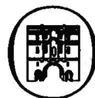
TZVETAN TODOROV

Literature and Its Theorists

A PERSONAL VIEW OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY CRITICISM

TRANSLATED BY

CATHERINE PORTER



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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In the interest of keeping footnotes to a minimum, titles and page numbers of works from which Tzvetan Todorov quotes appear in the text. Complete bibliographical information will be found in the Works Cited section at the end of the volume.

For quotations from works written in Russian, German, or French, I have used a published English translation whenever one was available. These books and articles are referred to in the text by their English titles, and the page numbers given are those of the translations; the Works Cited lists these translations and, following them, the original titles, publishers, and dates. For writings never translated into English, I have worked from the quotations in French that appeared in *Critique de la critique*, occasionally consulting the original language text; the titles appear in the original language, with an English translation following in parentheses where appropriate.

C.P.

1

Prefatory Explanations

I

Our fellow citizens do not read, we are told. And the devastating statistics that demonstrate how little in fact they do read lump all kinds of literature together: highbrow and mass-market texts, tourist guides and cookbooks. Books about books—works of literary criticism, that is—attract only a small minority of an already tiny group of readers: a few students, a handful of dedicated admirers. But criticism of criticism is an extreme case, no doubt a sign of the futility of the times: who could possibly take the slightest interest in it?

I could defend the subject of my book by arguing that criticism is not a superfluous appendage to literature, but its necessary double (a text can never *state* its whole truth), or that interpretive behavior is infinitely more common than criticism, and that it is therefore in our best interest that criticism professionalizes interpretation, so to speak, bringing out into the open what is simply unconscious practice elsewhere. But these arguments, however valid in themselves, are irrelevant here: my intention is neither to defend criticism nor to shore up its foundations. Instead, I shall focus on two interlocking subjects, pursuing a dual objective, moreover, in each case.

First, I want to examine how people have thought about literature and criticism in the twentieth century, and, *at the same time*, try to determine what shape a reasonable conception of literature and criticism might take.

Next, I want to analyze the major ideological trends of the same period as they have been manifested through reflections on literature; and, *at the same time*, try to determine which ideological position is most defensible. Within the perspective of this second subject, my choice of reflections on criticism is contingent. As it happens, I am familiar with this tradition; otherwise the history of sociology or the history of political ideas, for example, might have served equally well to provide access to more general questions. The search for an ideological position of my own comes last on the list, but that search underlies and perhaps even motivates all the rest of the inquiry.

To put it rather too succinctly, this book will deal both with the meaning of some twentieth-century critical works and with the possibility of opposing nihilism without ceasing to be an atheist.

Let me try to explain why I have felt it necessary to deal simultaneously with two subjects, each of which moreover has a dual aspect. To rule out generalizations and value judgments would have seemed naive or dishonest, would have meant breaking off the investigation midway. To rule out a detailed investigation of the subject matter in its specificity would have put me on the side of those writers who possess "the truth," and whose only problem is to figure out how to present it so they can put it across most convincingly. For my part, I am satisfied with searching for it (the undertaking seems sufficiently ambitious in itself), and I have become convinced that the most appropriate form for such a search may be a hybrid genre: a narrative, but an exemplary one—in the present case, the story of an adventure of the mind, the story of twentieth-century thinking about literature, a history that at the same time illustrates a search for truth. I am proposing—rather than imposing—this exemplary narrative in order to invite my reader to reflect on it: in other words, my aim is to launch a discussion.

My choice of authors was dictated by a number of objective and subjective criteria. The period of history in which I am interested is the mid-twentieth century, 1920–1980, roughly speaking; with one exception (Döblin), all the authors considered were born between 1890 and 1920, and thus they belong to my parents' generation.

Next, I have considered only texts written in French, English, German, and Russian, leaving all others aside. I have also sought variety: I have analyzed representatives of various critical currents and even of different casts of mind, looking at historians along with systematic and scientific authors, religious thinkers and political militants, essayists and creative writers.

Still, such considerations obviously do not suffice to explain why I have settled on some ten names among the hundreds of possibilities. I have of course taken reputation into account, but this factor is not sufficient, either, to explain my selection. The real explanation, finally, is this: I chose the authors who had, I felt, affected me most. I shall not be dealing with Freud, or Lukács, or Heidegger: I have perhaps made a mistake in leaving them out, but I have done so because their thinking, while noteworthy in itself, does not inspire reactions in me that I myself consider interesting. And since I am not aiming at exhaustivity but only at a certain representativeness, the criterion of private correspondence, of possible dialogue, does seem legitimate. I am closer at present to some of the authors I shall discuss than to others; there is no doubt about that. I have been stimulated by all of them, however, at one time or another, and I continue to admire them all.

Finally, I should add a more personal note. This book represents the last phase of a project begun several years ago with *Theories of the Symbol* and *Symbolism and Interpretation*: its initial design is contemporary with those texts. In the intervening years, a different theme, that of alterity, has become the focal point of my work. Not only has this delayed the completion of the earlier project, but it has also led to internal modifications. Nevertheless, the framework proposed in the first two books remains present here in the background; for that reason I should like to recall a few essential elements of those texts.

II

The fact that the writers one chooses to study are twentieth-century writers is not enough to guarantee the modernity of their thought. At every point in time, moments of the more or less distant past coexist with present and future moments. If I wish to ex-

amine the critical thought that is representative of this century, chronological objectivity is not enough; I must also make sure that the authors I choose have not been content to repeat received ideas and to corroborate tradition, but rather have expressed what is specific to their era. In order to make such a distinction, I will have to outline, at least in a general and cursory way, the heritage of the past that these critics have confronted.

Our ideas about literature and commentary do not go back to the dawn of time. The constitution of the notion of "literature" itself and all that the term currently entails is a recent phenomenon, dating from the end of the eighteenth century. Before that, people could of course identify the major genres (poetry, epic, drama) as well as the minor ones, but the whole in which they were included was something much broader than what we call literature. "Literature" was born of an opposition to utilitarian language, which finds its justification outside itself; in contrast, literature is a discourse that is sufficient unto itself. It leads on the one hand to a devaluing of the relations between works and what they designate, or express, or teach—that is, between the works themselves and everything else; on the other hand, it promotes close attention to the structure of the work itself, to the internal interweaving of its episodes, themes, images. From the Romantics to the surrealists and the *nouveau roman*, the various literary schools all lay claim to these basic principles, even though they may differ over details or terminology. When the poet Archibald MacLeish writes, in his famous programmatic poem:

> A poem should not mean
> But be,

he is only carrying this penchant for immanence to an extreme: meaning itself is perceived as excessively external.

