

Literary criticism must be scientific¹

Juri Lotman

The paper by V. Kozhinov “Is structural poetics possible?” (1965) is not the first that opponents of structuralism dedicate to that question. Since the beginning of the debate, the tone and character of the charges presented to those authors that implement statistical and structural methodologies in humanistic sciences underwent a significant evolution. L. Timofeev was the first to open the discussion,² introducing structuralism as suddenly revived ‘formalism’, as the repetition of an outdated stage of science. Clearly, such arguments do not even deserve a reply: it was enough to remind the forgetful colleagues that the whole matter “has already been condemned”.

Instead, P. Palievskij, in the article “On structuralism in literary criticism” (Palievskij 1963) chose to battle structuralism as a scientific system. The outcome of his battle, however, was quite unexpected, as he was unwillingly facing another adversary altogether: Science Itself. The object of Palievskij’s critiques is not something specific to structuralism; rather, it is something intrinsic to the very essence of scientific thought. Palievskij points out that literary criticism is a peculiar science lacking a precise terminology (words that do not have a conventional meaning are not terms). He does not seem to be troubled at all with this fact; moreover, he is even happy about it, since he sees in the absence of terminology not a deficiency, but a specific quality: “literary criticism has existed for over two thousand years and, as widely known, so far a clear terminology has never been established”.³ The words of A. K. Tolstoj come to mind:

¹ Originally published as: Lotman, Juri 1967. *Literaturovedenie dolzhno byt' naukoj. Voprosy literatury* 1: 90–100. © Tallinn University. Published by arrangement with ELKOST Intl. Literary Agency. The Russian word ‘*literaturovedenie*’ could be translated in to English as ‘literary criticism’, ‘literary studies’ or ‘literary sciences.’ I will use the term ‘literary criticism’, in continuity with other English translations of Lotman’s works. (Here and below the translator’s comments, P. R.)

² Reference to Timofeev; Leonid I. 1963. Sorok let spustya.. (chislo i chuvstvo mery i izuchenii poetiki). *Voprosy Literatury* 7(4): 62–80.

³ Palievskij, P. 1963. O strukturalizme v literaturovedenii. *Znamya* 12: 189–198.

For we are very young,
 We are only five thousand years and some;
 This is why we have no coherence,
 This is why there is no order!
Chto my ved' ochen' mlady,
Nam tysyach pyat' lish' let;
Zatem u nas net skladu,
*Zatem poryadku net!*⁴

When Palievskij condemns the attempts of structuralists to “grasp the ungraspable”, to “exhaust the inexhaustible”, he thereby proves (if, indeed, he proves it!) that scientific thought is inapplicable to the study of art. Sure, that is a possible standpoint. However, what would that have to do with structuralism?

To his merit, V. Kozhinov’s paper is different from the aforementioned articles – he is striving instead to understand the theories of his opponents. While he, not a long time ago, admitted that some fundamental ideas of F. de Saussure seemed to him “complicated and debatable” (Kozhinov 1963: 4), now he writes: “Saussure is, without a doubt, a great linguist, and with him began a completely new era in the history of the study of language” (Kozhinov 1965: 105). While in his article “Word as form of the image”, V. Kozhinov unconditionally identified structuralism with formalism (Kozhinov 1963: 3), here he shows liberality and tolerance: “I don’t think, in any way, that the attempts to build a structural poetics should be abandoned. I even dare to say that if its followers should decide to desist from such attempts, I would try to dissuade them” (Kozhinov 1965: 107). What a strange tolerance. So, according to V. Kozhinov, even if incorrect, similar pursuits should be allowed for the sake of competition between different approaches. However, whether to allow or ban a scientific approach should never be a matter of discussion in a scientific debate (and are we not in one?): the power to sanction a research methodology does not pertain to the participants of the debate. What we do need to discuss instead is whether the structural semiotic study of literature opens new scientific perspectives. V. Kozhinov does not repute so; we believe differently. We will now proceed to examine his argument.

In order to refute the semiotic methodologies, V. Kozhinov interrogates the primary sources, some of which do provide highly competent expositions of the matter. This can be only applauded.⁵ Yet, unfortunately, he apparently did

⁴ Tolstoj, Aleksej K. (1976[1869]). There sits beneath a canopy... In: Lotman, Juri. *Analysis of the Poetic Text*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 219–220.

