mother‹ (and not *ʔimim-na*) when the suffix *-na* ›our‹ is added. These are both environments where epenthesis should be expected if gemimates were clusters (1980, 6).

The only gemimates which can be broken are those that arise as a result of concatenation at morpheme boundaries, as in *fut-it* (< *fut-t*) ›I entered‹ (cf. *fut-ti* ›you, f. sg. entered‹) (Abu-Salim 1980, 7). It is of course arguable whether these are gemimates at all, or merely ›apparent gemimates‹, i. e., adjacent identical segments (cf. Goldsmith 1990).

Abu-Salim's evidence that gemimates behave like two segments is limited to the fact that they are spread over two syllables, as in *ʔim.mi* (1980, 8). His evidence does however raise questions about whether gemimates must be spread over two syllables. Before consonants, gemimates are syllabified entirely in the first syllable; *ʔim.mi* becomes *ʔimm.na* ›our mother‹. Similarly, we find *kimm.na* ›our sleeve‹ and *sitt.na* ›our grandmother‹ (1980, 6–7). Abu-Salim assumes bisegmental gemimates in most cases, but argues for a ›geminate collapse rule‹, which collapses two consonants into one long one in cases like those mentioned above (1980, 8).

Kenstowicz (1982) provides evidence from Tigrinya, a Semitic language spoken in Ethiopia, for an Autosegmental analysis of gemimates. In Tigrinya, /k/ and /q/ are spirantized. This occurs both morpheme internally and at morpheme and word boundaries in the language: *merkab* (inf.) → *räxäbä* (3sg.m. perfect) ›find‹, *kälbi* ›dog‹ → *ʔä ti xälbi* ›the dog‹. However, when it comes to gemimates, spirantization only applies to those which occur as a result of two identical consonants in contact at morpheme boundaries. Thus we find no spirantization in words such as *fäkkärä* ›he boasted‹, which contains an underlying geminate, but we do find it in words like *meraxka*, which arises from *merak* ›calf‹ coming into contact with *-ka*, the second person possessive marker (Kenstowicz 1982, 109). Goldsmith would probably call these apparent gemimates, and as we shall see in our discussion of McCarthy (1986), some evidence suggests that morpheme-internal gemimates differ from gemimates that occur across morpheme boundaries. This will be the subject of the next section.

4. True and Apparent Gemimates

Goldsmith (1990) distinguishes between true and apparent gemimates, the former being single segments that are multiply associated, and the latter being adjacent identical segments (1990, 80). The distinction, he contends, is not phonetic, but purely phonological. (Indeed, this would seem to be borne out in later studies (cf. Lahiri and Hankamer 1988), that illustrate that both tautomorphic gemimates and gemimates arising via morpheme concatenation are phonetically long). True gemimates, Goldsmith wrote, are morpheme internal, whereas apparent gemimates occur at morpheme boundaries (1990, 81). This claim was also made by McCarthy (1986), as we will see momentarily. Evidence for a distinction between true and apparent gemimates comes from the fact that the two types behave differently. In Tigrinya, for example, we saw that spirantization applies only to apparent gemimates, i.e. sequences of identical consonants at morpheme boundaries (cf. Kenstowicz 1982, 109).

McCarthy (1986) provides evidence that gemimates behave like clusters at morpheme boundaries. His arguments are based on the Obligatory Contour Principle, which he claims is a universal prohibition on adjacent identical segments. He finds evidence for the OCP in Afar, a language spoken in Ethiopia (1986, 220–22). Afar allows gemimates, but blocks syncope if it would result in two identical consonants coming into contact. This not only provides evidence for the OCP, but also for a monosegmental analysis of gemimates, which do not incur OCP violations. Afar has syncope before stressed suffixes: *xámila* → *xamlí* ›swampgrass (acc./nom. – gen.)‹. However, when two identical consonants would come into contact, syncope is blocked: *midadí* ›fruit‹. Now, if the identical consonants in question are heteromorphic, syncope is not blocked: *as-is-e-yo* → *asseyyo* ›I will cause to spend the day‹ (1986, 220–22).

In Tonkawa, a Native American language of Oklahoma and Texas, syncope is also blocked between identical consonants. So while we have *notoxo* ›to hoe‹ → *notxo*? ›he hoes it‹, syncope fails to apply in *hweawa* ›to die‹ → *hewawo*? ›he is dead‹ (McCarthy 1986, 223–24). Like Afar, Tonkawa allows identical consonants to come into contact via syncope, since the consonants in question are heteromorphic: *taʔane* + *niʔo:ɣta-* → *taʔan(n)osʔo:ta-* ›to stretch‹ (e.g. a rope) (1986, 225). In order to account for these data, McCarthy represents different morphemes on different Autosegmental tiers.

McCarthy goes on to discuss Tiberian Hebrew (1986, 234–35) and Iraqi Arabic (1986, 241), both of which also block syncope between identical consonants, again with the exception of heteromorphic consonants. In Damascene Arabic, by contrast, syncope is also blocked between identical consonants, but there is no exception for heteromorphic consonants. McCarthy

claims that this is due to tier conflation, i. e., the morphemes no longer reside on separate tiers (1986, 241–42).

There are two other possibilities: the OCP may be a language-specific phenomenon, as suggested by Kenstowicz (1982). A look at McCarthy's Damascene data also raises the possibility that the sequences would be too long if syncope were to apply between identical heteromorphemic consonants. McCarthy provides the following examples: *madd* + *et* ›she stretched‹ → *maddəto* ›she stretched it‹, *hatt* + *et* ›she put‹ → *hattəto* ›she put it‹, *fedd* + *et* ›sliver of‹ → *feddəto* ›your (f. sg.) sliver‹ (1986, 242). Syncope would produce sequences such as **maddto*, **hattto* and **feddto*, all of which have extremely long sequences of alveolar stops. Perhaps this is the issue here, rather than tier conflation.

In summary, we can say that there is evidence to support a distinction between morpheme-internal gemimates and gemimates at morpheme boundaries. We will see in the following section that this distinction was already at least partially present in the work of Trubetzkoy.

5. Trubetzkoy as a Pioneer

In this section I will discuss the extent to which Trubetzkoy anticipated the Autosegmental analysis of gemimates. I will argue that, although he did not yet have the theoretical apparatus characteristic of Autosegmental phonology, he had most of the ideas. Therefore, we can say that Trubetzkoy was well ahead of his time.

Trubetzkoy defined a geminate as a two-part monophoneme. Furthermore, he said that gemimates were bisyllabic and contained two morae (1938a, 164 and 168). In other words, Trubetzkoy provided us with a prose description of the Autosegmental model illustrated in section 2, and he did so in 1938. What Trubetzkoy described as a single, two-part phoneme with two morae is captured in Autosegmental phonology as single segment on a segmental tier, connected to two timing tier slots. Trubetzkoy's claim that gemimates were bisyllabic is captured in Autosegmental phonology by the fact that a single segment is connected to two syllable nodes.

Although Trubetzkoy described gemimates as monophonemes, he knew that they were unique consonants. Specifically, they violated three of the conditions he would later propose for single phonemes, namely that monophonemes may not be divided over two syllables, may not be longer than other single phonemes, and may not occur in phonological positions normally occupied by two phonemes (Trubetzkoy 1958, 50–54).

For Trubetzkoy, consonant duration was incidental; gemimates were crucially two-part phonemes. The singleton/geminate contrast for Trubetzkoy was

therefore one of one-part vs. two-part phonemes (Trubetzkoy 1938b, 120). In this respect, Trubetzkoy is at odds with modern phonetic studies, which indicate that geminates are typically 1.5 to 3 times longer than singletons (Ladefoged and Maddieson 1996, cf. Kraehenmann 2001 and 2003). Furthermore, perception studies indicate that constriction duration is the most reliable phonetic cue in the singleton/geminate contrast (see for example Lisker 1957 and 1958, Lahiri and Hankamer 1988, Cohn, Ham and Podesva 1999, and Kraehenmann 2001 and 2003).

Trubetzkoy also tackled the issue of monophonemic vs. biphonemic geminates. He argued that the difference was based on a geminate's morphological status. Specifically, he argued that geminates were biphonemic in languages where they occur at morpheme boundaries, and monophonemic in languages where they occur morpheme-internally (1958, 156). This is very similar to the analyses offered decades later by Goldsmith and McCarthy. There is one crucial difference, however: Trubetzkoy did not address the possibility that one language may have both types of geminates.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, we can say that Autosegmental phonology is greatly indebted to Trubetzkoy. While he did not yet employ the theoretical model, in other words, he did not have the tree structure of Autosegmental phonology, he knew about the unique segmental and syllabic status of geminates. He also knew about the relevance of morpheme boundaries to our analysis of geminates.

This is not to say that Trubetzkoy had all of the answers, or that Autosegmental phonology had nothing new to say. Autosegmental phonology has provided the theoretical model which most phonologists use to represent geminates. Furthermore, it has provided us with a wealth of cross-linguistic data, which has provided support for Trubetzkoy's, and ultimately for its own, analysis. Finally, although Trubetzkoy was on the right track for distinguishing morpheme-internal vs. heteromorphemic geminates, he did not consider the possibility that one language may have both types of geminates; this was another new contribution of Autosegmental phonology. So while Autosegmental phonology has made some new contributions to our understanding of geminates, if we want to understand its theoretical underpinnings, Trubetzkoy's work is the first place to look.

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On Trnka on Linguistics and Signs

1. Professor Bohumil Trnka (1895–1984)

Some of his students thought of him as of their Professor Sloe, because the Czech word *trnka* corresponds to the English *sloe* ›the small bluish black fruit of blackthorn with sharp astringent taste‹. Some linguists may wonder about the Czech pronunciation of Trnka's surname, which occurs in my text over one hundred times. Well, here it is, in approximate articulatory terms: The name is pronounced with an unaspirated [t], with a one-flap syllabic [r], velar nasal, unaspirated [k] and unreduced [a]. The word has two syllables, with stress on the first.

Bohumil Trnka was born one year before Roman Jakobson and passed away two years after him. He was, in 1926, one of the co-founders of the Cercle linguistique de Prague (Prague Linguistic Circle, *PLC*), a member of its steering committee and its honorary secretary practically right up to the interruption of its activities in 1950. He was one of the big three Angli(c)ist members of the Prague School of Linguistics and of *PLC*'s early years. The other two linguists were Vilém Mathesius, Trnka's senior (1882–1945), founder and moving spirit of the English Department and supervisor of Trnka's thesis, a genuine functionalist (cf. F. Daneš 2005), and Josef Vachek, Trnka's junior (1909–1996), Mathesius's devoted pupil exploring the English and Czech language systems and their dynamics, phonologist, remarkable teacher of the history of English language and defender of the status of written language, author of informative and interpretative volumes about the Prague Linguistic School, which put it back on the anglophone linguistic map after the WWII interruption (cf. Dušková 1994).

Some of the biographical facts mentioned are available from Vilém Fried's ›Introduction: a brief survey of the life and work of Bohumil Trnka‹ (Trnka 1982, 1–19), which was partially based on Trnka's notes. Bibliographical supplements of Trnka's works, as well as articles at the occasion of round anniversaries from his 70th to 85th birthday were successively published by Jiří Nosek (see Trnka

1982, 17 – 18). The one-hundredth anniversary of Trnka's birth was honoured by O. Leška (*ČMF*, vol. 78, no. 2, 1996, 66 – 78).

In 1925 Trnka published the monograph *Syntactic Characteristics of Anglo-Saxon Poetic Monuments* and, in 1930, the monograph *On the Syntax of the English Verb from Caxton to Dryden*, which had been accepted as his habilitatio. He took a very active part in international linguistic conferences in the pre-WWII period and, of course, in the various activities of the PLC. So, he knew several important linguists who stayed in Prague, converging on that city, moving from Russia in the East, and from Germany and Austria in the West. Some taught at the German Prague University and/or lectured at the meetings of the PLC, for example Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), a great linguistically inspiring philosopher born in the Moravian town of Prostějov (Prossnitz), and the logician Rudolf Carnap (1891 – 1970), a prominent member of the Vienna Circle, who lectured in Prague in 1931 – 1935.

Trnka's research in phonology brought its first result with the publication of *A Phonological Analysis of Present-Day Standard English* in 1935, four years before Trubeckoj's fundamental phonological work *Grundzüge der Phonologie*. Trnka became a member of the Royal Bohemian Society of Sciences in 1930, a member of the Philological Society in London in 1934 (its honorary member in 1973) and of the Czech Academy of Sciences and Arts in 1940. The Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences honoured him, in 1970, with the Golden Plaque named after the Czech grammarian Josef Dobrovský, whose unromantic, rationalist approach to language Trnka appreciated (Trnka 1982, 50 and 16 – 17, note 19).

After 1948, Trnka devoted his energy to lecturing, writing his condensed fundamental articles, and publishing university textbooks and he was the moving spirit of newly instituted professional bodies of linguists and philologists, in his capacity as president of the Circle of Modern Philologists and as chairman and convenor of the monthly meetings of the Work Group for Functional Linguistics, a group of specially selected linguists which »was one of the means by which Trnka wanted to keep the Prague School tradition alive« (Trnka 1982, 14). I am pleased to report here that one of the members of that Group was this Department's present leading linguist and grammarian Professor Libuše Dušková. I should perhaps also mention that, in the nineteen-sixties before my long sabbatical, Professor Trnka invited me to present papers on synonymy, terms and definitions at the Group's meetings.

Trnka was Professor of English Philology and Older English Literature in the English Department of the Faculty of Philosophy (Philology) of Charles University from 1925 to his retirement in 1970, and he continued lecturing almost up to his eightieth birthday in 1975 (cf. Trnka 1982, 3). His philological knowledge, philosophical erudition, epistemological drive, and patient but firm insistence

on his principles gave him a stature to be reckoned with in university cognitive structures.

Roman Jakobson, internationally the best known member of the Prague Linguistic Circle, who wrote an ›Afterword‹ for Trnka's *Selected Papers in Structural Linguistics* (1982, 383–384), characterized Trnka's »fabulous consistency and steadfastness« like this:

Free of any opportunism and time-serving accommodation, Bohumil Trnka's work offers a marvellous example of the harmonious development of stable methodological premises [...] no transient circumstances were able to divert him from the fundamentals of his scientific endeavour.

(Trnka 1982, 384)

The Afterword is very positive, expressing exceptional collegial esteem, with only a shade of delicate suggestion of possible points of disagreement between the theoretical views of the two linguists.

2. Selected Topics in Trnka's Linguistics

2.1. Trnka's Definitions of Linguistic Structuralism

Trnka's linguistic theory is sometimes characterized as structural, sometimes as functional, sometimes as structural-functional. The first of his substantive collections of papers has the title *Selected Papers in Structural Linguistics* (1982), the title of the second, posthumous, collection is *Chapters on Functional Linguistics* (1990). This is reflected in the definitions of Prague linguistic structuralism. Let me first quote the definition which was formulated by Trnka, and discussed and approved by members of Trnka's Work Group:

Structuralism may be defined as the trend of linguistics which is concerned with analysing relationships between the segments of a language, conceived as a hierarchically arranged whole.

(Trnka 1982 [1958], 70)

The words *conceived as* in the definition specify that the analysis should be based on the *hypothesis* that relationships between segments of language constitute a hierarchically arranged whole (the concept of *hypothèse* occurs in Hjelmslev's definition of structuralism; 1971, 28). Implicit in this definition is that there may be – and are – different hypotheses and different theories or ›trends‹.

Quite important are the precisions that follow the definition, commenting on the ›relationships between the segments of language‹: They stress that it was, at

that stage, impossible to say »whether the segments [of utterances] or the relationships are primary«, that »the relations of a segment are recognised by its properties« and that »every segment is constituted by its properties« (ibid., 70 – 71). That means that segments have properties and through those properties acquire mutual relations. The facts, i. e. segments, are seen in abstract relations. There is opposition of fact versus abstraction, the former insisting on determination of facts, the latter on the value of structural understanding. I use here the word *fact* for segments of texts, not in the sense of relations, or relationships. I do not use it in the sense of relation, despite Saussure's statement that: »Any linguistic fact consists of a relationship, and nothing but a relationship«, which the note on the same page proclaims to be »one of the main principles of the structuralist approach« (E 2006, 188, n. 32; F 2002, 263). This reminds us remotely of the Chomskyan questionable understanding of data as

the intuitions which native speakers have about their language, particularly about which strings do or do not correspond to well-formed sentences.
(Trask 1993, 70)

No doubt that relationship abstractions are the basis of theories, particularly – as I believe – in the specific procedure of comparison, which determines relations. That is a natural explanation as to why Trnka prefers to base his theory on relationships between segments, even if he allows for the importance of the segments themselves and their properties. Let us recall that Trnka expressed a belief shared with G.W. Leibniz that existence

is not given as an aggregate of substances, but as a system of relations and as the relations between constituted classes.
(Trnka 1990, 47)

A complementary, ›functional‹ definition of linguistics given by Trnka in 1981 (1990, 29), claims that linguistics is

an independent science, science *sui generis*, differing from logic and psychology, a functional science of intersubjective communication by means of sign entities and relations.

If the former definition explains the structural component of Trnka's linguistics, the latter states the independence of linguistics and formulates its functional component, emphasizing communication and the linguistic sign. This understanding of linguistics represents Trnka's concentrated effort whose goal I perceive to be in the fusion of the structural and functional components by means of a redefinition of the functionality of the sign (dealt with in chapter 3

below). Mathesius's term *functional linguistics* is sometimes used to denote this delimitation of linguistics. We could also note that the first, ›structural‹ definition insists on »relationships between the segments« while this ›functionak‹ definition emphasizes »sign entities *and* relations«.

That linguistics (like language) is *sui generis* (of its own kind, rather than, as is sometimes written, in its own right) means that they are characterized by the sign function, which substantiates the independence or autonomy of linguistics, because signs — as I would prefer to add — are, by their double-faced character of form and meaning (perceptibility-cum-intelligibility), situated between the two extreme ontological positions, and also because language laws and rules may be different from the laws of exact sciences (see 2.3 below).

2.2. System and Language Materials (langue and parole)

According to Trnka and his Work Group,

the true objective [of linguistic work] is the analysis of [...] utterances of all kinds, both spoken and written.
(1982 [1958], 70)

This primary objective of analysing utterances is further explained in Trnka's condemnation of the Saussurean dichotomy *langue-parole*:

What F. de Saussure describes as ›parole‹ is regarded by the Prague linguists as utterances (or parts of utterances), in which a code of inherent structural rules is to be detected.
(1982 [1958], 77)

In his article published in 1964 (Trnka 1964, 33 – 40), Trnka states this even more explicitly:

the results of our discoveries cannot be projected [as on page 9, not: ›protected‹ as I have it in my copy on page 92], so to say into the world of phenomena and create a false dichotomy of a body of phenomena *versus* its laws discovered (or to be discovered) by investigators.
(1982, 92)

Saussure's *langue-parole* dichotomy has been generally considered to be »the lynchpin of structural analysis« (Carol Sanders in Saussure's *Writings*, 2006, xxvi), but the *Cours* contains passages pointing out a serious problem. Certain renderings in the *Cours* seem to suggest a hypostasis of *langue*, e.g. »la langue,

distincte de la parole, est un objet qu'on peut étudier *séparément...*» (31; italics added). Even more pronounced is Trnka's following criticism of the Saussurean *langue-parole* doctrine:

Saussure's dichotomy does not exist as a linguistic factor. Language is always only a text which is never completed, and when a linguist discovers its laws, he arrives at a system of rules, which he analyses and builds up into a grammar. (1967, 28; translated from the Czech)

Trnka quotes one of those pithy sayings of which classical Latin has the secret: »Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu«, which exists in several variants, the simplest being: »Nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu«. This principle of empiricism was also used by the Prague-related French linguist Émile Benveniste (cf. Dubois et al. 1994, 65), at the 9th International Congress of Linguists in 1962 in a linguistically modified version: »nihil est in *lingua* quod non prius fuerit in *oratione*« (Benveniste 1966, 131; emphasis added). This principle leaves, nevertheless, a certain doubt, a suspicion that there is, that there must be, something more.

Trnka does not mention that Leibniz extended the saying by adding the phrase »Nisi intellectus ipse«. In other words »nothing is in the intellect that had not been before in the senses, *except the intellect itself*« (in the linguistic version of the saying, intellect corresponds to the intelligence of the linguist, his analysis). I interpret Trnka's meaning like this: linguists will, of course, use reason and hypotheses in order to construct a grammar or a theory, but they should base their reasoning, and verify results, on the pertinent language materials available. (If we have in mind basing our analysis on specific language material, then implicit here is a problem that is absent from this discussion: Namely the problem of the scope of the language material selected for analysis, such as contemporary or past, standard or non-standard, written or spoken, English or Czech language, a representative corpus, and the like.)

If texts and theories (*parole* and *langue*) do not constitute a dichotomy, they must be considered to be interrelated: Theories should be adequate to the utterances on which they are based or which they are supposed to represent: Linguistic analyses and hypotheses should capture and structure utterance data and reflect them faithfully, not adding anything that would contradict them or other occurrences which they represent. So, if *langue* is the result of the analysis worked out by one linguist, other linguists may and will construct different *langues* which will compete with one another for a positive assessment of adequacy to language materials. Trnka's explicit theoretical insistence on the dependence of theories on underlying utterances is most valuable.

Do not let us overlook that Trnka, above in the first quotation of this section,

and in several other places (e.g. 1982, 368 in the article on style), mentions written utterances together with spoken utterances. But he did not, as far as I know, get to integrating written utterances and writing into his theory. This is to be regretted in view of his experience with shorthand, transcriptions and his theoretical wisdom of phonology.

2.3. Laws, Rules

The objective of Trnka's linguistics is then to ascertain the laws, the rules governing language. These have, in Trnka's view opposing physicalism, a non-causal character, their normothetic character differs substantially from the causal nomothetic laws of exact sciences, which have an unlimited validity, independent of space and time (1982, 192). Language laws are subject to spatio-temporal differences and changes, i. e. may be different in different languages or dialects and in different time periods. The main purpose of accepting the concept of normothetic laws seems to be to free linguistics of the pressure requiring the application of laws comparable to the laws of physicalism. Considered more closely, ›normotheticity‹ has the merit of raising a number of fundamental questions of which some are beyond the reach of linguists qua linguists, especially the classification and characterization of sciences, including the group of cultural, human sciences supposed to deal with normothetic laws. Closer to linguistics is the question of in what way linguistics is different from the other cultural, human sciences. Normotheticity also raises the fundamental methodological problem of whether all areas of linguistics are in reality faced with language materials which are subject to the same type of regularity and have to be treated with the same type of method. Trnka has addressed some of these questions for instance in his approach to disciplinarity (section 2.6), to the language of linguistic science (2.4) and in his concept of structure (2.1) and language levels (3.4).

Trnka's normothetic approach may help to explain why — even though Trnka's view of mathematics and logic was very positive — we fail to find in his texts an intention to follow the example of exact sciences and formalize the language of linguistics. (Trnka was indeed the author of the first article of the first volume of the series *Prague Studies in Mathematical Linguistics*, in 1966.) He devoted much attention to specialized style (*passim* and in Trnka 1976) and he preferred, in his analytico-descriptive and — with a view to his insistence on language materials — recognitive approach, the ideal of exact adequate elegant terminology, the ideal of clear and succinct ›ordinary‹ language, not the ideal of a formalized or pseudo-formalized semiotic system.

An important question is whether normothetic laws can be exceptionless,

exceptionlessness being inherited from natural sciences by way of comparative and historical grammar. Trnka, then in his late forties, stated quite resolutely, though in an annotative remark, that:

we base our studies on experience, and, when we discuss a structural system of linguistic phenomena, *we demand that the individual cases follow laws absolutely*. (1982, 46, note 10; emphasis added).

I do wish that Bohumil Trnka's concept of structure were presented with less certainty, that his insistence on absolute laws and rules in linguistics, his condemnation of atomism (Trnka 1982, 45–46, cf. Robins 1969, 185) and the decisive priority he gave to relations over facts (cf. 1990, 65) were less categorical (cf. Goethe's epigraph about »alles Faktische«, in Firth 1957). The complexity of a language, and the extreme diversity of languages of the world do not encourage us to undervalue facts. But I fully respect Trnka's strong consistent epistemological position, conditioned also by the »ideological structure of the period« (cf. 1982, 49) — that is, in this case, by the forceful intellectual atmosphere opposing trends distrustful of far-reaching linguistic abstractions.

Trnka's later writings, however, contain traces that seem to attenuate somewhat his previous intransigence. Is there a proof of that? Well, for example the fact that Trnka used Horace's sentence (Epist., I,10,24): *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret* (»You may drive out nature with a pitchfork, yet ›she‹ will always come running back again«, corresponding vaguely to the English proverb: What's bred in the bone, comes out in the flesh). Trnka surprises by changing the Latin sentence in order to express a maxim about logic: *Expellas hominem logica, tamen usque recurret* (You may chase man [= human illogical nature] out with logic (1982, 58), yet he [it] will always come running back again). This is only a conjecture, because Trnka actually used this changed sentence in his text not against logic, but to explain emotional aspects of language. The reader will be the judge of that. The severity of brilliant scholars in their early research (e. g. Trnka's favourite's Rudolf Carnap's) has been known to be gradually attenuated with the acquired wisdom of tolerance. That is where the possible use of concepts such as exception, openness, creativity, periphery and play-game might come in.

Trnka's insistence on regularity led him also to expect the same rules to operate at all levels of language, in particular both in Martinet's second and first articulation. When criticizing V. Brøndal's view that constancy can be recognized in phonology but not in the area of meaning, he states that:

The assumption of such a duality is clearly incorrect, and the linguist must lay claim to scientific accuracy throughout the field, he must achieve regular corre-

spondences even on the level of meaning, as he has achieved the methodologically important concept of the ›sound-laws without exception‹ (1982, 36)

We can see that with regard to the principle of regularity, Trnka tried hard to discover normothetic regularities and attempted to remove linguistic antinomies (see Jakobson in Trnka 1982, 384). And we assume that what he always had in mind first and foremost, were the laws of the phonological system which is, despite all its complexities, simpler and more regular than the supra-phonological levels of language.

2.4. Language of Science and Terminology

Trnka saw the road to the science of linguistics in compliance with two prerequisites: (1) to choose the fundamental concepts and utterances (statements) that it needs, (2) gradually to define those concepts, thereby structuring the concepts into conceptual systems, as well as gradually to construct a system of statements (1990, 47). This means that Trnka, referring to Carnap's *Abriß der Logistik*, defends our right to decide what concepts (terms) and what theories we consider as necessary for an adequate analysis of language material but, at the same time, he insists on our obligation to explain clearly what those terms mean and use them in statements developing our theories systematically. Trnka's ideal was to comply with those two principles as independently of other sciences and as adequately to the nature of language materials as possible. Let us notice that this ideal includes requirements on specialized linguistic terms, that is, specialized signs.

I have to stress, however, that today this severe ideal, while not destroyed, has been internally weakened by philosophical criticism, and externally damaged by a powerful criticism of technology, and by the awareness of hidden motives of certain types of scientific endeavour.

The principles of scientific terminology and of the specialized discourse in which Trnka believed, may well have been the reason why he supported so decidedly the linguistic study of scientific natural language within the activities of the Prague linguists in the nineteen-sixties and seventies, and accepted acting as the reader of their theses and *Habilitationsschriften*. As a faithful defender of the tradition of the Prague Linguistic Circle and of the Prague School of Linguistics, he welcomed this continuation of what had been introduced by Zdeněk Vančura and Leontij Kopeckij in the thirties as an area within the scope of the PLC linguistic theory.

Trnka saw that specialized language constitutes a considerable part of the

language materials (texts) available (and to be analysed), and that terminology is a semantically and morphologically specific and quantitatively strong component of the vocabulary of today's languages. He saw that these facts represent both a responsibility and an opportunity for a special area of linguistics (›specialized linguistics‹ in Trnka (ed.) 1966a) — expanding linguistic theory, descriptions and numerous contemporary applications. Trnka was, in his own special way, a realistic linguist of his time not only at the beginning of the newly constituted State, when the Czech language was entering into new external functions in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, but right through his career. He published, with S. Potter, three excellent, and I mean excellent, textbooks of English for the upper classes of secondary schools, proposed a ›scientific and practical reform of shorthand‹, explained practical applications of functional linguistics in teaching modern languages, published useful handbooks for English visitors to Czechoslovakia and for Czechs among the English — and promoted the study of terminology, specialized language and style.

2.5. Historical and Comparative Studies

Dominant emphasis on the history of languages and their historical comparison in the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century provoked a vehement negative response from many proponents of the structuralist currents of thought. For example Saussure, himself a comparativist, wrote, surprisingly – and then perhaps not so surprisingly – in his *Writings*:

Langue and a science of language are possible only if one leaves out of consideration what has gone before, and what links periods together.
(E 2006, 151 and F 2002, 217)

and:

Why should linguists *compare*, or why should the linguist's profession insist on this *comparing*?
(E 2006, 116 and F 2002, 173, emphasis added).

There will be many conflicting interpretations of these recently published severe criticisms of historicism and comparativism in linguistics. Coming from an accomplished comparativist, the above condemnations are astonishing. If we read Antoine Meillet's ten-page praise of de Saussure's brilliance (Meillet 1951 [1913–1914]), we cannot have much doubt about the accomplished young comparativist that de Saussure had been long before he concentrated on syn-

chrony. Meillet, himself an eminent comparativist, born nine years after de Saussure, even stated (*ibid.*, 174–176) that it was de Saussure whose main merit it was that comparative grammar of Indo-European languages witnessed an important revival in the years 1875 to 1880 (Saussure was twenty-one when he completed his famous *Mémoire sur le système primitif dans les langues indo-européennes*, 1879).

One possible, conjectural explanation of his critical words might be that the comparativist Saussure had been disillusioned, at the age of fifty, with a disquieting unavailability or insufficiency of historical language data and the resulting shakiness of some conclusions reached after a long intensive research effort, as well as with atomistic comparisons of isolated words of dozens of languages insufficiently described, or not known to the analyst. It is up to Saussurean historians, such as Anna M. Davies (2004, 28–29), to solve the Saussurean ›puzzle‹, to explain and analyse the nature and path of de Saussure's disillusion and dissatisfaction.

However that may be, irrespective of the particular problems of historical and comparative linguistics, one finds very good reasons to consider historical development to be an essential mode of existence of human languages, and comparisons to be a fundamental component of their analysis (cf. Kocourek 1988).

In the first third of the twentieth century, the accomplishments of historical and comparative grammar were beginning to be no longer seen as the pride of linguistics, and linguists tended to abandon areas which had been their own. Bohumil Trnka was naturally one of those who fought for the recognition of synchronic study of language. A proof of his early balance is, however, that he never ignored the general merits of historical and comparative studies. His reflection offers incentives for an organic understanding of historical diachronic investigation, considered essential for language study and complementary to synchronic research. He enriched historical research with structural, especially phonological and morphological insights, publishing several fundamental contributions to historical description, such as a theoretical comparison of synchrony and diachrony (1933), the problem whether Verner's Law can be applied to Modern English (1934–35), a phonological aspect of the Great Vowel Shift of long vowels in late Middle English (1946). Being one of the Angli(c)ists who knew the Anglo-Saxon language and taught Anglo-Saxon literature, Trnka made a valuable attempt to offer a harmonious methodical treatment combining synchrony and diachrony, static and dynamic aspects of language.

Trnka's thinking also included and developed the comparative viewpoint. As early as 1929, he published a French-written article introducing a counterpart to genetic comparison of related languages, namely the analytical comparison of unrelated languages. He did not, however, abandon genetic comparisons. A refreshing activity which shows his thorough, factual and concrete under-

standing of comparing genetically related languages, Germanic languages in particular, is the fact that in addition to his knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, he prepared, and published, in collaboration, textbooks of Danish (1933), Dutch (1939), Swedish (1953) and Norwegian bokmål (1958). Obviously, he was doing more than he was preaching: he used every opportunity to observe and study not only the systems, but also the *petits faits vrais* of the languages compared, the Germanic languages in this case. (Trnka originally specialized in German, with a PhDr. in Germanic and English philology from 1919. Among his writings published in German, V. Fried's collection contains two articles: ›Bemerkungen zur Homonymie‹ (1931) and ›Zur Erinnerung an August Schleicher‹ (1952). The great German comparativist August Schleicher (1821 – 1868) was a friend and defender of the Czech language, who taught in Prague in the eighteen-fifties and was the founder of German Slavistics.)

2.6. Disciplinarity

The historian of a science has to keep a balance between the ability to question the adequacy of concepts and the wisdom of accepting tolerance to relativism where it is justified. We are naturally aware of the fact that language is the subject of study of many fields which may each shed different light on one of its aspects. In my understanding of linguistic theory, the major components are goal, disciplinarity, scope, methods, and language and terminology of linguistics. Disciplinarity means for me the position which the theoretician assigns to his discipline with respect to other disciplines. Let us look at philosophy, logic and psychology in regard to Trnka's linguistics, keeping in mind that philosophy, psychology and, of course, linguistics and logic have changed considerably since Trnka's time, and allegiances had to be, or will have to be re-examined.

For Trnka, linguistics is autonomous, independent, but not isolated from other sciences (Jakobson in Trnka 1982, 384). He did not condemn the fact that linguistics should draw on other sciences but he required that linguists develop their own methods and procedures. The natural consequence of his close relation with the philosophy of language and logic resulted in his high esteem for the philosopher, mathematician and polymath Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716) and for Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970), whose analyses of relations he adapted for his theory, and for Rudolf Carnap (1891 – 1970), whose theory of scientific language he accepted. We shall also see that he applied the logical concepts of asymmetry and transitivity to the relations between language levels. He believed as well in cooperation or applicability between sciences, what we would probably name today multidisciplinarity or interdisciplinarity, for ex-

ample between linguistics and statistics, when he considered the area of quantitative linguistics (1951).

His attitude to psychology was different, reflecting the old inbred epistemological conflict of different goals, different aspects of language and different methodologies. He was strongly opposed to the dominance of psychology in linguistic analyses, which characterized Neogrammarian linguistics. He accepted, for example, Husserl's arguments against the domination of psychology and natural sciences, believing that Edmund Husserl was »the first major philosopher who explored language from the point of view of his philosophical system« and that he »substantiated the independence of linguistics from psychology and natural sciences« (1990 [1962], 82). As for psychology, Walter Porzig went even further (in 1923) when he approved of Husserl's postulate of »Unabhängigkeit des gesamten Bedeutungsgebietes von allem Psychologischen« (text in Hans Arens 1969, 512). The consequence of his attitude to psychology is, for example, the difference between Saussure's and Trnka's concept of the linguistic sign. While the *Cours* states that the sign is »une unité psychique à deux faces« (99), Trnka does not see the sign as a »psychologism« (1990, 51). Trnka was convinced that the hope that psychology could constitute the basis of human sciences (duchové vědy, *Geisteswissenschaften*) was in vain. For him, it was the then new symbolic logic, or logistics, that could hold the central position. In an exceptionally enthusiastic passage (1990, 47, quotation translated from the Czech) he declared that it was symbolic logic that:

discovered again distant horizons unsuspected by contemporaries – a great liberatrix of imagination and leader on the road to knowledge.

So, was this Bohumil Trnka's noble dream? Liberation of imagination on the road to knowledge? We should bear that in mind when we read his normally moderate lines.

There exists a similar passage in Trnka 1948, whose English translation by Vachek is published in Trnka (1982, 54–55; italics added). Linguistics, writes Trnka, has been:

getting rid of the psychological bias and finding an ally in the modern relational logic worked out by Bertrand Russell; *modern logic takes on the part of the leading science in the structure of sciences of today* [...] Linguistics may entrust itself to this current without any fears for its autonomy.

The passage, we can see, has been considerably toned down, as if the previous version were giving away too much of the author's feelings. In his substantial historical analysis of Mathesius's thought, František Daneš considered Trnka's

preceding quotation in relation to Trnka's notion of internalization (Czech *prožívání*) reflecting Mathesius's humanizing functionalism (Daneš 2005, 87–88).

3. Bohumil Trnka on the Linguistic Sign

3.1. Introduction

Like many of the keywords in human sciences – such as synonymy, metaphor, definition – the word *sign* has a long tradition with ups and downs in scholarly favour: Aristotle, the Stoics, Saint Augustine, Aquinas, Bacon, Locke and Leibniz and their influence on the flourishing of the sign in eighteenth-century Enlightenment, followed by a long period of neglect from which the sign emerged in the works of William Dwight Whitney (1827 – 1894), Michel Bréal (1832 – 1915), Carl Sanders Peirce (1839 – 1914) and, most importantly for linguistic influence, Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913) and the *Cours de linguistique générale*, 1975 [1916]. The last third of the twentieth century was characterized, on one hand, by severe poststructuralist criticism of the sign (cf. Derrida 1972, 27 – 35, and 2004, 17 – 22; Bonnigton & Derrida 1999, 23 – 42), and on the other hand, with a relative silence of various theoretical approaches bypassing the sign (in Seuren 1997, 244). Roy Harris's detailed step by step critical commentary on the *Cours* includes an interpretation and assessment of the Saussurean sign (1987, 55 – 78). The publication of some of Saussure's previously unpublished manuscripts (*Écrits*, 2002, and their translation *Writings*, 2006) has reopened the authorship debates and new evaluations concerning individual key concepts of the Saussurean legacy. Interesting fundamental recent analyses of the sign by Nijmegen semantician Seuren (1997) and the historian of linguistics Joseph (2004), concluded their studies with a positive view of the sign.

Saussure's *Cours* explains the sign as »une image acoustique« [the signifier, *significans*, *signifiant*] and »concept« [the signified, *significatum*, *signifié*], using three elliptical diagrams whose halves correspond to the signified and the signifier, respectively. The sign found a prominent place in linguistics and in Saussure's newly constituted field of semiology (Peirce's semiotics). The *Cours* keeps the sign apart from the word. The understanding of its precise meaning is complicated by passages on pages 166 – 167 of the *Cours* (Saussure 1975 [1916]). These pages contain two possible concepts of the sign. One depends on a simple but crucial clause »dans la langue il n'y a que des différences«, and considers the sign to be split in half. The signifier and the signified are considered separate, purely differential, without positive terms (*sans termes positifs*). We could, if we had need to, use the term *non-positive sign* for this first concept. The non-

positive sign is possibly the position related to Derrida's later concept of unending deferment of interpretation of meaning following traces, sort of signified-less signifiers. There is a very vague but intriguing touch of relationship between this poststructural deferral and Trnka's very structural suspension of meaning at lexical and syntactic levels. (Strangely enough, Derrida's life story has several points of contact with Prague, he even quotes, annotatively but not critically, »Dr. Joseph Vachek« in his main language-related work, F 1967, 86, note 24, E 1997, 328.)

The other concept of the sign is based on the second part of the passage (:166), which is close to the standard model of the sign constituting a firm combination of the signified and the signifier that is no longer purely differential but constitutes a positive term (:167). This means that the sign constitutes a positive, meaningful entity capable of entering into relationships within a linguistic level. For this concept we could use the term *positive sign*. That is roughly the position from which most linguists would start. Prague linguists, among them Bohumil Trnka, were interested in the potential of the concept and developed half a dozen critical attitudes to the sign (cf. Hoskovec 2007).

3.2. Redefining the Sign

Prague theories were centred around structure and function, and included linguists leaning to one and/or the other concept. Trnka tried to remove that duality, without compromising his scholarly principles. He devised a theory that combined the two currents, functional and structural. He used the functional concept of the linguistic sign, which he organically fused with the structural theory of language levels and oppositions. His is a complete transformation of the standard lexical-semantic sign into a complex notion pervading the structure of four language levels. That means that the sign will occur at all four levels: phonological with phonemes, morphological with words, syntactic with sentences and utterance level with utterances, texts. With the broadening into four levels goes the broadening according to function: to the usual semantic level (of words) are added two more semantic levels, that of sentences and that of utterances. To the three semantic levels is added the phonological level of phonemes. This adds to the semantic function of words, sentences and utterances the distinctive function of phonemes. Being spread over the whole multilevel area, the sign gains on importance but, so to say, loses semantic force and specificity. Such enormous broadening means that the sign now corresponds to units on those four levels and has become an umbrella notion for four sign entities corresponding to phonemes, words, sentences and utterances. The sign

entities are supposed to have sign functions permitting them to become genuine signs when they are interpreted at the utterance level.

3.3. Sign, Communication and Grammar

Two of the keywords of Trnka's theory are sign and communication. If the sequence of linguistic signs has to serve and to implement intersubjective (verbal) communication, to be »an intersubjectively valid system of signs«, as Trnka maintains with reason (1990, 54), it cannot be a simple chain of juxtaposed signifieds. It happens by means of entities that have more than spoken (or written) form and meaning, that is by means of grammatico-semantic entities: words, sentences, utterances (texts). So it would seem that Trnka's signs (the four sign entities) are actually aspects of functional distinctive and meaningful linguistic units at the four levels of language. Trnka's theory brought together grammatical properties and semantic-distinctive sign properties, which are both indispensable in human language communication.

The grammatical aspect is often overlooked in the discussions dealing with the sign. By emphasizing the phonologico-grammatical structure and deferring the semantic interpretation to the utterance level, Trnka made the theoretical indispensability of structure for communication more evident and the separation of words and signs linguistically undesirable. I think if and when some philosophers try to destroy the sign, they do this without realizing that in order really to succeed they would have to destroy words.

3.4. Levels of Language, Asymmetry and Transitivity

In the matter of levels of language, I shall accept Trnka's four levels, leaving aside, but mentioning briefly, various moot points which complicate the overall hierarchical picture: As for the number of levels, see for instance Josef Filipec & František Čermák (1985, 23) and Benveniste (1966, 121). At the distinctive level, there is the problem of establishing the status of the written mode or written norm of language (see Libuše Dušková's summary of Vachek's defence of written language, 1994, 155–156; also Kocourek, 1991, 26–27, 98–99). At Trnka's morphological level, the relative status of morphemes and collocations and lexicalized phrases vis-à-vis words (Trnka 1978; Filipec & Čermák 1985, 23–25). For the discussion of the status of texts (discourse, utterances) as a linguistic level or as the functioning of the system only, see František Daneš (1971), Petr Sgall (2006, 354–356).

The units of Trnka's four levels are, of course and starting from the left,

phonemes, words, sentences and utterances (or texts). Here I use the term *text* parallel to *utterances*, the latter normally employed by Trnka. The reason for employing the term *text* is that *utterances* equal, for Trnka, de Saussure's term *parole*, and they often refer to more extensive sequences of sentences constituting a subject of linguistic analysis. But the statement from Trnka to consider texts as a quasi-synonym of utterances (and *parole*) is his passage in his assessment of Hjelmslev's theory (1967, 28, quoted already in section 2.2, emphasis here added):

Language is always only a *text* which is never completed, and *when a linguist discovers its laws, he arrives at a system of rules*, which he analyses and builds up into a grammar.

In English texts written by Trnka or translated from the Czech, the term *plane* occurs frequently side by side with *level*. V. Fried mentions, in Trnka (1982, 16), note 16, that Trnka informed him that »the concept of ›sign plane‹, which was one of the basic tenets of the Prague Linguistic Circle, was a reflection of B. Russell's notion of ›classes‹. Trnka views the relations of sign entities mainly in the collective, ›class‹ perspective as relations between their levels. He uses the logical concepts of asymmetry and transitivity as relevant to relations between levels.

Asymmetry first. Trnka redefines the term asymmetry in a different sense from that which used to be current in the terminology of the Prague School. The expression *dualisme asymétrique du signe linguistique* was employed by Sergej Karcevskij back in 1929, in the following sense:

Le signifiant (phonique) et le signifié (fonction) glissent continuellement sur la ›pente de la réalité‹. Chacun ›déborde‹ les cadres assignés pour lui de son partenaire: le signifiant cherche à avoir d'autres fonctions que sa fonction propre, le signifié cherche à s'exprimer par d'autres moyens que son signe. Ils sont asymétriques; accouplés, ils se trouvent dans un état d'équilibre instable [...]. (Vachek 1966a, 67; 2003, 103–104)

This means that Karcevskij speaks of asymmetry within a sign, of the ›inner‹ relations between the signifier and the signified. In this sense, asymmetry of the sign covers the concepts of synonymy and homonymy, which Trnka considers to be two fundamental properties of language.

But when Trnka speaks of asymmetry, he means the relation between two adjoining linguistic levels. For him, asymmetry is:

the inability of entities to change places in the sign relation, for example in the relation phoneme/word (or morpheme) (1990, 30).

The property of asymmetry permits the function of implementation (*stare pro* = to stand for) to operate only in one direction, left-to-right, not right to left, e. g. phonemes implement words, but words do not implement phonemes, etc. This is, after *asymmetry*, another redefinition of a classical signifier. Latin *stare pro* normally means ›to stand for‹, ›to mean‹, but Trnka uses it in the sense of ›to realize‹, ›to implement‹ (to implement entities at another level of language). Trnka's understanding of asymmetry clearly means that, in order for asymmetry to occur, the sign relation between the two entities must not be reciprocal. The relation of implementation between phoneme and word works only one way and is therefore asymmetrical.

How about a different question concerning various influences between levels? Can there be one influence left-to-right and a different influence right-to-left? Asymmetry of implementation between two levels does not mean that asymmetry blocks right-to-left influences that are other than implementation. For instance, if phonemes can implement words, can words influence phonemes in some way? I suppose they can, we can argue that the determination of phonemes is influenced by, based on, considerations of lexical meaning. For example: whereas it is true that phonemes implement words and that words do not implement phonemes, it is nevertheless true that words can exert influence on phonemes.

Let me raise a question which is beside the point, but not uninteresting: If it is true that phonemes implement words, is it also true that words are implemented by phonemes?, i. e.: Is the active-passive pair of sentences (»Phonemes implement words« and »Words are implemented by phonemes«) synonymic? Since we assume that passivization preserves core meaning, the usual answer to the preceding questions is affirmative. But the concepts of sentence synonyms, as well as of lexical synonyms, disregard important shades of semantic differences corresponding to formal differences. Linguistically, the passivized English sentence has a different perspective, placing *phonemes* and *words* in different sentence positions in different syntactic functions (Dušková 1999, part 1, 144–145). Passivization has a way of causing semantic ›deep-structure‹ problems.

Discussions of linguistic topics inspired by logic may sometimes be characterized by low-level, synchronic incommensurability in what Jan Kořenský would probably call paradoxical discourse (cf. 2004, 50–56; Kocourek 2006, 115). That would mean, in this context, mixing possibly incompatible expressions of the two disciplines: linguistics and logic.

The second property of relations between different levels of language is logical transitivity (e. g. if it is true that phonemes implement words and that words implement sentences, then it is also true that phonemes implement sentences, Trnka 1990, 30). The property or the principle of transitivity is in this case relevant, but for a linguist perhaps obvious. I believe, nevertheless, that tran-

sitivity has an importance for Trnka's theory because it enforces, as does asymmetry, the left-to-right direction of influence and underscores the significance of the phonological level of language in linguistic analysis. We shall see in the next section that, as with asymmetry, there can be one relation in one direction and another one in the opposite direction.

3.5. Left-to-right, Right-to-left and the Word

Both asymmetry and transitivity between levels proceed from left to right, i. e. from Phonemes to Words to Sentences to Utterances (or texts), P-W-S-U. This sequence of implementation can operate only from left to right, not in the opposite direction. Similarly, transitivity also operates left to right. As mentioned before, this is the only direction that those two logical properties permit and gives a sort of superior ›penetrating‹ power to phonemes, which implement all three meaningful levels, without being themselves meaningful.

If we look at Trnka's left-to-right transfer of lexical meaning through the sequence of language levels, we find that words, implemented by phonemes, have a sign function, which is activated neither at the word level, nor at the sentence level, but as far right as at the utterance, or textual, level. Here is how Trnka describes this process:

the word cannot be defined as the sign of extralinguistic reality, but as the realizing [implementing] element of the sentence. It does not really have a meaning, it has only a semantic function [sign function], which is changed into meaning, behind which there is extralinguistic reality (1990, 90).

The passage concludes with a seemingly simple statement that brings the lecture of 1962 to the final point:

The meaning of the word is twofold, (1) grammatical: the word is an empty square participating in grammatical oppositions (such as differentiation according to word classes, genders, cases, tenses, etc.), and (2) lexical [semantic]: the squares are filled with meanings from the outside (1990 [1962], 90).

We note that Trnka characterized the lexical sign function at word level with the metaphor of an empty square. Let me first, and for the purpose of this discussion, accept that metaphor (assuming availability of the ›frame‹ of the square, i. e. the grammatical content of words which resulted from a comprehensive syntactic and morphemic analysis). The metaphor of an empty square (or tri-

angle) appears also elsewhere in Trnka (1982 [1966b], 98, and 1990 [1967b], 109).

The key question in the above quotation is how to find the way to fill the empty lexical square with meaning, in other words: how to define and express the signified of the word? Once we consider the direction of across-levels analysis, why do we not examine the possibilities of the opposite, right-to-left procedure (U-S-W-P), that is, in this case, to begin with utterances (texts) in order to arrive at the signified of the word. If we start at the utterance level and go in the opposite direction, from utterances to words, via sentences, we do not choose a direction that is alien to Trnka. Actually, we endorse what Trnka considered to be the proper starting point in adequate linguistic analyses, in discovering language laws and constructing grammars, by means of an analysis of language materials (utterances, texts).

In a quotation given in section 2.3, he wrote »we base our studies on experience« (1982, 46). That is, we base our studies on the utterance level, do we not? Besides, in the preceding passage, he states that »the squares are filled with meanings from the outside«, which means filled from the utterances (»behind which there is extralinguistic reality«). Also, the right-to-left influence is implicit in the requirement that word signifieds realized at utterance level should be moved to the word level, i. e. in compliance with what could be named reversed right-to-left transitivity from utterance to word.

If we wanted to apply the right-to-left procedure in this case, we would, for example – and this is a very short version of a very long and complex effort – perform semantic analyses of lexical occurrences of an individual word in utterances and obtain the structure of different signifieds of that word (i. e. different senses of a polysemic word, *les acceptions*, Trnka's *sememes* in 1990 [1967a], 100). These would be grouped together, and constitute the structured complex of potential lexical meanings of the word. That complex would correspond to Trnka's sign function of that word. It would be moved to word level and would fill the lexical square. As the square would thus be filled, with the signified no longer suspended, the sign would be meaningful even outside texts.

This would be an example of a linguistic recognitive approach from text to interpretation to analysis. This approach is in ›complementary‹ conflict, for instance, with the neuropsychological orientation towards the behaviour-brain tandem.

The problem in our right-to-left procedure from texts to words is that the signifieds are abstract concepts, senses, thoughts which cannot be physically grouped together. In order to deal with them, we need their sensible, perceptible, material replacements that could be linguistically treated, that would undergo the above procedure, and finally be available for communication and analysis. What might such replacements be? This is not the place for me to answer that

question. Let me at least adumbrate that a possible solution relies on the fact that the clarification and analysis of the signified (of the sense) depends on its ability to be related to the signifieds of more complex, synonymic or quasi-synonymic, meaningful expressions that reveal its semantic components and permit to show certain aspects of the semantic structuring of the lexicon.

We can see that identifying the lexical signified in order to fill the empty square is a complicated, demanding and theoretically a slightly untidy task which requires knowledgeable analysts with interpretative power, patience, enthusiasm and detached wisdom. Trnka may have had, might have had, such a task in mind when he wrote that the sign humanizes linguistics. He stopped short of elaborating on the crucial semantic riddle of the signified, but he certainly presented the question in an original, challenging and inspiring way.

3.6. Concluding Personal Observations

(a) On the signifier: Signs have no material (sensible, perceptible) substance distinct from that of language units. Consequently, in the standard narrow lexical use, the term signifier coincides with the form of the word and, in Trnka's broad approach, with the forms of phoneme, word, sentence, utterance (or text).

(b) On the signified: In the standard narrow lexical use, the signified is an abstract entity, the sense of a word. In Trnka's broad use, the signifieds are abstract entities of functional properties of language units, namely the distinctiveness of the phoneme, and the senses of the meaningful units of supra-phonological levels of word, sentence, utterance (text). Those four units are carriers of what Trnka calls sign function (distinctive function plus semantic functions). Meaningful units are said to be endowed with semantic sign function, and, due to Trnka's suspension of lexical meaning at the lexical and syntactic levels, they are only to be considered signs when their sign function is realized, when they are interpreted at utterance level.

(c) On the sign hypothesis: Among the merits of Trnka's sign hypothesis is his emphasis on the fact that the distinctive and semantic sign functions pervade all levels of language structure and that grammatical and semantic properties of meaningful units are conjoined. He saw the sign function of linguistic units as an instrument of intersubjective communication by means of utterances (texts), which added a humanizing aspect to language structure. And — last not least — he connected the insistence on utterances in communication with his epistemological strategy of basing the construction of a system on the analysis of utterances. His approach was supposed to act against linguistic conceptions that

seem to introduce the sign in order to bypass considerations of semantic aspects of words and sentences. In brief: Trnka's substantially broadened redefinition of the linguistic sign led him to a bold comprehensive integration of sign functions with multilevel structuring of language, whose utterances are a means of human intersubjective verbal communication and the primary subject of linguistic analysis.

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On Bohumil Trnka's Concept of Neutralization and its Nature on the Higher Language Levels

Bohumil Trnka's concept of neutralization is a recurrent point in his work,¹ closely related to his concept of oppositions. He regards it as a feature of all structural language levels: »The subject of the present paper [Trnka 1982c] is to draw the attention of linguists to two linguistic phenomena called homonymy and neutralization. Both of them operate on all structural levels of language, i. e. on the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and suprasyntactic levels ...« (1982c, 356). Trnka himself was mostly concerned with neutralization in phonology and morphology, with a few digressions into syntax, but none – to my knowledge – into the suprasyntactic level.

The present chapter is concerned with neutralization on the levels that involve meaning. As a relevant starting point, the first part outlines Trnka's conception of neutralization in morphology and syntax. In the second part, neutralization is reconsidered on the level of morphology and elaborated on the syntactic level, with a tentative excursion into the level of utterance.

1. Bohumil Trnka's Conception of Neutralization

Neutralization is treated as the primary or a major point in two of Trnka's papers: the article from which the above quotation is drawn (Trnka 1982c) and a longer treatise concerned with morphological oppositions (Trnka 1982d). In the former, neutralization is contrasted with homonymy. The relation between the two concepts is explicated in terms of the phonological identity of the members of a morphological opposition in the case of homonymy, and suppression of the morphological opposition itself in the case of neutralization. Homonymy of

1 According to the years of the first appearance of his articles included in *Selected Papers in Structural Linguistics* (1982) Trnka's concern with neutralization appears to extend over more than three decades (from 1938 [1982a, 1982i] to 1974 [1982c]; as shown by the years of the first publication of the other papers referred to in the present chapter – 1961 [1982h], 1963 [1982f], 1966 [1982g], 1969 [1982e] – his interest in this point was continuous.

lexical and morphemic oppositions is defined here as the identity of their phonological realizations. Pairs of words like *light* (›not heavy‹) and *light* (›pale‹), *to lie* (›be at rest‹) and *to lie* (›to tell a lie‹) are homonymous because they are realized by identical phonological formations which do not contrast with each other in spoken English, while their lexical contrast and consequently their contextual distribution show them to be different words (lexical units). As examples of homonymy in the phonological realization of grammatical oppositions Trnka adduces, e.g., Latin inflexional suffixes *-ae*: identical form of the genitive and dative singular of the first declension (e.g. *familiae, agricolae*) in contrast to other declensions in which the two cases are differentiated (e.g. *mulieris : mulieri, dies : diei*; *-a* (nominative singular feminine – nominative, accusative plural neuter); *-um* (nominative, accusative singular neuter – accusative singular masculine), etc.; the English preterite and past participle suffix *-ed*. On the other hand, the verbal suffix *-ing* is not regarded as a homonymous morpheme, since its participial use differs from the gerundial only on the syntactic level. Similarly the prefix *un-* represents a single non-homonymous morpheme, because its two different senses (*unwise* ›not wise‹ x *to uncover* opposite of *to cover*) are distributed mechanically according to whether the base morpheme is an adjective or a verb.

Whereas homonymy involves the identity of phonological exponents of a morphological opposition, neutralization is suppression, under specified non-phonological conditions, of the morphological opposition itself. As one of the best known examples, Trnka adduces the suppression of the nominative versus accusative opposition which took place in Indo-European languages in the case of neuter nouns. For example in Latin, nouns like *vinum bonum, vina bona* appear in all syntactic positions in which all masculines or feminines must be put either in the nominative or in the accusative. A case of syntagmatic neutralization of the morphological opposition singular vs. plural is illustrated by the predicative noun, e.g. in *My brothers are merchants*. Here the opposition singular vs. plural in the predicative noun *merchants* is suppressed because it depends on the non-neutralized plural of the subject *my brothers* and does not express the plurality of *merchants*. The example is commented upon as follows:

the grammatical concord in English and most IE languages is a case of the syntagmatic neutralization of their morphological singular v. plural (or dual) opposition, which is realized by singular or plural in accordance with the number of the governing noun. There is no specific form of a noun available which would be neither singular nor plural and which could be used in this syntagmatic position which requires a noun devoid of numerical qualification.

A similar case of neutralization is found in negative sentences, since in his view negation is incompatible with a meaningful distinction between singular and plural in a sentence like *he has no child = he has no children* (Trnka 1982g, 343).²

The most clear-cut formulation of the distinction is found in the treatise on morphological oppositions:

The neutralization of morphological oppositions is fundamentally different from homonymy. In neutralization the opposition meaning of the members of the morphological pair disappears under certain non-phonological conditions and the whole opposition is represented by either one or the other member. Homonymy, on the other hand, does not have the function of the semantic suppression of the opposition, but only represents the identity of its phonological realization under certain phonological conditions. For example, the opposition of genitive singular vs. dative singular in the Czech feminine paradigm *kost* (bone) is realized by the same exponent (*i*, with occasional alternation of the final dental plosive), whereas in other Czech feminine paradigms the distinction of the two cases is upheld; the identity of genitive and dative singular *kosti* cannot be explained by stating semantic reasons, we must interpret this identity as a case of homonymy. (Trnka 1982d, 313)

Among other examples of homonymy of morphological exponents in Czech Trnka adduces nominative singular and nominative plural in neuter nouns *znamení* ›signal, sign‹, *moře* ›sea, ocean‹ – *znamení* ›signals, signs‹ – *moře* ›seas, oceans‹. These instances are regarded as homonymous on the basis of the existence of other neuter paradigms, viz. *slovo* ›word‹, pl. *slova* ›words‹, *ptáče* ›young bird‹, pl. *ptáčata* ›young birds‹, *sémě* ›seed‹, pl. *semena* ›seeds‹. If the Czech system of neuter nouns did not include these paradigms, the opposition of singular/plural in the nominative of all neuter nouns would be neutralized in Czech.

Neutralization plays an important role in the classification of morphological oppositions, which can be grouped according to whether they are relevant in the

2 The distinction between neutralization and homonymy is also expounded elsewhere, cf. »On morphemic homonymy« (Trnka 1982f) and »On some problems of neutralization« (Trnka 1982b).

»... morphemic homonymy must be strictly distinguished from neutralization of morphological oppositions. Whereas the former consists in the identity of the phonemic implementation of a morphological opposition, the latter is the suppression, under specific non-phonemic conditions, of the morphological opposition itself. Thus in Latin the identical form of the genitive singular and the dative singular of the first declension (e.g. *familiae, agricolae*) is an example of homonymy of both cases that are differentiated in other declensions (e.g. *mulieris : mulieri, dies : diei* ...), the endings *-um* in *vinum* and *-a* in *verba* is a phonemic implementation of the neutralized opposition nominative/accusative. The neutralization of this opposition consists in the structural incompatibility of all neuters to take part in it.« (Trnka 1982f, 336; similarly in Trnka 1982b, 153–54)

whole language system or whether they are suppressed (neutralized) under certain conditions. Neutralization of morphological oppositions is illustrated by gender in German, where gender distinctions are found in the singular but not in the plural. Similarly the morphological opposition nominative/accusative in the plural of animate masculines is neutralized in Slovak and Russian. According to whether neutralization depends on the base of the word, on the interplay with other morphological oppositions or on the syntactic context, Trnka distinguishes three types of neutralization:

(1) The neutralization of a morphological opposition is caused by the meaning of the base. For example the opposition of degrees of comparison, which characterizes adjectives, is neutralized in all adjectives that do not participate in the opposition of antonymy: *heavy, heavier, heaviest* against *metallic, Praguean*, etc. Only adjectives like *heavy* (x *light*), *poor* (x *rich*), *quick* (x *slow*), *healthy* (x *ill*) take the degrees of comparison.

(2) Neutralization is due to the participation of members of an opposition in another morphological opposition. Here Trnka adduces many examples, some of which have been mentioned above: the opposition of gender in nouns in the plural in German, Dutch and Scandinavian languages; the opposition nominative vs. accusative in the plural of animate masculine nouns in Slovak and Russian; the opposition nominative vs. accusative in the singular of neuter and inanimate masculine nouns in Slavonic languages; in Latin the opposition dative/ablative in all nouns in the plural; in Czech, Slovak and Russian the opposition nominative vs. accusative in inanimate masculine, all feminine and neuter nouns is neutralized in the plural.

In German the opposition of gender in nouns is neutralized in the plural: *der Knabe / er, die Frau / sie, das Kind / es – die Knaben / sie, die Frauen / sie, die Kinder / sie*.

(3) Neutralization is due to participation of the opposition members in syntactic oppositions. This type of neutralization is illustrated by concord in number between the subject and the predicative noun in a classifying predication, already adduced above, viz. *Moji bratři jsou rolníci* [my brothers are peasants]. The noun *peasants* does not express the opposition of plurality, because the plural form is only used to express concord in number with the subject, the actual number of peasants not being our concern. In other words, the neutralization of the opposition singular/plural is realized by the singular or by the plural form according to the grammatical number of the subject. Agreement with the number of the subject is further illustrated by instances like *The men had high hats on their heads*, where the forms *heads* and *hats* are used as a realization of the suppressed opposition of plurality. A fairly general case of neutralization of the singular/plural distinction is found in generic sentences. The realization form of this opposition is, according to Trnka, usually the sin-

gular *The swallow is a bird, An island is a piece of land surrounded by water*, or sometimes the plural *Dogs are useful animals*. Generic nouns displaying neutralization of the number opposition occur especially in negative and interrogative sentences.

Trnka also asks the question what is the cause of morphological neutralization. The answer seems easier for type one and three than for type two. Neutralization of the first type manifests itself as incompatibility of the particular opposition with the meaning of the word base. There is no point in comparing an adjective like *ferrous* if we refer to the substance. As for the third type of neutralization, it results from the fact that every word participating in a morphological opposition must also participate in its phonological realization either as the marked or the unmarked member of the opposition, even if this opposition is not desirable or even pointless in signalling the meaning of the particular syntactic context. Thus in the sentence *The dog is a domestic animal* the singular does not signal the opposition singular/plural, but refers to dogs in general. Since a language usually does not have nominal forms which are neither singular nor plural, it must use one of the two forms. Trnka points out that such a structure of morphological oppositions has certain disadvantages, of which a language like Chinese is free.

The causes of the second type of neutralization, the participation of an opposition in another morphological opposition, are less evident. According to Trnka they are to be sought neither in the phonological realization of the morphemes, nor in the operation of morpho(n)ological analogy, but in the needs of the sentence structure, and in the sphere of structural morphology in which the members of morphological oppositions are grouped along the syntagmatic axis.

The last point of importance with respect to neutralization in morphology concerns the number of features by which the members of an opposition pair are distinguished. The examples discussed so far all differ only in one feature. However, there are far more morphological oppositions whose members differ by several features and still correlate, e.g. the instrumental singular *otcem* in Czech: dative plural *otcům*. Can these oppositions be neutralized? According to Trnka, evidence for the existence of this type is provided, e.g., by Czech feminine nouns, all of which have identical form in the genitive singular and the nominative and accusative of the plural: *ženy* ›of a woman‹, ›women‹ (nominative and accusative plural); similarly in all the other feminine paradigms. This would appear to be a specific feature of morphology (or possibly of all higher levels), distinctly contrasting with the situation in phonology, where neutralization is found only between members of oppositions differing in one distinctive feature.

2. Neutralization Reconsidered

The extension of the phonological notion of neutralization to the higher language levels introduces a dual aspect into it: the loss of a distinction applies at the same time to form and meaning. As noted above, of the higher levels Trnka's treatment of neutralization mostly concerns morphology. Neutralization of morphological oppositions is explicitly defined in Trnka (1982d, 306):

As any other morphological element, all these oppositions [=morphological oppositions] must consist of meaning and the phonological implementation of this meaning. The determination of the morphemic meaning is often very difficult – recall the problem of Russian case inflection which was examined by R. Jakobson (1936, 240–248). Let us therefore choose a less complex opposition: the opposition singular/plural in Present-day English. Its morphological (or general, classifying) meaning is ›plurality‹ vs. ›non-plurality‹ [...]. The marker of plurality is manifested with countable nouns as a number larger than one. [...] In the morphological analysis we are only interested in the basic semantic opposition of both members [...].

What follows from these formulations is that neutralization in morphology concerns the loss of distinction between the members of an opposition both in form and basic meaning (morphological, general, classifying), as demonstrated by plurality vs. non-plurality in the case of nouns.

2.1. Neutralization in Morphology

Reconsidering the three types of neutralization of morphological oppositions specified above, we find that the aspect of meaning (Trnka's concept of the basic or morphological/ general/ classifying meaning) is fully operative in Types 1 and 3. In Type 1 the basic meaning involves the distinction between degrees of comparison: positive vs. comparative: vs. superlative. In the case of non-gradable adjectives, this distinction is blocked by the lexical meaning of the base morpheme. Accordingly, both prerequisites of morphological neutralization, neutralization of form (the opposition is expressed by one form, the positive) and meaning (loss of the capacity to distinguish degrees) are satisfied.

This type of morphological neutralization appears to be fairly common not only in the case of adjectives (and adverbs, for that matter, cf. *soon, sooner, soonest* x *now, then*, etc.), but also with nouns and verbs. For example, the opposition between generic and non-generic reference is incompatible with nouns that have unique reference (proper names), and the opposition singular vs. plural is blocked by the uncountable nature of uncountable nouns. As regards

the verb, in Slavonic languages the opposition perfectivity vs. imperfectivity is incompatible with atelic verbs;³ in English the opposition simple vs. progressive conjugation is annulled in the case of non-dynamic, stative verbs. A general constraint on verbal categories is due to the basic meaning of the categories themselves: thus the basic meaning of the imperative mood excludes reference to the past, and the basic meaning of the present conditional blocks the distinction between reference to the future and reference to the present.

Type 3 involves interaction between morphology and syntax. Significantly, all examples illustrating this type display neutralization of the singular/plural distinction. This is presumably not incidental, but rather reflects the fact that the meaning distinction between the singular and the plural is relatively easy to determine. In the case of concord between subject and subject complement in copular sentences

(1) My brothers are merchants.

the suppression of the singular/plural distinction in the subject complement primarily results from the semantics of the respective sentence type: the subject and the predicative noun are co-referential, the subject complement merely assigning the subject to a class. As shown by instances of discord, co-referentiality of the subject and the subject complement is a relevant feature of the sentence semantics. Compare examples adduced by Leech and Lu Li (1995):

- (2) a. The successes of the Labour Party are good evidence of this.
 b. Mushrooms are a very risky crop.
 c. His achievements were just a part of a magnificent year.
 d. They are now a threat.

Here the subject complements lack the feature of co-referentiality. Although they also assign the subject to a class, they are closer to qualification than classification. Leech and Lu explain the discord by the adjective-like character of the predicative nouns,⁴ basing their arguments on the prototype theory. The definitional core of the category of NPs consists in (a) being referring expressions, (b) beginning with a determiner, and (c) containing a head noun of variable number. Noun phrases in the discussed sentence type resemble the prototypical

³ Panevová (1981, 88) regards this type of neutralization as semantic defectiveness.

⁴ Among other adjectival features of noun phrases in the function of subject complement they noted their restricted occurrence with copulas other than *be*, the tendency of singular count nouns to omit the article, facile coordination of nouns and adjectives in this function, occurrence of nouns with the semantic feature of gradability, the dummy noun phenomenon, e.g. *our departure was a hurried one*. (Leech, Lu Li 1995)

adjective phrase in being (a) property ascribing, (b) abstract, (c) gradable and (d) invariable.

The other instance of neutralization of the singular/plural distinction due to the interaction of syntax is even more illustrative:

(3) The men had high hats on their heads.

In this type the loss of the semantic distinction sometimes overrides the concord principle: the member representing the neutralized opposition may take either form, i.e. also the discordant one. Quirk et al. (1985, 768) treat this type of concord as distributive number, with the following comment and examples after the prototypical example (4) a.: »While the distributive plural is the norm, the distributive singular may also be used to focus on individual instances.«

- (4) a. Have you all brought your cameras? [›Each has a camera‹]
 b. The students raised their hand(s).
 c. Some children have understanding fathers / an understanding father.
 d. We all have good appetites / a good appetite.
 e. Pronouns agree with their antecedent(s).

Besides concord, this type of neutralization is illustrated by the loss of number distinction in generic sentences.

(5) a. The swallow is a bird.

The suppression of the singular/plural distinction between both form and meaning is easily demonstrated here by the potential alternation of singular and plural forms in many of these instances:

(5) b. Swallows are birds.

There is even orthographic evidence for the loss of both the formal and the meaning distinction between the singular and the plural of generic nouns, found in some instances of the possessive case. Instances listed under (6) (drawn from Quirk et al. 1985, 327–28) show vacillation between the singular and the plural even in writing.

- (6) a. There were ten farmer's / farmers' wives at the meeting.
 b. a girl's school / a girls' school.⁵

⁵ Quirk et al. (1985, 328, note [a]) point out the tendency of the genitive of generic nouns

Yet another example of neutralization of the singular/plural opposition is demonstrated by negative sentences of the type

(7) a. He has no brother / no brothers.

A set that is empty remains empty whatever number of potential members is denied. It is worth noting that this type represents the only instance referred to under neutralization in the index of *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston, Pullum 2002, 389). In the adduced example, here listed as (7) b., the two forms are described as semantically equivalent with little pragmatic difference.

(7) b. No juvenile was admitted. / No juveniles were admitted.

In other instances, the pragmatic difference may play a role: one of the forms may be preferred or required.

(7) c. He has no father. / *He has no fathers.
d. He has no child. / He has no children.

In (7) c. the singular is required because one does not have more than one (biological) father. In (7) d., on the other hand, the plural may be preferred as reflecting the more usual case.⁶

The realization form of a neutralized morphological opposition appears to play a role only in the respective pragmatic implications. As is known from phonology, neutralization of an opposition is formally implemented by either member in dependence on the environments; e. g. in Czech the neutralization of voice in paired consonants is realized by the voiceless member at the end of words (cf. *led* [let] ›ice‹ and *let* [let] ›flight‹), but by the voiced member before a paired voiced consonant (cf. *prosba* [prozba] and *hrozba* [hrozba]). There are also instances where the neutralization form is identical with neither member, e. g. *comfort* [kaʊfət], containing a variant of the phoneme /m/, which represents all nasal phonemes in English before labials.

(descriptive genitive in their terminology) to have an idiomatic connection with the head noun, which may eventually result in the formation of a compound.

6 On the basis of these examples the authors argue for the plural as the default choice: in (7) c. the singular is required because one does not have more than one (biological) father; in (7) d. the plural would be normally used because it is more usual to have two or more children than just one. One may wonder whether the comment on (7) d. still applies, and what the pragmatic choice would be in (7) a. and in instances with a fixed number of the members of a set like *He has no grandmother / grandmothers*.

The second type of neutralization, neutralization due to the participation of members of an opposition in another morphological opposition, is illustrated by many examples, most of which are drawn from the declension of nouns. Specifically, neutralization is postulated for cases for which none of the respective paradigms displays distinctive forms: the opposition nominative vs. accusative in the plural of animate masculine nouns in Slovak and Russian; the opposition nominative vs. accusative in the singular of neuter and inanimate masculine nouns in Slavonic languages; in Latin the opposition dative/ablative in all nouns in the plural, the opposition of nominative/accusative in both the singular and plural of all neuter nouns, etc.

- (8) *vinum bonum* nominative/accusative singular
vina bona nominative/accusative plural
 (9) *feminīs, servīs, puerīs, victōribus, rēbus ...*
 dative/ablative plural

I regard this type as deficient in meeting the second criterion of neutralization, the suppression of meaning; cf. the formulation quoted above, »[=morphological oppositions] must consist of meaning and the phonological implementation of this meaning«. What is here identical is only the form. The basic meaning of the cases is different, however difficult it may be to determine, especially as regards the nominative and the accusative (cf. the definition of the ablative and dative in Pyles and Algeo (1993, 338 and 343): Ablative A case typically showing separation and source, but also instrument and cause; Dative A case typically marking the indirect object or recipient.) In the above quotation, Trnka himself refers to Jakobson's *Kasuslehre* (1936), where cases are treated as forms involving invariant meaning.

As shown by (10) a. and b., the semantic relations between the undifferentiated nominative and accusative forms of neuter nouns are identical to those between the differentiated nominative and accusative forms in other genders the nominative is here the agent and the accusative the patient.

- (10) a. House kloflo kachně. The gosling (nom.) pecked the duckling (acc.)
 x Kachně kloflo house. The duckling (nom.) pecked the gosling (acc.)
 b. Husa klofla kachnu. The goose (nom.) pecked the duck (acc.).
 x Kachna klofla husu. The duck (nom.) pecked the goose (acc.).

All examples of neutralization discussed so far, including types 1 and 3, involve neutralization of morphological oppositions. Even in the two types that involve the syntactic aspect, neutralization again affects morphological oppositions, not syntactic ones.

2.2. Neutralization in Syntax

Looking for potential candidates of neutralization in syntax, we need to specify the features on the basis of which they can be identified. On the analogy of morphological oppositions we seek related syntactic structures which differ in one syntactic feature and alternate with each other; in other words, syntactically related structures whose semantic distinction has been suppressed. As an instance of this kind we may consider the non-agentive passive which alternates with the active without appreciable difference in meaning. Compare the examples under (11).

- (11) a. Atoms are formed /form if the ions are diatomic
 b. In ion-ion recombination the electron transfers/is transferred from the negative ion to the positive ion.⁷
 c. The word derives/is derived from Latin.

Here we have two related syntactic structures differing in the feature active vs. passive, which normally contrast with each other semantically, but which appear to be more or less in free variation.

Another instance of syntactic neutralization within the English verb system is found in the infinitive operating as a postmodifier of a noun. Compare (12) a. and b. While in (12) a. the active and the passive convey their respective meanings, in (12) b. the formal distinction becomes irrelevant since both forms express passive meaning.

- (12) a. his wish to teach \neq his wish to be taught (is sincere)
 b. The only thing to do/to be done (is to deny everything).

In the sphere of sentences and clauses, potential neutralization can be exemplified by two contrasting structures: positive vs. negative polarity and locative vs. existential sentences.

Theoretically, sentence polarity appears to be irrelevant in *yes-no* questions, whose primary function is to ascertain in which polarity the content being expressed is true; this function can be served by either polarity. The only systemic constraint is the marked nature of the negative form. In language use this constraint appears to be a powerful one, alternation of positive and negative polarity being found only in rare cases. One type is encountered in Czech: either a positive or negative question can be used in the same situation with hardly any

⁷ Examples (11) a. and b. are shortened versions of examples adduced in Dušková (1999a, 120–22), where this point is treated at more length.

semantic distinction. What differences there are consist in the pragmatic aspects, the negative form being less direct, and hence more tentative. Compare examples (13) a. and b.:

- (13) a. Máš/nemáš známku? (literally: Have you/not-have you stamp?)
 b. Znáš/neznáš jeho adresu? (literally: Know you / not-know you his address?)

In English this use of negative *yes-no* questions does not occur. Nevertheless, a marginal case of alternating polarity may be found in *yes-no* questions operating in the secondary function of expressing invitation, offer, suggestion, as in (14).

- (14) Will / won't you join us?

As in (13), the difference between the two forms is here of a pragmatic nature: the negative form gives the addressee more freedom in responding according to his/her choice.

As regards locative and existential sentences, their structures and contrasting meaning are nearly always fully operative. Instances of blurred structure and meaning are even more marginal than in the preceding cases. It is to be noted that here neutralization requires very special contextual conditions. Compare (15) a. and b.

- (15) a. There is cheese and ham in the fridge. / In the fridge there is cheese and ham.
 ≠ The ham and cheese are in the fridge.
 b. He seemed to see the appeal in her eyes, as there surely was, for she was thinking, If his mother comes ..., ... it will be someone else to talk to.

I regard the *there*-clause in (15) b. as a case of suppression of the locative vs. existential distinction in that *there* in this clause merges both the locative (*there*= *in her eyes*) and the existential function (*as there surely was there*=*in her eyes*).

The last two points to be discussed are two types of subordinate clauses which do not lend themselves to facile classification.

The first is the subordinate clause in the cleft sentence. Although resembling the relative clause, it also differs from it in several relevant points.⁸ In the case of some antecedents the deviation from the relative clause is so essential that the

8 For a more detailed discussion of this point and references to the literature, see Dušková (1999b, 320–22).

subordinator *that*, which is the only choice here, is to be regarded as the conjunction and not a relative pronoun. Compare the first two examples in (16) with those given under c. a d.: while in (16) a. and b. the subordinate clause bears all features of a relative clause, in c. and d. relative interpretation fails to apply.

- (16) a. Those who are faithful know only the trivial side of love. It's the faithless who know love's tragedies.
 b. It was the girl whom/that/zero they blamed (not the boy).
 c. It was with great misgivings that he looked at the strange food on his plate.
 d. Why is it that you dislike her so much?

As shown by these instances, the contrast between the relative clause vs. content clause is here suppressed, the neutralized form being identifiable with neither; the subordinate clause of the cleft sentence represents a structure *sui generis*, which is doubtless a consequence of the relationship between the cleft and the underlying non-cleft form: a sentence expressing one propositional content is syntactically dissociated into two clauses.

The other type of clause that can be regarded as a neutralized form of two distinct types of subordinate clauses is found in the case of an *if*-clause in the position of an extraposed subject content clause, as in (17). Compare a. and b.

- (17) a. It is understandable that they feel threatened.
 b. It is understandable if they feel threatened.
 c. If they feel threatened, it is understandable. X That they feel threatened is understandable.

Leaving aside the interpretation of the *if*-clause in (17) b. as a straightforward adverbial clause of condition, which presupposes anaphoric function of the initial *it*, we get an entirely analogous structure as in (17) a.: initial *it* has an anticipatory function and the *if*-clause occurs in the position of extraposed subject. The only difference here consists in the presentation of the content of the subordinate clause: whereas in (17) a. it is presented as a fact, in (17) b. its truth value is conditional.⁹ As shown by (17) c., the subject interpretation of (17) b. applies only to the linear arrangement with the *if*-clause in final position. When

⁹ This point is treated at more length in the doctoral dissertation of V. Smolka (Smolka 2007, 19). Clauses like (17) b. are regarded as »a combination of a subject clause and a conditional clause which have merged and where the subject clause is meaningful only if the condition expressed in the *if*-clause is true.«

placed initially, the *if*-clause is again clearly adverbial, its only special feature being the co-referentiality of *it* and the content of the entire *if*-clause.

Considering the examples under discussion with respect to their character, they appear to differ from instances of morphological neutralization in two respects: the first is inherent in the syntactic level as such, and the second is connected with it. While in morphology, neutralization involves form and meaning, in syntax it involves another additional aspect: apart from form (structure) and semantic roles and/or sentence semantics, it also comprises syntactic function. Consequently, the conditions giving rise to neutralization are more complex. Even though more examples of syntactic neutralization can doubtless be found, they will hardly substantially differ from those that have been presented. The complexity of the neutralizing conditions rules out the central functions and uses of most structures, so that potential instances have to be looked for on the periphery of syntactic categories. This circumstance determines the characteristics of the adduced examples of neutralization: all types are (1) rare, (2) marginal (within the range from very marginal to more or less marginal), and (3) involve special, in some cases strongly marked, uses. These characteristics will presumably remain true even for a larger collection.

2.3. Neutralization at Suprasentential Level

The last point to be considered is neutralization on the suprasentential level. As stated in the introductory quotation, Trnka postulated neutralization for all levels, including the highest. His conception of this level was very broad insofar as it covered not only functional sentence perspective, but also stylistics and some pragmatic aspects such as illocutionary force and conversational implicatures (cf. Trnka 1990, 23). However, the highest level is not elaborated in his work. According to the brief outline, functional sentence perspective appears to play a major role insofar as the basic units of the suprasentential level Trnka identified with the theme and the rheme. Hence instances of neutralization are to be sought in the suppression of the distinction between the FSP functions.

Here the first problem that arises is the system of the FSP functions themselves. Although most theories of information structure recognize only two, the theme and the rheme (whatever terms may be used), the theoretical framework elaborated by Jan Firbas (1992), the most widely used theory among Czech anglicists, works with a third function, transition, implemented by the verb. In general, the FSP structure is regarded as a gradient which in the interpretative arrangement displays a gradual rise in communicative dynamism. Nevertheless, since the only poles in this arrangement are the theme and the rheme, even this

framework offers only these two functions as potential candidates for neutralization.

Another problem arises in connection with the realization form of these units. In contrast to the units of the lower levels, the realization forms of the theme and the rheme fail to provide a distinctive formal criterion. The theme and the rheme are largely realized in the same way, by noun phrases and adverbial phrases. A different realization form is found only in the case of the verb where one constituent of the verb phrase, usually the lexical element, operates as the rheme. This also applies to the verbo-nominal predication when the subject complement, which as rule constitutes the rheme, is implemented by an adjective phrase.

Altogether, the problem appears to be approachable only on the basis of the distinctive features of the FSP functions. These are to be sought in the FSP factors: linearity, context, semantics, and intonation in speech.

Starting with linearity, the theme is by definition the least dynamic and the rheme the most dynamic element, irrespective of position. Still, though not invariably, position as the indicator of an FSP function applies in a majority of instances: the theme is mostly found at the beginning of the sentence or in preverbal position and the rheme at the end or in postverbal position. To this extent it might be argued that where the rheme occurs at the beginning and the theme at the end, the (limited) distinctiveness of linearity is neutralized. This might be illustrated by rhematic subjects in initial position, as in (18):

(18) A car pulled up at the curb.

Compare the Czech equivalent *U chodníku zastavilo auto* [At the curb pulled up a car] in which the rheme occurs at the end.

Context dependence/independence is of a similar nature. Although given (context-dependent) elements mostly constitute the theme and new (context-independent) elements the rheme, both these functions often display a composite structure containing both given and new elements. Moreover, even given elements function as rhemes and new elements as themes, the FSP structure being ultimately determined by the interplay of all factors. Only an FSP configuration displaying an entirely new theme and an entirely given rheme might be regarded as neutralization of the contextual factor, but such a configuration is hard to conceive.

Within the FSP theory the semantic factor is treated in terms of dual semantics, static and dynamic, the latter being represented by the dynamic semantic functions constituting the presentation scale and the quality scale. Since the distinction between the two basically depends on the dynamic semantics of the verb in conjunction with the context independence of the subject, instances

of the neutralization of this factor might be sought where the verb fails to indicate presentation or quality, which is regarded as an instance of potentiality by Firbas (1992: 108–110), »which occurs when the interplay of FSP factors permit of more than one interpretation.« Compare his example:

(19) as great crowds gathered to him, [he entered a boat and sat down]

While the potential interpretation of the FSP structure in (19) either as the presentation of a phenomenon (*great crowds*) on the scene, or as ascribing a quality (*gathered*) to a quality bearer (*great crowds*) is an instance of homonymy, it might be argued that the distinctive function of the semantic factor is neutralized insofar as it fails to operate.

The last factor, intonation, primarily operates in speech, while in writing the FSP structure as a rule results from the interplay of the other three factors. Even so it appears to qualify as a neutralizable feature best in that the rheme generally bears the intonation centre (the nucleus). Hence it may be said that where the intonation centre falls on an element other than the rheme, the distinctive potential of this feature is neutralized. Such instances are rarely found where the automated pattern of falling intonation with the intonation centre at the end overrides the rhematic function of the initial subject, illustrated in (18).

To conclude, this tentative discussion of neutralization on the level of FSP has confirmed what was found about neutralization in syntax: the more variables are involved, the less favourable the conditions for neutralization become. Even more than in syntax, the instances of neutralization found on the level of FSP, if accepted as such, are peripheral or even non-existent.

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II

Information Structure in Czech Linguistics Today

Information Structure from the Point of View of the Relation of Function and Form¹

1. Introduction

There are two attributes by which the Prague Linguistic School is generally characterized: ›structural‹ and ›functional‹. While ›structural‹ is a common denominator of several linguistic trends that originated in the first decades of the 20th century following Ferdinand de Saussure's pioneering linguistic approach, the term ›function‹ was used by de Saussure only occasionally. It is supposed to be a distinctive feature of Prague scholars: at the same time as they recognized the necessity to describe and explain the collection of language phenomena as a structured whole rather than as mechanical agglomeration, they emphasized that this structured whole – language – should be understood as a functioning means of communication.

As has been observed already by the founding members of the School (e.g. Jakobson (1963, 482) says that »we could hardly find a unifying pattern for the Prague group which would distinguish it as a whole from other scholars [...]«) and by many Praguian linguists afterwards (e.g. Vachek 1966, Novák and Sgall 1962, Sgall 1987, Leška 1999, Daneš 1987; 2006), the Praguian formulations of the guiding principles often differ from author to author or from one paper to another. The following quotation characterizes the situation quite well: »[...] the Prague group has never formed anything like a dogmatically closed body; while it has been united in the basic acceptance of the structuralist and functionalist standpoint, in matters of implementation of the common principles there has always been a great variety of opinion« (Vachek 1966, 8). However, Jakobson (1963, 482) points out that »at the same time, there is a typical drift which ties the work of all these explorers and strictly distinguishes them both from the older tradition and from some different doctrines which found their outspoken expression likewise in the 30's. [...] this common drift [...] (aims) toward a means-

1 Parts 4.1 and 4.2 of this chapter are modified and substantially enlarged versions of Sect. 2 and 3.1, respectively, of Hajičová (2007).

ends model of language. These efforts proceed from a universally recognized view of language as a tool of communication.« This is what Oldřich Leška, one of the outstanding ›second-generation‹ Prague School representatives, reflected in the title of his paper as *unity in diversity* (Leška 1999).