In *On Christian Doctrine*, Saint Augustine, an author who is representative of the "classical" manner of thinking, formulated a fundamental opposition between use and enjoyment: "To enjoy something is to cling to it with love for its own sake. To use something, however, is to employ it in obtaining that which you love, provided that it is worthy of love" (I, iv, 4). This distinction has a theoretical corollary: in the final analysis, nothing but God deserves to

be enjoyed, to be cherished for itself. Augustine develops this idea in speaking of man's love for man:

> It is to be asked whether man is to be loved by man for his own sake or for the sake of something else. If for his own sake, we enjoy him; if for the sake of something else, we use him. But I think that man is to be loved for the sake of something else. In that which is to be loved for its own sake the blessed life resides; and if we do not have it for the present, the hope for it now consoles us. But "cursed be the man that trusteth in man." But no one ought to enjoy himself either, if you observe the matter closely, because he should not love himself on account of himself but on account of Him who is to be enjoyed. [I, xxii, 20–21]

In the case of Karl Philipp Moritz, one of the first spokesmen of the "Romantic" revolution at the end of the eighteenth century, we find that hierarchy is replaced by democracy, submission by equality; all creation can and must become the object of enjoyment. To the same question— can man become the object of enjoyment?— Moritz replies by praising man: "Man must learn to realize anew that he is there for himself—he must feel that, in every thinking being, the whole is there for each individual, just as each individual is there for the whole. Individual man must never be considered as a purely *useful* being, but also as a *noble* being, who has his own value in himself. Man's spirit is a whole, complete in itself" (*Schriften*, pp. 15–16). Thus the new society of enjoyment is launched. A few years later, Friedrich Schlegel demonstrates the continuity of aesthetics not, now, with theology but with politics: "Poetry is a republican discourse, a discourse that is its own law, an end in itself, and all its components are free citizens with the right to speak up in order to reach agreement" ("Fragments," from *Lyceum*, 65).

This *immanent* concept of literature is in harmony with the dominant ideology of the modern period (I use the term "ideology" in the sense of a system of ideas, beliefs, and values common to the members of a society, without opposing it to consciousness, or science, or truth, or anything whatsoever). Is Novalis still speaking of aesthetics when he declares: "We no longer live in the time when universally recognized forms dominated"? The replacement of the search for transcendence by the affirmation of each individual's

right to be judged on his own terms has to do with ethics and politics as well as with aesthetics: the ascendancy of individualism and relativism is the hallmark of modern times. To declare that a literary work is governed solely by its own internal coherence with no reference to exterior absolutes, to assert that its meanings are infinite and not hierarchized, is also to participate in this modern ideology.

Our idea of commentary has undergone a parallel evolution. Nothing marks the break with earlier views better than Spinoza's demand, formulated in the *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, that the search for the truth of texts be abandoned in favor of concern for their meaning alone. More specifically, Spinoza, having just separated faith from reason and thus truth (even religious truth) from meaning (of the holy Scripture, in this instance), begins by denouncing the division between means and ends in the earlier Patristic strategy:

> Most interpreters posit as a basic principle (in order to understand it clearly and decipher its true meaning) that Scripture is entirely true and divine, whereas that ought to be the conclusion of a thorough examination, one which leaves no obscurity unexplained; what the study of Scripture would demonstrate much better, without the aid of any human fiction, is what they posit at the very outset as a rule for interpretation. ["Preface," p. 24]

Spinoza's critique has to do with structure, not content: he is concerned not with replacing one truth by another, but with changing the place of truth in the task of interpretation. Far from serving as the guiding principle of the interpreter's work, the new meaning will be the result of that work: one cannot look for something with the help of the thing itself. The search for a text's meaning must be carried out without reference to its truth. Nineteenth-century philology espoused Spinoza's postulate, and although the struggle had lost currency in Böckh's day, he found it necessary to include the following statements in his *Encyclopädie und Methodologie der philologischen Wissenschaften* (1886):

> It is entirely ahistorical to prescribe, in the interpretation of Holy Scripture, that everything must be explained according to the *analogia fidei et doctrinae*; here the measure that has to guide interpretation is not itself firmly established, for religious doctrine, born of the explanation of Scripture, has taken on very different forms. Historical interpretation has to establish solely what works of language mean, without regard to whether this is true or false. [Pp. 120–121]

Here we can see how a barely perceptible shift has taken place. Whereas initially we are told that prior knowledge about the truth of a text cannot be used as a means for interpreting it, at the end we find a declaration that any question having to do with the truth of the text is irrelevant. By "truth," here, we are expected to understand not factual adequacy, which would be in any event impossible to establish in the case of the Bible, but general human truth, justice, and wisdom. After Spinoza, commentators no longer need to ask: "Does this text speak rightly?" but only "What exactly is it saying?" Commentary, too, has become immanent: in the absence of any common transcendence, each text becomes its own frame of reference, and the critic's task is completed in clarification of the text's meaning, in the description of its forms and textual functioning, far removed from any value judgment. By this token, a qualitative break is achieved between the text studied and the text of the study. If the commentary were concerned with truth, it would be situated at the same level as the work being commented upon and the two would bear upon the same object. But the difference between the two is a radical one, and the text studied becomes an object (an object-language), while the commentary accedes to the category of metalanguage.

Here again, terminological diversity, like differing emphasis on one part of the undertaking or another, helps conceal the unity of a tradition that has dominated commentary in Europe for several centuries. What comes to mind as a central embodiment of this project today is structural criticism, whether it takes themes (explorations of the imaginary, conscious or unconscious obsessions) as its object or the expressive system itself (narrative devices, figures of speech, style). But historical and philological criticism, as it has been practiced since the nineteenth century, is equally faithful to the immanentist project, since the meaning of each text can be established only with reference to its particular context, and since the philologist's task is to make this meaning explicit without passing any judgment on it. Closer to home, criticism that is nihilist in inspiration (and no longer positivist, like philology), criticism that demonstrates that everything is interpretation and that the writer

is busy subverting his own ideology, still remains within the same undertaking, while making any hope of ever attaining truth more chimerical than ever.