⁵ The uncensored version of the article testifies that Lotman has in mind Kozhinov’s references to Voloshinov’s *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. See also Lotman 2018: 67 and note 12 p. 84.

not examine enough of them. Only a researcher who believes that his reader is uninformed could create new, idiosyncratic definitions of concepts that already possess a precise scientific definition. “[T]he object of semiotics is not systems of signs in the proper sense, rather systems of signals, while the reality⁶ [...] that I call a sign⁷ [...] is not the object of semiotic competence” (Kozhinov 1965: 101): such bold claims cannot entice a discussion, since they concern questions that were already fully clarified.

V. Kozhinov attempts to master the terminology that he believes to be specifically semiotic without any success. For instance, he writes that “the signal is, above all, something permanent, stable, fixed once and for all or, as the semioticians say, ‘invariant’” (Kozhinov 1965: 98). Further, he speaks of “stable, immobile and invariant forms” (Kozhinov 1965: 104). Kozhinov clearly does not understand the meaning of the term ‘invariant’. His error is very typical of the opponents of structuralism, accustomed to living in a world of separated entities, of isolated concepts. When encountering the term ‘invariant’, Kozhinov, out of habit, searches for an isolated concept, a ‘word’, that semioticians, apparently just to sound more important, exchanged with the incomprehensible term ‘invariant’. And he finds ‘immutability’. The structural approach instead teaches us to see the world, and our models of it, as systems of relations and connections. ‘Invariant’ is not the name of an individual characteristic, but the attribute of a relation. ‘Invariant’ is not the immobile rock. ‘Invariant’ is not that man which ‘never shall shudder’, ‘if the world is turned upside down.’⁸ ‘Invariant’ is a concept correlated with ‘variant’ (the word itself is used only in the sense of ‘invariant of something’): the invariant part of changing states allows identifying them as variants of the same phenomenon. V. Kozhinov’s claim that the relation of invariance is intrinsic only to signals, and is the origin of the distinction between a signal and a sign, is simply incomprehensible to those who truly understand the meaning of those terms.

In structural linguistics, it is commonly accepted that the word is a sign. Nonetheless, while possessing unchangeable lexical content, a word is the synthetic abstraction of a whole series of phonetic and grammatical variants (word para-

⁶ A clear definition of this “reality” is not given in the article, as its author is not sufficiently familiar with the most authoritative works that discuss this matter. – Note by Juri Lotman.

⁷ In the original manuscript, Lotman mocks this reasoning: “It sounds like ‘a cucumber that I prefer to call an integral...’”. See the commentary in Lotman, Juri M. 2018. *O strukturalizme. Raboty 1965–1970 godov.* (Pilshchikov, Igor; Poselyagin, Nikolaj; Trunin, Mikhail, eds., comm.) Tallinn: Tallinn University Press, 85, Note 15. [Henceforth Lotman 2018.]

⁸ Paraphrase of a poem by Feofan Prokopovich – see, Prokopovich, Feofan 1961[1730]. *Kto krępok na boga upovaya. Sochineniya.* (Eremin, Igor P., ed.) Moscow–Leningrad: Izd. Ak. Nauk SSSR, 226. See also Pilshchikov’s comment in Lotman 2018: 85, Note 18. The commentator also points out the fact that Feofan’s lines are a translation of Horace’s *Carm.* 3.3.1–8.

digs). The word emerges as an invariant only in relation to those series. What we are dealing with is something completely opposite to what V. Kozhinov has in mind. An unchangeable state, without variants, cannot possess the propriety of invariance. V. Kozhinov reputed that, if something changes, then it is variable, and if it does not change, it is an 'invariant'. The structural approach originates from a different, dialectical, idea: invariability and variability are correlated, and one is not conceivable without the other.

A succession of magical changes
Of the dear face...
Ryad volshebnyh izmenenij
*Milogo litsa...*⁹

Something changes. However, I know that the "dear face" (invariant) is always one and the same and, consequently, the "magical changes", rather than different faces that I glimpse in front of me are its variants.

Therefore, the whole argument by Kozhinov is shattered, as it is based on hasty generalizations and an insufficient acquaintance with the topic. However, we are highly sympathetic with the author's sincere desire to sort out the question on the possibility of a structural poetics. Therefore, we feel obliged to put aside the controversy and focus instead on a constructive exposition of what we believe are the fundamental principles of structural research.