In this chapter attention is focused on the necessity of the application of the function – form viewpoint (›means‹ and ›ends‹, and the regard to the communicative function) in the domain of one of the most important contributions of Prague School scholars to linguistic theory, namely the study of the information structure of the sentence.

2. Form and Function in the Mirror of Authentic (Historical) Quotations

Let us first look at the use of the term *functional* and some related terms (relevant to our focus of attention) in two original sources, namely in the collective theses presented to the First International Congress of Slavists (published in Vol. 1 of *TCLP*, 5–29) and in Vachek's *Dictionary of the Prague School of Linguistics* (originally published in 1960; its English translation appeared in 2003).

The following places in the text of the *Thèses* are characteristic for the use of the term function and its derivatives (the numbers at the beginnings of the lines refer to the respective chapters of the *Thèses*):

1.a) Conception de la langue comme système **fonctionnel**

[...] la langue est un système de moyens d'expression appropriés à **un but**

2.a) [...] Nécessité de distinguer le son comme fait physique objectif, comme représentation et **comme élément du système fonctionnel**

[...] les images acoustico-motrices subjectives [...] remplissement, dans ce système, une **fonction différenciatrice de significations**

The entries in Vachek's *Dictionary of the Prague School of Linguistics* (1960, trans. 2003) mostly refer to what the author considered to be the most characteristic or typical uses of the given terms, rather than bringing definitions of the head words (collocations); it is no wonder then that some of the entries reflect a certain vagueness of use and differences between the authors quoted. We do not reproduce here the whole entries, only the relevant passages. Our comments (usually simply abbreviated from Vachek's commentary in the *Dictionary*) are in square brackets.

Function

Skalička (1948, 139): »[...] the term function is used where the meaning (the function of a word, a sentence) or the structure of semantic units (the function of a phoneme) is concerned« [as opposed to Hjelmslev, with whom »the notion of function is close to the notion of function in mathematics«].

Functional Onomatology

»two important parts of linguistic investigation, that of the ways and means of calling selected elements of reality by names, and that of the ways and means organizing these names, as applied to an actual situation into sentences [...] we may call these respective sections of linguistics functional onomatology and functional syntax.«

(Mathesius 1936a, 97 – 98)

Functional Sentence Perspective

[is not specified in general, just the means of FSP are mentioned as if the very term FSP were ›given‹]

Form and Function in Language

»it cannot be denied that form and function are not simply two sides of one thing, but they often intersect. This is [...] also the essence of homonymy and homosemy, and in my opinion an important impulse for language changes. Though language is a system, the system of language is perhaps never completely balanced. For this reason in analysing language, systems which are too logical and thus too simplifying will fail to some extent.«

(Mathesius 1936b, 50)

Analytical Comparison and the Functional Viewpoint

»If we are to apply analytical comparison with profit, the only way of approach to different languages as strictly comparable systems is the functional point of view, since general needs of expression and communication, common to all mankind, are the only denominators to which means of expression and communication, varying from language to language, can reasonably be brought.«

(Mathesius 1936a, 95)

3. The Hierarchy of Levels and Relations between Their Units

3.1. Introduction

The need for a systematic and integrated description of the relation of functions and forms has led to conceive the core of language system as consisting of levels, the units of which have their functions in that they represent units of the adjacent higher levels, up to the non-linguistic layer of cognitive content. Under this understanding, the relation of means and function is interpreted as ›functions as‹ (in the upwards direction) and ›is constructed of‹ (in the downward direction).

From the methodological standpoint, Mathesius (influenced apparently by Marty) adopted the speaker's point of view and emphasized the necessity to proceed from function to form; i. e. from needs of communication to means of expression; he claims that the functional approach consists in the convergence of linguistics to the standpoint of the speaker. According to Daneš (1987), in his respect to the communicative needs, Mathesius himself was influenced by sociology. For Mathesius, form is subordinated to function. As duly noted by Novák and Sgall (1968), several questions may arise: are the needs quite common? what are the basic units of such needs? etc.

However, it is possible to take an opposite point of view and to proceed from form to function, which is the method applied in Jakobson's structural morphology. Leška (1995, 10) notes that such a new arrangement opens the way to a stratification model of language, introduced by Skalička (1935) and fully developed by Trnka (see esp. Trnka 1964).

3.2. Relations between Units of Levels

With the system of levels, two hierarchies have to be distinguished:

- (a) the relation between the (units of the) adjacent levels in the hierarchy; Hockett (1961) speaks about the ›R‹ (representation) relation;
- (b) the relation between units of a given level: complex units are composed of more elementary units (morph of phonemes, morpheme of semes, word of morphemes, sentence of word forms; Hockett (1961) speaks about the ›C‹ (composition) relation.

As pointed out by Sgall (1987, 171), three different approaches on how to account for these two hierarchies can be found in the writings of Prague scholars; Sgall's (1967a) original model of functional generative description works with levels

based on the hierarchy ›R‹ and within each level the hierarchy ›C‹ obtains. For our discussion, we will restrict ourselves to the discussion of the ›R‹ relation.

A far-reaching significance for the understanding of the relations between units of adjacent levels is the notion of *asymmetrical dualism* introduced by S. Karcevskij (1929). The main idea consists in the recognition that a form and its meaning (or rather function; Karcevskij uses the French term *signification*) do not cover the same field in all their points: the same sign has several functions and the same function can be expressed by several signs. There is always a certain tension between *signifiant* and *signifié* and the asymmetrical dualism of the structure of the sign makes it possible for language to develop.

Another distinction relevant to the understanding of the relations between levels (esp. for the specification of the functions of a given form) is that of ambiguity and vagueness as discussed e.g. by Zwicky and Sadock (1975): it is possible to ask the speakers if two morphemes or constructions differ in their functions or if they are synonymous. Similarly, two different meanings of a single morph can be distinguished from a single vague meaning. In the former case, rather than in the latter, the speaker is always able to tell which of the two different lexical or grammatical functions s/he had in mind (although not knowing the precise linguistic wording).

4. The Communicative Role of Language and the Position of TFA in the Function – Form Hierarchy

4.1. Some Historical Milestones

The focal point of Mathesius' interest was ›functional onomatology‹ (means employed by language for the purpose of naming) and ›functional syntax‹. In the latter domain, Mathesius understood sentence as comprising a patterning primarily conditioned by the interactively based role the sentence plays in the context, in discourse. His innovative and consistent regard to this role has led to his introduction of the notions of *theme* and *rheme* into syntactic studies, which is one of the fundamental issues discussed in modern linguistic theories up to the present.

The writings on what has more generally (and recently) been covered by the term *information structure* date back to centuries ago; the issue is treated under different terms and it is not always possible to find a one-to-one mapping between them; they also receive a slightly different interpretation. However, they share the underlying idea: a description of the structure reflecting the functioning of language in communication, which is different from the subject-verb-

object structure (described in any formalism). One of the oldest and most stimulating, not only for its time, is Weil's (1844) comparison of the means expressing information structure in languages of different types. His proposal to distinguish two types of ›progressions‹ of sentences in a discourse, in relation to which part of a given sentence serves as a starting point for the subsequent one is of great interest. Sentences may follow each other in a parallel mode, i. e. they share their starting points (*marche parallèle*), or in a sequential mode, i. e., the starting point of a given sentence follows up the second (final) part of the preceding sentence (*progression*). In more modern terms, one can say that in the parallel mode, the sentences share their themes (topics), in the sequential mode the theme (topic) of one sentence relates to the rheme (focus) of the preceding sentence. (It should be noted that more than one hundred years later, a similar, though more subtle, approach was developed by Daneš (1970) in his paper on thematic progressions.)

It is not our intention here to present a historical survey; let us only mention that though the first hints for a systematic treatment of these issues within structural linguistics were given by Vilém Mathesius and later continued (on the initiative of Josef Vachek) by Jan Firbas, one should not forget that the topic was, so to say, hanging in the air, receiving attention especially in German linguistics (for a more detailed discussion, see Sgall et al., 1973; 1980 and 1986).

With the entrance of formal linguistics on the scene, it is not surprising that the first suggestions for an inclusion of TFA into an integrated formal description of language came from Prague; Sgall's Functional Generative Description (Sgall 1967a) working with a tectogrammatical (underlying, deep) level of sentence structure has incorporated the TFA opposition into the description of this level (Sgall 1967b).

An important terminological (but not only terminological) side-step is in place at this point. As Svoboda duly notes (Svoboda 2003) Mathesius' Czech term *aktuální členění větné* is not directly translatable into English; Firbas – on the advice of Josef Vachek (Firbas 1992, xii) and apparently inspired by Mathesius' use of the German term *Satzperspektive* in his fundamental paper from 1929 – changed it into *functional sentence perspective* (FSP). However, this is not the only name under which this domain of research entered linguistics: German researchers often speak about *Thema-Rhema Gliederung*, M.A.K. Halliday, one of the leading European linguists, who has been influenced by the Praguian theory, speaks about *information subsystem* (Halliday 1967) or *information structure* (reflecting the given-new strategy) distinguishing it from *thematic structure* (Halliday 1970); another pair of terms used are *topic* and *comment*, etc. These terminological differences often indicate some notional distinctions, as is the case of the Praguian theory of *Topic-Focus Articulation* (TFA) we subscribe to. TFA is not a mere ›translation‹ or ›rephrasing‹ of the term FSP; a different

term was used basically to indicate certain differences in the starting points: Firstly, theme was originally defined by Firbas as the item that carries the lowest degree of communicative dynamism (CD); if understood in this way, the existence of sentences without a theme (so-called ›topicless sentences‹ in linguistic literature, or ›hot-news‹) would be excluded (every sentence *has* an item with a lowest degree of communicative dynamism); to avoid such a misunderstanding, we used the term *topic* rather than *theme*. (Firbas 1992, however, modifies his definition of theme from Firbas 1964 by adding that in the absence of theme, the lowest degree of CD is carried by the first element of non-theme – referring to Sgall’s objection against his original definition of theme made at a FSP conference in Sofia in 1976.) Second, even though we accept the postulate that every item in the sentence carries a certain degree of CD, our analysis of negation gives indisputable support for understanding TFA as based on the ›aboutness‹ relation, i. e., not just on the degree of CD but on the opposition of contextual boundness (see Section 3 below) and also on (as a derived notion, though) the notion of a bipartition (the focus of a sentence conveys information about its topic). Third, certain notions have been found formulated more precisely in the TFA theory than in the insightful Firbas’ writings. As Sgall (2003, especially 281 ff) writes, this concerns differences in the nature of the four factors of linear arrangement, prosody, semantics and contexts (the first two belonging to the means of expression of information structure and the other two to its functional layers), as well as CD and contextual boundness. And last but not least, as will be discussed below, in our understanding, TFA is a structure belonging to the underlying, deep structure of sentences (tectogrammatical, in our terms).

It should be noted that the examples serving as arguments during the split of generative transformational grammar into interpretative and generative semantics reflected the difference in TFA (actually, on both sides of the dispute, though not recognized as such; see, e. g., Chomsky 1971 and Lakoff 1971, to name just the main figures). A ›breakthrough‹ on that side of the Atlantic was Mats Rooth’s doctoral dissertation on association with focus (Rooth 1985), in which the author (referring i. a. to Jackendoff 1972) quite convincingly argues for the »semantic effect of focus« in the sentence offering the explanation of this effect in terms of a domain of quantification (Rooth 1985, 197); his starting arguments were restricted to the presence in the sentence of the so-called focusing particles such as *only*, *even*, but he also extended his proposal to the so-called ›adverbs of quantification‹ (*often*, *always*) and cases such as cleft constructions in English.

The interest was aroused, and after Barbara Partee’s (who was one of Mats Rooth’s supervisors) involvement in the discussion of the semantic consequences of different TFA structures (see e. g. Partee 1991) the TFA issues took up an important position in the discussions of formal semanticists (for a Czech

contribution to that discussion see Peregrin 1994; 1996), but not only within that domain (quite noticeable is the interest in the TFA issues in German linguistics).

One of the crucial contributions of the above mentioned discussions was the due respect to the reflection of the differences in TFA in the prosodic shape of the sentences (which view, actually, has been present in the Praguian studies of TFA). Let us mention here only Jackendoff's (1972) introduction of the difference in A and B prosodic contour and Rooth's (1985) consistent regard to the placement of the intonation pitch in his example sentences.

4.2. The Position of TFA in the Function – Form Hierarchy

To offer an answer to the question posed in the title of this Section, let us start with some examples (maybe notoriously known). The capitals denote the intonation centre; the names in brackets indicate the source of the examples.

- (1) a. Everybody in this room knows at least two LANGUAGES.
b. At least two languages are known by everybody in this ROOM.
(Chomsky 1957; 1965)
- (2) a. Many men read few BOOKS.
b. Few books are read by many MEN. (Lakoff 1971a)
- (3) a. Londoners are mostly at BRIGHTON.
b. At Brighton, there are mostly LONDONERS. (Sgall 1967b)
- (4) a. I only introduced BILL to Sue.
b. I only introduced Bill to SUE. (Rooth 1985)
- (5) a. I work on my dissertation on SUNDAYS.
b. On Sundays, I work on my DISSERTATION.
- (6) a. English is spoken in the SHETLANDS.
b. In the Shetlands, ENGLISH is spoken. (Sgall et al. 1986)
- (7) a. Dogs must be CARRIED.
b. DOGS must be carried. (Halliday 1967; Firbas 1999)
c. Carry dogs. (a warning in London underground, around 2000) = Carry DOGS.
d. CARRY dogs.

It is not difficult to understand that the pairs of sentences under each number differ not only in their outer shapes or in their contextual appropriateness but also in their meanings, even in their truth conditions. This difference may be attributed to the presence of quantifiers and their order (with an explicit quantification in (1) and (2) and a more or less explicit one in (3) and (4)), but from (5) on, such an explanation is not possible. Also, an exclusive reference to

the surface order of the sentence elements would not be correct, as illustrated by (4) and (7).

A more adequate explanation is that based on the relation of *aboutness*: the speaker communicates something (the Focus of the sentence) about something (the Topic of the sentence), i. e. $F(T)$, the Focus holds about the Topic. In case of negative sentences, the Focus does not hold about the Topic: $\sim F(T)$.

A supportive argument for the semantic relevance of TFA can be traced in the discussions on the kinds of entailments starting with the fundamental contributions of Strawson. Strawson (1952, especially 173 ff) distinguishes a formal logical relation of entailment and a formal logical relation of presupposition; this distinction – with certain simplifications – can be illustrated by (8) and (9):

(8) All John's children are asleep.

(9) John has children.

If John's children were not asleep, the sentence (8) would be false; however, if John did not have children, the sentence as well as its negation would not be false but meaningless. Thus (9) is a presupposition of (8) and as such it is not touched by the negation of (8).

Returning to the relation of aboutness, we can say that (8) is about John's children, and for (8) to be meaningful, there must be an entity ›John's children‹ the speaker can refer to.²

The close connection between the notion of presupposition and TFA can be documented by a more detailed inspection of the notion of presupposition, exemplified here by sentences (10) and (11).

(10) The King of France is (not) bald.

(11) The exhibition was (not) visited by the King of France.

It follows from the above mentioned discussions on presuppositions that Strawson's (1964) ex. (10) is about the King of France and the King's existence (referential availability) is presupposed, it is entailed also by its negative counterpart; otherwise (10) would have no truth value, it would be meaningless. On the other hand, there is no such presupposition for (11): the affirmative sentence is true if the King of France was among the visitors of the exhibition, while its negative counterpart is true if the King of France was not among the visitors. The truth/falsity of (11) does not depend on the referential availability of the entity ›King of France‹. This specific kind of entailment was introduced in Hajičová (1972) and was called *allegation*: an *allegation* is an assertion A en-

2 This need not mean that the entity the sentence is ›about‹ should exist in the real world, but it should be referentially available; cf. the discussion of the notion of referential vs. existential presuppositions in Hajičová (1976, 55 – 58), reflected also in Sgall et al. (1986).

tailed by an assertion carried by a sentence S, with which the negative counterpart of S entails neither A nor its negation (see also Hajičová 1984; 1993, and the discussion by Partee 1996). Concerning the use of a definite noun group in English one can say that it often triggers a presupposition if it occurs in Topic (see sentence (10)), but only an allegation if it belongs to Focus (see sentence (11)).

These considerations have led us to an attempt at a more systematic analysis of the relations between affirmative and negative sentences (Hajičová 1972; 1984; 1993). The scope of negation can be specified, in the prototypical case, as constituted by the Focus, so that the meaning of a negative declarative sentence can be interpreted as its Focus (F) not holding of it, i. e. $\sim F(T)$. In this way it is possible to understand the semantic difference present in (10) and (11).

In a secondary case, the assertion holds about a negative Topic: $F(\sim T)$, see (12) on the reading when answering the question ›Why didn't he come?‹

(12) He did not come because he was out of money.

Here again, the scope of negation is dependent on TFA: it is restricted to the Topic part of the sentence. The assertion entailed (on this reading) by the *because*-clause in Focus is not touched by negation.³

4.3. TFA as an Integral Part of the Underlying Layer of Linguistic Description

The analysis summarized in Section 4.2 points out very clearly that TFA undoubtedly is a semantically relevant aspect of the sentence and as such should be represented at a level of an integrated language description capturing the meaning of the sentence (whatever interpretation we assign to the notion of ›meaning‹). For the formal description of language we subscribe to, namely the Functional Generative Description, this is the underlying, *tectogrammatical* layer; the tectogrammatical representations of sentences (TRs) are specified as dependency tree structures, with the verb (of the main clause) as the root of the tree. While the labels of the nodes of the tree are counterparts to the autosemantic words of the sentence, counterparts of function words as well as of grammatical morphemes are just indices of the nodes and the edges of the tree: the morphological values of number, tense, modalities, and so on, are specified by indices of the labels of the nodes. For each node of the TR it is specified

3 On another possible reading of (12), e. g. if the sentence is followed by *but because he was on his leave of absence*, his being out of money is neither entailed nor negated, i. e. the entailment belongs to the allegations of the sentence, i. e. he might have come for some other reason. The scope of negation concerns Focus, schematically: $\sim F(T)$.

whether it is contextually bound or non-bound.⁴ The edges of the tree are labeled by underlying syntactic relations (such as Actor/Bearer, Addressee, Patient, Origin, Effect, several Local and Temporal relations, etc.). The appurtenance of an item to the Topic or Focus of the sentence is then derived on the basis of the features *cb* or *nb* assigned to individual nodes of the tree (see Sgall 1979).

An underlying structure specified in this way can be understood as the ›highest‹ level of the language description viewed from the point of view of the hierarchy from function to form. The inclusion of TFA into this level can serve well as a starting point for connecting this layer with an interpretation in terms of intensional semantics in the one direction and with a description of the morphemic and phonemic means expressing TFA (Sgall 2003, 280; see also Fig. 1 in Section 6 below).

The semantico-pragmatic interpretation of sentences (for which the TRs represent suitable input) may then include an application of Tripartite Structures (Operator – Restrictor – Nuclear Scope), as outlined by B. H. Partee in Hajičová et al. (1998). Let us briefly recall some of the characteristic sentences discussed there (with their relevant TRs) and specify (in a maximally simplified notation) which parts of their individual readings belong to the Operator (O), Restrictor (R) and Nuclear Scope (N) of the corresponding tripartite structures. We assume that in the interpretation of a declarative sentence, O corresponds to negation or to its positive counterpart (the assertive modality) or to some other operators, such as focusing particles; R corresponds to Topic (T), and N to Focus (F).

- (13) John sits by the TELEVISION.
 (13') O ASSERT, R John, N sits by the TELEVISION.
 (13'') O ASSERT, R John sits, N by the TELEVISION.

From the point of view of TFA, (13) – leaving aside its possible interpretation as a topicless sentence (›hot news‹) – may be analyzed in two ways: either it conveys information about John (i. e. *John* being its Topic and the rest its Focus), or it

4 A contextually bound (*cb*) node represents an item presented by the speaker as referring to an entity assumed to be easily accessible to the hearer(s), i. e. more or less predictable, readily available to the hearers in their memory, while a contextually non-bound (*nb*) node represents an item presented as not directly available in the given context, cognitively ›new‹. While the characteristics ›given‹ and ›new‹ refer only to the cognitive background of the distinction of contextual boundness, the distinction itself is an opposition understood as a grammatically patterned feature, rather than in the literal sense of the term. This point is illustrated, e. g., by (*Tom entered together with his friends.*) *My mother recognized only HIM, but no one from his COMPANY.* Both *Tom* and *his friends* are ›given‹ by the preceding context (indicated here by the preceding sentence in the brackets), but in the given sentence they are structured as non-bound (which is reflected in the surface shape of the sentence by the position of the intonation center).

conveys information about John's sitting; in the latter case, the dividing line between Topic and Focus will be drawn after the verb. The ASSERT operator (introduced by Jacobs 1984) indicates the assertive modality of the sentence, and the two possible divisions into Topic and Focus are reflected by (13') and (13'').

In (14), the particle *only* occupies its prototypical position in the underlying structure, so that the focus of the particle is identical with the Focus of the sentence on either reading, i. e. with the verb included in Focus in (14'), and in Topic in (14'').

(14) John only sits by the TELEVISION.

(14') O only, R John, N sits by the TELEVISION.

(14'') O only, R John sits, N by the TELEVISION.

Let us just note that in the cases in which Topic or Focus is complex, as illustrated by (15), it is the opposition of contextual boundness that is responsible for the difference: while contextually bound items then belong to the local (partial) R, the non-bound ones belong to the corresponding N.

5. Means of Expression of TFA

5.1. Introduction

From the methodological point of view, Mathesius' emphasis on the virtual identity of the facts to be expressed by all languages of the world directs the analyst's attention to the diversity of ways by which these identical facts are referred to in various languages. As Vachek (1966, 7) notes, this is a specific characteristic of the Prague structuralist conception delimiting it from other structurally oriented linguistic currents (Danish glossematics, American descriptivism).

5.2. The Order of Words

The most frequently and extensively discussed means of expression of the information structure is the word order. In some approaches, the differences in the information structure are even identified with the differences in the order of words in the surface shape of the sentence; as indicated by our set of examples in (1) through (7) this is not correct; the word order is only one of the means (forms) of the expression of the underlying difference of meaning. This is not only due to the fact that not in all languages is the word order flexible enough to express this distinction. The order of words in the surface shape of the sentence

might be the same and yet the sentences acquire a different information structure, see (7) above or (15), offered by the late Prof. Ivan Poldauf (pers. comm.):

- (15) John and Mary saw an EXPLOSION.
- (15') An explosion was seen by JOHN and MARY.
- (15'') An EXPLOSION was seen by John and Mary.

While either (15) or (15'') might be used both if the two people saw the same explosion or each of them saw a different one, the (only, or at least preferred) interpretation of (15') is that the two people saw the same explosion (meaning: ›there was an explosion John and Mary saw‹) even though the order of elements in the surface shape of (15') and (15'') is the same.

5.3. Sentence Prosody

Examples such as (7) and (5) illustrate that sentence prosody, especially the placement of the intonation centre, is as important in expressing the TFA differences as word order is. In this respect, the pioneering analyses of M.A.K. Halliday have to be mentioned (dating back to Halliday 1967, see his example (7)); it was probably him who first ›exported‹ the issues relevant for information structure to the other side of the Atlantic. This might be attested by Chomsky's (1965; his example (1), reprinted here for convenience, was used for the first time in Chomsky 1957) first reference to ›topic‹ as a possible source of the semantic distinction between the active sentence (1) and its passive counterpart (1'); the intonation center in both sentences is assumed to fall on the last word of the sentence, or, alternatively, on *everybody* in (1'). The latter placement of the intonation center in (1') would be appropriate if the context in which the sentence occurs indicates that the only contextually non-bound item of the sentence is *everybody*. If the context indicates that *everybody* is contextually bound, then both (1) (with the intonation centre on *languages*) and (1'') would be appropriate.

- (1) Everybody in this room knows at least two languages.
- (1') At least two languages are known by everybody in this room
- (1'') At least two LANGUAGES are known by everybody in this room

Also, it should be acknowledged that in his paper on presupposition and focus as related to his notions of deep and surface structure, Chomsky (1971) consistently took into consideration the position of intonation center (giving it a special graphic notation by capitals). This respect to the prosodic expression is most perspicuously reflected in the above mentioned doctoral dissertation on ›association with focus‹ by Rooth (1985).

The issues related to the notion of ›association with focus‹ and its assumed acoustic realization by a pitch accent are connected with such expressions as English *only*, *also*, *even*. As indicated by the name of the category of these particles (›rhematizers‹ by Firbas, or ›focusing‹ or ›focus sensitive particles‹ or ›focalizers‹ by Rooth, Partee and others), the question can be raised as to whether these particles always stipulate association with a focused element in their scope, or whether there are contexts in which they can occur without such an association. The dialogue (16) (quoted from Hajičová, Partee and Sgall 1998, 153) supports the view that an association of these particles with the Focus of the sentence is not necessarily the case.

- (16) A: Everyone already knew that Mary only eats vegetables.
 B: If even Paul knew that Mary only eats vegetables, then he should have suggested a different restaurant.

In (B), there are two ›focalizers‹: one of them, the particle *only*, is associated with the material repeated from the first sentence (A) of the dialogue, the second is the particle *even*. Such a complex situation is referred to in linguistic literature as ›second-occurrence focus‹, SO (for the most recent discussion, see Beaver et al. 2007). It has been empirically testified by Bartels (1997) that the realization of second-occurrence focus (on several acoustic dimensions) is different from the ›regular‹ focus; in a follow-up production experiment reported in Beaver et al. (2007), it was confirmed that not only is the SO focus marked differently from the ›regular‹ focus but that it is also differs acoustically from the non-focused expressions. In Hajičová, Partee and Sgall (1998), the authors therefore differentiate the focus of the focusing particle (i. e. its scope) from the Focus of the sentence (i. e. the part of the sentence saying something ›about‹ its Topic). In terms of the above mentioned tripartite structures, the analysis of a complex sentence with two focusing particles is as indicated in (17). If the operator is included in Topic, its own focus (which differs from the sentence Focus in such marked cases) does not cross the boundary between the Topic and the Focus of the sentences.

- (17) (What did even PAUL realize?) Even Paul realized that Jim only admired MARY.
 (17') O ASSERT, R (O even, R realized, N Paul), N (O only, R Jim admired, N Mary)

It is, of course, not only the position of the intonation center that should be taken into account in the analysis of TFA. The studies on contrastive topic (see e. g. Hajičová, Sgall 2004, Veselá, Peterek and Hajičová 2003) covering also instances of the above-mentioned ›second-occurrence focus‹ convincingly support the view that one should consider the whole intonation contour of the sentence (its

F₀ characteristics) when deciding on the status of the given elements of the sentence in its TFA. For a very inspiring general discussion of the relation between syntax and prosody see Selkirk (1984, 1995).

It should be noted in the connection of the discussion of the prosodic means of TFA that it is not always the case that the most dynamic element of Focus is to be prosodically marked: Firbas (1992, 176) quotes the English sentence (18) as an example of an ›automatic placement‹ of the intonation center at the end of the sentence even if it is the subject which is ›rhematic‹ rather than the end of the sentence. (As noted by L. Dušková, pers. comm., the rhematicity of the surface subject is i.a. reflected by the use of the indefinite article.)

(18) A boy came into the room.

It is worth mentioning that due to the fact that the grammatically fixed word order of English does not make it possible to order the elements of a sentence linearly so as to reflect the information structure of the sentence (its CD), even the written form of English has a means to indicate the position of the intonation center in the sentence, namely the use of italics. This has already been observed by Alena Skaličková in the 1970's; her observation reoccurred, surprisingly enough, in a paper by Saldanha (2007), analyzing the use of italics to mark focus in English translations of Spanish and Portuguese original texts.

5.4. Syntactic Constructions

The best known example of a syntactic construction used as the means of rendering the information structure of an English sentence is the so-called ›cleft construction‹. It is a commonly accepted assumption that the *it*-clefts (in contrast to the pseudo-clefts, sometimes referred to as *wh*-clefts) make it possible to ›prepose‹ the rhematic element and thus to give it some kind of prominence; the rest of the sentence is then understood as being in a kind of ›shadow‹, backgrounded. The ›preposing‹ of the focused element is prototypically accompanied by placing the intonation center on this element. A typical example is (19); as its translation to Czech in (19') illustrates, there is no need to use a specific construction in Czech (unless in a special emphatic situation), a simple reordering of the elements of the sentence is enough.

(19) It was JOHN who talked to few girls about many problems.

(19') S málo děvčaty mluvil o mnoha problémech HONZA.

Lit. With few girls talked about many problems John-Nominative

Though the above interpretation of the cleft constructions is the one prevailing in linguistic literature on English, it is not the only possible one. As recalled by

Dušková (1993), Quirk et al. (1985, 1379) offer the interpretation of ›divided focus‹; the authors assume that the decision about which of the two items of ›focus‹ is dominant (›new‹) depends on the context. Dušková (1993) compares their example (20) with (20') and suggests that in (20') *Frost* as the rheme of the *it*-clause gets more prominence and thus can be regarded as dominant, while in (20) the dominant item is the *that*-clause.

(20) They hoped that Herbert Frost would be elected and Frost indeed it was that topped the poll.

(20') They hoped that Herbert Frost would be elected and it was indeed Frost that topped the poll.

Cleft constructions may also serve as additional support for the view that not only the division of the sentence into its Topic and Focus, but also the degrees of communicative dynamism as such play their role in the semantic interpretation of the sentence.

(21) It was JOHN who talked about many problems to few girls.

(21') O mnoha problémech mluvil s málo děvčaty HONZA.

Lit. About many problems talked with few girls John-Nominative

The interpretation (at least the preferred one) of (19) suggests that there was a group of few girls with which John talked about many problems, not necessarily the same set of many problems. For (21), the (preferred) interpretation suggests that there was a (single) set of many problems about which he talked with few girls (not necessarily a single group of girls).

5.5. Morphemic Means

To make the repertoire complete, information structure may also be rendered by morphemic means, to which belongs the notorious example of the Japanese particles *wa* and *ga* discussed in linguistic literature since Kuno's (1972; 1973) pioneering analysis of the function of these particles in the information structure of Japanese (most recently, the thematic function of *wa* was discussed e. g. by Fukuda 2003).

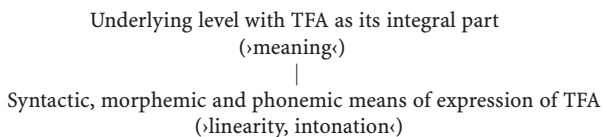
There are many other examples of languages where morphemics serves as (one of the means of expression) of information structure quoted in linguistic literature up to now, let me only cite two mentioned by Novák (1974, 177) referring also to Dahl (1959). Information structure is expressed obligatorily and by using morphological means in Yukaghir, a Paleo-Asiatic language (Krejnovič 1958). There are three series of forms for each transitive verb there (distinguished from one another by the presence or absence of personal inflection,

by morphological exponents, and by the presence or absence of certain prefixes) which are used where the rheme-component coincides with the subject of the verb, or its object, or the verb itself, respectively. In addition, a suffix is attached to the subject or object under conditions that pertain to the distribution of the rheme. In Tagalog, an Indonesian language, the theme of the sentence is distinguished by means of certain particles (articles) and word order; the syntactic roles of the given participants are indicated by an appropriate form of the verb (Bowen 1965).

6. Conclusion

This chapter argues (i) that topic-focus articulation as a semantically relevant language phenomenon is an integral part of the description of the sentence at the underlying level of language description (Section 4), (ii) that as such, TFA belongs to ›langue‹, to the language system rather than to ›parole‹ understood as the domain of communication and discourse, as sometimes claimed. From the point of view of the function – form relation as postulated by the Prague School scholars (shortly recapitulated in Section 1 of this chapter) it is then imprecise to characterize TFA (or FSP, for that matter) as an interplay of four factors, namely context, semantics, linearity, intonation (as continuously characterized by Firbas and his followers).

Figure 1



While linearity and intonation (together with syntactic and morphemic means) belong to the side of ›means‹ or ›forms‹ in the hierarchy (see Figure 1), the other two ›factors‹, namely the ›semantic‹ one (including the ›presentation scale: setting – presentation – phenomenon presented, and the ›quality scale: setting – quality bearer – quality – specification(s)) and the contextual factor are of a different nature. They, of course, may help the linguist to determine what the TFA of the sentence s/he examines is (or whether the sentence is ambiguous); for the participants of the discourse the TFA of a sentence is relevant both for the suitability of the sentence for this or that context (from the point of view of the speaker) and for its semantico-pragmatic interpretation (from the viewpoint of the addressee (see Sgall 2003, 281).

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Structural Dichotomy in the Theory of Functional Sentence Perspective

1. From Sentence to Text

Text linguistics has played a crucial role in the development of discourse analysis. It views texts as elements strung together in definable relationships (see e. g. van Dijk 1977 and 1985 or de Beaugrande, Dressler 1981), dealing with the analysis of the ›surface‹ structures that unify the text (cohesion) on the one hand and the ›deep‹ semantic relations between the elements (coherence) on the other. These concepts derive basically from the British discourse analysis approach represented by Halliday (Halliday, Hasan 1989). Text linguistics treats the text material from different perspectives; it is, however, unified by interest in describing language from the higher-level, suprasentential perspective as well as in the role of context and communicative approach.

Closely related to the study in the field of text linguistics is the information processing theory developed by the Prague (and Brno) School of Linguistics, most notably by Jan Firbas – the theory of functional sentence perspective. Generally speaking, it explores the theme-rheme structures and the relationships between the units of information in the utterance. The theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP) and its analytical methods have been considered one of the prominent tools of discourse analysis and information processing.

Combining the approaches adopted both by formalists and functionalists, the theory of functional sentence perspective draws on the findings presented by the scholars of the Prague Circle. The founder of FSP himself – Jan Firbas – drew on the findings of his predecessor, Vilém Mathesius. As early as 1911, Mathesius noticed the language universal of every utterance having a theme (topic) and a rheme (focus), and formulated the basic principles of what was to be labelled FSP only later.

In Firbas's view, the sentence is a field of semantic and syntactic relations that in its turn provides a distributional field of degrees of communicative dynamism (CD); Firbas defines a degree of CD as »the extent to which the element contributes towards the development of the communication« (1964, 270). The most

prominent part of information is the ›high‹ point of the message, i. e. the most dynamic element; other elements of the sentence are less dynamic (have a lower degree of CD). The degrees of CD are determined by the interplay of FSP factors involved in the distribution of degrees of CD: linear modification, context and semantic structure (Firbas 1992, 14–16). In spoken language, the interplay of these factors is joined by intonation, i. e., the prosodic factor.

It is the continuum of the degrees of CD along with the interplay of the basic FSP factors that make FSP specific within the field of text linguistics. One is able to analyse and interpret a clause making use of exactly given criteria. CD operates on the level of a clause; the individual thematic and non-thematic elements – when viewed from the level of a macro-structure – then form thematic and non-thematic strings (see below). In other words, the theory of FSP transcends the domain of text grammar, enriching it with the approach adopted by the study of information processing.

The domain of the theory of functional sentence perspective (FSP) has been explored mostly on the sentential level, i. e. in the area of the basic distributional field created by the clause. Recently, however, attention has also been paid to the functional picture of higher hierarchical levels of text; the research has shown that an FSP analysis of a distributional macrofield (a paragraph, a chapter) is a promising step taken in the study of FSP and that it can reveal significant characteristic features of a whole text (cf. Adam 2004 and 2006).

This chapter proposes to examine the distributional macrofield from the point of view of functional sentence perspective, focusing on the horizontal and vertical relations operating within the text.¹

2. FSP Analysis of the Basic Distributional Field (Horizontal)

Since the pioneering work of Jan Firbas' research into the theory of functional sentence perspective, the interpretative analysis of the clause has been the corner-stone of FSP. Indeed, it is the FSP analysis of a basic distributional field (clause) that is the starting point of the functional interpretation.

The very Firbasian notions connected with the functional and dynamic approach towards text derive from the functional analysis of the clause; Firbas claims that the central position in FSP interpretation ›is occupied by distributional fields provided by independent verbal sentences‹ (1992, 11–12). He views a clause as ›a field of relations‹ (syntactic and semantic above all) that

1 The concepts and terms used or referred to in this paper can be consulted in Firbas' summarizing monograph *Functional Sentence Perspective in Written and Spoken Communication* (1992).

determine the distribution of communicative dynamism (CD) over individual communicative units of the clause. Units carrying a lower degree of CD form the thematic part of the clause and those carrying a higher degree of CD form – together with the so called transition – the non-thematic part of the clause (Firbas 1992, 80 – 81). Also Svoboda (1989, 25) considers the functional study on the level of the sentence a basis of functional syntax; he labels the sentential level units ›mezzo-structures‹ hierarchically occupying the sphere between micro-structures and macro-structures.

Since the sentence is a field of relations, it is necessary to define what is meant by a basic distributional field. Firbas (1992, 15 – 17) agrees with Svoboda (1989, 88) that »a sentence, a clause, a semi-clause and even a nominal phrase serve as distributional fields of CD in the act of communication, and their syntactic constituents (e. g. subject, predicative verb [...]) serve as communicative units«. Through the interplay of FSP factors (context, semantics and linear modification), it is then possible to identify the degrees of CD carried by the communicative units: according to the gradual rise of CD, it is theme proper (ThPr) – diatheme (DTh) – transition proper (TrPr) – transition (Tr) – rheme (Rh) – rheme proper (RhPr).

To sum up, the functional analysis of a basic distributional field is, in its essence, a horizontal process and the relations between individual segments are purely syntagmatic. The table below displays the interpretative arrangement of a clause – according to the gradual rise in CD irrespective of the positions the segments occupy within the sentence (Firbas 1986, 47). It consists of six communicative units represented by black dots: the degree of CD they carry is symbolised by the size of the dots.

ThPr	DTh	Tr	TrPr	Rh	RhPr
•	•	•	•	•	•

Table 1 Symbolic FSP analysis of the clause

3. FSP Analysis of a Macrofield (Vertical)

3.1. Framework of a Macrofield

As has been mentioned above, the principles adopted in the FSP analysis of a clause are also applicable to higher hierarchical levels of text, such as paragraphs or chapters. The dynamic relations appear not to be restricted to the level of individual clauses but to exceed them, to operate on the suprasentential, macro-structure level of a communicative macrofield (for details see Adam 2004, 17–18).

Looking at an integral piece of text, we may – apart from the horizontal FSP analysis of individual clauses – identify two types of vertical relations that ›chain‹ into strings: co-referential strings and dynamic-semantic tracks.

3.2. Sample FSP Analysis

For the purpose of the following FSP analysis, I will use an extract from the *New Testament of the Bible* (see below). Biblical texts have repeatedly proven to be a rich and suitable source of discourse analysis studies (most notably Firbas 1992 and 1995, Svoboda 1983, Adam 2004 and 2006a). The later studies published by Firbas in particular dealt with a number of *Old* and *New Testament* texts. Firbas made it clear in his works that such text material represents a set of written discourse (of narrative, dialogic and poetic types) manifesting numerous remarkable language phenomena: both generally linguistic and text-specific. Let me recall, by means of illustration, his treatise on the establishment and the function of the dynamic-semantic layers of *Luke 2:1–20* (Firbas 1995), the case study in linear modification discussing the translation of the *Book of Revelation 21:6b* (Firbas 1996) or his congenial interpretation of *Psalms 91* based exclusively on FSP (Firbas 1989).

By means of illustration, let me give an example of an FSP chart of analysis, where both types of chains are indicated. First, the text under analysis (discussed in detail in Adam 2006b) will be presented in full, so that the reader may see the piece of writing in context (it is an extract taken from the New Testament, namely a passage from the *Gospel according to Luke*, chapter 2, verses 4–9).

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for

them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. (Kohlenberger 1997, 387)

In Table 2 below, the referential strings of the notions of ›Joseph‹, the ›baby Jesus‹ and the ›shepherds‹ respectively are presented in CAPITALS, whereas the dynamic-semantic track created in the rheme-proper layer is indicated by the use of *italics* (both these categories will be discussed separately below).

Table 2 An example of FSP analysis

Verse	Clause	TrPr (conj)	ThPr (Set/B)	DTh (Set/B)	TrPr/Tr (Q/Pr)	RhPr (Q)	Rh/RhPr (Sp/FSp)	RhPr (Ph)	Scale
2:4	4	So1		also4 from the town of Nazareth in Galilee5	went3		<i>to Beth- lehem6</i>	<i>Jo- SEPH2</i>	Pr
5	5		there3	He1	went to register2		<i>with MARY, who [...] 4</i>		Q
	5a		TO HIM4	who1	was pledged2		<i>to be married3</i>		Q
	5b	and1	^		was expecting2		<i>a child3</i>		Q
6	6			While they were there1	came3			<i>the time for the BABY to be born2</i>	Pr
7	7	and1		she2	gave birth3		<i>TO HER FIRST- BORN, A SON4</i>		Q
	8		She1	HIM3	wrapped2		<i>in cloths4</i>		Q
	9	and1	^ HIM3		placed1		<i>in a manger4 because there was no room for them in the inn5</i>		Q

Table 2 (Continued)

Verse	Clause	TrPr (conj)	ThPr (Set/B)	DTh (Set/B)	TrPr/Tr (Q/Pr)	RhPr (Q)	Rh/RhPr (Sp/FSp)	RhPr (Ph)	Scale
8	10	And1	there2	out in the fields5	were3			<i>SHEP- HERDS keeping watch over their flocks at night4</i>	Pr
9	11			TO THEM3	appeared2			<i>An angel of the Lord1</i>	Pr
	12	and1	AROUND THEM4		shone3			<i>the glory of the Lord2</i>	Pr
	13	and1	THEY2		were3		<i>terrified4</i>		Q

3.3. Co-referential Strings

It is of crucial importance to distinguish between the co-referential strings on the one hand and the dynamic-semantic strings on the other. The co-referential strings are chains of individual communicative units with the same referent; the string usually starts in the rhematic sphere and, moving across the transition, it finally establishes itself in the thematic layer (Firbas 1992, 27–29). In the thematic sphere, if the notion remains context-dependent, the process may continue within a number of distributional fields. In Table 2, one can easily follow the vertical run of four co-referential strings: those of ›Joseph‹, ›Mary‹, the ›baby Jesus‹ and the ›shepherds‹. These strings may be presented in a simplified way as follows:

Table 3 Co-referential strings of Lk 2: 4–9

JOSEPH (RhPr)	MARY (RhPr)	BABY (RhPr)	SHEPHERDS (RhPr)
↓	↓	↓	↓
HE (DTh)	SHE (DTh)	HER FIRSTBORN, A SON (Rh)	TO THEM (DTh)
↓	↓	↓	↓
TO HIM (ThPr)	SHE (ThPr)	HIM (DTh)	AROUND THEM (ThPr)
		↓	↓
		HIM (ThPr)	THEY (ThPr)

Firbas defines the co-referential strings as »linguistic elements naming or indicating the same extralinguistic phenomenon, in other words having the same referent« (1992, 32). In the flow of communication, »co-referentiality links elements together, producing co-referential strings« (Firbas 1992, 63).

Apparently, the co-referential strings – in contrast with the syntagmatic quality of the FSP analysis of the clause – run in the text in vertical direction, thus forming a field of paradigmatic relations. The general character of the co-referential strings is demonstrated in Table 4 (the black dots symbolise the movement of the referent from the rheme-proper layer – via the transition – to the thematic layer):

Table 4 Analysis of a co-referential string

Th	DTh	Tr	Rh
○	○		●
○	●		○
●	○		○
●	○		○
●	○		○
●	○		○
●	○		○

3.4. Dynamic-semantic Tracks

The other type of vertical chain – the dynamic-semantic tracks – is not based on such inter-layer relations as the co-referential strings are, but on the links established within one of the tracks exclusively. The existence and function of the dynamic-semantic tracks was first described by Firbas in relation to the concept of notional homogeneity of the RhPr layer (Firbas 1992, 77 and 1995, 64–66). The tracks are formed by all the thematic, transitional and rhematic elements of the text respectively. In other words, the rhematic track of a text, for example, may be described as a complete set of all the rhematic elements found in the given passage. Let me add that since the rhematic sphere is the most dynamic section of every piece of text (Rh-elements carry the highest degrees of CD), it is usually the rhematic track that is central to the functional analysis of a text. The thematic and even transitional tracks are, however, also capable of chaining into separate dynamic-semantic tracks.

By way of a digression, let me note the following. To name the vertical dynamic-semantic strings, two different labels have been used: *layers* and *tracks*. In his key monograph (Firbas 1992) and preceding works, Firbas consistently uses the term *layer*. In Firbas 1995 (an article dealing for the first time with the FSP

principles adopted in higher-level approach) and the following articles, he replaces this label by *track*; this term, in his opinion, depicts the dynamic character of the strings. The term *layer* is then used for the whole bodies of the thematic, the transitional and the rhematic spheres. In the present chapter, I am using the terminology accordingly.

Going back to Table 1, we can identify, for example, the following rhematic track constituted by all the rhematic elements (due to space limitations, I will present the track in lines, although its character is, of course, rather vertical):

Table 5 The rhematic track of the text analysed

RhPr: Joseph → to Bethlehem → with Mary → to be married → a child → the time for the baby to be born → to her firstborn, a son → in cloths → in a manger → because there was no room for them in the inn → shepherds keeping watch over their flocks at night → An angel of the Lord → the glory of the Lord

At this point let me comment on the semantic character of the rhematic track: a mere outline of its prominent members ›tells the story‹ and contains the information necessary for the reader to follow the narration. Thanks to this notional homogeneity, the dynamic-semantic strings are capable of summarising and communicating the main points of the message conveyed (for details see Adam 2003, 48 – 50). The enumeration of the rhematic elements neatly shows the semantic structure of the text and, at the same time, corroborates the significance and prominence of the rhematic layer.

To be more specific, the scene of the text under discussion is gradually entered by four participants: Joseph, the baby, shepherds, and an angel – i. e. the elements that enter the course of communication for the first time and so carry the highest degree of CD. These RhPr notions are accompanied and semantically developed by the elements occupying the Rh-sphere, to be found in Table 2 in the third column from the right.

As has already been mentioned above, the dynamic-semantic tracks may be viewed as a vertical phenomenon – they run through all the distributional fields ›downwards‹. Following a track (for instance a rheme proper track), we get a vertical ›cut‹ through all the text, creating a line of successive members of the RhPr layer. It is then possible to make use of simplified outlines of all the members of the respective dynamic-semantic track. In this sense, they are – together with co-referential strings – a vertical field of paradigmatic relations, though each of them is of a different character.

The paradigmatic chaining of three dynamic-semantic tracks (thematic, transitional and rhematic) can be observed in Table 6 reflecting the FSP analysis in a symbolic way:

Table 6 Analysis of dynamic-semantic tracks

Th	Tr	Rh
◆	●	■
◆	●	■
◆	●	■
◆	●	■
◆	●	■
◆	●	■

3.5. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations within FSP

At this point, by way of a summary, let me recall that the functional analysis of the basic distributional field created by the clause is a horizontal phenomenon characterised by syntagmatic relations between individual elements, whereas the FSP picture of a distributional macrofield formed by higher levels of text operates on the vertical axis and is characterised by two sets of paradigmatic relations (co-referential strings and dynamic-semantic tracks).

Such a two-directional system of relations operating within the discourse logically corresponds with Ferdinand de Saussure's concept of the structure of the language system (de Saussure 1993). De Saussure was the first one to come up with the idea that language – as any other signifying system – is based on the relationships that can occur between the units in the system – basically relations of difference and similarity.

The most important kind of relationship, according to de Saussure, is a syntagmatic relation, i. e. a linear (or as I say horizontal) one. He points out that in language – whether in spoken or written form – words come linearly one by one, forming a chain, by which one unit is linked to the next (de Saussure 1993, 170 – 172). For instance, word order in English – the position of a word in a chain of signification – contributes to meaning: in a neutral clause it is the subject that occupies the first position, following the SVO principle, etc. This concept obviously reflects what has been said above in regards to the dichotomy of the horizontal – vertical relations in FSP analysis: in the interpretation, the syntagmatic relations are primary. Furthermore, de Saussure claims that individual ›syntagms‹ acquire their value only because they stand in opposition to all elements before or after them. Similarly enough, the degrees of communicative dynamism are distributed over individual units of the basic distributional field according to the degree to which they contribute to the development of communication; in this sense, the syntagmatic relations are in concordance with one of the central factors in FSP, linear modification. In the development of com-

munication, the meanings of individual elements continually move closer to the high point of the message to finally fulfil the communicative purpose of the author (Firbas 1992, 105). The elements, showing different degrees of CD, differ in the extent to which they contribute to the development of communication.

The other type of Saussurean relationships that functions in the language system is labelled ›associative«. From the point of view of de Saussure's dichotomy, the associative relation ›unifies individual notions into a virtual mnemonic chain«, in other words, it creates associations of meaning among other members of the text that are not a part of the syntagmatic unit (de Saussure 1993, 171). In this way, the associative relations correspond with the paradigmatic relations described in the theory of FSP; both are non-linear and associate notions in dynamic chains that – if arranged in a logical sequence – carry meaning.

Let me now summarise the results deriving from the discussion above in Table 7.

Table 7 Multi-dimensional relations within FSP

distributional field	functional level	type of relations	axis of direction
basic distributional field	clause	syntagmatic	horizontal
macrofield	co-referential strings	paradigmatic (associative)	vertical
	dynamic-semantic tracks		
	text (discourse)	paradigmatico-syntagmatic	horizontal-vertical (multi-dimensional)

3.6. Functional Structure of the Text on the Macrofield Level

As mentioned above, the research into FSP has proved that the theory works at different levels of text units, whether lower or higher (for further details on the hierarchy of units in FSP, see Svoboda 1989 and Firbas 1992, 16 ff). The following discussion applies an analogous approach to the material of a functional macrofield, i.e. within larger units of text. The idea is in harmony with Firbas' conclusions in terms of the function of the thematic and rhematic layers in a text. He showed that the dynamic-semantic tracks run through individual distributional fields and convey meaning not only in the clauses proper, but create a string of a higher level, which is across the layers (Firbas 1995).

The dynamic flow of communication may be traced literally throughout all

basic distributional fields, going in the vertical (paradigmatic) direction. It seems that particular sections of the text have similar qualities as the elements within clauses do; the structure of the text resembles the theme-rheme structure in a sentence. This – once hypothetical – phenomenon was traced within a limited stretch of narrative passages of the *Gospel according to St. Luke* (Adam 2004). In it, I showed that the passage under examination contained inner dynamism that is capable of distributing the degrees of communicative dynamism over higher hierarchical units; the paper was focused on functional units within the rheme proper layer, in which the most dynamic development of communication takes place. The whole communicative macrofield implemented, in that case, a Combined Scale (Table 8).

Table 8 The functional structure of the sample narrative

exposition		collision	crisis	peripeteia	catastrophe
(DTh)	DTh	Tr	RhPr	RhPr	RhPr
(Set)	B	Q/Pr	Ph	Sp	FSp
(Roman empire)	a census Augustus Joseph Mary	an angel shepherds good news	a Saviour a baby Christ the Lord	Sign baby in a manger	heavenly host praising God

The subsequent part of the research attempted to trace analogous dynamic semantic tracks in the texts of scripted sermons (Adam 2007). Having discussed the distribution of degrees of CD over the whole macrofield, it was then possible to conclude that the whole rhematic track of the text implemented a sort of a Quality scale with rising degrees of communicative dynamism. Similarly as in the case of the macrofield analysis of *St. Luke's Gospel* (Adam 2004), I would compare the functional picture of the sermon to the structure implemented in classical drama. Namely, it would be *exposition* (induction into the problem; introduction) – *collision* (the problem exemplified) – *crisis* (failure to solve the problem satisfactorily) – *peripeteia* (solution found, though not sufficient) – *catastrophe* (the climax, final solution). It seems that such a gradual development is typically traceable both in narratives and sermons. The roles performed by individual sections as well as their corresponding dynamic semantic functions are shown in Table 9.

Table 9 The functional structure of the sample sermon

exposition	collision		crisis	peripeteia	catastrophe
<i>ThP</i>	<i>DTh</i>		<i>Tr</i>	<i>Rh</i>	<i>RhPr</i>
Set	B1	B2	Q	Sp	FSp
the topic set background (survey)	Marlene's breast cancer	hurricane Katrina	inadequate answers (fate / God's freewill)	right answer (God included)	suffering with God who underwent the same suffering

Having analysed a number of religious texts (see e.g. Adam 2003) and drawing on Svoboda (1996), I defined a text as a communicative distributional macrofield, which follows the same structural principles as its lower communicative counterparts (a clause, a noun phrase). Text as such thus may be viewed as one communicative macrofield with the degrees of CD distributed to the extent to which it contributes to the development of communication in the functional macrofield. It is apparently the narrative that can be naturally divided into an initial part, the body and a closing part of the story, and also analogically transformed into the functional outlook of the Th – Tr – Rh structure. Whether this perspective may be adopted on a larger scale is still to be shown. Nevertheless, the above interpretation seems to suggest that the functional approach is not confined to the boundaries of clauses, but exceeds them into the domain of paragraphs and chapters.

4. Conclusions

As has been shown in this chapter, it is not merely the clause that may be analysed within the theory of functional sentence perspective – the same principles of FSP may be readily applied also to the higher level of text, i.e. distributional macrofields (such as paragraph or chapter). The present chapter has focused on the horizontal and vertical relations operating within the macrofield as opposed to lower levels of text (the clause). The main concern has been the difference between the co-referential strings and the dynamic-semantic tracks. It follows that the above-mentioned horizontal – vertical relations are transparently traceable within FSP analysis; the multi-dimensional characteristics has been discussed also with regards to the dichotomy concepts offered by de Saussure.

Let me share an observation concerning the functional comparison of FSP and de Saussure's teaching. As has become clear, the vertical-horizontal concepts of study adopted in the theory of functional sentence perspective are in their function identical with the corresponding dichotomy introduced by de Saussure's theory. This may raise a legitimate question: why is that? How is it

that the structuralist principles are, in an analogical way, reflected in Firbas's functional approach? In my opinion, both theories are well founded on the very nature of language. They both study the same material, i. e. the living language used as a tool of communication. Only with this provision may the two theories draw similar conclusions. In the same way as de Saussure looks at the meaning of an individual lexeme or a whole sentence both from the syntagmatic and associative point of view, the researchers in the field of FSP may analogically explore a text both from the horizontal and vertical angle.

Finally, I would like to highlight the benefits derived from a multi-dimensional approach to the FSP study of text. When both directions – horizontal and vertical – are applied, the functional picture of the text becomes more plastic and distinct. Such an approach apparently enriches the set of methodological tools available. Besides, the present chapter has shown that the essential principles adopted in the theory of FSP are also applicable to higher levels of text, i. e. distributional macrofields; one is able to trace both the co-referential strings and the dynamic-semantic tracks running through the text.

This chapter is meant to be a contribution to research in the field of functional sentence perspective, above all to the function of the thematic and the rhematic layers and the facts resulting from such analysis. It seems that functional implementation of the vertical axis (to broaden the FSP analyses) is worth investigating and that the multi-dimensional approach to FSP opens new vistas to further research within text and corpus analysis.

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Communicative Dynamism and Prosodic Prominence of English and Czech Pronouns

The common feature of pronouns of all categories is their reference to discourse items that are easily accessible to the communication participants' minds. In most cases, pronouns convey given, context-dependent information: they denote referents previously (or – less frequently – subsequently) introduced by co-referential expressions into the *verbal context*,¹ or referents that are physically present in the *situational context*. Elements that do not convey any new information generally display low degrees of communicative dynamism and – in spoken discourse – low degrees of prosodic prominence. Pronouns are often unstressed or they carry very low degrees of stress.

Under certain conditions, however, pronouns become carriers of the most prominent stress and the highest degree of communicative dynamism within a sentence. A previous comparative analysis of English and Czech dialogues (Chamonikolasová 2007a) has suggested that in English, the occurrence of heavily stressed pronouns is more frequent than in Czech. The present chapter investigates the conditions of nuclear accentuation of pronouns and outlines some potential causes of the difference between English and Czech pronouns in their prosodic and communicative loads. It develops some of the observations made in previous mono-lingual studies of English pronouns (Chamonikolasová 1989 and 1991).

1. Background

Pronouns in the present chapter are studied from the viewpoint of information structure and intonation. The analysis of information structure is based on the theory of Functional Sentence Perspective as developed by Firbas (1972, 1989, and 1992) and Svoboda (1981 and 1989); it also incorporates some alternative

1 Demonstrative pronouns may also refer to the contents of a whole sentence or a sequence of sentences.

theories, especially those developed by Kuno (1972 and 1975), Hajičová and Sgall (Hajičová et al. 1998; Sgall 2000; Sgall et al. 1986), and Chafe (1994, 1996). The study of intonation draws on the principles of the ‘contour analysis’ of English intonation as presented by Crystal (1969), O’Connor and Arnold (1973), and Cruttenden (1986); and the accounts of Czech intonation as presented by Palková (1994), Daneš (1957), and Krčmová (1995).

1.1. Communicative Dynamism

Firbas (1992) views a sentence (simple or complex) as a field of distribution of communicative dynamism (CD). Sentence elements (syntactic sentence constituents) serve as communicative units carrying different degrees of CD, determined by the interplay of the factors of functional sentence perspective (FSP). The degree of CD of an element is the relative extent to which the element contributes towards the further development of communication. At the level of written language, this degree is determined by the linear modification factor (the least powerful factor), the semantic factor, and the contextual factor (the most powerful factor). Put simply, the three non-prosodic factors that determine the degree of CD of an element are the position of the element in a sentence,² its semantic structure,³ and the level of its integration in the context of communication.⁴ In spoken language, the interplay of non-prosodic factors is joined by the prosodic factor, i. e. intonation. Intonation either confirms the outcome of the interplay of non-prosodic factors, or, under special conditions (which will be illustrated below), it re-evaluates the outcome (cf. Firbas 1992, 143–191).

Depending on their degree of CD, communicative units perform different FSP functions. The foundation for the message to be completed in a sentence is provided by thematic units (theme proper and diatheme), carrying low degrees of CD. The core of the message is built up on the thematic foundation by non-thematic units, i. e. transitional units (transition proper and transition), and

2 According to Firbas (1992, 117–134), all Indo-European languages display a tendency to permit gradual rise of CD from the beginning to the end of a sentence. The most dynamic elements tend to occur in final positions. This tendency is stronger in languages with flexible word-order, such as Czech, than in languages with fixed word-order, such as English.

3 i. e., its semantic content and the semantic relations with other elements in the sentence

4 Firbas works with the concept of the ‘immediately relevant verbal or situational context’ (cf. Firbas 1992, 21–40). In this concept, context-dependent elements are defined as elements referred to explicitly in the preceding text or elements physically present in the situational context. This concept is narrower than the concepts applied by most other authors, who include in the set of context-dependent (or ‘contextually bound’) elements not only the explicitly mentioned items but also items that are closely related to them (cf. Chamonikolasová 2007b).

rhematic units (rheme and rheme proper). Transitional units (verbal elements and non-verbal elements expressing temporal and modal features, cf. Firbas 1992, 69–72) carry a medial degree of CD, higher than the thematic units and lower than the rhematic units. Rhematic units carry very high degrees of CD; the most dynamic element within the distributional field of a sentence is the rheme proper, which conveys the goal of the message. While the information conveyed by thematic units is either retrievable or irretrievable from the immediately relevant context, transitional and rhematic functions can only be performed by units conveying entirely irretrievable information or by elements, which in addition to retrievable information, contain additional irretrievable information which predominates (see Firbas 1995, 22–23).

Firbas's complex scale of thematic, transitional and rhematic units can be simplified and compared to other scholars' schemes, e.g. Hajičová and Sgall's conception of topic-focus articulation, or Kuno's theme-focus structure. Firbas's scale can be divided into the thematic section, containing all thematic units, and the non-thematic section, containing all transitional and all rhematic units. Applying a certain level of abstraction and disregarding certain conceptual differences (especially in the field of context-dependence),⁵ Firbas's *theme* becomes comparable to other scholars' *theme* or *topic* and his *non-theme* to other scholars' *rheme* or *focus*. This relation is displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 The information structure of a sentence (simplified pattern)

Firbas's conception			Other conceptions	
Theme	Non-Theme		Theme/Topic	Rheme/Comment/Focus
	Transition	Rheme		

1.2. Prosodic Prominence

In their books on intonation, Crystal (1969), O'Connor, Arnold (1973), and Cruttenden (1986) present detailed conceptions of what is usually referred to as *contour analysis* of intonation. There are some differences between the three conceptions in certain areas but the authors seem to agree on the most important concepts of intonation analysis, i. e. the identification of the *tone unit* as the basic segment of spoken utterance and the identification of the *nucleus* as the most

5 While many scholars equate thematicity with context-dependence (givenness), Firbas also includes in the set of thematic units elements that are partly or even fully context independent.

prominent accent in a tone unit.⁶ Crystal (1969, 204) defines tone unit as »the most readily perceivable, recurrent, maximal functional unit to which linguistic meaning can be attached«. Syntactically, tone unit may correspond to a sentence, clause, phrase, or a single word. Phonologically, tone unit is identified as a unit containing one peak of prominence and divided from neighbouring tone units by two phonetic factors: a pitch change following the nucleus and a slight pause.⁷ Most authors suggest that the nucleus is usually the last accented (i. e. pitch-prominent) syllable in a tone unit. In a sentence consisting of several tone units, the most prominent nucleus is usually the one occurring in the last tone unit. In this chapter, the most prominent nucleus within a sentence will be referred to as the *intonation-centre nucleus (IC nucleus)*. There are modifications to the tendency of the last accented stress within a tone unit to become the nucleus and of the last nucleus of a sentence to become the IC nucleus. The best known modification is the sequence of a falling tone and a rising tone within one tone unit or within two successive tone units within one sentence. The fall is generally considered to be more prominent than the rise (cf. Cruttenden 1986, 50 – 51; 61; 103 – 104, Halliday 1970, 38; O'Connor and Arnold 1973, 82 – 88, Firbas 1980, 125 – 133). Further modifications apply (cf. Firbas 1980, 130; Cruttenden 1986, 49 – 50).

The analyses of Czech intonation presented by Palková (1994), Daneš (1957), and Krčmová (1995) differ from the contour analysis especially by a stronger focus on the study of rhythmicality and in the description of the internal structure of a tone unit. The definition of the basic unit of speech referred to as *utterance unit*, however, resembles the definition of the tone unit within the framework of contour analysis; the definition of the most prominent stress within the utterance unit, referred to as *sentence stress* or *intonation centre* corresponds to the definition of the nucleus. The principles of contour analysis can therefore be applied for the interpretation of both English and Czech texts.

The focus of the present analysis is the occurrence of the nuclear accentuation of pronouns. Non-nuclear accents carried by pronouns will not be investigated.

6 The expressions *tone unit* and *nucleus* are used by Crystal; the same concepts are referred to by the other authors as *intonation-group*, *tone group*, *word group*, and *primary accent*.

7 The pitch change represents a step up or step down at the beginning of a new tone unit to the natural level of the speaker's voice.

2. Research Material

The present study is based on a corpus consisting of four English and Czech dialogues, one pair of scripted and one pair of non-scripted texts. The scripted texts are the original Czech version of the play *Protest* by Václav Havel (1992) and its English translation by Věra Blackwell (Havel 1990), as they were broadcast by Czech radio and by BBC radio. The non-scripted texts are Dialogue S.1.6. from the *London-Lund Corpus* (the computerized version of *A Corpus of English Conversation*, cf. Svartvik and Quirk 1980) and Dialogue JP122 from the *Corpus of Spoken Czech* (a subcorpus of *Český národní korpus* [Czech National Corpus]).

The two versions of the scripted text of *Protest* provide a secure starting point for the comparison of the function of pronouns in English and Czech, because they are functionally equivalent or nearly equivalent. All sections of the two texts that did not have an equivalent passage in the other text were excluded from the comparison. In both languages the analysis covers the first half of the entire text. The Czech text, denoted as *Protest-Cz*, consists of 2014 words occurring in 505 tone units; the English text, denoted as *Protest-En*, consists of 2562 words occurring in 540 tone units.

The two non-scripted texts (S.1.6. and JP122) provide a basis for acquiring data from natural speech. They are suitable for comparison because they share certain common features. They are dialogues between academics (one male and one female) on various aspects of university study.⁸ The analysis covers approximately one half of each dialogue. Dialogue JP122, referred to as *Dialogue-Cz*, consists of 2216 words in 521 tone units; the analyzed text of Dialogue S.1.6, referred to as *Dialogue-En*, consists of 2188 words in 521 tone units.

The prosodic transcription of the examples in this chapter indicates tone unit boundaries (#) and the position and pitch direction of the nucleus, i. e. fall (∖), rise (/), fall-rise (∨), rise-fall (∧), and level (=). Pitch range is not indicated. Words carrying the IC nucleus are capitalized; words carrying a non-IC nucleus occur in small type. Hesitation sounds are transcribed with the @ symbol, silent pauses are indicated by a dot.⁹

8 The texts differ in the extent of 'naturalness': the English dialogue was recorded surreptitiously (in 1964), while the Czech dialogue (recorded in early 1990s) is non-surreptitious.

9 The London-Lund Corpus contains a more detailed prosodic transcription based on the system developed by Crystal. For easy comparison, the transcription of the examples from Dialogue S.1.6. has been simplified and unified with the prosodic transcription of the other texts. The two versions of *Protest*, and the Czech non-scripted dialogue were provided by DILIA, the Jan Hus Educational Foundation, and the Institute of the Czech National Corpus of Charles University in the form of recordings on audio tapes without any transcription; they had to be analyzed and transcribed prosodically.

The examples are identified by numbers followed by the letters ‘a’ (indicating the Czech version) and ‘b’ (indicating the English version). An English translation imitating the structure of the Czech sentences is provided below the Czech text. In this word-to-word translation, two or more English words are put together by hyphens if they correspond to a single word in Czech; reflexive particles in Czech which do not have a counterpart in English are denoted as ‘refl’. The actual serial number of the particular tone unit as it occurs in the full text and the indication of the speaker’s identity (V = Vaněk, S = Staněk, A = speaker A, B = speaker B) is given in parentheses. In some cases, a wider context is provided by the text of the tone unit preceding the tone unit in question; these tone units occur in brackets.

3. Analysis of Scripted Dialogues

Both language versions of the play *Protest* contain a number of examples of nuclear accentuation of pronouns. The sections below introduce examples of agreement, as well as examples of disproportion between the Czech and the English versions.

3.1 Agreement between the Prosodic Prominence of English and Czech Pronouns

(1a) (154, S)

j ^s me	to	vůbec	ještě	/MY#
are-we	this	at-all	still	US

(1b) (154, S)

are we still \Us#

(2a) (163, S)

[kdybyste	ale	=vědě#]
if-you	however	knew

v	čem	musím	žít	\JÁ#
in	what	must	live	I

(2b) (163, S)

[you’ve no \idea#]

the sort of environment \P’vE got to put /up with#

(3a) (326, V)

má	se	hrát	společně	s	tou	\MOU#
it-is	refl	to-be-performed	together	with	that	MINE

(3b) (326, V)

it's meant to go on with \MINE#

(4a) (335, S)

je to	koneckonců	\VAŠE	věc#
it is	after-all	YOUR	thing

(4b) (335, S)

@ I . I suppose it's \YOUR business#

(5a) (430, S)

[vy	máte	v	těchhle	/věcech#]
you	have	in	these	things

přirozeně	daleko	víc	zkušeností	než	/JÁ#
naturally	far	more	experience	than	I

(5b) (430, S)

@ naturally you're far more experienced in these matters than \I am#

(6a) (468, S)

nakonec	se	odhodlám
finally	refl	I-decide

poradit	se	o	tom	s	/VÁMI#
to-consult	refl	about	it	with	YOU

(6b) (468, S)

finally I take the plunge and consult /YOU#

In the parallel sentences above, a personal or possessive pronoun carries the most prominent accent within the particular tone unit and within the particular sentence or subordinate clause. The referents of these pronouns are the two participants of the dialogue. The pronouns thus carry information which is retrievable from the immediately relevant context. In addition to the retrievable information, however, the pronouns convey additional irretrievable information on the circumstances under which they occur: they are contrasted with or selected from a set of other elements. The acts of contrasting or selecting an element represent new, context-independent information; they cause contextual disengagement of the pronouns and a major rise in their degree of communicative dynamism. The pronouns come to perform rhematic functions (cf. Firbas 1995, 22 – 3). The prosodic factor of FSP, i. e. intonation, confirms the outcome of the interplay of non-prosodic factors by marking the rhematic pronouns with an IC nucleus.

The analyzed material suggests that both English and Czech pronouns may undergo rhematization and nuclear accentuation if they enter into the relationship of contrast or selection.

3.2. Disproportion between the Prosodic Prominence of English and Czech Pronouns

3.2.1. Personal Pronouns

(7a) (029, V)

[víte že jste se za ta léta ani moc /nezměnil#]
do-you-know that you-have refl in these years not much changed

vy \TAKY ne#
you ALSO not

(7b) (029, V)

[you haven't \changed much in all these /years#]

neither have \YOU#

(8a) (360, V)

[a chápu že už proto máte asi
and I-understand that already because-of-that you-have probably

ke mně . určitý /odstup# /že#]
to me a-certain distance don't-you

já . \NE#
I NOT

(8b) (360, V)

[you might want to keep a certain \distance from me# oh \no#]

no . not not \I#

(9a) (246, S)

[/\přeháníte#]
you-exaggerate

já to tak aspoň \VIDÍM#
I it so at-least SEE

(9b) (246, S)

[you e/\xaggerate#]

well that's how \I see it#

(10a) (502, S)

[ne ale to jsou . prosím vás
no but this are mind you

jen čistě subjektivní \dojmy#
just purely subjective impressions

vůbec	na	ně	nemusíte	brát	\OHLED#
at-all	to	them	you-needn't	take	REGARD

(10b) (502, S)

[@ but these are just my personal im\pressions#]

why why should you listen to what I have to say#

In the English examples above, personal pronouns carry the IC nucleus. The corresponding personal pronouns in the original Czech sentences carry a low degree of stress. The IC nucleus in the Czech sentences is carried by non-pronominal elements: negative and intensifying particles (*ne, taky*), the verb (*vidím*), and the nominal part of an idiomatic predicate (*ohled*). The English equivalents of these elements remain unstressed or carry a low degree of stress. The heavy accentuation of pronouns in the English sentences produces a contrast, which is only implied or missing completely in the original Czech sentences. In (7b), *you* stands in contrast to Vaněk (*you*), mentioned in the preceding text by Staněk. *I* in (8b), (9b) and (10b) is contrasted with or selected from a set of people who may have a different attitude to the problem under discussion. This contrasting or selecting feature is missing or is very weak in (9a) and (10a); in (7a) and (8a), other semantic aspects of the statements are underlined: similarity in (7a) (I haven't changed – you haven't changed *either*) and different polarity in (8a) (other people do – I do *not*). Examples (7)-(10) seem to suggest that English personal pronouns enter into a relationship of contrast and selection, accompanied by nuclear accentuation, more often than personal pronouns in Czech.

3.2.2. Indefinite Pronouns

(11a) (057, V)

ničeho	jsem	si	\NEVŠIML#
nothing	I-aux	refl	NOT-NOTICED

(11b) (057, V)

I didn't notice \ANYONE#

(12a) (422, S)

když	se	mi	nepodařilo	ničeho	/DOSÁHNOUT#
when	refl	I	didn't-manage	nothing	TO-ACCOMPLISH

(12b) (422, S)

since it seems I didn't manage to accomplish \ANYTHING#

In the English versions of sentences (11) and (12), indefinite pronouns *anyone* and *anything* perform rhematic functions; the sentences are perspectived¹⁰ towards the indefinite pronouns expressing the goal of the message. By placing the nucleus on the indefinite pronoun, the speaker underlines the fact, that ‘what they noticed is *no one*’ and ‘what they accomplished is *nothing*.’ In the Czech version of the sentences, the indefinite pronouns corresponding to *anyone* and *anything* perform thematic functions; the sentences are perspectived towards another element completing the message. In (11), the Czech speaker seems to underline the fact that although the secret police keep an eye on him and follow him sometimes, on his way to Staněk’s house, he didn’t *notice* anything (i. e. any sign of being followed). In (12), the speaker underlines the fact that his attempts were unsuccessful and that none of them were *accomplished*. In examples (11) and (12), like in (7)-(10) above, the English speakers place the IC nucleus on a pronoun while the Czech speakers attach the most prominent accent to a different, non-pronominal element. The difference in prosodic realization reflects the difference in the distribution of communicative dynamism: the highest degree of CD is carried by an indefinite pronoun in English and a different – this time verbal – element in Czech; the Czech indefinite pronoun remains thematic and carries a low degree of prosodic prominence.

3.2.3. Demonstrative Pronouns

(13a) (127, S)

to	jste	ale	\NEMUSEL#		
that	you-aux	however	HAD-NOT-TO		

(13b) (127, S)

you needn’t have done VTHAT#

(14a) (171, S)

ale	nemáte	poněti	co	to	bylo	/ʌzə MARTYRIUM#
but	you-	idea	what-	that	was	of
	have-no		kind			AN-ORDEAL

(14b) (171, S)

h@ you’ve no idea what idea what an ordeal VTHAT was#

(15a) (500, S)

já	myslím	že	by	to	úplně	\STAČILO#
I	think	that	would	it	completely	SUFFICE

10 The verb ‘to perspective’ has a specific meaning within the theory of FSP. It is more precise than ‘to orient’ and is preferred by Firbas in his most recent publications.

(15b) (500, S)
wouldn't \THAT be the tool#

(16a) (496, S)
ano ta by tam rozhodně měla \ZŮSTAT#
yes that should there definitely should STAY

(16b) (496, S)
that \THAT must stay#

In the English versions of sentences (13)-(16), demonstrative pronouns are carriers of the most prominent accent while in the Czech versions, demonstrative pronouns carry a low degree of prosodic prominence. The most prominent elements in the Czech sentences are different forms of the verbs *have to* (*ne-musel*), *suffice* (*stačilo*) and *stay* (*zůstat*), and the noun *ordeal* (*martyrium*). All the demonstrative pronouns in the examples above (English as well as Czech) are anaphoric; they convey retrievable information by referring to a concept which was mentioned in the preceding conversation. The carriers of the IC nucleus in the Czech sentences all convey information which cannot be retrieved from the preceding text. Since intonation is not arbitrary, we have to ask why speakers of English attached the highest degree of prosodic prominence to anaphoric demonstrative pronouns in a situation in which Czech speakers placed the nuclear accent on context-independent, non-anaphoric elements. The English demonstrative pronouns in sentences (13)-(16) do not occur in relation to any obvious contrast or selection, so the explanation which was offered for the nuclear accentuation of the English personal pronouns in sentences (7)-(10) does not hold with the present set of examples. The English versions of sentences (13)-(16) are examples of what Firbas (1992, 159–162) refers to as ‘re-evaluating prosodic intensification’. By shifting the nucleus from a context-independent element onto a context-dependent element, the speaker adds emotive colouring to his statement or intensifies an emotive colouring already conveyed. According to Firbas, the emotive effect is achieved through the discrepancy between the distribution of communicative dynamism as determined by non-prosodic factors and the distribution of prosodic prominence. (In unmarked sentences, the two distributions are in harmony.) Firbas considers the additional emotive colouring of the message non-retrievable from the context and interprets the emotively intensified elements as rhematic. Through re-evaluating prosodic intensification, a context-dependent thematic element is, in Firbas’s view, re-evaluated into a rhematic element; a context-independent rhematic element is in turn re-evaluated into a thematic element. Indeed, sentences (13)-(16) are emotively coloured. A comparison between the English and Czech sentences suggests that Czech sentences are either less emotively coloured or their emotive colouring is achieved through non-prosodic means, especially lexical (idio-

matic) means indicating the speaker's attitude, e. g., *ale* (however) in (13), *úplně* (completely) in (15), *rozhodně* (definitely) in (16), *nemáte poněťí* (you haven't got the (faintest) idea) and *martyrium* (ordeal, agony) in (14). The examples above suggest that in order to achieve emotive colouring, speakers of English apply the prosodic means of re-evaluating intensification of contextually bound elements while speakers of Czech tend to indicate emotive attitudes by lexical means.

4. Analysis of Non-scripted Natural Dialogues

Data acquired from the natural dialogues support the tendencies suggested above by the analysis of the parallel translation texts. Although direct comparison of individual sentences in English and Czech is not possible with the corpus of non-scripted texts, the analysis again indicates a substantially higher percentage of pronouns carrying the IC nucleus in English compared to Czech. Below are examples of English pronouns carrying the IC nucleus as a result of contrast or selection; they resemble examples (1)-(6) and the English versions of (7)-(10) from the scripted material above.

(17) (001, A)
where do \YOU come from# -- .

(18) (341, B)
I'll show them that's what \I 'think#

(19) (318,B)
I went to this \OTHER person#

The English non-scripted dialogues contain a number of pronouns conveying an emotive message. Below are examples of re-evaluating prosodic intensification of pronouns, similar to the English versions of (13)-(16).

(20) (192, A)
oh well \THAT'S /good#

(21) (294, A)
\YOU /know#

(22) (451, A)
\YOU were /right# -

Emotive colouring is missing in all the sentences containing nucleus-bearing rhematic pronouns in the Czech non-scripted dialogue. The nuclear accentua-

tion of pronouns is due to contrast or selection similar to (1)-(6); compare examples (23) and (24) below.¹¹

(23) (023, A)

a	co	\TY#
and	what-about	YOU

(24) (495, B)

[já	si	nedovedu	=představit#]
I	refl	cannot	imagine

aby	.	prostě	se	nabralo	\VŠECHNO#
that		simply	refl	be-accepted	EVERYTHING

5. Survey of Results

The results of the present analysis are summarized in Table 2 below. The table indicates the number of occurrences of pronouns carrying the IC nucleus in the four texts under examination. Distinction is made between pronouns occurring in the relationship of contrast with or selection from a set of other elements and pronouns that are carriers of an emotive message. The table also indicates the representation of different pronominal categories within the examined sample.

The comparison of the two scripted semantically equivalent texts suggests that rhematization and nuclear accentuation of pronouns in English is more than twice as frequent as in Czech (28/12). Although the non-scripted texts are not semantically equivalent, they are comparable in terms of register and size (similar topics, similar numbers of words and tone units); the occurrence of nucleus-bearing rhematic pronouns in the English text is again much higher than in the Czech text (18/7). The higher frequency of pronouns carrying the IC nucleus in the English texts is due especially to the total absence of pronominal carriers of emotive messages in the Czech texts (8/0 and 11/0).

11 The nuclear accentuation of *všechno* in (24) is due to selection of *all* elements of the set under discussion. The speaker believes that only *part* of the set should be accepted.

Table 2 The occurrence of pronouns carrying IC nucleus

		Protest-Cz (scripted)		Protest-En (scripted)		Dialogue- Cz (non- scripted)		Dialogue- En (non- scripted)	
Contrast and Selection	Personal	8	12	12	20	4	7	3	7
	Possessive	2		3		0		0	
	Indefinite + Negative	0		3		1		4	
	Reflexive	2		4		1		0	
	Demonstrative	0		0		1		0	
Emotive message	Personal	0	0	0	8	0	0	6	11
	Possessive	0		0		0		2	
	Indefinite + Negative	0		0		0		0	
	Reflexive	0		0		0		0	
	Demonstrative	0		8		0		3	
Total no. of pronouns with IC nucleus			12		28		7		18

6. Conclusion

Pronouns are contextually bound elements which tend to carry low degrees of prosodic prominence and low degrees of communicative dynamism. Under certain conditions, however, they become partially disengaged from the context, convey context-independent information, and come to carry the highest degree of prosodic prominence and communicative dynamism within the sentence. The analysis of Czech and English dialogues presented in this chapter suggests that pronouns carry the IC nucleus and become the rheme proper of a sentence especially in two situations: (1) the pronoun is contrasted with or selected from a set of elements; (2) the pronoun becomes the carrier of an emotive message. The English dialogues contain a number of examples of both types of rhematization and nuclear accentuation of pronouns while pronouns in the Czech texts are rhematized exclusively as a result of contrast or selection; accentuation of pronouns as means of expressing emotive attitude is uncommon in Czech, where emotive colouring of a message is achieved by lexical rather than prosodic means. The material under examination suggests that rhematization and nuclear accentuation of pronouns due to contrast, selection and emotive colouring in English is more than twice as frequent as in Czech.

Abbreviations

A	speaker A
B	speaker B
CD	communicative dynamism
aux	auxiliary
FSP	functional sentence perspective
IC	intonation centre
refl	reflexive particle
S	Staněk
V	Vaněk

Symbols

prosodic marks:

\	Fall
/	Rise
∨	fall-rise
∧	rise-fall
=	Level
@	filled hesitation pause
.	silent pause

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III

System and Structure at Discourse Level

Karin Aijmer

The Attention-getting Devices *look*, *see* and *listen*

1. Introduction

The following extract (from Fairclough 2001 [1989], 152) is taken from a radio interview with Margaret Thatcher recorded in 1985. Margaret Thatcher, who was then Prime Minister, shows her authority by using *look* quite a lot.

I think it's wrong to think in material terms because really the kind of country you want is made up by the strength of its people and I think we're returning to my vision of Britain as a younger person and I was always brought up with the idea *look* Britain is a country whose people think for themselves act for themselves can act on their own initiative

According to Fairclough (2001 [1989], 152), the use of *look* is one example of Margaret Thatcher's ›toughness and determination‹. »[B]eginning an utterance with *look* marks it as putting somebody in their place, or forcefully correcting their misapprehensions.«

The example shows that we cannot make generalisations about the functions of pragmatic markers without considering who uses the markers and for what purposes (Rühlemann 2007, 29). Pragmatic markers such as the attention-getter *look* are context-bound and indexically linked to a number of contextual features. They have indexicality in common with other contextual elements such as pronouns but they refer to the context in more complex ways. For example, the attention-getters *look* and *listen* share the property that they indexically point forwards to what is coming next. They can also index sociolinguistic features such as the age, class, gender of the speaker. The indexical relation is often indirect and can explain that pragmatic markers have additional functions, for example that they can evoke speaker identity (Ochs 1989, 3). This explains that *look* can index ›a strong (female) political leader‹ as in the example discussed.

Look is also frequent in young people's speech but with a different meaning. This is in line with an upsurge of recent work which has shown that young people

speak differently from adults. The linguistic phenomena which are of interest from an age perspective are above all pragmatic in nature. Examples include the use of intensifiers and pragmatic markers. As pointed out by Andersen (2001, 307), many (but not all) pragmatic markers are distributed differently in adolescent and adult speech:

Items such as *and*, *but*, *or*, *so*, and *cos/because* were found to have a remarkably similar distribution. In contrast, the markers *oh*, *well*, *sort of*, *I mean* and the epistemic parentheticals were much more common in adult talk, while the interactionally significant markers *right*, *really*, *you know* and *okay* (in addition to *innit* and *like*) were more common in adolescent conversation. However, much investigation is needed to support these preliminary findings and to provide explanations for the differences that were found.

The high frequency of the invariant tag *innit* or of *like* is especially ›a young phenomenon‹ (Andersen 2001, 187). *Innit* has the same discourse functions as have been identified for canonical tag questions but it occurs with a wider variety of functions in adolescent speech (2001, 161):

[T]he functions of invariant *innit* and *is it* in adolescent conversation seem to go beyond those of ordinary tags and follow-ups of ›asking for confirmation‹ or ›expressing agreement‹ with a propositional claim.

Like has a number of pragmatic functions such as approximation or ›loose talk‹. In the language of adolescents (*be +*) *like* has also spread to quotative uses where it introduces direct speech. The quotative use seems to be used above all by female speakers under 35 years of age (Rühlemann 2007, 152).

A little explored area has to do with how discourse is organised sequentially in teenage and adult conversation and how conversationalists cope with discourse-management tasks such as taking the turn. According to Andersen (2001, 307), there seem to be several differences:

My general impression from working on the two data sets is that the discourse is organised differently in teenage and adult conversation, with respect to both sequential structure and interpersonal features. Teenagers seem to have more relaxed turntaking rules and pay less attention to politeness and phatic language than adults do. Interruptions dominate a large portion of the teenage corpus, and topic shifts occur frequently and often abruptly.

The linguistic differences reflect the fact that adults and adolescents do not adhere to the same social norms or rules of interactional behaviour; they use different face-saving strategies and they do not observe turntaking rules to the

same extent. There may be more overlap, less selection of next speakers and more interruption.

The strategies used by conversationalists to enter or intrude into the discourse are carried out by attention-getting devices. Attention-getting devices are signals used by the speaker to draw attention to the message, to take the floor or to interrupt. Romero Trillo (1997, 208) describes the over-riding function of attention getters as follows:

The reason for using attention-getting or attention-maintaining techniques may be a speaker's feeling that s/he is not being listened to or the need to emphasize part of an utterance because of its importance for the correct understanding of the message. These techniques may be either physical like tapping on someone's arm, waving a hand before the listener's eyes etc, or linguistic, the latter of course being less face-threatening than the former. [...] it is likely that most languages will combine gesture and linguistic strategies for its performance.

As Waltereit points out (2002, 996), »even though there is a considerable amount of research in conversation analysis on interruption, especially on the reasons speakers seem to have for it and gender-related differences in their behavior, the linguistic means that speakers select for this purpose have, to my knowledge, not been studied systematically«. It has been suggested that some typical devices are ›vocatives, imperatives and interrogatives‹ (Keenan et al. 1987). One group of devices consists of *look, see* and *listen* which have been grammaticalized as attention-getting devices in a large number of languages (Schiffrin 1987, 328; Brinton 2001; Waltereit 2002). Keenan et al. (1987, 49) refer to the verbs as ›notice verbs‹ since they »are explicit directives to notice or attend to some object, event or state of affairs«.

The aim of the present chapter is to study how adolescents use these perceptual attention-getting devices differently from adults. Differences in use have an effect on their description. Attention-getting devices are multifunctional and need to be described from different perspectives: functions in discourse, the relations they establish to the co-participants in the discourse, constraints imposed by cultural, social and interactional norms, sociolinguistic aspects (e.g. age, class and gender of the speaker), links with speaker identities and roles. We are lucky to be able to study social features associated with attention-getting devices on the basis of authentic corpus data. For the data on adolescent speech I have used *The Bergen Corpus of London Teenager Language* (COLT for short) (Stenström et al 2002; Andersen 2001, 85). The corpus consists of half a million words of the English spoken by London teenagers and was collected for sociolinguistic purposes in the 1990 s. A number of non-linguistic or social features have been coded such as age, class and gender of the speakers. However it is not

possible to study non-verbal means of obtaining information. On the other hand we get information about mimicking and whether the person is laughing or shouting. The texts can be described as informal chats between friends.