What is at stake in this debate is perhaps clearer now. Reflection on literature and criticism is a feature of the ideological movements that have dominated intellectual life (and not only intellectual life) in Europe during what is conventionally called the modern era. Earlier, people believed in the existence of an absolute and common truth, in a universal standard (for several centuries, absolute truth happened to coincide with Christian doctrine). The breakdown of this belief, the recognition of human diversity and equality led to relativism and individualism, and finally to nihilism.

I am at last in a position to spell out the nature of the ideas I am looking for in contemporary reflections on literature. My principal interest will be directed toward whatever allows us to move beyond the dichotomy sketched out above. More specifically still, among the authors I have chosen, I shall seek doctrinal elements that question the "Romantic" aesthetic and ideology but that do so without constituting a return to the "classical" dogmas.

This use of words in quotation marks, and in particular of the term "Romantic," which I shall employ frequently, requires some explanation. In fact, there are several obvious differences between the sense in which that term is used here and the meaning it takes on when it designates the artistic movement of the nineteenth century. On the one hand, under this label I include certain phenomena and ideas that were not associated with the Romantic group, such as historicism and realism. On the other hand, I exclude certain connotations that are frequently attached to the meaning of the term, most notably a valorization of the irrational.

The discrepancy between the usual meaning of the word "Romanticism" and the meaning adopted here has a simple explanation: I am speaking of what I believe to be the ideal type of the movement rather than the historical phenomenon in itself. On the ideological level, historical Romanticism and, even more obviously, the nineteenth century as a whole are heterogeneous complexes in which disparate, even contradictory, elements coexist while forming various hierarchies. Nevertheless, I hold strongly to the term, for it was in fact in a Romantic group—the very first, the one in Jena, which brought together the Schlegel brothers, Novalis, Schelling, and a few others—that the main ideas of the modern aesthetic were formulated, with forcefulness and originality.

Each of the chapters that follows is constructed, therefore, along similar lines. First I seek to identify what the author in question owes to the Romantic ideology; next I focus on those elements of his thought that, intentionally or not, challenge the Romantic framework and go beyond it. The final chapter looks dissimilar at first glance, since I take myself as its object while attempting to pull together the findings reached in the earlier chapters. But the difference is only superficial. From a certain standpoint, those other chapters, too, relate my own personal history: I have been, I am, that "Romantic" who tries to think beyond Romanticism through the analysis of authors with whom I have identified in turn. The movement repeated in each chapter is thus combined with another, a movement of accumulation that reaches its culmination at the end—and yet this culmination is not, after all, a synthesis. To put it another way, what follows is nothing but a *Bildungsroman*, a novel of apprenticeship—and moreover one that remains unfinished.

2

Poetic Language: The Russian Formalists

My attitude toward the Russian Formalists (I shall capitalize the word Formalist in referring to this particular group) has changed several times. This is not especially surprising, since I first became acquainted with their work over twenty years ago. My first impression was one of discovery: the Formalists showed that it was possible to speak of literature in a cheerful, irreverent, inventive manner. At the same time, their texts dealt with a topic that did not seem to interest anyone else but that had always appeared crucial to me, namely, what was rather condescendingly called "literary craft." My astonishment at these discoveries led me to seek out one text after another (not always a simple matter) and then to translate them into French. In a second phase, I thought I detected the presence of a "theoretical" project, the constitution of a poetics, in the Formalist writings. The project was not, however, consistent from one text to another (with good reason: I was reading several different authors whose writings spanned fifteen years), nor was it carried to completion: thus the task of systematizing and radicalizing the work was a necessary one. Finally, in a third phase, I began to perceive the Formalists as a historical phenomenon. The content of their ideas came to interest me less than the internal logic of these ideas and their place in the history of ideologies. This latter perspective is the one I have adopted in the current discussion. I

have limited my inquiry to a small part of the Formalists' activity, namely, the definition of literature or, to use their own terms, of "poetic language." It is a small part but a complex one, for, as we shall see, the Formalists were working with more than one definition of the poetic.

I

What might be called the "standard theory" of poetic language among the Russian Formalists was stated explicitly in the movement's first collective publication, the first of the *Sborniki po teorii poèticheskogo jazyka* (Collections on the theory of poetic language, 1916) by Lev Jakubinskij. Jakubinskij was never more than a marginal participant in the Formalist group, but in 1916 he lent his authority as a linguist to the theses his friends were promoting, and his contribution was thus a major one. Within the context of a global description of the various uses of language, Jakubinskij laid the groundwork for his definition of poetic language in terms drawn by and large from linguistics:

> Linguistic phenomena should be classified from the point of view of the goal with which the speaker uses his linguistic representations in each given case. If the speaker uses them with the purely practical goal of communication, we are dealing with the system of practical language (of verbal thought), in which linguistic representations (sounds, morphological elements, etc.) do not have any independent value, but are simply a means of communication. Yet other linguistic systems are conceivable, and they exist—systems where the practical goal becomes secondary (though it may not disappear completely), and linguistic representations acquire an autonomous value. ["O zvukakh stikhotvornogo jazyka," p. 16]

Poetry is one example of these "other linguistic systems." It is indeed the prime example: an equivalence may be established between "poetic" and "having an autonomous value," as Jakubinskij showed in another text published in *Poètika* (Poetics, 1919), the third Formalist collection:

> It is necessary to distinguish human activities that have value in and of themselves from those that pursue external goals and have value as

the means for the attainment of goals. If we call activities of the first sort *poetic*. . . . ["O poèticheskom glossemosochetanii," p. 12]

So far, this is simple and straightforward enough: practical language finds its justification outside itself, in the transmission of thought or in interpersonal communication; it is a means and not an end. In scholarly terms, practical language is *heterotelic*. Poetic language, on the other hand, finds its justification (and thus its entire value) in itself; it is its own end, and no longer a means. Thus poetic language is autonomous, or *autotelic*. This formulation seems to have won over the other members of the group, since quite similar statements appeared in various texts written around the same time. For example, in an article on Potebnja (1919), Viktor Shklovskij went even further by translating poetic autotelism in terms of perception (we shall see, however, that this subtle distinction is by no means accidental):

> Poetic language differs from prose language in the palpability of its construction. We can feel the acoustic, or articulatory, or semantic aspect of the word. Sometimes it is not the structure of words that is palpable, but rather their construction, their arrangement. ["Potebnja," in *Poètika*, p. 4]