Each scientific method has its own gnoseological foundation. This question should be discussed, at least for the reason that structuralists have already been accused of mechanicism (the reduction of the aesthetic to the mathematical), relativism, and all the capital sins of philosophy. Since the style of the offence determines also the style of the defence, I will take the liberty to remind my adversaries of one quote. Paul Lafargue reports a very interesting sentence by K. Marx on the theory of scientific cognition: "In the higher mathematics he (K. Marx) found the dialectic movement in its most logical and, at the same time, simplest form. He also reputed that science only reaches perfection when it succeeds in employing mathematics".¹⁰ I would like to address those who in the appeal to the mathematical methods only see the road to formalism and mechanicism: how do they reply to this statement from Marx?

⁹ Afanasij Afanas'evich Fet, "Shepot, robkoe dyhan'e" (1850).

¹⁰ Lafargue, Paul; Liebknecht, Wilhelm 1933. "Vospominaniya o Markse". *Bor'ba klassov* 3(4): 66.

All the opponents of structuralism who have expressed their views in print belong to the scientific party of the 'content'. They are convinced that in the field of humanities and their methodology everything is clear, that they already attained complete perfection, and the only work left is 'to [observe and] maintain it'. When a researcher attempts to elaborate a new approach, even someone as benign as V. Kozhinov thinks: well, it is not a disaster if hot-heads bumble, "let them get to the 'indissoluble core', they will bump on it and get back home"; in the end, they will have to "return to traditional methodology" (Kozhinov 1965: 107, 106). In the sciences of arts, structuralists belong instead to the party of the 'unsatisfied': they are convinced that the perfection about which K. Marx was speaking has yet to appear in the field of humanities. Structuralists are not inclined to observe, but to research. They understand, better than their opponents, the incompleteness of their attempts, their preliminary character. Nonetheless, they persevere in advocating the necessity of the continuous advancement of science.

The methodological foundation of structuralism is dialectics. One of the fundamental principles of structuralism is the refusal of analysis by means of mechanical enumeration of features: the artistic work is not a sum of features, but a functional system, a structure. The researcher does not list 'features', but rather builds the model of their relations. Each structure is an organic unity of elements, organized according to a given systemic type, and is in turn only an element of a more complex structural unity. Furthermore, it is possible to consider each element of the structure, taken separately, as a self-sufficient structure in itself. In this sense, the idea of a layer-based analysis, very common in contemporary science, is intrinsic to structuralism. As a consequence, the harsh division between synchronic and diachronic (historical) analysis, despite being very important as a methodological device and having played a very positive role in the past, is now regarded as a heuristic rather than a foundational principle.

The study of the synchronic sections of a system allows the researcher to advance from empirical to structural study. The subsequent stage is the study of the system in its functioning. It is now clear that when we have to deal with complex structures (such as art) whose synchronic description is in general troublesome, due to the countless factors involved, the knowledge of the previous states of the system becomes a necessary premise for a successful modellization. Therefore, structuralism cannot be considered an opponent of historicism in any way; the necessity to understand the different artistic structures (works of art) as elements of a more complex unity ('culture', 'history') is, on the contrary, a pressing task. Not mathematics and linguistics instead of history, but mathematics and linguistics together with history: this is the path of the structural study – those are the allies of literary criticism.

The relationship of structuralism with the abovementioned disciplines also determines its relationship with the previous scientific tradition. Indeed, in the domestic sciences structuralism has an important tradition. One example that I wish to recall, even if it is now considered a fundamental work by a wide array of disciplines, is V. Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, as well as the works of P. Bogatyrev, M. Bakhtin,¹¹ A. Skaftymov and others. The difference between structuralists and their opponents does not lie in the supposed repeal of 'traditional literary criticism' of the former. What differs is the understanding of the meaning of 'tradition'. When someone will write a history of domestic literary criticism, possibly, it will reveal, as Hamlet said, "more things [...] than are dreamt of in your philosophy" [Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5]. Setting aside the contemporary scholars, it is enough to recall the works of Yu. Tynjanov, B. Tomashevskij, B. Eichenbaum, G. Gukovskij, V. Grib, L. Pumpyanskij, G. Vinokur, S. Baluhatyj, A. Kukulevich¹² (killed young in the war), and many others. When a history of Soviet literary criticism is studied, and the significance of those authors understood, it will become clear that structuralism is not hostile at all towards previous "traditional" scholarship. Structuralism does not claim an exceptional position in science, also because in true science such a position does not exist. Aspiration to uniqueness is rather a sin of the critics of structuralism.