The comparison with adult language is based on data from the *London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English (LLC)* (Greenbaum, Svartvik 1990). The *LLC* was compiled in the 1960s and 1970s and is comparable in size with the *COLT*. The texts in the *LLC* represent both formal and informal conversation as well as data from discussions or debate. The conversations take place between adults who are friends, family members or acquaintances. The formal (non-surreptitiously recorded) conversations are characterised by more social distance between the speakers. Because of the time difference between the corpora it is possible that changes have taken place which explain the differences between the *COLT* and the *LLC* speakers. Both *look* and *listen* are for instance more grammaticalized in *COLT* than in the *LLC*.

2. *Look, listen, see*

Attention-getting devices can be both verbal and non-verbal. Verbal attention-getters range from distancing and deferential markers such as *excuse me* to more aggressive ones such as *look, listen, see*. The imperatives *look* and *listen* are of particular interest because the corresponding verbs are typically used in many other languages with an attention-capturing function. The Spanish correspondences have been studied in some detail by Romero Trillo (1997). Spanish *mira, fijate, mire* become a pragmatic marker ›look‹; *oye, oiga* become ›listen‹. Italian *guarda* ›look‹ has been studied by Waltereit (2002) who also mentions *sentire* ›hear‹ as a candidate for pragmatic marker status. Compare moreover French *regarde* (Droste 1989), German *sieh mal / sehen Sie / schauen Sie*, Portuguese *olha* (data from Waltereit 2002, 997).

Look is an example of how the literal perceptual meaning of the verb can be blurred and be taken over by pragmatic or discourse-organizing functions. The dictionary distinguishes between the perceptual and attention-getting use of the imperative *look*:

- a) used to tell someone to look at something that you think is interesting, surprising, etc. *Look! There's a fox!*
- b) used to get someone's attention so that you can tell them something: *Look why don't you think about it and give me your answer tomorrow. Look I've had enough of this. I'm going home.* (Longman »look (v) spoken words and phrases«).

In a) the speaker uses the imperative *look* to point to an object in the environment in order to secure the hearer's attention. *Look* as in b) is a pragmatic marker with attention-getting function when the speaker does not want to show something or draw the hearer's attention to a particular object. As a pragmatic marker *look* has a number of functions, for example to introduce direct speech.

The attention-getting signal is illustrated in (1). *Look* (*look look*) introduces something which the speaker considers important and therefore wants to draw the hearer's attention to. *Look* has lost the meaning of seeing as is clear from the context (*look you can hear what everyone is saying*).

- (1) Oh look look you can hear what everyone's saying when you listen to oi, oi, Bon, oi Bon. { shouting} Liam { / } I can hear everything you're saying on this Meg you know (33701)

See (as an imperative) was sometimes used as an attention-getting signal:

- (2) I got it yesterday didn't I? Yeah, I need another one. See I'm a nice bloke aren't I? She doesn't answer (39704)
 (3) If she doesn't she's disqualified. Yeah, you're disqualified! ... See! It's all about wits. ... Don't mind me I just don't know what I'm talking about
 (4) Ah, right see. Let me just get my jacket first and I'll be with you. (34901)

Listen can be used in the same way as *look* with the function to obtain attention while *hear* was not used as an attention-getting device in the conversations I looked at (but compare *hear*, *hear* in parliamentary debates).

As pragmatic markers with an attention-getting function *look* and *listen* have different frequencies in the *LLC* and *COLT*. The *London-Lund Corpus* is the same size as the *COLT* corpus (500, 000 words), making it possible to make comparisons without normalizing the figures.

Table 1 The frequencies of *look* and *listen* as attention-getting devices in the *LLC* and in *COLT*. (The figures within parentheses refer to all examples of *look* and *listen* as imperatives.)

	<i>LLC</i>	<i>COLT</i>
Look ¹	30 (365)	284 (880)
Listen ²	6 (32)	136 (275)

Table 1 shows that *look* and *listen* as markers were more frequent in the *COLT* corpus than in the *LLC*, i. e. there are differences which depend on the age of the

1 In all there were 1694 examples of the (lemma) *look* in *COLT* and 864 examples in the *LLC*.

2 In all there were 354 examples of the (lemma) *listen* in *COLT* and 48 examples in the *LLC*

speaker (and perhaps other factors such as the formality of the situation and the difference in time between the recordings in the two corpora).

The proportion of attention-getters in comparison with other imperative uses was higher in *COLT* (32.3 % of the examples of *look* to be compared with 8.2 % in *LLC*). The corresponding figures for *listen* are 18.8 % in *LLC* to be compared with 49.4 % in *COLT*. In some other languages the attention-getting function of the perceptual verbs is even more frequent. In the Spanish data analyzed by Romero Trillo (1997, 217), the frequency of the attention-getting function was, for instance, very high (*oye* ›listen‹ 37.7 %; *mira* ›look‹ 84.9 %, *fíjate* ›look‹ 35.1 %).

Moreover in the English data it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between the imperative and the attention-getter:³

- (5) Oh ! Isn't she cute ! You can, look, you can just squash her breasts. ... I'm not {laughing} doing it. { / } She'll kill you . . . (33905)
- (6) The neck is dirty, and the thing is white, and it look, and it's so, the neck is dirty of the to, [of the] (35 203)

The speaker can either point to something which the hearer can see or draw attention to what s/he is saying.

In older material *look* is common in combinations such as (*now*) *look* (*here*) or in the form *lookee* (*here*) (Brinton 2001, 179). Especially in the *COLT* corpus we find *look* in many new combinations as a pragmatic marker with attention-getting function. *Look* occurred, for example, in the combinations *now look*, *oh look*, *see look*, *look listen*, *right look*, *right well look*, *oi look* with an increase of intensity as a result:

- (7) but the other thing, and the other thing about this bus ride is it's so horrible isn't it ? It's just like look, everything that you look at { unclear} (34202)

Both *see look* and *look listen* can be used as attention-getting devices:

- (8) I know someone that sells them if you want one.
 { nv } laugh { /nv }
See look, look seriously man I'd do that
 No I [wouldn't.]
 [if I didn't] fucking pass.
 I wouldn't. (33905)

3 The examples have however been counted as attention-getters if this was a possible interpretation.

- (9) What I'm doing with my foot Look, listen Put them both in . . . Can you hear it? (3707)

In the *LLC* there were 30 examples of *look* which I have regarded as attention-getting devices (cf. 284 examples in *COLT*). In the majority of examples (20 examples) *look* was used in narratives after a verb of saying or thinking with the function to make the narrative dramatic rather than simply narrate or report an event. Here is a typical example from an informal conversation in the *LLC*:

- (10) A>he said well now what about \uniform#so I thought now \look# if I'm doing rubbing in some ointment and putting up doing an \enema [?]#I want an \overall#^not a \uniform# (*LLC* 2.12 732 – 736)⁴

Look (cf. *well now* after *he said* in the same example) is used to involve the hearer in the narrative.

Also in the *COLT* corpus *look* was frequent in quoted dialogue with the function to make the story-telling more vivid. We can think of *look* as a device used to create scenes in which characters speak in certain voices. »These scenes occasion the imagination of alternative, distant, or familiar worlds, much as does artistic creation.« (Tannen 1989, 26) This use is found with verbs of saying and thinking; as seen from the examples a frequent saying verb is *go* in the *COLT* texts:

- (11) she said she goes look Rich, do you like (35306)
 (12) shall I ring up and say look John (42704)
 (13) and he's going look I'll sleep with you man (34101)
 (14) we'll say look I'll do post for you today (42304)
 (15) No should I go to school and say here look listen to this sir, you'll find it very interesting (33905)

In the conversations from the *COLT* corpus we can observe how the prescriptive turntaking rules are not always adhered to (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974). Adolescents use attention-getting devices to fight for the turn; the person who speaks loudest and uses the resources of the language most successfully will be the one who takes the floor (the principle of ›survival of the fittest‹; Andersen 2001, 6). Both *look* and *listen* are excellent interruptors and they convey the sense of fighting back by conversational means (Brinton 2001).

4 My own simplified transcription. Only tone unit boundary markers (#) and intonation have been marked.

The result may be a turn-taking struggle as in (16) where the speaker uses *look* as an abrupt way of interrupting.

- (16) 1 [Yeah] but Ollie [ain't got]
 2 [Look]
 3 gonna start, Ollie ain't gonna start nuffink. So, [yeah]
 4 [Put] it this way, if Paul wants to tell Lou, let him, [cos Ollie just]
 5 [Yeah, but], [er]
 6 [Look], Ollie is the one that started it all in the first, he let that happen, but if anything, if Ollie thinks we do him then Steven will probably
 7 If it's, nah, if it was one on one, yeah, that's [alright?]
 8 [Then] we'll fight. (34901)

In adolescent conversation the turntaking rules are relaxed and it is acceptable to interrupt the previous speaker. *Look* is used to interrupt the speaker without success in turn 2. The marker is used again (turn 6) overlapping with the previous speaker's turn this time with more success.

Look in the *COLT* corpus is often used to »draw added attention« to an utterance (Keenan et al 1987, 52). This can be motivated by disagreements as in example (17). The attention – getting device has a challenging or adversative (>but<) function supporting the observation by Brinton »that *look* operates both on a scale of commitment and a scale of rhetorical strength« (Brinton 2001, 180). *Look* prefaces a turn in which the speaker disagrees with a previous speaker or protests that something is true:

- (17) Look ignore] Scott, forget Scott.
 What?
Look, what he's saying about Jamey in playground is true.
 What he means right, now I'll tell up front, what he means is that if I'll be friends then he'll be good friends and try to sort something out, (39801)
 (18) Well not really look I don't have] a short skirt. { nv} laugh { /nv} { laughing} { unclear} do, God knows { / } (42706)

The type of polemic conversation with a lot of interruptions we can see in (17) and (18) strengthens the bonding between the adolescents. Similar examples in the *LLC* suggest that the context is argumentative:

- (19) b> **Mr M\oore#
 b> look here#
 b> this is not** going to get on to the
 p\olitics of th/is thing#

b> we're trying to find \out#
 b> about foxes and human b\eings#
 (LLC 5.6 1005 – 1009)⁵

Look here occurs in a debate about fox-hunting. *Look* is used to gain the floor and to ›put the other person in his or her place‹.

Look and *listen* provide ›metaphorical urgency for emphasis‹, i.e., the speaker speaks ›as if maximum efficiency were very important‹ (Brown and Levinson 1978, 101). *Look* is found before commands or requests, which can be expected on account of its urgency meaning. However, in addition to urgency and efficiency social relationships are important. Politeness and ›efficiency‹ can be looked upon as competing forces in discourse. In the informal conversations with adolescents, social similarity, group-membership and solidarity with other members of the group may also be important. Thus even when *look* (or *listen*) is used with very direct forms such as imperatives (›commands‹) the purpose may be social and affective.

- (20) What I'm doing with my foot. ... Look, listen. ... Put them both in ... Can you hear it? (32707)
 (21) Look I want a cup of tea (35204)
 (22) Look I think I need some new trousers (40809)
 (23) Look I need my book (40601)
 (24) look can I have some (39302)

Even rudeness and insults can be associated with solidarity and similarity within the social group or network:

- (25) Look, fuck off Janet, no one wants you.
 I know, I know. (40602)
 (26) look shut up (3441)
 (27) look Jase shut up man (3401)
 (28) Look face it Jules (3962)
 (29) Look stop whispering about it (3391)
 (30) What I'm doing with my foot. ... Look, listen. ... Put them both in ... Can you hear it? (32707)

To sum up, *look* reflects the close bonding between the participants rather than a conversational conflict. It is not surprising that we do not find similar examples in the *LLC* where the speakers are more likely to regard direct confrontation as

⁵ See footnote 3. * (*) marks overlap.

threatening. *Look* is thus a good example that the same lexical element has both polite and impolite uses depending on who uses it and depending on the situation. Using one of the direct structures in (20) – (30) would suggest aggressive behaviour and power unless the speakers are equals and the context is informal.

Moreover attention-getters can express emotion. This is especially true when they combine with vocatives, names or endearments, when they are shouted or prosodically marked in some way. Just as we can express urgency even when this is only metaphorical (we speak as if something is urgent), »we can all express feelings that we do not have, or feelings that it might simply be felicitous to have in a given situation for particular reasons (Caffi, Janney 1994, 326)« (Rühlemann (2001, 47).

Look has affective meanings such as emphasis, intensity, urgency, impatience, softening.

As an attention-getting signal with the meaning of urgency *look* can implicate impatience and exasperation although these meanings would be less apparent in conversations among equals:

- (31) Look I'll do that later okay [look, God] [{unclear} no no please {unclear}]
but it doesn't make any sense. You've just introduced the topic.
[okay] (39301)

In (32), *look* is used with affective meaning (intensity) before a repeated request:

- (32) Give me the protractor. Look uh listen to me.
Give me the protractor.
(40601)

Look can be a softener implicating friendliness if no disagreement is involved:

- (33) look P\etey#
b> you've got is it six dr\awers#
b> out of a ch\est of drawers#
b> you've got a chest of drawers which is n\ot
which is b\ulky#
b> you've got tw\o m\attresses#
b> which are [o @] always a bit *of a* b\ind#
(LLC 4.2 1015 – 1020)⁶

⁶ See footnote 3.

Please look is emphatic and urgent:

(34) Can I have a tiny sip please.

No

Please, look I gave you some crisps {unclear}.

{nv} scream {/nv} Oh go on let me have some.

(33704)

Look can be compared with *listen*. However *listen* retains more of its meaning as a perceptual verb than *look*. On the other hand, simply regarding its meaning as perceptual would not explain its functions as an attention-getter or a floor-seeking signal. Thus *listen* like *look* must be regarded as multifunctional although the literal perceptual meaning is always more or less present. Not surprisingly, *listen* is less often described as an attention-getter or a pragmatic marker. Brinton (2001, 191) for instance refers to the use of *listen* as an attention-getter »as a use which is not recorded in dictionaries of contemporary English«. The attention-getting function is most clear in combinations such as *listen here* or with an appeal for confirmation (*just listen right, okay listen, all right listen, hey listen, ah listen right, no listen right, right listen yeah, now listen yeah, look listen*). *Listen* (like *look*) was more often repeated as an attention-getting marker. It is therefore possible that it expresses stronger emphasis than *look*. It was not used in the same contexts as *look* in the *COLT* corpus (or the *LLC*). *Listen* was for instance not common in quotative contexts (only a single example in *COLT*). In the *COLT* corpus *listen* was above all used to draw attention to something in order to consolidate membership in the adolescent group:

(35) There's AIDS, there's AIDS, right. Listen, listen, listen. There's AIDS and he's chasing the bum and the bum's running (32701)

(36) Only done one question. ^2 Hey guys, listen here, let me have, let me have the work that you've

In the London-Lund Corpus *listen* was used for urgency which explains the overlap in (37):

(37) B> *listen#> ^ ((if* you)) feel like a film tomorrow night

M/ike#a> **a what**

B> **Saint ^J\ohn's sch/ool#**

A> **((2 to 3 sylls))**

(B> ^film {sh\ow#}#

a> what's happening -

B> we're showing Around the World *in \Eighty Days#
(*LLC* 1.7.0 1207–1215)⁷

The example is taken from a conversation between two friends, both of them teachers in their thirties. Speaker B interrupts the conversation in order to introduce something new (the conversation has earlier dealt with different kinds of beers).

3. Attention Markers and Social Function

Attention-getters have uses which can be justified by the needs for efficiency and urgency. *Look* can be used metaphorically »for emphasis on making a rhetorical point« (Brown and Levinson 1978, 101). The need for urgency can however be overridden by the necessity to preserve face. The notion of ›face‹ is central in the theory of politeness developed by Brown and Levinson (1978). (On the importance of ›face‹ compare Goffman (1967).) According to Brown and Levinson the speaker and hearer cooperate to maintain face in interaction. However both the speaker's and the hearer's ›face‹ can be threatened by ›face-threatening acts‹. Speakers therefore select strategies that will minimize the threats to the speaker's and hearer's (negative or positive) face (›face-redressive strategies‹). Negative face refers to the »want of every ›competent adult member‹ that his actions be unimpeded by others« and threats are redressed by formal politeness strategies (Brown, Levinson 1978, 67). Redressing the speaker's positive face involves choosing strategies focusing on ›social similarity‹ and in-group membership. These strategies are less obviously polite and in many respects »simply representative of the formal linguistic behaviour between intimates« (Brown, Levinson 1978, 106).

Markers which are interruptive of discourse and challenge or contradict a previous speaker can have the function to establish or to maintain solidarity among the members in the adolescent community. The low frequency of attention-getters in this function in the conversations in the *LLC* suggests that adults do not normally interrupt or take the floor where speaker transition is not licensed. Thus the same behaviour which fulfills important social functions in the adolescent group might be experienced as impolite or aggressive in a conversation between adults. The turn-taking strategies used by adults involve hedging and hesitation rather than interruption and abrupt shifting of the topic. For example, while *look* and *listen* were more frequently used by the *COLT* speakers, the opposite is the case for *well*, a pragmatic marker frequently used

⁷ See footnote 3.

for turn-taking and topic-changing functions. *Well* marks a conciliatory move rather than a disagreeing one and it does not intrude on the hearer's privacy (Schiffrin 1987, 118).

Attention-getters are markers which the speaker can use intentionally to control conversations and to suggest power and determination. It is interesting to note that speakers with a lower status may not feel comfortable using attention-getting signals. Romero Trillo (1997) has drawn our attention to the difference between ›controlled‹ conversations (interviews with an informant) and free conversations between equals. What happens is that the number of attention-getting devices is lower in the controlled conversation. According to Romero Trillo (1997, 218),

this is probably partly because the speakers [in the controlled conversations] do not feel very relaxed, and are not free to draw attention to what they are saying, since they are talking to a person with a higher social status. [...] In [the informal conversations among equals], on the other hand, the speakers probably behave in a more normal way and do feel entitled to insist that their addressees be attentive to their words.

To sum up, *look* and *listen* have different frequencies and uses in discourse depending on who uses them. When speakers are young and have equal status as in the *COLT* corpus they use a lot of attention getters to show that they belong to a social group or network. In the *LLC* corpus attention getters were less frequent especially in interruptive and floor-seeking functions.

The pragmatic markers *look, listen* or *see* are multifunctional as a result of their grammaticalization or pragmaticalization from imperatives of perceptual verbs. They have meanings related to discourse-management tasks as well as the social function to establish or maintain intimacy and social similarity. *Look* as a pragmatic marker is, for instance, used with the meaning of metaphorical urgency, it has the function to introduce a new voice in the dramatized narrative, it is used to interrupt and to mark disagreement in conflictive ›but‹-talk. We have also seen that *look* and *listen* can be associated with power in addition to solidarity depending on the type of situation and who the speakers are. This suggests that the markers must refer to sociolinguistic features such as the age (gender and social class) and social role of the speakers as well as to function in different registers.

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Discourse-pragmatic Functions of Participial Clauses in Preverbal Position

Considering the fact that due to processing pressure, more complex clause elements generally tend to be positioned after the verb (cf. »the principle of end weight«, Quirk et al. 1985, 1362; henceforth *CGEL*), participial clauses in preverbal position can be considered as marked. The present chapter aims to identify the discourse-pragmatic factors which require the non-final position of participial clauses and which may override the tendency towards final placement.

1. The Types of Participial Clauses

The types of participial clauses discussed involve on the one hand post-modifying clauses, restrictive (1) a. and non-restrictive (1) b., and on the other hand adverbial clauses, whether introduced by subordinators (1) c. or not (1) d.

- (1) a. Articles **considering specific aspects of intercontinental collision** include those by Burke et al. (1977) [...] (J0T, 712)
b. Sloth faeces, **estimated to contain half the leaf material**, are returned to the ground around the trees [...] (J18, 91)
c. **When interviewing Margaret**, the therapist found her to be moderately depressed, [...] (B30, 608)
d. **Having asked that she should not be disturbed** she had taken the overdose in her room. (B30, 886)

The study is stylistically limited to academic written texts. The material was obtained predominantly from the British National Corpus.

2. Participial Clauses in Initial Position

Let us consider the initial position first. Participial adverbial clauses in preverbal position are either integrated in the sentence, functioning as adjuncts, or peripheral to the sentence – performing the functions of disjuncts, subjuncts and conjuncts. Our approach to the classification of adverbials is based on that of Quirk et al. (*CGEL*, 501 ff); however, it relies more on the semantic characteristics of the non-integrated adverbials than on their formal properties. These participial clauses represent the speaker's comment on the utterance.

In disjuncts the speaker comments on the style, form or content of the utterance. In ex. (2) he presents himself as the ›authority‹ on the utterance (*CGEL*, 615). Alternatively, the speaker may present the content of the matrix clause as generally valid, including the reader in the sphere of the ›authority‹ (ex. 3). Participial disjuncts are also often used for rewording (ex. 4). The implied ›valency‹ subject is the authorial *I / we*, and there is typically no coreference between the implied subject of the participial clause and that of the matrix clause it is attached to. The range of participial constructions used as disjuncts appears to be quite narrow: the recurrent predicates include (*-ly*, e.g. *broadly, generally, strictly*) *speaking, expressed (in this way, formally), put (another way), putting x (more precisely), taken (at face value, literally)*.

- (2) **Judging by our previous experience**, I do not think that the Home Secretary would have refused to renew it thereafter. (ASB, 979)
- (3) **Generally speaking**, organisms in warm, shallow seas that either build or are closely associated with reefs have been relatively vulnerable to extinction, [...]. (CMA, 556)
- (4) **Putting this more precisely**, the proper time taken by light to pass to and fro between two fixed points in spaces oscillates. (H8K, 1732)

Participial clauses may also be used to specify the speaker's point of view, their scope therefore extending over the whole sentence. These clauses may accordingly be classified as viewpoint subjuncts (ex. 5). Concerning the subject non-attachment to the subject of the superordinate clause, the same applies as in disjuncts (and conjuncts, for that matter). Again, a considerable degree of institutionalization of particular predicates in this function can be observed: *regarding, having regard, speaking, viewed (in this way)*.

- (5) **Anatomically speaking**, it is an either/or. (CGF, 890)

Although other forms of adverbials are generally preferred in the text-organising function,¹ participial clauses can assume a (near-)conjunct status. The writer's main concern here is to indicate clearly how the text is organised, and where in this structure the reader is at the moment. It is usually not only the subordinate clause that serves the text-organising function, but rather the sentence as a whole. These clauses border on temporal adjuncts but differ from them in referring primarily to textual rather than temporal localisation. As in other non-integrated adverbials, the implied agent of the conjunct is typically the authorial *I / we*. They also resemble disjuncts and subjuncts in referring to the way the content is presented. The text-organizing function is frequently expressed by the following participial constructions: *returning to, dealing (firstly) with, concluding, referring (back) to, recalling, switching from [...] to, linked with[...]*.

- (6) **Dealing firstly with the similarities between this and the student reconstructions**, it is noticeable that the preferred opening is vindicated: [...].(J89, 144)
- (7) **Before examining the major sociological perspectives on crime**, it is useful to refer to theories from outside of sociology, from other academic disciplines. (B17, 187)
- (8) Secondly, and **linked with this point**, criminal statistics reflect the intensity of law enforcement itself. (B17, 1096)

The relatively high incidence of non-integrated clauses in initial position is due to two factors: first, they function as discourse markers – it is reasonable for the speaker/writer to indicate how the sentence is to be understood or related to the rest of the text as early as possible. Second, the main factor hindering initial position in adjuncts – the anaphoric retrievability of the valency subject – does not pose a problem here: the implied subject is typically the authorial *I / we*. The author may be considered a part of the ›given‹ information in the whole text – ›derivable or recoverable from the context, situation and the common knowledge of the speaker and listener‹ (Daneš 1974, 109).

Another factor contributing to the recognition of the participial clause as a conjunct, disjunct or subjunct seems to operate here, viz. the tendency towards lexicalization of certain constructions in the particular function.

Initial adjuncts have a Janus-like nature in the construction of the text. They are anaphoric – their subject being recoverable from the preceding context – and at the same time they are tied to the matrix clause by the prevalent identity of the implied subject and that of the matrix clause (following the attachment rule). Considering that ›from the point of view of text organization, it is the theme that

1 Cf. Biber et al. 1999, 767–770.

plays an important constructional role« (Daneš 1974, 113), the thematic links achieved by the anaphoric reference of the implied subject of the participial clause and its cataphoric ties to the subject of the matrix clause contribute to the cohesion of the text. It is significant that the subject preceded by a participial adjunct typically has anaphoric reference, often being expressed by a personal or demonstrative pronoun or a proper noun (approximately 80 per cent).

On the other hand, being the most dynamic element (the diatheme) of the thematic section of the sentence field, participial adjuncts may serve to introduce a new topic in the discourse.

In example (9) the pronominal subject *it* is the least dynamic element (theme proper), referring to the rhematic element of the preceding sentence, but also developing the hypertheme of the paragraph, i. e. *the peace camps*. Out of the two adverbials, the nonfinite clause carries a higher degree of communicative dynamism (CD). This is not only due to the ›weight‹ of the clause (i. e. its length and complexity as compared with the simple adverb *quickly*) but also due to the distribution of CD within the subfield of the participial clause. The participial clause is homogeneous with regard to the distribution of CD since the elements carrying the lowest amount of CD (the contextually bound subject, the transition-oriented conjunction) are not expressed in it, and the temporal and modal exponents of the verb (transition proper) are restricted (in comparison with a finite verb predicate). »Through this extreme thematization [i. e. the omission of the thematic elements], the retained elements of an abbreviated clause are brought into relief, even though they do not constitute the rheme of the entire sentence.« (Bäcklund 1984, 164) The rheme proper of the participial adjunct clause (*women*) becomes (a part of) the global paragraph theme (*30,000 women, they*) in the following sentences.

- (9) Peace camps were formed around some of the RAF air bases [...]. The most famous of these was the first, at Greenham Common. **Organized exclusively by women**, it quickly became a symbol not only of peace but also of the values of the women's movement. On 12 December 1982, 30,000 women linked hands to ›Embrace the Base‹. They adorned the perimeter fence with pictures, flowers, and messages of peace. (ASB, 1485)

3. Participial Clauses in Medial Position

In medial position, following the subject head noun, the distinction between nonrestrictive postmodifying participles and adverbial clauses is described as ambiguous. It seems possible to move nonrestrictive nonfinite clauses to the initial position without a change in meaning (10). Thus, the nonfinite clause in

sentence (11) could be regarded as a reduction of a relative clause (11) a., but equally of a causal adverbial clause (11) b., or a temporal one (11) c.

- (10) a. The substance, **discovered almost by accident**, has revolutionized medicine. [>which was discovered almost by accident [...]<
 b. >**Discovered almost by accident**, the substance has revolutionized medicine. (CGEL, 1270–71)
- (11) The man, **wearing such dark glasses**, obviously could not see clearly.
 a. >The man, who was wearing [...]
 b. >The man, because he was wearing [...]
 c. >The man, whenever he wore [...] (CGEL, 1271)

It must be observed, however, that like in the initial position there are different degrees of integration of the nonfinite clauses into the matrix structure: restrictive (defining) postmodifying clauses are, syntactically, a part of the subject NP, and non-restrictive (nondefining, parenthetical) postmodifying clauses were shown to be ambiguous in terms of whether they represent adverbial adjuncts or nonrestrictive postmodifiers. This position may also, though marginally, be occupied by disjuncts.

Although restrictive postmodifiers are not of central interest here because their degree of integration into the subject NP does not allow any other position, they are worth mentioning because they share some features with non-restrictive postmodifiers and they also fulfil a clear discourse function. They provide anaphoric links between sentences, as can be observed in the following examples, (12) and (13), in which the participial clauses in bold are in anaphoric relation to the underlined preceding elements.

- (12) The presence of an antithetic fault on the hanging wall margin can give the impression of a symmetric rift valley if it is exposed and forms an escarpment, **even though** the overall structure is asymmetric. Further evidence **contradicting the traditional symmetric rift valley model** comes from observations of their morphology and surface structure. (JOT, 855)
- (13) Such regular joint patterns appear to develop when the centres of contraction are evenly spaced. The lines **joining these centres** represent the directions of greatest tensile stress in the lava flow as it cools, and [...]. (JOT, 1198)

Two observations are relevant at this point. First, the determiners of subject NPs with postmodifying clauses express mainly (96 per cent) non-anaphoric reference, i. e. the subjects are indefinite, as in (12), generic, or cataphoric, as in (13). It is the postmodifier part which links the new sentence and the new nominal entity with the previous context, as is clear from our examples. In contrast to the initial adverbial clauses, where it is the subject of the superordinate clause which is anaphoric, in restrictive postmodifying clauses it is the participial clause (the verb and its complementation) that provides the anaphoric link between the new subject and the previous context. In other than subject functions this tendency is not so strong, i. e. other than subject postmodifiers are not anaphoric to such an extent (the object modifiers are used to introduce new entities / information in the clause, i. e. they do not contain so many anaphoric elements). As far as other clause elements with participial postmodifiers are concerned, the anaphoric function does not seem to be so prominent.

The second point worth mentioning is that, in academic writing, subjects containing a participial modifier are much more frequent (40 per cent) than in other registers (10 – 15 per cent, cf. Biber 1999, 623). This specific feature is also reflected in the fact that, as in the initial adverbial position, we can encounter frequently recurring verbs, the prototypical one being *associated with*, representing 10 per cent of all examples and occurring prevalingly as the modifier of a subject. The reason why this verb is frequent may be sought in its meaning of ›connect in the mind‹, which serves well the defining function of the postmodifiers. It makes it possible to connect noun phrases in a semantically rather unspecified way, i. e. signalling some kind of relationship. The preposition *with* adds to this flexible combinability.

As has been mentioned earlier, nonrestrictive modifiers are said to be indistinguishable from medially placed adjuncts, which can be tested by the possibility of moving them to the initial position, cf. example (10).

The following two examples, however, attest that the status of participial clauses following the subject and separated by a comma is not always equivocal, and the adverbial interpretation may not be plausible at all. To be more precise, the mobility test is hard to apply, mainly due to the changes in the interpretation of the initially placed non-finite clause (examples illustrating this point are not drawn from academic prose). Thus, in example (14) the adverbial reading b. brings about a change in meaning, namely, temporal relations; in (15) the postmodifying interpretation with a relative clause is not possible at all.

- (14) A kindly lorry driver on his way to North Wales, **chatting of his own daughter and his home**, had dropped her at the roundabout at the top of the Banbury Road at about lunch-time. (A6J, 32)
- a. >A kindly lorry driver on his way to North Wales, **who chatted / was**

- chatting of his own daughter and his home**, had dropped her at [...]
 b. >**Chatting of his own daughter and his home**, a kindly lorry driver on his way to North Wales had dropped her at [...]

- (15) Hazlitt, **facing death**, was still able to say, proudly, that his last hopes or ideals were also his first ones. (ADA, 663)
 a. >**Hazlitt, when facing death**, was still able to say, [...]
 b. >**Facing death**, Hazlitt, was still able to say, [...]

Although the positional mobility test may serve well to indicate the degree of integration of the clause into the noun phrase, or to highlight the similarity (both structural and functional) of what are traditionally regarded as two different types of clauses, it represents an oversimplification in the sense that it suggests ›free positional variation‹ of the participial clauses, even in cases when these clauses are regarded from the point of view of the sentence structure, without taking into account the textual or discourse factors that may influence or determine the position of the clause in such sentences.

Comparing the NPs of restrictive and nonrestrictive postmodifiers, the most striking feature they share is the prevalent non-anaphoric character of the subject NPs. On the contrary, analyzing the properties of the initially placed participles, it was observed that the main clause subjects were anaphoric, which implies that the covert subject of the participle was present in, or retrievable from, the previous context as well, and the participle was primarily interpreted with respect to that entity, i.e. not with respect to the subject of the matrix sentence, but across its boundaries: the unexpressed subject can be seen as a member of a cohesive chain, with the finite clause subject being anaphoric to all the previous items in that chain.

Examples (16) – (18) illustrate subject NPs with indefinite reference, which also represent the subjects of the participial clauses, with (18) indicating most clearly that linearity is an important factor in the interpretation of the subject of the participle.

- (16) Dickinson and Seely (1979) give a more specific treatment of forearc regions with excellent diagrams of their morphology, structure and evolution. A good coverage of the major processes of orogenesis, **containing a number of detailed case studies**, can be found in Hsu (1983) and [...] (JOT, 702)

- (17) Rather similar definitions, **referring to shared norms and abstract patterns of variation rather than to shared speech behaviour**, have been given by Dell Hymes (1972) and Michael Halliday (1972). (Hudson 1996, 25)
- (18) Though ›poireau‹, the French word closest in sound to the name Christie chose, with its double meanings of ›leek‹ and ›wart‹, appears to have no obvious connection with the detective, the word ›poirier‹, **meaning a ›pear-tree‹**, offers a much more fruitful area for investigation. (A0D, 2123)

Let us now consider the consequences of the initial placement of such clauses. In (19), the subject of the main clause is a proper noun, which, by nature, is definite. If the participial clause is moved to the initial position, as illustrated in example (19) a., the fact that in the previous context there is no element which can be interpreted as its agent gives rise to pragmatic inferencing in the sense that if the initial position is not required by the cohesive link through the covert subject, there must be some other, this time semantic, relation, usually exemplification, setting a contrast etc. In our example *working in Britain* is interpreted with respect to the previous context – most likely in the sense that there is a relationship between *stationary continents* and *Britain*. This reading is, however, disqualified at the end of the sentence where it is stated that it was rocks *from around the world*, not just Britain, that provided the data. Although the subject is definite (proper noun), it is mentioned for the first time, i. e. it is not anaphoric.

- (19) 2.3.2 Palaeomagnetic evidence. During the mid-1950 s, at a time when continental drift was not seriously considered by most earth scientists, new evidence in the form of palaeomagnetic data from rocks again began to bring into question the notion of stationary continents. S.K. Runcorn and his associates, **working in Britain**, conducted an intensive programme of data collection involving the measurement of remanent magnetism in rocks of various ages from around the world. (J0T, 151)

a. > [...] new evidence in the form of palaeomagnetic data from rocks again began to bring into question the notion of stationary continents. **Working in Britain**, S.K. Runcorn and his associates conducted an intensive programme of data collection [...]

In example (20), the form of the subject, which is explicitly indefinite and ›non-anaphoric‹, rules out the possibility of the initial placement entirely (the beginning of a book). The position can be changed as far as the sentence is con-

cerned, but the lack of an element in the previous context to which the participle could be linked has pragmatic and semantic consequences.

- (20) Two European physicists, **working in Britain**, were able, in 1940, to establish that isotope 235 of uranium could be separated industrially, and during the following year, the Maud Committee reported that an atomic bomb was possible. (ALY, 858)

Adjuncts in medial position resemble non-restrictive postmodifying clauses in several respects. First, the subject of the superordinate clause is typically non-anaphoric. In clear contrast to the superordinate clause subjects preceded by initial adjuncts, the subjects followed by an adjunct were never realized by pronouns. Second, moving the participial clause to initial position proved to be problematic. If possible at all, it involved a pragmatic re-interpretation of the semantic relation between the participial clause and the superordinate one. Even if there is an anaphoric link between the subject of the matrix clause and the preceding sentence, it may not be sufficient to guarantee mobility of the participial clause into the initial position where the initial placement could complicate processing, cf. ex. (21) with ›the exposition of a split rheme‹ (Daneš 1974, 120).

- (21) It has recently been proposed that variations in albedo with respect to latitude [...] are a result of both the changing distribution of continents and sea-level oscillations. The latter, **causing a change in land-sea proportions**, is apparently the more important. (CMA, 525)

We have already mentioned the compactness of the participial clause and the way this affected the sub-field of the participial clause. However, compactness, i. e. homogeneity in terms of communicative dynamism,² influences the distribution of the degrees of CD in two ways: one concerns the ›compact‹ element itself, the other the neighbouring elements. As shown by Bäcklund (1984, 165), the »compacting effect [...] contributes to bringing about distinct rises or falls in CD over the sentence elements«. Participial clauses in medial position, although thematic themselves, frequently assign a certain degree of prominence to the preceding thematic subject. In this way, the subject *human beings* in (22) is highlighted owing to the following participial clause. The subject would not be emphasised if the adverbial clause were placed in initial position. Bäcklund

2 As explained by Firbas, »the phenomenon of compactness can be displayed by any elements that differ comparatively little from each other in CD, but form a section which in its entirety noticeably differs in CD from the elements which precede and follow it« (Firbas 1961, 88).

points out that participial clauses resemble parentheses in this respect. Both may be used to »throw emphasis on a word immediately preceding it«, and in both »the emphasis is signalled by intonation in speech but is also in most cases signalled by commas in writing« (Bäcklund 1984, 184). »There is rarely any need to set off an item that contributes so little to the development of communication« as pronouns do (ibid., 185). This may be another factor explaining why no instance of an adverbial clause inserted in the medial position following a personal pronoun subject occurred in our material, and why the subjects followed by an adverbial clause in medial position are often contextually non-bound.

- (22) The evolutionary costs in this case are those due to inbreeding, and the cultural outcome is the incest taboo. Two quite distinct arguments are mounted. [...] The first argument is the classical one and runs as follows. Human beings, **being observant and intelligent**, spot the consequences of matings between close relatives and make safety laws about them. (CMA, 983)

4. Summing up – the Anaphoric Subject of the Superordinate Clause

Initially placed adjuncts contribute to establishing and maintaining cohesive links in the text in two ways. First, their unexpressed subject is recoverable from the previous context (*a rattlesnake* in (23)); we can therefore speak about the ›attachment rule‹ operating backwards in the text across sentence boundaries. The unexpressed subject is also typically co-referential with the subject of the matrix clause, viz. the intrasentential application of the ›attachment rule‹ (*it* in (23)). Second, since the initial participial clause constitutes the diatheme of the field of the sentence, it often serves to introduce a new (or ›derived‹, cf. Daneš 1974, 119) topic in discourse (*the two rattlesnakes fight*).

Medial participial clauses are easier to move to the initial position if the preceding subject of the matrix clause has anaphoric reference. However, this is rarely the case and, moreover, the initial placement of the participial clause may necessitate extra processing effort. In the last sentence of (23) the semantic relation of the participial adjunct to the matrix clause is not influenced by position, since it is explicitly indicated by the subordinator (*after*).

- (23) Animals avoid using their most powerful weaponry when fighting other members of their species. Rattlesnakes are a clear example. A rattlesnake possesses a powerful poison which it uses against prey and dangerous

enemies. However, **when fighting against another rattlesnake** it does not use its poison fangs. Instead the two rattlesnakes **fight** in a gentlemanly, if energetic, joust in which each tries to push the other to the ground. The loser, **after being floored**, retreats. (GU8, 1580)

5. Summing up – the Non-anaphoric Subject of the Superordinate Clause: an Adverbial or Postmodifying Participial Clause?

We hope to have shown that when the subject of the matrix clause is non-anaphoric, mobility of the medial participial clause is problematic, as in the example of *working in Britain* [...] above ((19) and (20)). Mobility therefore does not seem to be applicable as a criterion of distinguishing between adverbial and postmodifying nonrestrictive clauses. There rather appears to be just one type of medially placed participial clause without a subordinator, which follows a non-anaphoric subject, is intonationally separated from it (as reflected in commas in writing), and which is capable of expressing a range of semantic relations starting from the weakest ones – ›postmodifying‹ (cf. [...] *today's speakers, who do not know the origins of generic he* [...] in (24)) – up to the stronger ›adverbial‹ relations (e. g. reason: [...] *since they don't know the origins of generic he*).

(24) [...] it surely becomes impossible to maintain that the workings of gender in English are untouched by sexism. It is true that today's speakers, **not knowing the origins of generic he**, may regard it as just a feature of grammar. (CGF, 1050)

6. Conclusion

While governed by structure-specific rules every (micro-)structure is also influenced by the requirements of the higher macro-structure which it is a part of. When considering the placement and the positional mobility of participial clauses as a criterion of their syntactic status we have seen that what is a plausible explanation if we limit ourselves to the syntactic structure of the sentence is overridden by the requirements of the hyper-syntactic structure. Likewise, the initial and the medial positions of participial adverbial clauses seem unlikely and hard to justify when considered merely from the point of view of sentence structure – they violate the principle of end-weight and cause processing problems. However, when considered from the point of view of the macro-

structure of the text, they contribute to the construction and processing of a text: they contribute to establishing and maintaining cohesive ties, they facilitate the introduction of a new topic in the text and may also serve as explicit means of textual organization. The interaction between the micro- and macro-structure is pragmatically conditioned. This involves not only cohesive links but also coherence semantic relations.

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On the Content Aspect of Textual Themes

1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the Textual Theme, an entity referred to elsewhere also by other labels, such as Discourse (Level) Theme, Textual Topic, Discourse Topic, Hypertheme, Macrotheme, etc. Moreover, sometimes a hierarchy of Textual Themes is posited, differing in their scopes, including the Global Theme, Paragraph Group Theme, Paragraph Theme, etc.

The Textual Theme, however, should be distinguished from its utterance (local) homonym. With Hausenblas (1971) we shall assume that the Textual Theme is superposed to the theme delimited within the frame of reference of the so-called FSP (or else topic focus articulation/information structure).¹ In other words, as utterance themes or local topics the author selects elements which are at least to some degree relevant to the Textual Theme. Hence the Textual Theme is seen as an entity which motivates various (utterance) themes (U-themes) directly or at least indirectly.²

It should be noted, however, that Textual Themes have not been studied per se; rather, interest in them developed during recent larger-scale research into cohesion and coherence in paragraphs and paragraph groups (see, Pípalová forthcoming).

The Textual Theme represents a textual (discourse) function, accorded to entities by the author and interpreted by the recipient. However, the encoded Theme need not be decoded the way it was intended.

Naturally, in monological texts, the selection of the Theme is the ultimate responsibility of the author. In dialogical and multilogical texts, however, it tends

1 To distinguish between the two homonymous terms of ›THEME‹, in what follows (outside citations), we shall reserve the capital-preceded ›Themes‹ – i. e., (Textual) Theme and its varieties (e. g., Paragraph Theme, Global Theme) as interpreted on a textual, hierarchically superior level. The non-capitalized ›theme‹, on the other hand, will label its counterpart delimited on the hierarchically inferior FSP level (local topic) and contrasted with the rheme.

2 It should be noted that in this chapter the unit of analysis is the main clause.

to be negotiated between two or more interlocutors (see, e.g. Downing 2003, Povolná 2005).

The Theme is inherent in the text (or text-driven), representing the text's organizing principle. This, however, does not preclude comparisons of texts on the basis of their Themes. In fact the Theme may be secondarily abstracted from texts and, as a result, texts may be correlated on the basis of similarities in their Themes.

The selection of the Textual Theme tends to be conditioned or even constrained by the context. Certain situations, periods, registers, genres, fields, communities, speakers, etc., are all associated with particular groups of Themes. Downing (2003, 114) further observes that cultures and subcultures may have possible sets of topics, some of which are open-ended, while others are conventionally limited by the institutional settings (e.g., law courts, classrooms, etc.). Indeed, in a particular situation, the eligibility of Themes varies from relatively common or prototypical Themes all the way to Themes which would be unusual, or even striking in such circumstances. Frequent Themes allow us even to categorize texts (e.g., publishing houses may catalogue books by their regular Themes, the books are then ›themed‹). Also, inventories of common fiction Themes have been published. For instance, in Daemmrich and Daemmrich (1986) most Themes and Motifs are labelled by nominal units, e.g., ›brother conflict‹, ›ancient ruins‹, ›aggression‹, ›quest‹, ›adventure‹, ›clown‹, ›colour‹, etc., to name at least a few.

Since the Theme is deliberately selected by the author given the particular context (situation), the very choice may lend itself to an evaluation. That is why we may assess the Themes as suitable, unsuitable, prestigious, inferior, relevant, irrelevant, etc., (see Peterka 2001, 138).

Many authors further maintain that the Theme plays a central role in ensuring coherence in texts. Indeed, the Theme stabilizes and ›grounds‹ the discourse and is relevant to the perception of its coherence (see e.g., Mathesius 1942 [1982], Giora 1985). That is presumably why it is shown to decay from memory more slowly than other processing levels (see e.g., Kintsch et al. 1990, cited in Brown 2006). Furthermore, unnegotiated changes in Theme tend to be identified as disturbance in coherence (see Bublitz, Lenk 1999, 166–172).

Although there seems to be general agreement as to the significance of the notion in question, there is, however, much disagreement as to what to understand by the concept. To our knowledge, in secondary literature, the Theme has been defined as pragmatic/textual/discourse aboutness, as a single referent, as an FSP function, as a proposition, as a topic sentence, as a cognitive structure, as a summary, as the main idea, as a macro-speech act, as the stock of shared knowledge, etc.

2. Hausenblas's Approach to Textual Theme

One of the most comprehensive accounts of Theme is provided by Hausenblas (1969; and with some minor modifications, 1971). In his definition, the Theme is what is laid down to the fore, to the centre of the ›visual‹ area of reasoning and communicating, but simultaneously, is subjected to further processing in discourse (Hausenblas 1971, 60).

Thus, in Hausenblas, the Theme is marked by its duality. On the one hand, it is something foregrounded, since the author delimits what is, as well as what is not, the centre of attention. Simultaneously, however, the Theme is naturally backgrounded, since it serves only as a foundation for communicating the ultimate sense of the text.

Hausenblas accords the Theme two distinct functions, namely a perspective and a prospective one. In the delimitation of the former, he was inspired by Mukařovský (1932 [2000]). The function consists in ›perspectivizing‹ (hierarchizing) elements of the content structure. This means that some Thematic entities are assigned greater prominence at the expense of others. As a result, we may perceive the main Theme, various subsidiary Themes, Thematic shifts, all the way to individual motifs.

In the second function, the prospective one, the Theme operates as a kind of a starting point for subsequent elaboration of the semantic flow. In other words, in this function the Theme embodies a kind of a prospect, plan, which may be fulfilled, specified, modified, abandoned, etc. The laying down of a Theme predisposes a certain range of issues to be selected and raised by the author. Whereas the former perspective function has a hierarchizing effect, the latter, prospective function, represents a kind of disposition to a particular treatment. In other words, it creates certain expectations.

Apart from this dual function of Theme, Hausenblas further maintains that there are two aspects of (Textual) THEME – (1) the specific cognitive content of a text, depicting a portion of (fictitious) extralinguistic reality, and (2) a principle of the content build-up of texts. In the latter sense the (Textual) THEME is seen as a means of text structuring. We may assume that the Theme's content aspect is primarily extralinguistically oriented and only secondarily textual (forming an indispensable unit of texture). Conversely, its constructional/structural aspect appears to be primarily textual and only secondarily reflecting the extralinguistic arrangements (e.g., causal conditioning, changes with time, etc.).

Nearly fifty years later, we can only endorse both these dualities, functions and aspects. Despite their being closely interrelated (i.e., one presupposing and conditioning the other), in what follows, we will have space to outline only the content aspect. In this context it appears worthwhile to recall Hausenblas's words describing the ease with which we tend to posit the Theme as a theoretical

category, and the difficulties we face when identifying its specific content in individual texts.

3. Present Treatment

3.0. Introduction

It should be pointed out that in the present approach we shall put aside such treatments where the Theme is regarded as the main idea, macro-proposition, gist or summary. In a similar vein, we shall disregard such approaches where the Theme is confounded with the potential or intended interpretation. In our view, many of these treatments bring the Theme close to the Global Rheme and appear feasible only in retrospect. In our understanding, the Theme only promises what the text as such should ultimately deliver.

Taking Brown and Yule (1983) in particular, Hausenblas (1969; 1971), Daneš (1994; 1995); and Daneš in Čmejrková et al. (1999) as our starting points, we suggest a three-layered approach to the Textual Theme. More specifically, we assume that the Theme may be delimited on at least three distinct hierarchized levels which are arranged into a kind of a pyramid. For ease of reference, the whole pyramid, i. e., the three layers put together, will constitute a ›Thematic area«. In what follows, we shall ascend the pyramid from the bottom.

3.1. The Broadest Layer of the Theme

In the broadest sense, the Textual Theme involves all the elements inherently taken for granted in the particular speech event. In the framework created by Kořenský et al. (1987), the comprehensive structure of the communicative event involves a number of substructures, namely the *socio-psychological (sub)structure* (i. e., the social, psycho-physiological and communicative features of the participants, their mutual relationships, their shared knowledge and experience, etc.), *the communicative competence structure* (the participants' knowledge of the social and communicative norms, their shared experiential and cognitive pool, and their use of verbal and non-verbal codes), *the pragmatic structure* (communicative intentions, strategies, goals, etc.), *the object structure* (participants, present personal and non-personal objects, the communicative medium and channel, records of previous communications, etc.), and, the arguably most decisive *Theme-and-content structure* (i. e., the discussed personal and non-personal objects, and other content items, including the meta-communicative ones). Moreover, it appears that the content aspect of the Theme

influences (and, at the same time, is influenced by) the text type and text pattern (these falling in the constructional/structural aspect of the Theme). Hence, the broadest and lowest layer of the Theme, which is simultaneously the most diffuse of all, may be conceived of as corresponding to a whole array of gradually established constituents derived from, and reflecting, the comprehensive structure of the communicative event.

However, the aforementioned (sub)structures and constituents of the general communicative framework do not always enjoy equal standing. First and foremost, not all of them need be linguistically manifested in the text. Particularly in some registers, many of them tend to be backgrounded. Frequently, it is not only the elements which are explicitly featured that are significant for the interpretation of the Theme. Just as telling may be the range of elements which are solely presupposed. What is important, however, is that given the openness of texts (van Peer 1989, 277), the recipient can reconstruct the missing links on the basis of his/her activated world knowledge, including the knowledge of the general communicative frame(work). As is pointed out by Downing (2003, 113–4), »global topics are not built up exclusively on the basis of textual information. Knowledge on various levels is also involved, including general knowledge in the form of schemata, frames and scripts; sociocultural knowledge and assumptions of the sociocultural context of situation, and finally of the immediate communicative situation, including the goals and needs of the participants, their character, relative status, and the kinds of speech acts they may engage in given the current discourse situation.«

In example (1), a number of elements of the broadest layer are encoded as utterance themes (e.g., *readers* – 1, *now* – 5, *us* – 6, 7, 8, etc.).

- (1) 1 Readers will not be surprised to learn that the purpose of this chapter is to consider the environmental issues outlined in Chapter 1 in the light of the social problems perspective, and to analyse the green movement as a collection of agencies making »social problem claims«. 2 This is not done for the sake of bolstering a sociological theory but because this perspective allows us to appreciate how the green movement has come to assume the shape it had at the beginning of the 1990s. 3 A book written even a few years ago (for example the excellent Pye-Smith and Rose 1984) would have presented pressure groups struggling to create public concern about a social problem. 4 Straightforwardly campaigning books would have exhorted their readers to take the issues seriously (Porritt 1984). 5 Now, with green issues high on the political and public agendas, it might be tempting to argue simply that the objective problem has finally forced itself into the public consciousness. 6 The social problems perspective prevent us from falling into that way of rewriting history; it leads us to ask how it is that envi-

ronmental issues have come to be seen as an objective social problem. 7 It also encourages us to examine processes internal to the green movement. 8 This perspective leads us to inquire how certain problems have come to the fore within the overall green case, how others have suffered relative neglect and why some organizations have prospered. 9 It also indicates some of the things which can be anticipated from the green movement. (Yearley 1992, 52)

Occasionally, to encode some of the elements of the broadest layer of the Theme as (U-)themes and simultaneously not to lose track of the prominent thematic Discourse Subject (DS),³ the authors may decide to employ also what we call submerged thematic progressions. In example (2), taken from a monograph, the author initially foregrounds⁴ the main DS, namely *Jung*. This is achieved, among other things, by establishing an identity chain interlacing mostly personal pronouns. In order to attain a greater interactiveness of this text, to disrupt a stylistic stereotype, etc., and simultaneously not to lose sight of the hitherto foregrounded DS, the author encodes as a theme an element of the broadest layer of the Textual Theme (namely *we*). What is more, by employing the same ele-

3 »As discourse subject (DS) I treat anything – be it an object, a group or class of them, a quality, state, process, action, circumstance, event, episode, and the like – that the speaker has in mind when applying a nominating (or deictic) unit in the process of text production in order to introduce/present/mention/re-introduce/recall something.« (Daneš 1989, 24)

4 »Foregrounding« will be understood here essentially in line with the Prague linguistic tradition, particularly with Mukařovský (1932 [2000]). Mukařovský (1932 [2000], 226–227) argues that the purpose of foregrounding is »to attract the reader's (listener's) attention more closely to the subject matter expressed by the foregrounded means of expression.« In his view, »foregrounding is the opposite of automatization, that is, the deautomatization of an act; the more an act is automatized, the less it is consciously executed; the more it is foregrounded, the more conscious does it become«. (In the present study, however, rather than with »automatization«, we have contrasted the term with »backgrounding«.)

Apart from its intentionality and its contrast with the background, Mukařovský stresses »the consistency and systematic character of foregrounding« (1932 [2000], 227). Moreover, foregrounding also implies choice, as »a complete foregrounding of all the components is impossible« (227). Furthermore, foregrounding is related to hierarchy. »The component highest in the hierarchy becomes the dominant. All other components, foregrounded or not, as well as their interrelationships, are evaluated from the standpoint of the dominant. The dominant is that component of the work which sets in motion, and gives direction to, the relationships of all other components« (227).

The opposition foregrounding / backgrounding (automatization) has gained wide currency in linguistics and has been employed with varying interpretations in diverse contexts. It seems worthwhile to recall also Leech and Short (1981, 48) who distinguish between qualitative and quantitative foregrounding. Among others they maintain that »the quantitative foregrounding [...] (adapted by R.P.) of a prominent pattern of choices within the code itself shades into the qualitative foregrounding [...] (adapted by R.P.) which changes the code itself« (ibid., 139).

ment in several succeeding utterances (3–5), the author establishes an additional identity chain. Interestingly, this decision is matched by syntactic parallelism in utterances 3–5. However, the original identity chain pursued initially is not discontinued this way, but rather temporarily submerged (only to resurface again in U-thematic functions later in the text).

- (2) 1 He took precisely the same approach to the belief systems of the East. 2 Here, too, he attempted to set on one side all metaphysical claims, treating them with agnostic indifference, and concentrating his attention on their psychological nature and significance. 3 We saw earlier that in dealing with the concept of karma, for example, he was careful to avoid any presumption concerning the doctrine of rebirth, treating it instead as an expression of the collective unconscious, a notion for which he claimed nothing but empiricist credentials. 4 We saw too how, in his Commentary on The Tibetan Book of the Dead, he transformed the experiences of the dead soul in its passage from death to rebirth into psychological terms, and prefaced his introduction to The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation with the disclaimer that »Psychology [...] . treats all metaphysical claims and assertions as mental phenomena and regards them as statements about the mind and its structure« (Cwll.760). 5 And we saw in his discussion of the I Ching that he took a strictly agnostic attitude to its pronouncements, describing his approach as »psychological phenomenology«, and insisting that »nothing ›occult« is to be inferred. 6 »My position in these matters is pragmatic.« (Cwll.1000) [...].(Clarke 1994, 150)

3.2. The Central Layer of the Theme

So far we have been discussing the lowest layer of the Theme. The central layer of the visualized pyramid is foregrounded against the background of the broader communicative framework. Simultaneously, since it is constituted within the communicative framework, it is also conditioned and constrained by the latter.

In this study we shall conceive of the central layer of the Textual Theme as a complex and hierarchized semantic (cognitive) structure, in monological texts selected by the author. Naturally, like the broadest layer, it may, but need not, be expressed explicitly. In the latter case it stays in the background, being only inferred.

Moreover, even when it is encoded explicitly, it is never expressed in its entirety. Rather, from the cognitive structure the author deliberately selects elements to be thematized (encoded as utterance themes). It is usually some of its most conspicuous, prototypical elements that suggest it.

Conversely, many entities are not manifested by explicit exponents. Nevertheless, since more gets communicated than is virtually worded, even elements which are solely implied are by no means devoid of significance.

Since the Theme appears to be the semantic starting point of the communication, it is crucial for its coherence. However, since it may not be expressed entirely, its perception tends to be imperfect. As shown for instance by Tárnyiková (2002, 56), coherence is always graded and never complete. Similarly, Bublitz and Lenk (1999, 155) argue that coherence is always only partial, although »participants operate on a generally shared default assumption of coherence« (Bublitz, Lenk 1999, 154), and to achieve a coherent reception of texts, they tend to supply the missing links on the basis of their activation of the relevant portion of world knowledge. That is exactly why the authors' strategies as to which elements to choose, how and when to encode them as themes are so essential and may induce greater or lower degrees of coherence. It should be noted that the types of the author's choices may follow from a number of factors, such as the disposition of the Thematic area, the author's intention, the length of the text, the text-type and genre, the intended recipient, etc., only to name at least some of them.

However, the author's selection of elements from the complex semantic (cognitive) structure (and their thematization) represents simultaneously his/her strategic decision, which ›perspectives‹ the content in a particular way (perspective function). It betrays his/her particular ›angle of vision‹ in its own right, or the strategic starting point, among others, with regard to the recipient, which may lead to the foregrounding of certain elements at the expense of others (prospective function).

Such a strategic decision may be detected both globally, as well as at any moment of dynamically conceived discourse. In this connection, we may recall the well-known »Why that now to me?« by Sacks (cited in Coulthard 1977, 76).

Through these choices, the hearer is as if guided throughout the text in a particular way (see also Bublitz, Lenk 1999, 158). Furthermore, the choices (and their sequential arrangement) may be viewed as signals of the author's cooperativeness. Indeed, if they are felicitous, the reader will be able to recall the relevant cognitive structure. As Bublitz and Lenk (1997, 171) argue, »frames are normally activated by keywords«.

It should be noted that the assumption of cooperativeness holds even for monological texts. In this connection we may also recall Linell (1998, 267) who argues that given the collaborative framework, the author of monological texts »produces her topics and arguments with some sensitivity as to how a potential responder, a ›virtual addressee‹, may react«.

Despite these choices, the central layer of the Theme is nevertheless rather comprehensive. However, unambiguous delineation of this comprehensive se-

mantic (cognitive) structure is virtually impossible. Rather, we may conceive of it as a somewhat diffuse and complicated structure, involving a whole range of DSs.

From this it also follows that though more specific, and comparably more clearly delineated, this layer of the Theme is not homogeneous at all. Rather, we may assume that there are more essential (prototypical) and less essential (marginal) elements or discourse subjects composing it.

The degree of centrality, however, is a property ascribed to various DSs ultimately by the author. In other words, some items of the layer are brought intentionally into greater prominence than others.

In examples (3) and (4), numerous elements of the central layer are encoded as U-themes. These, however, are occasionally interspersed with elements of the broadest layer.

- (3) 1 First The Independent goes tabloid, now the Times follows suit, though both papers are still available in broadsheet form. 2 The Daily Telegraph and the Guardian may not far be behind. 3 What is behind this revolution? 4 There has been a decline in quality newspaper sales over the past couple of years, and publishers have increasingly felt that some sort of shake-up was necessary to revive the market. 5 The Independent was in a particular trough, with sales at less than half the level of the early Nineties, and __ needed to do something dramatic. 6 It has certainly succeeded. 7 Overall sales have gone up, and in some areas the paper's tabloid version is out-selling the broadsheet one. 8 The Times evidently felt it was in danger of missing out. 9 On Wednesday a tabloid edition was introduced in the Greater London area. (Spectator, 29/11/2003)
- (4) 1 The supervision of the court and matters arising before and after trial rests with the Clerk to the Justices, who must normally be a solicitor or barrister of at least five years' standing. 2 The Clerk, or a court clerk, is also available in court to give advice to the justices on a point of law, but he must not influence their decision. 3 The justices decide questions of fact without the assistance of a jury and also __ decide upon the appropriate sentence. 4 The accused person may be represented in court by either a barrister or a solicitor. (Marsh and Soulsby 1987, 30)

Further, an affinity should be pointed out between certain text-types or genres on the one hand, and typical configurations of the elements in the thematic (cognitive) structure on the other. For example, in narrative fiction the traditional major and very complex thematic constituents include the characters, the

plot and the setting. (It is perhaps needless to add that in verbal art, given its second-order semiosis, each thematic constituent becomes a special, second-order sign; for further, see, e.g., Červenka 1992, Hasan 1985.)

Conversely, from the reader's point of view, these affinities presumably explain the expectation-creating role of Themes. As Calfree and Curley (1984, 174) explain, a skillful reader employs schemata – »mental frameworks acquired through experience and instruction«.

Furthermore, of the conventionalized configurations of constituents in the thematic organization, in certain text types/genres some such constituents tend to be prototypically foregrounded, whereas others usually stay in the background. Moreover, foregrounding is a dynamic property, and therefore some constituents may be temporarily foregrounded only to yield to others.

3.3. The Narrowest Layer of the Theme

We have seen above that the author always selects to encode as U-themes various elements both from the broadest layer of Theme (communicative framework) and from the central layer (cognitive structure). However, there are cases when s/he remains rather focussed in his/her choices, and as a result, this consistency in choices assigns the item selected (and enacted as the main Thematic DS) extra prominence. Therefore, in the narrowest sense the content aspect of the Theme may be identified with some of the most salient elements of the Theme-and-content structure, or with its dominant entity, e.g., the subject of scrutiny in a scientific monograph or a protagonist in an autobiographical novel (though itself a second-order sign, see above). Such a foregrounded DS, constituting the top layer in the visualized pyramid, is referred to in Brown and Yule (1983, 137) as ›topic entity‹, in van Dijk (1981, 187) as ›major discourse referent‹ or in Tomlin et al. (1997, 89) as ›central referent‹.

However, Brown and Yule (1983, 138) argue that when delimiting the topic of an obituary, »one would hardly want to say that ›the topic‹ of an obituary was ›the man‹ referred to by the name at the top of the entry, except in speaking in some kind of shorthand. There are many aspects of ›the man‹, physical characteristics for instance, which would hardly be considered to be appropriate aspects for inclusion in an obituary. The ›topic‹ of an obituary might be more adequately characterized in some such terms as ›an appreciation of the noteworthy events and deeds in the life of X.« Still, it appears that the depiction of noteworthy events and deeds in the life of people constitutes some of the defining features of obituaries. Indeed, these do form part of the stock of shared knowledge, may be activated, among other things by the graphical layout and presumably also by the space they are regularly assigned in newspapers, etc. In other words, these

features are presupposed, expected, as they form part of our culture. In our understanding, then, they do form an integral part of the Theme, though by no means part of its narrowest layer. Against the background of the broader layers, however, there arises as a singular, unique feature, the foregrounded or dominant DS.

Therefore, it seems that the above economical depiction of Theme is, after all, possible when numerous parameters of the context of situation are activated to such an extent that the writer may afford such ›shorthand‹. For example, a writer of an obituary discusses the Theme with another specialist in the field. Similarly, when a hot scandal is the subject of discussion, the mere mention of the politician's name presumably drags behind it a whole network of connotations and activates such a huge amount of world knowledge that the shorthand is not only feasible, but, presumably, also natural.

It should be noted, however, that even if a particular discourse subject remains the centre of attention throughout the discourse (especially through rather principled choices), it is always foregrounded against the respective background (i. e., the broadest and the central layers), the dominant entity of which it is taken to represent, whatever the degree of such foregrounding. Even if the background remains only implied, cooperative participants in the communication act will activate the portions of world knowledge structures (frames, schemata, scenarios, etc.), pertaining to the dominant DS and relevant to it.

Examples (5) and (6) illustrate paragraphs in which the utterance themes foreground a single DS. Although the narrowest layer is not the only one featured, it is the most dominant one.

- (5) 1 **The mink** (bold in the original, R.P.) was widely introduced for fur in 1929 and __ immediately escaped to colonize ›wetlands‹ extensively but irregularly throughout Britain and north-eastern Ireland. 2 It is a serious predator of poultry, game-birds and fisheries and may locally exterminate ducks and waders. 3 Despite all counter-measures it is probably by now permanently established. (Norwich 1991, 32)
- (6) 1 The building's fantastical interiors were born of a marriage between art and commerce; __ crafted to excite the imagination, to invoke the muse and to help spin a few bucks. 2 They surround audiences with sweeping vistas, half-naked gods, goddesses, fauns and satyrs – a pantheon to charm theatregoers into forgiving the old patch of damp or peeling paintwork. (The Times, 5/1/2002)

4. Conclusion

Having reached the top layer, we may now recapitulate. To conclude, in the present treatment the content aspect of the Theme involves at least three hierarchized layers arranged to resemble a kind of a pyramid. The lowest and broadest layer, which is simultaneously the most diffuse of all, follows from the overall communicative framework. It corresponds to all the given elements of the speech event. The central layer embraces a number of hierarchized, closely interrelated and regularly co-occurring elements arranged as a cognitive structure, or a content frame. The third, the most restricted one of all, though also potentially available (at least) in (some) texts, embodies some of its most conspicuous or foregrounded elements, or else, its dominant DSs.

It seems that all texts apart from athematic ones exhibit at least the first two layers of Theme. Athematic ones appear to display only the broadest layer. The centrality of the narrower (content frame) layer, presumably leads Downing and Locke (1992, 224) to the delimitation of what they call ›Superordinate Topics‹ as cognitive schemata. Martin and Rose (2003, 181) identify them as ›frames of reference‹. The representation of this layer, however, may be backgrounded, whenever the choices from among its constituents are principled to such an extent that they lead to the unequivocal foregrounding of some of the conspicuous or dominant Thematic DS(s).

Presumably, the aforementioned tiers, among other things, suggest which elements constituting the complex Theme are typically foregrounded and which are not. It seems that each tier as such is incorporated in the immediately succeeding broader counterpart as its somewhat foregrounded constituent.

These layers in the delimitation of the Theme notwithstanding, we tend to think of the Theme as a complex cognitive entity which unites rather than separates, has an integrative force, lends sense to the selection and arrangement of hierarchically lower Themes, or even subsidiary Themes, motivating them. Thus, in this study, the Theme is seen as the most static, unifying element embodying the subject matter treated, or as ›what has been subjected to some description, analysis, scrutiny, narration‹, etc.

It should be remarked at this point that some Themes are more predisposed to somewhat narrow rendering (foregrounding the central motif, etc.), whereas others are more prone to connote broader treatments.

Despite that, even if largely the same Thematic area is selected on different occasions, texts/discourses still tend to differ, among other things, in what they feature at all, what they choose to presuppose, what they foreground, and on what they establish their continuity. In other words, the same Thematic area may be instantiated and ›perspectived‹ in radically differing ways.

At this point it is vital to recall again the concept of openness of texts (van

Peer). It is impossible and indeed undesirable to identify explicitly all the elements of the Thematic area. In authentic texts, it is usually only some conspicuous features that are foregrounded. In our understanding the outcome of the choices constitute presumably what Firbas (1995) calls the ›thematic layer‹ of the paragraph (text).

These considerations have a bearing on build-up patterns in texts, as paragraphs and various higher text units differ considerably among other things in the type of layers of the Theme they feature in their utterance themes. When dealing with paragraphs, paragraph groups or even larger units of texts, it appears significant to explore whether solely elements of a single layer of the Theme are thematized or not, and which layer(s) they come from. If entities of more layers are encoded as utterance themes, it is interesting to investigate which layer is dominant and which is featured only marginally. Just as important is to discover what the mutual proportions of elements drawn from different layers are like, and conversely, which layers are only implied and why. Indeed, paragraphs foregrounding different layers appear to follow different build-up patterns.

Abbreviations and Symbols:

DS – Discourse Subject
 FSP – Functional Sentence Perspective
 R.P. – Renata Pípalová
 Theme – Textual Theme
 theme – theme in the theory of FSP
 U-theme – utterance theme

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IV Structures and Meaning

Why We Read What We Think We Are Reading: On Some Aspects of Resolving Ambiguity

This chapter looks at structurally motivated ambiguities in language and the processes involved in coping with them. It poses questions such as to what extent ambiguities are detected, which factors render one interpretation easier to arrive at than another, and, indeed, whether they always have to be resolved or whether ambiguity in language communication is a reflection of ambiguous reality and therefore something we are prepared to live with. It does not attempt to present a comprehensive overview or classification of the phenomenon, but rather to examine ambiguity in a variety of perspectives, some of them exceeding the limits of linguistics.

The treatment of ambiguity as a linguistic phenomenon varies enormously among linguists, as well as among linguistically untrained language users; some argue that ambiguity is essentially ubiquitous, others are convinced that true ambiguity is virtually nonexistent. A look into the Conceptual Index of *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (Huddleston et al. 2002, 1804) reveals references to ambiguity on as many as 160 pages, i. e. on almost ten per cent of the pages in the whole volume. This alone suggests that ambiguity is a frequent, and therefore potentially also important, phenomenon in English. On the other hand, those who oppose this view claim that the actual instances of communication failing as a result of unresolved ambiguity are extremely rare, which means that in a given context, one of the potential meanings is effectively excluded.

Emphasising the frequency of ambiguous structures on the one hand, and the scarcity of unresolved ambiguities on the other, blurs the fact that the two approaches are not necessarily contradictory: instances of potential ambiguity do occur frequently in English, but typically go unnoticed because only one of the interpretations jumps to mind naturally. Ambiguity is rarely intentional on the speaker's or writer's part. In other words, it is a »perception« rather than a »production« phenomenon, arising at the perceiver's side of the communication. This explains why looking for instances of ambiguous structures is so difficult in authentic texts; once a structure is interpreted in a manner which fits

into the context of the preceding communication, there is no need to re-examine it and look for additional interpretations. As a result, the ambiguous character of a syntactic structure is much more easily identified out of context, when, in order to understand, the interpreter has to supply different hypothetical contexts and test each of them in turn for compatibility with the resulting meaning of the structure.

In the rare cases when ambiguity is intentional (as in puns), the desired meaning is perceived against the background of the undesired one, creating a tension without which the pun would lose its humorous effect and would be perceived merely as an instance of inappropriate language use; this means that for a pun to work, the duality of the meaning must be discovered by the interpreter.

While the communication problems resulting from ambiguous structures may be negligible, it is easy to see why ambiguity gets a seemingly disproportionate amount of attention among linguists: if language is seen as a system, the fact that one sentence (one superficially identical surface chain of lexical items) may be assigned two different syntactic structures and hence two different semantic interpretations must, in principle, be perceived as a serious systemic shortcoming. This remains true even though phenomena similar to ambiguity are common on levels of the language system lower than that of the sentence, e. g. homonymy of lexical and grammatical elements, or homophonous items on the phonological level.

Even though ambiguity is associated with the level of the sentence, i. e. »a field of relations that can be interpreted in more than one way« (Dušková 1999, 199), in practice it is sometimes difficult to distinguish structural ambiguity from lexically motivated alternative interpretations. A case in point is the predicate verb. Alternative interpretations of a sentence containing a nonverbal homonymous lexical element in a given syntactic role (e. g. that of the subject, object, etc.) typically leave the overall syntactic structure of the sentence unaffected as long as the semantics of the element in both meanings are compatible with the syntactic role in question. In such cases the duality of the meaning is motivated lexically. On the other hand, when the homonymy/polysemy is the property of the predicate verb, the different uses of the verb assign different semantic roles to its complements, and when the respective interpretations of the verb differ in valency, they change the overall syntactic structure of the sentence, assigning the complements different syntactic roles. As a result, the boundary between a lexically and syntactically motivated ambiguity brought about by the predicate verb is much less clear-cut, as becomes clear from the following examples.

(1) Call me John. (Dušková 1988, 511)

The nominal complements of the verb *call* are interpreted either as Oi and Od, or Od and Co, respectively, marking the difference between a di-transitive and complex-transitive predicate verb. It is to be noted that the ambiguity is only possible if both of the complementing elements are formally and semantically compatible with their potential syntactic roles, i. e. that they are nominal and personal in the above example; while the Co may be adjectival, the Od cannot, cf. *Don't call me crazy*.

More commonly, the syntactic structure of the sentence remains identical in both alternative interpretations, but the semantics of the constituents change.

(2) I had a bath. (Huddleston et al. 2002, 291)

(3) I had a shave. (ibid.)

(4) I had a haircut / wash. (a modification of (3))

The different interpretations of (2) rest on the distinction between the stative and dynamic uses of the verb *have* (or between fully lexical and delexicalised uses of *have*), indicating possession of a material object (a bath) in the former case, and a process of bathing in a bath in the latter. Obviously, although the actual choice of the interpretation depends on the context, the latter is inherently more natural and probably also more frequent. Less conspicuously, example (3) manifests a distinction in the semantic role of the subject alone, either as the agent or the initiator, while the object has to be interpreted semantically as a process. The different variants of example (4) demonstrate how the interpretation depends on pragmatic factors: whereas in (3) it is equally possible, at least theoretically, for a person to do the shaving himself or have it done by someone else, *a haircut* normally suggests the role of the subject as the initiator, while *a wash* points to that of the agent. It is not impossible in (4) to imagine a reversal of the semantic roles of the subject, but if the less likely interpretation was the intended one, the speaker/writer, facing the risk of being misunderstood, would probably resort to an unambiguous structural option. Interestingly, (4) does not seem to allow an interpretation where the subject is the patient of haircutting (as in the case of a reluctant teenager growing long hair on purpose), whereas in *I had my hair cut* it is a possible option.

The semantic role of the subject is the key to distinguishing the meanings of a potentially ambiguous structure in the following example:

(5) She photographs well. (Dušková 1988, 257)

The animate, personal character of the subject naturally suggests its semantic role as the agent of photographing; since the statement is of a general kind, the syntactic object may be ellipted and the meaning corresponds to *She is a good photographer*. On the other hand, in a different context the syntactic subject may semantically become the object of photographing, which yields a mediopassive interpretation roughly equivalent to *It is easy to photograph her/ She is easy to photograph*. The importance of the semantic characteristics of clause constituents for determining the meaning becomes clear from the following, formally analogical example:

(6) Flowers photograph well. (a modification of (5))

Owing to its inanimate nature, the subject can only be thought of as the semantic object, and the structure is therefore unambiguous. Consequently, ambiguity does not arise where the semantic character of the constituents does not allow variable interpretation of their semantic roles.

Where the clause constituent structure does not change between the two interpretations, the distinction may depend on the semantic type of the copular predication.

(7) His first proposal was a joke. (Huddleston et al. 2002, 266)

(8) What he gave her was a worthless piece of jewellery. (ibid., 267)

In example (7) the subject complement either gives an evaluation of the proposal (i.e., *The proposal was laughable*) or specifies what the proposal was (*The proposal was to use a joke*). An analogical difference between the two meanings of (8) may be described as that between a nominal relative clause (or a fused relative in Huddleston's terminology) and a pseudo-cleft sentence, respectively.

Ambiguity often arises from uncertainty concerning the scope of an element understood in a broad sense of the word, i.e. the exact part of sentence within which such an element operates, which it modifies, is related to, etc. Issues of scope are often associated with negation.

(9) He didn't go to New York for two weeks. (ibid., 706)

(10) I'm not going because Sue will be there. (ibid., 732)

In one interpretation, the negation has a scope over the main clause predicate, not affecting the adverbial. The meanings may best be demonstrated by shifting the adverbial into the initial position, i.e. before the negation and therefore outside its scope, as in *For two weeks he didn't go to New York*. On the other hand,

the negative scope may extend over the adverbial, leaving the main clause predicate unaffected, as in *He DID go to New York, but NOT for two weeks* or *I AM going there but NOT because Sue will be there*.

(11) They predicted no rain. (Huddleston et al. 2002, 815)

Similarly, in the above example the negation is either of the clausal type or is limited to the object alone. Disambiguation is achieved by expanding the object into a dependent clause: *They didn't predict that there would be any rain* or *They predicted that there would be no rain*.

A similar mechanism operates in example (12), where it is unclear whether the adverbial *yesterday* is part of the matrix or the subordinate clause. For ambiguity to arise, the tense of both the matrix and the subordinate clause must be semantically compatible with the meaning of the adverbial:

(12) He told me you wanted it yesterday. (ibid., 781)

While moving the adverbial in (12) into the initial position unambiguously assigns it to the matrix clause (*Yesterday he told me you wanted it*), the focusing adverb *only* in the following example does not reliably identify the focus in writing when in the *not*-position.

(13) John could only see his wife from the doorway. (Quirk et al. 1985, 605)

Any of the clause elements following *only* may get the focus, and even the subject *John* is not excluded. The identification is unambiguous when *only* immediately precedes the focal element. Arguably, the ambiguity is resolved in spoken language by placing the intonation nucleus on the focused element, but in writing the identification of the focus rests on the context and the plausibility of the separate interpretations.

Another type of ambiguity may be thought of as a result of ellipsis or of insufficient temporal specification of events.

(14) The Examiners' Meeting finished before the Selection Committee Meeting.
(Huddleston et al. 2002, 697)

The two respective interpretations are best demonstrated by expanding the event into a clausal form: *The Examiners' Meeting finished before the Selection Committee Meeting finished/began*.

Within the compound and complex sentence, ambiguity may be a property of the respective syntactic structure; in the absence of an explicit subordinator, the

last of the clauses in the following example may be understood as coordinated with the matrix clause *I know* or with the subordinate object clause *that he's cheating*.

- (15) I know (that) he's cheating and I can't do anything about it. (Quirk et al. 1985, 1043)

In addition, ambiguity may arise in subordinate clauses allowing two interpretations formally classified as separate clause types, e.g. a dependent interrogative object clause and an adverbial clause of condition, or an object and a temporal clause, respectively, as in the following examples.

- (16) Let me know if you need any help. (Huddleston et al. 2002, 975)
 (17) Let me know when you need help. (a modification of (16))

Homonymous conjunctions are by no means exceptional and the range of meanings is not necessarily restricted to two: for instance, the conjunction *while* may be used, in addition to its essential temporal meaning, to convey the meaning of concession and contrast. However, it is to be noted that while some of the interpretations are sharply divided semantically from each other, others are much less so, and are best understood as creating a smooth transition between the two respective categories of clauses. Indeed, certain types of adverbial clauses display a kind of inherent semantic affinity. An example of this kind may be conditional and temporal clauses with future orientation, which essentially manifest a difference in the degree of likelihood of the event presented in the subordinate clause. Unsurprisingly, when *as long as* is used as either a temporal or conditional conjunction, the semantic difference may be negligible in some contexts. Similarly, the temporal and concessive uses of *while* seem to be much more clearly outlined than the concessive and contrastive ones, as in the following hypothetical example.

- (18) I always grumble while my wife never complains about anything.

When the sentence is understood as describing characteristic features of the two persons in question, the subordinate clause is purely contrastive. On the other hand, when the idea is that *my wife would have every right to complain about my grumbling, but doesn't do so*, the interpretation becomes concessive.

When a particular structure is identified as ambiguous, attempts are made by the interpreter to account for the semantic difference in lexical, syntactic or some other linguistic terms. Since the tools used in the description of language necessarily affect the manner in which reality is understood and interpreted,

forcing the interpreter to employ a particular set of categories and a particular angle of view, paradoxically, a structure may sometimes be assigned different syntactic interpretations even when the semantic difference is tiny.

(19) He found a video for the kids to watch. (Huddleston et al. 2002, 1067)

(20) He got it for the kids to watch. (ibid., 1067)

(21) He got a video for the kids to watch. (ibid., 1067)

In Huddleston's account the infinitive clause in (19) is relative because the verb *find* does not allow a purposive interpretation, in (20) the pronoun *it* cannot be postmodified by a relative clause, hence the infinitive clause must be a purpose adjunct, whereas (21) is ambiguous, permitting both interpretations. However, Huddleston is quick to add »that there is little effective difference in meaning between them« (2002, 1068).

This line of thought may run even deeper than this: in (19) it is difficult to imagine the event of somebody finding a video *that the kids could watch* (i. e. relative interpretation) without having in mind the children watching it. In other words, the finding of a video may be interpreted as the result of looking for one, or, at least, as a realisation of coming across one, of the need of one for the kids to watch. This suggests that the concept of purpose associated with a deliberate act is always present, albeit at different levels of implicitness.

The subject in (20) may be interpreted semantically either as agent, which suggests deliberateness and hence purpose, or as a recipient, in which case the deliberateness is not necessarily on the part of the subject, but on the implied donor's part.

Interestingly a modification of (21) produces an effect similar to those found in (20).

(22) He got the video for the kids to watch.

If the identity of the video is already established, i. e., if the definite article is anaphoric, then the information presented by *for the kids to watch* cannot be thought of as a criterion of suitability and, consequently, of choice of one rather than another video (which would correspond to the relative interpretation), and the infinitive is therefore understood as an adjunct of purpose. However, in a different context, there may be two videos, one in good condition (i. e. *for the kids to watch*) and another in poor condition (*for the kids just to play with*). In such a case the infinitive may be used in its relative sense, but the purpose is still present at an underlying level, and the two formally distinct interpretations merge beyond a point where they can be isolated from each other.

Complicating matters further is the uncertain status of the preposition *for*. It can be regarded either as a constituent complementing the matrix clause predicate (*He got the video for the kids*) or the subject of the infinitive clause (*He got the video that the kids could watch / so that that the kids could watch it*), or it could fulfil both functions at the same time (*He got the video for the kids which they could watch / so that they could watch it*). If the preposition *for* complements the matrix clause predicate, it will typically be understood as the subject of the infinitive at the same time, yet it is not impossible to imagine that it might be restricted to the function of the postmodification of the noun *video*, while the subject of the infinitive is identical with that of the matrix clause, i. e. *he*: *He got the video (which had originally been meant for the kids) so that he might watch it*.

Admittedly, some of these interpretations are less likely than others, but none utterly impossible. Since structures allowing similarly variable interpretations are by no means exceptional in language, a question arises as to how the human mind can cope with this tremendous complexity of potential meanings while processing the language in real time. While there is clearly no simple answer, it is still possible to speculate on factors that may be significant in the process of resolving ambiguity.

Human perception and, consequently, the description of reality can never capture it in its entirety. On the one hand, there are physical and physiological limits to what we can see, hear, etc. However, even within those limits, it is still impossible to perceive, store and process all the information that is theoretically available through the senses, since even a seemingly simple relationship of two items of reality may be described in a variety of manners, depending on the angle of observation, the distance, etc. A number of phenomena perceived through the senses are of a continuous rather than discrete character, with smooth transitions from one state of things to another. Perception therefore has to be selective, taking into account only that fraction of information which is recognised as important. Further selection and restriction comes in the process of encoding this information into language: the number of linguistic units is limited, and although it seems that by combining units of different levels the scope of possibilities is enormously expanded (e. g. combining a relatively restricted number of phonemes or graphemes produces vast numbers of units of a higher order, i. e. lexical units, which in turn produce an even larger number of combinations within a limited set of syntactic structures, etc.), it is only possible to make the linguistic representation of reality progressively more and more accurate at the expense of processing ease: the more complex the conceptual content encoded, the longer and more complex the linguistic structure used to encode it. With the complexity of structure increasing past a certain point, the language cannot be processed in real time, losing its essential communicative function. Describing reality by means of language therefore involves segmenting a continuum into a

limited set of discrete categories, e. g. a continuum of semantic relationships into a limited set of syntactic structures.

As the limitations just described have been in operation since language communication began, they have moulded language into its present form and have taught language users how to compensate for incomplete information. One factor is that of predictability. What is communicated can be expected to an extent, because within a particular context some information is more logical than other information. In this respect, semantics has primacy over syntax. It was shown earlier in this chapter that the process of disambiguation necessarily involved consideration of the semantic roles of clause constituents. Given a set of lexical items and a context, language users might often be able to reconstruct the intended meaning even in the absence of syntactic structure because they have expectations about what they are going to read or hear. The same applies to situations when the syntactic structure is imperfect or faulty (as is often the case of non-native speakers). As a result, where the meaning communicated is the one most naturally supplied by logic, the syntactic structure may be ambiguous or may even recede into the background without the danger of the communication failing. Analogical examples may be found at the phonological level among auxiliary words possessing a stressed (strong) and an unstressed (weak) form, respectively: e. g. the weak forms of *the* and the existential *there* are phonologically identical and are only distinguished by means of the grammatical context in which they occur. Here, as well as in some other examples, the principle of language economy is in operation, avoiding redundancy of expression as long as it does not make processing the information too difficult or even impossible.

The other factor is that a fine discrimination of meaning is often unnecessary, unless the ambiguous phrase or sentence constitutes a crucial point in communication. Underspecification and approximation is the norm in language communication, and it is only when a mismatch between the information content expected and that actually provided is perceived, or a gap in the information supplied is identified, that the linguistic form of the message is re-examined. Unsurprisingly, the structures used in texts where accuracy is important are much more complex than those used in casual conversation, which in turn means that they require more processing effort, both at the producing and the receiving end of the communication.

While this ambiguous or indeterminate nature of some language structures may seem unsettling, it may be somewhat comforting to find a possible analogy in other fields of exploration, possibly even those which epitomise accuracy and exactitude. There is a famous experiment in physics, known as the double-slit experiment, in which photons or electrons are shot onto a screen with two slits cut into it and a photographic plate set up behind the screen to record the photons coming through the slits (Greene 2004, 206). If only one slit is open, the

pattern created on the plate by the photons coming through is, predictably, in the form of a single band. When both slits are open, an interference pattern consisting of a series of concentric bands is created on the plate, as photons coming through the two respective slits interfere with one another. This experiment is used to demonstrate the dual character of photons (or other subatomic entities) as particles and waves at the same time. Astonishingly, the same interference pattern is created even if single photons at a time are shot repeatedly at the screen, suggesting the unimaginable: that a single photon must be coming through both slits simultaneously and interferes with itself. On the other hand, if a device is incorporated into the experiment to determine the slit through which the photon travelled, the interference pattern disappears as if the photon were forced externally to opt for one or the other slit.

This demonstration of the idiosyncrasies of quantum physics suggests that processes at the subatomic level are governed by very different laws from those operating at the level of the macro-world, i. e., those we know from our everyday experience and those constituting the basis of »common sense«. Translated into reflections on language ambiguity, the duality of the photon reminds us of the potentially of different meanings encoded within a single language structure. And as the photon is forced by the very act of observation to choose only one of the possible trajectories, language is forced by the process of interpretation to yield only one of the meanings potentially contained in it. It is therefore to be expected that, in spite of not presenting a real communication problem, language ambiguity will remain a popular topic for linguistic study, since it points to the essential processes governing our use of language.