The same year, in a book on Khlebnikov (the title means "The Newest Russian Poetry"), Roman Jakobson proposed formulas that have become famous; his definitions remain entirely consonant with Jakubinskij's:

> Poetry is *an utterance with a set toward expression [vyskazyvanie s ustanovkoj na vyrazhenie]*. . . . If the plastic arts involve the shaping of the autonomous material of visual representations, music the shaping of autonomous sound material, choreography of the material of autonomous gesture, then poetry is the shaping of the autonomous word, of what Khlebnikov calls the "selfsome word" [*samovitoe slovo*]. . . . This set toward expression, toward the verbal mass, which I qualify as the sole essential feature of poetry. . . . [*Novejshaja russkaja poèzija*, pp. 10–11, 41]

To say that poetry is autonomous or autotelic language is to define it by its function, by what it does rather than what it is. What linguistic forms allow this function to be fulfilled? How does one

recognize language that finds its end (and its value) in itself? The Formalist texts offer two answers to these questions. The first answer, a response at the level of "substance," in a sense, takes the statement literally. What is language that refers to nothing outside itself? It is language reduced to its material nature alone, sounds or letters; it is language that refuses meaning. This response does not originate in pure logical deduction. On the contrary, the fact that this response was already present within the ideological arena of the day is very probably what led the Formalists to try to find a broader justification for it and to construct a theory of poetry as autotelic language. For their theoretical speculations were closely tied to the practices of their contemporaries, the Futurists; the Formalist theories at once grew out of and laid the groundwork for Futurist practices. The most extreme aspect of these practices is known as *zaum'*, "trans-sense" or "supraconscious language," pure signifiers, a wordless poetry of sounds and letters. As we saw with Jakobson, there is no great distance between Khlebnikov's *samovitoe slovo*, "self-moving" or "selfsome word" (Khlebnikov himself rarely practiced *zaum'*) and the Formalists' *samotsennoe slovo*, the "self-valuable word" or discourse with autonomous value. In a retrospective commentary on this period, Boris Ejxenbaum thus rightly identified "trans-sense language" as the most extreme expression of the autotelic doctrine: "The Futurists' trend toward a 'transrational language' (*zaumnyj jazyk*) [is] the utmost baring of autonomous value" ("Theory of the Formal Method," p. 9).

Some ten years earlier, Shklovskij had wondered whether all poetry was not in reality trans-sense poetry, and whether poets do not resort to meaning most often only in order to find a "motivation," a camouflage or excuse:

> The poet does not decide to utter a "trans-sense word": usually the trans-sense elements are hidden behind the mask of some content, often a deceptive or illusory one that forces the poets themselves to recognize that they do not grasp the content of their own verses. . . . The facts we have adduced make us wonder whether words always have meaning in speech, not just in patently trans-sense speech but simply in poetic speech—or is this opinion just a fiction and the result of our inattentiveness? ["O poèzii i zaumnom jazyke," in *Sborniki po teorii poèticheskogo jazyka* 1, pp. 10, 13]

Jakobson takes the same point of view: "Poetic language strives, as to its limit, toward the phonetic word, or more exactly, inasmuch as the corresponding set is present, toward the euphonic word, toward trans-sense speech" (*Novejshaja*, p. 68).

Other representations of the group do not go quite that far, but they all agree on the essential value—and above all the autonomous value—of sounds in poetry. Thus Jakubinskij writes: "In *versified linguistic thought* sounds become the object of our attention, they reveal their autonomous value, they emerge in the clear field of consciousness" ("O zvukakh," pp. 18–19). And Osip Brik: "However you regard the interrelation between image and sound, one thing is undeniable: sounds and consonances are not just a euphonic adjunct, but the result of an independent poetic drive" ("Zvukovye povtory," in *Poètika*, p. 60).

But is language that denies meaning still language? Have we not obliterated the essential character of language, sound *and* meaning, simultaneous presence and absence, if we reduce it to the status of a pure physical object? And why pay such intransitive attention to mere noise? Taken to the extreme, this answer (to the question about the forms of poetic language) reveals its own absurdity. That is doubtless why the Formalists, without addressing the issue explicitly, went on to offer a second answer, one that is more abstract and less literal, more structural and less substantial. It consists in saying that poetic language fulfills its autotelic function (that is, the absence of any external function) by being more systematic than practical, everyday language. A poetic work is overstructured discourse in which everything is interdependent: that is why we perceive it in itself, rather than for the sake of something else. Thus in his famous analysis of Gogol's "Overcoat" (1918), Èjxenbaum goes out of his way to avoid any reference to external considerations, resorting instead to metaphors of construction and play, objects or activities that are characterized by their internal coherence and by their lack of external goals. "In a work of art not a single sentence can be in itself a simple 'reflection' of the author's personal feelings. It is always construction and play" ("How Gogol's 'Overcoat' Is Made," p. 131).

In a study published around the same time, on the relation between the devices used in plot construction and other stylistic devices, Shklovskij also lays claim to this structural version of autotelism. Not everything is necessarily trans-sense language in

poetry or (especially) in prose; but narrative prose itself obeys the laws of sound combination, the rules of construction that produce phonic "instrumentation." "The methods and devices of *syuzhet* structure [*sjuzhetoslozhenie*] are similar to, and in principle are identical with, the devices, even with acoustic instrumentation. Works of literature represent a warp [*pletenie*] of sounds, of articulatory movements and thoughts" ("The Connection between Devices of *Syuzhet* Construction and General Stylistic Devices," p. 70).

The affirmation of the systematic character of literary works thus made its entrance into the Formalist Vulgate, in widely varying formulations, from Shklovskij's—"a work of literature is a unified edifice. Everything in it is subject to the organization of the material" (*Third Factory*, p. 55)—to Juri Tynjanov's—"before this basic problem [of literary evolution] can be analyzed, it must be agreed that a literary work is a system, as is literature itself. Only after this basic agreement has been established is it possible to create a literary science" ("On Literary Evolution," p. 67).