Beside its gnoseological foundation, as for every scientific approach, structuralism also needs to reflect upon its ethical grounds, if only to repeal the common charge of 'dehumanization' presented by its opponents. V. Kozhinov writes: "I am convinced that the attempts to build an exact science of poetry will continue, perhaps even with increasing intensity. The very idea of such a science is, without a doubt, progressive in the proper sense of the word. 'Progress', however, is far from necessarily meaning 'better', i.e. good, true, productive, beautiful. Contemporary totalitarianism, for example, is a result of the 'progressive' evolution of

¹¹ By mentioning Bakhtin as belonging to the structuralist tradition, Lotman is directly attacking Kozhinov. The latter was one of the main actors in the "rediscovery" of Bakhtin in the 1960s. We know, through the annotations in his personal copy of the journal *Voprosy Literatury*, that Bakhtin was aware of the debate on structuralism, and had read Lotman's contribution. His sympathies, however, seem to fall on Kozhinov's side (see Gogotishvili's critical Note 38 in Bakhtin, Mikhail M. 2002. *Sobranie sochinenij*. V. 6. Moscow: Inst. Mirovoj Lit., 595–597).

¹² Anatolij Mihailovich Kukulevich (1913–1942), postgraduate student (*aspirant*) at the Philological Faculty of Leningrad State University, student of G. A. Gukovskij. In his memories, Lotman (2001: 17) describes Kukulevich as being a decisive influence in his decision to pursue literary studies (see Lotman, Jurij 2001. *Non-memorie*. Novara: Interlinea).

economy. Is it good to defend such progress and sing its praises?” (Kozhinov 1965: 107).

A strange example. What could possibly be the connection between the exact methods in humanistic sciences and totalitarianism? Rather, inexactitude and approximation in the scientific work pave the path to unfairness, opportunism and voluntary or involuntary falsehood. But falsehood will never belong in humanism.

The only thing that science, by its very nature, can do for man is to satisfy his need for truth. Science is humanist primarily because it broadens the mind of man. Totalitarianism employs much less the exact sciences than demagoguery. The foundation of demagoguery is the possibility of bending the truth in any direction.

More than that, many researchers in the humanities are pushed towards exact methods because they have become tired of the ritualized commemorative and non-commemorative statements, which sometimes are presented under the guise of science. When does the dehumanization of science truly occur? When the researcher strives to offer a limited but solid truth or when, through the same ritualistic formulas and exclamations, a writer is praised as a great realist and a champion of truth in one anniversary (his), while shunned as the champion of reaction in another (that of another writer)?¹³

About the “delimitation of truth”. The opponents of structuralism thoroughly collect the statements where structuralists admit that semiotics is unfit (or temporarily unfit) for some tasks and show them to the reader: “See! Here! They confess to their limits, while we do not have any!” Any aeroplane, even the most perfect, is limited by its technical possibilities. But wait, behold the flying carpet that does not have any limitations! This is why science is different from what Manilov¹⁴ thinks. Science is not capable of everything. Only by recognizing this fact is it possible to determine what lies within the possibilities of science and what is, for the time being, out of reach. If you present any scientist with a particular question, be it a physicist, a chemist or a biologist, he can tell you whether that question can be answered now, whether it is likely to remain unanswered, or whether the question itself does not make any sense at all. In the humanities, instead, there is the silent agreement that only one factor determines the possibility for the solution of all problems: its inclusion in the research plan of an institute or in a publishing contract.

¹³ In the original manuscript, the paragraph continued: “Examples are memorable”. According to Pilshchikov, Lotman is hinting here at the Soviet critic Vladimir Ermilov’s self-contradictory assessments of Dostoevsky; he was also Kozhinov’s father-in-law. See Lotman 2018: 74 and Note 47 on pp. 89–90.

¹⁴ A character in the novel *Dead Souls* by Nikolaj Gogol.

I am afraid that the balance is in favour of those that strive, in each step, to define the limits of their own possibilities.