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Whims of Context in the Interpretation of Idiomatic Expressions

In the vein of the functional approach, a few modest thoughts will be offered on the role of context as this shows itself primarily on the interlocutor's part when decisions are to be made about the proper interpretation of idiomatic expressions. Of course, the role of context on the speaker's part will also be dealt with. These and other issues are very often taken for granted; they deserve a (psycho-)linguistic analysis, though.

The citations in (1) illustrate cases which all English speakers will regard as non-literal in meaning. They are true idiomatic expressions, which do not have any reasonable literal counterparts:

(1) white lie; shoot the breeze; cry stinking fish; screamblood murder ...

On the other hand, the following phrases will undoubtedly be read literally:

(2) abominable lie; shoot a bird; eat stinking fish; commit a murder ...

And, finally, the examples in (3) will have both literal and figurative interpretations:

(3) small fish; play with fire; lose one's marbles ...

These, evidently ambiguous as they are, cause difficulties. There are far too many in English, and new parallel figurative meanings can appear under certain favourable conditions, as has always been the case throughout history. Etymological studies will shed some light on the process, yet not in all cases. Sometimes the figures by which new, idiomatic meanings come into existence are no longer transparent enough. This is another story, though. At this point we ask the question of whether there is a criterion which presently keeps the literal and the figurative meanings apart; in other words, what is it that informs the interlocutor about one, or the other interpretation?

One of the crucial concepts that we need to elucidate in order to understand the process of interpretation is ›predictability‹. Following (and paraphrasing) the definition offered by Štekauer (2005), we have in mind the degree of probability that a particular meaning of an expression encountered for the first time by the interlocutor will be interpreted in preference to other possible meanings. The definition must be extended, though -- also because we would like to know more about the very process of comprehending, namely, about that ›degree‹ (as mentioned in the definition) and about that ›preferred‹ meaning. Hence we take predictability as existing on two interconnected levels. On one level the interlocutor analyzes the internal structure of the expression, whose components constitute its total meaning. This computation is quite often difficult to describe, yet in any case it is based on the process of the cumulative association of the semantic roots of the respective components; then, on the receiver's part the process presupposes decipherment of metonymies, metaphors, even the so-called underlying metaphors involved. At this point one important fact should be mentioned: the so-called Decomposition Hypothesis, which is one of the theories to describe ways of arriving at the proper interpretation of meaning¹, assumes that idiomatic expressions are semantically empty and therefore their figurative meanings must be obtained by accessing idiomatic meanings of the components. Hence it follows that what flashes first into the interlocutor's mind must be the figurative meaning of the whole expression; and only after this figurative interpretation proves inadequate, the literal interpretation will be preferred. Native speakers DO start from a possible, potential figurative reading. Here is what one of our respondents said about the way in which she understood the following sentence:

(4) They will call to see if the coast is clear today for the trip.

»In the end I prefer the meaning ›the skies are sunny‹, but, actually, my first thought was ›no one was watching them to pursue them‹.« (Here it is fairly easy to guess what finally made her opt in for the literal meaning: it is the word *trip*, referred to as ›key‹, which »contextually« upset the accumulated figurative interpretation.)

In fact, example (4) serves well to comment upon the other level of our extended, broader definition of predictability. There must be a device, in the interlocutor's mind, which decides on the proper choice. In other words, there is something that finally sets one or the other interpretation apart. Let's consider the following examples:

1 For certain reasons (explained in Kavka 2003) we prefer this hypothesis to the Lexical Representation Hypothesis and Configuration Hypothesis.

- (5) a. He keeps all kinds of small fish, but the most precious one is a red herring.
 b. He is just a small fish, but always a master in misleading us with a red herring whenever we try to solve problems.
- (6) a. The policeman twisted his arm and made him lie on the floor.
 b. I've had enough, thank you. But if you twist my arm I wouldn't mind having some more salad.

Undoubtedly, the meanings of (a) utterances will be read literally, those in (b) figuratively.²

Although we deal with the interlocutor's position after all, it is worthy of note that here both parties, the speaker and the receiver, will interpret the respective meanings alike. We tend to claim, and quite rightly, that this is owing to the shared context, the factor which is responsible for just one and not the other intention on the speaker's part and the interpretation on the receiver's part. Let us have in mind, however, that the construction of meaning and the interpretation of meaning are nothing like a two-way road: thus it may happen that the verbal context does not prove to be as omnipotent a factor as is commonly believed. As pointed out above, interlocutors will normally begin by figurative interpretation, and this will be found to be active if the context is biased for that interpretation – it means: when the context is ›neutral‹, only verbal, and hence rather insufficient. Let us consider a few examples:

- (7) Both sisters giggled, shooting the breeze the whole evening.
 (8) I'm tired; I think I'll hit the hay.
 (9) And, in the end, they decided to bury the hatchet.
 (10) I feel like painting the town red.
 (11) Can you carry a torch for Mary?

From the speaker's point of view, however, not all literal readings are as absurd as ›shooting the breeze‹ or ›hitting the hay‹, or at least as peculiar as ›painting the town red‹ (perhaps by a magician in a fairy-tale)! There indeed are cases of obvious ambiguities, and these must be ironed out in some way in order not to hinder communication. The following example will epitomize the issue:

- (12) He must have lost his marbles, as he began shouting.

2 Needless to say that the interlocutor must be ignorant of the fact that there is no such species of fish as a ›red herring‹.

Did he lose those small balls that boys play with, or did he go mad? It is true that the verbal context, in the original view of its concept, will not help much. Namely, it does not help much if we understand it as something that defines the meaning and function of the expression by making the text cohesive through such forms as ellipsis, pronouns, particles, conjunctions, and similar. Luckily enough, this typically occurs not only within the given utterance but also in preceding and following ones. Hence we can stay within the domain of the co-text concept and replace the idiomatic expression with an appropriate simplex, e.g., *I feel like celebrating...*; *He must have gone mad...* It is true, however, that such a solution is not always appropriate, for many a reason, which we will discuss in the other part of the present chapter.

Luckily enough, in everyday speech the situation is not as bad as that. Ambiguities that might bring about problems in communication will mostly pass unnoticed since both parties handle the context below the level of consciousness. This sounds optimistic, of course, but here the context-concept is extended. Namely, there are also relevant features of the actual situation in which the utterance is pronounced and these add considerably to the meaning. In fact, these are features that we take into account when dealing with functional styles and which bear upon the issue of text-coherence. Here we speak of context of situation, or co-situation, which represents, at least for some of us, the entire cultural background, including of course the respective communities' knowledge of the external world. In other words, the concept of context encompasses both verbal and situational context. Then, as a complex phenomenon, it is believed to represent a cline owing to the significance of its co-situational component, overlapping with the co-textual component.

What has been maintained is in line with Lyon's (1983) opinion claiming that the figurative interpretation has its logical grounds not in semantic anomaly but rather in contextual improbability. It must be stressed again that the predictability for the expression to be read figuratively will depend largely on the co-situational component. It is true that sometimes the process of »leveling out« contextual information is what has to be solved first, and it is often time-consuming, too. Let us illustrate these facts by the following utterance, which reflects two or even three situations.

(13) It took me a long time before I got the picture.

(i) I am sitting in my friend's room admiring one of the pictures squeezed on the wall. I know that he was trying to buy the picture from a lady who did not seem to be willing to sell it at first. Now, at my approving sight, he says: »Well, it took me a really long time before I got the picture.«

(ii) My friend is telling me about an unexpected appointment with his boss. I

understand that he was offered a gorgeous career, about which he had not even dreamt before. No wonder he comments upon the experience saying: »It took me long before I got the picture.«

It is obvious enough that the interpretation of the expression ›get the picture‹ will be literal in situation (i), and figurative in situation (ii), namely, in the sense ›come to understand‹. Nevertheless, we can imagine yet one more situation, when the expected input comes only after the expression ›get the picture‹ has been uttered. (To a certain extent, allowing for some inaccuracy, we could speak of introducing the rhematic part of the discourse first.)

(iii) My friend remains silent, evidently wishing to change the subject. Then, all of a sudden, he says: »Well, it took me really long before I got the picture.« And after a moment's hesitation he goes on telling a story about buying a picture, as in situation (i), or, alternatively, on his meeting the boss, as in situation (ii). However, the question is what in fact crosses my mind when I hear his first sentence. Of course, I can react in a fairly obliging way, saying »Yes?« in a rising intonation, for instance, but what am I actually thinking of? Is it anything like ›Which one [i.e. picture]‹, or rather ›What happened that you didn't understand?«

Retrospective judgements expressed openly by native speakers showed that the very first thought to have crossed their mind on hearing the sentence embedded in situation (iii) was ›He could not understand at first‹. Thus the aforementioned hypothesis is again proved right, namely, predictability guesses begin by figurative reading. Yet there is one important point to be stressed in this »context«.

As follows from the preceding discussion, and was mentioned explicitly, too, although the speaker is involved in the same way of processing we could only hardly dare to maintain that the interlocutor's way is exactly the very reverse path (cf. Aitchison 1996). Suffice it to consider one of the simplest situations: pragmatically speaking, the interlocutor can react in a different way to what the speaker actually intended to say. Thus even though the context may seem to support the figurative reading of the given expression on the interlocutor's part, what the speaker has in mind, deliberately, is its literal interpretation. Our example of situation (iii) offers a good illustration of this point. Namely, what flashes into my mind first is the meaning, ›my friend experienced something that he could not understand‹; but he has been thinking of the picture now hung on the wall behind us, the one he told me about some time ago. As a matter of fact, my friend has in mind what corresponds to situation (i), and this narrows down the possibilities of interpretation.

There are quite a few other issues when context is called upon in order to solve problems, for example: problems of style, or synonymity and interchangeability of idiomatic expressions.

Here decisions to be made are on the speaker's part. The role of context will be understood in such a way that its co-textual component seems to prevail when the speaker selects from among synonymous expressions.

We have touched upon the possibility of replacing an idiomatic expression with a simplex in order to bias the interpretation; e. g., while ›paint the town red‹ may be ambiguous, ›celebrate‹ is only literal. Of course, this simplex does not require much of the context to be read literally, but we feel that the utterance is lacking in imagination and expressivity. Let us note another example, randomly selected yet more illustrative. One simplex, namely ›get angry‹, is matched by several idiomatic expressions:

(14) get angry	<>	blow off steam	blow off one's top	lose one's cool
		let off steam	blow one's stack	hit the ceiling
				bite one's head off
				flip one's lid (etc.)

Reviewing the sets (which are very probably incomplete) we face a handful of issues to be discussed. In our opinion, three of them are worthy of note since they relate to the present topic. (1) Are idiomatic expressions used because they have different meanings from simplexes? (2) Do the substitutions such as ›blow off‹ and ›let off [steam]‹ have any difference in meaning? Or are they just mere variations, alternatives, due to the varieties of English (something like ›trousers‹ and ›pants‹)? And (3): Are all, or at least some of the expressions in (14) equal in meaning, namely, are they synonymous?

Gibbs and Nayak (1990, 1991, 1995) presented witty illustrations to show that the proper selection of idiomatic expressions out of those available depended largely on the verbal context, which is to be understood as a choice controlled by root metaphors as these underlie key words of the story. Having been inspired by their illustrations we now dare to offer one of our own:

- (15) I didn't mind her driving my Peugeot. But when she returned once on foot saying the car had been left somewhere in a ditch, I *got angry?: got hot under the collar?: hit the ceiling?*

As all of us will agree, the phrase ›I got angry‹ is too weak in expressivity, and it would probably only be used if the speaker were unable to retrieve from his mental lexicon anything more appropriate, namely, an expression to reflect adequately his state of mind once he learnt the news. Nevertheless, let us imagine that in our speaker's mental lexicon there are two idiomatic expressions available, e. g., ›get hot under the collar‹, and ›hit the ceiling‹. We could, of course, consider the preference for one or the other expression in terms of the speaker's personality-type. However, trying to apply idiomaticity concepts, we would like

to work with an image of »pressure« figuratively (metaphorically) underlying the situation: this pressure can be viewed as being accumulated on the speaker's part as long as he listens to the story of the accident. Psychologically, through uttering one or the other idiom the speaker tells a lot about his momentary mood, being in the heat of passion; metaphorically, the pressure in the speaker's mind can only build up piecemeal, or it reaches its maximum and must be released. Obviously, »hit the ceiling« will more likely be used to match the latter situation.

The text in (15) is too short, and it does not contain any lexical means to point to the underlying metaphors which are expected to opt in for one or the other idiomatic expression at the end of the story. The story can, of course, be extended and appropriate lexical means used in order to express the significance of the verbal component of context. Let us consider yet another citation, a fairly cohesive text (as a paraphrase of Gibbs and Nayak, *ibid.*):

- (16) I'm always tense when I'm thinking about compounds as idiomatic expressions. It makes me fume when I can't grasp the idea, and the pressure builds up when I find myself unable to lock it up into proper words. Also I get hot under the collar whenever I come to know that an ingenious thought of mine is not an original one. And when our secretary rings me up reminding me that I forgot to submit an Abstract of my contribution, I BLOW OFF STEAM.

The text abounds in such explicit lexical units that aim at the idiomatic phrase »I blow off steam« as probably the best out of the list (14). The underlined expressions match idiomatically the image of »pressure of steam«. This text, however, is of too creative a character, unlike the more natural text (15); but in spite of that it is illustrative enough from the didactic point of view, showing the role of verbal context in decision-making on the speaker's part.

In place of a conclusion, the following notes can be submitted to a further, more detailed study:

We only tried to offer some views on two prototypical cases: one showing the process of biasing interpretation on the interlocutor's part, and the other illustrating the ways of selecting proper idiomatic expressions on the speaker's part. If we claim that ambiguities in interpretation, either literal or figurative, are solved owing to »omnipotent« context, then this must be regarded as a fairly complex phenomenon, in which the primary role is played by its co-situational component. This co-part is the one that shows varying degrees of its content, yet in any case it overlaps, more or less, with the co-text component, i.e. verbal component. (The degrees vary according to the stages of language evolution,

viewed diachronically, provided we accept the idea suggesting that co-situation is the entire cultural background.) Also worthy of note is the finding that on the receiver's part the co-situational component may sometimes be time-consuming before an agreement with the speaker is achieved on either literal or figurative interpretation. As a matter of fact, the co-situational component will vary in its degrees more on the interlocutor's part rather than on the speaker's part.

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Neologisms of the ›On-the-pattern-of‹ Type: Analogy as a Word-formation Process?

The analogy so pleased him that he often used it in conversation with friends, and his formulation grew increasingly precise and elegant.

Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*

1. Starting-points

Analogy has been of profound interest to scholars since classical antiquity. In language study it is a well-known and universally acknowledged factor in shaping language and its development, which has been examined from both a diachronic and synchronic perspective. It is traditionally associated with change in morphonology, morphology, and syntax (where analogy forms the basis of rule reinterpretation). It has been discussed in the pre-structuralist era, as in Junggrammatiker Paul's *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* (1880, chapter 5), by structuralists – de Saussure devotes two chapters to it in the third part on diachronic linguistics of his *Cours* (1916), Trnka explores this subject in his paper *About Analogy in Structural Linguistics* (1936 [1982]) – as well as by generativists (Aronoff, Fudeman, 2004, 87–8). An oft-quoted account is provided by Hock (1986 [1991], 167–237). He distinguishes two main types of analogy (apart from analogy as a factor in sound change): analogical levelling (›paradigmatic‹ levelling), or the reduction or elimination of morphophonemic alternation within a morphological paradigm, and proportional analogy, in which a regularity is carried over to irregular forms according to the formula $A:A' = B:X$. He mentions three areas in which proportional analogy operates, morphology, orthography and word-formation, i.e. creation of neologisms (*xeroxing*), which is of primary importance to us here. According to Hock, proportional analogy may also combine with morphological reanalysis as in *Hamburger* where ›from Hamburg‹ was reanalyzed as ›from ham‹, thus making way for analogized forms such as *cheeseburger*, *turkey burger*.

While individual examples like *hamburger* > *cheeseburger* are clearly indicative of analogy at work, it is difficult to get a full idea of analogy at work on the basis of a few scattered instances. The present study makes use of the op-

portunity provided by electronic dictionaries to search through the etymology section of entry articles. It so happens that if an electronic dictionary such as the *COD* carefully and consistently enough describes the etymology of the head-words, a relatively large sample of what the compilers apparently consider analogized creations can be gathered.

Also there seems to be a certain disparity between this relatively large number of neologisms whose origin is ascribed to analogy and the fact that authors of standard descriptions of contemporary English word-formation, such as Bauer (1983) and Plag (2002), give only a passing mention to its role in vocabulary expansion in English. Therefore we decided to examine the copious electronic dictionary data to see whether it could throw up some new aspects of analogy and show some other patterns beyond the much quoted example of *cheeseburger* on the model of *hamburger*.

2. Data Sources and Reference Sample

The results of a full text search in electronic/online dictionaries for words whose origin involves analogy depend on how systematic the marking is. In the *OED Online* there are 858 hits for words whose etymologies include the term ›analogy‹. A cursory look shows however that not always does it apply to the actual etymology of the word in question. What is more, the compilers often use other words instead of and alongside the term analogy and so it is necessary to make a careful analysis to identify formulations referring to analogical formations.

Inasmuch as the study is of a preliminary nature, it seemed suitable to have a look at dictionaries with a more synchronic orientation than the *OED*, namely the *COD* and the *RHWUEL*. In the case of the *COD* full text search in the etymology block for the string *on the pattern of* (in several instances also *by analogy with, on (the) analogy with* or *on the model of*) yields close to 350 hits in both the *COD9* (1995) and the *COD10* (2001). Similarly one finds in the *RHWUEL* (1996) a total of 194 instances with *on the model of* etymology and 68 containing *by analogy with*.

Eventually, the choice went to the *COD9* list comprised of 344 items (see Appendix) of presumably analogized creations (i.e. regarded as such by the compilers). In the following text we also refer to several other examples taken from other sources. Needless to say that the *COD9* list represents only a tentative sample which is neither complete (for instance *cheeseburger* is missing in both the *COD9* and the *COD10* since the respective entries do not give etymology) nor reliable as it is bound to include a certain amount of dubious or incongruous cases. This is principally due to the fact that analogy represents, for various

reasons, a process still open to much debate and so establishing a correct etymology in such cases is not an easy matter.

3. Sample Analysis

Leaving aside the issue of the status of analogy among word-formation processes (WFPs), we searched the sample for recurrent patterns and ways whereby the etymologies of the sample items could be described. The preliminary picture which emerges is far more varied and complex than we expected. First and foremost, it appears that most instances in the sample can be related to standard WFPs and accordingly fall into several distinct groups of presumably analogical formations (with some additions from elsewhere). The resultant preliminary classification is as follows:

1. the **derivational** type: *implode* < *explode*, *introjection* < *projection*, *oldster* < *youngster*, *tactile* > *audile* (affixal formations by analogy);
2. the **compound** type: *airhead* < *bridgehead*, *mouse potato* < *couch potato*;
3. the (combining-form) **neoclassical compound** type: *democrat* < *aristocrat*, *astronaut* < *aeronaut*, *cacography* < *orthography*;
4. the **particle compound** type: (military) *build-down* < *build-up*; *hands-on* < *hands-off*;
5. the **conversion** type (often connected with alternation): *ascent* < *ascend* (based on *descent* < *descend*);
6. the **blending** type: *sordor* < *squalor*, *walkathon* < *marathon*; cf. Stein's ›layering‹ exemplified by *numerati*, *jazzerati* on the pattern of *literati*;
7. the **clipping** (abbreviation) type: *Nazi* < *Sozi(alist)*;
8. the **acronym** type: *SNOBOL* < *COBOL*, *H-hour* < *D-day*;
9. the **calque** type: **lexical**: *nonsuch* < Fr. *nonpareil*; *abreact* < Ger. *abreagieren*; **semantic**: *sack* (plunder – from Fr. *sac*, in the phrase *mettre à sac* ›put to sack‹, on the model of Ital. *fare il sacco*, *mettere a sacco*, which perhaps originally referred to filling a sack with plunder);
10. the **multiword formation** type: *perpetuum mobile* < *primum mobile*;
11. **other types** of analogized formations going beyond the above processes: **root creation**, involving a fanciful element not found elsewhere (*million*, *billion* > *jillion*, *zillion*); presumably analogical formation of **bound morphemes, affixes and combining-forms** (*-ose*, *yocto-*, *zepto-*).

It was somewhat surprising to find that for practically every type of WFP there is a parallel analogical formation. Surprising only because examples of analogized formations in the literature are chosen selectively and randomly; at least we have

not come across any attempt to give their whole range. From the above classification we may conclude that regardless of whether a WFP is considered morphological, highly systematic and rule-governed (derivation, compounding) or highly idiosyncratic and arbitrary (clipping, acronymy) each is accompanied by analogical coinages. To quote Szymanek (2005, 431), »[g]enerally speaking, regardless of the strength and productivity of a particular pattern, a new complex word may be created by analogy«.

3.1. Some Remarks on the Sample Features

The bulk of our sample comes from two registers – scientific/technical and colloquial/slang, with a marked preponderance of the former. This finding confirms a general tendency in word-formation that the process of conceptual production and exchange is particularly active and brisk in the scientific and professional communities on the one hand and in various interest groups thriving on fashionable trends on the other hand. This onomasiological need is particularly strong in nouns and adjectives which comprise the majority of the sample.

From the etymological point of view, the sample contains both native, foreign and hybrid creations. The items of the scientific/technical layer prevail, which accounts for the fact that a large number of the analogized creations is based on Latin and Greek lexical material. In several cases of this type, it is very difficult to decide whether a particular lexical item arose through analogy with another learned word by combination of borrowed segments on the English soil, or whether the word had been borrowed into English as a whole (e.g. *sorority* formed on the model of *fraternity*). (The latter possibility would exclude such items from the list of native analogized creations.) The dating of most items in our sample falls between the 17th and 20th centuries, with a few exceptions of undoubted Middle English origin.

On the whole, our analysis of the sample has revealed that in most cases analogy indeed played a crucial formative role and that its operation was rather more patterned than unpredictable. From a broader structural and typological perspective, this patterning by analogy in relatively recent English can be seen as part of its striving for a greater degree of transparency (regularity) in the structure of the word, presumably in response to its being inundated by lexical items of specialized meaning and opaque form. The isolated (or secreted) formatives are then free to be used in the lexicogenic process (if they are not a direct result of its operation: *yocto-*, *zepto-*).

3.2. A Case Example of Analogical Creation

As a case example we may use the formation *anklet*, meaning ›an ornament worn around the ankle‹ and first attested in English, according to the *OED*, as used by P. B. Shelley in 1819. It is described by lexicographers as patterned on *bracelet* as the model word. The analogy seems then to be of the immediate kind and motivated semantically: both *anklet* and *bracelet* refer to items of jewellery. The patterning, however, may be more deeply structured than meets the eye. Though immediate analogies tend to be also non-proportional, what we have here is a case where the relationships are of proportional nature and semantic motivation appears to be paired with a phonetic one. The process begins, as proportional analogy always does, with an isolation of the component parts. They can be decomposed, as is the case here, in an etymologically unorthodox way: the formative *-let* in the model word is isolated so that one diminutive suffix (*-et*) is superseded by another (*-let*). This ahistorical replacement is facilitated by the fact that there exist semantic parallels between Middle English nouns *bracel* and *brace* which allow the mistaken joining of the final base consonant to the suffix. Another potent factor to facilitate such morphological reanalysis is phonetic resemblance which often plays havoc with morphology in analogical creations (cf. distinct sound patterns in such formations as *aviculture*, *apiculture*, *arboriculture*, formed on the pattern of *agriculture*; *Mariolatry* on the pattern of *idolatry*). In the meantime, another proportional analogy seems to be at work in the lexical item that feeds the formation of *anklet* from the other direction: *ankle* appears to be decomposed into **ank-* and *-le* on the pattern of some such pair as *handle* and *hand* (i. e. *ankle* : *X* (= *ank*) = *handle* : *hand*).

4. Analogy – a Distinct Word-formation Process?

Before we attempt to formulate some general impressions from the sample analysis, it will be useful to review the predominant positions on analogy in literature. Authors seem to agree that analogy comes in two forms, as one-off formations modelled on a particular lexeme and cases when a single lexeme provides a pattern for a series of analogical formations. While they usually agree that the former are ›genuine‹ analogical formations, isolated, not accounted for by any kind of rule, unpredictable to some degree, the latter type poses certain problems. Thus Bauer (1983, 96) defines ›genuine‹ analogy as follows: »By an analogical formation will be meant a new formation clearly modelled on one already existing lexeme, and not giving rise to a productive series«, drawing on the distinction between productivity and analogy made by Thomson (1975, 347). At the same time he admits the possibility that »an analogical formation

will provide the impetus for a series of formations [...]« and resolves this awkward fact by claiming that generating a series of words is not the same as generalization: »If instances of word-formation arise by analogy then there is in principle no regularity involved, and each new word is produced without reference to generalizations provided by sets of other words with similar bases or the same affixes: a single existing word can provide a pattern, but there is no generalization« (Bauer 1983, 294).

Plag (2002, 37–38), on the other hand, recognizes that »[i]n such cases, the dividing line between analogical patterns and word-formation rules is hard to draw. In fact, if we look at rules we could even argue that analogical relations hold for words that are coined on the basis of rules« and he mentions Becker (1990) and Skousen (1995), who »have developed theories that abandon the concept of rule entirely and replace it by the notion of analogy. In other words, it is claimed that there are not morphological rules, but there are analogies across larger or smaller sets of words.« At the same time he provides counterarguments to such a position: »it is unclear how the systematic structural restrictions emerge that are characteristic of derivational processes« and »why certain analogies are often made while others are never made« (ibid.). He concludes by advocating to »stick to the traditional idea of word-formation rules and to the traditional idea of analogy as a local mechanism« or, as he puts it elsewhere (Plag 1999, 20), »analogical formations should be distinguished from instantiations of productive word formation rules«. Still, the dilemma remains and one is inclined to agree with Szymanek (2005, 431) that »it does not seem possible or appropriate to dissociate completely both concepts, i. e. analogy and (high) productivity«.

5. Analogy as Emerging from the Sample

In general terms, then, analogy found in our sample appears to be linked to meaning and operate in morphologically analyzable word-structures. We found it useful to modify the basic proportional analogy formula $A : A' = B : X$ for the purposes of word-formation to accommodate the internal structure constituents of A and B. The item A is seen as composed of constituents M1 and M2, and B is composed of constituents M1 and MX (or MX and M2), where M^1 stands for ›first or initial morpheme‹ and M^2 for ›second or final morpheme‹. The resultant formula is

$$A (M^1 M^2) = B (M^1 M^X \text{ or } M^X M^2)$$

where M^X stands for a morpheme substituting either morpheme M^1 or M^2 and the formula basically says that on the basis of the internal structure of a par-

ticular word A a new word B is formed by replacing one of the constituents with a similar morpheme/word-structure.

In most cases, analogy tends to be fostered by concomitant functional factors (semantic content). The substituting constituent (free or bound morpheme) appears to be semantically related to the substituted one by various kinds of sense relations such as opposition (*explode-implode, patriarch-matriarch*) or cohyponymy (*run-walk* in *walkathon – marathon*). Sometimes, however, the primary motivating impulse appears to be a formal one (most notably, identical phonetic sequence; cf. e.g. the formations in *-nik*).

As might be expected, the sample findings confirm the existence of analogy at two levels, **local analogy** (›the traditional idea of analogy as a local mechanism‹) and **extended analogy** providing a pattern for a series of formations. It has to be said that on the most general level all word-formation – whether rule-based (and predictable) or irregular (such as clipping) and one-off coinages – has some kind of analogy as its underlying principle. Analogy is the backbone of creativity, i. e. the native speaker's ability to extend the language system in a motivated but unpredictable (non-rule governed) way which may or may not subsequently become rule-governed, predictable and productive. Incidentally, it is not without interest that, as Lyons (1969, 36–8) says, »whereas the traditional grammarian regarded ›analogy‹ as the principle of regularity in language, the comparative philologist of the late nineteenth century tended to look upon it as one of the main factors which inhibited the ›regular‹ development of language« and concludes that »even the irregularities in language may originate from what were once regularities, however paradoxical this may seem.«

The fact that most, if not all, items in our sample can be referred to one type of standard WFP or another suggests that they do not represent a distinct, separate formal (structural) type. By the same token, they were not singled out by the COD authors by accident; there is something special about them which prevents their origin from being described in terms of a WFP. The appearance of all of them is in fact claimed to have been ›inspired‹ or ›motivated‹ by some other specific ›source‹ word, i. e. their formation was triggered by a concrete lexical item on which they are directly patterned. All this applies to both local and extended types of analogy. It leads us to the conclusion that analogy is indeed not a distinct formal word-formation type, but rather a motivated way of exploiting all kinds of word-formation processes, whether unpredictable or rule-governed, to fill some immediate need. Motivation here includes all three types of motivation, phonetic, morphological and semantic, as pointed out by Ullmann (1966). In this sense analogy superimposes different types of word-formation and freely uses them as a vehicle ›to say things which had not been said before« (Lyons 1969, 38).

A case in point is *ankylose* which COD9 explicitly describes as a back-for-

mation from *ankylosis*, on the pattern of *anastomose*, or *metonym* as a back-formation from *metonymy*, on the pattern of *synonym*, etc. It goes without saying that there is no clear-cut division between the two forms of analogy, local and extended: inevitably it will often be difficult to say whether a neologism came into being solely by exploiting the general pattern of a particular word-formation process (such as compounding) without reference to any previously existing word or whether it was formed directly by analogy with it. Again, this is reminiscent of Plag's note that »the dividing line between analogical patterns and word-formation rules is hard to draw« (Plag 2002, 37).

6. Features Characterising Analogical Formations in the Sample

The analogical formations in the sample display certain characteristics that make the presence of analogy notable and accordingly remarked on by the etymologists. They seem to apply particularly to instances of local analogy in which the operation of analogy is signalled by at least **four related features**, not commonly found with ›regular‹ cases of the respective word-formation processes.

The first one is (1) **irregularity** or unpredictability. The element *ank-* in *anklet* mentioned above is a case in point, despite all the structural proportionality that might perhaps be traced underneath. Analogized neologism occurs even when one or the other or both constituents of the complex source word are not regular, or do not appear to be word-forms, affixes or combining forms at all. For instance, although there is a distinct set comprising *million*, *billion*, *trillion*, *zillion*, no affix/combining form *-illion* has so far been recognized, and similarly neither *mi-* in *million* nor *z-* in *zillion* are morphemes either. They are treated as such due to (ad hoc) (2) **reanalysis**. In the case of *million*, it is reanalyzed as if composed of *-illion* affix/combining form; in the case of *doublet*, it is the part *-let* which is treated in a likewise manner, etc. Next, there is (3) a distinct **semantic link** between the trigger or pattern-providing word and the neologism (typically opposition, co-hyponymy, synonymy). This inevitably results in the final feature: neologisms produced ›on the pattern of‹ typically form (4) **lexical fields** of various types around the pattern word (cf. the field patterned on *agriculture* containing as many as 19 formations; see Table 1).

Table 1 Examples of analogy-based lexical fields

Trigger word	Agriculture	M1 -fly
Lexical field(s)	aeroculture, apiculture, aquaculture, aquiculture, arboriculture, aviculture, citriculture, floriculture, horticulture, mariculture, olericulture, pisciculture, sericulture, silviculture, stirpiculture, sylviculture, vermiculture, viniculture, viticulture	(habitat/place of origin) <i>house-, bar-, alder-, stone-, stable-, Spanish-, Hessian-;</i> (time of incidence) <i>May-, March-, harvest-;</i> (feeding source) <i>cheese-, dung-, flesh-, fruit-, meat-, flower, vinegar-;</i> (host) <i>deer-, horse-;</i> (colour) <i>butter-, green-, black-, white-;</i> (appearance) <i>crane-, scorpion-, saw-, spider-, soldier-;</i> (distinctive feature) <i>hover-, fire-, lantern-, warble-;</i> (behaviour) <i>gad-, cluster-, dragon-, rob-, etc.</i>

There is one other aspect which distinguishes local analogy from productive processes in the sample. Whereas the latter may not need any trigger word and operate mainly on morphological basis, local analogy yields formations closely linked to the trigger word (and together) within a lexical field by formal and functional similarities. The field is composed of two and more items and most typically based on semantic relationships of antonymy and co-hyponymy. The analogical creation in fact serves to fill the gap(s) in a lexical (sub)field opened up by the trigger word.

7. Conclusions

Although there is no doubt about the importance of analogy in lexical word-formation – indeed there is a theory recognising three ways in which speakers arrive at a word they are looking for: by rote (searching the mental lexicon for a memorized word), by rule (productive WFPs) and by analogy (Aronoff, Fudeman, 2004) – we are not aware of any in-depth study that would deal explicitly with the operation of analogy in the creation of new words.

The sample culled from the etymology blocks of the electronic *COD9* displays distinct distributional characteristics, stylistic and temporal, but more importantly the analysis of the sample has shown that the presumed analogical formations recall all the major word-formation processes, and accordingly can be assigned to several groups or types: the derivational type, the compound type, the conversion type, the blending type, etc., with a specific distribution. This close interrelation between analogy and WFPs argues for the view that analogical coinage is not an independent and separate process, but instead a motivated exploitation of all types of word-formation processes, whether rule-

governed or not. If true, then analogy should come under the heading of motivation, encompassing all three types of motivation.

Analogical formations in the sample display certain characteristic features, most of them well-known, that make the presence/operation of analogy notable (hence it is pointed out by the dictionary etymologists). These features include irregularity (unpredictability), reanalysis, close semantic link between the trigger word and the neologism, and lexical field membership.

To conclude, the sample analysis has confirmed the erratic nature of analogy which poses a serious methodological problem as analogical formations are likely to form a cline from idiosyncratic one-off creations to relatively open-ended series. On the other hand, through analogical change as recorded for us by lexicographers we learn something of the morphological segmentation and functional interpretation of the forms at the time when the change was taking place. By assessing its agency, we may hope to contribute a little towards our understanding of mechanisms that allow the native speaker of a language to form new lexical items in a synchronic ›grammar‹.

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Appendix

Reference COD9 sample of presumed analogical formations

actinide, adsorb, Africander, airhead, allergy, alumina, aluminium, ambivalence, ambivert, amylopsin, -ance, -ancy, -ane2, anglophone, anklet, ankylose, anticline, antipathetic, apiculture, apolune, apprentice, aquaculture, aquarium, arboriculture, arsine, ascent, astronaut, audile, auto-, average, aviculture, barquentine, barrister, baryta, beachhead, beatnik, beauteous, behaviour, benignant, biathlon, billionaire, bionic, bionomics, biopsy, bookmobile, boundary, bounteous, brazier2, Britishism, bumptious, cacography, Carolingian, casualty, catalyse, catalyst, centennial, -centric, cetane, chaotic, chordate/chordata, citron, clairaudience, cloudscape, cohesion, communitarian, computerate, concrescence, condolatory, coolant, cosmonaut, covalent, curvilinear, custodian, decelerate, deman, democrat, detoxicate, diarchy, dignitary, dimer, diplomacy, disclosure, discography, discovery, dissimilate, restraint, doomster, duologue, duopoly, duplet, ebony, egocentric, elasstomer, electrolyse, electrostatic, electrovalent, empathy, equalitarian, ergosterol, eventual, eventuate, exposure, extrovert, exurb, exurbia, factual, ferroelectric, finery1, fissiparous, floriculture, flotation, fluorescence, fruitarian, genetic, Glaswegian, goodbye, gradient, grandiloquent, graphicacy, grebo, handicraft, heft, heliport, heptahedron, heptarchy, heptathlon, Hibernicism, horticulture, humidior, hydrofoil, hydropathy, hyperosnic, iconoclasm, idiocy, implode, Indonesian, infix, inlier, interactive, introjection, iodoform, LaserVision, leaderene, levitate, literacy, lithia, locative, -loger, lorikeet, lowlight, maleficent, manufactory, Mariolatry, meristem, Messianic, metonym, metronymic, -metry, midi, midibus, millenium, misandry, monandry, monomial, morning, morpheme, motorcade, multinomial, mycelium, narcolepsy, necropsy, neoprene, neptunium, nom de plume, nonagon, nucleonics, numerate, nylon, nympholepsy, oceanarium, octo-roon, oldster, oligopoly, operatic, oracy, Orlon, -ose2, outro, pannikin, parenthetic, pellagra, penultimate, percept, perilune, perpetuum mobile, pessimism, petrification, phonon, phosphine, photon, pinocytosis, pisciculture, planetesimal, platitude, pleasurable, plication, -ploid, ploidy, plutonium, poetry, polynomial, potentiate, practice, preferential, privateer, proactive, proclitic, prosenchyma, prothalamium, providential, prudential, pulsar, puritan, pyrolyse, quadruplet, quadruplicity, quantum chromo-dynamics, quintuplet, quintuplicate, radionics, radon, raguly, recessive, reflate, reflation, repine, reportorial, resoluble, resorption, retortion, retractile, retrogress, retrogression, retroject, retrospect, rhombohedron, rudiment, salariat, sateen, saving, -scape, scarify2, Scillonian, sclerenchyma, secrecy, seductive, selvedge, sensor, septfoil, septillion, septuplet, sequential, seriatim, sexfoil, sextillion, sextuple, sextuplet, siderostat, signary, silica, silicon, simpleton, singlet, singleton, skewbald, SNOBOL, sonar, sorority, sousaphone, speciesism, spectacular, spokesman, squirearch, squirearchy, stabile, stator, statuesque, Sten gun, sthenic, straticulate, stratosphere, submissive, suitable, superordinate, surficial, surrebutter, sympathetic, synaesthesia, synocious, talkie, telegram, tellurium, -teria, terrarium, tetrathlon, titanium, titivate, tog2, to-

neme, transonic, travelogue, triathlon, trichotomy, tricrotic, trillion, trinomial, trio, triphibious, triplet, triptych, trousers, tyrannosaurus, ultimogeniture, undecagon, underwhelm, unipod, Unix, valediction, vanitory, vespiary, viaduct, vibratile, video, vivisection, volution, walkathon, warfarin, wealth, weeny, width, witticism, wondrous, yocto-, zepto-, zymurgy

Part 2

Beyond Language Structures

Introduction

For some structuralists the functionalist approach and the contrastive description of language developed by the Prague School became a point of departure for more general models. A notorious example is Claude Lévi-Strauss's application of Jakobson's and Trubetzkoy's phonological approaches in the study of the structures of kinship and myths (e. g., Lévi-Strauss 1963, 27, 31 – 100, 233, 240). Unlike Lévi-Strauss, who welcomed functionalist structuralism as a general methodology of the humanities, praising its »renovating role« and comparing it to the transformative potential of »nuclear physics« in the »physical sciences« (1963, 31), the contributors to Part 2 of this volume aim to rethink not only the present potentialities, but also the implicit limitations of structuralist approaches. They also discuss the relationship of structuralist methodologies to more recent developments in the theories of structures.

Among these, special attention is paid to the notion of »transmission« important for the concept of structure as a dynamic entity and already emerging, as Johannes Fehr shows, in Saussure's work. Another productive tendency is traced by Ming Quian Ma in Maturana and Varela's approach to systems as products of interfacing between structure and organization. Still another transformative movement is envisaged in Vaihinger's and Iser's concept of fictions as language interfaces mediating not only among incompatible representations or cognitive processes, but also, as Iser's last lectures and writings demonstrate, between culture and nature.

The following chapters proceed from the study of closed, unitary and universalizing concepts of structure to dynamic structures and open systems. In these circumstances, the functionalist approach is substantially modified: it no longer focuses on central paradigms but on the interfaces between systems.

Discussing the legacy of Prague Structuralism in literary studies, the contributors to the first section of Part 2 identify numerous functions of language processes and structures which may be described as interfacing.

As Lawrence Lipking shows, the thought of translation in the theory of the Prague School (Wellek, Vodička, Levý, Doležel), leads to the reassessment of the

synchrony–diachrony opposition. In this process, »untranslatability« engenders the cultural function of translation as »creative transposition,« and the »very existence« of synchronic structures depends »on diachronic circumstantiation.«

Commenting on the strengths and deficiencies of Jakobson's »poetic function,« Ilias Yocaris identifies its weakness as the »want of a trans-disciplinary protocol of analysis acting as an ›interface‹ between the sciences of language and traditional hermeneutics.« One of the major disadvantages of Jakobson's method is the absence of mediation between interpretation, grasping the dynamic nature of the text, and the totalizing features of functionalist structuralism. As a consequence, Jakobson's key notion of »poetic function« may be said to validate »a self-reflexive ahistorical conception of literariness« and generate models which cannot represent »complex discursive interactions described by [contemporary] linguists and pragmaticians.«

The problems of Jakobson's structural model are further examined in Shirley Sharon-Zisser's discussion of the influences of Prague structuralism on Jacques Lacan's concept of poetry and poetic function. Lacan's hypothesis of the correspondence between »the unconscious« understood as »a chain of signifiers« and »the effects of substitution and combination of signifiers in synchronic and diachronic dimensions« of discourse, »places the signifier in center stage« and allows one to rethink the unconscious as »the scene of the poetic function.« This points to the Prague notions of dynamic structure (Mukařovský, Vodička) whose balance or »norm« is constantly disrupted and reinstated. Sharon-Zisser »radically question[s] Jakobson's [...] assertions concerning the immanence of the poetic function.« In poetry, the interface between the conscious and the unconscious becomes »the scene of the poetic function.«

The limitations of René Wellek's structuralist concept of literary history based on »intrinsic/generalizable norms« are contrasted by Elizabeth Weiser with Kenneth Burke's ›performative‹ theory of literary history seen as a process of »interaction among discourses,« rather than as an evolution of systems based on universal and timeless aesthetic norms. The very concept of Burke's »dramatism,« which Wellek criticized, accounts for the dynamic nature of his system as an interface between individual works as rhetorical »acts« and shifting configurations of linguistic, aesthetic or legal norms.

The transformation of the Jakobsonian model of »poetic function« into a dynamic system is discussed by Lawrence K. Stanley. In relation to the metaphoric and metonymic axes of Jakobson's system, the abstract notion of the »zero phoneme« is interpreted in a Deleuzean way as »something ›missing from its place‹ that gives structure its transformational capacity to generate, out of two other terms or meanings, a third term or meaning of another order.« As Stanley's analysis implies, Jakobson's »symbolic-reciprocal relation between the metaphoric and metonymic axes« is transformed into an interface: »we recog-

nize it as the symbolic-reciprocal relation between the materials of art and the consciousness of the artist.«

In the concluding chapter of the first section, James Underhill explores Jiří Levý's structuralist theory of verse. Some of his conclusions imply that the functioning of rhyme resembles that of an interface: »a complex interplay« between the two value systems – acoustic and semantic – generating aesthetic qualities of a poem. As a consequence, rhyme can no longer be understood as a mere formal element. As Underhill points out, this »has fundamental repercussions for translation.« In Levý's thought of translation, which is closely linked with his theory of verse, »intonation patterns and syntactic breaks« are not approached as »formal constraints« but as »aspects of a complex meaningful dynamics« of the work of art which must be re-produced (»reshaped«) in the process of translation. This development of Prague structuralism represents an important alternative to the post-WW2 formalist approaches often focused on »fragmentary details.« Moreover, Levý's comparative study of rhyme in its relation to specific language phenomena and functions has anticipated recent and contemporary approaches to verse (Gasparov, Meschonnic, Attridge, Wesling).

The chapters of the following section (Structuralism Today) reflect on the present position of structuralism as a methodology in the humanities and social sciences.

Commenting on »the greatest promise of structuralism,« the expectations that it will close the gap between »the natural sciences and the humanities by offering the new methodology of a hard-core ›science« for the latter, Aleida Assmann identifies structuralism's major contribution as »a systemic approach to time,« tradition (T.S. Eliot) and »social frames of memory« (Maurice Halbwachs). In historical terms, »temporal change is systemically described in terms of a constant replacement of [these] frames [...] a new ›perspectivization,« a new rewriting.« In Assmann approach, the structuralist approach to time resembles an interface, shifting but also integrating frameworks of memory or paradigms of tradition. Another significant contribution of the Prague School discussed by Assmann is Mukařovský's notion of »the unintentional in art« which transcends the functionalist approach and may be said to act as an interface between the phenomenological and semiotic perspectives and between the work of art and its reception. Mukařovský's study of the unintentional nature of art highlights the difference between analytical methods of the natural sciences and interpretation used in the humanities, formulated later by Mikhail Bakhtin.

In the following chapter, Monica Spiridon assesses the variegated contribution of the previously mentioned thinker. In spite of their great diversity and anti-formalist bias, Bakhtin's writings can be seen as a remarkable attempt to »interconnect history and ideology with linguistics.« Discussing Bakhtin's notion of »speech genres,« Spiridon points out »the foundational heterogeneity

of sense« clashing with the structuralist emphasis on language as a system of norms. In contrast to the structuralist concepts, Bakhtin's categories («dialogism,« »heteroglossia,« »carnival,« etc.) »can move freely, transgressing the borders of art and heading towards life.« One may see them as interfaces between heterogeneous discourses and social realities. Although Bakhtin never mentions it, some of these notions have affinities with the neo-Kantian concept of the fictive, discussed in the concluding chapter of Part 2. This may be another example of the »contemporary« character of Bakhtin's thought pointed out by Spiridon.

Discussing the concept of structure in Niklas Luhmann's systems theory, Erik Roraback focuses on the importance of contingency and »risk« in rethinking the »baroque« character of »capitalist modernity.« Unlike Bakhtin, emphasizing the »architectonics of answerability,« Luhmann sees modernity as »the structure of contingency that forces selections,« constantly threatened »by eschatological visions of reconciliation, emancipation and truth.« Roraback points out an important quality of Luhmann's systemic thought of difference, establishing a link between complexity typical of the »hard-core« sciences and theories of meaning in the humanities: »Meaning is [...] simply a *new and powerful form of coping with complexity under the unavoidable condition of enforced selectivity.*« In brief, Luhmann's systems theory may be read as a productive instance of interfacing the sciences and the humanities and thinking modernity not only as a philosophical category but also as a historical epoch.

The limitations of a structuralist concept of history in Vodička's seminal work *The Structure of Development* are explored in the following chapter. The main problem of the structuralist approach is that of the closure conceived as »intrinsic balance [...] disrupted and regained in the course of time.« In Vodička's approach, this theoretical understanding of a historical period as »an autonomous field« clashes with the rather empirical notion of national literature based on the »community of the language users.« Therefore the Prague School can grasp history only by means of »pragmatic systemization of heterogeneous material.« Vodička cannot do without a totalizing notion of time but he cannot totalize time intrinsically, in its present moments, split between the possibilities of the development of aesthetic form and pragmatic »tasks« of literary development. The corrective to this approach is seen in the Deleuzean reading of time which sees periodization as »the technique of the reduction and control of the forces of desire« and envisages time as the process of infinite division and subdivision of intervals and a »boundary between language and bodies.« This boundary is understood as an interface: no longer as an original matrix, but, in Derrida's words, as »structural function.«

The last chapter of section two reassesses the structuralist approach to history implied in Jakobson's work. Responding to Bourdieu's critique of structuralism

»as a totalizing program which seeks to control meaning by absorbing the specificity and historicity of human activities and cultural forms within a monolithic grid of binary sign relations and theoretically abstracted cultural norms,« Mark Amsler proposes a different approach: Instead of confronting structuralist models with »economic models of social action,« he re-reads »the Prague School's theories of the ›dominant‹ and markedness« as »a critique of structuralism from within, one associated with a critical understanding of literacy and textuality,« The relevance of Amsler's approach is demonstrated both in the theoretical reflection of literacy in post-colonial literatures and its practical application in teaching in a multicultural and multiethnic society. In this respect, Amsler amply demonstrates the productive nature of some key structuralist concepts and approaches, when transposed to different theoretical and cultural contexts where »a text performs and articulates a second ›dominant,‹ a textual other to the social dominant.«

Since the main tenets of most chapters in the last section of Part 2 have been outlined at the beginning of this introduction, the following paragraphs concentrate on specific features of individual transformations of the theories of structure, described in the concluding chapters of the book.

Pointing out the »controversial, if not contradictory« nature of Saussure's notion of »transmission,« Johannes Fehr's close reading of Saussure's manuscripts attempts to mediate between the transmission's accidental character and its general function as »a tension inherent in Saussure's thinking on language.« It can be said that the notion of transmission functions as an interface between two heterogeneous and (at least for Saussure and many other structuralists) incompatible systems of language and society.

A similar theme of »the joint enterprise of signs and deeds« characterizes the approach of Giuseppe Martella. As a »constitutive part« of human existence, language is significant not only in the metaphysical sense, but also in the »sheer scientific sense, according to which all living things feed on an energy-information diet allowing them to regulate their life and thus to survive.« Conscious of the reciprocal nature of »life and understanding,« Martella proposes to see language »as an open system« of no longer neutral, but »biased or *asymmetrical* differences [...] stemming from significant and motivated gestures.« Using the phenomenology of perception and examples of digitalization of social and cultural memory, Martella outlines the complexity of language from a simple bodily gesture (»index«) and its function (*deixis*) to a hypertextual »link«, where word-processing programs and other technological devices may be said to function as interfaces.

As Ming-Qian Ma argues in the following chapter, »de-synonymizing system and structure« amounts to »an important conceptual shift in rethinking language as a system.« While the system's organization is »operationally closed to

itself« materializing its optimum state, the system's structure is »functionally open to optimizing from its environment.« These characteristics roughly correspond – at a more general level, applicable in the sciences as well as in the humanities – to the Prague School notions of structure, its norm and »concretizations.« What substantially modifies this approach is the perspectivism implied both in Maturana/Varela and Henri Atlan's approaches. Especially the latter's term »chunking« as a »change in perspective at the structural level of integration that signifies informational complexity at the level of the organization« (further elaborated by Michel Serres) and may be said to transform the notion of structure with respect to non-linear concepts of time (e. g., Deleuze's »Aion«) discussed in the chapter on structuralism and history.

The concluding chapter deals with the transformative potential of »fictions« in science and art, discussed towards the end of the nineteenth century by the German Neo-Kantian philosopher Hans Vaihinger and more recently in the cultural anthropology of Wolfgang Iser. Apart from the functioning of the fictive as »an interface among language, human consciousness and the surrounding world« the chapter discusses its relation to theories of play, starting with Schiller, and its impact on the understanding of the nature-culture relationship. As an interface, the As-If »does not embody a foundational principle.« It is a function that »precedes the structure« and consequently marks a new stage in the development of its theories.

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I
Legacies of Prague Structuralism and Literary Studies

Lost in Translation: The Prague School and the World of Literature

In 1956, when Erich Auerbach reviewed the first two volumes of René Wellek's *A History of Modern Criticism, 1750 – 1950*, he argued that no theory could produce general laws of literature or arrive at a unified view of the critical field. Critics had always responded to texts and issues of their moment, not to any continuing conversation. In that respect a coherent history of literary criticism was strictly impossible; whoever attempted it could only record a succession of individual critics (Auerbach 1956). This argument articulates a deep divide between the old philology, historicist and relativistic in its assumptions, and newer efforts to frame comprehensive theoretical principles.¹ Yet it also reflects a tension in Wellek's own work as well as in the legacy of the Prague School. *Theory of Literature* (1949), in the chapters that Wellek wrote, had proposed that the concept of »structure« could »open a way to the proper analysis of a work of literature,« and it defined that opening in terms already well established by Jan Mukařovský and other Czech Structuralists: »Structure« is a concept including both content and form so far as they are organized for aesthetic purposes. The work of art is, then, considered as a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purpose« (Wellek, Warren 1949, 141). Potentially analyses of such systems of signs might be »proper« in any time and place. But as a literary historian Wellek did not follow his own theory. The *History of Modern Criticism* (1955–92), as it expanded from four projected volumes into eight, gradually fell into a piecemeal, eclectic account of national schools and the critics who led them. In practice, apparently, Auerbach had won; no system of signs could account for the unpredictable weavings of individual critics.

Perhaps the difference between Auerbach and Wellek had always been more apparent than real, however. The two scholars shared interests in philology and literary history as well as literary criticism, and they agreed more often than they differed. Nor did Auerbach's skepticism about comprehensive theories prevent

1 Wellek (1991) takes issue with Auerbach's »secular religion of historicism« in Volume 7 of the *History*.

him from floating theories of his own. Indeed, his own former teacher, the great E. R. Curtius, accused him of encasing living works of art in dead terms such as »realism.« In the words of R. P. Blackmur, »Curtius is, relative to Auerbach, a deep anarchy of the actual. Every blow he struck at Auerbach was meant to break down the formulas whereby we see how unlike things are like« (Fitzgerald 1985, 39). From this point of view, not only the history of criticism but every sort of history must fight a never-ending, always-defensive battle against the triumphant formulas that grind particular things into a paste of lumpy generalizations. Wellek liked to generalize too. Yet as a literary historian and historicist—»I still believe fundamentally in historicism,« he told me in a letter not long before he died—he remained engrossed by irreducible, particular details. Few passages in the *History of Modern Criticism* are more revealing than his appreciation of Albert Thibaudet, whose expression of the essence of historicism »recognizes all the fantastic variety of the world and enjoys it in its conflicts and contradictions. [. . .] It is a view of literature and the world that is still immensely fruitful for its understanding, however much it may run counter to the fanaticisms, the limited preoccupations and the possibly profounder metaphysics of our time« (Wellek 1992, 60). Clearly Wellek is speaking about himself no less than about Thibaudet, and voices his own dismay at what he regards as the ahistorical metaphysics of current fashions in theory. Thus a work that began with synchronic ambitions concludes with diachronic resignation. The *History* comes crashing to a halt in 1950; the champion of theory retreats to a former age when historians and critics had joined in an effort to understand and value literature.

The tension between theory and history in Wellek's work might be traced back to the very beginning of the Prague School. Most of the founders, including Vilém Mathesius, Bohumil Trnka, Roman Jakobson, and Jan Mukařovský, had been trained as philologists, of course, and the ambiguity of the word »philology,« which can stand either for literary scholarship in general or more specifically for the study of language, applies as well to the enterprise that they pursued. The Prague School itself, considered as a wide-ranging investigation of structures and systems of thought, might be viewed as an offshoot of a group with a much tighter focus on language, the Prague Linguistic Circle. An enthusiastic antihistoricism fueled the sense of discovery and opportunity that Mathesius and Trnka brought to the Circle. »When I began with my own work as a linguist,« Mathesius later wrote, »the diachronic approach was in such preponderance that it was destroying the possibilities of further development. I thus stood up against it and worked systematically in a synchronic manner« (Toman 1995, 86).

In the long run this stark opposition did not hold. The systems of signs that constituted language might also serve, some linguists recognized, as a portal to

the larger systems of signs, also embedded in language, that constituted history and culture. That insight probably represents the most lasting achievement of the Prague School. As Jurij Striedter persuasively argues, Czech Structuralism departed from Russian Formalism by defining the work of art as a sign in an aesthetic function; in this way it made room for the study of changing codes that frequently modify the reception of each system of signs and thus provide grounds for the evolution and evaluation of literature (Striedter 1989, 83–119). Perhaps no other theoretical school has ever worked harder to account for historical shifts in aesthetics. In present-day terms, one might claim that scholars such as Mukařovský and Felix Vodička tried to connect the DNA of works of art—their elemental systems of signs—with their Darwinian evolution through time—the transformations of artistic species. This was an immensely ambitious project, a confluence of synchronic and diachronic codes. If it did not succeed, that may be the fault of history; the political climate after the 1930s did not encourage Czech scholars to take an interest in aesthetic values and functions. But tensions inherent in the project also kept reappearing. The anti-historicism that energized the early strivings of the Prague Linguistic Circle still lingered, like an unwelcome ghost, in the later historical research of the Prague School.

A similar tension permeates one of the main concerns of the Circle, its views on translation. The founders could hardly ignore the problems and hazards of translation, for practical as well as theoretical reasons. First of all, the diverse backgrounds of members, with Russian, Ukrainian, German, and French as well as Czech strains, were difficult to reconcile with the ideal that Jindřich Toman calls »the magic of a common language.« What language was spoken, in fact, at the first meetings of the Circle? That is not entirely clear. Probably German led a polyglot conversation, with many troublesome accents (one running joke was that Jakobson spoke 25 languages, all of them Russian). If one motive of these discussions was to provide linguistics with an international if not global perspective, moreover, freeing language from any narrow national parole, another motive was a declaration of Czech independence. Czech literary scholars inherited the patriotic challenge of defending the singularity of their national literature against absorption by other languages and cultures, a challenge made still more urgent by the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This was the moment to assert—or invent—a tradition, a political identity that selected items from the past and shaped something new. The cosmopolitanism of the Prague Circle promised that Czech philology could shed the provincialism of second-hand scholarship and lead the way to a world-class reform of linguistics. Translation served as a model: by analyzing what happened to works in other languages when translated into Czech, critics demonstrated the systematic in-

tegrity of each version. Poetics, like Janáček's operas, confirmed the inimitable and irreplaceable power of the native language.

At the same time, however, those who spoke that language occupied only a small part of the world, and they needed to communicate with other languages and literatures. During the 1930s a massive campaign to make world literature available to Czech readers, and Czech literature known to the world, resulted in increasingly sophisticated theories and practices of translation. Many associates of the Prague Circle were mobilized in that campaign. Jakobson's interest in particular problems of translation played a major role, he later acknowledged, in stimulating his important studies of linguistics and poetics. Here structuralism triumphed. In their analyses of poems, Mukařovský and Jakobson defined more clearly than ever before the precise phonological and grammatical patterns that are unique to each language and always escape translation. It was not that Jakobson subscribed to what he called »the dogma of untranslatability,« later popularized by Benjamin Whorf. Since »all cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language,« the translator, given enough space and time, could always render literally »the entire conceptual information contained in the original.« But poetry turned grammar and sound into significant units that carried semantic import. Grammatical gender, for instance, which personified inanimate nouns as male or female, could predispose »the mythological attitudes of a speech community.« As Jakobson points out, »*My Sister Life*, the title of a book of poems by Boris Pasternak, is quite natural in Russian, where ›life‹ is feminine (*zhizn'*), but was enough to reduce to despair the Czech poet Josef Hora in his attempt to translate these poems, since in Czech this noun is masculine (*život*).« Hence »poetry by definition is untranslatable,« and »only creative transposition is possible« (Jakobson 1987, 428).

From one point of view—the poor translator's—this conclusion might well induce despair. Yet from another it might bring about a sense of tantalizing possibilities. For the linguist, the investigation of what gets left out of poetic translations offered new insights into the nature of language, in which »irrational« elements also helped frame the total system of signs. Moreover, in an odd way poetry defended the nation, because it preserved that part of Czech ancestry that could not be touched or usurped or carried away. »The standard literary language,« according to Bohuslav Havránek, »is the vehicle and the mediator of culture and civilization; it is an indicator of independent national existence« (Mukařovský 1977, 7). When that sentence was published, in 1940, the independent national existence of Czechoslovakia could hardly be taken for granted. But poetry, like an underground demotic resistance movement, kept the national spirit alive. No other language could do what it did. Untranslatability, in this respect, was exactly what a patriotic writer should strive for. That point had already been made in the eighteenth century by Samuel Johnson. By defying

translation, Johnson argued, poets guard language against the blight of foreign jargons and pidgins, which in his day threatened, through »the license of translatours,« to »reduce us to babble a dialect of France« (these days, of course, the whole globe babbles American English). Johnson's great *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) was written for poets; like a seed bank, it saves and nurtures a pristine stock of native words (Lipking 1998, 131–34). In a similar way, the Prague Linguistic Circle identified the stock of grammatical and phonological structures that made Czech poetry immune to transplantation.

Yet Czech poets, scholars, and critics, as well as the nation itself, could not survive without perpetual interchange and affiliations with the rest of the world. Small nations need friends, a larger community that expands their horizons and keeps their existence in mind. In building such alliances, translation is vital. Furthermore, an adequate theory of translation would have to go beyond attention to the import of phonology and grammar. Mukařovský and Jakobson had already emphasized the wider historical contexts that affect the aesthetic functions of language. The next generation of the Prague School, especially Vodička and Jiří Levý, developed original views of translation based on reception theory (Vodička) and »transduction« (Levý) (Doležel 1988). Each of these theories focuses on the process by which a literary »message« is contingent not only on the text that transmits it but on the way it is received. In this dynamic process, as in a Heraclitean river, no text is ever the same each time it is read; it is altered by concrete conditions of history, changing assumptions and epistemes, shifts in the meanings of words, or the perspective of the individual reader. Translation, therefore, represents the dynamics of transmission in their purest form. If poetic texts are untranslatable, that is because they share the common fate of texts: the gulf between the sender and receiver who collaborate in realizing them. But for that very reason translations expose and clarify the double nature of texts, synchronic structures whose very existence depends on diachronic circumstantiation. Since each translation is always already not only a »message« but also one example of its reception, analysis must necessarily look both ways, toward what has been lost in the transmission and what has been added. In this way the critic avoids the error of regarding either the text or its history as a closed system; changing contexts alter systems from one age to another, if not from moment to moment.

When Vodička wrote his classic *Beginnings of Newer Czech Belletristic Prose* (1948), therefore, he began not with an »original« text but with a translation, Josef Jungmann's version (1805) of Chateaubriand's *Atala* (1801). Any conventional critic might note the difference between Chateaubriand's famously gorgeous French prose and its relatively restrained Czech offspring; and with painstaking care Vodička parses the dissimilar sentence structures of the two texts. But that is not his point. Rather, he wants to show how the specific social

and historical contexts of that moment—the »Czech national rebirth«—induced or forced Jungmann to invent a new sort of prose, transposing Chateaubriand's mystical Romanticism into a belletristic prose-poetry that would at once appeal to unmystical, unromantic Czech readers and prepare them to accept hitherto unperceived possibilities in their language, an aesthetic dimension from which a future national literature might be created (Striedter 1989, 131–38). In this virtuoso analysis, Vodička combines minute linguistic discriminations with a remarkably ambitious theory and history of reception. The movement from French to Czech prose provides a clear view of the way that texts vary according to the contexts that frame them. But at the same time it suggests that a study of comparative translations, not only as texts but as contexts, might serve to illuminate the historical changes in literature as a whole, conceived as a series of tasks or projects rather than as detached pieces of language. Potentially such a study might grow into an overarching structure or system of systems that found a place for every language and assigned individual texts a position in space and time within the larger world of literature.

This narrative deserves a grand climax. If there were any justice, the literary history of the Prague School would culminate with *The World of Literature* (1967), a secondary-school textbook written by a collective of scholars under Vodička's direction. Here structuralist theory marries the broadest possible outline of the history of literature, in terms that even young students can understand. On another shore, Wellek's *Theory of Literature*, which ends with chapters on literary history and literary education, had envisioned just such a project, a dream now realized by Vodička. But curb your enthusiasm. Although the first volume of the textbook was printed, the authorities, on the eve of Prague Spring, were not ready to approve *The World of Literature*; unavailable to the public, it vanished down a hole. Has anyone here seen a copy?² Not me. As a matter of fact, after I mentioned the text in a lecture in 1984, Wellek denied that it had ever existed, though he may have relented when I told him that Jurij Striedter had seen it, read it, and described it to me. In any event the project was not completed, nor is anything remotely comparable—a sophisticated and concise introduction to world literature, informed equally by history and theory—available today. Perhaps the very idea of such a text now seems impossible, like a perfect translation. One might believe in global literature, a congeries of disconnected and unrelated languages, traditions, and cultures, united, if at all, only by a stubborn refusal to be assimilated into the empire of major powers and

2 When I asked this question during my lecture at the conference in Prague, Martin Procházka informed me that he had studied the text in a course soon after its publication. This contradicts Striedter's statement that the book »was never released for school use« (Striedter 1989, 288).

airport bookracks. But a coherent world of literature, a system of systems or total order of words (in Northrop Frye's phrase)—that dream seems beyond us.

If despite the best efforts of the Prague School the theory and history of literature have yet to be synthesized, however, maybe the tension between them remains productive. Like Auerbach and Wellek, the best philologists grapple with theory, just as history forces itself on theorists. Nor has the final word on the Prague School and the world of literature yet been written. Consider one last parallel with what might be found, as well as lost, in translation. I have already referred to the despair of the Czech translator of Pasternak's poems. Yet that impossibility proved full of possibilities—amazingly creative. In a letter to Jakobson, Pasternak declared that the Czech translation »played an essential role in his work. His own writings, having become dead letters, already weighed down upon him, but when he read them in a new version that at the same time was similar in language, he derived inspiration for renewal of his work« (Jakobson, Pomorska 1983, 145). Dead letters can unexpectedly come back to life, and translations can refresh as well as distort. When and if »The World of Literature« is eventually published, it will not resemble Vodička's and Wellek's projects; a different context of reception will change the system. Yet the aspirations as well as the tensions of the Prague School still keep the hope of synthesis alive. The next reading, the next translation, might always find that new world.

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Towards a Neoformalist Approach to Literary Texts: Roman Jakobson's Conceptual Heritage

Introduction

Roman Jakobson's works on the poetic function of language (see especially Jakobson 1960, Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss 1962) were at the origin of a real revolution in the field of literary theory. Indeed, Jakobson's definition of poeiticity constituted a major epistemological turning-point: thanks to this definition, literary scholars were able to set up a methodological protocol, a set of concepts and a descriptive (meta)language permitting a thorough unification of the sphere of textual analysis¹ and therefore helping to establish a new scientific paradigm.² What are the main features of this paradigm? The credit to be given to the Jakobsonian approach is double : on the one hand Jakobson was the first (with the Russian formalists) to point out that »the object of literary science is not literature, but ... what makes of a given work a literary work« (Todorov 1965, 37), i. e. precisely the »poetic« use of language; on the other hand he was the first to show that in fact the »poeticity« of language does not ensue from a sum of aesthetic or generic specificities but from *a series of formal operations open to an »objective« description*. At the heart of his theoretical system lies of course the well-known »principle of equivalence« (Jakobson 1960, 358–370), which constitutes Jakobson's major contribution to structural stylistics. We shall set out here to examine the conceptual implications of this principle; with the help of examples we shall describe the protocol of text analysis elaborated by Jakobson, highlighting its strengths and its limitations and drawing at the same time the outlines of what may be called a neo-formalist approach to literary texts.

1 See especially Riffaterre (1971, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1994), Delas, Filliolet (1973), Ruwet (1975, 1981), Groupe μ (1970, 1990).

2 On the formation of a founding paradigm in a given subject, see Kuhn (1962), chap. I, II.

Jakobson's Definition of the »Poetic Function«

This definition is nothing new. As everybody knows, Jakobson defines the »poetic« use of language as follows: »*The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection [syntagmatic axis] into the axis of combination [paradigmatic axis]*. Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence« (Jakobson 1960, 358). But what does this mean concretely? In substance, Jakobson explains that »poetic« utterances are in fact made up of mutually equivalent sequences of signifying units (morphemes, lexemes, syntagms etc.) insofar as they are connected word to word within a system of internal parallelisms and symmetries: in other words, what differentiates the »ordinary« use of language (its referential function) from its »poetic« use is that the choice of words and forms in a poetic statement is not accidental, since the only options kept are the ones permitting to create and/or to prolong a network of formal analogies. Let us give an example:

(1) *Songe, mensonge*³ (French proverb)

This proverb constitutes a »poetic« expression in the Jakobsonian sense of the word, insofar as the two lexemes are »equivalent« from a phonetic point of view. The inclusion of the whole signifier »*songe*« within »*mensonge*« functions as an iconic sign which metaphorically reduplicates the message conveyed by the proverb: »dreams are just illusions.« However, if »*songe*« is replaced by »*rêve*«,⁴ this phenomenon of »semiotic convergence« (Riffaterre 1971, 60–62) disappears purely and simply because the two words are not phonetically »equivalent«: unlike »*Songe, mensonge*«, »*Rêve, mensonge*« is nothing but an »ordinary« statement, which has in principle no »poetic« dimension.⁵

3 »Dreams are just illusions«.

4 »*Rêve*« is another word for »dream«.

5 Of course, the word »poetic« is used *lato sensu*: if one sticks to the remarks and analyses made by Jakobson himself, it becomes clear that discursive »poeticity« is no prerogative of poetry as a genre, nor of »literary« texts in general, since non literary texts in prose like the well-known motto »I like Ike« may also have a »poetic« function (Jakobson 1960, 357). Therefore, from Jakobson's point of view, resorting to the »principle of equivalence« is not a distinctive feature which might help to separate poetry from texts in prose or »literary« texts from »non literary« texts, but a specific communicational technique aiming at highlighting the very configuration of the verbal message: in this way any utterance based on »meaningful« parallelisms and positional symmetries may be considered as »poetic«, regardless of the discursive genre it belongs to. However, this conception of »poeticity« is far from being shared by all of Jakobson's epigones, as some of them either stick to poetry in the traditional sense of the word (Delas, Filliolet 1973, Ruwet 1975, 1981, 1989; Groupe μ 1990), or to literary works in general (Riffaterre 1971, 1979; see *a contrario* Aroui 1996). Such methodological conservatism seems

Strengths of Jakobson's definition

Introductory Remarks

From a strictly stylistic point of view, the interest of the methodological protocol perfected by Jakobson and his conceptual epigones lies in the fact that it helps to describe in a very precise way the interactions developed between different signifying units in »poetic« texts. These interactions provide the poetic language with a twofold dimension, systemic as well as holistic.

The Systemic Dimension of Poetic Language

The first implication of the »principle of equivalence« is that the choice of words in a »poetic« text obeys two different series of obligations: (a) constraints emanating from the ordinary rules of language, whether they are syntactic, phonetic, semantic, morphological etc.; (b) constraints emanating from the structure of the text itself, since – as mentioned earlier – it is that structure which determines the choice of such or such word rather than another within a given paradigmatic class. This is for instance what happens in a well-known commercial slogan praising a chain of supermarkets:

(2) Avec Carrefour, je positive.⁶

Here, the choice of the French verb »positiver« derives from a series of constraints progressively restricting the range of expressions that can be used to express »the same idea«, until the selection of this verb becomes almost compulsory:

- In the first instance, to preserve the semantic intelligibility and coherence of the message itself, the selected phrases have to be a class of grammatically correct verbal locutions whose sememes roughly contain the seme /meliorative vision/: »Avec Carrefour, je positive/ je me sens bien⁷/ je vois la vie en rose,⁸ etc.«

to be counterintuitive: the discursive techniques used to create stylistic »equivalences« among verbal constituents have a trans-generic dimension, and may perfectly well be reproduced in »ordinary« language (see *infra*). Consequently we shall here follow Jakobson's own theoretic prescriptions.

6 »With Carrefour, I think positive«.

7 »I feel good«.

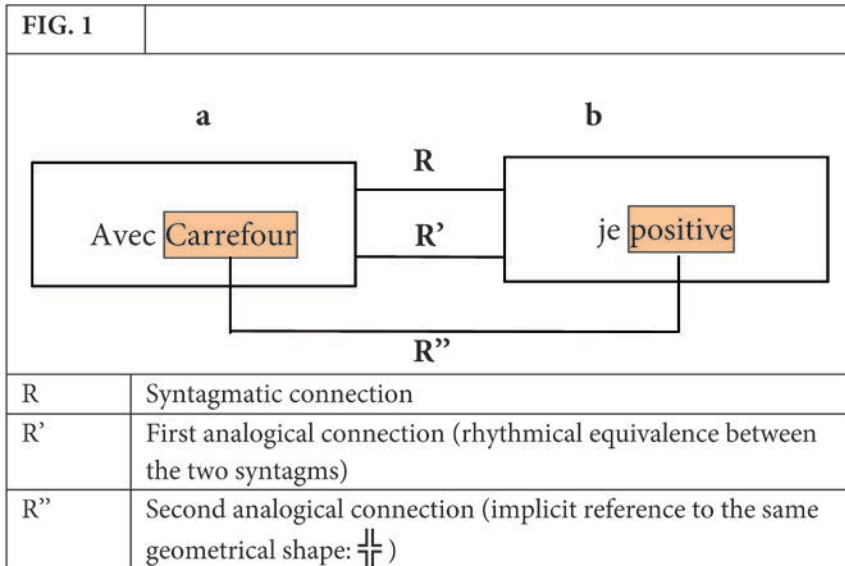
8 »I look on the bright side of things«.

- Then, within this paradigm, only the four-syllable phrases are selected, so as to create a rhythmical equivalence which will make the motto easy to remember: »Avec Carrefour (4 syllables)//je positive//je me sens bien« (4 syllables).
- In the end, the choice of the verb »positiver« derives from an implicit analogical equivalence with the PN »Carrefour«, since both are visual references to the mathematical + sign: »Carrefour« (‡) means »crossroads« in French ...

What emerges from such an analysis is that the poetic function as viewed by Jakobson implies a form of »overstructuring« or of »double structuring« of the verbal message (Aroui 1996, 9 – 10, 12, Delas, Filliolet 1973, 71, Ruwet 1975, 316 – 317, 1981, 2). What does this mean? In a »poetic« text, each signifying unit happens to be *a priori* connected to its context in two different ways: (i) through syntagmatic links, necessarily codified, which are organized in a »horizontal« or »linear« way ; (ii) through analogical links, not necessarily codified, which are organized in a »vertical« or »tabular« way (Groupe μ 1990, 65). Thus the syntactic connection developed between the PS »Avec Carrefour« and the VS »je positive« is overdetermined by the rhythmical equivalence of the two segments, but also by a transsemiotic analogy which remains implicit [Carrefour \rightarrow ‡ \rightarrow »positiver«]. It becomes clear then that the »double structuring« of poetic texts involves going beyond the linearity of language, which becomes *ipso facto* a network of systemic connections. Indeed, according to Ludwig von Bertalanffy's well-known definition (1968, 55 – 56), a system is a group of elements (a, b, c etc.) each of which has several different relationships at once with the others (R, R', R'' etc.), its behaviour in an R relationship differing from its behaviour in another R' relationship. Yet, this is exactly what is happening in (2): as can be seen in figure 1, the PS »Avec Carrefour« and the VS »je positive« are connected together through three different relationships, each of which is based on a distinct property (syntactic, phonetic, semantic). Therefore, one can safely say that, from Jakobson's viewpoint, »poetic« texts function as systems: this point is perfectly underlined by Michael Riffaterre, who puts forward that the formal and semantic unit of poems rests on a »systemic relationship« (Riffaterre 1980, 165) that links together their verbal components.

The Holistic Dimension of Poetic Language

The »double structuring« of the poetic text affects its global way of functioning at the semantic level: indeed, the verbal constituents which allow different organisational structures to be assembled on each other should be considered as part and parcel of a whole, insofar as each of them was chosen among an



unlimited set of possible verbal configurations in accordance with its specific relevance to a system of echoes and intratextual references directing its very significance. In epistemological terms, overstructured texts may be said to have a holistic dimension since some of their components have semantic properties emerging⁹ due to their integration into different structural devices at the same time (Esfeld 2001, 6–17). An example drawn from *In Search of Lost Time* by Proust may be used to show concretely how this »totalising effect« (Delas, Filiolet 1973, 42) works: it is the well-known scene in *Sodom and Gomorrah* when the baron de Charlus, a homosexual dedicated body and soul to debauchery, tries to seduce Jupien the tailor, with whom he is about to copulate immediately after the end of the passage.

- (3) [C]haque fois que M. de Charlus regardait Jupien, il s'arrangeait pour que son regard fût accompagné d'une parole, ce qui le rendait infiniment dissemblable des regards habituellement dirigés sur une personne qu'on connaît ou qu'on ne connaît pas; il regardait Jupien avec la fixité particulière de quelqu'un qui va vous dire: »Pardonnez-moi mon indiscrétion, mais vous avez un long fil blanc qui pend dans votre dos«, ou bien: »Je ne dois pas me tromper, vous êtes aussi de Zurich, il me semble bien vous avoir rencontré souvent chez le marchand d'antiquités«. Telle, toutes les deux minutes, la même question semblait intensément posée à Jupien dans l'œillade de M. de Charlus, comme

9 On the concept of »emergence«, which has become common place in the theory of systems and the philosophy of science in general, see for example Broad (1960, 61), Nagel (1961, 367–368), Bunge (1979, 27–30).

ces phrases interrogatives de Beethoven, répétées indéfiniment, à intervalles égaux, et destinées – avec un luxe exagéré de préparations – à amener un nouveau motif, un changement de ton, une »rentrée«. Mais justement la beauté des regards de M. de Charlus et de Jupien venait, au contraire, de ce que, provisoirement du moins, ces regards ne semblaient pas avoir pour but de conduire à quelque chose. Cette beauté, c'était la première fois que je voyais le baron et Jupien la manifester. Dans les yeux de l'un et de l'autre, c'était le ciel non pas de Zurich, mais de quelque cité orientale dont je n'avais pas encore deviné le nom [*Sodome*], qui venait de se lever. [...] [D]écidé à brusquer les choses, [Charlus] demanda du feu au giletier, mais observa aussitôt: »Je vous demande du feu, mais je vois que j'ai oublié mes cigares«. Les lois de l'hospitalité l'emportèrent sur les règles de la coquetterie. »Entrez, on vous donnera tout ce que vous voudrez«, dit le giletier, sur la figure de qui le dédain fit place à la joie.¹⁰ (Proust 1988, 7–8)

This passage is entirely structured around two main isotopies, the musical (I₁) and the erotic (I₂) one. I₁ and I₂ are connected together from the start through the ingenious comparison between Charlus's ogling and Beethoven's questioning phrases. They then develop in a parallel way and coincide at the level of a specific word, the substantive »rentrée«, whose apparition Proust skilfully postpones in order to end his sentence by a witticism. Why choose such a word? Out of context, »rentrée« refers to the re-entry of a musical motif (in a symphony for example). But *in this specific case*, a second meaning is added on top of this technical meaning: if Beethoven's musical questioning introduces a »reentry« in the musical sense of the term, Charlus's ogling introduces quite a different sort of »reentry«, that is to say penetrative sex (hence the final invitation to »come

10 »[E]ach time that M. de Charlus looked at Jupien, he took care that his glance should be accompanied by a word, which made it infinitely unlike the glances we usually direct at a person whom we scarcely know or do not know at all; he stared at Jupien with the peculiar fixity of the person who is about to say to you: ›Excuse my taking the liberty, but you have a long white thread hanging down your back,‹ or else: ›Surely I can't be mistaken, you come from Zurich too; I'm certain I must have seen you there often at the antique dealer's.‹ Thus, every other minute, the same question seemed to be put to Jupien intently in M. de Charlus's ogling, like those questioning phrases of Beethoven's, indefinitely repeated at regular intervals and intended –with an exaggerated lavishness of preparation– to introduce a new theme, a change of key, a ›re-entry.‹ On the other hand, the beauty of the reciprocal glances of M. de Charlus and Jupien arose precisely from the fact that they did not, for the moment at least, seem to be intended to lead to anything further. It was the first time I had seen the manifestation of this beauty in the Baron and Jupien. In the eyes of both of them, it was the sky not of Zurich but of some oriental city [*Sodom*], the name of which I had not yet divined, that I saw reflected. [...] The latter, deciding to precipitate matters, asked the tailor for a light, but at once observed: ›I ask you for a light, but I see I've left my cigars at home.‹ The laws of hospitality prevailed over the rules of coquetry. ›Come inside, you shall have everything you wish,‹ said the tailor, on whose features disdain now gave place to joy.« (Proust 1993, 10; modified by the author)

inside«...). Such a stylistic arrangement constitutes a clear example of »double structuring«, since Proust's text reveals both a »linear« order and a »tabular« one. In fact, due to its integration into this complex verbal device, the word »rentrée« acquires here a new significance emerging in a holistic way, because in this instance it happens to convey an erotic connotation *which is absent out of context*.¹¹ We are therefore confronted with a process of »linguistic totalisation« or »integration« (Delas, Filliolet 1973, 107, 179): poetic texts are holistic systems insofar as their global organisation has a direct influence on the semic profile of their verbal components.

Weaknesses of Jakobson's definition

Jakobson's definition of the »poetic function« raises four main problems:

Incompleteness

The description of the devices used in poetic texts to create »tabular« structures which come on top of »linear« structures is, at best, incomplete. Indeed, Jakobson grants – as his exegetes did not fail to notice (Shapiro 1976, Milner 1982) – a scandalous privilege to all sorts of parallelisms (phonetic, semantic, syntactic, metrical...) developing between the elements present in the utterance (Jakobson 1960, 371 – 74). Thus in his well-known stylistic survey of Baudelaire's sonnet »Les Chats« (Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss 1962; cf. Starobinski, 2001), he successively goes through the symmetries entailed by

- The nature, position and distribution of the rhymes
- The syntactic and phrastic structure of each stanza
- The repetition of some semantic and logical patterns
- The punctuation
- The nature and disposition of the grammatical actants
- The recurrence of some phonemes
- The distribution of the figures of speech
- The isotopic structure of the text, etc.

11 In technical terms, the afferent seme /penetrative sex/ is said to come on top of its sememe (Rastier 1996, 44 – 48).

Yet, such an approach is unsatisfactory for two reasons:

1. Parallelisms in All Their Forms

are far from being the only devices by which *in praesentia* stylistic »equivalences« may be created: this may also be achieved by resorting to other formal operations which are not all taken into account by Jakobson and his epigones. For information only, here are a few of those operations, supported by some examples:

(a) Etymological Reactivations

In the first line of Victor Hugo's poem »Soleils couchants«¹² (»J'aime les soirs sereins et beaux«¹³) a double connection develops between the characterised »soirs« and the characteriser »sereins«. Indeed, V. Hugo chose this characteriser in particular rather than its synonyms (»calmes«, »tranquilles«, »paisibles« etc.) because it shares the same etymon with »serein«... The words »soirs« and »sereins« are related by *both* a syntactic connection *and* their common etymological roots: Hugo's text is »overstructured« due to the fact that in this instance the etymological meaning of »serein« (cloudless, clear) finds itself »reactivated« on account of its proximity to »soir«.

(b) The Setting-up of Analogical Micro-systems

Stanza 8 of the »Bateau ivre«¹⁴ by Arthur Rimbaud is »overstructured« because the poet organizes a whole »miniature« analogical system, whose constituents are structured around the comparison »l'aube exaltée ainsi qu'un peuple de colombes.«

(4) Je sais les cieux crevant en éclairs, et les trombes

Et les ressacs et les courants : je sais le soir,
L'aube exaltée ainsi qu'un peuple de colombes,
Et j'ai vu quelquefois ce que l'homme a cru voir !¹⁵

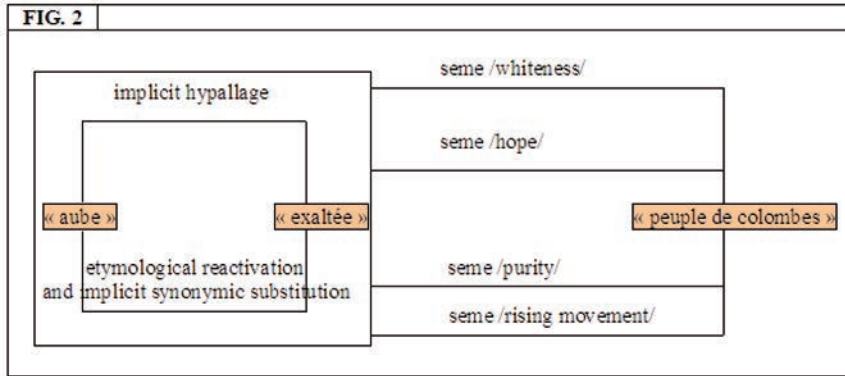
How does this micro-system work? The different constituents of the NG under study (the substantive »aube«, the past participle »exaltée« and the NS »peuple de colombes«) are simultaneously associated through two series of superimposed stylistic connections (see Figure 2):

12 »Sunsets«.

13 »I love these calm clear evening hours«.

14 *The Drunken Boat*.

15 »I know the lightning-opened skies, watersprouts / Eddies and surfs; I know the night / And dawn arisen like a colony of doves, / And sometimes I have seen what men have thought they saw!«.





(i) »Aube« is connected to »exaltée« by an implicit hypallage (the »exaltation« of dawn referring to the exaltation of the lyric self) and by a complex analogical sequence, based on an etymological reactivation (the verb »exalter« comes from the Latin *exaltare*, »to elevate«) and an implicit synonymic substitution [»aube exaltée« → »aube qui se lève«].

(ii) The comparison between the dawn (»aube exaltée«) and a colony of doves (»peuple de colombes«) is based on the presence of four different semes (/whiteness/, /hope/, /purity/, /rising movement/) that are all shared by the tenor and the vehicle. What is the nature of those semes? /Whiteness/ is inherent to the sememes of »aube« and »colombe«. /Hope/ and /purity/ are »sociolectal afferent semes« (Rastier 1996, 83), since they both belong to the connotations usually attached to the two words out of context. On the contrary, /rising movement/ is an »idiolectal afferent seme« (Rastier 1996, 83), since it emerges only in this specific context due to the above-mentioned etymological reactivation: the overstructuring of Rimbaud's text results from a complex synergy between organisational components belonging at the same time to syntactic, lexicological, semic and figural orders.

(c) The Development of Transsemiotic Analogical Sequences

Such a sequence has been discovered in Apollinaire's poem »Zone« by the great stylistician Gérard Berthomieu. During one of his lectures, Berthomieu examined a line in which Christ is mentioned in these terms: »C'est la double potence de l'honneur et de l'éternité« (cf. text 5).¹⁶ Apollinaire is obviously resorting here to an etymological reactivation: he uses the word »potence« in its etymological sense (lat. *potentia*, »power«, a meaning which still exists in French today in the word »omnipotent« for example.) But how can the choice of this reactivation be

¹⁶ »It is the double gallows of honour and eternity«.