Jakobson also fluctuated between the two answers. We have already seen the role he ascribed to trans-sense poetry. But at the time of his book on Khlebnikov, he drew upon other explanations as well. One of them, in effect an intermediate position, is formulated in the context of a discussion of Kruszewski's teaching. Kruszewski, the nineteenth-century Polish-Russian linguist, systematically described linguistic relationships in terms of the opposition between resemblance and contiguity, an opposition frequently encountered in works on general psychology at the time. Jakobson added the first inkling of a value judgment by using the terms "conservative" and "progressive," terms highly charged with political meaning in postrevolutionary Russia: "From a certain point of view, the process of language evolution appears as the eternal antagonism between progressive forces, determined by relations of similarity, and conservative forces, determined by associations of contiguity" (*Novejshaja*, p. 10). From there, Jakobson reasons as follows: the heterotelism of everyday language is well suited to relations of contiguity (arbitrary ones) between signifier and signified; the autotelism of poetic language will be favored by relations of similarity (motivation of the sign); furthermore, we have moved from "progressive" to "revolutionary," which, in the context of the times, allows each of these terms, "poetry" and "revolutionary," to cast the other in a positive light:

> In emotive language and poetic language, verbal representations, be they phonetic or semantic, concentrate greater attention upon themselves. The connection between the sound aspect and meaning is tighter, more intimate, and consequently, language becomes more revolutionary, inasmuch as habitual associations by contiguity recede into the background. . . . The mechanical association between sound and meaning by contiguity is realized all the more rapidly as it is made from habit. Hence the conservatism of practical speech. The form of the word quickly dies out. In poetry, the role of mechanical association is reduced to a minimum. [*Novejshaja*, pp. 10, 41]

Replacing associations of contiguity with associations of similarity (a replacement that seems to coincide with the "tighter, more intimate" relation between sound and meaning) in fact reinforces the systematic character of discourse, for contiguity is simply another name for what is arbitrary, for unmotivated convention. But elsewhere in the same text, Jakobson envisaged another form of motivation, not between signifier and signified ("vertical" motivation, as it were), but between one word and another in the discursive chain ("horizontal" motivation). The latter once again points toward the autotelism that defines a poetic utterance. "We do not perceive the form of a word unless it is repeated in the given linguistic system" (ibid., p. 48). This view became Jakobson's credo forty years later, and the differences between his 1919 statement and the better-known statements of the nineteen-sixties are merely terminological. On the one hand, poetic language is defined by its autotelism: "The set (*Einstellung*) toward the *message* as such, focus on the message for its own sake, is the *poetic* function of language" ("Linguistics and Poetics" [1960], p. 25). On the other hand, this autotelism manifests itself in the particular form of overstructuring known as repetition: "The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination" (ibid., p. 27). "On every level of language the essence of poetic artifice consists in recurrent returns" ("Grammatical Parallelism and Its Russian Facet" [1966], p. 98).

Such is the first Formalist conception of poetic language—not chronologically first, but first in importance. Is it really an original conception? The line of descent from the Russian Futurists has always been obvious. But that line is an immediate relationship which does more to mask than to reveal the true ideological origins of Formalist theory. At the very beginning of the nineteen-twenties, however, Zhirmunskij had pointed out, in "Zadachi poètiki" (Tasks of poetics), that the Kantian aesthetic (and also, one might add, its later elaboration during the period of German Romanticism) provided the framework for the Formalist doctrine of poetic language. The idea of autotelism as a definition of beauty and art comes straight from the aesthetic writings of Karl Philipp Moritz and Kant; even the close connection between autotelism and increased systematicity is explicitly articulated in these texts, as well as the connection between autotelism and the value of sound. In his very first text on aesthetics (in 1785), Moritz declared that, in art, an intensification of internal purpose has to compensate for the absence of external purpose:

> When an object lacks external utility or purpose, these must be sought in the object itself, if this object is to arouse pleasure in me; or else I must *find so much purpose in the separate parts of this object that I forget to ask: but what good is the whole?* To put it in different terms: seeing a beautiful object, I must feel pleasure uniquely for its own sake; to this end the absence of external purpose has to be compensated for by an internal purpose; the object must be something fully realized in itself. [*Schriften*, p. 6]

For Schelling, similarly, the loss of external function is offset by an increase in internal regularity:

> The poetic work . . . is possible only through a separation from the totality of language of the discourse by means of which the work of art expresses itself. But this separation on the one hand and this absolute character on the other are not possible if the discourse does not have in itself its own independent movement and thus its time, like the bodies of the world; thus it separates itself from all the rest, obeying an internal regularity. From an external point of view, the discourse moves freely and autonomously; it is only in itself that it is ordered and subject to regularity. [*Philosophie der Kunst* (1803), pp. 635–636]

August Wilhelm Schlegel also specifically justifies phonic repetitions (the metric constraints of verse) by the need to assert the autonomous character of poetic discourse:

> The more prosaic a discourse, the more it loses its singing stress pattern, and is simply articulated drily. Poetry has the opposite tendency. Thus, it must create its own time sequence to make clear that it

> is a discourse with its own end, that it does not serve an external agency and will emerge within a time sequence established elsewhere. In this way the listener will be drawn out of reality and put into an imaginary time sequence; he will perceive a regular subdivision of sequences, a measure inherent in the discourse itself. Hence this marvelous phenomenon, the fact that in its deepest expression, when it is used as a game, language spontaneously loses its arbitrary character, which otherwise rules it firmly, and it now follows a law apparently alien to its contents. This law is measure, cadence, rhythm. [*Vorlesungen*, (1801), pp. 103–104]

One may well wonder whether the Formalists were conscious of this heritage. Yet even if they were not, it would not matter much, since they could have been steeped in Romantic ideas without having gone directly to the source; they could have received them by way of the French or Russian Symbolists. Thus we may remain skeptical of Jakobson's statements when, in 1933, he rejects comparisons that he finds excessive: "This school [Formalism], say its detractors . . . calls for an art for art's sake approach and follows in the footsteps of Kantian aesthetics. . . . Neither Tynyanov nor Mukařovský, nor Shklovsky nor I—none of us ever proclaimed the self-sufficiency of art!" ("What Is Poetry?", p. 749). But in fact Jakobson's earliest writings contain two key references, to Mallarmé and Novalis. Now Mallarmé's aesthetic is nothing but a radical version of the Romantic doctrine; as for Novalis, he is one of the principal authors of that doctrine! In a later text, Jakobson recalls the influence Novalis once had on him:

> But much earlier [than 1915, the year he read Husserl], around 1912 [that is, at age sixteen], as a high school student who had resolutely chosen language and poetry as the object of my future research, I came upon the writings of Novalis, and was forever enchanted to find in him, as in Mallarmé, the indissoluble combination of a great poet and a profound theoretician of language. . . . The so-called Formalist school was still in its period of germination before World War I. The controversial notion of *self-regulation (Selbstgesetzmäßigkeit) of form*, to borrow the poet's terms, underwent its evolution in this movement, from the first mechanistic positions to a truly dialectic conception. This conception had found in Novalis's famous "Monologue" a fully synthetic starting point, one which from the very beginning had astounded and bewitched me. ["Nachwort," in *Form und Sinn* (1974), p. 77]

Inheritance is not identity, and it is certain that neither A. W. Schlegel nor Novalis—nor Baudelaire, whom Jakobson frequently invoked in his later writings—could have written the grammatical analyses that Jakobson devoted to poetry. For the ideological choice that the Formalists shared with the Romantics (the definition of poetic language) is not enough to characterize Formalist work in full; it does matter that Novalis wrote poetic fragments while Jakobson wrote articles in scholarly journals. The fact remains, nevertheless, that this conception of poetic language, particularly popular with the Formalists, is by no means theirs alone, and that in terms of this conception they remain entirely dependent upon Romantic ideology.

II

But this conception of poetic language is not the only one, nor is it even altogether the earliest, in the history of Russian Formalism. If we look at Shklovskij's first theoretical article, "The Resurrection of the Word," which appeared in 1914 and thus predates the group's formation, we discover that the doctrine presented above is blended curiously with another. Shklovskij does not appear to differentiate between them; yet in reality the second doctrine is very hard to reconcile with the first.

On the one hand, Shklovskij writes: "If we should wish to make a definition of poetic perception and 'artistic' perception in general, then doubtless we would hit upon the definition: 'artistic' perception is perception in which form is sensed (perhaps not only form, but form as an essential part)" ("The Resurrection of the Word," p. 42).

The general tone of this is quite familiar, and yet we also note a nuance that was present as well in the texts quoted earlier, one that seems indeed to be Shklovskij's personal contribution to the collective doctrine: instead of describing the work of art itself, or poetic language, Shklovskij focuses consistently on the process by which the work is perceived. What is autotelic is not language but rather its reception by reader or hearer.

On the other hand, Shklovskij proposes in passing yet another definition of art. This definition, as we shall see, is also closely

linked to perception, but it rejects the notion of autotelism: "The thirst for the concrete, which constitutes the soul of art (Carlyle) requires renewal" (ibid., p. 4). Carlyle, as we know, is just another popularizer of Romantic ideas, and his conception of art is derived from Schelling's: the synthesis of the infinite and the finite, the incarnation of abstraction in concrete forms. Thus we have not departed from the Romantic tradition. But perhaps Shklovskij is referring implicitly to another *topos* of the period (especially if we bear in mind his stress on perception), namely the *topos* popularized by Impressionist aesthetics. Art rejects the representation of essences and turns toward the representation of impressions and perceptions; only individual visions of an object exist, not the object in itself. Vision constitutes the object, by renewing it. Here we come closer still to the relativist and individualist principles of that ideology.

However this may be, Shklovskij does not seem at all aware that this particular function of art (the renewal of our perception of the world) is irreconcilable with autotelism, or the absence of any external function, which is equally characteristic of art; in his later writings he continues to support both views. The lack of articulation is particularly striking in "Art as Technique" ("Iskusstvo kak priëm"), where he introduces the celebrated concept of *ostranenie*, "estrangement." For here again we find the examples of a "distant" or "strange" poetic language cited earlier in "The Resurrection of the Word" (Old Church Slavonic, Arnaut Daniel, Aristotle's glosses or *glôttai* [*Poetics*, ch. XXI]), accompanied by the following statements: "The language of poetry is, then, a difficult, roughened [*zatrudnënnyj*], impeded language. . . . In the light of these developments we can define poetry as *attenuated, tortuous* speech" ("Art as Technique," pp. 22–23).

The first conception of poetic language is indeed present here. But alongside it, sometimes even embedded within it, we find the second one as well, stressed by the author. Thus Shklovskij writes, quite inconsistently with respect to the first conception: "[Poetic] imagery [is] a means of reinforcing an impression. . . . Poetic imagery is a means of creating the strongest possible impression. As a method it is . . . neither more nor less effective than . . . all those methods which emphasize the emotional effect of an expression (including words or even articulated sounds)" (ibid., pp. 8–9). We

can see how the parenthesis attempts to reconcile the two views: we return to the doctrine of artistic autotelism provided that we forget that art is different from the rest of the world! But can the "means"-image be identical with the "object"-image, the "means" with the "end"? Or again: "The purpose [of an image] is not to make us perceive meaning, but to create a special perception of the object—*it creates a 'vision' of the object instead of serving as a means for knowing it*" (ibid., p. 18).

The opposition between poetic language and practical language remains just as categorical, and just as simplistic; however, it no longer entails an opposition between autotelism and heterotelism, but instead it opposes the concrete to the abstract, the perceptible to the intelligible, the world to thought, the particular to the general. Shklovskij sometimes manages to assume both positions within a single sentence, as in the following passage, central to his essay:

> Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects "unfamiliar," to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.* [Ibid., p. 12]

Up to the word "unfamiliar" we remain within the second Formalist conception; from there to the end of the sentence, we go back to the first one—unless art is conceived as a perceptual apparatus and not as an object of perception itself. If the process of perception becomes an end in itself (owing to "difficulty" of form), the object is less perceptible, not more; if unfamiliarity provides the definition of art, the process of perception is imperceptible, and we see the object instead, as if for the first time.