In the traditional structure of literary criticism, two different methodologies coexist: in one, the researcher investigates the work of art as one of the many products of social thought; in the other, he examines the rhythm, stanzas, composition, style, etc. There is no binding connection between these two, essentially independent, studies. In the first case, the literary critic becomes a historian of social thought, who neglects the artistic specificity of his object. In the second case, the researcher is hampered by the question: what is the meaning of the formal elements observed? Some of the most talented researchers are able to overcome spontaneously the contradiction between these two methodologies. Their work deserves every consideration. Nonetheless, true science begins when a strict evidentiary methodology encases the intuitive discoveries, relying on developed research tools.

The structural methodology seeks to overcome the dualism of modern literary criticism: on the one hand, it investigates literature as an art, i.e. as a specific form of social consciousness,¹⁵ strongly opposing its shallow “dissolution” in the history of social doctrines. On the other hand, structuralism seeks to uncover the idea of the work of art as a unity of signifying elements.

For each of those elements, the structural researcher asks himself: what is their meaning, what is the conceptual load that they carry? The relation of the artistic ideas with the structure of the artwork resembles the relation of life with the biological structure of the cell. It is impossible in contemporary biology to find a vitalist,¹⁶ someone who would study life without considering organized matter as its bearer. They can still be found, however, in the field of literary criticism. At the same time, a simple terminological enumeration of the material “inventory” of the living tissue certainly would not disclose the secret of life. The cell is a functional self-regulating system, and the realization of its function is life. The work of art is an equally complex self-regulating system (of another type, of course). The artistic

¹⁵ Cf. Marx, Karl 1977[1859] *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (Dobb, Maurice, ed.). Moscow: Progress Publishers, 20: “The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness (*gesellschaftliche Bewußtsein*).”

¹⁶ See Pilshchikov’s and Trunin’s commentary on the context of this comparison in Lotman 2018, Note 56 on pp. 92–93.

idea is the life of the work, impossible both in dissected bodies and outside of a body. The mechanicism of the in approach and the idealism of the latter must be replaced by the dialectic of functional analysis.

The first objective of the structuralist researcher is to determine the meaning of the elements of the artistic text, traditionally considered its “formal” elements. Those elements, however, do not possess any meaning when removed from the system to which they belong.

Thus, the researcher faces the complex task of determining the elementary signifying units of a given system (each of which being a set of differential features) and the rules of their combination in more complex signifying units. The methodology employed will be the same for the different layers of the work of art (from the simplest to the most complex) and for other modelling systems (language, myth, etc.), while the elements and the rules of their combination will be different.

The signifying elements of a given structure will be those that, within the boundaries of that structure, are included in [binary] oppositions. The essence of those elements cannot be revealed with the simple description of their isolated nature: it is thus necessary to identify these oppositions. For example, in the poem by Pushkin:

Rise up, fallen slaves!
*Vosstan'te, padshie raby!*¹⁷

The element ‘*vosstan'te*’ acquires a different meaning depending on which system of oppositions we include it in. The opposition

rise up [*vosstan'te*] ↔ prostrate down [*prostrites' nits*]

determines the semantics; while the opposition

rise up [*vosstan'te*] ↔ stand up [*vstan'te*]

determines the stylistics (or pragmatics, in semiotic terminology). The inclusion of the same element in a different opposition of the ode “*Vol'nost'*”, such as

Appeal to uprising ↔ Appeal to reform

¹⁷ Pushkin, Aleksandr S. 1959[1817]. *Vol'nost'. Oda. Sobranie sochinenij v 10 tomah. Vol. 1.* Moscow: GIKhL, 44–47.

or

Appeal to uprising ↔ Appeal to preserve serfdom

radically distorts the meaning of that element in the Pushkinian system. If we consider the last opposition as true, then we get into an insoluble contradiction when trying to understand the verses:

And down the criminal axe-blade flies,
 And lo! A ghastly purple lies,
 Upon a Gaul enslaved anew.¹⁸
Padet prestupnaya sekira...
I se – zlodejskaya porfira
Na gallah skovannyh lezhit.

Here despotism (the “wicked purple” of Napoleon) is not antithetical to popular uprising and the execution of the king – on the contrary, it is its consequence. Anarchy and despotism are variants of lawlessness and violation of political freedom. The execution of the king (anarchy) generates despotism (Napoleon), and despotism (Paul) generates anarchy (the assassination of 11 March 1801).¹⁹ To Pushkin, both stand opposed to the law. Therefore:

French Revolution
 Dictatorship of Napoleon
 Despotism of Paul I
 Assassination of 11 March 1801

↔ Law

In the previous tables, the sign ↔ means opposition (the reader could substitute it with the word “opposes”), and the concepts listed in one column of the table are synonymous within the given system.