FIG. 3		
<p style="text-align: center;">Vous priez toute la nuit dans la chapelle du collège Tandis qu'éternelle et adorable profondeur améthyste Tourne à jamais la flamboyante gloire du Christ C'est le beau lys que tous nous cultivons C'est la torche aux cheveux roux que n'éteint pas le vent C'est le fils pâle et vermeil de la douloureuse mère C'est l'arbre toujours touffu de toutes les prières C'est la double potence de l'honneur et de l'éternité</p>		
—	PREDICATE-THEME CONNECTION	
—	<p style="text-align: center;">TRANSSEMIOTIC ANALOGY</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>»Potence« [»gallows«] :</p>  </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>»Double potence« [»double gallows«] :</p>  </div> </div>	
Source : Gérard Berthomieu, lectures on <i>Alcools</i> , 8 October 1990		

justified? Why »double *potence*« rather than »double *puissance*«? As Figure 3 shows, resorting to etymological reactivation clearly helps to »overstructure« Apollinaire's text, since the NS »double potence« becomes an iconic sign referring to the very figure of the Crucified One...

- (5) Vous priez toute la nuit dans la chapelle du collège
Tandis qu'éternelle et adorable profondeur améthyste
Tourne à jamais la flamboyante gloire du Christ
C'est le beau lys que tous nous cultivons
C'est la torche aux cheveux roux que n'éteint pas le vent
C'est le fils pâle et vermeil de la douloureuse mère
C'est l'arbre toujours touffu de toutes les prières
C'est la double potence de l'honneur et de l'éternité

2. Poetic Discourse

is also »over-structured« by *in absentia* equivalences: in this case, an isolated verbal constituent or a whole sequence are correlated to one or several others absent from the text. *In absentia* equivalences of all kinds are described in the works of Michael Riffaterre, who mentions among others:

(a) Topic Transformations

A large number of poetic texts are based on the transformation of one or several *topoi* which remain subjacent, but whose implicit presence helps to create »double structuring effects« based on stereotyped thematic series that underlie the linear development of such or such narrative (or descriptive) sequence. This is what may be noted for example in a famous extract from *Swan's Way*, the description of the toilets at Combray:

- (6) [J]e montais sangloter tout en haut de la maison à côté de la salle d'étude, sous les toits, dans une petite pièce sentant l'iris, et que parfumait aussi un cassis sauvage poussé au-dehors entre les pierres de la muraille et qui passait une branche de fleurs par la fenêtre entrouverte. Destinée à un usage plus spécial et plus vulgaire, cette pièce, d'où l'on voyait pendant le jour jusqu'au donjon de Roussainville-le-Pin, servit longtemps de refuge pour moi, sans doute parce qu'elle était la seule qu'il me fût permis de fermer à clef, à toutes celles de mes occupations qui réclamaient une inviolable solitude : la lecture, la rêverie, les larmes et la volupté.¹⁷

The description of the »little room« (the toilets) is overstructured owing to the fact that it constitutes a »modern« version of the *topos* of the *locus amoenus*.¹⁸ It must be recalled here that this *topos* consists of a series of thematic invariants (T₁, T₂, T₃...) diagrammatically represented in Figure 5. In fact, what Proust offers the reader is a variant of this series, since his description contains a group of constituents (C₁, C₂, C₃...) implicitly linked on a term-to-term basis with the

17 »I ran up to the top of the house to cry by myself in a little room beside the schoolroom and beneath the roof, which smelt of orris-root and was scented also by a wild currant-bush which had climbed up between the stones of the outer wall and thrust a flowering branch in through the half-opened window. Intended for a more special and a baser use, this room, from which, in the daytime, I could see as far as the keep of Roussainville-le-Pin, was for a long time my place of refuge, doubtless because it was the only room whose door I was allowed to lock, whenever my occupation was such as required an inviolable solitude: reading or day-dreaming, tears or sensual pleasure«. (Proust 1989, 11)

18 Of course, the *topos* of the *locus amoenus* (»delectable place« in Latin) dates back to Greek/Latin antiquity, but it can also be found in a large number of medieval texts, whether it is for instance the garden described by Guillaume de Lorris in the first part of *Le Roman de la Rose*, or else the garden in which the heroes of the *Decameron* by Boccaccio are strolling (third day, introductory chapter).

main components of a *locus amoenus*. The »horizontal« semantico-logical connections ensuring the referential coherence of Proust's text are therefore overdetermined by a series of »vertical« analogical connections linking the main components of the description with their respective topic matrices. The following diagram is then achieved (see Fig. 4).

FIG. 4

T series (<i>topos</i> of the <i>locus</i> <i>amoe-</i> <i>nus</i>)	T ₁ (isolated place)	T ₂ (in a bucolic environment)	T ₃ (full of greenery)	T ₄ (with running water)	T ₅ (in which one indulges in delectable activities)
Seman- tic relati- onships between T and C	Isotopic over- lapping	Isotopic transformation	Isotopic intersection	Implicit isotopic transposition	Partial isotopic overlapping
C series (des- cription of the »little room«)	C ₁ (room where one can be alone)	C ₂ (in an urban environment)	C ₃ (scented by a flowering branch)	[C ₄ (equipped with hydraulic fittings)] ^{a)}	C ₅ (in which one indulges in reading, day-dreaming, masturbation / in which one can give free rein to his sadness)

^{a)}Of course, C₄ is not explicitly mentioned in Proust's description, but still remains present in the reader's mind since the seme /hydraulic fittings/ is inherent to the sememe of »toilets«.

(b) Implicit Intertextual References

A textual sequence may also be overstructured through the implicit reference to one or several subjacent hypotexts (or »syntexts«; Ricardou 1978, 304), which may function as so many »stylistic matrices« (Riffaterre 1979, 77; 1980, 12–13, 19–21; 1982, 100–101). Thus, for example, in *The Flanders Road* by Claude Simon the alternated descriptions of Georges eating grass in a prisoners' camp and performing a cunnilingus are mutually associated, since they both refer to the same hypotextual matrix, i. e. the obscene slangy expression *brouter la touffe* (»grazing« / »eating pussy«; see Yocaris 2002, 89–90). It must be noted that such a stylistic device, which obviously constitutes the peak of literariness for Riffaterre, can very well be used in non literary texts. By way of proof, all one has to do is to read the sports newspaper *L'Équipe*. On 17 August 2007, the daily paper carried the following headline about the tennis player Virginie Razzano (who had just qualified for the quarter finals of a WTA tournament in Toronto): »Virginie fait un tabac«. This headline is perfectly adequate at referential and syntactic levels, but we may wonder what justifies here (i) the choice of the player's first name instead of her surname and (ii) the choice of the idiom »fait

un *tabac*« [= hits it big]« instead of its equivalents »fait un *malheur*« or »fait un *carton*« for example. In fact, both choices are constrained, since the sequence considered is nothing but the expansion of a hypotextual matrix, the NG »tabac de Virginie«...¹⁹

Ahistorical Dimension

Jakobson's definition of poeticity validates *de facto* a self-reflexive ahistorical conception of literariness. This is quite logical, insofar as the stylistic analyses based on the single »principle of equivalence« are bound to highlight the »internal« relationships developing among the different textual constituents (the »intracommunication« phenomena according to Groupe μ 's terminology 1970, 19), to the detriment of the links between these constituents and the »extra-textual« referent. One may certainly argue that such an approach constitutes a corruption of Jakobson's ideas (Dominicy 1982, 45–46; 1991, 168, n.19; Ruwet 1989, 13–14; Aroui 1996, 6–7). The fact remains that the insistence on the »self-referentiality« of literary texts is a real commonplace in the works of Jakobson's structuralist epigones, who are vying with one another in sensational statements: »the poetic speech discredits itself as an act of communication. In fact, it communicates nothing, or rather it only communicates itself« (Groupe μ 1970, 19); »Poetic texts are closed, they have no referent« (Delas, Filliolet 1973, 56); »poetic representation is based on a reference to the signifiers« (Riffaterre 1979, 198), etc. Of course, such methodological isolation just leads to a deadlock, and has greatly contributed to the decline of structuralism in the field of literary studies since the eighties.

Partial Inadequacy

Jakobson's definition turns out to be ineffective when we are confronted with texts deprived of cohesion on the syntagmatic plan. Indeed, a text cannot be »overstructured« if it is not structured, in other words if it does not retain a minimum amount of syntactic and logical coherence! Confronted with this tricky problem, which mostly comes up when one is working on twentieth-century poetry, Jakobson's epigones adopt very different positions. Some of them, like Nicolas Ruwet, try to get round the difficulty by making an absolute aesthetic norm of the »double structuring« precept, and by purely and simply ruling out from the field of poetry the works which do not comply with Ja-

¹⁹ Virginia tobacco.

kobson's patterns of analysis (see Ruwet 1975, 349–350). Others, like Groupe μ 's rhetoricians, do their best to adapt those patterns to the reality of the situation: they hence admit that »poetic reading better acknowledges the organizing structure of a text through a specific tabular model than through a linear disposition« (Groupe μ 1990, 319), which comes down to giving up *de facto* the »double structuring« principle. Others still, following the example of Michael Riffaterre, are trying to show that in fact poeticity results from a conflict between »linear« and »tabular« structures, the interference between two distinct organisational systems generating referential and semantic incongruities which draw the reader's attention to the reticular and »totalising« dimension of truly »poetic« texts (Riffaterre 1979, 196; 1980, 2–3, 88–91, 136). Needless to say that none of these theoretical options is fully satisfying, insofar as the three of them are based on axioms having a local impact alone, and not a universal one: a protocol of analysis likely to be applied to *all* poetic texts without exception is still to be found...

Methodological »Pointillism«

Resorting systematically to the »double structuring« concept informs in a decisive way one's viewpoint on poetic texts. Indeed, the latter are considered as multidirectional networks containing a series of nodal points (textual segments helping to structure together different organisational mechanisms) on which the analyst's attention usually focuses. Thus for example, in text (3), the analyst will focus his attention – as we actually did – on the presence of the word »rentrée«, a relational knot linking together the musical isotopy and the erotic one. But what about the constituents which do not belong to the fabric of systemic relationships thus discovered? Those constituents are relegated to a position of secondary importance: thus, the analyst tends to favour a »pointillist« approach, since he minimises the part played by textual sequences and syntactic connections which do not help to create *in praesentia* and *in absentia* stylistic equivalences. This is probably why Jakobson's structuralist epigones all insist, except for D. Delas and J. Filliolet (1973, 62–89), on *word* stylistics (Riffaterre 1979, 61–74; Groupe μ 1990, 29–84), to the detriment of *sentence* stylistics: the syntactic and phrastic construction of poetic texts is not examined as a significant fact in itself (Ruwet 1989, 15), since the focus is either on the recurrences of the same constructional pattern (Groupe μ 1990, 34–37), or on the phenomena of *in absentia* equivalence between a whole sentence and its hypotextual matrix (Riffaterre 1979, 45–60), or else (while slightly departing from Jakobson's patterns of analysis) on syntactic deviations from an arbitrarily defined norm (Groupe μ 1970, 67–90).

Outline of a Neo-formalist Approach

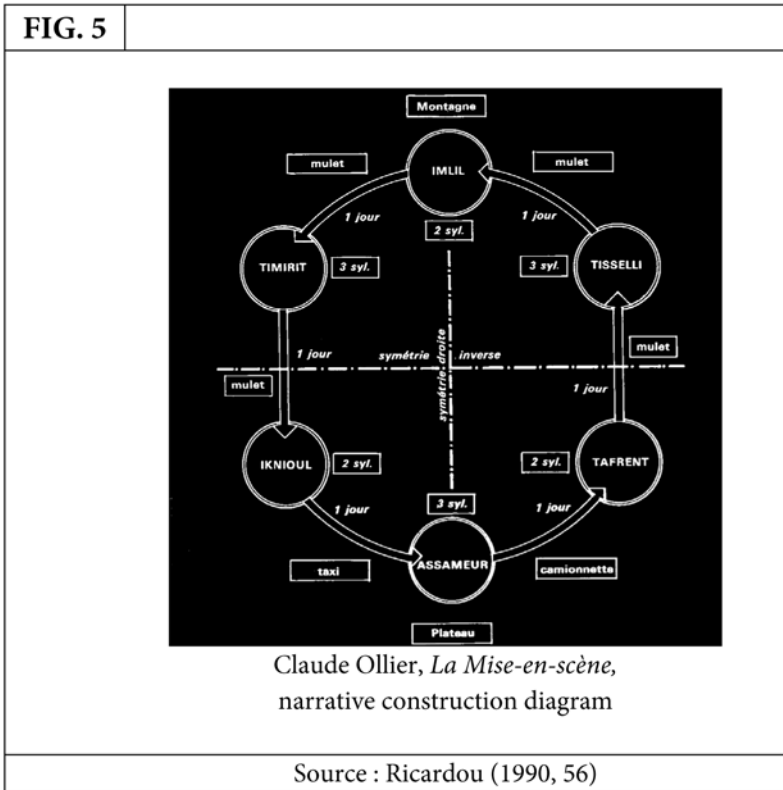
A neo-formalist approach should rest on the conceptual and methodological experience acquired through the »classical« structuralist approach, while providing theoretical innovations permitting a remedy –at least partly – for the above mentioned difficulties. This is roughly what those innovations might consist in:

The Use of Iconic Descriptive Tools

Since the analytic approach advocated by Jakobson and his epigones is clearly based on a form of »spacialization« or »geometrization« of poetic discourse (Shapiro 1976, 432, Riffaterre 1980, 61), stylisticians drawing their inspiration from it would be well advised to resort to diagrams helping to »visualize« the complexity of interactions developing among the different constituents of poetic texts. It is to be noted that the process of diagrammatic formalization may not only concern microtextual (see Fig. 2, 3) but also macrotextual structures: a play, a short story, even a whole novel (as for example *La Mise en scène* by Claude Ollier: see Fig. 5) can be the subject of a diagrammatisation. Besides, thanks to the continuous improvements in computer science, it has now become possible to make use of 3D animations, which can be quite useful to reproduce the »rhizomatic« dimension of some works of postmodernist fiction (such as Claude Simon's *Triptych* or Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Topologie d'une cité fantôme*) whose fictional world no longer lends itself to a stable, unitary representation deprived of contradictions (Ricardou 1978, 223–243; Yocaris 2006).

The Use of the Goodmanian Concept of »Exemplification«

A large-scale use of the concept of exemplification (see Goodman 1968, 1978; Genette 1991; Jenny 1997, 2000; Yocaris 2008) makes it possible to adopt a non self-reflexive formalist approach, since the »tabular« mechanisms implemented in poetic texts may be considered in some cases not as simple stylistic marks aimed at making verbal matter perceptible, but as complex signs obliquely expressing a referential content which must be taken into account in the same way as denotative thematic data. This is for instance what happens in text (7), a Malherbe's Ode singing the praises of Marie de' Medici (»À la Reine sur sa bienvenue en France,« 1600).



- (7) Ce sera vous qui de nos villes
Ferez la beauté reflleurir,
Vous, qui de nos haines civiles
Ferez la racine mourir ;
Et par vous la paix assurée
N'aura pas la courte durée
Qu'espèrent infidèlement,
Non lassés de notre souffrance,
Ces Français qui n'ont de la France
Que la langue et l'habillement.²⁰

20 »You are the one who in our cities / Will make beauty flourish anew, / You, who will uproot / Our civil hatreds; / And through you, peace now ensured / Won't be as short-lived / As unfaithfully hope / Unwearing by our suffering / Those French people who are French / Only in language and attire.«

The setting up of a whole system of echoes and constructional symmetries in this ten-line stanza²¹ enables the reader to pick out the predicates »order«, »regularity«, »balance« that are thus denoted *and* exemplified simultaneously: the syntactic and metrical structures of the text clearly metaphorise the unchanging stability of the monarchy ... Therefore, Malherbe's poem, *owing to the fact that it makes apparent a whole network of »internal« formal symmetries*, becomes a »trace« of the sociological and political context which has partly determined its production: we are a long way from the »non referential« and »un-historical« readings advocated by M. Riffaterre (1979, 84).

The Use of Appropriate Tools to Study Enunciative and Syntactic Structures

The rapid development of textual linguistics and pragmatics since the early eighties has opened new perspectives for structural stylistics. Indeed, the surveys concerning enunciative polyphony in all its forms (Ducrot 1984), the use of implicit assertions (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1986), the emergence of a discursive coherence (Charolles 1978; Calas 2006), »textual construction of the point of view« (Rabatel 1998) or else the use of deictics (Morel, Danon-Boileau 1992) unquestionably enable a better definition of the »totalization« phenomena which can be observed in poetic texts. However, the least that can be said is that research in this field is just in its infancy: most of the complex discursive interactions described by linguists and pragmaticians still remain out of the field of vision of stylistics, for want of a trans-disciplinary protocol of analysis acting as an »interface« between the sciences of language and traditional hermeneutics. Establishing such a protocol will be an exciting challenge for literary scholars in the forthcoming years.

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21 As a matter of fact, one notices immediately: (a) the near-exclusive predominance of pair rhythms; (b) the symmetrical disposition of the lines in alternate, couplet and enclosing rhymes according to a 4+2+4 pattern; (c) the triple repetition of »vous«; (d) the duplication of the syntactic *pattern* [cleft sentence + relative clause + factitive construction] (»c'est vous qui ferez x); (e) the use of antithetic terms (»refleurir« / »mourir«), etc.

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Shirley Sharon-Zisser

The Poetic Function from Jakobson to Lacan: A Lacanian Theory of Poetics

The »projection of the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection to the axis of combination,« so did Roman Jakobson famously formulate the poetic function (Jakobson 1981, 27). Such projection precipitates signifying chains in which the sequential combination of formally different units (for instance, noun and verb, iamb and spondee) is substituted by the sequential combination of formally equal units (most notably units of prosody or meter). A dense textual fabric is formed, a poetic text(ure) whose hallmarks are formal repetition at the same time as »frustrated expectation« or »defeated anticipation« (Jakobson 1981, 28, 42) as it is precisely repetition within a linguistic function different to that which Jakobson calls »the usual speech form« (1981, 42) in its sequence and diachrony which makes it possible for the (linguistically) unfamiliar to emerge, for a linguistic segment that is poetic to become defamiliarized, to use Shklovsky's term (1965), or to use Freud's term, theorized only a little later than »Art as Technique,« for the *angst*-related affect generated in the psychic apparatus when the strange and the familiar fold into one another, *unheimlich* (1919 h). But I anticipate myself.

Jakobson's conceptualization of language's (at least partially) sense-exceeding dimension, most frequently encountered in poetry, as a functional effect of the rhetorically-determined axes marking the limits of language itself has had a varied and influential legacy in contemporary literary and linguistic theory, not least in Derrida's category of textual aporias – a derivative of conceptual aporias in which a category which cancels out its very conditions of possibility – which might be regarded in Jakobsonian terms as the poetic function driven to an absolute pitch of intensity. For what is the Derridean aporia if not an impossible passage, an impass(age), a milieu which does not, Derrida says, allow for kinesis of any kind (1993, 29), including, one might say, the passage of sense; an impasse of sense (in French, *impas du sens*) which becomes a *pas du sense*, an absence of sense, non-sense, a state of the signifier wherein what Jakobson calls the »cognitive function,« the function correlated with the referent, is not only, as he puts it »more or less dimmed« (Jakobson 1981, 89) but altogether blacked out,

blocked. If for Jakobson the referent is one of language's functions, which may be dimmed or foregrounded in a given linguistic instance, for Derrida in his early work, notably *Of Grammatology*, the referent or, he says, »the transcendental signified« (1976, 158), cannot legitimately be located outside the linguistic event, outside of the text. The linguistic aporia, then, would be for Derrida the marking at once of language's absolute edge, unendurable ledge, »pure possibility,« he says, »of cutting off,« (1993, 78), and of the immanence of this l-edge in each and every component of a linguistic event. Always already manifesting the intransgressibility of the signifier towards a transcendental signified, Derrida's aporia may be read as a deconstructive notation of the Jakobsonian poetic function not as a peculiar instance of language but as exposing the very structure of the sign with respect to its beyond. And yet this radical refusal of a beyond has a before which it logically precedes rather than transcends, a future anterior whose roots, uncannily glimpsed above, are Freudian.

Jacques Lacan's return to Freud *à la lettre* in terms of the linguistic theories of Saussure and Jakobson shares the interest of Derrida, whose work its beginnings historically precede, in the defiles of the signifier. And yet the letter of the Freudian text, most markedly the Freudian concept of the inassimilable thing (derivative of the Kantian »thing in itself,« the noumenon inaccessible to consciousness's spatio-temporal modes of perception)¹ escaping the pleasure principle's judgment (a literal judgment of taste, made in terms of the wish to eat or to spit out) determining a perceptum's accession to the status of representation or signifier,² leads Lacan to increasingly emphasize in his teaching an operator which is precisely outside representation, outside of the text: the Freudian lost object which refuses the logic of absence, the Freudian thing made operable for analytic praxis which Lacan writes as the object small a. Outside of the frame of the phantasm. Exterior, foreign, even to the Other scene of the unconscious. Outside of the text.

Lacan's teaching, then, casts not only ego psychology and the object relations psychology of Melanie Klein and the English school (Fairbairn, Guntrip, Winnicott) but also deconstructive philosophy, as logically pre-Freudian: concealments, in Heideggerean terms, of the ontological opening in the history of thinking constituted by the Freudian discovery of the unconscious as an other scene (*andere Schauplatz*) in which signifying chains unknown to the conscious mind and the ego but deploying the rhetorical mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy, condensation and displacement, which Jakobson locates as the

1 Kant develops the concept of the »thing in itself« in *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1999), e.g. A254/B310, P362.

2 See especially Freud's *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1887–1902, 239) and »Negation« (1925 h, 238).

structuring principles of language, fold and unfold themselves. It is precisely at the level of the formalism (of the Czech tradition) Lacan writes in his fifth seminar of 1958, on the formations of the unconscious, namely of a structural theory of the signifier as such, that Freud »situates himself from the beginning« (1957 – 1958, lesson of 6 November 1957). »Starting with Freud,« Lacan writes in the article on »The Subversion of the Subject« of the same year, »the unconscious becomes a chain of signifiers that [...] insists somewhere« (»on another stage or in a different scene,« as he wrote), a chain of signifiers whose governing mechanisms »correspond exactly to the function [the Prague school] believes determine the most radical axes of the effects of language, namely metaphor and metonymy – in other words, the effects of the substitution and combination of signifiers in the synchronic and diachronic dimensions, respectively, in which they appear in discourse« (1958 [2005], 676 – 77).

But if one starts with Freud, as Lacan indeed does, one should add, as he does not always do in his early work which places the signifier at center stage, that what the »linguistic analysis« of the Prague school »allows us to detect as being the essential modes of [...] the combinations of signifiers« including in the poetic form where combination wholly eclipses selection and substitution, are »strictly identifiable with [...] overlap in an exhaustive fashion« with the clinical laws »by which a phenomenon can be recognized as belonging to the formations of the unconscious« (1957 – 58, lesson of 20 November 1957) only on condition of these signifiers' constant delineation of their beyond which manifests itself in their very repetitions. It is precisely as a function of this beyond, the beyond of the Thing (*das Ding*) that the Other scene of the unconscious becomes, in Freudian and Lacanian terms, the scene of the poetic function. For if poetic language, as Mukařovský puts it, ceaselessly performs the work of the »violation of the norm« (1964, 22), is it not homeomorphic with the violations of universals (for instance, the universal of anatomical functions of zones of the human organism) involved in erogenization qua aberration, Freud's term (1905d)³ for the constitutively perverse nature of sexuality as precipitate of the unconscious? Poetry, Lacan says in his third seminar, echoing the formulations of Shklovsky and Mukařovský, »is the creation of a subject adopting a new order of symbolic relations to the world« (1955 – 1956 [1993], 78). Poetry, he says in his twenty-fourth seminar, echoing Mukařovský even more closely, depends on »the violence done to usage,« in the case of poetry, normative linguistic usage (lesson of

3 It is in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (Freud 1905d) that Freud unfolds a metapsychological theorization of sexuality as structurally based on »aberration,« most poignantly the aberration of a portion of the organism (what he terms the erotogenic organ) from the survival function it is supposed to fulfill according to the universal principles of anatomy, to the function of serving as an object of the satisfaction of the drive in its constant motion.

15 March 1977). Just so, one could say following Freud's *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905d), does the erotogenic organ, wrenched from its ego-serving and anatomical function and perverted to serve the satisfaction of the drive.⁴ Sexuality is poetic; insofar as it is always already perverse. And inversely, the poetic function as a category of structure is structurally sexual in its predication on the operation of othering (violation of the norm, defamiliarization, defeated anticipation).

But Lacan is more precise than that, throughout his teaching and increasingly so towards its closure, adumbrating a theory of structure, and a theory of poetry, which radically question Jakobson's stated assertions concerning the immanence to the poetic function of the binding together of »thematic and compositional framework« (1949 [1981], 17; 1960 [1981], 44; 1970 [1981], 301) at the same time as they take the Jakobsonian theory of structure in poetry as their point of departure. »The essential to structuralism,« Lacan says in his sixteenth seminar, is the »lack in the signifying chain« (lesson of 12 March 1969), the arbitrary gap, in Saussurian terms, marking the difference between one signifier and another.⁵ This lack or gap enables movement in the signifying chain: movement along the axes of selection and combination, the motion of folding of the axis of selection onto the axis of combination constitutive of the poetic function (1960 [1981], the motion of folding and unfolding, flux and reflux, which Jakobson masterfully sketches within the poetic structure of Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 »The expense of spirit« (1970 [1981]). At the conclusion of this masterful sketch Jakobson speaks of »the cogent and mandatory unity« of poetic texture and meaning (1970 [1981], 301), whose critical unfolding must, he stresses, »be corroborated by a structural analysis« attentive to grammatic categories summoned, in poetry, to perform »novel tasks« (1961 [1981], 97). For Jakobson, the curves of movement in language, especially poetic language, made possible by the differential structure of the signifier, precipitate new meanings, critically articulable only to the extent they are corroborated by linguistic analysis. New meanings, subtended by novel usages of linguistic forms, are the effect of the sliding of the signifier, especially along the parabolic curve of the poetic function. An interest in »the effects of language« made possible by its gaps is indeed, Lacan says in his fifteenth seminar, the common denominator of theories of structuralism (lesson of 13 March 1968). In his sixteenth seminar, Lacan equates these effects with the precipitation of »wandering objects in the

4 Freud's most cogent formulation of the erotogenic organ as a portion of the organism wrenched from its anatomical function and used for a satisfaction exceeding the needs of survival is in the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905d, 181–84). See also the essay on »The Psychoanalytic View of a Psychogenic Disturbance of Vision« (1910i).

5 See Saussure's formulation of language in the *Course in General Linguistics* as a »purely differential« system wherein the differential gaps between signifiers are arbitrary (1966, 120).

signifying chain« (lesson of 12 March 1969). And yet these wandering objects are not new meanings; not even in poetry. And not only because, in Mukařovský's terms, the expansion of standard language, of the treasury of signifiers and their semantic precipitates or signifieds, is »beyond the scope of poetic language« (1964, 28).

If poetry is structurally sexual, as a psychoanalytic analysis of Mukařovský's and Jakobson's structuralist theories of poetic language would suggest, this in no way manifests itself in the semantic register of poetry, much as this register, taking its material from the phantasm⁶ (in psychoanalytic terms, the subject's unconscious relation to the lost object in its phenomenal manifestations) so often concerns itself with the vicissitudes of love life. Instead, Lacan says in the sixth seminar, what poetry clearly and precisely gives to be seen is how »the poetic relationship to desire is poorly accommodated [...] to the depiction of its [topic]« (lesson of 12 November 1958). Poorly accommodated not because of any limitation of its signifying ability, but because of the inherent incapacity, Lacan says in a later seminar, of any *Bedeutung* (Frege's term, variously translated as reference, denotation, meaning)⁷ in the chain of signifiers constituting a subject's unconscious »to cover what is involved in sex.« (1966–67, lesson of 11 January 1967). Hence the *Bedeutung* poetry generates is always already a flawed *Bedeutung*, »struck by some caducity or other« (Lacan 1966–67, lesson of 11 January 1967) at the very point where the poet purports to provide a conscious, Cartesian and perhaps also universal articulation to the (impossible) sexual ratio between man and woman. And yet because this caducity of »the poetic approach to desire when it itself is properly speaking sought and aimed at« (Lacan 1958–59, lesson of 12 November, 1958) takes place on the parabolic curve of the poetic function, enabled, in Saussurean terms, by the differential gap between signifiers and capitalizing on this gap's mobilizing effects, it takes the form of the particular mobilization, particular movement of the soaring failure. A movement which becomes, Lacan states in his sixth seminar on desire and its interpretation, the poetic function's unique mode of the »evocation« (as distinct from depiction) of desire (1958–59, lesson of 12 November 1958). What subtends the poetic function's structural sexualisation, Lacan suggests, is this function's intensification of the differential gap between signifiers, which has the evocation of desire's movement of aborted soaring towards a metonymic object as its effect.

And yet when Lacan again speaks of the poetic function eight years later, with Roman Jakobson in the audience at his seminar, it is not the differential gap but

6 This formulation concerning the source of poetry's semantic material in the phantasm appears in Lacan's twenty-fifth seminar, lesson of 20 December 1977.

7 Frege's concept of *Bedeutung* which is Lacan's conceptual point of departure in this development concerning the structuralist category of the poetic function is developed in his influential article »On Sense and Reference« (1980).

another, more radical form of things which are not what he indicates as endemic to poetry's structural sexuation, to the work of »sexual desire« and enjoyment as poetry's structural principle⁸: not the Euclidean absence of the gap or lack, but the topological absence of the hole, or more precisely, the vacuole, his term for the (lost) object beyond the signifying chain, which he denominates as the object small a. The question Lacan puts to Jakobson in his fourteenth seminar is whether »he, whose teaching on language has [...] such consequences« for psychoanalysis, »also thinks [...] that his teaching is of a nature to require a radical change of position at the level [...] of what constitutes the subject« (1966–67, lesson of 14 February 1967). The »radical change« at which Lacan gestures is his own recasting of structure. Structure is now no longer taken only in the classical structuralist sense of a covariant ensemble enabling diachronic and synchronic slidings of signifiers. In the presence of Jakobson, who attended the seminar on that day, Lacan redefines structure as »real« (Lacan 1966–1967, lesson of 14 February 1967), that is, as an ensemble whose »truth« is the object-hole cast out from it to retroactively function as its cause (Lacan 1966–67, lesson of 11 January 1967). It is Jakobson's implication, as early as »Linguistics and Poetics« (1960 [1981]) that the poetic function involves a problematization of the referent (what Lacan will recast as the hole of the object a, the vacuole) that enables Lacan to suggest that his (Jakobson's) theory of linguistic structure points towards this object as the »cause of discourse itself« (1968–69, lesson of 20 November 1968). Only the »anatomy of the vacuole,« of the hole not the lack, Lacan says in a discussion of the poetry of courtly love in his sixteenth seminar, can explain the relationship of poetry to sexual desire and enjoyment at its structural principle (to be sharply distinguished from its conscious theme) (1968–69, lesson of 12 March 1969). This is because the vacuole functions in the psychic apparatus not only as the *hors-texte*, the cause beyond the chain of signifiers that is the unconscious, but at the same time as the empty center, the »edge structure,« in terms of vector theory, which allows the drive to perform the work of its »rotational flux« (Lacan 1968–69, lesson of 12 March 1969). The drive's pressure, which Freud calls its *Drang* (1915c), is the pressure to rediscover the primordial satisfaction whose exclusion, *Ausstossung* from psychic representation, becomes the condition of psychic representation, a temporal looping backwards, a rotation around the hole (in psychic representation, in satisfaction) the operation of *Ausstossung* institutes as psychic cause.⁹ The substitute objects in relation to which the drive obtains satisfaction: breast,

8 On sexual desire as poetry's structural principle see Lacan (1968–69, lesson of 12 March 1969).

9 See Freud's theory of the drive as elaborated in »Instincts and Their Vicissitudes« (1915c, 122–24).

excrement, gaze and voice as libidinal objects, the objects of love life, *objets d'art*, including poetry,¹⁰ are thus not only *objets trouvées*, phenomenal veils of the hole they never even fully cover encountered in a linear movement towards it, but effects generated by the very circular motion, the rotational flux of curbing around this hole. Which cannot be said. Which does not cease not to be written.

Poetry is a form of this rotational flux; paradigmatic because like the work of the psychic apparatus itself, it is a practice of the letter, an effort at writing. Every poet in his effort to write, to enchain signifiers, writes Lacanian analyst and poet Jo Attié, aims at a non-dialectical point beyond the work of the signifier; at his own unsayable as the Archimedean point of his writing. Once he has marked this, point, this hole, the poet does not cease, in his writing, to turn around it, impossibly seeking to name it; the precipitate of this turning is poetry as object (2006, 1 – 4).

But it is not only and perhaps not even primarily Jakobson's correlation of the poetic function with the occlusion of the referent (in Lacan's terms, the vacuole), which enables Lacan to suggest to him the radical implications of his structuralist poetics. For the vacuole, cause of the signifying chain, is not a philosophical postulate in the knowable's beyond (the modes of perception, the chain of signifiers) but indexed within the knowable. Indexed in poetry, for instance, as Lacan states in the fourteenth seminar, precisely at the point in which the poetic speaker ceases to be a Cartesian »I,« presenting the conscious contents of his »I think« which purportedly grounds his »I am,« and manifests himself as »the ›I‹ of the ›I am not thinking‹« manifests himself, that is, as what is radically split off from the *Cogito* (1966 – 67, lesson of 11 January 1967). And are not poetic moments where the Cartesian »I« of the poetic speaker is debunked to the benefit of what cannot be thought or said, remains opaque to sense, particular instances of what Lacan describes in the fourteenth seminar (1966 – 67) as the *Bedeutung's* being struck by caducity, its becoming a holed *Bedeutung*? In Lacan's terms, then, the vacuole not only precipitates but manifests itself in the convariant ensemble of signifiers: not in their differential gaps, not, in Derridean terms, in instances of *différance*, but precisely at moments of an opacity irreducible to semantic sense. Is not this another name for what Jakobson theorizes as the poetry of grammar (1961 [1981]), linguistic forms as they function in poetry, playing a decisive role in the poetic function?

10 In the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (Freud 1905d), Freud speaks only of breast, excrement and phallus as objects of the drive. In Lacan's elaboration of the theory of the drives, especially in the tenth seminar on *Anxiety* (1962 – 63), Lacan adds two new objects of psychoanalytic theory; gaze and voice. It is in this same seminar that Lacan speaks of cultural objects, objects outside of the body, including art objects, including poetic objects, as structurally coeval with these natural objects. All of these objects, in Lacan's theorization, are phenomenal veils of the void of the lost object.

If so, then the implications of Jakobson's thinking on poetic language are indeed more radical than his explicit insistence on grammar's support of poetic sense. If the poetry of grammar is the isolatable register Jakobson claims it is (1961 [1981]), it can never be reducible, translatable, to poetic sense. It is what is constitutively excessive of sense, what objects to sense, what functions as momentary indices of the object cause (the vacuole) around which poetic writing revolves, precipitating poetry as a libidinal object. The radical implication of Jakobsonian poetics Lacan points towards is that poetry of grammar, and, I venture (Sharon-Zisser 2008), poetry's stylistic, primarily rhetorical dimension at large are not only not the supports of sense Jakobson makes them be in what may be a belief in the possibility of a sexual ratio, but not merely aporetic. They do not only bring the sense of a poem to a dead end, disabling further hermeneutic movement, but make whatever sense has already accumulated leak. Poetry, Lacan says in his twenty-fourth seminar, consists not only of an »effect of sense,« but just as much of a »hole effect« (*effet du trou*) which reduces this effect of sense to a »pure knotting of one word to an other« (1976–77, lesson of 15 March 1977), a knotting signifying nothing and by this very property pointing at the emptiness (of the Thing, of the vacuole) around which libidinal (and poetic) life revolves (Lacan 1976–77, lesson of 15 March 1977). »How does the poet accomplish this tour de force, to make sense be absent?« Lacan asks in the twenty fourth seminar (1976–177, lesson of 15 March 1977). The answer Lacan does not spell out may be implicit in the declaration he made to Jakobson ten years earlier regarding the radical effects of Jakobson's literary theory. The *tour de force* is not only the effect of the rotational flux of signifiers around the hole which makes every poetic text a vortex(t) whose centripetal motion rips signifieds from the poetic chain of signifiers and swallows their debris. The *tour* (turn) which turns the poetic text *trou* (hole) is, as this anagram perhaps suggests, an effect of the work of the letter, the dimension of language exceeding sense whose more macrostructural manifestation is the forms of grammar and rhetoric, of style. Each instance of what Jakobson calls the grammar of poetry, what I have called the erotics of rhetoric (Sharon-Zisser 2000, 2008), signifying nothing, hence creates a *trou-matisme*, a small wound or hole in the poetic text's *Bedeutung*, a hole which the libidinal cathexis (of the poet, of the reader) dynamizes, turns vortex(t)¹¹ centripetally voiding the text of sense.

The poetic text is structurally topological: the chain of stylistic forms qua microstructural vortices, singular in the ways they function as attempted solutions to the poet's mode of enjoyment (that is, satisfaction in suffering), producing a macrostructural *effet du trou* insofar as they are placed *en tour*, made to

11 For an extended theorization of the literary text as vortex(t) see my »Some Little Language Such as Lovers Use« (2001).

turn by a drive traversing them, become flowers of rhetoric in a topological sense.¹² Read with Freud and along the development of Lacan's teaching, Jakobson's thinking of poetic language as predicated on the occlusion of the *Bedeutung* alongside the foregrounding of quintessentially asemantic grammatical forms points, as Lacan suggests in his fourteenth seminar, towards a psychoanalytic literary theory whose emphasis with regard to the structure of the poetic text would be not only the hole of the Thing, the always particular lost object around which poetry turns as its cause, but even more so the forms of style as microstructural manifestations of this hole, which do not support sense, as Jakobson claims, but void it. In voiding sense, they call forth what it is possible to call forth of enjoyment.

Such a psychoanalytic literary theory, however, has implications not only for the delineation of the structure of the poetic text but also for its interpretation. The analysand in an analytic session, Lacan says in his twenty-fifth seminar, makes poetry (1977–78, lesson of 20 December 1977). Sometimes. At those moments when the effort at conscious formulation makes something emerge from an Other scene or its unsayable beyond, something which makes the sense of conscious formulation leak. Or, more precisely, at those moments when the something from an Other scene or its beyond, whose I is that of the non-Cartesian »I am not thinking« and which is always already on the same Moebian surface as the *Cogito*, is cut by the analyst. The cut of the analytic session traumatizes the analysand's language precisely at the moment where it is already holed by what comes from elsewhere and objects to sense, just as do rhetorical forms in poetic language. The cut of the analytic session, which in Lacan's late teaching becomes tantamount to analytic interpretation,¹³ aimed at the alteration of symptoms, is inspired by Lacan's theorization of the holed structure of the poetic text itself. (Lacan 1977–78, lesson of 20 December 1977). To the extent an analytic interpretation is retroactively proven true, that is, affects the symptom, truth itself, Lacan says, »is defined as being poetic« (Lacan 1977–78, lesson of 20 December 1977). Analytic interpretation hence partakes of the writing of poetry, initiated by the punctuated moments of the analysand's speech. Psychoanalysis itself becomes, for Lacan, coeval with poetry (1976–77, lesson of 15 March 1977); analytic work, as the title of one of Jacques-Alain Miller's recent seminars indicates, is an effort for poetry.¹⁴ Precisely in the measure that it consists of subjecting sense, the source of neurotic suffering, to

12 For an extended theorization of rhetorical forms, »flowers of rhetoric« as topological, see my »Rhetorical Erotogenicity« (Sharon-Zisser 2009).

13 On the cut of the analytic session as the act of analytic interpretation par-excellence see Miller's »Interpretation in Reverse« (1999).

14 Jacques-Alain Miller's annual Lacanian orientation seminar at the University of Paris-VIII for the year 2002–2003 was entitled *Un effort de poésie*.

an operation of voiding by the traumatismes of the analytic cut, the clinic's equivalents for the micro-vortices constituted by the poetic text's flowers of rhetoric. Analytic interpretation whose function is poetic hence diverges from hermeneutic procedures, whether in psychotherapy or in literary criticism, including deconstructive criticism. It does not add significations but subtracts them. And a literary theory that would be not only rigorously psychoanalytic, but as such, also truly poetic in its effort and its function? Performing a topological *Aufhebung* (emphasizing under erasure) the Jakobsonian principles of poetic language's occlusion of the referent and the foregrounding of the asemantic grammar of poetry, it would read not for the sense of the semantic surface, poetry's correlative of the analysand's egoic speech, full of sense, knowing nothing of unconscious desire. Isolating the formal particularity of those purely asemantic rhetorical points of a literary text where the poetic function reaches its pitch of intensity, it would read these points awry: as proof not only of the text's literariness but of its radical alterity to its author. A psychoanalytical literary theory would read rhetorical forms as traumatismes in vortical, rotational flux which makes sense leak, enabling an anamorphic glimpse of their particular function in the economy of an always opaque mode of enjoyment.

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René Wellek and Kenneth Burke: Prague Influences on the Birth of Modern Rhetoric

René Wellek, in volume six of his compendium of modern literary criticism, wrote the following about Kenneth Burke, who was at the time nearing the very end of his 60-year career as a literary critic, semanticist, and theorist. Placing him among the New Critics, Wellek questioned his allegiance: »In [Burke's] theory, literature becomes absorbed into a scheme of linguistic action or rhetoric so all-embracing and all-absorbing that poetry as an art is lost sight of [. . .]. Art perishes and one wonders what the grand drama is for« (1986, 255–56). Today, rhetoricians agree that Burke's true allegiance was not to the New Criticism but instead to the New Rhetoric, the revival and expansion of rhetorical theory that has taken place in the U.S. from the mid-20th century and now numbers over 1,000 academic rhetoricians. While we often trace the beginnings of the New Rhetoric to the English critic I.A. Richards' 1936 Bryn Mawr Lectures on *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, and while other canonical »New Rhetoricians« would include such figures as Chicago narratologist Wayne Booth and Polish-Belgian argument theorist Chaim Perelman, it is arguably Kenneth Burke who is today the best known, most influential, and most widely studied. His expansive theories on discourse analysis, collected in books spanning four decades but most elucidated in 1945's *A Grammar of Motives*, 1950's *A Rhetoric of Motives*, and 1966's *Language as Symbolic Action*, are standard fare in American graduate schools. Burke's philosophy of language as symbolic action in particular has become almost ubiquitous in the humanities and social sciences (Gusfield 1989, 2), and his influence on literary studies, rhetoric, and speech communications is even more pronounced. Postcolonial theorist Edward Said lamented in 1983 that »any reader of modern French criticism will be astounded to realize that Kenneth Burke, in whose huge output many of the issues and methods currently engaging the French were first discussed, is unknown,« but Burke is no longer unknown, and the ranks of Burke scholars continue to grow through the conferences and journals dedicated to his theories.

While Burke wrote literary and social criticism throughout the 1930 s, it is his theory of *dramatism*, promulgated in his 1945 book *A Grammar of Motives*, that

most scholars point to as the starting point for Burkean language studies. Dramatism was defined by Burke as »[the acknowledgement] that the most direct route to the study of human relations and human motives is via a methodological inquiry into cycles or clusters of terms and their functions« (1968, 445). Dramatism is an understanding of language as not a conveyor but a creator of meaning in human interaction with the world. The philosophy of dramatism thus assumes that »our words create orientations or attitudes, shaping our views of reality and thus generating different motives for our actions,« write Foss, Foss, and Trapp in their standard introduction to Burke's thought (1991, 181). It »treats language and thought primarily as modes of action« (Burke 1945, xxii) – thus his well-known dictum, language is symbolic action. The methodology of dramatism, therefore, proposes to study human motivations through a close and synoptic examination of the words used to convey the chosen actions. It studies the interaction that these words produce between an act, an actor or agent, their scene, the tools used to produce the action, and the purpose for the action. Burke's own purpose for dramatisitic analysis he proposed as a means to transcend differences in a conflict-laden world by identifying deeply embedded points of linguistic commonality and then using these to move toward rhetorical action.

Thus, Wellek's critique of Burke – that after his early literary criticism, »his work in recent decades must rather be described as aiming at a philosophy of meaning, human behavior, and action whose center is not in literature at all« (1961, 109) – is a badge of honour to Burke scholars today. Yes, he *did* aim at human behaviour (although he never lost sight of what for him was the importance of literature to this aim). So Wellek's supposed criticism is dismissed and his influence on Burke unexamined. It is this unexamined interaction and influence that I wish to address here, for Burke did care what Wellek thought of his work, and he did care that Wellek portray him accurately to Wellek's audience of literary critics. Unlike most Burke scholars today, Burke thought of himself primarily as a literary critic and his work as expanding the importance of literature and criticism to the world, and, as I argue in my book *Burke, War, Words*, he strove from the beginning to make his methods understandable to and adoptable by other literary critics.

An examination of Burke's correspondence files reveals that he wrote regularly to people we would today call New Critics, neo-Aristotelians, general semanticists, and – in several cases – friends of Wellek's.¹ In 1950, Burke was asked informally to come to Princeton University and »help with Wellek« during Wellek's guest lectures on the German literary critics. Burke, who read German well enough to be a regular translator of Thomas Mann, was considered to be the

1 Wellek's private papers are still uncatalogued and thus unavailable for scholarly study.

most knowledgeable scholar around on Wellek's speciality, the history of Continental literary criticism. In 1949, the two of them presented papers at the New England regional meeting of the College English Association, in what was originally to have been a joint panel (Goldberg to Burke, 1 March 1949, 17 March 1949, Kenneth Burke Papers). While Wellek discussed the need to define which documents were literature and which were not in order to more critically compose a »literary history,« Burke discussed the possibility of defining literature as »symbolic action« – a type of rhetoric inducing change in the reader (»New England Meeting« 1949, 6–7). Both men, in other words, were positing a revised definition of literature in order to expand literary theory, and both were convinced that what Wellek called »formalistic, organistic, symbolistic aesthetics« tied to »a closer collaboration with linguistics and stylistics« (1961, 118) was the true path for the literary critic – although Burke would always add that the purpose for this analysis was a clearer understanding not only of literature but of the world.

Burke and Wellek, in other words, should have been at least correspondents, if not friends. And yet, it seems they were not. Burke did not engage with Wellek's work, and Wellek, the few times he addressed Burke's work, was superficial or openly negative. In his 1949 book with Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature*, Wellek cited Burke's work only as far as 1937, ignoring his two key books from the 1940s. Later, in a paragraph in »The Main Trends of Twentieth-Century Criticism« for the *Yale Review*, Wellek termed Burke a New Critic who combined »Marxism, psychoanalysis, and anthropology with semantics in order to devise a system of human behavior and motivation which uses literature only as a document or illustration« and whose method was »a baffling phantasmagoria of bloodless categories« (1961, 109). Perhaps unsurprisingly, this generated a vigorous, 16-page response from Burke to the editor of the journal. Wellek replied to him, labelling Burke a philosopher and adding,

Nor do I contradict myself if I deplore the lack of collaboration between the New Critics and modern linguistics and still refuse to accept your specific philosophy of language. It seems to me that it has almost nothing in common with modern linguistics whether it be that of De Saussure's, Trubetskoj's, or Jakobson's, or Hjelmslev's, or Devoto's, or Spitzer's, or even Bloomfield's.
(14 December 1961, Kenneth Burke Papers)

Burke's drafted reply to this letter is equally disdainful:

When critics start attacking one another along [the] lines [of being too abstract], it's a good time to recall the proverb of the pot and the kettle [. . .] My slogan is: Better read one book ten times than ten books once. But while I am stumbling through one book once, your chosen task must require you to have raced competently

through at least half a hundred [. . .] Under such conditions, as you indicate, sixteen pages of ›painsful‹ minutiae may be needed to correct the false impressions which your efficient generalizing method can pack into one short paragraph.

(24 December 1961, Kenneth Burke Papers)

It seems most probable that this Christmas Eve response was never sent. Instead, two days later, Burke sent a short note commenting that he had decided not to add to his original 16-page response, since he seemed unlikely to change Wellek's mind, and instead hoped only that when Wellek wrote of him again, he would contact Burke, who would be happy to help with his »bafflement,« as he »dared tell« himself that their problem was simply one of misunderstanding (26 December 1961, Kenneth Burke Papers). This is typical Burke: he always wanted to be understood – an irony given that he is considered the most obscure of modern rhetoricians – and he always thought, as he put it in a 1939 article, that »people, taken by and large, are acting reasonably enough, *within their frame of reference*« –and if they were not, then what they needed was »a still wider frame of reference« (rpt. 1941, 188) – that is, more information to widen their perspective. But when Wellek did write of Burke again, in a long essay on Burke for the *Sewanee Review*, he continued to be »baffled,« and Burke this time responded both at length and publicly in the *Michigan Quarterly Review*. Although both articles presented opposing textual interpretations, of greater concern to each was whether the other's method was at all valid. Wellek mightily opposed Burke's expansion of his theory of dramatism into realms outside of literature, and thus he attempted to describe only its effects on literary texts while ignoring both the implications and the conclusions drawn from studying the same terms used in philosophy, theology, science, etc. (1971, 172). Burke, meanwhile, felt that Wellek's encyclopaedic and selective samplings of his literary analyses over the years were a »piecemeal, hit-and-run mode of reporting« (1972, 11). Both men, that is, felt that the other's method could yield no true insights.

Perhaps, as Burke wrote in that never-sent 1961 letter, »Our interests are so unlike, I do not dare hope to win your approval.« But I believe their interests were *not* so dissimilar; that in fact Wellek and Burke were pursuing in many ways a similar project – the marriage of formal literary criticism with linguistics, the aesthetics of the New Criticism with the scientific understanding of general semantics, modern linguistics, and for Burke even the terministic orientations of the social sciences. It may be, in fact, that Burke was among those in the best position to grasp Wellek's project, and Wellek was among those who should have been most sympathetic to Burke's. And yet, they were not at all in synch, and their potential collaboration was instead lost in Burke's ignoring of Wellek's work and Wellek's regular attacks on Burke.

There is one point in time, however, that could have made things different – the point at which Burke and Wellek seemed most close together, early on in their respective careers in the United States. At the start of World War II, Wellek proposed a way of looking at literature that Burke appropriated, and expanded upon, and never, apparently, realized came from Wellek's first major article in an American journal. This is the way in which Wellek played a role in influencing the direction of modern American rhetoric, the New Rhetoric.²

When the war broke out in Europe, Wellek came from England to the University of Iowa. He had just published *The Rise of English Literary History*, and the first time he could bring the topic widely to a target audience of American literary scholars and critics was his 1942 article in that bastion of the New Criticism, the *Southern Review*. In »The Mode of Existence of a Literary Work of Art,« Wellek took on the prevailing dichotomies of the literary critics of his day. New Critics (Ransom, Tate, Brooks) and neo-Aristotelians (Crane, Daiches) were focused on the intrinsic (and therefore timeless) nature of a poem – the poem in itself. They were reacting to both the previous generation of literary scholars, who ignored form for biography and context, and the Marxist critics, who argued instead for attention to the poem's message. Both scholars and Marxists, in other words, were focused on the extrinsic, or time-bound, nature of the poem – either in its original setting or in its message for the contemporary world. Wellek argued for a third way – what Burke always called a »falling on the bias« position that incorporated the best of two seemingly dichotomous perspectives into an ironic unity. »A real poem,« wrote Wellek, »must be conceived as a system of norms« which it was the readers' (and critics') job to »extract« from each poem, such that all the norms together would make up not one, idealized superior norm, but a system of norms, or values, »realized only partially in the actual experience of its many readers« (1942, 745–46). The method by which the critic-reader could grasp these norms, Wellek said, was through the phonemics explored by the Prague Linguistic Circle, such that ever-widening

2 I am not suggesting here that there is proof that Burke used Wellek's early work to formulate his rhetorical theory in the *Grammar of Motives*. It is known that Burke read at least the *Southern Review*, if not Wellek's other work. It is also known that a year after Wellek's article appeared in the *Review*, with its conclusion that a mode of existence for literature was both timeless and timebound, Burke described a similar eternal/historical condition for poetry when he tried to explain the difference between his methodology and purely intrinsic criticism. It is also known that this article of Burke's formed a solid kernel of his work in the *Grammar* and subsequent rhetorical theories, although neither man seems to have recognized the similarities in their projects. I am, therefore, recapturing a connection that perhaps Burke and certainly Wellek would disavow. More likely, Burke would embrace it – his rhetorical project was always expansive – and Wellek, whose focus remained committed to literary theory, would dismiss it as irrelevant.

circles of structures – sound units to sentence patterns to genres – could be carefully teased out for analysis.

While not new to anyone in the Prague Circle, this *was* new to the U.S. at that time, and Wellek's efforts to bring the insights of the Prague Circle to the field of linguistics eventually helped to change the field dramatically, just as his knowledge of Continental literary history helped to jumpstart the American interest in European theory. However, there is one other point Wellek makes, at the very end of his 1942 article, which influenced as well that other field, modern rhetoric. What, Wellek asks, after defining what a poem is not and how to figure out what it could be, is the »actual mode of existence« of a poem? Between the »Charybdis of Platonism and the Scylla of extreme nominalism« there is a work which is neither »an empirical fact [...] of any individual or group,« nor »an ideal changeless object.« It is accessible only through individual experience, but it is not identical with any experience« (752). It is historical: »It was created at a certain point in time and [...] is subject to change and even complete destruction« (751).

Wellek was, of course, countering the widespread influence in America of T.S. Eliot, who argued that literature has a simultaneous existence in all eras. Wellek disagreed. Literature was not timeless, nor yet was it entirely bound to the time and place of its authorship, as the literary scholars would have it. Each work was instead »a system of [implicit] norms [...] which have to be extracted from every individual experience of a work of art and together make up the genuine work of art as a whole« (745–46). Thus, a poem was both »time-bound« – created at a particular moment and made concrete each time it was read/enacted – and »timeless« – endowed with »some fundamental structure of identity since its creation,« such that, for all its changes through the centuries, we still call the *Odyssey*, *Odyssey* (752). As a scholar of literary history, Wellek necessarily believed that literature does have a history. As he had put it in a book chapter the year before, it is not eternally, simultaneously present, even if

there is a distinction between that which is historical and past and that which is historical and still somehow present [...]. Yet this does not exclude the possibility that there is a real history which is more than a mirror of the social changes under which literature was produced in the past [...]. To speak of »eternity« is merely an expression of the fact that the process of interpretation, criticism, and appreciation [the subjects of literary history] has never been completely interrupted and is likely to continue indefinitely.
(1941a, 120)

And Kenneth Burke agreed with him. Burke had spent most of the 1930 s trying to argue for his own bias-falling position that transcended the time-bound

criticism of the Marxist message-hunters and the timeless criticism of the aesthetic formalists. Literature was timelessly historical, he insisted – and here was a new European critic agreeing with him, stating it in a new way. Although Wellek is uncredited, Burke seems to have picked up his argument the following year in an article in *Accent* entitled »The Problem of the ›Intrinsic,‹« in which he noted that his new methodology – what would become dramatism – examined a poem's extrinsic qualities, as an object created by an author in a particular historical scene, as well as its intrinsic qualities, as a timeless statement. Neo-Aristotelian critics like R. S. Crane, he said, give critics the choice of poem as exemplar or poem as object. But what if poem were considered as act? This would not

slight the nature of the poem as object. For a poem is a *constitutive* act – and after the act of its composition by a poet who had acted in a particular temporal scene, it survives as an objective structure, capable of being examined in itself, in temporal scenes quite different from the scene of its composition, and by agents quite different from the agent who originally enacted it.
(Burke 1943, 93)

By considering the poem as an act, not an artifact, a kind of living record, Burke's dramatism would enable the examination of a poem's intrinsic and extrinsic features, its eternal and temporal elements.

Both Burke and Wellek believed that, in Wellek's terms, a »system of language« was not a fiction but a real thing, even if empirically immeasurable (1942, 751). As Burke would put it as he argued for dramatism in the first chapter of his *A Grammar of Motives*, even if one denied all action that was not measurable, the words describing the action were still there: »these words of nonsense would themselves be real words, involving real tactics, having real demonstrable relationships, and demonstrably affecting relationships« (1945, 57–58). For Wellek in the early 1940 s, it was enough to note that »we recognize some structure of norms within reality and do not simply invent verbal constructs« (1942, 751), such that the role of the literary critic was to critique in comparison to what s/he knew of the norms more generally. For Burke the budding rhetorical philosopher, the reality of words meant a »rhetorical realism« (Wess 1996) such that, just as sociologists might study human social interactions to determine motivation, wordsmiths needed to study human verbal interactions. If they »measured« the words used against certain norms, as did literary critics, then they would better understand human motivations. However, the measurement apparatus would have to be as ambiguous and linguistic as the words themselves – his dramatistic methodology, »a synoptic way [for humans] to talk about their talk-about« (Burke 1945, 56).

If Wellek did contribute to Burke's dramatisitic theory the first articulation of the timeless and time-bound duality of literature in a real system of language, Wellek's insight is important to modern rhetoric for several reasons. First, it gave Burke the terms to frame a rationale for his insistence that purely intrinsic criticism was impossible – that a poem was not a timeless entity that one could study inductively, as R.S. Crane wanted, »apart from any *a priori* assumptions about the nature of poetry in general« (1943, 86). The »inductions« one came to in such a study were necessarily deduced from the nature of the language or terminology employed. Yet any particular work of art was also more than a product of its history. As one of the circle of New Critics, Burke reacted as strongly as did William Empson or John Crowe Ransom against the purely extrinsic historical/biographical scholarship of his past. Yet unlike them, he did not want to abandon the insights into present-day audience awareness that the Marxist critics brought – that sense, as Wellek articulated it, that the system of norms was »realized only partially in the actual experience of its many readers.«

Wellek, then, with his discussion of time-bound/timeless poems and intrinsic/generalizable norms, gave Burke the key to discussing the poem in both its intrinsic and extrinsic forms. The poem is a constitutive *act*, said Burke, and therefore never a static *thing* – it was always *moving* through time, falling on the bias between the stasis of the eternal and the frozenness of a particular historical moment. Wellek was making a similar point in his insistence that a poem is a *system*, a set of interacting norms that can be »extracted from every individual experience of a work of art« (1942, 745) yet do not abstract into universal timeless entities, for the norms arise from history and also determine future norms/values (1941a, 125).

What Wellek never understood was Burke's insistence that this interacting system was itself an *act*, a verb rather than a noun. For Burke this focus on an act interacting with history – what he would call the act/scene ratio – would become the central tenet of his emerging dramatisitic theory. It was a more rhetorical, more pragmatic understanding of the act/scene interaction than Wellek was willing to accept. As Wess puts it, Burke's constitutive act developed between the extremes of Enlightenment science and Romantic aesthetics:

In the old paradigm, subject and object interact, the interaction produces a discourse, and enlightenment or romantic criteria determine whether to place trust in the discourse. In the new, trust is placed in the interaction among discourses more than in single discourses, the basis of the trust being neither enlightenment certainty nor romantic authenticity but rhetorical sayability.
(Wess 1996, 4)

This focus on the interaction among discourses, the ongoing debate, would

expand for Burke throughout the war years into what he came to see as the necessary response to the monologue of fascism. Rather than the certainty of the single voice speaking for all, there was the celebration of the »wrangle of the parliament,« where the conflicting interests of various groups are teased out of various real, material interests and set one against the other to come to some as-yet-undetermined plan of action (rpt. 1941, 200). In such a »wrangle,« it would be easy to envision the abandonment of norms for the free-for-all of relativism, as all interests debated equally. Here again, Wellek's insistence on the non-universal but still normative »system« of literature may well have helped Burke to concretize his ideas as he sought to explain a non-relativistic celebration of multiple perspectives. »The system of norms is growing and changing and will remain, in some sense, always incompletely and imperfectly realized,« Wellek wrote (1942, 753). But this did not mean that all readings were equal. »A hierarchy of viewpoints, a criticism of the grasp of norms is implied in the concept of the adequacy of interpretation. All relativism is ultimately defeated by the recognition that the Absolute is in the relative, though not finally and fully in it« (753).

The hierarchy of interacting viewpoints was to become Burke's climactic anecdote in the *Grammar of Motives*, the summing up of his ideas. Examining the U.S. Constitution as constitutive act – a document which has remained normative, eternally timeless, even as it is historicized through continual re-interpretation by the Supreme Court – Burke wrote that debates over the interpretation of the Constitution have historically swung between strict textual and broader contextual interpretations, but to

cut across this on the bias [. . .] would require a more complex procedure, as the Court would test [a newly desired] measure by reference to *all* the wishes in the Constitution [. . . with] explicit reference to a *hierarchy* among the disjunct wishes. (1945, 380)

The norms of the Constitution would remain constant, but their relative importance would shift depending upon the historical moment, while this resultant new hierarchy of actions would always be judged against the eternal norms of the body as a whole. Such an understanding of hierarchies and norms could in turn be applied to the »wrangle« of parliamentary debate of any kind. For Burke this was an acknowledgement that the choices one necessarily makes are ironic, in that they are composed of many potential choices, each of which, even the most seemingly antagonistic, is constituted by language. Each hierarchy of choices, in turn, each system of norms, contributes something to the »certainty« of the (symbolic) action that is chosen.

This final emphasis on language as act, as necessary choice for action in the

world, which was so vitally important to Burke as he wrote during the War years, may not have gained much understanding or sympathy from Wellek's pure literary critic – but perhaps the Prague Linguistic Circle itself at the time would have been more favorable to Burke's point. After all, as Josef Vachek points out in his history of the Circle, it labelled itself both structural and functionalist, thus arguing »that any item of language (sentence, word, morpheme, phoneme, etc.) exists solely because it serves some purpose, because it has some function (mostly that of communication) to fulfill« (1966, 6–7). For the Prague Circle, »language is not a self-contained reality, but, in fact, its main function is to react to and refer to this reality« (Vachek 1966, 7). That is, as Burke wrote in a key essay, language, as symbolic action, as expressed in literature, is a system of strategic, stylized »answers to questions posed by the situation in which they arose« (1941, 1). As an act, language functioned to serve a communicative purpose in the world. Wellek may have perhaps wished to keep linguistic analysis in the realm of the literary, but he was right about Burke: like the Prague Circle itself, Burke had a larger agenda.

With this chapter, therefore, I would like to acknowledge the undoubtedly unintentional debt that modern rhetoric owes to René Wellek. Wellek's early distinction of art as timelessly historical allows us to consider not only literature but also such »word hierarchies« as theories themselves, as acts that are at once both context-driven and universally applicable. What I call in my work »rhetoricizing« theory contextualizes a theory's origins not merely to understand its time-bound nature but also to allow it to more richly inform its timeless, universal applications – to more fully grasp the Absolute in the relative, as Wellek put it. It is this understanding, I believe, that was brought to modern rhetoric in a 1942 article by a newly immigrated scholar on the mode of existence of a literary work of art.

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Structural Transformation: Short-story Narratives and the Significance of Degree Zero

In »How Do We Recognize Structuralism?« Gilles Deleuze defines the »empty square« or »degree zero« as that which lacks its own identity or meaning and upon which structuralism depends. This designation occurs after a string of short sections that play off (»juxtapose a system of echoes«) Lacan and Foucault and J.-A. Miller and Frege and others and lead to Jakobson's basic metaphor/metonymy structure and his denotation of a »zero phoneme which does not by itself entail any differential character or phonetic value, but in relation to which all the phonemes are situated in their own differential relations« (Deleuze 2004,186). It is this sense of degree zero as something »missing from its place« that gives structure its transformational capacity to generate, out of two other terms or meanings, a third term or meaning of another order than the one out of which it is generated, which in turn suggests ways of looking at the generation of short stories.

The simplest instance of degree zero is the phoneme, a distinct sound without significance until combined with other sounds to form signifying words. The simplest analogy is with games; to have a game you have to have movement and to have movement there must be an empty space. Most important is this sense of missing from its place: something draws into this space; it hints at a structurally-effected energy.

The metaphoric axis, as Roland Barthes describes it, is »a vertical project [. . .] which plunges into a totality of meanings, reflexes and recollections,« »a sort of existential geology,« wherein any word »live[s] without its article—and is reduced to a sort of degree zero« (1970, 47 – 48). The totality of meanings along the metaphoric axis saturates a word so thoroughly that it belongs to nothing, is itself no-thing and yet everything, the degree-zero potential of that which has no identifying article (that is, not an apple or the apple or your apple or my apple, but just apple). While a word's denotative meaning can be defined, as long as it remains on the metaphoric axis its meaning can only be immanent. This is the semantic degree zero.

The metonymic axis structures language syntactically, is the empty space

defined minimally as noun phrase (NP) plus verb phrase (VP) whose logic, Barthes notes, is »unconscious« (1977, 141), an unconscious presumably at work whenever we speak or write, an unpremeditated sense of what goes where so that we do not have to think about the syntax we use when we speak a sentence. »The elements of a structure,« Deleuze further notes, »have neither extrinsic designation, nor intrinsic signification [. . . are] a matter [. . .] of places and sites in a properly structural space, that is, a topological space« (2004, 173–74). This is metonymic or syntactic degree zero.

One significance of degree zero has been described by Roman Jakobson: a speaker or user of language stuck in one of the two axes suffers from aphasia and can at best make only meaningless noises. Another significance has been identified by Deleuze: we need those empty spaces in order to move, to function, to perform, to signify, to write.

Two degree zeros have to be brought together and combined in order to have meaning or significance. As Deleuze observes, »if the symbolic elements have no extrinsic designation nor intrinsic signification, but only a positional sense, it follows necessarily and by rights that *sense always results from the combination of elements which are not themselves signifying*« (2004,175). Roman Jakobson's definition of the poetic function (»The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination« [1960, 358]) provides a geometric image within which to perceive where the third term, itself still (nearly) an empty square, the space where the two axes intersect, the point where nothing yet has quite happened, a point so infinitesimal that it nearly does not exist, is pure potential, is the pivotal point whose hinge makes possible the movement of projection. This hinge is the connective that constitutes symbolic form, »a form with no antecedents« and yet »is also a Value« (Barthes 1970, 13).

The metaphoric *projects*; that is, it throws forward and extends. »Project« intimates design; design intimates intention: not authorial but structural intention. Structural intention—this generative shape-force—intimates movement rather than a static state, movement perhaps of the sort that Chomsky's notion of »deep structure« identifies: the perpetual movement of the mind ceaselessly forming; perhaps of the sort that Freud narrated: »thought proceeds in systems that are so remote from the original residues of perception that they have no longer retained anything of the qualities of these residues, so that in order to become conscious the content of the thought-systems needs to be reinforced by new qualities« (1959, 134–35). The sense of projecting pushes us a bit closer to grasping the empirically invisible force or energy hinted at by »missing from its place.« Something *wants* to happen.

When thrown into the metonymic axis, the metaphoric becomes a function: being becomes doing. Metaphorically saturated words fit in between cardinal functions (the essential narrative actions, as Barthes describes them) to become

interpretative catalysers. They clarify and intensify meaning without pushing the narrative forward; they alter narrative pacing and in doing so make their own non-semantic non-syntactic meaning. A metaphoric consciousness, by being projected into the metonymic unconscious, does not merely fill in but becomes the motive and the meaning of the narrative. But the metaphoric is not obliterated by this projection; it continues to echo and to retain its de-articled potential in part by the empty spaces left by choosing this word rather than any of the others.

Given the possibility of structural intention, structural inquiry can help identify and examine two things: knowing and intention.

The short story offers a particular experience. It does not have the physical space or the latitude of the novel to expand into the classical beginning-middle-end form; rather, it has an intensified immediacy akin to the consciousness of a dream. Its brevity brings it close to the metaphoric, close to something just barely projected into or registering on the metonymic. Its metaphoric-like brevity has that »excess of sense« which borders on the line between sense and nonsense (as, for instance, in dreams), a complication that offers ways of reading what is »not recognizable or identifiable,« structures wherein the slippage between two correlative things (word and object, character and place, character and character) can happen yet without complete loss of reference or determination.

I have chosen, as a way to localize this inquiry, a short story composed by Eudora Welty right after she heard the news of the assassination of black civil rights leader Medgar Evers in 1963. I have chosen this primarily for the proximity between the writer's knowledge of a specific event and her response to that knowledge. Because the story—»Where Is the Voice Coming From?«—approaches its subject from the perspective of the assassin, the first person singular, it intensifies the complexities of the transformation from personal emotional response to a story that will stand on its own. The text is short, accessible, sympathetic (even though Welty was quite unsympathetic with the assassin).

Little was known about what happened when Welty heard about the assassination: only that Evers had been shot as he got out of his car late at night and that the assassin had left behind the rifle. Yet such minimal information triggered something greater than a simple response from her:

I thought, [Welty later recalls] with overwhelming directness: Whoever the murderer is, I know him: not his identity, but his coming about, in this time and place. That is, I ought to have learned by now, from here, what such a man, intent on such a deed, had going on in his mind. I wrote his story—my fiction—in the first person: about that character's point of view, I felt, through my shock and revolt, I could make no mistake.

(Welty 1980, xi)

Welty begins with having something to say, with the knowledge not only of her response but also of the culture out of which the assassin had arisen. Her comments reveal how fiction attaches articles to words (*his* story, *my* fiction) as the narrator-writer metamorphoses out of her knowing response to the actual assassin and into a fictional narration of character. In her fiction, her short story, the assassin's metaphorically-compressed racial hatred, a nearly inarticulate rage against civil rights movements, is projected over and into the metonymic. Thus projected, his compressed outraged hatred transforms into an extended narrative of struggle, of one man pitting his physical strength against a political and social force. At the very beginning of the story, the assassin says:

I says to my wife, »you can reach and turn it off. You don't have to set and look at a black nigger face no longer than you want to, or listen to what you don't want to hear. It's still a free country.«
(Welty 1980, 603)

His statement explicitly identifies what motivates the character to act; as he says: »I reckon that's how I give myself the idea.« The *idea* is the character's need (akin to the actual assassin's) to strike a blow, which is satisfied not directly but indirectly: a bullet projected from a rifle into the back of his unwitting opponent. The implicit cowardice undermines any possibility of the heroic, but the effect is certain; the assassin has displaced his opponent and he has now fulfilled the expectation of the story's opening: his wife does not have to look at or listen to what she does not want to look at or listen to (crucial, by the way, that his wife does not see him as hero: thus the character's need for this narrative). On the one hand, fiction works the metonymic degree zero that the actual assassin did not have, so here his rage reforms into verbal narrative; on the other hand, graphing the narrative with Greimas's actants reveals its illogical nature—the way it breaks up and justifies itself against itself and finally dissipates in the end into a repetitive near-nonsense song—an echo of the song that Ophelia sings in *Hamlet*—which he sings while playing his guitar.

In a sense the real assassin is aphasic: his rage is compressed into »black« or »race« or »rights« and he knows no degree zero or empty space into which he can move and hence assumes that only by executing this man will he gain that space. Welty, in turn, both seizes upon his aphasia and sustains it but also finds within fiction a sufficient degree zero to articulate the story of »such a man« which extends beyond the singular actual individual through the range of the metaphoric and generates thereby something greater either than one man's rage at black civil rights movements or her rage at his actions.

The story's title—»Where Is the Voice Coming From?«—suggests uncertainty about the very »confusion between consecution and consequence,«

between *then* and *then because*, that Barthes identified as »the central problem of narrative syntax« (1977, 98). This uncertainty is dramatized by the choice of first-person; narrated by someone other than the real assassin but *as if* the real assassin, the fiction collapses distinctions among »his story/my fiction/first person.« »Characters can only exist,« Deleuze and Guattari argue, »and the author can only create them, because they do not perceive but have passed into the landscape and are themselves part of the compound of sensations« (1994, 169), a claim that uncannily fits what happens in Welty's story: her intention to write the story of this assassin's »coming about, in this [. . .] place.« The character and the place of his coming about become coincidental and indeterminate. And this is further dramatized when, just after watching his victim get out of his car and just before he fires the fatal shot, the character recalls

I knowed who was coming [. . .] I knowed it when he cut off the car lights and put his foot out and I knowed him standing dark against the light. I knowed him then as I know me now, I knowed him even by his still, listening back.
(Welty 1980, 604)

The victim and the assassin are no longer determinate; he knows him as he knows himself, and the two become metaphorically coincidental, just as had character and landscape. And here we get yet another metaphoric identification: Welty's claim to know the actual assassin's »coming about« and the character's claim to know his victim »as I know me now.«

Art must wrest the affect from affection, the percept from perception, Deleuze and Guattari argue in *What is Philosophy?* Art might arise out of personal experience and consciousness; however, it should not attempt to represent memories of experience but rather work »the percept or affect of the material itself,« the »complex material that is found not in memory but in words and sounds« (1994, 166, 168). At some unpredictable point, material »pass[es] completely into the sensation« (167) which then is immediate in the material that shapes and is shaped, emerging and transforming out of actual experience into material form where lines blur and identities become indeterminate.

What kind of cognition is this, as sensation passes into material and material into sensation? What intervention has happened and how can it be traced or imaged through structural inquiry? How does the short story work so that the writer slips across real barriers to make something intelligible (in this instance, how such a real person could come about in this place) without explaining it?

Behind this argument is Deleuze's argument in »How Do We Recognize Structuralism?« In addressing that question, Deleuze postulates that even phonemes »reciprocally determine each other« (2004, 176). To get at the nature of this reciprocity, he differentiates three types of mathematical-like relations:

the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic. The real is arithmetic; its values are specified (he illustrates this with $2 + 3 = 5$). The imaginary is algebraic; its values are not specified but are determined (he illustrates this with $x^2 + y^2 - R^2 = 0$). The symbolic is like differential calculus; its values are neither specified nor determined (he illustrates this with $ydy + xdx = 0$). In the symbolic, all relations are determined reciprocally; they have no existence, no value, no significance on their own. Here we find the »pure logic of relations« (2004, 176) and a way to understand how »structure constitutes the principle of genesis« (172) and how it is possible for it to be the »substratum both for a strata of the real and for the heights of the imagination« (172). Structure can »account both for the formation of wholes and for the variation of their parts,« (173) most exactly when we sense the various symbolic-reciprocal relations. To be reciprocal, there must be a back and forth or give and take motion, a correspondence among identifiable chunks that compels forth a new form whose motive exceeds a mere willful working of words. Within the reciprocal, we feel the constant potential of cognitive undertow.

Within the energies of this undertow, we form constellations out of raw material; we constellate material into significant shapes and cognitive coherences whose meaning is contextual, made up of metamorphoses and not single discrete morphologies. And complex meanings are made up of complex metamorphoses, connected morphologies, out of semantic and phonological and structural possibilities. The enigma of the aesthetic individual labor of forming a significant object out of the unsettlingness of the unexamined and unworked, when traced out by structural analysis, unveils what has probably always been the writer's cognitive situation. Analysis that reveals the reciprocal relations of symbolic structure allows us to follow as far as possible the dynamic interplay of identifiable and discrete elements and to see where perception transforms into percept, affection into affect, where writing »makes the standard language stammer, tremble, cry, or even sing [. . .] ›not to reproduce but to distance the past« (Deleuze, Guattari 1994, 176).

The metaphoric word saturated with other words constellating around it has the essence of symbolic-reciprocal relation manifest in its de-articled form. Once in the metonymic, the word does not lose its de-articled sense completely, but retains it by merit of the symbolic-reciprocal relation between the metaphoric and metonymic axes, as well as by the absence of metaphorically-related but unchosen words. We recognize the structural roots of the indeterminacy in the blurred *his story/my fiction* difference or the statement »I knowed him then as I know me now« and we re-cognize it as the symbolic-reciprocal relation between the materials of art and the consciousness of the artist. For degree zero pervades immediate and constructed consciousness and unconsciousness; the act of fictionalizing is an infrastructural interpretation that seeks out the degree

zero that makes possible differential movement within the structure, and from which it participates in symbolic-reciprocal transformations and by which it becomes liberated from the individual and local.

Structural paradigms determine what moves we can make within zero degree spaces and what moves are significant within the game-rules of language and what counts as meaningful statement. Formal structural analysis maps out the transformations we make from langue to parole, but not why, not the motive; it makes intelligible the tensed or tensional energies within reciprocal relations of the symbolic, out of which generation is always immanent, but also the possibility of intention within the reciprocity of the structural, and it offers a way to identify the permeability of structures which in turn makes possible a co-performance of structural intention and authorial intention and realizes the pervasive significance of degree zero as the space necessary for transformation.

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James W. Underhill

Structure and Reconstruction: Jiří Levý and the Translation of Poems

The Prague School

The debt linguistics owes to the Prague School hardly needs to be stressed. Some will have in mind Trubetzkoy's contribution to phonetics; his idea that the words of a language are differentiated by oppositions between phonemes, and that the phonemes themselves are kept apart by their *distinctive features*. Others will be thinking of the importance of the concept of *foregrounding*, a word which translates Mukařovský's Czech term *aktualizace*, and which is used in contemporary stylistics to designate the way certain aspects of the formal and semantic elements of a text are highlighted in dynamic relation to one another. But whatever they have inherited from the Prague School, few linguists would contest that the twenties and the thirties were a period of great intellectual, poetic, cultural and scientific effervescence in Prague, and linguists have often sought inspiration in that generation of linguistics which witnessed the encounter between French and Swiss Saussurean linguistics and pan-Slavic approaches to language, literature and culture.

It was no doubt that effervescence which incited Martin Procházka and Jan Čermák of Charles University, Prague, to devote the 2007 conference of the Czech Association for the Study of English (CZASE) to »The Prague School and Theories of Structure«. And it was no doubt that same effervescence which tempted scholars from New Zealand, Britain and North America as well as from France, Switzerland and Germany to join together with their East European colleagues to reflect upon the contribution made by the Prague school's ideas and conceptual tools to the study of language and literature today.

What tends to be forgotten, however, (no doubt because few scholars outside the Czech Republic master the Czech language) is that the Prague school was Czech. Mukařovský was writing for Czechs about the Czech language and its literature. The energy of the Czech revival with its »classico-romantic« nineteenth century poets, Erben and Mácha, the rebirth of the Czech nation in 1918 and the remarkable growth in Czech studies were all part of one startlingly

complex adventure, the great thrust forward of a people defining themselves and celebrating their culture. And part of that celebration involved retracing the roots Czech culture shared with its Slavic »brother-languages«. Like all social and cultural phenomena, the political dimension of this movement was fundamental. That this political aspect of the Prague School was soon marginalized or forgotten is hardly surprising. Notwithstanding discourse analysis and work on the relationship between ideology and language, linguistics has all too often steered clear of the political implications of language, and linguists have often been seduced by the ideal of linguistics as a science – a formal science – which induces many to blinker their eyes to the social roots of language and the implications for society of discourse and language change.

Perhaps this is the crucial difference between many contemporary linguists and the great linguists of the Prague School. When the Prague School chose to restrict their research to formal questions, they remained aware of the greater social, historical, political and cultural significance of their research. Though the Prague School inherited much from philologists like Propp, Shklovsky and Tynyanov who belonged to what came to be called the »Russian Formalist School«, neither those scholars nor the Prague School scholars were »formalists« in the strict sense of the term: they did not live within the intellectual compartments, the departments and disciplines, within which the contemporary university encourages us to confine ourselves today. Reaching into thirteenth-century Czech poems, Jakobson and Mukařovský were hoping to unveil something essential about the very structure of Czech verse. But since they were working within the framework of a comparative school, they believed that what they found in ancient Czech verse could help explain the way linguistic elements form themselves into harmonious forms of organisation in other languages. The specific aspect or element of language always remained specific in the Prague School, socially, culturally and historically situated: it was never reduced to the mere means, the physical go-between, which would open up access to a universal conception of language. In this way, their work was highly distinct from generative metrics which studies the structure of English verse, and then hopes to perceive the structure of other languages using universal paradigms. When Jakobson and Mukařovský reached towards a wider conception of the way harmony functions in *language*, they did not lose sight of the distinct ways harmony functions within both individual expression and in individual *languages*.

Without knowing Czech, it is of course impossible to grasp the significance of the study of accents and syllables for elucidating the way Czech verse distances itself from what might loosely be termed »ordinary speech« in that language, and it would be absurd to criticise French- and English-speakers for not knowing Czech. It is, nevertheless, important to stress that what western scholars have

taken from the Prague School does not wholly coincide with what the School's scholars were offering in that great period of vibrant research. To put it bluntly, we have pillaged what we could, and left what we found impossible to grasp and use. This has led to a rather skewed view of the Prague School, a view which is reinforced by the selective reading and citation of a rather limited number of key texts. This is not the place to go into a critique of the Prague School's inheritance, but it should be pointed out that three general trends have greatly influenced the extent of the influence of the Prague School internationally speaking.

Firstly, the Prague School has tended to be represented as a linguistic school rather than a philological school and the writings of the various authors who have been gathered under that umbrella term have consequently tended to be used as a source of formal rather than cultural concepts. This is no doubt reinforced by the second trend which consisted in making Jakobson the main exponent of the Prague School. This can, no doubt, be attributed to the fact that Jakobson asserted himself internationally, the poetician, Mukařovský, did not (or not until much later). And when Mukařovský did gain some recognition in English-speaking nations, it was invariably only thanks to a few key essays, notably *On Poetic Language*, published in 1976.

In France, the work of the Prague School was published in 1966 in an edition edited by Josef Vachek (*Travaux linguistiques de Prague: l'école de Prague aujourd'hui*) containing texts in French, English, German and Russian; nevertheless, the texts all focused upon linguistic questions and the poetics of the Prague school went totally unrepresented. It was not until Jacqueline Fontaine published *Le Cercle linguistique de Prague* in 1974, that Mukařovský gained some small degree of recognition in France: Fontaine stressed the importance of the study of poetry and poetics in the founding theses agreed upon by the four members of the Prague Circle committee (Mathesius, Jakobson, Mukařovský and Trnka). She also devoted a chapter of her book to a comparison of the poetics of Jakobson and Mukařovský (135–146).

Thirdly, though our debt to the Prague School is not in doubt, a cursory glance at the shelves of university libraries in Britain and France confirm the fact that our *Prague schools* are very different. The French Jakobson introduced by Nicolas Ruwet is not the Jakobson of *The Selected Writings*, a monumental oeuvre which preserves the Jakobson who wrote fluently in five languages.

This is not without consequences for the development of French structuralism and its exportation abroad: and it goes without saying that this limited reception of Jakobson and the eclipsing of the philological and cultural significance of the Prague School project has greatly contributed to the reaction against structuralism which has been witnessed in the post-structuralist thought over the last generation in France and elsewhere. American scholars following Derrida are rejecting a form of structuralism – a form of sterile neo-classical

accademic French structuralism – which had its roots in the once vibrant French rhetorical tradition. But neither that French rhetorical tradition nor the sterile formalistic structuralism which imposed itself in French schools and universities from the nineteen-sixties onwards bore much resemblance to anything Mukařovský had to say about poetics and the significance of poems for the Czech language and its people.

Levý's Contribution

This brings us to the *raison d'être* of this chapter. If we are to salvage some of the remains of the Prague School which escaped recuperation by international scholars, we first have to recognise both the full wealth of that school's research and the depth of its reach into society and into poetic language. If seen through the prisms of post-war structuralism and stylistics as they have been practiced in Western countries, rigorous study of formal aspects of poetic language risks appearing reductive and sterile unless we make an effort to uncover the full extent of the scope of the Prague School and its preoccupations. We need to leave behind French and English conceptions of structuralism, if we are to understand the Prague School and the generation to which it gave birth in the fifties and the sixties in the Communist Czechoslovakia.

Poetic and linguistic research from the Cold War period was almost totally dismissed by Western scholars. The political reasons for this reaction are no more flattering to ourselves in the West than they are to the Czechs themselves: we simply wished to believe that nothing of value could survive without the intellectual freedom we praised ourselves for preserving. Such a desire directed both the policies of our institutions and our free market publishing houses which tended to promote dissidents. This neglect constitutes a small tragedy in the field of poetics, in which Jiří Levý made what is probably the most outstanding contribution to comparative versification and the theory of poetic translation of all time. This may seem like the prelude of a dithyrambic celebration of this scholar, but the aim of this chapter is rather to offer a critique of Levý's work, *The Art of Translation (Umění překlada)*, published in Prague in 1963 and translated into German though never into English. No doubt Levý (a man animated by a deep desire to further our understanding of poetics and translation) would have recognised that critique is a form of celebration, an act of respect. But before engaging in the critique of his findings, it is, of course, worth stressing those qualities which make Levý's research so remarkable.

The richness of Levý's approach lies in the fact that there is no division between his theory as a philologist and his practice as a translator. His question remains a very simple one: how can we translate a poem? This simple question

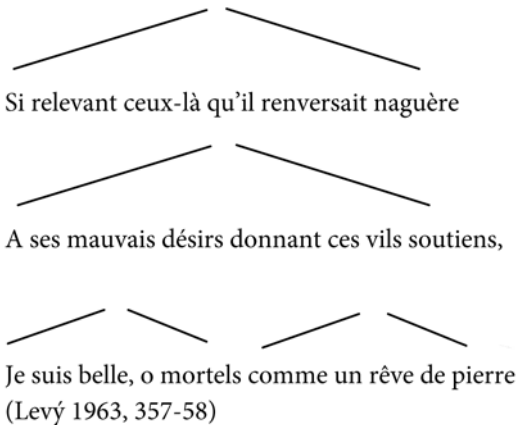
leads him to address the problems of transposing syntax, rhyme, euphony and metre. With this he embarks upon an impressive comparative study of these elements in various languages, and though he finds himself obliged to introduce fine distinctions related to the nature of these elements and the way they have been harnessed by each language's poetic tradition and by the individual poet working within his tradition, Levý never loses sight of the fact that these elements only take on meaning within the single and undivided impression which the poem as a unity makes upon the reader. In this, Levý proves to be very much the inheritor of the Formalist tradition incarnated by Tynyanov and the Prague school structuralist poetics of Mukařovský. For Tynyanov, Mukařovský and Levý, the poem is one complex dynamic whole. Consequently, all research into the individual elements or components of that whole can only be held to be of use or of interest in as much as they show the way one element works as part of the orchestrated ensemble by asserting itself in relation to other elements. The question for Levý immediately becomes: how do we enact the same dynamic interaction of those elements in the translated poem which must also act as a whole?

One might be tempted to conclude that poetry is more difficult to translate than prose because a poem has metre and rhymes. Although this is obviously true (as far as regular metrical verse is concerned), it tends to obscure the nature of the movement of poetry by suggesting it is more complex than prose. Levý points out on the first page of his study that this is both true and false. Quoting the French stylistician, Pierre Guiraud, Levý points out that one of the essential differences between the syntax of prose and poetry is that the latter is often much simpler. Subordinate and auxiliary clauses in the sentences of French verse were found by Guiraud to be between 25 and 50% less frequent than in prose for example (Levý 1963, 225).