Shklovskij gives no indication that he is aware of the difficulties he has raised. To my knowledge, only one attempt to reconcile the two conceptions was made, and that appeared more than fifteen years later, in Jakobson's "What Is Poetry?" Toward the end of his study, Jakobson more or less summarizes the Formalist position, and he also takes up the definition of poetic language, or poeticity:

> But how does poeticity manifest itself? Poeticity is present when the word is felt as a word and not as a mere representation of the object being named or an an outburst of emotion, when words and their composition, their meaning, their external and inner form acquire a weight and value of their own instead of referring indifferently to reality. ["What Is Poetry?", p. 750]

Up to this point Jakobson has been presenting a very pure version of the first Formalist conception, autotelism. But the following sentences require a change of perspective:

> Why is all this necessary? Why is it necessary to make a special point of the fact that the sign is not identical to the object? Because besides the direct awareness of the identity between sign and object (A is A_1) we need the direct awareness of the inadequacy of that identity (A is not A_1). The reason this antinomy is essential is that without contradiction there is no mobility of concepts, no mobility of signs, and the relation between concept and sign becomes automatized. Activity comes to a halt, and the awareness of reality dies out. . . . Poetry is what protects us from automatization, from the rust threatening our formulae of love and hatred, of revolt and renunciation, of faith and negation. [Ibid., p. 31]

This reasoning could be interpreted in the spirit of general semantics *à la* Korzybski: an automatic relationship between words and things is bad for both, for it removes them from the realm of perception and grants exclusive priority to mental processes. By breaking with automatization, we benefit on both accounts: we perceive words as words, but by the same token we also perceive objects as objects, as they "really" are, beyond any act of naming. . . .[1]

The word, and the concept of, estrangement have a well-known

[1]We find a similar assimilation, some ten years later, in Maurice Blanchot, for whom the perception of language as object also leads to the perception of objects in themselves: "The name ceases to be the ephemeral passing of nonexistence and becomes a concrete sphere, a mass of existence. Language abandons this meaning it had tried exclusively to be, and aims for nonsense. The prime role belongs to the physical: rhythm, weight, mass, figure, and then the paper we write on, the trace of ink, the book. Yes, fortunately, language is an object: it is the written object, a piece of bark, a chip from a rock, a fragment of clay preserving the reality of this earth. The word acts not as an ideal force but as an obscure power, as an incantation that forces objects and makes them *really* present outside of themselves" (*La Part du feu*, p. 330).

history, to which we shall return. It is not clear, however, that estrangement played a particularly significant role in many of the Formalist texts themselves. To be sure, Shklovskij invokes it constantly. But in the Formalists' systematic treatises (Èjxenbaum's "Theory of the Formal Method," for example, or Tomashevskij's *Teorija literatury* [Theory of literature], both published in 1925), the device is merely mentioned in passing; in no way does it stand as the definition of art. Tomashevskij describes estrangement or defamiliarization as "a special instance of artistic motivation" ("Thematics," p. 85). What place could estrangement have occupied in the Formalists' aesthetic system? One might begin by supposing that it corresponded to the very definition of art, as Shklovskij suggested. But even if this second conception of poetic language remains Romantic in origin, the form it had assumed in the period in question put it in direct contradiction with the first conception: the first denies any external function, the second proclaims one. The relation to the external world, banished from the Romantic aesthetic as an "imitation," makes its reappearance here in a more instrumental relationship: art is to reveal the world, rather than imitate it.

A second possibility would be to retain Shklovskij's repeated emphasis on the process of perception and take this idea as the outline of a theory of reading. But in this form, too, the idea contradicts the major tendencies of Formalist practice. The object of literary study, according to the Formalists—on this point they all agree—is the work itself, not the impressions the work makes on its readers. In theory, at least, Formalists distinguish the study of a work from the study of its production or reception, and they constantly criticize their predecessors for being preoccupied with mere circumstances or with impressions. A theory of reading could be slipped into Formalist doctrine only as contraband.

Finally, there is a third possibility: estrangement could serve as the basis for a theory of literary history. This is the meaning it takes on, starting in the early nineteen-twenties, in the writings of Shklovskij, Jakobson, and Tomashevskij. Estrangement gives rise to the idea of the cycle in which the literary device is rendered automatic, then exposed ("laid bare"); it underlies the metaphor of an inheritance passed from uncle to nephew (each period canonizes texts that the previous period considered marginal). But if we take the idea of estrangement in its strict sense, we can apply it only to a

limited number of cases; in order to make it more generally applicable, we would have to transform its meaning. That is what happens in the writings of Tynjanov, which thus lead to a third conception of poetic language.

III

Before we reach that point, we must recall what the Formalists' concrete activity consisted of, and then assess the extent to which this activity corresponds to some aspect of their program. Little of their writing is devoted to the elaboration of an aesthetic system, whether original or trivial, nor are they concerned with exploring the essence of art; for better or for worse, we have to admit that the Formalists were not "philosophers." On the other hand, they produced a number of works on various aspects of poetry (Brik, Jakobson, Tomashevskij, Èjxenbaum, Zhirmunskij, Tynjanov), on the organization of narrative discourse (Èjxenbaum, Tynjanov, Vinogradov), on the forms of plot construction (Shklovskij, Tomashevskij, Reformatskij, Propp), and so on.

Thus we might say, at first glance, that there is a gap between what I called the "first conception" of poetic language and the Formalists' concrete work, to the extent that it is hard to see how the studies themselves depend in any way on the initial hypothesis. If we look more closely, however, we discover that these works are made possible (without being directly inspired) by the postulate that is the Formalists' point of departure. The somewhat abstract and hollow Romantic formula according to which a work of art has to be perceived in itself, and not as a means to some other end, becomes not a doctrinal affirmation but a practical reason leading the Formalists—who are in this respect scholars rather than readers—to perceive the work itself. They discover that it has a rhythm that we must learn how to describe; that it has narrators that we must be able to differentiate; that its narrative devices are universal and yet infinitely varied. In other words, their point of departure within the Romantic aesthetic allows them to put into practice—and here they are true innovators—a new *science of discourse.* Not that, unlike other critics, they speak the truth where others were merely expressing opinions; such a view would be illusory. Still,

they are renewing the link with the project initiated by Aristotle in his *Poetics* and his *Rhetoric,* that of a discipline whose object is the forms of discourse rather than individual works. Indeed, this encounter between the Aristotelian tradition and the Romantic ideology is where the originality of the Formalist movement lies, and it explains the Formalist preference for scholarly articles over poetic fragments.