Other Pushkinian poems, such as “Napoleon”,²⁰ give very different systems of oppositions.

The term ‘opposition’ originates in structural linguistics and was introduced in phonology by N. S. Trubetskoj. It is connected with the idea of ‘unity of the

¹⁸ The translation by A. Z. Foreman is available at <http://poemsintranslation.blogspot.com/2015/07/pushkin-ode-to-liberty-from-russian.html>.

¹⁹ Emperor Paul I, son of Catherine II, was assassinated in a palace conspiracy on 23 March (11 March according to the Julian calendar) 1801.

²⁰ Pushkin, Alexandr S. 1959[1821]. “Napoleon”. *Sobranie sochinenij v 10 tomach. Vol. 1*. Moscow : GIKhL, 160–163.

opposites' of Hegel and with the 'principle of antithesis' of Darwin.²¹ It was adopted by G. N. Plehanov for the analysis of art.²² It was employed by Ferdinand de Saussure as a foundation of his system (the 'mechanism of resemblance and difference'²³), then productively applied in linguistics by R. Jakobson, in psychology by L. Vygotskij²⁴, and in ethnography by Boas and Lévi-Strauss.²⁵ Clearly, it is an effective instrument for the construction of models of various structures. Such a mechanism of description lends itself to the study with the aid of mathematical instruments. The principle of opposition is highly dialectic because the opposition is determined as the fundamental form of commonality. Just as the variants of an element possess an invariant (for the left column in the example from the ode "Liberty" the invariant will be 'destruction of the political equilibrium'), the members of the opposition possess an archiphoneme, archilexeme, archiseme, etc.,²⁶ which removes ("neutralizes") their oppositionality:

Compare the following opposition

Destruction of the political balance
(bad political system) ↔ Law (good political system)

²¹ Darwin, Charles. 2009[1890]. *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 52.

²² For Plehanov's discussion of Darwin's 'principle of antithesis' see Plehanov, Georgij V. 1922. *Ob iskusstve*. In: *Iskusstvo: sbornik statej*, Moscow: Novaya Moskva, 37–59.

²³ "Le mécanisme linguistique roule tout entier sur des identités et des différences, celles-ci n'étant que la contre-partie de celles-là," quoted from Saussure, Ferdinand de 1995[1916]. *Cours de linguistique générale*, (de Mauro, Tullio, ed.). Paris: Payot & Rivages, 150. See also de Mauro's Note 217 pp. 459–460: "[the goal of this discussion is] establishing on which bases we identify (as speakers and as linguists) two phonemes as two specimens of the same entity, as two variants of the same invariant" (the author's italics).

²⁴ See Vygotskij, Lev S. 1998[1965] *Psihologiya iskusstva*. Rostov-na-Donu: Feniks. 17, 28–29, where the author discusses Plehanov (1922). See also the commentary in Lotman 2018: 95, Note 67.

²⁵ See the introductory note by Restaneo in this issue, p. 477.

²⁶ 'Archiseme', as Lotman (1977: 37, Note 4) explains, "is coined by analogy to N. S. Trubetskoy's term 'archiphoneme', and is used here to mean the totality of distinctive features common to two elements on a given level of a neutralized binary opposition". [See Lotman, Juri M. 1977. *The Structure of the Artistic Text*. (Lenhoff, Gail; Vroon, Ronald, trans.) Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 37 Note 4. See also Trubetskoy, Nikolaj S. 1969[1958]. *Principles of Phonology*. Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 79.]

with the verses:

He wants to be like us, the Gipsy:
 He's prosecuted by the law.
On hochet byt' kak my tsyganom:
*Ego presleduet zakon.*²⁷

Here we can find the opposition

Freedom	↔	Law
(existence outside of politics)		(existence inside politics)

It is clear that in the first system the members of the opposition are not simply antithetical, but also possess some common essence. If we look at the former opposition “through the eyes” of the latter, then this common essence comes to the fore.

In “The Gypsies” Pushkin is not interested in the differences between “bad” and “good” political systems, as they are equally evil, since they both oppose the “natural will”. He then expresses this common feature, which makes them lose their difference (the feature of being “good” or “bad” ceased to be differential for the concept of ‘political system’ and lost its significance), with the word ‘law’.