On the other hand, the movement of poetry owes its complexity (in part at least) to two factors: the interaction between the sentence and the verse line, and the internal division of the line itself. This led Levý to compare the internal division of verse lines in different languages and to consider the influence of line-internal divisions upon intonation. This in turn took Levý far beyond the simplistic conceptions of foot metrics (which though abandoned by specialists continue to hold currency today in all of the major languages). In French, for example, Levý stressed that the line-internal shaping of French syntax was crucial for the balance of the French verse. Though traditionnally we tend to define French verse in terms of syllable-count (*décompte syllabique*), cataloguing lines in terms of *alexandrins* (12 syllables), *decasyllabes* (10 syllables), *octosyllabes* (8 syllables) and so forth, Levý mastered the theory of French versification and knew Grammont's *Petit traité de versification française* (1906; Grammont 1989). He was perfectly well aware that verse lines of more than 8

syllables were considered to be »complex verse lines« (*vers composés*) and that they required a *cæsura* in order to maintain their metrical character.

Nevertheless, unlike many metricians, Levý was as interested in the way individual poets shaped the regular contours of their verse as he was in the rules which allow regularity to be maintained. For this reason, he pointed out that the same force that shapes the rising-falling intonation of the French alexandrine which climaxes at the *cæsura*, can equally be employed within each of the *hémistiches*. Levý offered the following examples to compare the way this same shaping force of syntax and intonation acts at two different levels:



Such distinctions can be found in both traditional treatises of French versification (Grammont 1989) and contemporary guides to metrics (Mazaleyrat 1990). However, two things distinguish Levý's approach from those of much French versification. Like the contemporary poetician, Henri Meschonnic, and like the author of the monumental *Dictionnaire de poésie et de rhétorique* (1961), Henri Morier, Levý does not set out with a view to establishing the rules of regularity. He accepts these rules as essential governing principles, but his sensitivity is for the individual shaping of those governing principles. He is interested in the way regularity emerges within the voice of the individual author, and it is the timbre of that voice which he seeks to catch. This sensitivity to voice is inextricably bound up with Levý's work as a thinker of translation: he listens to the poem and to the attempts to transpose its voice. Intonation patterns and syntactic breaks do not therefore represent formal constraints which must be reproduced in the translation, but rather aspects of a complex meaningful dynamics which must be reshaped using different linguistic resources in the target language.

In the same way Levý's treatment of rhyme differs from traditional formalist definitions. Because rhyme for Levý could never be reduced to a formal constraint, a cog in the machinery of verse; rhyme for Levý had three functions, one of which was its »meaningful function«: rhyme acts as a link which »forges a meaningful link between corresponding words (and thereby between corresponding verse lines)« (*vytváří významový spoj mezi souznějícími slovy (a tím i mezi příslušnými verši)*, Levý 1963, 281). Levý did not deny the importance of rhyme as an aesthetic formal constraint: indeed his third function for rhyme was its »euphonic function« (282). However, this function was not divorced from the meaningful movement of expression in Levý's analysis, and it was that meaningful movement, he argued, that the translator should be discerning in the original and recreating in his translation. As he put it »[r]hyme is not an isolated element of the poem, but a part in the complex interplay of acoustic and semantic values of the work of art« (*Rým není izolovaná složka básně, ale součást složité souhry akustických a významových hodnot díla*, 281).

The second function Levý attributed to rhyme was its »rhythmic function« (1963, 281). Rhyme stresses line-endings, thereby supporting the coherence of the line as a distinct metrical unit in a series of like units. Thus, the role played by rhyme in Levý's translation theory could not be reduced to one formal element which must find a corresponding element in the foreign language. The translator had to be sensitive to the status of the rhyme in »the complex interplay of acoustic and semantic values.« This has fundamental repercussions for translation, because the poetics of certain languages are more dependent upon rhyme than others. English metrical verse retains its metrical character if rhyme is removed, as its blank verse tradition in poetry and theatre proves. French, on the other hand, has been unable to maintain a blank verse tradition, which implies that French poetry is more dependent upon what Levý calls the second function of rhyme, the »rhythmic function,« in which rhyme strengthens and supports the coherence of the metrical line as a unit. For this reason, though it might seem justifiable to translate Racine's rhyming couplets into rhymeless metrical verse (blank verse) in English, dropping the rhyme in translating Shakespeare's sonnets would lead to something more akin to free verse and (to my knowledge) no metrically-bound blank verse Sonnet translations have been attempted in French.

Levý's treatment of rhyme is characteristic of his treatment of all elements of the poem; they are all treated as inseparable parts of the »interplay« (*souhra*) of the poem. Levý's conception of poetry grew out of a conception of language which had been clearly defined in the founding theses of the Prague school. For Mathesius, Trnka, Jakobson and Mukařovský, language could only be understood as a »functional system,« a »system of expressive means harnessed towards a certain objective,« (Fontaine 1974, 27). In the conception of language of

these four scholars, we can understand no language act without considering it in its context within the system to which it belongs, (Fontaine 1974, 27). In the same way, the poetic work constituted a »functional structure« in which no element should be analysed in isolation from the elements upon which it depends, (Fontaine 1974, 38). In contrast to his approach, post-war scholarship in the fields of stylistics and metrical analysis has often fallen into the habit of examining fragmentary details within the confines of independent schools which communicate less and less with one another. Generative metrics in the United States and the post-Jakobsonian study of acoustic patterning which the followers of Ruwet in France practice have, as a result, tended to offer little stimulation for those interested in what poems say and what they do to us when they move us.

Levý's approach is doubly rewarding. Firstly, it directs our attention to the interaction between *sine qua non* structural constraints of regular verse (rhyme and metre) and to the interaction between those constraints and the other forms of free patterning in the metrically-bound poem. Secondly, it attenuates the misleading opposition between free and metrical verse. In Levý's approach, metrical verse is significantly more complex and varied in nature than reductive structure-focused approaches would have us believe. Free verse, on the other hand, is not »free«: it is shaped and held together by free patterns of organisation which do not imply rigid rules but rather discernable forms of similarity and opposition such as the rising-falling pattern within the *cæsura* quoted above, or foregrounded alliterative links.

For this reason, Levý postulates: »Free verse is not a shapeless linguistic succession, and cannot be translated into prose split up into lines,« (*Volný verš není beztvářá jazyková poslušnost, a nemůže se překládat prózou rozdělenou do řádek*, Levý 1963, 367). Levý advocates that the translator discover the »stylistic principle of the author's poetics« (*odhalit stylový princip autorovy poetiky*) and transpose it to the other verse system (*veršový systém*, 367). True, Levý's study of the transposition of free verse (367–82) is limited to accentual and syllabic patterning and to the organisation of syntax, but there is nothing in his writing to suggest that he did not see other acoustic elements, such as alliteration and free line-internal rhyming, as forming part of the shape of free verse.

Levý's approach thus has the advantage of not opposing free and metrical verse but of positing them as two distinct forms which enact a »complex interplay of acoustic and semantic values« the latter of which refines this interplay into more rigid structural prerequisites. Yet this is far from the only advantage. Formally speaking, Levý's study, based on a synthesis of international research and inspired by the rigorous work of the Prague School, goes into much greater detail and offers a far more profound conception of each of the elements of the poem. This is very much the case in his treatment of rhyme: his detailed comparative

study of rhyme shows that this element is itself subject to dissimilar linguistic constraints in different languages. Because of the vast number of different suffixes which words can take on in synthetic languages such as Czech and Russian and Italian, there is much more scope for rhyming in these languages. The Italian word *amare* (to love) can take on between forty and fifty suffixes (*amo, amavo, amai, amerò* etc. Levý 1963, 283). This allows Italian to rhyme constructions derived from »love« with thousands of other words (1963, 286). Its counterpart in Czech, *láska*, can for the same reason offer an almost limitless number of rhymes (286). »Love« in the dative form (*láskám*: to loves) for example, rhymes with the dative form of »us« in *k nám* (to us).

This explanation can be confirmed by consulting contemporary rhyming dictionaries. The *Dictionnaire des rimes orales et écrites* (Warnant 1998) offers one hundred and twenty rhymes for *amour*, while *The Penguin Rhyming Dictionary* (Ferguson 1985) offers only eleven for *love*. That Levý was right to stress that rhyme was a question of meaning is confirmed by the fact that the linguistic constraints on rhyming tend to shape the way poets link words and thoughts. Even the greatest of the English poets cannot escape those linguistic constraints. Given the relative poverty of the rhyming potential of English, Shakespeare finds himself forced to use all of the most predictable rhymes for *love* (glove, dove, above) as can be seen in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Perhaps the most impressive achievement of Levý was to master a wide variety of languages and their systems of versification. Because Levý does not restrict himself to studying how we translate Russian, Polish, French, German and English verse into Czech: he compares Spanish and Polish verse, he considers the translation of Polish verse into French (1963, 251), Old English into Modern English (256) and modern French into modern English (319).

It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that Levý's contribution to comparative versification and to translation theory was outstanding. His contribution can be summed up in three fundamental points. He offered the first rigorous multi-lingual comparison of the poetries and versification systems of different languages. He did not fall into a formalist treatment of formal elements of poetry. In the West, reminders that form and content are inseparable are *de rigueur*, but this has not prevented much detailed formal analysis from leaving behind the aesthetic and poetic aspects of poems. It has not prevented others from ignoring the contribution of formal patterning to the impact of the poem upon the reader as a meaningful act of expression. Neither has it prevented much textual analysis from using ineffectual and out-dated systems of metrics. The vast majority of post-war thinkers fall into either the formal or the semantic camp and those scholars who denounce the consolidation of the schism between form and content and who call for a return to the poem (Meschonnic, Wesling) resound like voices crying in the wilderness. Even attempts to relink accentual patterning

to syntax had to wait until the 1990 s in English-speaking countries with the work of Cureton (1992), Attridge (1995) and Wesling (1996). Until then, sentence structure in poetry tended to be considered only in as much as it failed to coincide with line-ends (enjambement) for example.

Given the scope of Levý's comparative work, his capacity for harnessing both Czech and international scholarship, and his remarkable ability of utilizing linguistic research for furthering our understanding of the poetics of translation, it is hardly surprising that he has no real inheritors. In Prague, his *Art of Translation* is considered a magnum opus and forms one of the main pillars of translation studies programs (partly because his work englobes a historical study of the development of translation in the Czech lands of Bohemia and Moravia). Outside of the Czech Republic, the impact of Levý's work has been virtually nil. Inevitably, comparative scholarship into poetics and versification such as the *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* have tended to juxtapose the findings of experts of individual languages since few scholars can claim to master more than their own or one other foreign tongue: translators, on the other hand, have tended to restrict themselves to airing their ideas and impressions in the prefaces to their translations. Wherever comparisons are made, only two languages are usually taken into account. But it is not simply the knowledge of several languages which is at stake here: it is a question of remaining sensitive to the fact that languages are the cultural constructs within which poetry is born and within which versification systems emerge. It is within the constraints of those languages that the individual voices of poets take shape, finding a resonance which allows the poet to speak meaningfully within the tradition to the multitude using the shared idiom.

The Prague school listened to that multitude and to the resonance of the individual voice which resounded within that living tradition. In this sense, the Prague School's concepts of »ordinary language« and foregrounded speech were not fixed poles, binary opposites against which to contrast poetic language: they were the mutually-conditioning forces and expressive resources of human expression. Without the Prague school as the cradle to Levý's intellectual education, his conception of translation theory would not have grown into such a fertile and inspiring system of thought. This is worth remembering when we compare his conception of poetics to those found in contemporary literature in journals such as *Poetics Today*, *Style* and, more recently, in the circle which has come to be called *Cognitive Poetics*.

Gasparov

If Levý has no real inheritors, two voices do, however, make a contribution to the field of research which Levý was carving out for himself; those of the Russian linguist, M.L. Gasparov and the French poet and poetician, Henri Meschonnic. Gasparov neither attempts a poetics of metrical expression nor a particularly innovative study of metrical problems in any one language. What is noteworthy about his work is that he attempts a hitherto unimagined historical outline of the development of syllabic, and accentual-syllabic metres and their complex mutual influence upon one another throughout the history of our Indo-European languages. His choice of linguistic framework indicates that Gasparov sees himself as an inheritor of the great German linguists Bopp and the Grimm brothers, and more specifically of those linguists such as Bergk, Westphal and Usener who aimed to re-establish a Germanic *Urvers* (Gasparov 1996, 5). His project, which reaches back into Old Iranian (Avestan), Latin and Greek, traces the development of Germanic, Romance and Slavic metres up until modern times. The task Gasparov takes on in *A History of European Versification* (1996) is a daunting one. Among the stimulating findings which his research uncovers, at least two points deserve mention. Firstly, he shows that although metres are language-bound (to the extent that metres must repose upon the shapes that syllables and stresses can form), they do not, for all that, evolve deterministically. At times, scholars are inclined to see in the French alexandrin the perfect and appropriate realisation of the French language. The iambic pentametre at times appears to some of us to be the natural poetic expression of our language. In contrast to this naive deterministic view, Gasparov shows that a language can give a home to various forms of metre. English has known strong-stress and syllabo-accentual metres and has at least attempted syllabic metres. In the same way, Gasparov wrote: »The domination of the syllabo-tonic system in Russian verse continued for more than two centuries, from the middle of the eighteenth century until recently« (1996, 235). That Russian verse influenced Czech, Polish and Bulgarian verse throughout the nineteenth century: but Czech and Polish syllabic verse had influenced Russian verse in the seventeenth century, and if that influence had found some foothold it was perhaps because Russian shared with Czech, Polish, Bulgarian and Serbian a folk tradition in common slavonic metrical verse which used eight and nine syllable lines. Czech tends to confirm that metres do not develop deterministically. If metres were language-bound then it would seem natural for Czech to adopt the trochaic metre since in Czech the tonic stress always falls upon the word's first syllable as in: *potom* (then) or *nevím* (I don't know). However, to avoid monotony, Czech poets chose to contravene this linguistic given by adopting the opposite form of accentual-syllabic metre (the iambic form) which sets an unstressed syllable before a stressed one.

This allows an initial distancing effect which foregrounds verse in relation to common speech.

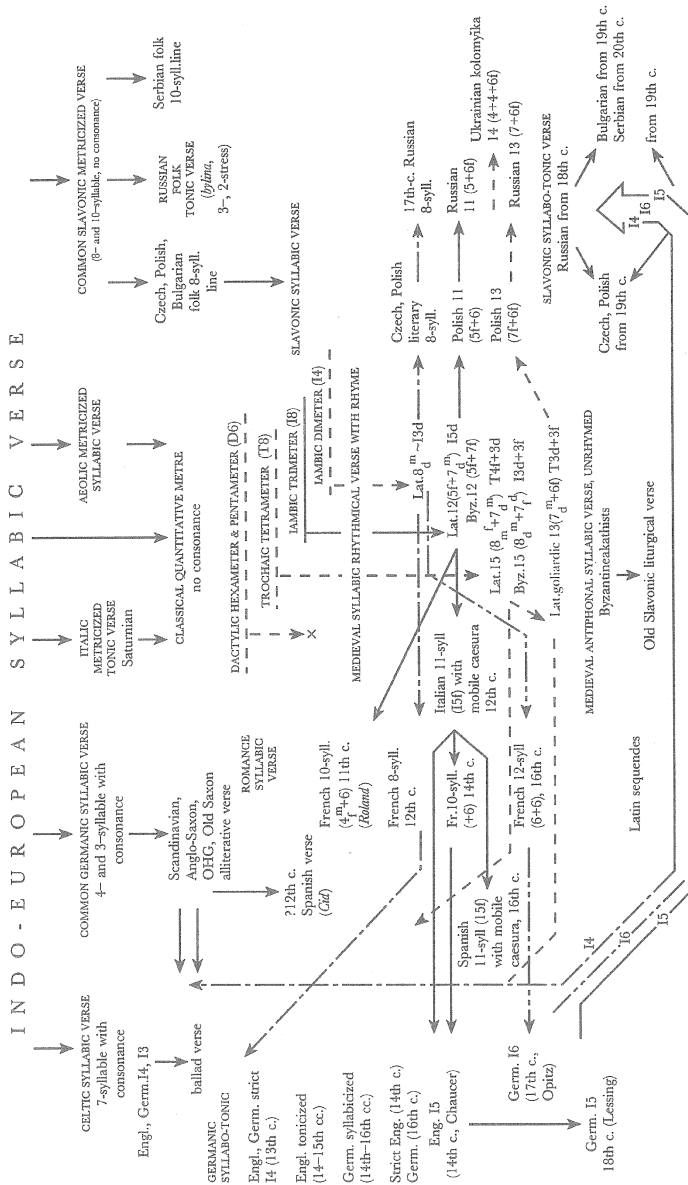
The second point concerning Gasparov's work that deserves mention is that no metrical tradition evolves in a linear fashion and that the influence of other languages makes itself felt at different periods in history. Influence between poetry and versification systems is, moreover, often a two way process. Translation is, of course, of crucial significance in the migration of metres from one language to another, as it is to the process by which an untenable foreign metre is reshaped into a new dynamic creation by the target language as translators strive to bring poems across the interlinguistic divide. An idea of the scope of this influence of and exchange between languages can be glimpsed from the overview Gasparov offers before the introduction of his book (1996, xvii; see figure on p. 325).

Meschonnic

Meschonnic's contribution to poetics in general and to poetry translation specifically is of an entirely different nature to Gasparov's, and if we are to grasp something of the nature of the thought of this poet-translator-thinker-poetician who has published around sixty works, then we must proceed as we have done with Levý by trying to understand how he defined himself within the intellectual context in which he found himself working. Meschonnic's work can best be understood in terms of attack and defense: he attacks approaches to poetry which distort the nature of poems and seek to use them for ends irrelevant to poetics and poetry. By doing so, he hopes to better defend poetry itself and to show what poetics has to reveal about language in general.

This is no easy task: from the sixties to the nineties, a series of attempts were made to colonise the place held in the university by poetics in France. The discipline of philosophy (inspired by Heidegger and Derrida) began to appropriate poetry and poetics for its own purposes, winning over many students and scholars to their motivated conception of a certain ideal of what poetry is and what it does. Psychoanalytic approaches to literature began to do the same thing, seeking in the text the unconscious mind that was examined on the Freudian couch.

Most of all, linguistics offered new stylistic approaches to literature (and to poetry in particular). Although such approaches had the charm of providing a rigour which was sometimes absent in the creative impressionistic intelligence of the mind cultivated by the contemplation of literature, they failed to take into account the social and aesthetic aspects of literary works. The new stylistics, which was one dominating force among linguistic approaches to literature, was,



for example, unable to take on board the question of literary worth. If this linguistic-inspired stylistics was incapable of responding aesthetically to literary works, it was quite simply because the approach was incapable of offering a definition of what a literary work is. Distinctions between verse and poetry, between doggerel and poems, which had provided meaningful paradigms for literary discourse for centuries, lost their relevance in stylistic analysis. Stylistics tends to accept what a culture considers to be poems without questioning the foundations or the legitimacy of their definition as such within the canon and within the culture. This was because stylistics scholars were working with Jakobson's definition of *literaturnost* (that specifically »literary« quality in literary texts). Ironically, *literaturnost* was not a literary concept, but a linguistic one. It may have functioned differently for the Russian formalists and the Prague Structuralist, Mukařovský, but in Jakobson's hands it became a term used by linguists to define something which presented qualities not found in common linguistic usage. *Literaturnost* became a category. And however much that category fascinated Jakobson, it was a category he placed outside of language as a whole. Russian formalists and structuralists were both working with an opposition between ordinary language and literary language: and this is precisely where Meschonnic takes position with his critique of linguistic approaches to poetics.

Meschonnic argued that poetry was part of language and that a linguistics incapable of comprehending poetry in its conception of language was one which deformed our vision of language. Not only does poetry influence language, as Mácha influenced Czech, Shakespeare influenced English and Baudelaire influenced French, poets themselves are working with the same linguistic resources as all other speakers. Alliteration in advertising is not the penetration of poetic effects upon common speech, but rather the exploitation of a potential for binding concepts together using phonetic means: this potential is proper to language per se and can be found in all fields of discourse.

In his critical poetics (*Critique du rythme*, 1982), Meschonnic made a vast survey of the approaches to versification and poetics in French, Spanish, Italian, English, German and Russian. In doing so, he wished to help us extricate ourselves from reductive formalistic approaches to rhythm which reduce the movement of poetry to a repetitive weak-strong beating. Meschonnic's alternative, »*rythme*«, bears very little resemblance to this definition of rhythm. In Meschonnic's conception, *rythme* becomes the shape the lyrical subject gives to to his poem, the organised discourse which *transpires* from his activity as the discourse-subject of that poem. This is a difficult notion to grasp, but it will be obvious that Meschonnic's version of *rythme* (like Levý's concept of rhyme) implies semantic elements and cannot therefore be considered a »formal« or »stylistic« element. *Rythme* is the organisation of meaning: and that meaning is

engendered (or *formulated*) using elements traditionally assigned to form in the form-sense division of the linguistic sign.

This organisation of the subject in and by his discourse, is proper to language as a whole, but it finds its greatest expression, Meschonnic believed, in the poem which privileges the transformation of language by discourse. The poet is not acting outside of language or working against language, as the Prague school at times understands the poet's work. The poet's activity is simply a regeneration of language by a meaningful recycling of its own resources.

Meschonnic finds misleading the tendency to consider certain »stylistic effects« as »poetic«. After all, it is patently true that alliterative links are found everywhere in language. Proverbs abound in alliteration (e.g. look before you leap). Meaningful oppositions are highlighted by phonetic links (e.g. friend or foe). In inventing new meaningful links, poets are only rekindling the fire of language. Shakespeare's »fair is foul and foul is fair« (*Macbeth*, I.1) merely harnesses a common linguistic process, though in doing so Shakespeare transforms language as the meaningful links he forges resound throughout the centuries. Such expressive patterning is powerful but pervasive throughout language.

This language-transforming expression takes place in great translations too. English owes the expression *clear as crystal* (with its alliterative link, *c/l*, which foregrounds the metaphor) to the *King James Bible*. French translations, on the other hand, did not come up with such a powerful expression, and, consequently, French Bibles offer several different metaphors (*brillant comme du cristal* TOB 1988, *limpide comme du cristal* for the *Bible de Jérusalem* 2001). These French translators did not opt for more conventional expressions such as *claire comme l'eau de roche* or *comme l'eau de source* which were probably themselves translations of the famous line from the Bible, but in any case neither those expressions nor the contemporary translations forge the meaning by binding the two terms of the metaphor with a sonorous link. Consequently, none of these expressions have achieved the same resonance within the French language as the inspired translation *clear as crystal* has come to form a meaningful and memorable expression for the English-speaking peoples.

Meschonnic's concept of *rythme* is so far removed from the meanings associated with the word »rhythm« in English that I have chosen not to translate it: this at least will prevent us from confusing it with metre or accentuation. But metre and accentuation also form part of his concept of *rythme*. What Meschonnic objects to is the reduction of the poem to the accentual or syllabic structure. Meschonnic reminds us to listen to the poem, and it is for this reason that his concept of *rythme* can best be understood in terms of the metaphor of the poem's »voice.« Structuralist poetics sought the structure, then tried to understand how the voice fitted into the poem, as though poets constructed

blocks of flats then fitted their thoughts and their feelings into each apartment, as the council's housing officer allocates tenants. As Meschonnic pointed out, however, »the voice is not added to the structure,« (*«la voix ne se rajoute pas à la structure,»* 1982, 275). The voice emerges with the configuration of the poem.

Meschonnic turned structuralist poetics on its head by refusing to view poems as manifestations of poetry and by stressing that it is poems that allow us to form an idea of poetry: what we know of poetry comes from poems. From this perspective, it appears perverse to seek the ways the movement of a poem adheres to or distances itself from the metrical schema, as scholars inspired by the structuralist paradigm tended to do. Meschonnic prefers to view the metre as one of the emerging forces which give shape to the voice (or the *rythme*) of the poem. As he pointed out, »The metre does not exist outside the poem any more than the poem is created outside of the subject,« (*«Le mètre n'existe pas plus hors du poème que le poème ne se fait hors du sujet»* 1982, 275).

The subject (*sujet*) should not be confused with the poet as a living person, the person of whom literary biographies are written. Nor should he be confused with the philosophical subject or the subject of psycho-analysis. The subject of the poem comes into being with and within the act of creation. In this sense, the poem is as much responsible for creating the subject as the subject is responsible for creating the poem. It is by the language-transforming act of creating an original (might we say »authentic«?) poem, that the poet reactivates a language's creative potential. The presence of the subject in the poem is manifest in the accentual organisation of his verse, in the words he rhymes and the links he forges between different words.

Like any other voice, the voice of the poet can be recognised from his »manner of *signifying*«, (*significance*). This *signifying* involves harnessing accentual patterns and phonetic links in order to body forth, or give form to, a certain act of expression. As Cassagne suggested, Baudelaire's voice was in part shaped by his predilection for rhyming certain words; *ténèbres-funèbres* (shadows-mournful/gloomy), *mer-amer* (sea-bitter), *automne-monotone* (autumn-monotony), (quoted by Meschonnic 1982, 264). These appear to the English ear original and intriguing rhymes, perhaps, but the reader of Baudelaire soon becomes accustomed to them. They act as the general backdrop to Baudelaire's more startling *rapprochements*, such as *intrépide-vide* (intrepid-empty) in the following lines which enact a beautifully casual anticlimax, so characteristic of Baudelaire's bathos:

L'amoureux le plus **intrépide**
Comme un flacon s'use et se **vide**¹

For Meschonnic, *signifying* involves exploring and extending the alliterative links found in language in an original manner. What these links formed, Meschonnic called the »*sémantique sérielle*,« extended networks of phonetically-bound concepts. Baudelaire's line »*La musique souvent me prend comme une mer*,«² does not employ alliteration simply to cradle the reader with a repetitive sonorous movement which washes over him like waves, it forges a link between »music« and »sea« and (most importantly) with the *me* of the poem in which the two are fused in an emotionally charged moment of expression. The highly expressive semantic nature of the links in this phrase becomes only too obvious if we compare them to alliteration found in advertising. Take for example, *Come down to Dan's Discount store*. Such alliteration attracts attention, but is in no way meaningfully expressive.

It is impossible to give anything like an adequate impression of the extent of Meschonnic's thought on poetics here. His translations of the Bible and his reflection on his own practice as a translator cannot be treated either in this chapter. The main ideas of his translation theory can be found in *Pour la poétique II* (Meschonnic 1972), *Poétique du traduire* (Meschonnic 1999) and *Éthique et politique du traduire* (Meschonnic 2007). The brief definition of some of his concepts given above will have to suffice here. It is possible though to explain how Meschonnic's approach to translation rejects the translation of meaning. He is not, on the other hand, in favour of a translation of form (a school of thought which has advocates as notable as Walter Benjamin). Meschonnic proposes that we respond to the voice of the poem, not by translating the structure but by re-enacting the signifying process (its *signifiance*). In translating Shakespeare's »Sonnet 71,« for example, Meschonnic responds to the meaningful alliterative link Shakespeare establishes between »mourning« and »me« in the first line »No longer mourn for me when I am dead,« by linking »death« (**mort**) to »deadly mournful« (**mourne à mourir**) in the first two lines of his translation:

Après **ma mort** ne pleure pas plus tard,
Que bat le glas qui bat **mourne à mourir**
(Meschonnic 1999, 299)

1 »The most intrepid lover / exhausts himself and empties like a flask.« (»Sonnet cavalier« Baudelaire 1975, 223)

2 »Music often takes me like the sea« (»La Musique« Baudelaire 1975, 68).

Of course, the actual phoneme repeated will often change in the translation, and the translator will not always be able to find equivalences for the meaningfully charged process of signifying in the poem: but once we look beyond the structure and begin listening to the voice, then we might hope to compensate for losses in the translation by linking other words to make powerfully significant combinations which travel down the same road the original poem would have us follow.

Critique of Levý

As we have seen, Levý had no inheritors, but Gasparov and Meschonnic, in very different ways, extend the project that Levý was working on. Gasparov opens up a historical dimension to comparative metrics. Meschonnic, on the other hand, like Levý, confronts the translation of actual poems and is forced to explain what works and what does not work in the process. Levý certainly did not go as far as Meschonnic in making a critique of the form-sense conceptualisation of literature. Nor did he need to for his purposes. Unlike Meschonnic, he was working within a context and period which was sensitive to poems. Though at times Levý expressed himself using formal terms, his practice of translating and reflecting upon translating tuned his ear and sharpened his intuition when it came to discerning the patterning of particular poets and evaluating and analysing the creative responses of translators to the poems they translated. Meschonnic from the 1970s onwards was preaching to a very different choir.

Notwithstanding their differences, there is nothing incompatible, between the approaches to translation of Meschonnic and Levý. The former's theory could refine the latter's concepts and the latter could extend the former's linguistic scope. There remain, nevertheless, difficulties in Levý's approach to poetry which must be briefly addressed. These difficulties concern his fundamental dichotomy of syllabic and syllabo-accentual verse.

To criticise Levý on this point might seem somewhat perverse. After all, Levý simply took on board the metrical approaches of each language and compared them in a very impressive synthesis. This led him to propose the following schema:

Syllabo-accentual metres	English
	Russian
	German
	Bulgarian
	Serbo-Croat
	Czech

Syllabic metres

 Polish
 Spanish
 Italian
 French
 (1963, 281)

However, if we take the two most representative forms of syllabic and syllabo-accentual metres in Levý's diagram, French and English, respectively, we are forced to admit today that neither of the theories of metrics with which Levý was working were capable of adequately explaining what happens in the poetry of these languages.

Levý was relying on traditional foot metrics as his mode of interpreting English verse. Foot metrics had, however, long been identified as incapable of explaining the way in which speech is shaped into metrical regularity in the verse line. The idea that a five-stress line (a pentameter) has five stresses is patently untrue. Consider the first line of Shakespeare's first sonnet:

Despite its four accents, this line is perceived (and invariably read) as a perfectly

/ / / /

From fairest creatures we desire increase

regular five-stress line. Other lines draw further from the five-stress metrical schema (as the first line of »Sonnet 21«):

\ \ /

So is it not with me as with that Muse

In this line, only »Muse« is clearly stressed, with »not« and »me« each carrying a lighter secondary stress in the natural undulating movement of English. Once again, though, this line is perceived as a perfectly regular pentameter. If this is so, it is partly because we do not tend to read poetry as we pronounce everyday speech. The expectations we have of the sonnet as a regular poem comprising fourteen pentametric lines encourage us to seek out regularity where it can be found. This entails a certain manipulation of the stressing of normal speech. Traditional foot metrics sought various means of explaining this process and invented a whole series of terms (such as »wrenched accent« Cuddon 1991,1045). Such terms and explanations were never integrated into a coherent explanation of the rules of regularity and were moreover revealed to be totally useless when it came to explaining why one three-stress line appeared regular while another was

perceived as wholly irregular. Worse still, traditional theories found it impossible to explain why many five-stress lines could not function as pentameters, and why four-stress lines failed to work as tetrameters.

These questions were resolved when Attridge (1982, 1995) integrated the concepts of *promotion* and *demotion* into his binary scansion which distinguished the *stress contour* from *metrical beating*. The great advantage of his system is that it resists trying to resolve two entirely different forms of stress into one single linear accentual pattern. His system held metrical beating and word stress in suspension as two interacting forces which must be resolved by each reader. The stress contour was the accentuation of the syntax, the sentence as it would be read or spoken outside of the context of the poem. However, since poems are not read like prose, the expectations we have of regular metrical verse make us seek out regularity in the movement of the lines. Whether we find it or not, remains to be seen. Many of Shelley's lines, and many of Donne's, do not seem to fulfil the requirements we are expecting. If this is so, it is because they differ too greatly from the underlying undulating movement of weak and strong syllables, and often we seem to lose track of the discernable metre which has been set in motion by the poem.

It is important to point out, however, that the number of stresses is not the fundamental condition for regularity. A three-stress pentameter is not necessarily perceived as less regular than a five-stress pentameter. What matters is the relationship between the syllables themselves. Can one weak syllable be promoted into a stress? Can a stress be demoted into a non-stress, a weak moment in the undulation of the line? It is upon these questions that our impression of a line's regularity depends. Attridge explains promotion as that process by which the natural tendency of English to alternate weak stresses with one focal point of accentuation is harnessed by the metre to allow one weak syllable to become stressed when it is preceded and followed by weak syllables. This process is clearly at work in the line from »Sonnet 21« quoted above:

-s -s -s s -s s -s -s -s +s
 So is it not with me as with that Muse
 o B o B o B o B

-s unstressed syllable

+s stressed syllable

s stressable syllable

B Beat

o offbeat

(scansion adopted in Attridge 1982)

Because the syllables »is,« »with« and »me« are both preceded and followed by weak syllables, nothing in the line opposes their promotion. Their promotion does not imply that they receive the same stress as »Muse«, and indeed demoted stresses sometimes carry greater stress in a given line than promoted unstressed syllables. Nevertheless, as long as the weak-strong undulating movement is not contradicted, and as long as the reader is able to lightly promote weak syllables into beats, the metre will not be contravened, and the impression of regularity will be maintained.

Just as promotion depends upon three weak syllables, demotion invariably occurs when three strong syllables are encountered. Though it is possible to demote one of a series of two stressed syllables, this presents significantly more difficulty than demotion in the triple-stress pattern. This is because English tends to avoid stress series, and in three consecutive stresses, the internal stress tends to lose its salience in relation to its neighbouring syllables. Attridge offered the following example of demotion from Shakespeare's »Sonnet 55«:

-s +s -s +s -s +s +s +s -s +s

Nor Mars his sword, nor war's quick fire shall burn

o B o B o B o B o B

(Attridge 1982, 206)

Attridge was influenced by the work of generative metrics while he was developing his system of versification, a tradition represented today by Kristin Hansen. The crucial difference, however, is that Attridge's approach is a reader-focused approach. It begins with the reader's impression of regularity and irregularity and explains it with a convincing system based upon a limited number of fundamental processes, rules and concepts. Rather than reducing the verse line to an abstract structure, Attridge traces the way each line of a given poet approaches and moves away from the underlying governing principle of metrical order. In this sense, Attridge is closer to Mukářovský, Levý and ultimately, Meschonnic, than he is to most representatives of metrical analysis.

Just as English specialists have long since abandoned the foot metrics with which Levý was working, recent French scholarship has refined its definition of syllabic verse. Notably Benoît de Cornulier in his *Théorie du vers* (1982) has contributed to our understanding of the workings of French versification by underlining the importance of accents in the French line. Until recently, accents were ignored in French versification (Grammont 1989) and were attributed a non-metrical status by Mazaleyrat (1990) who considered them as rhythmic elements which colour the movement of the verse line without contributing to its organisation as a rule-bound structure.

what traditional metrics (and Levý) claimed. Nonetheless, accentuation cannot be reduced to a mere metrical function in French verse, and it would be a mistake to see other accents as playing a merely secondary role in colouring the internal patterning of the verse. Poets regularly make use of the end of the line to divide sentences, thereby setting up a tension between the movement of the syntax and the metrical reading of the line. In Paul Valéry's »La Fileuse« (The Spinner), for example, we find a line which might be translated as: »The dream unwinds with an angelic indolence.« This is pretty enough as a line of verse. But rhythmically speaking what is interesting about the French line is that it is divided in the following way:

Le songe se dévide avec une paresse
Angélique

This line break contravenes the stress of French syntax, which would normally place the stress upon the final syllable of »angélique«, while subordinating »paresse«. The metre, however, entices us to promote »paresse«, lengthening its stress deliciously and forcing us to pause upon this word which should evoke sloth and lack of haste.

As this striking example shows, accents are therefore essential for the expressive movement of French verse. Accents, within the verse line stress meaningful words (as they do in everyday speech). Accents at line-ends foreground the meaning of words (and this form of highlighting is reinforced by rhyme). Accents caught in the tension between the movement of the sentence and the movement of the metre are foregrounded all the more. It should be obvious, then, that reducing accentuation to the formal patterning of an abstract metrical schema is a perverse distortion of the way we perceive the movement of meaningful verse.

Conclusion

At the end of this chapter, we should return to Levý's initial question; how can we translate a poem. Levý himself shows the way towards a comparative metrics which should be of service to the translator. Gasparov enlarges this project. In doing so, he inevitably loses sight of the poem itself. Gasparov is dealing with metrics and poetry. Levý is dealing with poems and the way they are transformed in the act of translation. This helps him to avoid reducing the structure of poetry to an abstract formal principle.

Levý does, however, conceptually speaking, remain within the limits of the linguistic sign which divides language into form and meaning. For this reason,

Meschonnic was justified in criticising one of the few articles by Levý to appear in English *The Meanings of Form and the Form of Meanings* (Levý 1966) (Meschonnic 1982, 259). If we speak of the influence of form on meaning or of meaning on form we are already accepting to link up things which form part of one indivisible whole. Voice does not use form to support it or reflect its content. Structure emerges in and with the act of expression. This is something which Levý knew very well, as is demonstrated by his sensitive analysis of translations (and especially by his treatment of rhyme). But the theoretical framework with which he was working sometimes clouded his intuitive insight.

Levý can hardly be criticised for not resolving the metrical questions which the scholars of each language took centuries to explicate: but if we are to elaborate today a comparative versification, it cannot be founded upon the misleading opposition between syllabic and accentual-syllabic metres. Attridge's binary scansion is necessary to allow us to explain the regularity of English verse, just as we need to reinstate the accent if we are to understand the true subtlety of French rhythm. This should allow us to discern more clearly the forces and patterns which weave the poem into a regular metrical shape.

To attempt to answer Levý's question, translating the structure is clearly insufficient. To translate the meaning and then impose a structure upon the verse would be grossly insensitive. Critics have always condemned prose chopped up into lines, calling it »doggerel« and »rat rhyme«: »versification« has also been used pejoratively in both French and English. Obviously, the translator that Levý envisioned was not a »versifier« or *un versificateur*: he was closer to the poet, the writer who creates meaning in movement, setting up harmony, introducing tension, linking and highlighting significant elements of the poem. This subtle process of creative re-expression was the task Levý laid out for the translator. His sole aim was to translate the poem: and however complex the discussion of his simple question becomes, the translator's response must be, quite simply, a poem.

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II

Structuralism Today

Structuralism: Great Expectations or Paradigm Lost? A Personal Reassessment

In this chapter, I will look back at structuralism and discuss its intellectual impact in the 1960s and 70s. What has happened to this theory and mode of thinking that hit my generation with the power of a revelation? My question introduces a trail of other questions, such as: has structuralism been replaced by other approaches and convictions or does it continue to ground and inform our thinking? In which way is it compatible or incompatible with other theories and interests? And if it is compatible, in which way does structuralism persevere within systems theory, post-structuralism and deconstruction? Which leads to a much more general question: what have we given up, what remains with us, and, not to forget: what is there to rediscover about structuralism?

Great Expectations: A Biographical Confession

These questions cannot be answered without some autobiographical input. When I started my studies of literature in the later sixties at the university of Heidelberg, my first guide into the new field was not a teacher but a book: René Wellek's and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature*. I read this magisterial work which was not an assigned but a personally chosen book in the spirit of religious devotion. More than the seminars and courses that I attended it was this book that initiated me into the new academic universe and laid the foundations of my intellectual formation.

What became of those ›great expectations‹ with which I started my studies in the heydays of structuralism? I will begin my reassessment of structuralism with an examination of these expectations. In this context we need to ask: what exactly was the lure of this influential intellectual movement? Which hopes were fulfilled or disappointed? And, perhaps even more importantly: which hopes proved illusory and inapt?

A collection of essays on *The Prague School of Linguistics and Language Teaching* was introduced in 1972 with the following sentence: »The linguistic

sciences have been much in vogue during the past twenty years and their popularity seems unlikely to diminish« (Fried 1972, 1). In 1972 this statement was still true, which is confirmed by the fact that I was able to keep this book, slightly aged but unused, in my home library – together with many a Czech work on phonology, eagerly bought but hardly read. At the time, it was a must for me as a student of literature to buy all the relevant linguistic publications and store them as symbolic capital on my shelves. The linguistic turn that had ushered in not only a new language-consciousness but also the widely shared conviction that any access to the study of culture has to pass through the door of language and the linguistic paradigm. The structuralist approach to language was considered the prime key to the mysteries of human relations and the king's way to the understanding of society and culture.

The great expectation that language would be the exclusive key to understanding the world and its structuralist analysis would reign unparalleled as the paradigmatic science in the humanities turned out to be an illusion. Towards the end of the 70 s, this enthusiasm had abated. Structuralism became a 'paradigm lost' not through being explicitly refuted by arguments and debates but through a silent and continuous process of estrangement and erosion. Without much self-defense, it gave way easily to new leading paradigms such as marxism, feminism, deconstruction and the systems theory of Niklas Luhmann, to name only a few of the successor candidates. It would be interesting to think more about the relations between these successors and structuralism that have been overlooked. These intellectual movements affirmed the political context and category of human agency. Luhmann's theory has many parallels with structuralism: the systemic view, the constructive force of distinctions, the synchronous and homoeostatic approach, and, last but not least: functionalism. The most important difference between Luhmann's system and Saussure's system lies in the fact that the latter chose language for his model while the former chose the biological model of living organism (but cleared of its organicist connotations) for his general orientation.

The greatest promise of structuralism (and it was perhaps also the lure of systems theory) was that it would close the gap between C.P. Snow's two academic cultures, the natural sciences and the humanities, by offering the new methodology of a hard-core ›science‹ for the humanities. According to these assumptions, it is not only the study of nature that is guided by strict laws but also the works and workings of the human mind, be they reflected in the products of language, the use of artifacts, or the structure of texts, myths or systems of kinship. Closely linked with this scientific promise was a new way of investigating which did not content itself to look at an object but which penetrated the surface to look into it and even right through it. This *penetrating gaze*, the method to look beyond the surface in order to discover hidden deep

structures was an enticing feature that structuralism shared with psychoanalysis. As psychoanalysis was designed to uncover the secret laws of the human psyche, structuralism claimed to uncover the secret laws of the human mind. The ability to see beyond what others are able to see constitutes a special competence that backs up a clear profile of professionalism. In the realm of the humanities with its soft methodology, much had depended on intuition, personal experience, and a stylized diction with the effect that the borderline between cultured knowledge and professional knowledge was notoriously blurred. Under the reign of structuralism, this borderline was reasserted. This is an important reason why structuralism was so eagerly embraced in the 1960s and 70s. It was promoted in academic institutions because it offered an emphatically self-assured methodology on an objectivist basis.

To return to my first flirt with structuralism: entering a university and being initiated into an intellectual community is not only a cognitive affair; it has also an erotic flavor. To encounter new theories is very much like dating; some are more attractive than others; one has to choose and ponder with which to enter into a life-long relationship. Monogamy, fortunately, is not a norm for the growth of a mind; friendship is a much better metaphor for the way in which the various phases of one's life are determined and marked by intellectual influences and commitments, which are, of course, always framed and mediated by admired personal models, affect-charged relationships and unexpected encounters. Some of these intellectual systems are like old friends who disappear when they are superseded, others are kept at bay though they are not totally forgotten, and yet others are ungratefully abandoned and may even turn into sudden enemies. My relationship with structuralism is that of gratitude for an old friend whom I like to revisit from time to time in his home for the aged, both for nostalgic reasons and because these visits help me to call up and work through the lower strata of my own intellectual development. This chapter is exactly such a visit. It will explore the territory between the lure of structuralism and its discontents, between its ›great expectations‹ and its status as a ›lost paradigm,‹ picking out three ideas from the bankrupt's estate that I consider worthy of attention and further intellectual development.

System and Time

One of the standard notions about structuralism is that it has shut out the dimension of time and adopted an anti-historical stance. It is true that structuralism developed from a turning away from the key orientation of the nineteenth century, which was historicism. Within the historicist paradigm, a definite origin in history and its growth in time was considered the one and only clue

for the understanding of any phenomenon, be it an institution, a person, a text, an artifact, a cultural practice. In opposition to growth, development and change, structuralism focused on function which could only be studied in a synchronous context. Phonology, for instance was born together with the premise that »no element of any language system can be properly evaluated if viewed in isolation: its correct assessment can only be obtained if its relationship is established to all other elements co-existing with it in that same language system« (Vachek 1972, 13). The emphasis here is of course on »co-existing«, but this implies in no way timelessness. From its very start, the system was conceived of in terms of process and change. Structuralism therefore implies not a turning away from time but a new approach to time, looking not at isolated changes but at changes as sets of relations within a system and between systems. Roman Jakobson and others have pointed out that the evolution of language

can only be duly interpreted if it is conceived of as an evolution of a systemic whole within which the relations of the elements composing it are often reshaped and/or replaced by other relations, the main aim of such changes being to maintain (or, as the case may be, to restore) the balance of the given language system. (Vachek 1972, 13)

Temporal change is obviously affirmed, but it is not described in terms of a linear process: the new way to describe temporal change is in terms of a systemic whole that constantly recomposes itself to maintain a state of balance. We may also say: a system is like an organism that has to continually adapt to the environment and its challenges; in doing so, it works according to a program that transforms external changes into internal changes. Thus, the structuralist system is in no way static but presents itself as a dynamic set of internal relations and external stimuli to which it responds. Constant re-adaptations or replacements are necessary in order to reproduce itself and maintain its dynamic identity over time. Today, after the emergence of systems theory and memory studies, we have a much better understanding of these processes and are better equipped to do justice to the structuralist approach to time.

As an example of a systemic approach to time, I will introduce a famous essay on »Tradition and the Individual Talent« (1919) by T.S. Eliot (Eliot 1969, 45 – 60). Although the term »system« does not appear in Eliot's essay, his concept of tradition is systemic in the technical sense of the term. In this text, Eliot refers repeatedly to literary tradition as a »whole,« which for him is another term for »system.« When Eliot redefined or rather reinvented his concept of tradition, he was influenced by the kind of systemic thinking and discourse that was developed at the beginning of the twentieth century in various disciplines. Eliot describes tradition as a system that reorganizes its economy constantly with

each change and renewal. He replaces historical categories such as »development« and »cause« with aesthetic categories such as »whole« and »unity,« in which the old and new are in a constant process of re-adjusting to each other. By translating historical language into systemic language, Eliot turns away from history without, however, discarding all notions of process, dynamics and temporality. This is his famous description of tradition as a dynamic system:

What happens when a new work of art is created is something that happens simultaneously to all the works of art which preceded it. The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for the order to persist after the supervention of the novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new.
(Eliot 1969, 50)

By using a systemic approach to tradition, Eliot can allow for movement and change in complete independence of causal or chronological models. He thus deconstructs the framework of chronology, which had been the backbone of historicist thinking. But he is far from simply abstracting time and arresting the object of his analysis in synchronic space. Instead, he stresses the internal dynamics of a system which is built on the co-adaptation of the old and the new. It is interesting to note that Eliot's concept of tradition as a process of permanent internal restructuring is not only in keeping with early structuralist theories but also corresponds with the model of memory as conceived by some philosophers and sociologists of his time. In 1925, six years after Eliot's essay on tradition, Maurice Halbwachs published a book on the »social frames of memory,« *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, in which he presented the laws of memory in surprisingly similar systemic terms. This is Halbwachs' description of »framework« which clearly corresponds to Eliot's »whole«:

Every time we integrate our impressions into the framework of our current ideas, the framework changes our impression, but the impression also modifies the framework [. . .] This results in a constant work of adjustment that, with every event, requires us to return to all of the concepts we have worked out on the occasion of prior events. If it were a matter of simply moving from a prior to a later fact, we could remain constantly in the current moment, and in it alone. But in reality, we must incessantly change from one framework to the next, which doubtlessly differs very little from the first, but in any case differs.
(Halbwachs 1985, 189)

The last sentence sounds almost like a translation of Eliot's »the whole existing

order must be, if ever so slightly, altered.« Eliot's concept of tradition is de-temporalized, but not rendered motionless; it does not invoke a concept like Walter Benjamin's »apocatastasis« – there is no »all in all« or »total recall.« The reference to Halbwachs alerts us to Eliot's concept of tradition as memory. Although the word does not appear in his essay, it gives a precise description of the process of remembering which is related to the past, yet always takes place in the present. Both memory and tradition are systems in the sense that they are *reconstructions of the past in the present*. Both are determined, limited and made possible by what is visible at that particular moment in time and space. We can never know the past as such; we can only access it from the present.

There is another theorist, who has to be invoked here, because he used the term »system« in order to develop a theory of the dynamic literary process. In his essay »On Literary Evolution« (1927), Yuri Tynyanov defined system as »a whole, the unity of which is determined by the interrelations of its individual components.« For Tynyanov, such a system was a far cry from a harmonious and indifferent order. »A system does not mean the coexistence of components on the basis of equality; rather, it presupposes the pre-eminence of one group of elements and the resulting deformation of others« (quoted in Erlich 1965, 199).

In this view, the history of literature is not a neutral continuum, but, rather like memory itself, a process of rewritings and deformations as they arise from the conditions of perception and the dynamics of dominance at each present moment. The word »deformation« here has no negative connotations, because there is no standard of a binding norm that transcends history. Temporal change is systemically described in terms of a constant replacement of frames, a continuous appropriation, a new »perspectivization,« a new rewriting. As a literary critic, Eliot was particularly interested in this potential of creative deformation; he hoped to make literary history productive again by congenially aligning it with his own norms of innovations. Tradition, as a cultural memory that lends itself to creative deformation, differs from a canonical tradition that merely enforces veneration. In the light of the new systemic discourse, Eliot was able to think dialectically and to make the ends of various polarized concepts meet such as »tradition« and »innovation,« order and change, part and whole.

Beyond Functionalism

Functionalism was the great innovation of structuralist thinking which allowed new approaches to the study of language. Going back to Karl Bühler's famous model of the functions of language, structuralists elaborated further functions and developed their specificities. Bühler's model describes the three basic functions that are involved in speech utterances: an emotive one that is linked to

expression, a conative one that is linked to appeal and a referential one that is linked to the world of objects and facts. Jan Mukařovský added to this matrix the aesthetic function, which links the utterance to itself and to the other words in which it is embedded. The aesthetic function does not only occur in literary language. He insisted that it is a universal phenomenon »and not even linguists can deny its place among the basic functions of language« (Mukařovský 1967, 49). The aesthetic function does not cancel other functions, but contributes to the complexity of the model. It adds a quality of self-reflexivity which involves a refocusing of attention on the linguistic signs themselves. Mukařovský on this basis generalized that autonomy or non-functionality was the specific and proper function of art, which was itself a highly political statement in the politicized context of the 1930 s. (It must be added, however, that he revoked this theory and made his peace with Stalinism in the late 1940 s.) To Bühler's three and now four functions Roman Jakobson later added two more, the phatic function oriented towards the channel of communication and the metalingual function, oriented towards the linguistic code (Jakobson 1960, 350–77).

The interest of the Prague theorists in the multiplication of functions can be interpreted as a strategy against homogenous concepts of man and reality. Mukařovský's thinking was directed not only at the complexification of functions but also at restricting and questioning the central concept of function itself. This question became the focus of one of his later publication on »the intentional and unintentional in art.«¹ In this essay, Mukařovský distinguishes between two dimensions of a work of art which are responsible for its double status. The intentional is what is semiotically encoded and addressed to a reader or viewer who receives the work as a sign. The proper response to the work of art as a sign is to decode it, to understand it, and to relate it to conceptional frames. The hypothesis here is that we are dealing with a medium that can become transparent for some kind of meaning. The unintentional side, on the other hand, constitutes the work of art as an object, which, like all objects, is opaque. When the object quality of the work of art is foregrounded, the search for meaning is frustrated, the desire for sense is blocked, and the reader is referred back to his senses. It is in the constant oscillation between the experience of meaning and the experience of the object, between the intentional and the unintentional dimensions that the work of art unfolds its continuously renewed energy. This interminable energy, according to Mukařovský, is related to the double experience of the work of art as object and sign, depending on the perspective and disposition of the reader. The work simultaneously speaks and it withholds itself. The non-semiotic event or object-quality of holding back causes an irritation in the receiver, who, however, is thereby not only perplexed and frus-

1 See also Wutsdorff (2006).

trated, but also affected and aroused to discover new aspects and new forms of perception.

Analysis and Interpretation

We have started with the penetrating gaze of structuralist reading strategies and have come full circle with the literary text not only as a sign but also as an object that penetrates the reader. There is a more general dilemma at stake here that touches on a contradiction between theory and practice within the project of structuralism itself. The theory of the Prague structuralists which converges with the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin is that they are both engaged in opening new meanings when sounding the potential of a work of art (Wutsdorff 2006). They all emphasize the interminability of the reading process and protest against acts of closing this process by the power and authority of a last word.

Especially in Eastern Europe, this theoretical emphasis on the open and dialogic process of meaning production had, of course, obvious political implications. There is, however, which is rather confusing, a contrary tendency in structuralist practice that aims at the objectifying, demystifying and pinning down of meaning. Some texts, like Baudelaire's »Les Chats,« that had been operated on by various eminent structuralists with the result that these texts, which had been taken apart and analyzed so conclusively hardly ever stimulated new encounters or lured readers into a second round. When in the 1960 s and 1970 s I felt attracted by structuralism, this had much to do with the promise that it opened up an access to new topologies of meaning, to hidden matrixes of texts or cultures, to mental maps and the ways they were organized. I vividly remember the time when every text I read was promptly submitted to a process of rewriting into rigid patterns and grids which were supposed to yield hidden structures of meaning. To a quite high degree, the scientific project of structuralism lay in the objectivist stance that aims at discovering meaning without involving the reader as gendered personal self or historical subject. This scientific orientation carried the thrilling promise of cracking codes and gaining pure knowledge. The scientific lure of power and control, however, was bought at a high price: it required us to leave out time, historical circumstances, and most of all: the experience of the body. It is small wonder, then, that structuralism was followed by a reassertion of what had been elided: gendered views, political stances, individual experiences and the senses. As I see it today, this preoccupation with deep structures satisfied a deep desire for control over that shifting and unruly object, the text. In the process of its analysis, a text was transformed from a chaotic engine of meaning-proliferation into an orderly and manageable system of relationships and constellated terms. In this process,

subjective reading turned into objective analysis; the pleasurable or painful encounter with the text gave way to a rather mechanical and distanced x-ray of it.

Mikhail Bakhtin addressed this problem in an article in the 1970 s in which he distinguished between interpretation and analysis. For him, interpretation is an act that has to be continuously repeated, whereas analysis is an act that leads to the clearly defined end of a final result. While analysis provides closure by dissolving a mystery, interpretation maintains and intensifies the mystery by adding to the semantic weight of the text. Analysis is a scientific and secular project which is oriented towards a verdict, a result, a solution to a problem. Interpretation, on the other hand, is first and foremost a way of prolonging the interaction with the text. It is modeled on the status of the sacred text, the aura of which is maintained in continuous forms of interaction. Bakhtin introduces the terms symbol and concept to make his point. According to him, meaning can only be answered with another meaning.

There are two possible approaches to meaning: one is the rationalization of meaning (the scientific analysis), the other is the deepening of meaning with the help of other meanings (the philosophically-aesthetic interpretation). This deepening occurs by widening the context and drawing in what is remote. The interpretation of symbolic structures has to penetrate into the infinitude of symbolic meaning. This is the reason why it can never become an exact science like the natural sciences.²
(Bakhtin 1979, 360)

Mukařovský and Bakhtin, each in his own way, have shown that the structuralist urge towards a truly scientific method for dealing with texts and art has its obvious limits. The structuralist technique of scientific analysis and x-raying jars with its premise of the text as a perpetual engine of meaning.³

At the peak of its momentum, structuralism was more than a theory, a method or a practice – it was a world view. In the early nineteen-seventies it offered an exciting mental adventure that was not to be missed. When revisiting this adventure today, the effect is very much that of visiting an old friend whom one has lost sight of for a long time. We become aware of various mannerisms to which we respond with estrangement, but we also feel a deep and grateful sense of familiarity and loyalty.

2 If the idiom in which the description of the work of art is carried out is not in some way cognate to it, the interaction ceases to be »dialogic« and is transformed (to use Martin Buber's language) into an »I-it-relationship.«

3 According to Harold Bloom, »reading a text is necessarily the reading of a whole system of texts, and meaning is always wandering around between texts« (Bloom 1975, 107 – 8).

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Monica Spiridon

Bakhtin after Bakhtin: The Fate of a Pioneering Theory of Language

Bakhtin Revisited

My presentation maps out a tenuous retrospective assessment of Bakhtin's theoretical legacy consistent with a wide variety of epistemological agendas, which »interpreted« him in every possible sense of the word: from translation to exegesis, from paraphrase to rewriting and inevitably to misreading.

From the mid-sixties, Bakhtin has progressively become a cultural star and fostered a persistent vogue. In 1981, one could have come across an article on Bakhtin in a publication like *The Sunday Times* and in 1988, at the triennial congress of the ICLA (*International Comparative Literature Association*) an entire section was dedicated to him. In 1990, at the congress of the FILM (*Fédération Internationale des Langues et Littératures Modernes*) Bakhtin inspired an independent colloquium. Nowadays, popular culture, media studies, semiotics, poetics, the theory of the novel, literary history, philosophical anthropology and pragmatics all openly lay claim to him.

The first step on the path of this spectacular reception was made by post-war semiotically-oriented literary theory. Julia Kristeva initiated the reassessment of a completely forgotten theorist, whose life was obscurely drawing to its close. Her reading of Bakhtin boosted modern speculation on intertextuality, which was expanded into the abundant contemporary assumptions on the pre-/trans-/ or arch-text. Gerard Genette (1979, 1982) Linda Hutcheon (1985), Margaret Rose (1979), among many others, at least appeared to follow in her footsteps.

Approached from a different point of view, Bakhtin became involved in the theoretical boom of post-structuralist hermeneutics (de Man, 1983). Todorov, a moderate structuralist, played a leading role in this development. The French theorist had earlier promoted Russian formalism on the French intellectual market, editing a classic book: *Théorie de la littérature. Textes des formalistes russes réunis par Tzvetan Todorov* (Todorov 1966). Under the title *Mikhail Bakhtine: Le principe dialogique suivi par Ecrits du cercle de Bakhtine* he also edited the most important Bakhtin texts in French dating back to the nineteen-

thirties, when he was at war with the formalist dogmatism of the *OPOYAZ* (Todorov 1981). Unfortunately, at that time, the so-called »dialogic principle,« a universal pattern of verbal interaction, did not achieve any rating on the intellectual market of a country not ready to part with formalist structuralism.

The texts compiled and edited by Todorov provided an efficient transatlantic passport for Bakhtin. In the wake of the American translation of Todorov's book, under the title *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle* (Todorov 1984b), the former enemy of the *OPOYAZ* emerged as one of the most important literary theorists of our century. Only one year later, in *PMLA*, vol.100, no. 2, the executive director of the *Modern Languages Association* offered a substantial reward to the reader who could spot the first mention of the »Master Thinkers« of twentieth century humanistic culture in the collection of the journal. Bakhtin was top of the list, followed by Barthes, Freud, Derrida, Claude Lévi-Strauss, etc.

On the same side of the Atlantic Bakhtin's early opus *Art and Answerability* legitimized a well-articulated phenomenology of dialogism, rooted in the text, but pointing to the much wider horizon of theological thought (Clark, Holquist 1984b).

As it became apparent, by means of intertextuality, dialogical hermeneutics and so on, the late reception of Bakhtin turned him into a pioneer of post modern plurality and pan-anthropologism, which significantly marks contemporary intellectual discourse.

However, the more familiar we are with the numerous and highly interpretable writings of the Russian theorist, the more we feel the pressure of an unavoidable question: can one discern a fundamental core, able to bring the widest variations and at the same time to secure the unity of his manifold heritage?

The main purpose of the following pages is to answer this rather rhetorical question. I will consequently try to circumscribe the horizons between which Bakhtin has simultaneously moved from 1919 through to the early seventies. Perhaps in doing this it will become clearer that the dynamics of his thought have been dominated by a *top-down pattern*, which took off from philosophy and anthropology towards linguistics and from the speculative towards the empirical rather than the other way around.

The Critique of the Formal Method

Perceived as rather marginal in his original horizon of expectations contemporary to the fancy, brilliant and vanguard oriented formalists, Bakhtin's hypotheses passed almost unnoticed. For a long time his image remained imprisoned by a rigid academic perception, assessing him as a positivist poetician, albeit more flexible than his enemies, the formalists.

In Bakhtin's critique of the so-called »formal method« a close reading can reveal an astute energy of reworking formalist theoretical hypotheses (Bakhtin, Medvedev 1985, 118–28). A series of scholars, such as Gary Saul Morson, I.R. Titunik, Kristyna Pomorska, Ladislav Matejka, contended that in several respects Bakhtin represented a connector between the Russian and the Czech structuro-formalisms on the one hand, and western post-war structuralisms on the other (Morson, Emerson 1989, Titunik 1984).

Bakhtin's system should be evaluated in explicit contra-distinction to formalism, which was the starting point of his own hypotheses. The formalists grounded the structural formal specific of literary language in its contrast to practical or ordinary language. They insisted on »estrangement« as the functional engine of literariness, as Shklovski contended. Matters of »content,« such as ethics, history, values, among others, were downgraded to the status of »mere material« and subsequently discarded:

The formalists began from the false assumption that the fullness, generality and breadth of meaning could not be included in the material here and now of the poetic construction. Their fear of meaning in art led the formalists to reduce the poetic construction to the peripheral, outer surface of the work. The work lost its depth, three-dimensionality, and fullness. Their concepts of material and device are expressions of the superficial view of the construction. Having established a reverse proportionality between meaning and artistic significance, the formalists inevitably arrived at the device, which, as the combination of indifferent material, was *formalistically empty*.

(Bakhtin, Medvedev 1985, 118)

The *OPOYAZ* practically institutionalised what I would call a *Model of the Alternative* in every possible respect: poetic-language and its estrangement (*ostranenie*) is an anti-common language; devices are counter-material; subject is a forced remodelling of the fable; every literary series emerges as a total displacement and reversal of a preceding one, etc.

Bakhtin's system bears, on the contrary, an obvious centripetal and integrative mark, since the negation and the alternative have been replaced by a cumulative transgressive move:

The problem would have been solved if the formalists had succeeded in finding an element in the poetic work which would simultaneously participate in both the material presence of the world and in its meaning which would serve as a medium, joining the depth and generality of meaning with the uniqueness of the articulated sound. This medium would create the possibility of a direct movement from external form to intrinsic ideological meaning.

(Bakhtin, Medvedev 1985, 118–19)

The Russian theorist operates with an all-encompassing, extensive notion of form. This means that in the terms of the Copenhagen Structuralist School he is very keen on the »*form of the content*«: according to him, in its very substance, the content has been permeated by language. In *Rabelais and his World* (1984a) Bakhtin does not define the key concept of »carnival« as a mere eclectic ideological content, or as a semi-institutionalised cultural form, but as a »*form of the content*,« simultaneously oriented towards culture and towards power.

Opening all the severe methodological brackets of the *OPOYAZ* Bakhtin helped integrate their hypotheses into wider significant horizons:

The very presence of the utterance is historically and socially significant. The utterance is not a physical body and not a physical process, but a historical event, albeit an infinitesimal one. Its individuality is that of a historical achievement in the definite epoch under definite social conditions. This is the individuality of a socio-historical act, which is fundamentally different from the individuality of a physical object or process.

(Bakhtin, Medvedev 1984, 121)

At a certain point, in his substantial assessment of the formal method Bakhtin labels the dynamics of the relationship between literary language and its context as a »dialectical« process. (Bakhtin, Medvedev 1984, 29) At this point, we need to remember that after having been imprisoned, he continued to write under a severe Stalinian censorship and was consequently constrained to disguise his categories in a convenient Marxist manner (Voloshinov 1976).

In the abundant, heteroclitic texts of Bakhtin, most frequently untitled, we can identify a core hypothesis concerning the modelling force of linguistic expression. It magnetically attracts in its orbit a huge mass of distinct materials, pertaining to the individual, the community, the world, society, history, culture, etc., and will eventually fuse them in a formal architecture:

The material individuality of the sign and the generality and breadth of meaning merge in the concrete unity of the historical-phenomenon-utterance. This meaning is itself historical. The organic connection between the sign and meaning attained in the concrete historical act of the utterance exists only for the given utterance and only under the given conditions of its realisation.

(Bakhtin, Medvedev 1984, 130)

Switching to the area of diachrony, it is necessary to note that the formalists mobilized strong evidence to support the hypothesis of the text as a product of supra-individual laws and of impersonal forces. For them, the text is a self-sufficient object, independent of non-literary values and strongly resisting external pressure. Bakhtin locates literary dynamics beyond the perpetual, me-

chanical clash of only two types of discourse (poetical versus practical language). He seems more interested in the battlefield where huge discursive armies fight each other, producing a fascinating, endless polyphony, largely dependent on various contexts and historical rhythms. It is worth noticing that in Bakhtin's discursive world, the swift tempo of innovation, prevailing in the formalist universe, is replaced by a chronology that would probably have been labeled by the French theorists of the *Annals School* as *la longue durée*. This type of movement is so slow that sometimes it becomes imperceptible and most probably its basic unit is the century. Overall, Bakhtin defends a *top-down approach* to language, literature and the humanities, in sharp contrast to the bottom-up formalist point of view. For him the study of literature is a branch of the study of ideologies (Gardiner 1992).

We cannot conclude this sketchy presentation of Bakhtin's counter-offer to formalist hypotheses, without recalling his obsessive, early interest in the subdivisions of the epistemological discourse. In Bakhtin's dispersed writings it is possible to discern the landmarks of a »transversal discipline« (to use a trendy phrase), operating with a repertoire of mediating categories which inter-connect history and ideology with linguistics. The following paragraphs of my chapter draw on this disciplinary project.

Towards a Transgressive Discipline: »Meta-linguistics«

Both scientific and speculative European structuralisms have stimulated projects committed to transform metaliterature into an overarching theory of human sciences. Closely followed by French structuralism, Bakhtin's contemporaries, the Russian formalists, also aimed to create a *science* whose particular object was verbal art: the *science of literature*. In this way, the laws that rule literature were moved on the premises of linguistics.

In his turn, Bakhtin expressed a lifelong interest in the area. In a series of notes dating back to the very end of his life, now published under the title *Towards a Methodology for the Human Sciences*, Bakhtin draws a fundamental distinction between the »exact« and the »human« disciplines. Whilst »exact« sciences concerned with the objects of knowledge are monologic, »human« sciences, he maintains, are necessarily dialogic (Bakhtin 1986, 159–72). This idea was the starting point of Bakhtin's endeavour to build a methodologically integrated approach of human sciences, joining together linguistics, aesthetics, epistemology and ethics: in other words, an audacious *translinguistics*, which he occasionally called *meta-linguistics*. The object of this transgressive discipline is language, as manifest in dialogical relations between speakers (Bakhtin 1984c).

This brand of metalinguistics obviously implies that the appropriate terms

for the study of language are to be found *beyond linguistics*. We need to remember Bakhtin's early concerns for the axiomatic cooperation between aesthetics, epistemology and ethics, as expressed in his first important study *Art and Answerability* (Bakhtin 1990). Seen in the retrospect, he emerges as an anti-systematic thinker, allotting only a small local area and a mere propedeutic function to systematic linguistics.

In *Speech Genres*, for instance he blames the confinement within the text as promoted by formalism (Bakhtin 1986, 159–72). In *Discourse in the Novel* it becomes clearer that this category of »voice« is a semantic and not a psychological concept: »They are speaking voices carrying the image of a language« (Bakhtin 1981, 336).

Constantly interested in the symbols through which humans negotiate meaning, Bakhtin has circumscribed a main field of significance and legitimized it by means of a whole repository of concepts, intended to give shape to linguistic interaction. Language was understood by Bakhtin mostly as an arena in which communications are established between people, groups and generations, across cultural barriers and between ideological antagonisms.

The backbone of the transgressive or transversal intellectual discipline defended by Bakhtin is a series of *normative arch-concepts*. In fact, he patented and promoted a long list of epistemological categories, which unfortunately left room for conflicting interpretations. All of them, *dialogism*, *heteroglossia*, *speech genres*, *voices*, *carnival*, are firmly grounded in the linguistic soil, at the crossroads of the empirical and the speculative, induction and deduction, text and context. (Bakhtin 1986)

The very core of his system, the most diversely interpreted and the most frequently misunderstood concept, now almost embodied by Bakhtin, remains the »dialogue.« Bakhtin was frequently portrayed as a »Figure of Dialogism.« In contemporary poetics there are several groups of worshipers of »dialogism,« a concept which eventually acquired the same status that Ihab Hassan used to assign to post-modernism: a kind of raspberry vinegar that automatically upgrades the most ordinary meal to the dignity of »*nouvelle cuisine*.«

In the simplest terms, »dialogism« can be defined as the aperture of an utterance towards the indeterminacy of the discursive area, which in its turn has been baptised »heteroglossia.« In fact, the categorial couple *dialogism* and *heteroglossia* manages to cover both the formal and the social faces of the same reality.

Beyond its international scholarly career and productiveness, Kristeva's category of *intertextuality*, represents more or less a »misreading« of Bakhtin's hypothesis on dialogism, triggering one of the main contemporary movements towards transgressing the closure of the text: any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations, any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The

notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least a double (Kristeva 1980, 66).

Complaining about the subsequent interpretations of the term she originally launched, currently conceived as an inspirer of a brand of source-criticism that plays the card of a mechanical text/pre-text relationship, Kristeva switched to the category of »transposition«, also borrowed from Bakhtin. Any signifying practice is the transposition of diverse signifying systems (Kristeva 1974, 59). The transposition and the polysemy as developed by Kristeva represent crucial dimensions of any text, in the same way that it is also true of Barthes, in *S/Z*, to quote just one example.

Another conceptual landmark of Bakhtin's, the »speech genres« (*»les genres du discours«* in Todorov's pioneering translation) has had an interesting career. Speech genres (normative, mediating and hermeneutic categories) are essential tools of the negotiation of meaning, which takes place in specific historical contexts. Embodying the mutability, the diversity and the historic determination of meaning, they betray a theorist obsessed with the foundational heterogeneity of sense (Bakhtin 1984b).

It was frequently noticed that Bakhtin firmly believed in the free combinations of the units of language. Nonetheless, these allegedly »free« combinations are regulated by a virtually infinite number of rigorous generic norms: The utterances and their speech types that are speech genres, Bakhtin contends, are *the drive belts* from the history of society to the history of language (Bakhtin 1984b, 65). Shaping our speech in all its meanings and forms, between common speech utterances and sophisticated cultural structures such as the novel, operate diverse but stable generic patterns of expression (the everyday narration, writing formulas, standard military command, the repertoire of business documents and the diverse types of social, political commentary among several mentioned by Bakhtin).

The categories devised by Bakhtin can move freely, transgressing the borders of art and heading towards life: his understanding of the aesthetic realm was a very extensive, a Kantian one (Clark, Holquist, 1984a). Whatever can be qualified as human, even life itself, Bakhtin maintains in his late notes, always gets formalised and this process of modelling is highly ritualised.

Since Bakhtin emphatically stressed the flexibility and the complexity of meaning especially when delivered over to readers, many of his interpreters inferred from this that, for him, meaning was radically unstable, in the same way in which deconstructionist hermeneutics saw it. In fact, whilst promoting pluralism and relativism, he was cautiously keen on the »limited freedom« of interpretation and on the category of norm. In his late essays of 1970–71 he contends that any type of understanding is under the pressure of external norms and that »freedom« simply means awareness of these norms.

In this particular respect, he seems to meet the earlier hypotheses of Charles Saunders Pierce, who taught pragmatics at Harvard in 1903 and insisted on the necessary relationships between the communicators, in the framework of the »*unlimited semiosis*« he preached. Contemporary scholars agree that for Pierce »the interpretant« refers not only to simply interpretive processes but also to an interpretive community and to its restrictive norms, embodied by diverse cultural products and structures. Bakhtin seems quite close to this extensive meaning of interpretive communities, now quite active in contemporary semiotics, in the wake of the Tartu School.

Significantly, as regards literary prose, Bakhtin was not interested in short stories as formalists were, but in the novel: a highly integrative genre, favouring intertextuality, openness, intermingling, and mediations and so on. Later on his analyses were extended towards the temporal-spatial models named »chronotopes,« that found the sub-genres of the novel. For him, Dostoyevsky epitomized translanguistics or metalinguistics, where the interest in literary text and in the history of ideas reaches a profitable balance (Bakhtin 1984c).

It is worth noting that all Bakhtin's concepts have to be situated in the framework of a particular discipline, be it philosophical anthropology or pragmatics, modernist literary theory, socio-linguistics, post-structuralist or post-modern thought and so on. This is a highly debated issue, which continues to divide Bakhtinian scholars. Among his first-rate interpreters, Katerina Clark, Michael Holquist (1984b) and Todorov (1984a) would favour philosophical anthropology, I.R. Titunik (1984) and Gary Saul Morson (1989) linguistics. This is due to the fact that most of his concepts are both historical and normative and the umbrella-category of *dialogue* is a generative concept, which can be seen both as a textual model and as an anthropological paradigm.

Beyond any conflicting options, Bakhtin made a major contribution to the actual understanding of human sciences, questioning the monolithic, reductionist category of structure and operating in the interstices of several traditional disciplines.

Conclusions: Bakhtin our Contemporary

Bakhtin's hypotheses on the cumulative rather than negative virtues of »form« paved the royal way for European intellectual thought from structuralism to post-structuralism and to contemporary semiotics, which proclaimed the validity of the sign as the model of culture as a whole. As a declared anti-Saussurian (he tagged Saussure's hypotheses as »abstract objectivism«), the Russian theorist met Pierce in the rebuff of the narrow semantic approaches of meaning. Both of them grounded it in interpretative communities, which share a repository of

go-betweens such as genres, codes, the most diverse linguistic patterns, archetypes, etc.

Bakhtin's comprehensive approach to human sciences was founded on the identity of their substance – called either text or verbal utterance – and on the unity of their methodology. This allowed him to seek bridges between the individual and the social as well as between language and history, boosting a formal analysis of ideologies, dominated by dialogism.

If, at this point, we attempt to answer the question outlined at the beginning of this chapter, we can conclude that the main core of Bakhtin's thought was to be found in his early texts which, in rhetorical terms, acted as a prolepsis in anticipating what was to follow. His first important text, *Art and Answerability*, dates back to 1919, when Bakhtin was only 24, while the very last one was published in Moscow in 1975. This gap of almost 50 years constitutes an obvious unity disguised in the most confusing diversity: all linguistic issues are approached within the framing perspective of extremely wide categories, open to philosophical anthropology in its widest sense. However, when compared to the very first, his latest contributions bear an obvious pragmatic mark. His heritage recommends him not only as a prominent linguist, a technical semiotician, a forerunner and a developer of structuralism and post-structuralism but also as an important moment in the history of the European intellectual discourse.

It seems that between the mid-sixties and mid-nineties we witnessed a spectacular »Bakhtin battle,« comparable to the one unleashed by the rediscovery of Walter Benjamin. The sustained »Bakhtin after Bakhtin« interpretive scenario eventually came up with the effigy of an atypical Bakhtin: an outstanding link in the great chain of the history of ideas. Now that this chapter is drawing to its close, I realise that perhaps a better title would have been »Bakhtin, our contemporary.«

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Erik S. Roraback

Niklas Luhmann and Forms of the Baroque Modern; or, Structure, System and Contingency

It was in the heyday of structuralism of the 1960 s that Niklas Luhmann (1927 – 98) began his prodigious efflorescence of publicational work that would evolutionarily build on his highly complicated, yet useful systems theory, very much canvassed and informed by notions of self-reference as the supervening functional structure of today, of diverse theories of difference such as self-differentiation and variability, of communication, of autopoiesis, and of risk.

Luhmann’s imaginative, productive and provocative interdisciplinary usage of the strategies of structuralism is enriched by his concomitant enlistment of evolutionary-biological and modern information theories. The present chapter will thus aim to give the principal contours of Luhmann’s systems theory in order to spotlight a selection of its milestones in raising the level of the debate for our contemporary concern with the twinned concepts of structure and system as chiefly a question of self-reference and self-differentiation in the engenderment of a self-reproducing auto-poietic society.

Crucially, I want to argue for the notion here of a relational baroque system (i. e., 1600-present) of differences of capitalist modernity outfitted by structure, risk and contingency accordingly as an apposite, dialectical way of revisiting our modern baroque-era foundation stones. This would give us one plausible way for a thoughtful and searching attempt to understand reality situations in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

William Rasch writes in his first-class study of Niklas Luhmann,

For some [modernity] is an ongoing project; for others it is history; and for still others it has never happened. For Luhmann, it is the precondition of all our deliberations, the ›structure‹ within which our ›semantics‹ makes sense [...] the structure of contingency that forces selections, which [...] force further selections [...].

(Rasch 2000, 2–3)

Here then »modernity« is a »structure,« to wit, the structure for thinking the

baroque modern. For the present critic it is even more profoundly a question of the deeper materialist structures of relation of capitalism or of capitalist modernity, which is to say a whole body of capitalist rationalities, if you prefer, than it is merely of the rather basket term »modernity,« per se; yet another first-rate Luhmann critic, Hans-Georg Moeller, explains,

modernity can be described as the attempt to reunite the Cartesian subject that was split into mind and body with the help of an overarching humanism. Luhmann [...] tries to grant all the different dimensions of bodily life, of conscious experience, of communicative practice their own right of existence. Luhmann is neither a monist nor a dualist, he is a thinker of multiplicity and difference and in this respect he is more ›postmodern‹ than ›modern.‹
(Moeller 2006, ix)

But again, I see the problem more one of (baroque-period) capitalisms than of the foregoing, though this is of course a part of the multiple capitalist picture, including any feasible endorsement of a distinction between the concepts modern and postmodern; for further clarification, Moeller adds that for Luhmann, »[s]ociety is not made up of small units that constitute a larger unit, it is rather based on differences that constitute more differences« (Moeller 2006, 40). Today we can cash that in thanks to the work of figures from philosophical culture such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. Also, for Rasch in a disclaimer, that »Niklas Luhmann, modernity's most meticulous theorist, should ›side,‹ as it were, with postmodernity yet reject the melodramatic term as simply expressing the need, as he puts it, to ›catch up on the semantic level‹ (Luhmann 1998, 18)« (Rasch 2000, 10), shows that we are in truth of fact for Luhmann not experiencing any structural changes in society since the eclipse of the so-called feudal age of hierarchical stratification. It is in this sense that we live still in an age pried open and terraced by the classical baroque of the seventeenth century. Indeed, Luhmann notes that »in about 1600 the system concept began its historical career« (2002, 38); and furthermore he writes that »the structure of systems, [may be seen] as capital, in the sense of an accumulation of money or knowledge or power, or as history« (1990, 41), which makes for a rather baroque notion of plural modern capitalist systems from multiple points of view, not least a classical experience of the periodizing one. This retroactive activity of going back to the age of major ferment, precariousness and risk of the classical seventeenth-century version of the baroque accords to a notion too that it is dialectically exigent that we return to the origin of modernity if Luhmann is correct, when he notes that, »one finds oversubtle strategy discussions but insufficient reflection on the structural origins of the conflict and the valid grounds of the opponent« (2002, 117). That is to say, more precisely, I

think, that the notion of ›origins‹ or a baroque absolute is a way for us of thinking the absolute in an historical way as traditionalists in the good sense that Walter Benjamin gives the term in his influential essay, »The Destructive Character«. The structuralist (on some level) Jacques Lacan echoes this periodization of the modern as a perhaps surprising if not noumenal and so unconscious baroque thing when he notes in his celebrated Paris seminar of 1969 – 70, which has been translated into English as *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*:

I recommended to one charming person that he reread Baltasar Gracián, who, as you know, was a Jesuit living at the turn of the seventeenth century. All things considered, this is where the view of the world that suits us was born [...] It's curious, but that's how it is.
(Lacan 2007, 183)

To put it succinctly, the real matter at hand then is cognition of this diachronic unit of temporality of 1600 to the present as the correct framework for apprehending the modern present (albeit another correct view out there to note parenthetically would yet again have the fourth- and fifth- century Saint Augustine, as thinker, as the true prophet and inaugurator of the Occidental modern). Luhmann notes that, »[s]ince the end of the sixteenth century, the idea of self-maintenance has been used to displace teleological reasoning and to reintroduce teleology by the argument that the maintenance of the system is the goal of the system or the function of its structures and operations« (1990, 11). This goes hand in hand with the birth of the modern more or less capitalist individual and capitalist brain, which themselves may be seen, we shall see, as autopoietic systems structured within a more macro-level autopoietic societal system.

And for Rasch,

[w]hat is [...] important, according to Luhmann, ›is not the emancipation of reason, but emancipation from reason,‹ an emancipation that ›need not be anticipated,‹ because it ›has already happened‹ [...] the fall from reason [...] has landed us not in a surreal wonderland of unreason but rather in the midst of a plurality of competing rationalities, ›high-energy rationalities,‹ as he says, ›that only cover partial phenomena, only orient society's function systems.‹
(Rasch 2000, 11)¹

Benjamin's acclaimed angel of history here then has been unfettered from »the storm of progress;« but has it really? I think not. For the issue of the history-sensitive angel is rather more one of progress than of rationality, *per se*. The

1 Luhmann quotations are from (1998, 18, 25)

foregoing would then more concern Paul Klee's 1927 painting *Grenzen des Verstandes* (The Limits of Reason) and its creative value than Klee's *Angelus Novus* from 1920, which, it is well known, Benjamin privately owned.

Be all this as it may, furthermore, for Rasch: »If the modern world is a differentiated world, defined by functions and relations, not essences, then, too, modern reason is a differentiated reason, distinguishing itself from itself, dividing itself into system-specific and function-specific rationalities« (2000, 12). A kind of baroque saving of reason in the plural, via plural rationalities, for plural functional and relational systems, therefore is what is needed. Why for example, as multiple commentators have already remarked, does the university apparatus all too easily take on board a certain kind of advanced capital corporate and so dangerously parochial rationality that would seem at odds with the development and evolution of revolutionary and adventurous thought? An amplificatory pluralization of rationality would be the way to realize the world intrinsically from inside, as it were, by incorporating the notion of self-differentiated forms of reason for a more just, genuine and humane rationality that would be more reasoned as well as functionally and relationally effective, perhaps too in a way that would prove a vindication of a true worldwide humanism as of yet to come into existence.

What is more, for Rasch, the key problem lies in: »modernity's unresolved antinomies caused by the lamented inability to think the absolute [...] to justify reason rationally or even historically—not to mention dialectically« (2000, 12–13). It is here again that the concept of the baroque modern that comes into play as a modeling of history that would enable a rational, historical and dialectical understanding of the process-based emerging origins of the modern.

In this light we may need something again like the baroque »absolute«; or, what the French feminist thinker Christine Buci-Glucksmann has argued for in her book on Benjamin and on Charles Baudelaire entitled, *Baroque Reason: The Aesthetics of Modernity* (1994). For Bryan S. Turner commenting on Buci-Glucksmann's tome, »Baroque Reason« is »essentially a ›theatricization of existence‹ which mobilizes the notions of ambivalence and difference to provide what Buci-Glucksmann calls the ›Reason of the Other‹ which permits us to see the modern world from within« (Turner 1994, 23). This would offer up new sites for the engenderment of contingency and so too of risked blocks of deep value and deep meaning that might shatter the strata of over-codified ones that have become dead wood if not totalitarian. Indeed, Rasch adds, »faith in the authority of reason has gone the way of faith in the authority of God, contingency becomes the transcendental placeholder« (2000, 20). In the foregoing light, it may in the end be the question of what is the contingency of contingency that is the true question to ask in our modern situation.

Rasch discourses of

the complex and fragile order that modernity has achieved [is] perpetually threatened by eschatological visions of reconciliation, emancipation, and truth. Paradox is the sign under which this new order organizes itself, because it must be [...] without an origin [...] What is to be preserved is not the content of modernity [...] but its principle of organization.
(Rasch 2000, 25)

As against one possible interpretation of Rasch we do, however, need one critical movement/moment wherein we apprehend the seventeenth-century as the time of the structural origin of modernity. Otherwise, we are merely speaking into the air and condemn ourselves to a kind of ephemeral ahistoricism unable to accept that there is on some level a mechanical-clock element to time. Luhmann himself writes that »we all get older and at the same rate« and »the simple duration of life makes one old« (1990, 40–41). Clearly, aging *is* inevitable and we cannot turn back the clock.

Here I am also speaking against those such as Luhmann himself when he once averred in an interview that was published in English in 1991: »Talking about the Enlightenment or modernity will not help.« For it is my contention here, to put the point positively, that we can still talk about Enlightenment or modernity, if only in a more theoretically apt and potent way. For example, the Italian scholar Giorgio Agamben judiciously quotes Benjamin's notion of origin that I should want to endorse for a more theoretically cogent position concerning the semantic field of the concept of origin that remains a bit problematic in most contexts and definitions:

Origin [*Ursprung*], although an entirely historical category, has [...] nothing to do with genesis [*Entstehung*]. The term origin [...] describe[s] that which emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance. Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming, and in its current it swallows the material involved in the process of genesis. [...]. Origin is not, therefore, discovered by the examination of actual findings, but it is related to their history and their subsequent development.
(Agamben 1999, 156)

Yes: this happy and acute definatory result is more generally the case for our present theoretical efforts to understand the modern. Now, more from Rasch:

as long as God's throne remains vacant, only differentiation allows for a plurality of observer positions and thus for a plurality of contingent, fallible, antagonistic perspectives [...] [modernity's] divided nature is what enables us even to contemplate alternatives—if not alternatives *to*, then at least alternatives *within*, the modernity we inhabit.
(2000, 26)

Thus, thinking of contingency and difference as the structures of modernity is tantamount to comprehending the social fact that ›God's throne remains vacant‹. Everything turns on this. And the idea of subverting or reforming a system from within is a very baroque reality situation to boot. Consider the classic example within the art system of the cycle of American *film noir* of 1944 – 58 working within the Hollywood apparatus, which seems to be expanding the power of Hollywood, but is in fact subverting it from within for what is now considered Hollywood's most creative or rather agent of variability engenderment of film for, in a global reading, world-wide filmic culture.