Èjxenbaum turned out to be particularly aware of this distinctive feature of Formalism, and he referred to it frequently in his "Theory of the Formal Method":

> It is not the methods of studying literature but rather literature as an object of study that is of prime concern to the Formalists. . . . Neither "Formalism" as a theory of aesthetics nor "methodology" as a fully formulated scientific system is characteristic of us; what does characterize us is the endeavor to create an autonomous discipline of literary studies based on the specific properties of literary material. [Pp. 3–4]

> It became unmistakably clear, even to those outside Opoyaz [Society for the Study of Poetic Language], that the essence of our work lay, not in erecting some rigid "Formal method," but in studying the specific properties of verbal art, and that the point was not the method but the object of study. [Pp. 28–29]

Formalism is characterized not by a theory but by an object. In one sense, Èjxenbaum is right: he has no particular method at his disposal, and even terminology changes over time. But what characterizes a critical school is never a method (that notion is a convenient fiction designed to attract disciples). A critical school is characterized rather by the way it constructs the object of its studies. Historians of the previous generation had included relations with the ideological context as part of that object, and they had omitted any internal analysis of works; the Formalists did just the opposite. Now it is quite clear that, for Éjxenbaum, who illustrates the positivist attitude here, that choice remains perfectly transparent, invisible. Moreover, this explains why the Formalists never seem to offer answers to the question: "What is criticism supposed to do?" They would answer in all innocence that criticism is supposed to describe literature—as if literature existed as a natural fact.

But let us return to the object of literary studies as Èjxenbaum perceives it. This object is "literature as a specific system of facts,"

"the specific properties of verbal art." But just what sort of specificity is at stake? To justify the creation of a new discipline,[1] that specificity would have to be the same in all cases recognized as belonging to literature. Yet an attentive analysis of the "works themselves"—made possible by the hypothesis of literary specificity—showed the Formalists that the specificity in question does not exist. More precisely, it exists only in historically and culturally circumscribed terms; it is not universal or eternal; by the same token to define it in terms of autotelism is untenable. Paradoxically, their Romantic presuppositions are precisely the source of the Formalists' anti-Romantic conclusions.

Tynjanov is the first to note this, in his article "Literaturnyj fakt," ("The literary fact," 1924). In the first place, he remarks: "While it is getting more and more difficult to come up with a firm definition of literature, any contemporary can point out what a *literary fact* is. . . . The older contemporary, who has lived through one or two or perhaps several literary revolutions, will observe that in his time such-and-such an event was not considered a literary fact, whereas now it has become one, and vice-versa" (p. 9). And he concludes that "the literary fact is heterogeneous, and in this sense literature is a series evolving disjunctively" (p. 29).

We readily see what degree of generalization the concept of estrangement had to undergo in order to lead to Tynjanov's new literary theory (is it by chance that his article is dedicated to Viktor Shklovskij?). Estrangement is now just one example of a broader phenomenon, the historicity of the categories we use to classify cultural facts. These facts do not exist in the absolute, like chemical substances, but depend rather upon the users' perception.

Returning to the same subject in "On Literary Evolution" (1927), Tynjanov makes his position even clearer.

> The very existence of a fact *as literary* depends on its differential quality, that is, on its interrelationship with both literary and extraliterary orders. Thus, its existence depends on its function. What in one epoch would be a literary fact would in another be a common matter of social communication, and vice versa, depending on the whole literary system in which the given fact appears. Thus the friendly letter of Deržavin is a social fact. The friendly letter of the Karamzin and Puškin epoch is a literary fact. Thus one has the literariness of memoirs and diaries in one system and their extraliterariness in another. [P. 69]

"Automatization" and "estrangement" appear here as particular examples of the process of literary transformation in general.

This thesis has devastating consequences for Formalist doctrine. In effect, it amounts to asserting that what Èjxenbaum considered the cornerstone of Formalism's identity—the object of Formalist studies, that is, the (transhistorical) specificity of literature—does not exist. Two contradictory reactions can be noted among the other members of the group. The first is Èjxenbaum's own, in *Moi vremennik* (My chronicle, 1929). He adheres completely to Tynjanov's position, accepting his conclusions as well as his examples: "Thus, for example, at times periodicals and the environment created by the activities of editing and publishing take on meaning as literary fact, while at other times the same meaning is conferred on societies, circles, salons" ("Literary Environment," p. 61). "Literary fact and literary period are complex and changing notions, inasmuch as the interrelations between the elements constituting literature and their functions are changeable" (*Moi vremennik*, p. 59). Nothing is said, on the other hand, about how this idea relates to Èjxenbaum's previous statements on the subject.

Jakobson, for his part, does not seem disturbed by these new declarations. In "What Is Poetry?", he is content to isolate an enduring kernel within the general flux; thus he somewhat limits the field in which his theses apply, but he does not modify their tenor: "As I have already pointed out, the content of the concept of *poetry* is unstable and temporally conditioned, whereas the poetic function, *poeticity*, is, as the Formalists stressed, an element *sui generis*, one that cannot be mechanically reduced to other elements" (p. 750). Jakobson's work in the nineteen-sixties continued to bear witness to his conviction that it is possible to have a linguistic (and transhistorical) definition, if not of poetry itself, then at the very least of the poetic function.

Tynjanov's thesis has radical implications. In fact, it does not allow for an autonomous knowledge of literature, but it leads toward two complementary disciplines: a science of discourse that studies stable linguistic forms but cannot account for literary specificity; and a history that makes explicit the content of the idea of literature in any given historical period, relating this idea to others at the same level. This third conception of poetic language in fact demolishes the notion itself: in its place we have the "literary fact," no longer a philosophical category but a historical one. Tynjanov

takes literature down from its pedestal: he no longer sees it as in opposition to, but rather in a relation of exchange and transformation with, other discursive categories. The very structure of thought has changed: in place of everyday grayness and the poetic starburst, we discover the plurality of manners of speaking. At one stroke, the initial gap, the gap between language that refers to the world and language that expresses itself, is abolished, and the question of truth in literature can be formulated in new terms.

As far as the definition of literature itself is concerned, we can do no more than attempt to imagine what consequences the Formalists might have drawn from this spectacular reversal. One possible direction might have been a radical historicism—just as radical as their Formalism—which would have led to throwing out the entire question; thus we would not have abandoned the conceptual framework of Romanticism. Following another lead would have made it possible to seek a new definition, justified not by the authentic relationship among all the facts known as literary, but by the explanatory value of the definition itself. Yet nothing of the sort ever came about: the group fell victim to political repression toward the end of the nineteen-twenties, and all the questions it had raised became taboo, in the Soviet Union, for several decades. The only positive lesson to emerge from this brutal end to Formalist reflection is that literature and criticism apparently do not find their ends in themselves: otherwise, the State would not have bothered to bring them under control.