The ensemble of these fundamental oppositions reflects the author’s understanding of reality, the structure of the writer’s text. A complex hierarchy of signifying elements, built in conformity with the rules of a given structure, becomes the author’s model of the world, realizing the artistic idea.

The aforementioned example is interesting also as it shows that certain features of a given structure are discovered only when we read it through the “eyes” of a structure of another kind, i.e. when we translate its concepts into the language of another system. This methodology opens the way to a stricter study of a wide array of issues: from the impact of reality on art to the problem of influence, adaptation and reception, i.e. the impact of one type of consciousness, culture or art, on another. It opens the way to the solution of the still vaguely defined problem of ‘the writer and the reader’. We most often study the writer’s plans and intentions (and rarely – their embodiment). The question of how the conscience of the reader transforms the work of the writer, and what the laws and forms of such a transformation are, is not studied at all.

²⁷ See Pushkin, Alexandr S. 1959[1817]. Tsygany. *Sobranie sochinenij v 10 tomah. Vol. 3.* Moscow: GIKhL, 159–180.

Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize yet another aspect of the issue. In the complex hierarchy of the work of art, not everything can be reduced to a system of concepts. Those who fight against structuralism from the standpoint of intuitionism accuse it of neglecting the sub-logical, emotional side of art. This critique, however, has no grounds. Specialists in literature as well as physiologists employing a structural approach are deeply interested in the problem of the modelling of emotions, and in the relationship between conscience and intuition in the artistic creation. To be an ichthyologist, however, it is not necessary to become a fish. Just the same, in order to study intuitive processes it is most desirable to employ methodologies more perfected than those of intuitive research. Furthermore, the question on the nature of intuition acquires a deeper meaning: as it is approached with a scientific mentality, it shows that the future development of automatic systems will be closely connected to attempts of artificially simulating intuitive processes.

The structural study of literature is in its infancy. Hence the inevitable polemical harshness in the formulation of the methodological questions, the search for a research path still ongoing, the failures and the successes. All these factors make it still too early to give a conclusive review of structuralism's achievements and its failure. It is clear, however, that the very nature of the science of literary criticism is in the process of transformation. I am most happy to observe that philology has ceased to be an "easy profession" that does not require any special expertise.

In the 19th century, academic philologists were required to have a deep knowledge of ancient languages and to be able to master textological, hermeneutical and biographical research. Later, philologists were further required to handle historical material with competence; to possess a broad comparative cultural erudition and experience in sociological research; to study poetry using statistical methods, to study literary stylistics, etc. As the demands increased, the range of expertise needed by a philologist steadily expanded. At the same time, an inverse process occurred: the literary critic ceased to be a philologist, and linguistics became an independent and unrelated occupation. Ancient languages and literatures began to be studied only by a narrow circle of specialists. Scholars of West-European literature tacitly received the right to know about Russian literature only from general courses, while "Russianists" received the right to have only a shallow understanding of foreign (not only West-European, but also Slavic!) literature. For a literary critic, to be an expert of textology or metrics [*stihovedenie*] became optional. This process has an objective explanation: it is connected with the

phenomenon of specialization, a distinctive characteristic of the previous science. This process, however, had some negative consequences: it was easier to become a literary critic, especially with a specialization in contemporary literature. As a result, in conjunction with a series of external causes, the quality standards in humanistic sciences decreased.

A new type of literary critic has to be able to combine a wide array of empirical material, which he has acquired through his own research, using deductive thinking as for the exact sciences. He must be a linguist (since in our times the study of language is the most advanced amongst the humanities and its methodologies act as a model for other sciences) and must be able to work with other modelling systems. The new literary critic should be acquainted with the latest discoveries of the psychological sciences, and constantly strive to sharpen his own methodology, reflecting over general problems of semiotics and cybernetics. He must be accustomed to collaborate with mathematicians. Ideally, he himself should become a literary critic, a linguist and a mathematician, and be accustomed to typological thinking. Finally, he should never accept easy and familiar answers over the ultimate truth.

Sure, becoming a literary critic will become more difficult, and in the near future it will become incommensurately more so. In this, perhaps, lies the most encouraging result of this new course in the humanities.

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*Translated by Pietro Restaneo*²⁸

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