Now, for Moeller, Luhmann's edifice is indeed »a theory of contingency, not of liberation« (2006, 40). In this sense it may be partly accused indeed (many have already) of highly determinate cynical reason, but that would be going too far, I believe. I defend this claim, for I believe it is rather a simultaneously much more modest and ambitious program over against many a classical tradition of emancipatory thought. It is not cynical reason; it is rather what thought should be all about; alive to increasing understanding of our reality condition. Let it not go unremarked that Luhmann's conceptual framework also is more descriptive than explanatory, per se, as the Ludwig Wittgenstein of *The Philosophical Investigations* would have preferred. It is perhaps worth mentioning here what Agamben cites about the concept contingency. »You are familiar with the wicked joke Duns Scotus borrows from Avicenna to prove contingency: ›Those who deny contingency should be tortured until they admit that they could also have not been tortured‹ (1999, 38). However eye opening these disparaging remarks, which of course are to be taken as a ›wicked joke,‹ they are not without merit in terms of elucidating the hangover of an ahistorical view of the notion of contingency.

Crucially, for Rasch: »Complexity [...] becomes not a property of a system but [...] the mode of observation. The ›fragmentation‹ of modernity has led to a ›fragmentation‹ of observation, which leaves us with no access to a commonly assumed objective world« (2000, 33). The valorization of fragmentary writing in the last two hundred years in the literary arts (from Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, and Benjamin in German to Maurice Blanchot in French to Thomas Pynchon in English, *inter alia*) shows this trend. In addition, Rasch writes: »Complexity guarantees contingency [...] creates meaning—the difference between potentiality and actuality« (2000, 33). The vertiginous and baroque if not Byzantine complexity of modern society then can offer up new chances for the production of meaning. The concept of complexity may also be said to inform the logic of development of a working definition of the baroque.

For the Luhmann of *Essays on Self-Reference*: »Meaning is not a selective event, but a selective relationship between system and world« (1990, 27). We also read in the same composition from Luhmann of »an opportunity to reconsider

the *relationship between meaning and language* and correct the widespread overestimation of the role of language« (1990, 50). This is because for Luhmann meaning

requires [...] systems whose particular structures [...] define additional boundaries within the domain of the linguistically possible. For the realm of meaningful experience and action these are psychic and social systems of the most diverse kinds. (Luhmann 1990, 51)

Comparing the »hard« and »soft« sciences, Luhmann sees »the complexity of complexity« as the »core problem« of the former, and »the meaning of meaning« as the principal difficulty the latter. Despite this he asks whether these are »really different issues« (1990, 80). The present essay would submit that they are not, and are instead more a question of the encodings of forms of sub-systemic and ideological disciplinarization or systematization. It is this sense of the semantic of history of life and of experience in the text that again surfaces in the modern as a baroque phenomenon: »Meaning is [...] simply a *new and powerful form of coping with complexity under the unavoidable condition of enforced selectivity*« (Luhmann quoted in Rasch 2000, 52). In specific, self-selection or ›choosing‹ would activate the effort and the crucial individual and collective force of decision.

It also needs to be said that historically, the obsession with meaning has often gone hand in hand with so-called bourgeois or middle class modes of thinking; so, from this perspective one must consider Luhmann part and parcel of that tradition, albeit in a highly theorized if not anti-bourgeois way; be that as it may, for Luhmann in *Essays on Self-Reference*, »complexity means the necessity of choosing; contingency, the necessity of accepting risks« (1990, 26).

The act of interpretation would be one example of such risk. As Rasch provocatively points out, for Luhmann the »unity of society no longer appears within this society,« and »we live in an ›administered‹ society, if we can read ›administered‹ to mean functionally differentiated« (2000, 101).

So here at least one can see a form of rapprochement of Luhmann with his oft-arch rival, to wit, the Frankfurt School. In another key, however, for Luhmann in his *Theory of Distinctions* he speaks of, »the critique of ideology that is always from a holier-than-thou perspective« (1990, 141). Ideology critique of course is of the essence for Frankfurt School theorizing, which it is Luhmann's concern to attack. And yet is not Luhmann's tack an ideological version of that history of the concept ideology itself? One wobbles on the tightrope of the question.

Nico Stehr and Gotthard Bechmann assert more precisely in their introduction to Luhmann's text *Risk* about the Bielefeld professor's

emphasis on differences [...] on distinctions, that are [...] constructions. The substitution of the subject concept and the transfer of the subject/object differentiation into the distinction between system and environment take Luhmann to a post-ontological theory of society [...].
(Bechmann, Stehr 2002, xi)

Hence the notion of »distinctions« as »constructions« that are transposed to »the distinction between system and environment« makes Luhmann a very post-Heideggerian ›post-ontological‹ theorist of modernity.

It is perhaps in this sense that Luhmann's relation to philosophy can

be compared to Hegel's relation to religion (as expressed in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*). For Hegel, religion was, with respect to its highest purpose, a thing of the past. It had reached its end as a satisfactory manifestation of the ›spirit.‹ Neither its semantics nor its general structure could be fully accepted any longer. Religion was in waiting [...] for its *Aufhebung* (›sublation‹)—in the [...] threefold sense of continuation, negation, and elevation—in philosophy.
(Moeller 2006, 199)

Hand in hand with the foregoing could go what we read from Bechmann and Stehr's take on what Luhmann lays down in the foundation of the building that is his work in thought:

- (1) Society does not consist of people. Persons belong to the environment of society.
- (2) Society is an autopoietic system consisting of communication and nothing else.
- (3) Society can be adequately understood as world society.

Banishing people to the environment of society completes the decentralization of the humanist cosmology. Having been evicted from the center of the universe in the Renaissance, deprived of its unique origin by being placed in the context of evolution by Darwin, and stripped of autonomy and self-control by Freud, that humanity should now be freed from the bonds of society by Luhmann appears to be a consistent extension of this trend.
(Bechmann, Stehr 2002, xv)

This places Luhmann in a rather prestigious lineage of Copernicus, of Tycho Brahe, of Galileo, of Johannes Kepler, of Darwin, and of Freud, as his key cultural antecedents. Thus too, Luhmann can say that for him in a neo-Leibnizian and so neo-baroque and neo-monadological point about the said ultra-atomized individual: »Human beings appear to live alongside one another as isolated monads« (2000, 12). Further than this, for Bechmann and Stehr:

Luhmann's strict, austere artificial language is [...] due [...] to the stringency of his theoretical program [...] and to his communication that] an adequate modern theory of society requires the sacrifice of the mere pleasure of recognition and the judging of theory construction on its own merits.
(2002, 20)

This lack of projective mechanisms of identification (such as species wide identification with other humanoids) is probably the main reason why Luhmann's work, for all its elegance and theoretical firepower, can be decidedly and remains to this hour distinctly offputting if not upsetting to so many precisely due to the intellectual disquietudes it spawns thereby making some stubbornly conservative readers looking corpse-like; also, not unimportantly, Luhmann's use of a spirit of artificiality or of artifice may count as a baroque stylistic trait.

Also, with respect to the foregoing it is worthy pointing out that along with the charges against Luhmann as a neo-conservative thinker would go the work of the French thinker Jean Baudrillard in his critique of structuralism, insofar as Luhmann extends the insights of structuralism in his own idiosyncratic and creative way in his wide-ranging sense of reference and points of inspiration. As the American scholar Hal Foster put it in his 1996-classic, *The Return of the Real*,

according to Baudrillard, just as the commodity is divided into use and exchange values, so is the sign divided into signified and signifier. Structurally, then, just as the commodity can assume the effects of signification, so can the sign assume the functions of exchange value [...] on the basis of this structural chiasmus between commodity and sign he recasts structuralism as a secret ideological code of capitalism [...].
(Foster 1996, 92)

No doubt there is a kernel of truth to the foregoing as a supervening structure even today some thirteen years later after the publication of Foster's judicious tome; there is a sense too in which Luhmann is a kind of entrenched, middle class sort of thinker with at least ostensibly an establishment if not proto-capitalist brain, but that may well prove a somewhat superficial, reductionist and so seriously misleading understanding for future generations; yet that Luhmann is likely one major theorist of world society for our age shows Foster's point that »this structural chiasmus has now become *actual*« (1996, 92). For Luhmann himself at least,

[systems theory] is an international language, not designed to protect specific interests. Contrary to what is commonly thought of it, the focus of modern systems theory is not identity but difference, not control but autonomy, not static but dynamic stability, not planning but evolution.

(Luhmann 1990, 187)

»Difference,« »autonomy,« »dynamic stability« and »evolution« are thus run up the flag pole of the complex modern.

Bechmann and Stehr clarify and emphasize the meaning of evolution in Luhmannian temporality:

in which past and future are separated, and which Luhmann terms evolution—definitely not progress, since there is no guiding medium among the various media and the functional differentiation of society has no guiding system [...]. (2002, xxi-xxii)

Here at least Luhmann would be on the same side of the ledger as one spirit of Walter Benjamin's soaring if discomfited angel of history with its back to the future into which it is nevertheless being propelled when we read that there is no progress, merely evolution. Now, to move to Luhmann himself: »Recursively operating [...] systems proceed on the basis of the state they have attained. Their own operations are guided by their (immediate) past. They can gain no access to their future. Hence, they move backwards into the future« (2002, 35). This sounds again precisely like one version of Benjamin's baroque interpreting Angel of History.

What is more, it would be hard to believe that Luhmann did not, whether consciously is not at issue, have Benjamin's exact importance and influence here in mind. Indeed, as for the art system, Luhmann writes in a way related to the foregoing notion of recursivity, »art appears as an articulation of its own self-reference [...] it can do whatever it wants so long as it produces self-referential connectivity« (2000, 43). However, Luhmann is quick to note that

Hardly any other functional system can compare with art when it comes to integrating the most heterogeneous modes of operation into an autopoietic functional nexus [... indeed,] the history of art suggests that one starts from the difference between genres [...]. (2000, 178)

Here the idea surfaces that the study of genre remains truly to be begun and mined in comparative cultural work. Moreover, Luhmann elucidates a point that will perhaps be truly depressing for some (and maybe even intriguingly interesting if not problematic for others) who would ascribe a different function to the aesthetic than that espoused here:

By staging and perpetually restaging a form of self-reference [...] the art system [...] does not need a ›political function,‹ which it never had any chance of successfully

occupying [...] ›democratically‹ [...] *The art system realizes society in its own realm as an exemplary case* [emphasis added] [...] Operative closure, the emancipation of contingency, self-organization, poly-contextuality, the hypercomplexity of self-descriptions [...] illumine] the structural fate of modernity.
(Luhmann 2000, 309)

There is then at least for Luhmann structurally a kind of magic mimetic power to art, after all, and despite it all (e.g., the only ostensible not particularly actual, anti-art movement in some radical leftist theoretical circles, cf. Guy Debord) in its special capacity to illumine »the structural fate of modernity,« a central notion for Luhmann's efforts; whence the extreme sense of instability and precariousness in the seventeenth-century finds itself reproduced in the twentieth- and in the early twenty-first century.

There is more yet to consider from Luhmann in his *Essays on Self-Reference*

the continuing dissolution of the system becomes a necessary cause of its autopoietic reproduction [...] It becomes inherently restless. [...].
All structures of social systems have to be based on this fundamental fact of vanishing events, disappearing gestures or words that are dying away. Memory, and then writing, have their function in preserving—not the events, but their structure-generating power [...].
(1990, 9)

This core and even foundational emphasis on the restlessness, on the decay and on the ephemerality of events and of change go hand in hand with the overall general dynamic and ultimately even dynamism of a generalizable baroque aesthetics. And Luhmann's emphasis on the »structure-generating power« of memory and of writing over against their eventual status points toward a modeling of modernity complementary to that espoused by recent investigators into the topic area of the event, be it from Deleuze, from Alain Badiou, among others. Also Luhmann writes: »The system can continue its autopoiesis or it can stop it [...] To be or not to be, to continue the autopoiesis or not to, serves as an internal representation of the totality of possibilities« (1990, 114). This dare I say Hamlet-like state of affairs gives an early baroque dose of drama to Luhmann's oft rather cold, albeit monumental in a not totally un-baroque way, systems theory.

To build on the »to be or not to be« thematic (one could also call it the question of the act of predication vis-à-vis a self or a God) let us have a look at the role of the individual in Luhmann's theory. For example, Luhmann declares,

We should drop the term ›subject‹ (›psychic systems,‹ ›consciousness,‹ ›personal system,‹ perhaps even ›individual‹ would do the job) if we are simply referring to a

part of reality. How can we conceive of a part of reality as underlying or supporting reality?
(1990, 114)

The overthrow of such aforementioned categories derives not least from the sensitive ontological fact that for Luhmann

in the less technical formulation of Paul Valéry, ›Je suis né plusieurs, et je suis mort un seul' (Born as several, I die as one).

[...hence one can see] the individuality of an individual as autopoiesis [...] There is [...] only self-referential individuality [Further,] cells and societies, maybe physical atoms, certainly immune systems and brains, are all individuals [...].
(1990, 117–18)

These audacious views show high imagination. Importantly, for Luhmann:

the theory of autopoietic systems [...] precludes [...] humanism [because] there is no autopoietic unity of all the autopoietic systems that compose the human being. Certainly mind and brain never will build one closed, circular, self-referential autopoietic system, because thoughts, as elements of the mind, cannot be identified with single neurophysiological events, as elements of the brain [...] to want to be human has no scientific basis. It amounts to sheer dilettantism.
(1990, 116–17)

This again has proved the source of some bitter objections to Luhmann, and yet I would argue that again Benjamin's inhuman angel of history precisely points toward such a description of the individual human for a new angel or for a new human.

In truth, what Luhmann needs is a sense of the poetic, which Benjamin and Luhmann's reader-critics themselves can and should provide lest Luhmann's theoretical brilliance go injudiciously stale, and so little to the purpose turn up from his readers. In my judgement, one example of this would be not to reject humanism, but to build on it, to remodel it, to enhance it. Furthermore, to return to where we began in this chapter, to the classical baroque, Luhmann insists that:

The seventeenth century made a twin discovery: the subject and its boredom [Hence,] the subject has to occupy itself with something, be it economic or aesthetic. Motives, then, are to be thought of as filling [...] the empty circularity of pure autopoiesis, of the reproduction of the elements of consciousness by elements of consciousness; and boredom corresponds to the thinking of thinking. During the seventeenth century, both the subject and its ennui became socially acceptable self-descriptions.

Only the theory of autopoietic, self-referential systems seems [...] able to formulate

this latent unity of the subject and its ennui—a theory of the self-despairing subject, a theory of dynamism achieved through self-desperation [...].
(1990, 118)

In wake of the above global-cultural moment, and the fact of the pure circular structure of time, Luhmann soon after this continues in a similar vein:

it will no longer be possible to use the [...] distinctions between reason, will, and feeling. They have to be replaced by the distinction between autopoiesis and structure [...] knowledge about consciousness, meaning, language, and [...] ›internal speech‹ will have to be reformulated. There is no dual or even pluralistic self [...] no personal identity distinct from social identity. These [...] are late nineteenth-century inventions [...] semantic reactions to the facts of a complex society.
(1990, 118)

No more »distinction between reason, will, and feeling«: we need instead »autopoiesis and structure« for the baroque or neo-baroque modern. This is a highly substantial claim with which we shall sooner or later for Luhmann have to come to terms in order to apprehend the individual as autopoietic system and even too the seventeenth-century baroque as the nucleus given to modernity; in other words, we need to think beyond our merely academic frameworks that are so often outsourced by global capital and so prejudiced against thinking in big terms.

Certainly in a baroque modeling and apprehension of the social and of the economic, this is the case. The differential baroque unity of the relations of the modern system would be its self-reference as a highly baroque operation and diachronic contingent period of unstable history. In order to understand society from within one must take Luhmann's theoretical edifice as an allegory of the modern on which to build in a way that would do economic, existential, intellectual and ontological justice to Buci-Glucksmann's Walter Benjamin who

revalues allegory as a mode of writing, the principle of an aesthetic of modernity, the rising up of a misunderstood past [...] Allegories are always ›allegories of oblivion‹, for through them is expressed the unfreedom of men and women, and no writing which sides with the victors' history, or which, even from the Left, postulates an evolutionary continuity, has ever been able to reveal that infinite servitude.

(Buci-Glucksmann 1994, 46–47)

Hence beyond the »evolutionary continuity« of the Luhmannian text one must consider the allegorical and his work in thought as a way of increasing under-

standing about a badly understood past because not least of the cheapening of the operations and of the cultural products of the seventeenth-century.

Luhmann sums up the current state of affairs: »It seems to be the case that not all functional systems have reached the degree of autonomous differentiation that allows autopoietic self-reproduction« (1990, 192). Benjamin's angel of history would probably find a kind of redemptive happiness (a highly complex thing given Benjamin's understanding of both the destructive and the productive elements as operations at work in redemption) if such a state of affairs were attained. The individuation of the individual would, as above-noted, be one such autopoietic subsystem. Also for Luhmann,

[a]s against Adorno it is a question here not of ›autonomy vis-à-vis society,‹ but of an *autonomy within society*; we see the social nature of art not in negativity, in an ›oppositional position towards society,‹ but in the fact that emancipation for a specific function is only possible within the society. (1990, 193)

Hence too for Rasch's Luhmann »the threat to modernity is *dedifferentiation*« (2000, 167). This is the snare to avoid: hyper-homogenization, hyper-normalization and so on.

Given the foregoing spotlights one form of complexity, which is to say, of risk, of contingency, and of meaning, for the world of modernity would be that of self-differential, multi-colouredness, as a way of articulating ever-more modes of functional differentiation, which accords to what the world both asks for and needs today in our arguably rather unpotentialed gloomy times; or, what Jean-Luc Nancy calls the plausible »*glomicity* [...] of the market« (2007, 37). Would it not be a sign of increasing functional differentiation for the world to be open to, and to throw the high beam on, the multipronged-variable-colouredness of a functionally-differentiated reality for the unfolding of a more genuine dialectical canon of plural baroque reasons of self-differential risk, contingency, meaning and complexity? Luhmann's theoretical edifice surely can be seen as one such allegory of such a process for which the world would submit an application if not outright cry out.

More generally, and to sum up, one might say that the concepts structure, system and contingency are what Luhmann's »super-theory« (Moeller 2006) offers up for a superior baroque rationality for thinking human destiny. His work seems even a good example of what Buci-Glucksmann writes of Benjamin's famous thesis number nine from his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*:

the metaphor of the Angel [...] roots the text in a *border zone beyond and beneath the human*. This places Benjamin close to Kafka [...] Besides, Benjamin himself states

that he has made his own ›Kafka's formulation of the categorical imperative: act in such a way that the Angel has something to do.«
(1994, 44)

The foregoing is precisely what Luhmann's writings set his interpreters out to do, to start up a fresh dialogue about the creation of a world that makes sense from the point of view of functionally differentiated sub-systems, of the semantics of meaning, and of the reasons of rationality, all in the service of a re-description of modernity that can only be changed from within not least due to the social fact that the human being as classically conceived has vanished from within, giving »the Angel something to do« in the search for different blocks of variability, of functionality and of meaning for a novel human and original corpus of rationalities. Both the aforesaid, and the desire to change something in the received definition of the modern, constitute the twinned conviction out of which this piece essays to contribute its own basic theses.

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Structuralism and History

A long time ago, first Claude Lévi-Strauss and later Hayden White envisaged the possibility that structuralist approach could find a balance between the two ways of structuring historical material: paradigmatic and syntagmatic. If the former prevails, histories are fashioned according to archetypal, mythological narratives, basic genres (comedy, romance, tragedy, satire) or paradigmatic figures of speech (metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony). The latter aspires to find causal links between innumerable facts, events and particular narratives. Both approaches are related, as Lévi-Strauss points out, in a paradoxical way: the more general the narratives or the laws, the closer history approaches mythology or ideology. And the greater the number and diversity of particular facts, events or narratives, the nearer history is to entropy.

According to Lévi-Strauss, to resolve this paradox would mean to identify a central area in which these paradigmatic and syntagmatic perspectives interpenetrate and can be synthesized. This central area is marked by the originally phenomenological concept of *historicity*, which, according to Lévi-Strauss, is a synthesis arising from comparative study of common features of cultures and their historical narratives. The problem of this historicity is that its coherence is not a mere product of the comparison of individual histories, but of a mythological approach based on a specific use of language, which Lévi-Strauss describes as a shift to the metaphorical pole of historical discourse. Similarly, Hayden White emphasizes the importance of what Giambattista Vico had called »poetic history,« which uses the productive potential of principal rhetoric figures not only to structure (or – as he says – »emplot«) historical narratives, but even to fashion and contextualize historical facts. As a result, when some representative structuralists try to deal with history, they seem to resort to mythological or poetical methods. In order to assume a synchronic perspective, they shift the focus from history to »historicity.«

However, historicity is, as Derrida writes, »difficult to *acknowledge*.« In *Speech and Phenomena* (1973, 52) he connects it with an »ideality« given by »the possibility of repetition.« Later, in *The Gift of Death*, he discusses historicity (and Jan

Patočka's interpretation of it) in ethical terms, as the responsibility for the *past*, the *future* or the *other*, which is linked with the self, the nation, the state, etc., by historical events. And since the ethics of responsibility »often claims to separate itself, as ethics, from religious revelation, it is even difficult to tie it closely to a history of religion« (Derrida 1995, 5).¹ Despite this »historicity must be *admitted to*,« which implies that it must remain the »problem of history,« (1995, 5) a problem that is never to be resolved. History, says Derrida commenting on Patočka's *Heretical Essays*, »can be neither a decidable object nor a totality capable of being mastered, precisely because it is tied to *responsibility*, to *faith*, and to the *gift*« (1995, 5).

Since it resists objectification and closure, history cannot be converted into a system which could be studied by a structuralist method. The effort to get out of this impasse is typical of the new historicist approach, focusing on the links between individual narratives, events and objects and structuring them by simple yet exceedingly versatile patterns: circulation, oscillation, substitution, exchange, etc.

Another, very traditional means of structuring history is periodization. Rather than establishing large and self-enclosed areas of historical knowledge, it can be approached as a certain way of structuring a dynamic flux of events in a linear (or cyclical) time. Let me now more closely examine the origins of period as a structural pattern. Then I will focus on a representative response of the Prague School to the problem of structuring history by periodization in the work of Felix Vodička.

A specific use of the Greek philosophical term *peras* (meaning »boundary,« »limit« or even »number«) is characteristic of Aristotle's treatment of prose, metre and language structures Chapters 8 and 9 (on Rhythms and Period) of the third book of his *Rhetoric* (2004, 131 ff; 1409a). Aristotle first distinguishes *rhythm* as a structuring principle, which can both differentiate and synthesize the individual »impressions« (that is, meanings or aesthetic effects) of a speech. Although rhythm first seems to be distinct from metre, which is artificial and therefore has a negative impact on the plausibility of the prose utterance (its resemblance to authentic speech), later it becomes clear that rhythm actually *requires* metre as a sort of *internal* limit, balance or norm. This explains why Aristotle seeks the *golden mean* between a heroic solemn rhythm, such as hexametre in poetry, and simple, ordinary speech (characterised by iambic

1 Derrida comments on the conclusion of Patočka's essay »Is the Technological Civilization a Civilization in Decline, and If So Why?« in *Heretical Essays on the Philosophy of History*: »It might also be that the question of the decline of civilization has been badly put. Civilization does not of itself exist. The question would rather be if historical man wants yet acknowledge history.« (Patočka 1990, 126)

rhythms) or hasty speech (of which trochaic rhythms are typical). He finds the paean (*paian*), a »hidden metre,« as he says, a structural pattern based on the optimum numerical value of all the three major metres (iamb, trochee and dactyl). Unlike the trochee and the iamb, where the ratio between long and short syllables is 2 (2 divided by 1), and unlike the dactyl, where the ratio is 1 (2 divided by 2 – two short syllables), the paean is characterized by the ratio 3:2, which is 1.5, an arithmetic average of the values of the trochee and the iamb on the one hand, and dactyl on the other.

It is not surprising that the paean can function both as a metre and as a rhythm, and determine the articulation of what we now call the segments of utterance. One modification of the paean determines the beginning, another, the end of a period. As a result, the paean becomes a central device structuring the period both as a meaningful and aesthetically pleasing whole resembling authentic speech. It is important to add that some forms of this sound pattern, the so-called second and third paean, have never existed in Greek poetry: they are the possibilities given by the rules of Aristotle's system or structural variants generated by it.

In Chapter 9 of *Rhetoric*, period is no longer defined as a structure based on mathematical principles but as product of aesthetic *and* logical totalization – it is a »compact« utterance, which must be pleasing, »easy to follow« and »to remember.« The subdivision of period – called »member« (*kolon*) – is rhythmical by its nature but corresponds to the logical structure of the period based on antithesis (Aristotle 2004, 133 ff; 1409 a-b). Moreover, it is also a syntactic device, as in the schemes called »antithesis, *parison* repeating the same grammatical structure in successive clauses], and *homeoteleuton* [repeating the same endings of clauses]« (Aristotle 2004, 135; 1410a).² In this way, mathematical structuring is not only seen as the source of a totalizing aesthetic effect and logical clarity but also as an utterly practical, mnemotechnic device.

To sum up, in the Aristotelian, teleological, approach to totalization, time is transformed into empirical sequences (rhythmic patterns), which in turn are formalised by mathematical means (nowadays called optimisation). The totality of Aristotelian period is no longer given by the supreme authority of a myth or a religion, as in Benedict Anderson's »simultaneity along time,« but by the *intrinsic balance*, which can be related to what Anderson calls the »homogeneous empty time [...] marked [...] by temporal coincidence« (Anderson 1991, 24).³

2 »Parison« is also called »*parisisis*« and »homeoteleuton« »*paromoeosis*.«

3 Cf. Benjamin (1969, 261) linking this notion of time with that of historical progress: »The concept of the historical progress of mankind cannot be sundered from the concept of its progression through a homogeneous, empty time. A critique of a concept of such a progression must be the basis of any criticism of the concept of progress itself.«

These features of Aristotle's concept may be said to foreshadow some structuralist approaches to systems, whose balance is alternately disrupted and regained in the course of time, such as the notions of the dynamic nature of the language system and of the »national literature« discussed by the representatives of the Prague School including Jan Mukařovský, Bohuslav Havránek and especially Felix Vodička.

Vodička's theory of literary historical periods explained in his principal work, *The Structure of Development*, is characterized by a certain ambiguity. On the one hand, a period in literary history should be »an autonomous field,« given by »dominant elements of literary structures and forms,« that is, chiefly by what Mukařovský, in an earlier study about Czech verse, calls »the immanent development« of a principal genre. On the other hand, Vodička derives the totality of a literature from the totality of the »community of the language users«, that is a group of people using the same language and contributing to its development. In the passage I am quoting from he also refers to »the relations between codified literary language and poetic language« but also to totally »extrinsic aspects,« such as »the period morals and morality in literature« (Vodička 1998, 69)

This, however, contradicts the previous assumption that literary history must have its own, »intrinsic« periodization method (1998, 66). On the one hand, Vodička mentions the so-called »literary tasks« (68), given intrinsically in terms of aesthetic values and art forms and generated as potentialities in the course of the immanent development of the system. On the other hand, the system ultimately derives its existence from the empirical status of language as a »community« of its users, which in turn is seen as the origin of its principal unit, the totality of a »national literature« (73).

The latter aspect also implies that the well-known term of the Prague school, »concretization« (taken from Roman Ingarden) is not only the product of the »immanent development« of literature but also of deliberate efforts of certain privileged members of society, namely literary critics, and their ideological orientations. These representatives of the literary public are seen as *setting tasks* based on the empirical understanding of life or derived from »ideological postulates« (Vodička 1998, 56).

In contrast to Aristotle, whose notion of balance is based on mathematical optimisation and the traditional concept of the golden mean, Prague structuralism, when dealing with history, is not able to arrive at a unifying principle of totalization. Vodička, therefore, also has to admit that literary historians must focus on the relationship of »heteronomous elements to the immanent conditions of the new organization of the literary norm.« This also implies a constant tension between the »real,« or »immanent,« norm, and the »alleged« norm, based on the postulates of critics (Vodička 1998, 59). The *theoretical*, »dialectical« resolution of this tension cannot be reached, nonetheless for Vodička it

exists as a given, *practical* task: if we disregarded this internal dynamic, »we would not *obtain the superior notion of historical system*,« which is above »statistical enumeration of individual qualities« (1998, 69; my emphasis).

In other words, the Prague School can grasp periods only as means of pragmatic systemisation of heterogeneous material, consisting of a number of phenomena which are arbitrary from the point of view of intrinsic development of literature, whose totality, however, is determined only ideologically and empirically, by the notions of »national literature« and of »the community of language users.«

This tangle of essence and sign, concept and word, pragmatism and idealism was, in fact, previously unravelled by Nietzsche. According to Gilles Deleuze (1983, 43–44), Nietzsche saw the problem not as that of distinguishing between reality and appearance, inside and outside, being and its representation, but between *the quantity and quality of interacting forces*.⁴ In Derridean terms, boundaries can be understood as sites where the »difference of quantity« of these forces »counts more than the contents of quantity, more than the absolute magnitude itself« (Derrida 1973, 148). As a result, there are »two very different conceptions of the limit, one as original matrix, the other as structural function« (Deleuze, Guattari 1983, 171).

These notions are conflated, if not confused, in the Prague school approach. On the one hand, Vodička cannot do without a totalizing notion of time, on the other hand, he cannot totalize time intrinsically in its present moments, which are split between the possibilities of the development of aesthetic form and pragmatic, ideologically or empirically formulated, »tasks« of literary development.

4 »Forces have quantity, but they also have the quality which corresponds to their difference in quantity: the qualities of force are called ›active‹ and ›reactive‹. We can see that the problem of measuring forces will be delicate because it brings the art of qualitative interpretations into play. [...] If a force is inseparable from its quantity, it is no more separable from the other forces which it relates to. Quantity itself is therefore inseparable from a difference in quantity,« that is, from quality. »What interests [Nietzsche] primarily, from the standpoint of of quantity itself, is the fact that differences in quantity cannot be reduced to equality. Quality is distinct from quantity but only because it is that aspect of quantity that cannot be equalised, that cannot be equalised out in the difference between quantities. Difference in quantity is therefore, in one sense, the irreducible element of quantity and in another sense the element which is irreducible to quantity itself. Quality is nothing but difference in quantity and corresponds to it each time forces enter into interaction« (Deleuze 1983, 43–44). Cf. Derrida (1973, 148). In contrast to Deleuze's emphasis on the irreducibility of the qualitative aspect to the equality of forces, Derrida points out the irreducibility of the difference itself: »one of the terms appears as the difference of the other, the other as ›differed‹ within the systematic ordering of the same [...] It is out of the unfolding of this ›same‹ as difference that the sameness of difference and of repetition is presented in the eternal return« (1973, 149). Cf. also Deleuze (1996, 133).

An attempt to resolve this dilemma by imagining a process of the objectification of the hypothetical reader's desire by the influence of the internal properties of the genre was made by Hans Robert Jauss, who transformed an earlier notion of the »horizon of expectation« used by Popper, Mannheim and Gombrich, into a structuring device of the literary process. Periods can thus determined by the degree of dynamic tension between the readers' expectations and the intrinsic development of literary forms and aesthetic values. While being mainly »a tool for historical contextualization and interpretation« (Holub 1993), Jauss theory also points beyond its phenomenological grounding to the basic issue of periodization: setting boundaries.

Let me conclude by pointing out a general feature of periodization (and, in fact, all classification) discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti-Oedipus*. The authors seem to give a plausible explanation of the pragmatic nature of the boundary as a specific *power structure* regulating desire by moving it »in the direction of more intense and more adequate investments of the social field.« This results in »an effective reduction of the forces of desire to Oedipus, to a father's name, in a grotesque triangle [...]. Oedipus is indeed the limit, but the displaced limit that now passes into the interior of the socius [...].« It is »always colonization pursued by other means, it is the interior colony, and we shall see that even here at home, where we Europeans are concerned, it is our intimate colonial education« (Deleuze, Guattari 1983, 170). In other words, Deleuze and Guattari seem to suggest that periodization can be explained, in Nietzschean terms, as a technique of the reduction and control of the forces of desire. This is related to completely different notions of time than those we used to work with so far.

In *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze claims that there are two readings of time that imply certain *value judgements*: In the first time called the *Chronos*, the past and the future are always in relation to a certain present. This implies:

- (a) the *relativity of individual presents* and the *supremacy of God's presence* as the circle of all presents, which encompasses the past and the future. In this way, all linear time is necessarily cyclical.
- (b) the *corporeality of the present*, which is the measure for the action of bodies and the working of causes. The *unity of all causes* is called the Cosmos, which is created by the *relative* movement of individual presents, each of them referring to a vast present encompassing it, and simultaneously by *the absolute movement* to the vastest of all presents.
- (c) the *regulated movement of all presents*. Where does it receive its measure from? From God? And what if it is left to an *accident*? (cf. Deleuze 1990, 162–63)

The answer must therefore be sought elsewhere, in another interpretation of time. This reading is called by Deleuze the *Aion* and explained as *becoming* – a pure and measureless change of qualities. Bodies lose their measure and become *simulacra*. The Chronos has become *a break*. Its hierarchized domain is uprooted and overturned. Tormented by schizophrenia (bursting asunder and contracting), manic depression (delirious future, delirious past), the Chronos wants to die but it has already been replaced by the *Aion*, which is characterised by:

- (a) *the process of division and subdivision of time intervals*. Each past and future divide their present and subdivide it ad infinitum into pasts and futures. This does not effect the change yet: the change is produced by orientation to the surface, the incorporeal events and their split, heterogeneous nature. This implies a radical difference in the perception of the present: an *instant* instead of a *now*.
- (b) *the surface effects*, which point to *the ground of language* as pure impersonality and pre-individual existence. The line of the *Aion* is a boundary between language and bodies, a boundary of a different kind than that constructed in the Aristotelian period or structuralist approaches to periodization, both of which aim to collapse the difference between corporeality of bodies and incorporeality of language.
- (c) its appearance as *the »third present,«* apart from the two presents of the Chronos, with which we are familiar from the former reflexions on periodization (that of actualization, or concretization, and that of »the immanent development«). The present of the *Aion*, Deleuze concludes, is without thickness and depth: it is the *present of the actor*, of »counteractualization«: representing the instant as a paradoxical moment, a quasi-cause. It is the »pure perverse« (neither subversive nor actualized) »moment.« (cf. Deleuze 1990, 164 – 68)

Analyzing the uses of periodization, I now seem to have replaced the desire of the presence of history in our lives with the dubious pleasure taken in the illusion of stage acting, which has already lost its didactic, or rather edificatory, function, epitomised in the Renaissance metaphor of the *theatrum mundi*. In winding up this chapter the obvious question arises: What is to be done? Can we endlessly totter between historical irony and reification or ideologization of history? One of the attempts to reevaluate historical irony as the self-reflexivity of the work of the historian, made by Hayden White, ended in an impasse, when his chief assumption of the arbitrariness of the choice of emplotment was disputed with respect to diverse historical approaches to the Holocaust (Kansteiner 1993).

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Jakobson's Dominant, Hyperliteracies, and Structures of History

Within academic criticism and critical theory, Pierre Bourdieu's critique of structuralism (objectivism) and existentialism (subjectivism) has served as a powerful foundational moment for distinguishing structuralism from post-structuralism. Beginning in the mid 1970 s, Bourdieu argued that mainstream structuralist theory in the human sciences (literary theory and criticism, art criticism, social thought) was flawed for making three assumptions: 1) that sign relations are univocal, 2) that individual actors and local groups alone do not constitute powerful centers of meaning, cultural signification, and change, and 3) that structuralist theory and methods are objectively distinct from the objects and activities which interpreters are interested in (Bourdieu 1987, Bourdieu 1999). For Bourdieu, these structuralist assumptions presumptively privilege theory and disciplinary knowledge as opposed to the intentions of individual or collective agents, the local meanings of concrete actions and things, and the power of personal knowledge. Bourdieu consistently criticizes structuralism's claim to explain behaviours, texts, and signifiers as surface manifestations of cultural universals rather than as serving particular functions. He also admonishes structuralists, especially sociologists, for claiming to have special theoretical access to systems of creativity and meaning. For Bourdieu, the structuralist critic and structuralist theory in general must be resituated and contextualized as an interested rather than objective.

Despite the clamor for critical reflexivity in the wake of the Structuralist Symposium at The Johns Hopkins University in 1966 and the subsequent rise of deconstruction and poststructuralism, contemporary theory and practice in the human sciences continue to be haunted by the theoretical and interpretive questions Bourdieu raises. Responding to Lévi-Strauss and Roman Jakobson's collaborative readings of poetry and myth and other structuralist interpretations which seek to claim methodological power, social theorists, art and literary critics, and semioticians have increasingly framed structuralism's ongoing problem with agency, situated meaning, and change in terms of Bourdieu's critique of structuralism as a totalizing program which seeks to control meaning

by absorbing the specificity and historicity of human activities and cultural forms within a monolithic grid of binary sign relations and theoretically abstracted cultural norms. Lévi-Strauss comes in for especially heavy criticism when he reduces the Oedipus myth to the opposition between overvaluing and undervaluing blood relations. Bourdieu argues that Lévi-Strauss denies the narrative any social function or specificity or surface signification. Bourdieu also points out (rightly) that many structuralist analyses adopt without question Saussure's model of the linguistic sign (signifier + signified = sign as a social relation) and his absolute distinction between synchrony and diachrony. In doing so, they miss considering how privileging linguistic oppositions and semiotic binaries might distort or foreshorten the complexity and range of possibilities within human behaviours, especially those procedures and interpretive frames which construct and maintain textual coherence, aesthetic novelty, dominant meaning, or cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984).

In structuralist theory, Bourdieu turns Saussure-inspired economic models for human activity, academic disciplines, and dominant ways of knowing into a critical reflexivity. He complicates the idea of disciplinary »interest,« »capital,« and »exchange« by connecting specific theories and cultural norms with economic stratification, material power, and cultural hegemony (1987, 124–31). Bourdieu critiques structuralism for failing to reflect sufficiently on how its cultural and theoretical assumptions are implicated in the production of cultural hegemony and dominant academic knowledge: »Il s'agit, en chaque cas, d'observer la forme que revêt, à un moment donné de l'histoire, cet ensemble d'institutions historiques qui constituent un champ économique déterminé, et la forme que revêt l'intérêt économique dialectiquement lié à ce champ« (1987, 125; cf. 132–43).

Interestingly, in this last passage, Bourdieu twice uses the term *histoire/historique*. Bourdieu's concatenation of dialectic, economic determinism, and historical situatedness pose a specific challenge to structuralism's supposed a-historicity. In this chapter, I want to reconsider the relations between structuralism and situated or historical meaning by rethinking Bourdieu's critique of objective (naïve) structuralism and his theorizing of interest, agency, and practice. To do this, I will focus not on economic models of social action, as Bourdieu does, but on the Prague School's theories of the »dominant« and markedness, in particular Jakobson's linguistic theory of markedness and the *signe zéro*. No one will accuse Jakobson of adopting Saussure's, Peirce's, or any other theory of the sign in a naïve or unreflective way. The Prague Circle presented its own critique of structuralism from within rather than outside structuralist analysis. They incorporated a critical awareness of the complexities of sign systems and linguistic relations into their readings of aesthetic, folklore, and material texts. How then does Jakobson's theory of markedness offer a

different critique of structuralism from within, one associated with a critical understanding of literacy and textuality as situated practice?

First, I'll discuss how Jakobson's theory of markedness and the »dominant« constitute a more complex critique of structuralism than is generally acknowledged. Then I'll show how markedness produces a theory of literacy as »hyperliteracy« and a way of reimagining Bourdieu's *habitus* as the space of linguistic difference as well as embodied activity. The productive tension between Bourdieu's theory of practice and Jakobson's theory of markedness opens for us a theoretical space for thinking about how some textual practices make the world we know and can know while others offer alternative worlds, *heterotopias*, which reflect and remake that world in other spaces contained within the dominant space. To concretize my reading of Jakobson, I will discuss some alternative hyperliterate textualities in Dante, the Caribbean writer Louise Bennett, Wallace Stevens, and the New Zealand educator Sylvia Ashton-Warner.

As practices, literacies exist in relation to one another and as part of broader social organizations. There is no single Literacy from which all individual practices and attitudes derive. Hyperliterate practices remake »dominant« and »marker« literacies by articulating the differences – silences, gaps, and unacknowledged or repressed possibilities – retained within dominant structures. Hyperliteracies and Jakobson's theory of markedness release within structuralist theory heterotopes of agency, hope, and resistance to social dominance, spaces which are intended or unintended consequences of literacy.

Jakobson proposed different definitions of the »dominant.« His best known definition first appeared in the opening paragraph of his 1935 Czech lectures on semiotics (first available in English translation in 1971) the dominant is »the focusing component of the work of art: it rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components. It is the dominant which guarantees the integrity of the structure« (Jakobson 1987, 41). Various forms of writing and individual texts *foreground* or deploy linguistic and rhetorical features which from the formalist or structural point of view are perceived to govern or integrate the work *as a work*. Functionally, the dominant is the principal feature of textual cohesion, bringing together other elements of a text around a key trope, syntactic parallelism, metrical pattern, clusters of phonetic associations, or other cohesive devices. Jakobson argued that the dominant linguistic aspect of poetry is phonetic or phonological arrangement, the sound pattern which marks a text as a particular kind of poetry. The metrical pattern of a limerick or an English folk ballad is easily distinguishable from that of an English sonnet or Latin epic hexameter because such patterns are shared by communities of speakers. We perceive metrical verse as acoustically different from blank or free verse, stanzaic verse as different from couplets or long lines. Bob Dylan's enigmatic statement »Every rhyme is true« reproduces Jakobson's claim that poetry *as poetry*, that is,

as systematic textual production, foregrounds phonological associations as the dominant ordering strategy for making a text meaningful and readable as connected discourse.

Correspondingly, other kinds of texts are marked by different linguistic dominants. In realist narrative, for example, whether in prose or verse, linguistic transparency and denotative reference are foregrounded as the dominant. Language is treated as a conduit for conveying direct knowledge of reality. The realist textual dominant shapes our interpretation of what is an accurate rendering of the world »out there« by relying on the socially shared belief that the language, images, or design of the text give us direct access to that world. But if we ask, as poststructural and neopragmatic readings or reflexive sociology do, whether our belief in a transparent representational system precedes our interpretation of the world »out there« to which the text refers, then realist narrative's dominant is destabilized and textual cohesion disrupted.

A textual dominant constitutes a principal of structure and also marks the historically situated horizon of expectations and temporally-specific assumptions of audiences. Both Bourdieu and Jakobson argue in different ways that the dominant is always historically situated. Saussure similarly argued that synchronic order is always located somewhere along the diachronic axis. For example, the U.S. film *Hoop Dreams* (1994, dir. Steve James) was not nominated for an Academy Award that year as a »documentary« because the judges determined that the film was too slick, too well-made, and used too many film techniques and shots associated with so-called »fictional« Hollywood films and sports marketing promotions such as *NFL Highlights*. In the judges' eyes, the film's pattern of associations and the directorial intentions they were supposed to manifest did not align with those of canonical documentary films. The Academy judges seemed to argue that the film was »not documentary film-like enough« because its narrative structure and image-making techniques did not conform sufficiently to the judges' expectations for what are the dominant aspects of documentary film. The question of the dominant is both quantitative and qualitative. We might describe the judges' *documentary dominant* as: a film, however ›creative,‹ about the ›real‹ world and ›real‹ people represented with film techniques which do not draw from the Hollywood repertoire of commercially produced, emotionally manipulating stories, clichéd images, and aesthetically designed shots, sets, costumes, and camera angles. *Hoop Dreams* was not enough like *Nanook of the North* and other canonical documentary films and too much like other kinds of Hollywood cinematic fiction and corporate sports self-promotion.

But perhaps the problem is not that of a single associational pattern but of a single dominant. We need to think of the dominant in terms of multiplicity as well as repetition. *Hoop Dreams* is not a flawed documentary nor a hybrid film

but a film with more than one »dominant« or »foregrounding« aspect. While the nominating judges regarded the film as an anomaly, later film makers and audiences have read *Hoop Dreams* as a new model and a different horizon of expectations for how documentaries can be made and understood.

The Academy judges' understanding of *Hoop Dreams* coincides with the usual way Jakobson's theory of the dominant is explained, in terms of poetic foregrounding and formal cohesion. The textual dominant is a feature, what Jakobson calls »one leading value,« which controls all other aspects of a text (1987, 42). The notion of a »leading value« like the dominant derives from Russian Formalist and Prague Circle theories of »normal« language. Their description of »ordinary« language, validated by appeals to everyday usage and denotation, is the benchmark of neutrality for calibrating other linguistic usages. Ordinary language is taken to be a zero sign, from which individual texts depart by foregrounding or marking a dominant linguistic aspect which calls attention to the text as a particular arrangement, a distortion of normative linguistic or signifying discourse which disrupts readers' expectations of what can or should be stated »normally.« Prose is more metonymic and conforming to a realist representation of the world; poetry is more metaphoric and given to distorting our accepted ways of reading and seeing the world. Prose is representational; poetry is revolutionary, or at least potentially so. The Academy nominating judges adopt a kind of zero sign theory of genre and form when they interpret *Hoop Dreams* as not documentary enough because the film does not sufficiently conform to the cinematic conventions for formal neutrality.

Jakobson's theory of poetics based on the dominant and the Prague Circle's linguistic theory of ordinary and deviant usage has given rise to a backlash in poetic and critical theory, especially against structuralism. Jakobson's theory of poetics has been criticized for being ahistorical or politically disengaged, for being too formalist, too synchronic, too bound up with demonstrating the cohesion and multi-level integration of individual texts, or too willing to privilege verse and poetic discourse over narrative. In other words, Jakobson's poetic theory and his definition of the dominant have been criticized for being too poetic or too »structuralist,« even though structuralism's methodological successes have in fact had more to do with narratives than with lyrics or drama.

But Jakobson defined the »dominant« in more than one way. Jakobson's other definition pre-emptively addressed his critics and subtly complicates the very theory of poetics he proposed. He proposed this second, less cited definition of the »dominant« later in the same essay based on his 1935 Czech lectures. This second definition of the »dominant« is more historically and culturally contextualized, although still structural and synchronic: »We may seek a dominant not only in the poetic work of an individual artist and not only in the poetic canon, the set of norms of a given poetic school, but also in the art of a given

epoch, viewed as a particular whole« (1987, 42). This definition is part of structuralism's program to treat cultural formations and historical periods as themselves like texts or systems. On the face of it, this passage repeats aspects of his earlier definition of the »dominant,« but Jakobson shifts the focus from individual texts or artistic *oeuvres* to the epoch or historical period. From the structuralist point of view, we can read Mannerist poetry and painting, Romantic art and writing, or postmodern architecture and electronic writing as texts whose integrity, cohesiveness, and structural hierarchy of features are ordered by a *dominant* »set of norms« which distinguish one artistic movement or period from another.

Periodization and stylistics are staples of the disciplines of art history, narrative history, and literary history, and they organize much scholarship in the humanities. What Jakobson does is offer a structuralist reading of situated culture and social practices as texts which cohere around a dominant theme, set of tropes, or representational conventions. But how does one period become distinct from another? Structuralist and poststructuralist readings always come up against the problem of linearity, sequentiality, and change. Jakobson's essay on the dominant and its two definitions of the »dominant« show how at least some aspects of structuralist linguistics and semiotics were already *post*.

Jakobson's second definition of the dominant is tensely associated with his first definition as the foregrounded aspect in a text. As he and Tynyanov had pointed out in their provocative but still underrated short 1928 essay, »Problems in the Study of Literature and Language«:

The [Saussurean] opposition between synchrony and diachrony was an opposition between the concept of the system and the concept of evolution; thus it loses its importance in principle as soon as we recognize that every system necessarily exists as an evolution, whereas, on the other hand, evolution is inescapably of a systemic nature.

(Jakobson 1987, 48)

Pure synchronic analysis cannot account for the flow and fluidity of experience and practice: »The history of a system is in turn a system [. . .] every synchronic system has its past and its future as inseparable structural elements of the system« (Jakobson 1987, 48). The dominant exists in a fluid construction of socially signifying relations which produce multiple discourses and differences within historical periods and over time. Perceptions of distinct periods or movements are themselves produced by the associations and patterning, repetitions, which Jakobson attributes to the dominant.

But like Bakhtin's *heteroglossia*, Jakobson's dominants include not just a single structural dominant as a neutral anchoring sign position but multiple

temporalities, alternate spaces, and performative *heterotopias*. In the second part of »The Dominant,« Jakobson shows that the friction and disconnect between the two kinds of dominant actually constitute a productive relationship. *Dominant 1* (foregrounding an aspect of language or other textual element) produces textual cohesion by integrating all structural features under that aspect. *Dominant 2* reintroduces temporal and socially differentiating aspects of usage and representation into a synchronic structural context. Both Dominant 1 and Dominant 2 are potentially distorting and creative, but at different levels and in different ways. Both mark out agentive subject positions and contexts for writers, makers, and readers, but with different textual consequences. Dominant 1, anchored to a text or activity, marks the text's distinction from those norms and expectations by which audiences entertain what are possible or allowable forms, representations, and meanings. In this respect, the textual dominant will always be working against a moving series of audience expectations over time. Dominant 2, located in the contextual or intertextual archive (which is both temporal and spatial), constitutes the perceived norms and artistic expectations of a particular temporal period as distinct from those of other periods and at the same time is taken to reveal the very norms and expected usages an individual text is said to deviate from or reorder by deploying Dominant 1. In this framework, the dominant in a text might be revolutionary or assimilating; it might challenge mainstream power or collective meaning or redeploy dominant ideology for heterotopic purposes, in pedagogy, poetic grammar, or national mythology.

At the end of his 1935 »The Dominant« Jakobson tries to reintegrate Dominant 1 and 2 into a Saussurean matrix of synchrony and diachrony: »In contrast to one-sided monism and one-sided pluralism, there exists a point of view which combines an awareness of the multiple functions of a poetic work with a comprehension of its integrity, that is to say, that function which unites and determines the poetic work« (1987, 43). One way of construing this claim is to say that Jakobson wants to reserve Dominant 1 for those texts which specifically enact a »poetic function,« that is, »a verbal message whose aesthetic function is its dominant« (1987, 43). Dominant 2, the structured textual archive at a particular moment, becomes a way to account for the historically situated and sustained hierarchies of linguistic functions, devices, and genres in social discourses. Just as Dominant 1 can shift in the linear sequence of the text or the temporal sequence of reading (as Jakobson points out in his reading of Pasternak's *The Safe Conduct*), Dominant 2 is susceptible to temporal and therefore structural shifts in discursive, poetic, or material orders. Otherwise, we wouldn't recognize the differences between Mannerist and Baroque or Modernist and Postmodernist periodizations or Foucault's Classical or Modern discursive orders. Jakobson argues that genres, forms, and media are rhetorically hierar-

chized in terms of audience expectations and appeal and structurally hierarchized in terms of cultural status and acceptability. This is precisely the sort of ordered reception study outlined by Bourdieu (1994), Jauss (1982), and in more disciplinary ways, Fish (1980, 1989).

Jakobson's dialectic between Dominant 1 and Dominant 2 renders so-called »transitional genres« and hybrid linguistic and literate forms as especially significant. Such texts, genres, and media may be considered nonaesthetic, that is, serve nonaesthetic functions, in one period but be aesthetically foregrounded or serve aesthetic functions in other periods (1987, 45). *Hoop Dreams* uses aesthetically foregrounding techniques to represent the lives of two African-American high school basketball players in ways which glamorize and simultaneously make intimate the lives of poor and working-class minority men in the US. The film problematizes dominant, mainstream U.S. audiences' assumptions about the young men's lives and about the stated and hidden goals of private and public schools for educating them. *Hoop Dreams* can make us uneasy about our own narrative genres which mythologize minority youth, especially African-American basketball players, as heroes in some respects, but not »for us« in others. The film challenges our expectations precisely by showing the young men's lives, hopes, and words through artful cinematography and film editing. The film redeploys conventions from American professional sports promotional films and narratives of aspiring high school students to complicate the views and actions of minority communities and the Catholic high school coaches who offer them opportunities for social advancement if the young men will use their considerable athletic skills to benefit the school. The film also documents how the American ideal of individualism is actually an ideology of exceptionalism which works both for and against non-mainstream youth. While *Hoop Dreams* records the concrete lives of two African-American basketballers and their families as representatives of »life in the Chicago projects,« the film also depicts the two young men as exceptional athletes and complex human beings who may or may not rise above their circumstances to achieve their hoped for goals. In this way, the film withholds any affirmation that American society always rewards merit while it questions the basis upon which merit is apportioned.

Jakobson's theory of the »dominant« is intimately bound up with his theory of »markedness.« In markedness theory, linguistic structures are organized as sets of opposed elements on the same level (phonemes, morphemes, syntactic constituents, words), beginning with the »zero sign.« The zero sign anchors all other oppositions. It is one element of a binary opposition and marks *not choosing an element* as a meaningful or significant sign position within a paradigm of limited or contextualized choices. Syntagmatic and associative sign relations are comprised of present and absent options. For example, in the set of English plurals, the opposition to a nominal plural marker (-s, -es) or a stem

vowel change plural (*mouse, mice*) is the absence of any bound morpheme or mark, that is, a »zero sign,« which also indicates a plural form (*deer, sheep*) in context and triggers grammatically a corresponding plural verb (*The deer is/are crossing the road.*). When plural forms including the unmarked plural produce explicit grammatical marks elsewhere in the clause (verb marking), they indicate the nouns' syntactic control and reveal a form of markedness which crosses linguistic levels (from word to syntactic constituent).

To take another English example, we can distinguish meanings by attaching different articles (indefinite, definite) to a noun (*a* mark, *the* mark) or not attaching an article at all (mark [verb], Mark [proper name]). (How this makes sense of expressions such as »the Donald« [Trump] or »the rugby« is still up for grabs.) The Prague linguists showed us that absence is part of the structure and the zero sign is a relational signifier within a semiotic system.

Bourdieu, Barthes, structural Marxists (Althusser, Macherey, Balibar), and some Post-marxists apply the Prague Circle's understanding of neutral and marked language to social systems other than language. Silences, absences, and gaps within a social system do not necessarily constitute non-knowledge, what we don't know. They are often »misrecognitions,« limitations on our imagining the possible, what I call »programmatic ignorance« (1993, 51; cf. Thomas 2004, 9–12). Misrecognition is not just Marxian »false consciousness« or Sartrean »bad faith.« Rather, misrecognitions are produced by the dominant structure's inadequacy or impossibility as an explanatory machine. Possible but unacknowledged or unrealized aspects of the structure are positioned as deviant forms of understanding yet are always available within the assumptions, beliefs, and practices of the social order. Historicity and historicizing analysis reveal these absences to be repressed fullnesses. Both Althusser and Bourdieu's notion of misrecognition makes explicit what is implicit in Jakobson's two earlier formulations of the »dominant.« The dominant is a principal feature of structural hierarchy and of the deployment of power. The matrix of Dominant 1 and Dominant 2 constitutes a different way to think about ideology and alternative practices as resisting and creative. Rather than being restricted to the workings of domination and repression, ideology produces and is part of subjective agency, not only the self-defeating agency which serves the interests of dominant groups but also the deviant, alternative, and resisting beliefs and practices of social subgroups. Such groups receive and self-mark their status in relation to a dominant ideology which gives them an identity and excludes them. Bourdieu, Althusser (1969), Žižek, and Post-Marxists such as Laclau and Mouffe (1985) theorize ideology not just as a screen of false consciousness separating us from the Truth and Reality but as a constitutive social space, the productive site of alienation, subjectification, agency, disidentification, and world remaking.

Literacy is one of the most contested social spaces within ideological struggles

and institutional formations. Both Jakobson's theory of markedness and Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* and distinction are grounded in critical analyses of textuality and written discourses. We can outline three different models of literacy: conduit, power, and marker models (Marvin 1984, Reddy 1979, Frawley 1987). In the conduit model, writing and textuality are regarded as a relatively unproblematic mode for transferring information along a transparent linguistic conduit from sender to receiver. In the power model, writing, reading, and official knowledge are restricted to a minority of elites and privileged in a society, while textual information is disseminated to the majority orally or through other visual forms. People's abilities to produce and handle written materials are correlated with their relative power in a society. The marker model takes a different way and identifies not a single Literacy but literacies as contingent semiotic practices and open discourses, available to different social subgroups and capable of serving different, even competing goals.

The marker model reorients a strictly linguistic theory of »markedness« to account for competing textual practices as well as repressed or alternative literate practices. It is important to keep in mind that Jakobson developed his theory of markedness in terms of both oral and written forms, especially artistic texts. Jakobson and Trubetzkoy wrote: »Every single constituent of any linguistic system is built on an opposition of two logical contradictories: the presence of an attribute (>markedness<) in contraposition to its absence (>unmarkedness<)« (quoted in Chandler 2002, 110). But as Jakobson's matrix of Dominant 1 and Dominant 2 shows, and as deconstruction and the marker model of literacy continue to unpack, all language use is marked. Present forms and absent forms are structurally significant in relation to each other in some context. If usage gives us the domain and the elements of a language, then language as a structure is derived from marked forms. There is no fundamental or original language moment from which all others derive structurally and temporally *except* as the product of ideology. The syntactic and semantic oppositions of marked/unmarked terms govern our perceptions and understanding of naturalness and deviance – that is, difference – and inscribe ideologies of gender, competence, social prestige, and so forth into utterance. Our understanding of language and social subjectivity are bound up with our understandings of textuality and markedness. As Bourdieu writes, »Resituer la lecture et le texte lu dans une histoire de la production et de la transmission culturelles, c'est se donner une chance de contrôler le rapport du lecteur à son objet et aussi le rapport à l'objet qui a été investi dans cet objet« (1987, 140).

In literacy theory, markers constitute strategies and practices which manifest how readers and writers communicate and interact through texts and in the process differentiate themselves as individuals and group members from other individuals and groups. The marker model imagines a contested field of liter-

acies in which textuality, skills, and power are ordered and reordered by individual goals, differences, and textual play. The marker model also makes room for the importance of unintended consequences of textual practices, especially in the context of schooling and dominant literate cultures. Literacies are networks of social and linguistic markers and cannot be defined by a single criterion or by a unified practice based on a single standard, set of skills, or language type (Marvin 1984; Street 1985, 1–3, 101; Gee 1990; Gee 1992, 107–19; Gee 1996). Hyperliteracies, then, are the condition and the product of contested literacies. Some hyperliteracies are the product of what James Paul Gee characterizes as the tension between Primary and Secondary Discourses. *Primary discourses* are »those to which people are apprenticed early in life during their primary socialization as members of particular families within their socio-cultural setting« (Gee 1996, 137). *Secondary discourses* are »those to which people are apprenticed as part of their socialization within various local, state, and national groups and institutions outside early and peer group socialization, for example, churches, schools, etc.« (Gee 1996, 133). Literacies emerge in either Primary or Secondary discourses, although the latter pathway is more common via schooling. Social and educational ›advantage‹ occurs when children's Primary discourses closely approximate that of schooling's Secondary discourse.

Jakobson's two definitions of the »dominant« are interrelated in several ways in texts and literacy events. Sometimes the intersection of Dominant 1 and 2 reinforces dominant social and political culture; other times, Dominant 2 crosses and subverts or reaccents dominant culture. A text emerges when »marks« and »iterability,« not the writer's voice or self or intention or even her interests or responsibility, make possible future experiences with the trace of writing itself. Readers' experiences and meanings do not necessarily map onto the writer's nor are necessarily the writer's responsibility. Jakobson's dialectic between Dominant 1 and 2 dovetails with Derrida's idea of the mark and iterability as the condition of textuality: »To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that my future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning and from yielding, and yielding itself to, reading and rewriting« (1982, 316). In »Signature Event Context,« Derrida recoups negativity and empty space as the necessary supplement for the production of legible and iterable marks. They are the condition of textuality which enables texts to emerge: »spacing is not the simple negativity of a lack, but the emergence of the mark« (317). Like Derrida, Jakobson argues that markedness floats atop the dynamic between presence and absence, between some marks and the seemingly empty space which marks demand as their supplement. Absence and empty space become signifiers precisely in terms of their negative signification.

In hyperliteracy and a markedness theory like Jakobson's, a text performs and

articulates a second »dominant,« a textual other to the social dominant. Sometimes the textual dominant approaches the social dominant, as in perceptions of realist representations, denotative meaning, and consensus truth or probable premises. Other times, the textual dominant marks a difference between written utterances and what a writer or reader believes to be the social dominant. That is, as writing, a text comprises both present and absent marks to create a conceptual presence which depends not on the presence of a writer, author or addressees but on the text's intertextual and referential repetitions or transpositions of a dominant code, archive, and possible (sayable) subject roles within a discursive field. Hyperliteracy emerges within a structural order of competing discourses and ideological formations where the possibilities for structural change and new ways of reading the world are wedged out of their determination by Dominant 2 and then inserted into a textual foreground by deliberate marking in Dominant 1. Such literacies represent and express particular subjectivities as agents. But they also critique the grounds or motives for textual work, repeat or redirect already instantiated utterances, and intervene to varying degrees in dominant social structures and institutional norms. As I shall argue, marker literacies, fortified by Dominant 1, retext (L. *retex(t)ere*, *retextus*: to unravel, to weave again) available genres, voices, connotations, linguistic forms, and reading contexts into sayable but hitherto unsaid or misrecognized or programmatically ignored forms in Dominant 2.

Bourdieu's theory of the *habitus* thickens a marker model of literacy and hyperliteracy by emphasizing how textual practices are embodied and performative. Bourdieu defines *habitus* as the »dialectic of social structures and structured structuring dispositions« (1999, 52), which critiques structuralism's claim to objectivity from the point of view of experience, praxis, embodiment, and pragmatic performativity. Bourdieu's *habitus* imagines bodies and agents as complex social spaces, beings within time and always operating within more than one structure of being. In Bourdieu's theory, *habitus* intersects with the historicity of *interests*. As such, *habitus* is equivalent neither to Jakobson's Dominant 1 or Dominant 2. Rather, *habitus* »is constituted in practice and is always oriented toward practical functions« (Bourdieu 1999, 52), that is, the matrix of Dominant 1 and Dominant 2. Individuals and groups actualize objective, deterritorialized structures through lived, embodied practical experiences, including textual experiences of writing, reading, hearing, and seeing.

In his critique of scientific structuralism Bourdieu mostly goes after sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists who substitute theoretical models and idealisations for the world views and pragmatic belief systems of the people and texts they are interpreting. Objective structuralism, Bourdieu claims, is a kind of cultural asset stripping for the benefit of corporate academia and hegemonic society. The *habitus*, he argues, foregrounds how people's behaviors and prac-

tices are organized, regulated and subjectified within specific cultural formations and social institutions and promoted or prohibited for specific social purposes. Similar to Jakobson, Bourdieu states that the *habitus* includes both dominant discourses and those practices marked or recognized as resistant, nonconformist, deviant, avant garde, or experimental. This situation is complicated by the fact that resistant or nonconformist practices within the *habitus* are determined not just by their oppositional status but by dominant as well as alternative groups or individuals in multiple ways and at different times. The *habitus* does not always stand in oppositional relation to the dominant order. Individuals or subgroups can assimilate the *habitus* to dominant culture by cooperating in their own domination, internalizing dominant culture's values, beliefs and »structuring structures,« and adjusting their own local beliefs and behaviors to conform. These manoeuvres are part of creative and interpretive practices. Ideology marks and performs subjectivities within the *habitus* by privileging certain values, practices and beliefs, thus dividing and sorting people and practices within a structure of values.

What are the possibilities for alternative discourses and practices of change after Bourdieu's critique of structuralism? Hyperliteracies are one kind of social-change space for constructing alternative discourses within dominant discourse. Hyperliteracies suggest how Jakobson's matrix of Dominant 1 and 2, based on his theory of markedness, is a procedure for uncovering repressed, undeveloped, or absent possibilities in textual practice. In hyperliteracies, Prague structuralism and poststructuralism look at one another through the ghost of objective structuralism. The Prague structuralists' theory of markedness also contains a theory of language ideology and transgressive textual practices. Markedness and Jakobson's matrix of the dominant also suggest that the »poetic« is not monolithic. It is neither inherently the *avant garde* wing of language and progressive artistic politics (as some Prague structuralists claimed) nor necessarily a conservative »aesthetic ideology« of taste and elite culture. Rather, a poetics based on marker literacy constitutes a structured intertextuality for creating new spaces *within* dominant forms. Hyperliteracy creates heterotopes by articulating texts from within the structured absences and repressions left by a confident but careless dominant discourse.

Consider, for example, how Latin has functioned as a powerful marker within western and non-western language ideologies and literate practices. For centuries in the West, Latin has been the privileged language of intellectual culture and the object language of grammatical discourse. In the middle ages, Latin was a prestigious spoken and written language and thus critical for medieval language theory, ideology, and written practice. In his *Convivio* (13th c.), Dante worried about the genetic and institutional relations between Latin and the vernacular and how Latin's social value was affected by the materiality of

multilingual manuscript formats. While preparing a manuscript of his *canzoni* in the vernacular, Dante also composed a Latin commentary to his poems which was to be added in the margins. However, Dante's multilingual compositions created a dilemma: if Latin is an ideal language, the language of *grammatica* itself, the prestigious discourses of learning and religion, what happens to the status of Latin if it is shifted from the center to the manuscript margins as a frame for his vernacular poems? How could Latin become a servant to the vernacular?

True obedience should have three things, without which it cannot exist: it should be sweet and not bitter, entirely under command and not self-willed, and within measure and not beyond measure. These three things a Latin commentary could not possibly have possessed, and therefore it would have been impossible for it to be obedient. That this would have been impossible for Latin, as has been said, is made clear by the following reasoning: everything that proceeds by inversed order is disagreeable, and consequently is bitter and not sweet, as, for example, sleeping during the day and lying awake at night, or going backwards and not forwards. For the subject to command the sovereign is to proceed by inversed order (for the right order is for the sovereign to command the servant); so it is bitter and not sweet. And since it is impossible to obey a bitter command with sweetness, it is impossible for the sovereign's obedience to be sweet when a subject commands. Therefore, if Latin is the sovereign of the vernacular, as has been shown above by many reasons, and the *canzoni* which play the role of commander are in the vernacular, it is impossible for its obedience to be sweet.
(Dante 1990, 7)

Dante's trouble with marginal Latin in a vernacular text goes to the heart of medieval theories of universal grammar and multilingual practices. Latin in the manuscript margins is a marked discourse; however, Latin as the sovereign language in multilingual discourse is also marked. Dante was an adroit analyst of language contact and vernacular differences, as any reader of his *De vulgari eloquentia* knows. But he and many others adhered to the European language ideology that Latin was the incarnation of Language itself, the exemplar to which all other languages and usages were compared genetically or structurally. Also, Dante and many clergy were concerned that Latin literacy was becoming too widespread among lesser ranks of laity. They expected Latin to remain an elite, learned discourse, although no longer reserved just for clergy. For Dante and the clergy, Latin literacy was an ideological tool in a dividing practice or »distinction« machine (Foucault 1982, 77 – 78; Bourdieu 1984).

Latin language ideology and hyperliterate marking are also part of colonial, post-colonial, and neo-colonial discursive politics. In English, French, and Spanish discourses in the Caribbean, writers reproduce the Dominant 1 lan-

guage ideology that »proper English« or »standard English« constitutes the norm and then explode that dominant by writing and performing texts which decenter and mark dominant language usage as deviant, artificial, or ill-fitted to communication. For example, Louise Bennett (1919–2006) uses comparative linguistic markedness, hyperliteracy, and a critique of Latin language ideology to disrupt the conventional distinction between standard and non-standard Caribbean Englishes:

Listen, na!

My Aunty Roachy seh dat it bwile her temper an really bex her fi true anytime she hear anybody a style we Jamaican dialec as »corruption of the English language.« For if dat be de case, den dem shoulda call English Language corruption of Norman French an Latin an all dem tarra language what dem seh dat English is derived from.

Oonoo [= *you* pl.] hear de wud? »Derived.« English is a derivation but Jamaica Dialec is corruption! What a unfairity!

(Bennett 1993, 1)

Bennett makes a similar point in her painfully funny poem »Bans O’Killing« about Standard and Nonstandard Englishes (first published in 1944):

Dat dem start fe try tun language,
From de fourteen century,
Five hundred years gawn an dem got
More dialect dan we!
(Bennett 1966, 210, ll. 21–24)

Bennett’s speaker calls the question on the cultural confidence (game) of Standard English:

Ef yuh dah – equal up wid English
Language, den wha meck
Yuh gwine go feel inferior wen
It come to dialect?
(Bennett 1966, 209, ll. 9–12)

In her prose and poetry, Bennett cites, then rewrites, retexts the *doxa* of dominant linguistic ideology. She uses the materiality of text to connote broader linguistic marking. Standard spelling suggests »proper« pronunciation, while phonetic or non-standard spellings (reduced consonant clusters, post-vocalic /r/ dropping, interdental *th* /θ/ becoming voiced /d/ or unvoiced /t/, invariant BE forms, etc.) connote indigenous pronunciation and grammar. But so-called standard spelling is also fractured in that different readers with different internal

phonological systems will ›pronounce‹ the printed words differently in their heads or aloud. Bennett's imagined multidialect speaker purveys the wisdom of her »Aunty Roachy« and resituates the negative value judgment in Dominant 1 of Jamaican Creole English within a broader comparative historical vision that questions the naturalized indigeneity of contemporary Anglo-British speakers themselves. Status marking, like hyperliterate marking, is not description but performance, not natural but contingent, pragmatic, and rhetorical.

In the 1920–30 s, when Jakobson first developed his theory of the dominant and its corollary, markedness, he did not explicitly question Marxism's rejection of the »aesthetic« in favour of the »political« or the »real.« Formalism was never an *alternative* to content analysis or Truth. Jakobson's theory of discursive functions and the »poetic« did not promote a naive formalist theory of art divorced from the world or worldly interventions. Rather, Jakobson's twin theories of the dominant and markedness constitute a complex structural matrix for critical reading, for analyzing and theorizing aesthetic experiences while remaining suspicious of and engaged with practices, potentialities, and transgressions of language and other signs as available systems for design and performance. The critical matrix of a synchronic dominant shot through with historically specific textual dominants and other agentive markedness and textual subjectivities creates a discursive space and a temporal horizon, a heterotope, for continuing the unfinished work of structuralism. Structuralism in Jakobson's theory of markedness can be a critical analysis of cultural texts which seeks out the misrecognized potentials of signifying practices for social change and other-worlds making. A pragmatic performativity, grounded in critical markedness and Bourdieu's *habitus*, helps us imagine »multiliteracies« (Cope, Kalantzis 2000), multimedia designs, and multiple centers of agency, multiple *habitus*es, which motivate new pedagogies of literacy and creative change. Let me concretize my general claim with two examples of how modernist poetry and critical pedagogy rethink structuralism and Jakobson's theory of the dominant as hyperliterate heterotopes.

Individual writing and reading develop within intertextual discursive spaces. Hyperliteracy resists closure by opening textual borders, disclosing semiosis without limit, and pressing against the ideological control of the power model of literacy. Hyperliteracy is contingent on material practices and situations. Through embodied reading, counter commentary, parody, and other »deformative« reading practices (Samuels, McGann 1999), hyperliteracy releases individual texts into the sign chain of unlimited signifying, resignifying, and retexting. Deformative hyperliteracy interrupts textual linearity with paradigmatic signifying. Hyperliterate reading and writing try to seize the discursive power which dominant Latin language ideology attempts to control. Thus, hyperliteracy marks struggles for meaning and power in both texts and reading

formations. Language ideology and the power model of literacy work continually to close textuality's borders, restrict the number of available passports, and channel the flow of migrations or assimilations. Hyperliteracy, on the other hand, foregrounds (marks) how the network of texts (hypotexts) and filiations (intertextuality) is neither a totalizable nor a stable structure. The domain of hyperliteracy is retexted in asynchronous or anachronistic developments, local histories of reading strategies, manuscript formats, discontinuous reading, multilingualism, and *insubordinate* aesthetic and documentary writing. Hyperliteracy is structured as an unruly set of mobile practices which reorder dominant and alternative or resistant discourses for both insider and outsider literates.

Wallace Stevens' »The Man on the Dump« (1968; first published in *Parts of a World* [1942]) thematizes different discourses and redraws the boundaries between less prestigious signs and the center of »High Modernist« poetic culture. In the poem, the representation of a Depression-era dump, a wasteland of discarded morsels, bits of trash (»the wrapper on the can of pears« l. 7), is also the repository of an alternative aesthetic discourse, »the janitor's poems / Of every day« (ll. 6–7). The found poetry of can labels and scraps of newspaper headlines contrasts with the clichéd images of »flowers of rhetoric« which pass for mainstream, dominant verse culture. Ruminating on trash and the rejects of human activity, the speaker imagines another kind of understanding: »One sits and beats an old tin can, lard pail. / One beats and beats for that which one believes. / That's what one wants to get near« (ll. 35–37). The rhythm of these three lines is relentlessly iambic until the third, truncated line.

Stevens' last stanza turns from assertions to questions: »Is it peace, / Is it a philosopher's honeymoon, one finds / On the dump?« (ll. 42–44). As the lyric speaker meditates on scraps of clichéd usage, »the blatter of grackles« (l. 46), and sentimental, routinized repressions of linguistic experiment and more empowering creative and concept-bending expressions, he comes to a last question: »Where was it one first heard of the truth?« (l. 49). The last two syllables – actually, words – in the same line – »The the« – either continue the question, answer it, or represent a stutter which withholds the complement in the noun phrase (NP). The conclusion to this meditation on poetics subtly repeats one of English's most used and seemingly least substantive or meaningful words. In these last two syllables, the poem repeats and then discards – trashes – other poetic registers. We are offered instead a retextualized morsel of language as a transgressive, newly-minted NP. The phrase structure of »The the« temporarily marks the second »the« as a new Noun through the immediate pressure of textual context. This is a classic example of the structural linguistic claim that phonetic or surface repetition is not necessarily structural repetition. Functionally, the poem marks the most banal of determiners as an infinitely full signifier, while it

withholds any absolute referentiality for the word. The *what* is answered by itself: »The the.« Reference as false echo. Like Standard spellings in Louise Bennett's Jamaican Creole English printed text, the Standard spelling of Steven's printed »The the« conceals different dialect pronunciations of the Noun Phrase, including a possible working-class pronunciation [dɔdʌ] with iambic stress and the association with drum cadences. When *the* is laid beside itself, the poem rewrites, retexts, the ordinariness of the word in dominant discourse as a marked usage. The verbal doubling is more than itself and rivals Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for the sense nonsense makes.

If hyperliteracies and markedness construct new kinds of textual utterances and new subjectivities and possibilities for social change or justice, what about the relation between hyperliteracy and schooling? Schooling is one of the most pervasive aspects of dominant culture and has also been the site of hopes for social transformation and change. Multicultural and critical pedagogy use traditional and new forms of literate discourse to empower all students, especially minority or disadvantaged students, with knowledges and abilities which enable them to achieve greater autonomy and cultural capital and to shape their worlds as workers, citizens, and social creators. But, as James Paul Gee (2000) has recently pointed out, some cognitive assumptions and curriculum goals of critical pedagogy are also shared by »fast capitalism.« Whereas traditional, Fordist capitalism depends on top-down organization, centralized expertise flowing to the production line, and layers of supervision to ensure that workers are applying knowledge correctly to produce goods and services, fast capitalism fosters distributed networks and teams of knowledge workers who collaboratively pool their respective expertise and abilities to accomplish tasks or larger enterprises. Sometimes sounding a lot like Vygotsky on social mind as intelligence, fast capitalism promotes covert assimilation and group identification through apprenticeship, shadow-doing, shared expertise. But whereas Vygotsky was interested in understanding children's cognition and improving literacy education, fast capitalism wants to harness individual abilities and resources for market production and economic advantage. Vygotsky saw literate individuals as capable of transforming the mainstream social order. Fast capitalism regards itself *as* the new social order. Fast capitalism's dynamic network model also reimagines Bourdieu's theory of *habitus* as a program for establishing »communities of practice« which maintain the mainstream dominant culture (Jakobson's Dominant 2) through individual and group relationships organized to best serve mainstream-approved or dominant economic or cultural projects. For policy makers, some educational theorists, and managers, fast capitalism and postindustrial schooling have converged around *dynamic, flexible portfolios of rearrangeable skills acquired through competence-based education*, with the corollary that privatized schooling will best prepare students for the new

workplace order. What happens, then, to critique, reflexive literacy, and alternative practice in such a cognitive, task-based environment with built-in assimilation? What happens to hyperliteracy as a project of hope?

Alternative and critical pedagogies have inspired and shaped many peoples' hopes and expectations for social change and literate power. Consider some critical relations between hyperliteracy and schooling revealed in a twentieth-century alternative literacy program associated with Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1908–84). A controversial and inspirational figure, Ashton-Warner taught primary school literacy in rural, predominantly Maori schools in New Zealand from the late 1930s through the 1950s. In the 1950s she also began writing novels based on her teaching and personal experiences and in 1963 published (with Bob Gottlieb, her U.S. publisher) her reflective teaching philosophy and strategies, *Teacher*. She left New Zealand in 1969, taught at an alternative school in Aspen, Colorado (1970–71) and lectured at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver (1972–74), before returning to New Zealand for good in 1974. *Teacher* is one of the most influential and inspirational teaching diaries ever written. In her book, Ashton-Warner reproduced or revised large chunks of her classroom interactions as well as reflections on the social contexts of teaching, her young pupils' home and community experiences, and her own struggles with teaching as a profession and a calling. She also outlined her »Key Vocabulary« and »organic« method for teaching young children to read and write. Here, I am interested in *Teacher* as a text and a pedagogical critique which imagine what education can be and not as a documentary record of what actually occurred in Ashton-Warner's classrooms or in other aspects of her life (Hood 1988, 130–86).

Ashton-Warner's lessons and materials for literacy pedagogy were part of what she called »transitional« education (1963, 66), an innovative program for educating mostly minority indigenous children in a society which often did not want them. Ashton-Warner was one of several primary teachers in New Zealand who resisted the state-imposed curriculum and early readers which she and others thought did more to disadvantage and turn off than encourage five-year-old Maori children to become competent readers and writers. Despite what others have attributed to Ashton-Warner, she herself was quite explicit about her goals. She wanted to use five-year-old Maori children's experiences as a way to transition them into *Pakeha* (white European settlers and their descendants in New Zealand) literacy and culture. She imagined her classroom activities and readers as a way for Maori children to make the transition from the Maori *pa* community to the English literacy demanded in the wider world. Ashton-Warner saw the differences between Maori and *Pakeha* as cultural incompatibilities rather than deficits, although she acknowledged that the differences were hierarchized as deficits and advantages in white-dominated New Zealand society. To overcome this inequality, teachers needed to acknowledge

children's lives, where they began school *from*, what skills, hopes, and obstacles they brought into the classroom. Then teachers could structure »organic« learning, that is, reading and writing which emerges from the children's own experiences and curiosities. Ashton-Warner's classroom was a kind of heterotopia, where children's own words and stories were used to build a bridge from the restricted yet energetic world of the *pa* community to the wider world of dominant culture and literacy.

Unlike Basil Bernstein (1974, 170–89), Ashton-Warner regarded the experiences, language, and imaginations of young Maori children as powerful motivators for breaking into reading and writing and for understanding the power of written language. In this respect, *Teacher* contains two competing dominants: the goal of *Pakeha* literacy in English and the recognition that Maori children's immediate lives and experiences are worthy of being part of school literacy. These two dominant values are located in two different but partially overlapping linguistic systems. Reading *Teacher*, one senses that while Ashton-Warner wanted to empower her children to bridge and cross class and racial divisions and master the skills and cultural possibilities of written discourses, she was not interested in turning Maori children into brown versions of polite, »respectable« middle-class white people. While her pedagogical methods and goals reaffirmed dominant society's expectations that the children would learn English literacy, Ashton-Warner allowed a good deal of Maori culture and language, embodied in the children and in her own cross-cultural activities, to coexist in her classroom. Ashton-Warner's pedagogy resists linguistic and textual homogenization.

One of Ashton-Warner's principal insights was that for many Maori children in her classroom, their interest in individual words first emerged from *fear* or *sex*, that is, from their primal experiences. While this might seem like romantic primitivism, for Ashton-Warner, it was a way to tap into the repressed energy of language. Beginning literacy pedagogy with children's personal and home experiences necessarily entails introducing into the classroom behaviors, experiences, attitudes, and words which are not part of the formal curriculum and do not accord with dominant, mainstream norms for acculturation. Ashton-Warner insists that children tell her the English and Maori words they would like to know how to write and read. Thus, the children provide new reading and writing vocabulary words from their oral life stories, desires, and fears. For example:

Later, standing watching Seven [one of her more aggressive pupils] grinding his chalk to dust on his blackboard as usual, I do see. »Whom do you want, Seven? Your old Mummy or your new Mummy?«

»My old Mummy.«

»What do your brothers do?«

»They all hits me.«

»Old Mummy« and »New Mummy« and »hit« and »brothers« are all one-look words added to his vocabulary, and now and again I see some shape breaking through the chalk-ravage. And I wish I could make a good story of it and say he is no longer violent [. . .].
(1963, 37–38)

If a child's story begins to seem too dangerous for the rest of the class, and sometimes the stories were dangerous, she provides a separate sheet of paper for the child to write on privately. Eventually, the children read one another their stories and help each other pronounce and comprehend the written texts.

Both the content and the form of the children's stories subvert the middle-class assumptions and language of the 1950 s New Zealand Department of Education's prescribed primary readers. Ashton-Warner's Key Vocabulary pedagogy demanded different types of textbooks than the »Janet and John« readers, apparently based on American primary textbooks. The »Janet and John« readers imagined children's lives in very restrained language: »I do not like the pond. I do not want to play here.« (Ashton-Warner 1963, 70–71). No impolite words or activities. No contractions. No creative spellings. No Maori words or ideas. No fear. No sex. No energy. So Ashton-Warner made more individualized readers for her pupils, handmade and handpainted illustrated books using the children's own vocabulary words and stories, with their local hybrid language of English and Maori, their edgy unintended personal revelations, and hyperactive imaginary or domestic narratives. Contractions, naughty behaviors (*bombs, knives, hiding, growling, drinking, hitting*), and non-middle-class community experiences all become part of textuality as the children dictate their stories:

I don't delay the delivery of a thought by saying, »He is not naughty,« but say, »He's not naughty.« »Where's Ihaka?« »He'll get a hiding.« »Kuri's at home.« »Pussy's frightened.« »I'll come back.« In grown up novels we enjoy the true conversational medium, yet five-year-olds for some inscrutable reason are met with the twisted idea behind »Let us play.« As a matter of fact, Maoris seldom if ever use »let« in that particular setting. They say »We play, eh?«
(1963, 71)

The sentence »We play, eh?« (*We play, don't we?*) is a prime example of the hyperliterate discourse constructed in Ashton-Warner's spoken and written classroom language. Her primary texts, produced collaboratively with her five-year-olds, bridged the social-cultural differences between Maori and Pakeha by using what she called the »pa vernacular« (Maori English) as a way of teaching wider English literacy. The Maori transition books inscribed the contractions and rhythms of everyday Maori English and *Te Reo* (Maori) into classroom materials. Her students' speech formed the basis for her primary readers, es-

pecially *eh*, the marked syntactic particle which signals questions, offers, requests, and discursive open-endedness in Maori English: »Eh, Mrs. H.? [Her married name was *Henderson* at the time.] We're going to the river, eh?« (1963, 70–71). The *eh* particle and its syntactic functions are carried over from the Maori particle *ne* (*nei*) into English. Sociolinguists have shown that while both modern Maori and *Pakeha* New Zealanders use *eh* to mark questions, Maori English speakers do so more often and both Maori and *Pakeha* working class speakers (especially females) do so more often than middle class speakers (Meyerhoff 1994; W. Bauer 1997, 426; Holmes 1997, 2005). In different contexts, the *eh* particle can mark Maori or class identity. But when I and my family first moved to New Zealand, our then two-year-old son began to use the *eh* particle as a tag question within a few months after starting preschool. For him and for us, *eh* was an immediate marker of New Zealandness.

Ashton-Warner uses the children's Primary (Home) Discourse, both English and Maori, as a bridge into fluent reading and writing, but when she and her students inscribe Maori English and impolite words into their writing books as part of their stories, they give validity to the children's speech, literate cognition, and most important, their lives and ideas by »bookifying« them. *Eh*, contractions, subject-verb disagreements, dangerous stories of domestic abuse and nighttime fears in the children's writing are not dross or dirt to be hidden, erased, or corrected away on the road to »higher« literacy. Rather, Ashton-Warner's hyperliterate pedagogy made Secondary Discourse, the literacy of power and cultural access, available to the children by setting situating the power of written language within intimate, sometimes risky written version of their Primary Discourse and community experiences. In this respect, the students' Key Vocabulary is generative, world making and world disclosing. The children's hybrid textuality is formed by oral and written collaborations with their teacher in a classroom full of noise, movement, energy, drawn from the »force of the energy in our New Race« (her name for the Maori), »like a volcano in continuous eruption« (1963, 103). Passionately praised as a heroic female educational saint or feverishly condemned as a petulant, difficult, self-aggrandizing outsider or imposter, the Ashton-Warner of *Teacher* put literacy pedagogy on equal footing with social commitment and pragmatic, student-centered classroom practices. The classroom was a heterotopic space for hyperliteracy.

The final section of Ashton-Warner's *Teacher* is a narrative of the now-retired teacher's return to her former primary school. The old building has been replaced by a new modern building, and a young female teacher has taken over the classroom. The narrator's sense of dislocation is strong: »I'm longing for my Little Ones to come in from assembly. A long long time since I have seen them[. . .]. Where are they going to put the easel? I wonder. What about the sand? What'll happen when they bring the water trough in?« (1963, 220, 223). The pa has been

erased from the classroom. There are no pa words in the cards posted around the room, no *kiss*, no *ghost*, no *meeting house* (223). The classroom has become respectable, ordered, charming, functional, part of dominant order.

Still, in her melancholy return to the new classroom, the narrator incorporates her Maori children's stories and their five-year-old English into her own. The classroom in her mind remains heterotopic and multidialectal: »and why does not Waiwini's Little Brother wail to me that somebodies they broked his castle for notheen; somebodies?« (224) The ending of *Teacher* merges the child's oral lament with Ashton-Warner's written one. The hyperliterate narrative empowers the children's stories yet one more time so that the narrator's speech and the child's overlap. While phonetic spelling marks the difference between different subjects and their language, the child's voice and pain have become the adult narrator's. The child speaks for the narrator, same fear, same lament, same world, same words. Or is it the other way around?

I plug in the jug from habit when I return to the kitchen and go unnecessarily to the mirror to check my hair that I have washed this morning. Sparkling five-year-old tears on an autumnal face.

That's why somebodies they broked my castle for notheen; somebodies [. . .]. (1963, 224)

In the text, there is no quotation, no reported speech. There is no single textual dominant. The hyperliterate narrative combines two voices and two points of view in a paragrammatic discourse without attribution.

Hyperliteracy might seem to be associated with new technologies or new media. But hyperliteracy is grounded in multilingualism and heterotopic practices. In Ashton-Warner's classroom, handmade books, oral-written interaction, and collaborative reading and writing comprise a different kind of hyperliteracy, one which disrupts and reinvents normative classroom pedagogy by foregrounding children's motives and languages. The children's hyperliterate textuality, beginning with their own stories and words, marks a more politicized writing in a structural (heterotopic) space which crosses Dominant 2 (middle-class mainstream literacy) with Dominant 1 (immediate textual narratives of desire, loss, and hope). Ashton-Warner's hyperliterate pedagogy and her collaborative reflection on teaching challenge our expectations of what a literacy narrative of progress should look like.

Hyperliteracy as a structuralist pragmatics unhinges dominant discourses and language ideology from their prevailing institutional contexts and authorized commentaries. In this respect, hyperliteracy connects Jakobson's theory of the dominant and markedness with Saussure's less well known but equally powerful notion of the »associative sign.« Associative sign relations, of

indefinite order and number, are structured not linearly but as a constellation of different structures (phonetic, syntactic, semantic). They create a space for making and reading open textuality. Beyond overt intentionality, hyperliteracy foregrounds difference, dissent, respect, creolization, and nonstandard discourses as critical practices and potential futures. The marker model deploys multiple Dominant 1s, whether in the manuscript format of Dante's poetry, creole poetry, Stevens' poetic syntax, or Maori children's English stories. Implicitly or explicitly, these multiple structuring structures critique and pry loose Dominant 2 from its anchoring confidence in cultural hegemony. Hyperliteracy creates discursive contests and heterotopes as counter ideology formations within dominant discourse. These other spaces and texts unsettle and re-contextualize the unitary stability of a power or dominant model literacy for new purposes. Hyperliteracy respects heretics.

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III

Theories of Structure and Their Transformations

Johannes Fehr

The Question of Transmission in Saussure's Reflections on Language

Un mot n'existe véritablement, et à
quelque point de vue qu'on se place,
que par la sanction qu'il reçoit de
moment en moment de ceux qui
l'emploient.

Ferdinand de Saussure

Rather than the father of structuralism, as he was considered in France, the members of the Prague School of linguistics saw in Ferdinand de Saussure an elder stepbrother. These, at least, are terms that were chosen to characterise the somewhat reserved position of the Prague School regarding the Geneva linguist.¹ In any case, the relationship between the Prague School and Saussure was not only one-sided, it was also biased by the fact that it was almost exclusively grounded on the *Cours de linguistique générale*, published in 1916, three years after Saussure's premature death, and edited by his pupils. To the readers of Saussure's posthumous writings – which began to be known and published only in the late 1950s and which as recently as 2006 were also translated into English –, it is clear however that Saussure's thinking on language was much closer to the Praguian's than they had suspected it to be. This becomes particularly clear, if one considers the notion of »transmission« as I will do in the following. In order to do so, I will propose a close reading of some of Saussure's manuscripts, which are texts of a particular kind: Rather than a sum of well established truths, they are a laboratory of a science in the making, meandering and full of hesitations, allowing us to follow the development of Saussure's thinking.

1 See Holenstein (1974, 28 ff): »Für die Osteuropäer ist das Verhältnis zu Saussure indessen komplexer. Man könnte seine Stellung eher mit der eines älteren Stiefbruders vergleichen. [...] Je nach Kontext ist Saussure für die Prager Linguisten Vorbild, das sie propagieren, Kampfgefährte in der Avantgarde und Kampfrevale, an dem man die eigenen Konzeptionen mißt.« For a more recent account see Sládek (2007, 36 ff).

The Notion of »Transmission«

The notion of »transmission« also appears in the *Course in General Linguistics*, but it remains rather casually and marginally present since it is addressed as a purely physiological process which as such is considered as being not of interest for linguistics. In the well-known scheme of the »speech circuit« in the »Introduction« for instance, we learn that »the brain transmits to the organs of phonation an impulse,« or that, »from ear to brain, the physiological transmission of the sound pattern« takes place (Saussure 1983, 12). In contrast, the notion of »transmission« is extensively discussed in Saussure's manuscripts. And what is astonishing there is not only the emphasis that the notion is given, but also how controversial, if not contradictory it is considered.

To start, I will just pick out the first of a series of examples claiming that the notion of »transmission« is something properly crucial for any serious attempt to theorize language:

note first the complete irrelevance of a viewpoint taking as its starting point the idea-sign relationship outside time, outside transmission, which alone tells us, experimentally, what the sign is worth.
(Saussure 2006, 161)²

The importance of transmission should hardly be overseen thus, one might think. But as Saussure writes in the same manuscript, it is normally ignored or misconceived:

What is unusual about the conventional sign is that the disciplines which might need to use it did not realize that this sign was [. . .] transmissible, and thus had a second life, about which one can assert that these disciplines (as well as the public in general) had no idea whatsoever [...]
(Saussure 2006, 154)³

2 Since unfortunately the text given in *Writings in General Linguistics* (Saussure 2006, based on *Écrits de linguistique générale*, Saussure 2002) is deficient and incomplete compared to the version in the critical edition of the *Cours de linguistique générale* by Rudolf Engler (Saussure 1968 and 1972a), I am quoting the French texts included there from this older, but philologically much more careful publication. »[...] constatons tout de suite l'entière insignifiance d'un point de vue qui part de la relation d'une idée et d'un signe hors du temps, hors de la transmission, qui seule nous enseigne, expérimentalement, ce que vaut le signe« (Saussure 1968, 273).

3 »Ce qu'il y a de particulier dans le signe *conventionnel*, c'est que les disciplines qui pouvaient avoir à s'en occuper ne se sont <pas> doutées que ce signe est [...] *transmissible*, et par là doté d'une seconde vie, dont on peut bien dire que ces disciplines (de même que le public en général) n'ont aucune espèce de notion [...]« (Saussure 1972a, 28).

Here, as in some other comparable passages,⁴ Saussure's position seems to be quite clearcut: although the concerned disciplines as well as the public in general may have no idea whatsoever, an understanding of transmission is said to be decisive for a serious theory of language. However, in a number of other passages in his manuscripts, Saussure separates – or excludes – transmission from the study of language. And astonishingly enough, he does it with comparable determination:

Life of language may mean, firstly, the way language lives through time, i. e. the fact that it may be transmitted. – This fact is a truly vital element of language, because nothing in language escapes transmission; but it also happens to be completely foreign to language.
(Saussure 2006, 33)⁵

The separation is even more radical in the following passage which, by the way, is quoted like the preceding one from a convolute of manuscripts discovered only recently, in 1996, in the Orangery of the Saussure family house in Geneva:

In the last analysis – a point reached quickly – it is clearly impossible to understand what *langue* is, without first establishing its many modifications from one period to another. But once this is done, the most pressing task, in our view, is to reimpose a complete separation between the purely momentary ›*langue*‹ and the contingent fact that this ›*langue*‹ is naturally meant to be conveyed through time. In fact, a language is often made up of accidents of transmission, but that does not mean that we can study transmission instead of studying the language system; and it certainly does not undermine our certainty that the language system, on the one hand, and its transmission, on the other, will always be two things of a quite different order.
(Saussure 2006, 34)⁶

4 See further in this chapter and Saussure (1968, 169).

5 »On peut entendre par *vie du langage* premièrement le fait que le langage vit à travers le temps, c'est-à-dire est susceptible de se transmettre. – Ce fait est si l'on veut un élément vital du langage, parce qu'il y a rien dans le langage qui ne soit transmis; mais il est plutôt absolument étranger au langage« (Saussure 2002, 53).

6 »Quand on en vient à l'analyse dernière qui est très vite atteinte, on voit qu'il n'est certainement pas possible de comprendre ce qu'est la langue sans connaître d'abord les vicissitudes qu'elle traverse d'une époque à l'autre: mais après cela, il n'y a rien de plus nécessaire, nous le croyons, que de rétablir une séparation absolue entre l'être ›*langue*‹ toujours momentané et le fait contingent que cet être ›*langue*‹ est ordinairement destiné à se transmettre à travers le temps. En réalité tout ce qui est dans la langue vient souvent des accidents de sa TRANSMISSION, mais cela ne signifie pas qu'on puisse substituer l'étude de cette transmission à l'étude de la langue; ni surtout qu'il n'y ait pas à chaque moment, comme nous l'affirmons, deux choses d'ordre entièrement distinct, dans cette langue d'une part, et dans cette transmission de l'autre« (Saussure 2002, 55).

If transmission is foreign to language and if it is of a different order than the language system, it is hard to see why it should be decisive to deal with it in linguistic theory. Obviously, the conclusions drawn in the last two quotations do strongly conflict with the affirmations of the preceding ones, and if Saussure's papers are not to be considered only as a number of contradictory statements, the question has to be raised how these – at least – contrary lines of thinking should be put in relation to each other and how they should be dealt with. One possibility is to suppose that there is a development between the two positions that would have prevailed consecutively in Saussure's thinking on language. Thus, one would assume that in a first step Saussure might have discovered the importance of transmission while in a second step he would have rejected it. However, such a reading has to face a number of problems. The first is that presumably – presumably, since only a part of Saussure's manuscripts can be dated with sufficient evidence – the passages refuting or rejecting transmission are earlier than those emphasising its importance, which would be strange enough for a first step. But, be this as it may, the fact is that in the *Course in General Linguistics* the position of leaving transmission aside is adopted. Now, what I will propose here is another reading: I will try to show that the two positions can be treated as resulting from a tension inherent in Saussure's thinking on language.

Phonic Matter and the Distinction between Internal and External Elements of Language

The second position which consists in strictly separating transmission from the system of language, evokes a similar attitude in Saussure's thinking concerning the sounds of speech. According to a formulation of the *Course in General Linguistics* »a sequence of sounds is a linguistic sequence only if it is the bearer of an idea: in itself, it is merely an item for physiological investigation« (Saussure 1983, 101). A note taken in 1911 by Émile Constantin, one of the auditors of the last of Saussure's three Courses in General Linguistics given at the university of Geneva, traces the same line of argument in the following terms:

you can say that the material word is an abstraction from the linguistic point of view. As a concrete object, it is not part of linguistics.
(Saussure 1993, 79a)⁷

7 »[...] on peut dire que le mot matériel, c'est une abstraction au point de vue linguistique. Comme objet concret, il ne fait pas partie de la linguistique« (Saussure 1993, 79).

The closeness between the exclusion of the »material word« from the field of linguistics and the exclusion of the question of transmission becomes palpable in the following passage, again quoted from Constantin's notes:

Phonation might appear to command an important place among the phenomena of language; appears as inessential as the various pieces of electrical apparatus which may be used to transmit signs of the Morse alphabet. Granted that these signs are visible at the two termini, it matters little by what apparatus they have been transmitted.

(Saussure 1993, 72a)⁸

Both, »phonation« as well as the »various pieces« of an »electrical« telegraph »apparatus« appear inessential in so far as they are considered as mere means of transmission. But if so, wouldn't it be consequent then to count the whole dimension of transmission of language, phonation included, among the so called external elements of language? Why, after all, are neither transmission, nor phonation mentioned in the particular chapter of the »Introduction« of the *Course in General Linguistics* dedicated to the distinction between internal and external elements of language? Why are they not counted among the things »our definition of language assumes that we disregard« (Saussure 1983, 21), like for example »all the respects in which linguistics links up with ethnology,« »political history,« »connections with institutions of every sort« and »the geographical extension of languages« (Saussure 1983, 21)?⁹

With regard to »phonation« there is a clear answer that can be given, since there is one particular characteristic of the »material word« or »phonic matter« which cannot be disregarded in the study and theory of language as Saussure explained to his students again and again:

With respect to the material instrument of the sign in linguistics, is it the characteristic of being the human voice, <the product of the vocal apparatus,> which is decisive? No. But here there is a crucial characteristic of phonic matter not sufficiently <stressed;> this is that it is presented to us as an acoustic chain, which immediately entails the temporal characteristic of having only one dimension. One could say that this is a linear character: the <chain of speech necessarily> is presented to us as a line, and <this> has enormous consequences

8 »La phonation en apparence pourrait réclamer une place de premier ordre au sein des phénomènes de langage; apparaît comme aussi inessentielle que les différents appareils électriques qui peuvent servir à transmettre tels ou tels signes de l'alphabet morse. Ces signes étant visibles aux deux extrémités quel que soit l'appareil qui les ait transmis, peu importe« (Saussure 1993, 72).

9 For a detailed discussion of the problems related to the geographical extension of language which is where »the distinction between external linguistics and internal linguistics appears most paradoxical« (Saussure 1983, 22), see Fehr (2000, 70 ff).

<for the subsequent connections which will be made.>
(Saussure 1997, 20a)¹⁰

Although the »linear character« is clearly a property of the »material word,« a property of »phonic matter,« it cannot be disregarded but has to be considered on the contrary as one of the two fundamental principles of the linguistic sign, as is well known from the passage of the *Course in General Linguistics* explaining the principle of linearity:

The linguistic signal, being auditory in nature, has a temporal aspect, and hence certain temporal characteristics (a) *it occupies a certain temporal space*, and (b) *this space is measured in just one dimension*: it is a line.

This principle is obvious, but it seems never to be stated doubtless because it is considered too elementary. However, it is a fundamental principle and its consequences are incalculable. Its importance equals that of the first law [arbitrariness of the linguistic sign]. The whole mechanism of linguistic structure depends upon it.

(Saussure 1983, 69–70)¹¹

Linearity, thus, is – or should be considered as – one of the two fundamental characteristics of the linguistic sign. But if so, what about transmission? If indeed linearity is considered as constitutive for the linguistic sign, as Saussure claimed, isn't it exactly so, insofar as the transmission of the sign is concerned? Isn't it the concrete, physical sign that is pronounced and perceived, handled by the speakers, that is subjected to linearity in contrast to a merely mental or ideal sign? Yet, isn't it quite difficult – if not impossible – then, to take linearity as one of the two fundamental characteristics of the linguistic sign without according at the same time that transmission has to be considered as an indispensable part or as an intrinsic dimension of the linguistic system?

10 »Du côté de l'instrument matériel du signe en linguistique est-ce le caractère d'être la voix humaine, <le produit des appareils vocaux,> qui est décisif? Non. Mais il y a ici un caractère capital de la matière phonique non mis suffisamment en <relief;> c'est de se présenter à nous comme une chaîne acoustique, ce qui entraîne immédiatement le caractère temporel qui est de n'avoir qu'une dimension. On pourrait dire que c'est un caractère linéaire: la <chaîne de la parole forcément> se présente à nous comme une ligne et <cela> a une immense portée <pour tous les rapports postérieurs qui s'établiront>« (Saussure 1997, 20).

11 »Le signifiant, étant de nature auditive, se déroule dans le temps seul et les caractères qui'il emprunte au temps : a) *il représente une étendue*, et b) *cette étendue est mesurable dans une seule dimension* : c'est une ligne. Ce principe est évident, mais il semble qu'on ait toujours négligé de l'énoncer, sans doute parce qu'on l'a trouvé trop simple ; cependant il est fondamental et les conséquences en sont incalculables ; son importance est égale à celle de la première loi [l'arbitraire du signe]. Tout le mécanisme de la langue en dépend« (Saussure 1972b, 103).

Never Devoid of the Social

Among the several passages in the papers he left, the following – which I have not quoted so far – is probably the most instructive one for the understanding of the importance of the notion of transmission in Saussure's thinking on language. In particular, it allows us to understand in which respect Saussure's thinking differed from the theory of signs that had predominated in the tradition of philosophy:

1. Language is merely *a specific case* of the theory of Signs. But this very fact alone totally prevents it from being something simple (or something whose nature the mind can grasp directly), even though in fact, within the general theory of signs the specific case of vocal signs might not be incalculably more complex than all the specific known cases, such as *writings, numerals* [ciphering, encryption], etc.
2. The crucial response of the study of language concerning the theory of signs, and the eternally new horizon it will open up [. . .], will be to impart to that theory *a whole new aspect of the sign*, the fact that the sign can only begin to be truly known when it is understood that it is something not only transmissible but intrinsically *destined to be transmitted* [. . .]. For anyone wishing to develop a theory of language, though, this complicates things a hundredfold [. . .] (Saussure 2006, 154)¹²

We seem to be at a pivotal point. In a first step, language is determined as being »a specific case of the theory of Signs«. As such, language cannot be »something simple«, »something whose nature the mind can grasp directly.« However, in this respect »vocal signs« are not even more complex than other known cases. But then, in a second step, there is a curious turnaround or *volte face*: since in the study of language there seems to appear something radically new, namely the fact that the »sign is [. . .] something not only transmissible but intrinsically destined to be transmitted«.

In another manuscript, again from the Gardenhouse convolute discovered in

12 »1° <Le langage n'est rien de plus qu'un> *cas particulier* de la Théorie des Signes. <Mais précisément, par ce> seul fait, il se trouve déjà dans l'impossibilité absolue d'être une chose simple (ni une chose directement saisissable à notre esprit dans sa façon d'être), alors même que dans la théorie générale des signes, le cas particulier des signes vocaux <ne serait> pas en outre le plus *complexe* <mille fois> de tous les cas particuliers connus, tels que *l'écriture, la chiffraison*, etc.

2° Ce sera la réaction <capitale> de l'étude du langage sur la théorie des signes, <ce sera> l'horizon <à jamais> nouveau qu'elle aura ouvert [...], que de lui avoir appris <et révélé> *tout un côté nouveau du signe*, à savoir que celui-ci ne commence à être réellement connu que quand on a vu qu'il est une chose non seulement transmissible, mais de sa nature *destiné à être transmis* [...]. Seulement pour celui qui veut faire la théorie du langage, c'est la complication centuplée [...].« (Saussure 1968, 169).

1996, Saussure speaks of language as »a collection of signs [. . .] capable of transmission through time, from individual to individual, from generation to generation« (Saussure 2006, 28)¹³ – and here he explains in which respect this process is different from what the »theory of signs« traditionally deals with:

Imagine that the question of the *origin of language* is under debate. The question can only be approached from these two angles: the conditions in which a thought comes to correspond to a sign, or else the condition in which a sign comes to be transmitted over six months, or twelve months. This latter case precludes *thought*, since thought may differ from one moment to the next. The central phenomenon of language is the association of a thought with a sign; and this central fact is nullified in the course of the sign's transmission. (Saussure 2006, 28)¹⁴

The »theory of signs« – in the tradition of philosophy – is focused on the relationship between the sign and what it refers to, »the association of a thought with a sign«, considered the »central – primordial – phenomenon of language«, as Saussure writes. Yet, beside, beneath or behind the relation of thought and sign there is something different, much less obvious, namely the question of how it is possible that a sign, and be it only for a period of six to twelve months, may be transmitted. Instead of the relation of thought and sign, other problems have to be examined: How is it possible that signs are available, that they are circulating? What does it take, what is required to make words available as signs? How do words have to be constituted in order to be able to be transmitted? If indeed linguistic signs are »intrinsically *destined to be transmitted*«, this means that there is not something like a sign as such that could be described or defined outside transmission. On the contrary, it is only insofar as something is transmitted and transmissible that it exists as a sign.

Interestingly enough, it is in a passage dealing with phonology that Saussure developed ideas following the same line of argument:

The phonatory unit must be defined; and when it has been defined, the absence of

13 »Veut-on au contraire considérer la langue comme une somme de signes (il ne faut plus parler ici de système) jouissant de la propriété de se transmettre à travers le temps, d'individu en individu, de génération en génération, il faut dès le début constater que cet objet offre à peine quelque chose de commun avec le précédent« (Saussure 2002, 46 ff).

14 »Supposons que nous ayons à parler de l'*origine du langage*. Il y aura immédiatement ces deux manières de concevoir la question: ou bien les conditions où une pensée arrive à correspondre à un signe – ou bien les conditions où un signe arrive à se transmettre pendant six mois, ou douze mois, et aussitôt la *pensée* est supprimée, parce que cette pensée peut différer d'un instant à l'autre. Or le phénomène primordial du langage est l'association d'une pensée à un signe; et c'est justement ce fait primordial qui est supprimé dans la transmission du signe« (Saussure 2002, 47).

any difference between the unit within or outside the chain will be apparent. The idea that phonemes drift about in the sky and sometimes drop down into the speech chain will be abandoned. The biggest mistake of the phonologists that I attack is not to have reckoned that phonemes ›entering the chain‹ behave in a special way, even though this notion itself is extraordinary, but rather to have accepted the idea that there might exist some realization of the phoneme other than the one it has within the chain, and to have disseminated the idea that B or Z or L represent units, or even ›directly given units,‹ without attempting to show what such an affirmation means.
(Saussure 2006, 93)¹⁵

If »phonemes« exist only »in the chains« or if signs exist only insofar as they are transmitted, this has consequences for the way the system of phonemes or the system of signs has to be conceived. A system constituted by elements existing only in a process of transmission and permanent circulation, cannot be something closed nor something immutable, established once and for all. And Saussure did not ignore it – »this complicates things a hundredfold« »for anyone wishing to develop a theory of language,« as he wrote in the passage quoted above.

As mentioned at the outset, in the *Course in General Linguistics* the question of transmission and its complications for the theory of language are completely elided. It is not surprising therefore if Roman Jakobson, as other exponents of the Prague School, criticized the Saussurean conception of the system of language for being too rigid, and particularly that the strict separation between synchrony and diachrony propagated in the seminal book of 1916 obstructed the view on the dynamism inherent to language (cf. Holenstein 1974, 34–55). Yet, passages found in his unpublished papers, such as the following with which I want to conclude, leave no doubts that in his reflections Saussure was about to develop a conception of a sign system much closer not only to positions of the Prague School, but perhaps even more to a poststructuralist thinking on language:

A sign system, if it is to be so called, must be part of a community—indeed, only as

15 »Il faut définir l'unité phonatoire, et quand on aura défini cette unité on verra l'absence de toute différence entre l'unité dans la chaîne ou hors de la chaîne. On cessera de se figurer que les phonèmes planent d'une part dans le ciel et tombent quelquefois, d'autre part, dans la chaîne parlée. Le plus grand tort des phonologistes que j'attaque n'est pas de s'être imaginé que les phonèmes ›en entrant dans la chaîne‹ se trouvent soumis à un régime spécial, quoique cette idée soit déjà extraordinaire, mais bien d'avoir accepté l'idée qu'il existerait un autre avatar quelconque des phonèmes que celui qu'ils peuvent avoir dans la chaîne, et d'avoir propagé l'idée que B ou Z ou L représentent des unités, voire des ›unité immédiatement données‹ sans aucune tentative de montrer à quoi correspond une telle affirmation« (Saussure 1968, 132).

such does it constitute a sign system at all. As such its general conditions of existence are so different from anything it might otherwise represent, that the rest appears unimportant. It should be added here that if this community environment changes everything for the sign system, this environment is also the original and true locus of development, towards which, right from its very inception, a sign system moves. A sign system is destined for a community just as a ship is for the sea. Its only role is that of allowing comprehension between people in groups large or small, but not for the use of a sole individual. This is why, contrary to appearance, semiological phenomena, of whatever kind, are never devoid of the social, collective element. The community and its laws are among their *internal*, rather than *external* elements, as far as we are concerned. (Saussure 2006, 202)¹⁶

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16 »C'est seulement le système de signes devenu chose de la collectivité qui mérite le nom de, qui est un système de signes: parce que l'ensemble de ses conditions de vie est tellement distinct depuis ce moment de tout ce qu'il peut constituer hors de cela que le reste apparaît comme inimportant. Et on peut immédiatement ajouter: que si ce milieu de la collectivité change toute chose pour le système des signes, ce milieu est aussi dès l'origine le véritable endroit de développement où tend dès sa naissance un système de signes: un système de signes [n'est] proprement fait que pour la collectivité comme le vaisseau pour la mer. Il n'est que pour s'entendre entre plusieurs ou beaucoup et non pour s'entendre à soi seul. C'est pourquoi à aucun moment, contrairement à l'apparence, le phénomène sémiologique quel qu'il soit ne laisse hors de lui-même l'élément de la collectivité sociale: la collectivité sociale et ses lois est un de ses éléments *internes* et non *externes*, tel est notre point de vue« (Saussure 2002, 289–90).

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Giuseppe Martella

From Index to Link: A Phenomenology of Language

So that gesture, not music, not
odours, would be the universal
language, the gift of tongues render-
ing visible not the lay sense but the
first entelechy, the structural rhythm.

James Joyce, *Ulysses* («Circe»)

Language of the Body

Gesture and word have always been intimately connected in the history of man. As Gregory of Nyssa once observed, »it is the hand that renders free the word,« and if we ask for what purpose it frees the word for, the answer might be: in order to arrive at some awareness of shared gestures and actions or, in other words, to common consciousness. However this may be it is certain that the use of any single utensil frees the word in a specific way of its own. We could therefore maintain that the joint enterprise of signs and deeds on the one hand evolves together with our technological instruments, while on the other hand it transcends the sphere of man/woman, as both ethology and robotics have well shown. We ought therefore by now to be prepared to see such an enterprise as pre-human and post-human. In order to articulate this statement it may be useful to adopt a sort of paleontological perspective, capable as such of encompassing Primary era fish and Quaternary era man, and in which we can as it were witness a series of successive liberations, »that of the whole body from the liquid element, that of the head from the ground, that of the hand from locomotion, and lastly that of the brain from the facial mask« (Leroi-Gourhan 1964, 40 – 41). And surely among the organs of a living body there is always some sort of solidarity, determining functions that are distinct and yet reciprocal. Therefore, it seems to me that a »thick description« of human language should first of all consider its functions in relation to the organs of the individual body and only as secondary to those of the social body, in which it cooperates. Instead of this, both historical and structural linguistics have generally disregarded the basic relationship of language to the body and the use of utensils, considering language as an autonomous entity severed, as it were, from the sphere of animality and from animal evolution. Both approaches have indeed studied language in pretty abstract terms, occasionally referring to its connection with the

social milieu, but in fact ignoring both its biological and ethological aspects (Robins 1967). In my opinion, now the time has come to restore a body to language, and to incarnate the word in the whole history of the living (i. e. not only of humankind), in order to better understand its genesis and functions.

In the past fifty years, molecular biology, ecology, cybernetics and information technology have changed respectively the notions of life, environment, intelligence and language, relating them all, more or less explicitly, to such ideas as chance, considered as a principle of organisation, autopoiesis, complexity and statistical inference. The disciplines of language, text, society and culture – in other words: the human sciences as a whole – must simply face up to these changes and shed their disciplinary isolation and anthropocentric approach. Erwin Schroedinger (a pioneer at once of atomic physics, molecular biology and the theory of information, and the first scientist to intuit the notion of a genetic code) once suggested that all living beings feed not only on energy but also on information, that is, on negative entropy; if this is true, then language is really a constitutive part of man's being, not only in the metaphysical sense of man's being-thrown-into-the-world and of his existential angst in the face of casualties and death, but also in a sheer scientific sense, according to which all living things feed on an energy-information diet allowing them to regulate their life and thus to survive by means of a more or less complex interpretation of all stimuli coming from the world without. We might thus conclude that the existence of codes permits both the constitution of cultural texts and that of organic tissues, and put aside all sharp distinction between hermeneutics and biology (Maturana 1980). Life and understanding are in fact to be regarded as reciprocal functions that cover the entire time span from pre-human to post-human. They transcend the homo sapiens as a species, locating him in a tensional space within the ecosystem, as it were in a precarious balance between the impact of micro-organisms and that of microchips.

In this perspective, it is my opinion that, both from a historical and a structural perspective, human language is not to be considered as a closed system of neutral and conventional differences, but rather as an open system of differences that are so to say biased or *asymmetrical*, i. e. stemming from significant and motivated gestures, and bearing traces of the course of their histories, beginning with a living body trying to find its way and to mark out its territory. In a phenomenological perspective such as the one I am now trying to follow, the world of perception and that of expression should be considered on a par and as complementary. Just as experience of the world is gained in fact through the unfolding of inherent horizons of meaning, so its expression is achieved as a gradual *de-marking* of the self-here-now (the subject of the utterance) and as a gradual and oriented demarcation of the world, starting from a single body and from its occasional, more or less violent, inaugural gestures. It is

therefore useful to take the phenomenology of perception and that of motility as starting points for the understanding of the functioning of language both in its relation to the body and as the expression of the world-body. By so doing I believe we can avoid the snares of both a mechanical structuralism and a mystique of language, seen as the unearthly home of being and of its unspeakable event.

On the other hand, today's digitalisation of cultural memory is quickly modifying relations between the individual and the species, in a way never before dreamt of in the course of evolution, thus forcing us to explore such topics as artificial intelligence, the animal-machine relation and the statute of *cyborgs*. What is most dramatically changing in the realm of human interaction is, in my view the very nature of *deixis*, and this also means the nature of the space-time coordinates of the living body. In other words, we are witnessing a rapid re-configuration of all modes of territory-demarkation that have long been preserved in the memory of our species, materialised in its symbols and myths, schemata and figures of speech, and eventually in the texts of our tradition. Thus the so-called natural languages, now also being used by cyborgs, ought to be seen as non-autonomous systems, open to stimuli from the external environment and to alphanumerical complications, and moving towards the condition of artificial languages. Such considerations should help us unmask the long-standing illusion of the ›naturalness‹ of verbal language, showing that it is merely the result of a process of naturalisation of an interiorized technique, that of speaking, which has ever since become an unquestioned habit (Armand 2006, 1–4). Following this train of thought, I am driven to conclude that the horizon of our age is marked by the eclipse of natural languages, so far considered as the tokens of the originality of our cultures and the guarantors of the purity of our identities. All cultural identity is in fact being exteriorised and resolved in the digital multiplication of the programmes accessible to our organic index (our finger), which in an immemorial time founded subjectivity in language and set it up as a system of demarcation of the surrounding environment.

Functionalism and Phenomenology

We know that what is generally understood as a »mark« is a »sign or symbol impressed on an object to indicate whose property it is, the place of origin or manufacture, the quality, or other characteristics«. Hence in linguistics the term »mark« has come to indicate »a significant element that characterises in an oppositional way the phonological, morphological or lexical entity that possesses it as compared to the one that does not« (De Mauro–Paravia 2002–2009). We can thus observe that the concept of the linguistic mark, or feature, contains

the orientation of a given term towards a more general one to which it has given birth in time and to which it logically belongs (Jakobson 1980, 92).¹ This generation and participation of words out of words both refer to the ways in which subjectivity operates in language.

When asked about the concept of linguistic features, developed simultaneously by him and Trubetzkoy, Roman Jakobson replied that »it is a kind of *intrinsic content* of correlations [...] In linguistic consciousness the binary opposition takes the shape of a contrast between the presence of a mark of any kind and its absence (or between the maximum of any mark and its minimum).« He then impeccably concluded that structural correlation, not only in linguistics but also in ethnology and the history of culture, »is always a relation between the categories of the marked and the unmarked [...] and for this reason] it is important to establish for each age, group, nation etc. which series is the one constituting the category of the marked« (Jakobson 1980, 92). This statement is tantamount to acknowledging (as later done by Yuri Lotman) that every language of culture, being a system of differences, is made up of a network of *deep asymmetries* (between marked and unmarked terms), each of which points to both a ceremonial beginning and/or an end, and thus gives way to the possibility of a cultural typology (Jakobson 1980, 94).²

In conclusion, a rethinking of the whole matter reveals that the functionalist approach that characterised the linguistic and literary studies of the circles of Moscow, Petersburg and Prague in the nineteen-twenties and -thirties was in many ways already beginning to corrode from within Saussure's paradigm of language considered as a simple system of differences (Saussure 1977). In particular, the observations made by Jakobson on the status of the so-called shifters or *deictics* and on the presence of marked terms at various levels of linguistic opposition (which amount to recognising the foundation of language in a historical subject) represented a radical questioning of Saussure's idea of the purely differential and conventional nature of language. Such a train of thought allows us to notice, for example, that the procedure of commutation, which has been adopted in phonology to individuate the relevant traits and the differential values of a phoneme in a given language, is after all only empirically based and issues results that are often questionable. Or also that the criterion of double articulation as a distinctive characteristic of human (as opposed to animal)

1 Jakobson's example is that of subjective time in verse, as opposed to the objective, non-marked time of ordinary speech. For Jakobson however, all grammatical declination/conjugation is constituted through the opposition of marked/non-marked terms.

2 According to Jakobson, »the fact of conceiving every binary opposition at whatever level of the linguistic structure as the relation between the mark and the absence of it is the logical outcome of the idea that a hierarchical order is at the basis of every language system, in all its ramifications and manifestations« (1980, 94).

language, turns out at close inspection to be nothing more than an anthropocentric prejudice, for we can never rule out the possibility that also in animal languages a distinction can exist between gestures and sounds that have a meaning and others that have no meaning; or better, and according to a scale, between single signs-sounds with a vague meaning and clusters of them that take on a more precise meaning for a given group and in a particular ecological environment.

On the other hand, in digital codifications it is certainly possible to distinguish, at various levels, starting from bits and bytes, purely differential oppositions from fully meaningful configurations. What I want to suggest is thus, firstly that double articulation (that is, the shift from merely distinctive to fully signifying contrasts) transcends the phonetic field and is applicable at the very least also to gestures; secondly, that it not only regards human but also animal language; and lastly, that it can very well be applied to machine languages, down to the distinction between algorithm and instruction. In conclusion, in a paleontological and technological, rather than merely anthropological, perspective, language appears as a function that is transversal to biology, anthropology and cybernetics. Its genesis, structure and function should therefore be considered as jointly and severally related to human evolution and to the evolution of the environment as a whole, from its physical-chemical basis to its modes of organisation, both biological and ethological, technical and scientific, sociological and cultural. An integral functionalism ought therefore to take into account this double opening of the so-called natural languages, both downwards (ethology and molecular biology) and upwards (the languages of culture and of artificial intelligence). The scientific paradigm of complexity as well as all the recently developed systems-theories can possibly embrace both linguistic functionalism and the typology of culture. As Edgar Morin, among a few others, has been pleading for a while, it should be desirable to go beyond the sharp distinction between man, animal and machine, as well as beyond that between nature, culture and technology (Morin 1973). I do believe the time has eventually come to fully face the serious challenges issuing at once from our inter-disciplinary and ecological predicaments.

But only a truly phenomenological approach to language can really help us understand that the hierarchical order inherent in the concept of feature is the result of a genetic course that starts from the index of the hand, pointing to the I-here-now of the utterance as the marked category *par excellence* and the true origin of language as a cultural institution. In fact, the most substantial and specific information conveyed by the marked as compared to the unmarked term in all language, implicitly regards its *distance* from the bodily index which deeply roots every speech act in the living ground of culture. Every linguistic feature in a text or discourse can be considered in fact as the lingering trace of an

act of indication, being the inaugural gesture of orientation of the body in a given environment and in an interactive situation. Every language in this sense bears the traces of a people's history, having elaborated and configured them as a sort of map of the habitat of the gesturing body. We therefore need consider the latent topology of language, which is able to disclose in turn a possible typology of the manifestations of the world in language.

To sum up: we can now refer the concept of linguistic feature back to that of *deixis* as the inaugural gesture of orientation of the subject in its world-environment; the very gist of the concept of mark consists in fact precisely in its being a trace of indication lingering in the language system – a trace and distant echo of the indexical explosion that gave origin to the linguistic universe. For this reason it is only misleading to conceive language as an abstract system of differences that the subject can make use of in an occasional speech act, because language is the result of recursive acts of orientation that construct an environment around the gesturing body. These acts do not happen in the void but in interactive situations, in which the living subject defines itself in relation to another one, whom it indicates and with whom it starts a sort of mimetic game, be it cooperative or antagonistic, which gradually develops into ritual, myth and eventually culture. We can therefore conceive language as a whole system of asymmetrical differences (that is, differences between marked and unmarked terms) issuing from a motivated act and a deictic basis, originating from the gesturing body within an interactive situation, and answering the subject's need of orientation for the sake of its survival in a given habitat. All these occasional gestures and sounds are later fixed (through repetition and habit) in formulaic performances, as well as, through garlands of rites and myths, in social norms and institutions.

All the major themes in the thought of Jakobson and of the Russian Formalists³ show them as being closer to phenomenology than to Saussurian structuralism, although it was rather Saussure they were associated with in the nineteen-fifties and sixties. But it is in the concept of »dominant« that the phenomenological orientation of Jakobson's linguistics can be fully grasped. This is because the idea that the evolution of language and that of literature come about through the alternation of different symbolic forms in a dominant position, rightly places them in the sphere of genetic evolution and reassigns them to the bodily functions and to the phenomenology of perception which derives from them.

3 The concept of mark, the order of the appearance of phonemes in children, the six great functions of language, each of which is prevalent in a given text, as well as the general conviction that »a hierarchical order lies at the foundations of every language system, in all its ramifications and manifestations« (Jakobson 1980, 94).

In an essay entitled »The Dominant,« Jakobson in fact makes a few telling comments on this topic, referring to some of the major themes and phases of research of the Russian and Czech Formalists, and particularly to the link between sound and sense as an »inseparable whole« in the poetic texts. In this essay he offers a good definition of the dominant »as the focusing component of a work of art [...that] rules, determines, and transforms the remaining components [...that] guarantees the integrity of the structure [...and that] specifies the work« (Matejka and Pomorska 1971, 82). As one can clearly see from this passage, Jakobson points to cohesion, specification and focusing as the constituent functions of the dominant in a certain textual corpus⁴. In short, as the dominant informs and focuses all cultural work in its own context, any emergent dominant trait de-forms the work and determines its reception and adaptation within a given social environment.

I have mentioned this passage of Jakobson's in order to suggest that there is a unique thread connecting the phenomenology of perception, linguistic functionalism and the typology of culture. This thread, which can perhaps be spun out of the concept of dominant, leads us to compare the movements of the body with those of language, since the phenomenology of the word is rooted in its physiology, and the sense of all discourse in the senses of the living organism.

Index and Link

As Maurice Merleau Ponty once remarked,

the sense of a thing perceived [...] can only be articulated as a certain *gap* with regard to the level of space, of time, of mobility and in general of signification in which we find ourselves, and can only be given as a systematic deformation, of our world of experience, without our being necessarily able to name its principle. Every perception is not the perception of some thing unless it is also the relative in-perception of a horizon or background that is involved, although not thematized, in our experience.

(Merleau-Ponty 1995, 25; my translation)

All this is as true of perception, as it is of our experience in general and of its linguistic expression. This should induce us first of all to conceive of linguistic difference in terms of the relation between *figure* and *background*, which is

⁴ Jakobson gives the example of Czech poetry between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries, where, depending on the occasion, metre, rhyme or intonation assumed a different weight in determining the poetic value of the artefact or even its status as poetry (Matejka and Pomorska 1971, 82).

essentially an asymmetrical relation. Every symbolic system stems, in fact, from this basic perceptual game, which is implicitly rooted in the gestures of turning our eyes and of pointing our fingers. And this amounts to reaffirming the principle of the deictic basis of all language and to drawing the systemic conclusions thereof. The relation between figure to background in the act of perception constitutes in fact the first breaking of the universal principle of symmetry and equivalence holding in our psychic unconscious, (Lotman 1992, 70), and this breaking of symmetry is an event which is capable of opening the basic horizon of sense for the living mind-body (think, for instance, of a child first fixing his gaze on an object, and then pointing to it while emitting a few sounds).

Perception and expression are complementary functions. The focusing of an object against a background, which is often accompanied by an indicating gesture, is the founding element of both. This leads us to consider the index as the constituent element of all languages, demarking the asymmetrical relation between our bodies and the surrounding space. Deixis is the basis of every difference-relation in an ordinary language, conceived as a system of historically given differences. This system is composed of marked terms and unmarked ones, that is, of a set of asymmetrical relations that articulate the fundamental asymmetry inherent in bodily perception and motion. The whole of language can thus be regarded as a system of differences that are neither neutral nor arbitrary, but rather marked and motivated, right from the start – a system by which means the subject has once been able to settle in its environment, using language both as a basic techno-logical framework (*Gestell*) and archive (*Bestand*) (Heidegger 1977). This framework and reserve of meaning, like every other technical device, do not lie outside of man, but rather constitutes an extension and articulation of his body, which is subject to both motion and emotion.

We should be aware by now that the use of personal computers and word processing programmes has changed our whole sensibility with respect to writing and language. They have both modified the relationship between eye and hand in the act of writing, and that between perception and bodily expression for a given subject in its own environment. As a consequence of this, our relation with language as an indexical issue is utterly modified. Working with word-processing programmes, in some way restores the index to the ancient prominence it had been deprived of by the advent of writing, but also tends to change its function in games of language.

Typing on a keyboard obeys in fact a sort of double articulation between the space of signs and that of commands. While you are typing with a writing programme, you are in fact composing a text while disposing of a hypertext. This change in the relation between eye and hand can be easily grasped when the cursor shifts its shape on the computer screen (for example when the vertical

flashing bar becomes an arrow, and then a little hand with a pointing finger): in this case the cursor is just moving from the space of signs to that of commands – in other words, from signification to interaction. A move of this kind is bound to affect not only the status of writing as such but also our attitude towards language as a whole. It affects in fact our way of situating ourselves in the surrounding territory and of marking it out, starting from indication as the founding act of language. The technical modifications of deixis implied in the use of digital interfaces are thus going to change our whole sense of language as the substrate of our being-here-now, and with it the horizontal structure of every possible experience. What is changing utterly then is also our grasp of the world as an intentional act of our body, in which synaesthesia and motility, perception and expression, draw the line of our existence. From this perspective and at this stage of transition from the civilisation of print to that of electronic media, the whole of language begins to appear to us less and less »natural,« more technical and re-mediated.⁵

Our powerful digital machines that use statistical procedures are for instance already able to recognise the frequency of certain *clusters* of words or particular *clichés*, a preference for a certain type of syntactic construction and its degree of complexity in a given document, and to compare these elements with those contained in a number of other selected documents. They can thus recognise the »voice,« the signature, or the style of a given author often better than a literary expert can do.⁶ And if »the style is the man,« one can but wonder whether a computer can know us better than we do. In any case, neither embracing cybernetic fundamentalism, nor belittling the dramatic impact of digital technology, we certainly ought to pose anew the question of the relation between artificial and human intelligence, and between machine language and »natural« language, in their common space of performance, between the first organic demarcation of an environment and its further technological expansion in the course of time; between the naïve gesture of pointing to an object and the building of a whole sophisticated system of culture – or in a more up-to-date figure: between the finger of the hand and its digital semblance on a screen, pointing to the presence of a hypertextual link.

5 For the concept of »remediation« see Marshall McLuhan (1987), Bolter and Grusin (2000). It is related to the concept of writing as *pharmakon* (remedy-poison), discussed by Plato in the *Phaedrus* (274e-275a), at the time of transition from oral to written culture.

6 This has already been the case for texts by Shakespeare and for a number of ancient and modern apocrypha (Johnson 1997, 160 ff).

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Toward a Closed-Open Typology: Language System, Systems Theory and a Phenomenology of an Organization-Structure Interface

Changes in a language system cannot be understood without reference to the system which undergoes them [...]. The structural laws of the system restrict the inventory of possible transitions from one state to another. These transitions are, we repeat, a part of the total linguistic code, a dynamic component of the overall language system.

Roman Jakobson, *On Language*

»The central issue of the structuralist theory,« with which all architectural problems of language »are closely connected,« as Josef Vachek succinctly epitomizes it in his *The Linguistic School of Prague: An Introduction to Its Theory and Practice*, is »the question of what kind of system language constitutes« (1966, 27 – 28).

The answers to this issue have been, since the inception of the question, many and diverse. Broadly defined by V.V. Vinogradov as »a system of systems« (quoted in Vachek 1966, 28), for instance, language is understood from this perspective as constituted by »a number of sub-systems or levels, each of which has its own particular structure« (Vachek 1966, 28). These sub-systems or levels are, in addition, »organized internally and systematically related to each other« (Tobin 1988, 50). Sustaining such a language system, both structurally and functionally, is an »inner tension,« a »basic antinomy,« or a disequilibrium, between »its solid central core« (Vachek 1966, 32, 27), characterized by a »flexible stability,« proper to the whole, organized as a system,« as Karel Hausenblas observes in his reading of Vilém Mathesius (1994, 325), and its »periphery,« which, Vachek promptly specifies, »need not be in complete accordance with the laws and tendencies governing its central core« (1966, 27). As such, changes in language are perceived as »systematic and goal directed« (Jakobson 1990, 170), featuring what Nikolai S. Trubetzkoy calls, in his letter response to Roman Jakobson in 1926, a »rational character,« which »stems directly from the fact that language is a system« (quoted in Jakobson 1990, 170). More specifically,

these changes in language are motivated therapeutically, argues Vachek in his reading of the Saussurean »finishing touches« on this Jakobsonian idea, by the system of language »striving after some kind of balance of its elements,« and by remedying »some structural defects« in any given segment of the system, the success of which leads, however, only to jeopardizing once again this newly established balance, which is now manifested in »the rise of another weak point in some other part of the system« (1966, 21, 25).

As enlightening as they are useful, these answers have fore-grounded, however, only one aspect of language: its composition or makeup as a closed system, self-sufficient, self-sustained, and self-organizing. In theorizing language as »an autonomous system« in these terms (Vachek 1966, 158), one concomitant issue has thus remained in a shrouded state of ambiguity, and the issue in question is the differentiation function of language in relation to its environment, a function whereby language turns receptively open, albeit conditionally, capable of interacting with the fluctuations in its surroundings for the purpose of its own self-reorganization and survival. As early as in 1978, Robert Lilienfeld, in his study and critique of systems theory, captures this polemic and calls attention to its underlying assumption, an assumption on the basis of which a system is perceived willy-nilly as such. He points out, rather emphatically, that »The system, if it is to be a system, must not only have boundaries; it must also be a closed system«; but what makes the issue more complex is that »Dealing with a ›natural reality‹ is always a matter of dealing with an open reality,« he continues; and to the extent a given system engages the natural reality at all, »One cannot make a closed system just by assumption. This is a difficulty that appears to be completely evaded by systems theorists« (1978, 248). Neither can one make an open system just by assumption, and the same difficulty can be argued as having met a similar fate in the hitherto conceptualization of language as a system and of the language-environment relation. Much to the relief of the scholarly urgency therein, this critical phenomenon has received some renewed attention lately. The recent publication of a collection of essays titled, rather tellingly, *Dynamic Structure: Language as an Open System*, for instance, brings to the forefront the very difficulty that Lilienfeld has identified. If, as Jan Sokol makes it clear, language presents an »authoritative institution« endowed with »[t]his ordering role [...] vis-à-vis the terrible flood of experience« (2007, 32), and if, as Alice Kliková also observes, »[t]he system of signs is perfect and closed,« armed with »some *a priori* given building plan,« the question then becomes, to put it in Kliková's apt words again, »how the closed and fixed system of signs can become an open dynamic structure« in its interaction with the environment (2007, 168, 182).

Phrased as such, Kliková's question alludes, in one sense, to its own answer. At once conceptual and linguistic, this answer is amply suggested by a particular

discursive feature that characterizes the thinking and writing in the anthology. More specifically put, the problem that underlies and prompts Kliková's question of »how« finds its expression, implicitly but symptomatically, in the rather habitual use of certain terminologies throughout this collection of essays and, explicitly though inadvertently, in Ondřej Sládek's important assertion in his essay that, in »the concept of linguistics« of and from Saussure, »the term ›structure‹ is essentially equivalent to ›system‹« (2007, 53). Here, then, lies the problem. In theorizing language as a system in relation to its environment, in other words, the poverty of vocabulary results in a conceptual gridlock, and it is the indiscriminate, synonymous employment of »system« and »structure« that has prevented a conceptual progress toward an assumption-less answer to the question of »how.« That being said, to de-synonymize »system« and »structure« is to initiate a conceptual shift in rethinking language as a system, a shift from »[seeking] a vocabulary for ideas,« as the American Language poet Lyn Hejinian describes, with a subtle language twist pertinent to the problem in question here, to »[seeking] ideas for vocabularies« (2000, 27).

In this respect, the research findings in the study of organizations in biology have proved to be not only conceptually informative and analogically suggestive, but also theoretically modifiable and pragmatically applicable.¹ The works of Humberto R. Maturana and Francisco J. Varela, in particular, offer a functional modal of autopoiesis which, when read as an »explanatory analogy« (Gentner

1 In understanding of any subject, the reference to and the use of theories, data, and practices from other fields are crucial and, in this exploratory process, models, metaphors, and analogies play a fundamentally constructive role in cognitive and epistemological thinking. Describing them as »speculative instruments« of an interdisciplinary methodology, Max Black, for instance, defines their function as »wedding« that illuminates reciprocally between different domains:

»They, too, bring about a wedding of disparate subjects, by a distinctive operation of transfer of the *implications* of relatively well-organized cognitive fields. And as with other weddings, their outcomes are unpredictable. Use of a particular model may amount to nothing more than a strained and artificial description of a domain sufficiently known otherwise. But it may also help us to notice what otherwise would be overlooked, to shift the relative emphasis attached to details—in short, to *see new connections*.«
(1962, 237)

Thinking very much in the same vein, Henri Poincaré drives this point home in terms of mathematical analogies. He writes:

»We may perceive mathematical analogies between phenomena which have physically no relation either apparent or real, so that the laws of one of these phenomena aid us to discover those of others. [...] What is the result? These theories seem images copied one from the other; they are mutually illuminating, borrowing their language from each other. [...] Thus mathematical analogies not only make us foresee physical analogies, but besides do not cease to be useful when these latter fail.«

(1958, 79)

1982, 118),² sheds important light on language as a closed system and on its »functional dialectology« (Hausenblas 1994, 322) whereby to open to changes in the environment.

In *The Tree of Knowledge*, Maturana and Varela's theorizing of system is grounded, first and foremost, in a clear distinction between the two parts of which a system consists: its organization and its structure, hence the formula of »system (organization + structure)« vis-à-vis »environment (everything outside the system's boundaries)« (Wolfe 1998, 60). By their account, the organization of a system is defined as that which »signifies those relations that must be present in order for something to exist,« and which »denotes those relations that must exist among the components of a system for it to be a member of a specific class«; whereas the structure of a system is specified as that which »denotes the components and relations that actually constitute a particular unity and make its organization real« (1987, 42, 47).³

Moreover, a system works when its organization and its structure faithfully play out their respectively designated roles. The organization, for instance, aims at maintaining the taxonomical identity of the system, and is characterized by an »operational closure« (1987, 89), which means that the system, as a self-refer-

2 As Dedre Gentner has cogently argued, analogies, together with models and metaphors, function »as structure-mappings between complex systems,« and these structural-mappings focus on »analogical relatedness« or »relational predicates« but »not literal similarity« or »object attributes«; as such, »analogies must be viewed as comparisons between systems and cannot be analyzed as simple comparisons between objects« (1982, 108, 109). In addition, theorized as »a system of mappings,« an analogy, according to Gentner, is characterized by the following »structural qualities« (1982, 113) as its evaluative criteria. The first is »base specificity: the degree to which the structure of the base is explicitly understood« (1982, 113). The second is »internal-structural characteristics,« which include 1) »clarity,« referring to »the precision with which the object mappings are defined, that is, exactly how the base nodes are mapped onto the target nodes and which set of predicates gets carried across«; 2) »richness: roughly, the quantity of predicates that are imported«; and 3) »systematicity,« that is, »the degree to which the predicates imported belong to a mutually constraining conceptual system« (1982, 114). And the third is the »external qualities,« including 1) »validity,« which »refers to the correctness of the imported predicates in the target«; and 2) »scope,« which »refers to the number of different cases to which the model validity applies« (1982, 117–118). In this sense, explanatory analogy foregrounds »clarity and systematicity,« emphasizing »an abstract, well-clarified, coherent system of relations,« Gentner thus makes it clear, and it is »high in clarity, abstractness, scope and systematicity, but not in richness« (1982, 122, 123, 124).

3 Maturana and Varela's explanatory analogy of »organization,« »structure,« and the distinction between them is a toilet: »Thus, for instance, in a toilet the organization of the system of water-level regulation consists in the relations between an apparatus capable of detecting the water level and another apparatus capable of stopping the inflow of water. The toilet unit embodies a mixed system of plastic and metal comprising a float and a bypass valve. This specific structure, however, could be modified by replacing the plastic with wood, without changing the fact that there would still be a toilet organization« (1998, 47).

ential, self-producing, and self-organizing entity, is operationally »closed [...] on the level of *organization*« (Wolfe 1998, 60) so as to be, and remain, what it is. At the same time, the structure works to facilitate adjustments and changes of the system, and is identified by a functional openness, which means that the system stays functionally »open to environmental perturbations on the level of *structure*« (Wolfe 1998, 60), where »these interactions [with environment] continuously trigger [...] the structural changes that modulate its dynamics of states« (Maturana and Varela 1987, 169). Furthermore, while »[e]nvironmental ›triggers‹ and ›perturbations‹ [...] take place on the level of structure,« as Gary Wolfe makes it clear, »what may be *recognized* as a perturbation or trigger is specified by the [system's] organization and operational closure« (1998, 60).⁴

In this sense, Maturana and Varela's concept of system in terms of an organization-structure interface thus presents what might be called a »closed-open« typology for language, a »holistic, schematized« typology (Seiler 1990, 156), that is, in light of which language is understood as a dynamic system predicated upon an organization-based, synchronic-operational closure self-referentially engaged in a structure-based, diachronic-functional openness.

To this holistic and schematized closed-open typology of language as a system, Henri Atlan and his work can be read as having contributed pertinent and detailed theoretical elaborations, elucidating, in particular, the specific mechanisms of the structural-functional axis as the site where language turns open to its environment. Equally significant is that these elaborations resonate, from the perspective of bio-informational complexity, with the concepts of »quantitative evaluation« (Sgall 1995, 60) and the »implicational correlations« (Shibatani, Bynon 1995, 6, 11) theorized by the Prague School of linguistics.

In his seminal article of 1974 titled »On a Formal Definition of Organization,« Atlan postulates his own revisionist alternative based upon his rethinking of the »two major trends, contradicting each other,« in »the various proposed definitions of organization«: seeing organization, on the one hand, as »constraints between parts, or regularity and order, where order is viewed essentially as repetitive order, i. e. redundancy,« and, on the other hand, as »non-repetitive order, which is measured by an information content in Shannon's sense (1949), i. e. a degree of unexpectedness directly related to variety and un-homogeneity« (296). Atlan's own alternative approach is called »a formal quantitative [*sic*] definition of organization,« and the idea he proposes to use as the basis for his definition is that of an »optimization process so that any optimum organization

4 Emil Volek makes a similar observation on this point. He writes: »A further characteristic of all living organisms is that they do not respond to impulses from outside in a causal-mechanical way, but do so with their own specific reactions« (2007, 189).

would correspond to a compromise between maximum information content (i. e. maximum variety) and maximum redundancy« (296).

At work in Atlan's above theorem on organization are two constitutive concepts, in the sense that »Organization« is used to mean« both »a state« and »a process« (1974, 296). There is, therefore, the »state of organization of a system« (»optimum organization«), and the »optimization process« (»compromise«) of that system, a process specified later as having a »structural character« as well as »functional features« (1974, 301). The dynamic relation between the state of the organization and its structural-functional process can thus be paraphrased in terms of a closed-open typology. In other words, the condition of a system is stable and optimum when its organization executes an operational closure that embodies and sustains a state of equilibrium, according to which maximum information content from the environment is allowed and processed on the level of the structure only to the point where a reduction of complexity succeeds in producing redundancy – i. e., a »generalization of repetition« defined as measurable, quantitative constraints between elements »so that knowledge about one of them provides automatically some knowledge about another« (Atlan 1984, 111) – and where this redundancy works as what William Paulson calls an »error-correcting code« (1988, 58) whereby the resultant certainty or order from variety can be recognized and acknowledged by the organization and its operational closure. Or, what amounts to saying the same thing, the state of a system is stable and optimum when its structure opens to a variety of information content in the environment only to the extent that the embraced diversity of information is compromised properly enough to reach a degree of conformity acceptable by the organization and its operational closure, and that the complexity of the information content is reduced proportionally enough so as not to seriously overwhelm the organization's overall regulatory configurations.

In this sense, Atlan's conceptualization of organization can be seen as consisting of two interrelated, mutually constituted dimensions: an organization that materializes the optimum state of a system by being operationally closed to itself, and a structure that actualizes the process of the same system by being functionally open to optimizing from its environment.

More specifically, Atlan's theory of organization thus delineated is grounded in his notion of an organization as »a three-dimensional space,« which is defined by what he refers to respectively as »three parameters« and »three quantities« at work on both levels of the organization and the structure (1974, 301). Atlan writes:

A given organization is defined at least by three parameters, which determine the main features of its characteristic function $H(t)$. One of them is the initial in-

formation content H_0 and has a structural meaning. A second parameter, with a dimension of time, has the meaning of a functional reliability, related to the overall resistance of the system to noise-producing factors. The third parameter, namely the initial redundancy R_0 , is both structural and functional in character, since structural redundancy is known to help insure reliability. (1974, 295)

In other words, constitutive of the ontological identity and the optimum state of a system as operationally closed on the level of its organization by first determining and then sustaining its information content with time and over time [$H(t)$], the three parameters of initial information content [H_0], initial redundancy [R_0], and time, which is encoded later as [tM] (1974, 301), are engaged simultaneously in an openness to, or an interactive process with, the environmental triggers and perturbations on the level of the structure, from where changes on the parameter H_0 implicate the system's structural aspect, variations on the parameter tM , the system's functional dimension, and fluctuations on the parameter R_0 , the system's structural as well as functional condition.

Of these three defining parameters, initial redundancy, which is both structural and functional in character, is considered as the most crucial factor, upon whose changes pivot both the identity and the self-organizing potential of the organization. »Whether or not the organization can exhibit self-organizing properties, depends on the value of the initial redundancy R_0 ,« Atlan asserts; and »[s]ince these self-organizing properties are a consequence of a decrease in R ,« Atlan continues, »a minimum value of R_0 from which this decrease can start is necessary« (1974, 301). In addition, the importance of redundancy R in a given organization also lies in that its presence or absence determines the types of information content therein. » H is the information content of a message or system with internal constraints between the parts,« Atlan explains, » H_{\max} is the maximum information content computed by not taking into account the constraints, i. e. by assuming complete independence of the parts,« and » H_{\max_0} , [is] the initial maximum information content when redundancy is ignored,« which presents »a measure of the structural aspect of organization« (1974, 299, 301). With its ratio properly maintained and proportionally reduced, redundancy hence constitutes the structural-functional condition for an organization and its optimum state, which is manifested in its information content with time and over time.

With redundancy thus situated in relation to other parameters, »[t]he process of organization of any system,« Atlan points out, »is described by the variation of information content with time, $H(t)$, which itself is the combination of two related functions: the decrease of redundancy, and the decrease of maximum information content« (1974, 301). In this light, the fluctuations of information

content with time are the consequences of these two related functions in that the »decrease in redundancy leads to an increase in maximum information content,« which enhances the organization's self-organizing potential by »[allowing] for more possibilities in regulatory performances« (1974, 300); whereas the decrease in maximum information content incurs the increase in redundancy, which renders the organization incapable of sustaining its self-organizing potential due to the increased repetition of its existing information content and, as a result, the decreased possibilities in regulatory performances. Further, these two related functions »are themselves two different functions of time« and, together, they »express the overall organization of the system, both structural and functional,« by expressing »the kinetics of the effects of noise on the system« (1974, 299).

The parameter of time is, in this sense, characterized by these two different functions. The decrease of redundancy, for instance, is seen as the function of time when time, in this context, »means accumulated effects of noise-producing factors,« or »the effects of time as those of accumulated random noise producing factors acting from the environment« (1974, 299, 297). By contrast, the decrease of the maximum information content is perceived as the function of time when time is considered as having »the meaning of a functional reliability, related to the overall resistance of the system to noise-producing factors,« and »The value of the *reliability*« is understood in terms of »the inertia opposed to random perturbations« (1974, 295, 301). As such, »A very high reliability will correspond to a very long phase of growth or increase in $H(t)$;« Atlan explains, »on the contrary, a small reliability will determine a very short duration for this phase« (1974, 301–302). Whichever the case, these two different functions of time articulate two types of effects of noise, effects that are also termed as »ambiguity« and »written as a function of noise, or [...] as a function of time« (1974, 297). According to Atlan,

two possible effects of noise acting in two opposite directions can be considered, and correspond to two kinds of ambiguities, one counted negatively and the other positively. The first one is related to a »destructive ambiguity« and has the classical meaning of a disorganizing effect. The second one is related to what we called an »autonomy-producing ambiguity,« because it acts by increasing the relative autonomy of one part versus the other, or, in other words, by decreasing the overall redundancy of the system. (1974, 298)

That being said, Atlan thus epitomizes his theory on self-organizing system and its organization-structure interface in relation to the environment, to which the

system remains closed on the level of its organization but open on the level of its structure:

[...] we propose to call self-organization a process where the change in organization with increased efficiency, *although it is induced by the environment, is not directed by a programme but occurs under the effects of random environmental factors*. According to this view, a self-organizing system is a system *redundant enough and functioning in such a way* that it can sustain a decrease in redundancy under the effects of error-producing factors without ceasing to function. This decrease in redundancy leads to an increase in information content or variety which allows for more possibilities in regulatory performances [...] In other words, self-organization appears as a continuous disorganization constantly followed by reorganization with more complexity and less redundancy.
(1974, 300; my emphasis)

But the significance of the research findings in biology and its conceptual purchase on the theorizing of language as a system are not just confined to the formal definition of system and its organization-structure interface. Equally significant is that they introduce and foreground the human factor, whose role is at once limited and constitutive. It functions as the triggering mechanism on the level of the structure, from where the human action of observation presents »an expression of structural coupling,« as Maturana and Varela contend, »which always maintains compatibility between the operation of the organism and its environment« (1987, 172).

Central to Maturana and Varela's concept of observation, which is aphoristically summed up as »[e]verything said is said by someone« (1987, 26), is the notion that observation is an »embodied action« (Varela et al. 1991, 172). The importance of this notion lies in that the embodied observation, contra epistemological reduction, privileges a »nonreductionist relation between the phenomenon to be explained and the mechanism that generates it« by refusing to »bring forth a generative relation between otherwise independent and non-intersecting phenomenal domains« (Maturana 1991, 34). For the observer, as Maturana and Varela have defined in *The Tree of Knowledge*, is »not a preexisting reference nor in reference to an origin, but as an ongoing transformation in the becoming of the linguistic world« that the observer builds with other fellow observers (1987, 235). In this light, »As observers we can see a unity in *different* domains, depending on the distinctions we make,« they write; and all these different observations »are necessary to complete our understanding of a unity« (1987, 135). More specifically, they continue,

[i]t is the observer who correlates them from his outside perspective. It is he who recognizes that the structure of the system determines its interactions by speci-

fying which configurations of the environment can trigger structural changes in it. It is he who recognizes that the environment does not specify or direct the structural changes of a system. *The problem begins when we unknowingly go from one realm to the other and demand that the correspondences we establish between them (because we see these two realms simultaneously) be in fact a part of the operation of the unity.*

(1987, 135–136; my emphasis)

Maturana and Varela's idea of an embodied observation finds its cognate but more concrete expression in Henri Atlan's »the eye of an observer« (1984, 117). As he has stated earlier, the process of an organization of any system is described by the variation of information content with time, which is itself the combination of two related functions of decrease of redundancy and decrease of maximum information content, which in turn are the two different functions of time expressing two different types of effects of noise. Autonomy producing or destructive, the nature of noise is neither predetermined nor objective, however. It is, rather, a matter of changing positions an observer takes on the level of the structure. For ambiguity, written as a function of noise, »can bear opposite signs according to whether we are interested in the information transmitted in a channel [...] or in the information content of a system containing the channel« (Atlan 1974, 297). Moreover, the idea of positioning as such implies the notion of structure as consisting of layers of integrated structures where the change of sign from destructive to autonomy producing and *vice versa* takes place. In his 1984 article entitled »Disorder, Complexity and Meaning,« Atlan specifies further this changing positioning as »chunking,« i. e., »a complete change in perspective« at the structural level of integration that signifies informational complexity at the level of the organization:

Chunking implies a complete change in perspective: the most heterogeneous set of elements is seen as homogenous when it is chunked and itself viewed as an element at a higher level of integration. Chunking, when one goes from one level to the other, amounts to transforming heterogeneity into homogeneity, and this corresponds to a change of sign in the effects of noise when one goes from one level to the other. [...] Using noise, i. e., random perturbations, to un-tighten the constraints at one level produces some heterogeneity, [...] the very same heterogeneity can be seen as a new state of order, having more complexity and less redundancy if it is used at a higher, more integrated level. In other words, moving from one level to the other produces a change in sign of the effect of noise in a channel of communication – a change from negative, when it is subtracted from the information transmitted in the channel, to positive, when it is a measure of the additional variety introduced by loosening the constraints.

(1984, 116–17)

As such, this notion of »chunking« has received a similar and yet more literary-analogical rendering from Michel Serres. In his essay titled »The Origin of Language: Biology, Information Theory, and Thermodynamics,« which is included in *Hermes: Literature, Science, Philosophy*, Serres speculates upon a general theory of language by positing that language is a »living organism,« a »homeorrhesis,« which consists of »a series of successive apparatuses called levels of integration« (1982, 74, 77). In this »multiple, integrated system,« each level of integration functions as »a filter, a rectifier,« and noise, so claims Serres, »only makes sense in relation to an observer,« whose changing position from one level to another »effects a move from the noise-information couple to the meaning-obstacles couple and finally to meaning« (1982, 76, 79). More specifically, this »change of sign occurs,« according to Serres, »for a certain function entering into the computation« (1982, 77), and this function is identified as the function of ambiguity and its transformations in relation to observation:

In other words, this function, called ambiguity and resulting from noise, changes when the observer changes his point of observation. Its value depends on whether he is submerged in the first level or whether he examines the entire unit from the next level. In a certain sense, the next level functions as a rectifier, in particular, as a rectifier of noise. What was once an obstacle to all messages is reversed and added to the information. [...] From a point of view within the system, the transmission of information along a given circuit from one element to another subtracts ambiguity because it is a noise, an obstacle to the message. For an observer outside the system, ambiguity must be added, for it increases the system's complexity. It functions in this case as information at the level of the unit's organization. In one case, it covers up; in the other case, it expresses.
(Serres 1982, 77–78, 79–80)

In this sense, chunking presents what Serres calls in *The Parasite* a »torus of reversal« (1982, 69) between a banquet conversation and a phone conversation, in that one's participatory position in or geographical proximity to one conversation (say, that of the banquet), which makes its verbal exchanges intelligible, turns the other conversation (say, that of the telephone) into a distant noise. It is, in other words, a reversal between »message with repressed noise« and »noise with repressed message,« thus designating, on the level of the structure, »a space of transformation of noise into message, and vice versa, for the observer« (1982, 69).

Akin to Maturana and Varela's theorem of embodied observation and its resistance to reductionist generalizations, Atlan's notion of chunking as an embodied and complete change in perspective that results from using noise to un-tighten the constraints has, insofar as the observer is concerned, an important implication pertinent, in particular, to the understanding of language

and language changes on the level of its structure. If, as Atlan points out, constraints between elements on one level denote the existence as well as the function of repetition or redundancy »so that knowledge about one of them [elements] provides automatically some knowledge about another,« chunking, by contrast, leads to a different level of information complexity, the order of which is »unknown« to an observer »but assumed to exist« (1984, 111, 117). Both »the logical difficulties« and »the richness of the analysis« of a self-organizing system, according to Atlan, lies therefore in the problematic that, while »information is assumed to be necessarily transmitted (together with chunking)« on the level of the structure »and the meaning of this information plays a central role in the functional organization of the whole, [...] this meaning is not and cannot be known to the observer« on the level of the organization; and this is because, himself or herself being an ongoing transformation in the becoming of that same system rather than a preexisting point of reference vis-à-vis the system, the observer »can have empirical access only to each level [i.e., structure] by itself, and not to the passage from one to the other« (1984, 117). Differently put, the observer triggers a structural coupling with the open environment, but the coupling with the environment thus triggered has to be recognized by the organization and operational closure. Atlan points out that

it is the role of these unknown, but crucial, meanings in self-organization that the complexity from noise principle expresses indirectly. Again, loosening the constraints at one level will create functional complexity and not mere disorganization only at a different, more integrated level, where the new relations created by the loosening will be integrated into a new functional organization having more diversity and less redundancy. [...] So, self-organization viewed as noise-induced disorganization followed by reorganization implies such interplays between different levels, and describing self-organization as the utilization of noise to create functional complexity amounts to describing the creation of new, but still unknown, meanings in the information transmitted from one level to the other. In other words, what appears as organizational randomness to this observer outside the system implies creation of new meanings, yet unknown to the observer, within the system itself.
(1984, 118)

In this sense, chunking presents itself as a threshold position where an observer situates himself or herself. It is an in-between position, a »torus of reversal,« between the structure and the organization, the knowable and the unknowable, the meaningful and the mysterious, where »the otherness of language, its failure to communicate precisely ourselves,« as William Paulson puts it paradoxically, »makes of it the bearer of something new« (1988, 103). Chunking, in other words, dramatizes the organization-structure interface by occupying the

structure as the site of observation, from where the noise-producing eye of the observer disrupts the organization's three defining parameters of information content, redundancy, and time, which in turn have to be concomitantly and continuously rewritten in order to maintain the organization's ontological identity.

The understanding of language system in such terms invites, then, an analogical appropriation of another concept in the studies of linguistics and biology: languaging. »Language itself is never in a state of rest,« asserts the American author of »language poetry« Lyn Hejinian (2000, 50). Her statement, as well as A.L. Becker's emphasis on »[t]he shift from noun to verb, from *language* as an abstract thing of some sort to *languaging* as an act« (1991, 228), resonate with José Ortega y Gasset's contention that language »is always making and unmaking itself« (quoted in Becker 1991, 228). From this perspective, Maturana and Varela's definition that »[l]anguage is an ongoing process that only exists as languaging, not as isolated items of behavior« (1987, 210) can be interpreted as a definition of language as an autonomous, living, and self-organizing system, which consists of its organization operationally closed to itself (»an ongoing process«) on the one hand, and, on the other hand, its structure functionally open to the environment (»exists as languaging«). More specifically, languaging finds its expression in »structural coupling« (Maturana and Varela 1987, 246) and, thereby, in »orienting« (Becker 1991, 229) both the organization and the observer. In addition, languaging is embodied or carried out by none other than the observer who, »constituted in language,« languages in language (Maturana and Varela 1987, 234–35, 210).

To such a statement with a rather poetic flare, Atlan adds what seems to be a note of sobriety and explicit uncertainty. The difficulty in addressing all these self-referential issues in language, he points out in his 1984 article, lies in the fact that language is itself an organization as such. »Making use of language is making use of the kind of order always implicit in the use of language,« Atlan writes, »[t]alking about order, complexity and so on is *doing* something *in language* which has to do with what order, complexity, etc., are supposed to be« (1984, 109). With this insight into the nature of language as a self-referential system, Atlan then problematizes »meaning« itself by footnoting his own thesis on self-organization in the form of a »double parenthesis.« »Parenthetically,« he remarks, »I would add that by meaning, I do not necessarily refer to what is meant in human communication, because we do not know enough about what *meaning* is in the human language (and I suspect we do not know enough because human language is itself a self-organizing system)« (1984, 110).

That being said, to the structuralist question of what kind of system language constitutes, the answer could be, tentatively and with qualifications, that, predicated upon a closed-open typology, language is a dynamic system »in a con-

tinuous becoming that we,« the observers actively engaged in languaging, »bring forth« (Maturana and Varela 1987, 235) at its organization-structure interface.

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Structure and the Philosophy of As-If: Wellek, Vaihinger and Iser

This chapter deals with the problem of fictions and the fictionality of structures, in a direction proposed recently by Wolfgang Iser. In his seminal book *The Fictive and the Imaginary* Iser, among others, alerts us to the relevance of the fictive as

an operational mode of consciousness that makes inroads into existing versions of world. In this way, the fictive becomes an act of boundary crossing which, nonetheless, keeps in view what has been overstepped. As a result, the fictive simultaneously disrupts and doubles the referential world.
(1993, xv)

In contrast to Iser, who, when he wrote this, was predominantly interested in the self-reflexive nature of the literary text »disclosing its own fictionality« (Iser 1993, 11) and in literature as a »paradigmatic process« of »worldmaking« (Iser 1989, 270).¹ I focus on the fictive as an interface among language, human consciousness and the surrounding world. At the same time I acknowledge Iser's importance in outlining this approach in his discussions of Jeremy Bentham's philosophy of discourse and Hans Vaihinger's philosophy of fictions, pointing out important aspects of fiction, such as »modality«, »posit« and »differential« (Iser 1993, 110 – 52). And this orientation is also confirmed in Iser's work-in-progress on culture as a »recursive process« (Iser 2004, 21 ff)² whose completion was precluded by his sudden death in January 2007.

The link between the philosophy of »as-if« and the theory of the Prague School may be negligible and perhaps even misleading, yet, as I will argue, it is important for understanding the specificity and important limitations of the Prague functionalist approach, which relies on the totalizing notion of a closed,

1 Iser refers to Goodman(1978).

2 An earlier English version of this lecture was delivered at a conference »Toward an Anthropological Humanism?« at UCLA Department of French & Francophone Studies, convened by Françoise Lionnet and Eric Gans on 4 March 2002.

homogeneous and stratified sign system. In his *Habilitationsschrift* entitled *Immanuel Kant in England 1793–1838* (1931) René Wellek acknowledges the role of Hans Vaihinger as a »faithful interpreter« of Kant (1931, VI) and several times refers to his commentary to *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Apparently, Vaihinger also belonged to the readers of Wellek's dissertation when it was still in manuscript form. Despite his respect for Vaihinger's Kantian commentaries, Wellek never mentions his principal work on the Philosophy of »As If«: a fundamental revision of Kant's transcendental approach replacing the *noumena* with the »fictional nature of ideational forms« (Vaihinger 2000, 94n).

Wellek's discussion of Kant's influence in Britain³ introduces Kant's philosophy as »one of the forces which awakened the English idealism,« which had almost dried out in the mid-eighteenth century, »to a new life« (Wellek 1931, 4). Rather than describing this awakening, Wellek emphasizes the importance of heterogeneity and a minute network of interacting forces in cultural history. Wellek's comparative method goes beyond the schematism of the Prague School manifesting itself in the dichotomy of »immanent development« and »concretization« (Vodička 1998, 67).⁴ This conclusion also rectifies recent attempts to see Wellek's study of Kant's reception as a »functional transformation of the foreign influence into a domestic literary context« (Pospíšil, Zelenka 1996, 48).

In spite of this advanced functionalist approach, Wellek's interpretation of Kant's reception rests on a rigid value scheme. Wellek sees Kant's philosophical thought as setting the norm of a comprehensive philosophical system, contrasting with the heterogeneous currents in British philosophy in the age of Romanticism.⁵ Unlike Wellek, Vaihinger sees a tension in Kant's system, which

3 The word »England« in the title of the book is misleading, since it contains the discussion of the response of Scottish philosophers, Thomas Reid, Dugald Stewart, Sir William Drummond and especially William Hamilton (Wellek 1931, 38–62).

4 According to Felix Vodička, drawing on Mukařovský, »concretization« (*konkretizace*) is not only the product of the »intrinsic dynamic of development« (*vlastní vývojové dynamiky*) of literature but also of deliberate efforts of certain privileged members of society, namely literary critics, and their ideological orientations. These representatives of the literary public are seen as »setting tasks« (*kladou úkoly*) on the basis of the empirical understanding of life or deriving them from ideological postulates. Therefore the literary historian has to pay attention to the relation of »heteronomous elements to the immanent conditions of the new organization of the literary norm« (*heteronomních elementů k imanentním podmínkám nové organizace literární normy*) (Vodička 1998, 67, 59).

5 See, e.g. his criticism of the heterogeneous structure of Coleridge's philosophy, based on a simple metaphor of a building executed in different styles: »Coleridge has built a building of no style or rather of mixed style. [...] Coleridge's structure has here a storey from Kant, there a part of the room from Schelling, there a roof from Anglican theology and so on. The architect did not feel the clash of the styles, the subtle and irreconcilable differences between the Kantian first floor and the Anglican roof. He had vaguely in mind the type of the building he wanted to build. [...] Or, speaking without any

may produce significant inconsistencies, if its concepts are proclaimed higher realities. According to him, in the first edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, the »Thing-in-Itself« was called »a mere idea, i. e. a fiction,« which can be compared with »Leibniz's differentials.« This »limiting concept,« which has a methodological meaning in mathematics (and which Solomon Maimon compared to imaginary numbers), was then extended to »actual and ultimate reality« (Vaihinger 2000, 74–75). Apparently, for Vaihinger, Kant's philosophy is a mere point of departure for the study of sciences and art as products of fictions.

Discussing fictions, Vaihinger (as Bentham before him) points out their linguistic nature: modal construction AS IF is based on an ellipsis of a clause »as it would be if there were...« Suspending the statement of its conditional existence, the ellipsis facilitates a *comparison* of heterogeneous and incongruous ideas, which cannot be likened to one another on the basis of resemblance, common quantitative data, etc.: for instance »matter« and »atoms« or »circle« and »polygon« (2000, 94). Significantly, this structure does not function as a mere pattern of consciousness, but *pragmatically* as an interface, a device interrelating diverse structures or heterogeneous environments. As Vaihinger reminds us, emphasis is not laid on »the correspondence with an assumed »objective reality,« which can never be directly accessible to us,« nor on »the theoretical representation of the outer world in the mirror of consciousness and still less [on] the theoretical comparison of logical products with objective things,« but on the »practical corroboration [...] experimental test of the utility of logical structures [...]« (2000, 8).

In noetic terms, the expression »as if« is »an impossible unreal assumption« under which »empirically given matter« must be subsumed (Vaihinger 2000, 93). As Iser interprets this reflection, the empirical matter (»what is given« – that is, »the real«) is not simply submitted to imaginative, let alone rational, processing. Rather, the »as if« functions »a kind of relay, insofar as it forces the imaginative into a form in order to open up the full range of possibilities« (Iser 1993, 146). According to Iser, it is not the theoretical scheme but »the practical purpose« that

requires that consciousness remains dominant, so that the imaginative is present in the structure of consciousness only as an empty space. The empty space marks the possible influence of the imagination on the activities of consciousness – an influence brought about by the need to compare the incomparable. (Iser 1993, 146)

metaphor, Coleridge had in mind a system, but what he accomplished is merely the heterogeneous combination of different systems.«
(Wellek 1931, 67–68)

The contradiction between the pragmatic nature of Vaihinger's fictions and their aesthetic genealogy can be traced back to Schiller's »theory of play as the primary element of artistic creation and enjoyment,« which induced Vaihinger to recognize »in play the ›As if, as the driving force of aesthetic activity and intuition« (Vaihinger 2000, xxv). Now for Iser this play arising »out of the coexistence of the fictive and the imaginary [...] is both a product of activation [of the imaginary by the fictive] and the condition for the productivity brought about by the interaction it stimulates« (1993, xvii). On the one hand, Iser strives to integrate Derrida's paradigm of supplement as both surplus and lack (»The impossibility of being present to ourselves becomes our possibility to play ourselves to fullness that has no bounds [...]« Iser 1993, xviii; my emphasis), on the other hand he sees the play no longer in the modality of the »As If,« but in the final apocalyptic perspective, which can be articulated only by literature becoming a peculiar »As If« *eschaton*: »a panorama of what is possible« making »the interminable staging of ourselves appear as the postponement of the end« (Iser 1993, xix; my emphasis). Here Vaihinger's *bricolage*, creating an endless multiplicity of fictions, is subjected to the »engineer« paradigm of the apocalypse, whose constant deferral cannot eliminate the »transcendental vantage point« (Iser 1993, 4)⁶ from which the fictive and the imaginary are orchestrated.

This »well executed dance composed of many complicated figures and turns« (Schiller 1967, 300)⁷ may betray Iser's propensity for the aesthetic ideology of Schiller's »third joyous kingdom of play and fiction« built up unnoticeably »amidst the frightful realm of forces, and the sacred realm of laws« by »an aesthetic creative drive« (Schiller 1967, 215).

Iser's model of play as a postponed temporal closure clashes with the function of the »As If« as the interface, »the fictitious entity,« interposing itself »between thought and thing« and unfolding »a network of connections that compete with what is known for certain and seek to reach beyond it« (Iser 1993, 129). In contrast to the all-encompassing play, the structural paradigm of »as-if« implies, in Deleuze's words, a different »reading« of time than the totalizing and circular Chronos of »the games, with which we are acquainted« (1990, 58): the »limited« Aion, »which divides itself infinitely in past and future and always eludes the present« (1990, 5). As Iser had noticed, already in Bentham's thought the »as if« indicates the difference—now minimalized but nevertheless ineradicable—between the two poles of will and reality« which appears to be »concealed by the

6 According to Iser, the »tacit knowledge« supporting »the old antithesis between fiction and reality« implies this point, which »can no longer be upheld in view of the transgressive operations of the fictionalizing act« (1993, 4).

7 See, e.g., Iser's description of the interplay between the fictive and the imaginary: »the games played (*agôn, mimicry, alea, ilinx*)« (1993, xviii). For the categorization of the above types as games of »competition, chance, mimicry and vertigo« see Caillois (2001, 71 – 161).

two modes of predication and representation« (Iser 1993, 126). Moreover, in Vaihinger's thought, »the As-If manifests itself differently according to its pragmatically determined context [...] does not embody a foundational principle,« and is a »function« that »precedes the structure,« revealing itself in »a basically limitless catalog of types of fiction.« Rather than characteristics of paradoxical Iser's »models,« which »can give no information about what they are modelling« (1993, 50–51), these manifestations are closer to Deleuze's notions of »event,« »sense,« »differentiator« or »ideal game« (1990, 11, 28, 51, 59) characterizing open dynamic structures in *The Logic of Sense*.

Compared to Wellek, who saw the fictional world as the totalizing and hierarchized aesthetic »unity in variety«, based on »age old aesthetic terms« (Wellek, Warren 1949, 17), and as the »pattern, structure or organism« (1949, 221) created exclusively by artistic means, Iser transformed Vaihinger's structural notion of fictions into a dynamic theory of interfacing the real, the fictive and the imaginary; literature, sciences and the humanities. In *The Fictive and the Imaginary* he was still tempted to frame this theory by the *eschaton* of aesthetic ideology. Yet soon he discarded this frame and used the »As If« to develop a new, global theory of reception, no longer based on philosophical paradigms of the Enlightenment (*Bildung*, aesthetic state) or later philosophical systems (Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger) but drawing its power from the *actual, historic* conditions determining the existence of cultural theory and culture itself. In Iser's own words,

reception theory did not derive its parameters from a philosophy, as phenomenological or hermeneutic theories did, nor from a discipline such as psychology [...]. Instead, it was engendered by a dilemma in which the study of literature found itself in the late 1950s and 1960s: namely, the conflict of interpretation. (2006a, 58)

The relevant aspect of this conflict between the approaches based on the assumption of meaning embodied in the text and those seeing meaning as a product of »presuppositions governing interpretation« is, as Iser further argues, »the inherent limitation of all presuppositions and hence their restricted applicability« (2006a, 59).

The power of Iser's approach consists in its ability to proceed beyond the obvious implications of relativism and perspectivism, envisaging texts (similar to the »as if« operator) as *transformative apparatuses* focusing the reader's attention to specific »referential fields« and to »historical, cultural and literary systems« existing as *interfaces* between texts and reality. Through these systems, or »organizational units of the given world [...] the contingencies and complexities of reality are reduced to meaningful structures« (Iser 2006a, 60–61).

As Iser argued in the lecture »Culture: a Recursive Process« (2004, 21 ff)

delivered during his last visit to Prague, in anthropological, biological and cybernetic terms, culture is not, as Lévi-Strauss and many others believed, determined by its opposition to nature but emerges out of human relation to entropy. Since entropy escapes knowledge, it can be kept under control only by the »organizational units [...] historical, cultural and literary systems« which are no mere static interfaces between humans and the universe, but dynamic *loops of feedback* (2004, 21)⁸ – acts of interaction, converting the entropic environment into a process engendering culture. Thus, culture as an environment produced by humans, is necessarily structured by their own acts.

Referring to the anthropological theory of Eric Gans (1985), Iser links entropy to violence, thus pointing to the practical regulative function of culture as a means of preventing the escalation of conflicts. In performing this *global mission*, culture must keep the *diversity*, which, according to Iser, can be preserved only by means of *dialogue*. Unlike the models of Mukařovský or Bakhtin, this dialogue, or, in Leroi-Gourhan's words, »functional approximation« (1988, 155) does not have a generalized form: it exists among the individual human sciences as well as among teachers and students, different cultures, texts and their readers, literatures and their social conditions. Without it, not only the humanities, but the whole culture is »dead,« and will necessarily give way to »sheer violence« (Iser 2006b,15).

The non-essentialist, practical humanist appeal of Iser's theory of culture has a particular importance in approaching the legacy of Prague Structuralism, which as one of the first modern interdisciplinary movements attempted to overcome the split between theoretical formalism and empiricist historicism in the humanities. It is not surprising that in one of his last interviews, Iser spoke about his interest in reading representative works of historiography (2006b, 15), and that he even pursued his historical research in the Vienna archives. More importantly, Iser took a genuine interest in those tendencies of Prague Structuralism striving to overcome the limitations of the synchronic description of systems. Not accidentally, Vodička's main work, *The Structure of Development*, was on the reading list of the Thematic Network: Reception Studies, whose meetings Iser enriched by stimulating presentations and penetrating comments.

Although it is to be deeply regretted that Iser will not visit Prague again, there is no doubt that the practical humanism of his work will stimulate all those trying to proceed beyond the schisms between structuralism and post-structuralism or sciences and humanities and increase the power of culture in the dangerous, unstable condition of the globalized world.

8 »Da sich Entropie der Wißbarkeit entzieht, läßt sich Kontrolle nur über Rückkoppelungsschleifen erzielen.« (Iser 2004, 21)

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