

Igor Smirnov

Contradictions: Semantic Strategies of Philosophy and Literature

Applying a semantic perspective, the article revolves around the questions of mutual relationships between philosophy and literature, pointing to a whole range of often contradictory views which see literature as both inferior and superior to philosophy since the former is often accused of generating imaginary worlds while the latter is seemingly verifiable through logic and truth-value. Both however, inevitably undergo a process of historical verification, which exposes not only differences between literature and philosophy but also a number of similarities resulting from various ways of appropriating otherness and an irreducible narrative components permeating their very semantic structures.

Alexander Piatigorsky

A Few Remarks on the Relationship between Philosophicity and Literariness

Taking the differentiation between linguistic philosophy and philological philosophy, the article outlines the emergence of respective types of philosophers, whose self-awareness of the philosophical object is characterized as either textual or linguistic. This particular distinction is supported by the conviction of the evolving nature of 20th century philosophy precisely from linguistic to philological/textual. This distinction in turn redefines a number of traditional philosophical perspectives, the most important of which is the question of the object of philosophical contemplation.

Vladimir L. Shunikov

The (Post)Bachtinian School in Contemporary Russian Literary Theory

Outlining a historical evolution of the 20th century Russian literary theory associated with the Philological Faculty of the Moscow University and often debating various Western approaches such as post-structuralism or deconstruction, the article attempts to identify the premises of Russian theory by highlighting its analytical preoccupation inspired by such theorists as Mikhail Bakhtin or Valery Tyupa. The analytical approach resulted in theories concerning communication strategies of the literary text, which in turn, resulted in the emergence of various narratological and neo-rhetorical theories.

Valery Tyupa

Narratology in the System of Literary Studies

Identifying two vital aspects of narratology – poetics and rhetoric – the article then proceeds to highlight their nature and interpretive consequences some of which are embodied in the post-structuralist desire to reach beyond the internally structured text and reach the level of communicative intersubjectivity. Any narrative discourse is characterised by the combination of the referential event and the communicative event, which are both determined by three basic factors: the actant, the world-view and the point-of-view. Such a perspective,

as the article suggests, opens up a series of new interpretive possibilities as they redefine the traditional and historical approach to literary studies.

Valery Tyupa

Three Aesthetics of Addressing

Examining 20th century art, the author looks at avangarde art movements which in their departure from classical models of artistic expression shifted their focus from the object to the receiver in order to influence his or her spiritual experience. The transition from creativity to receptivity in the process of artistic creation is represented as typical of non-classical aesthetics which favours work's openness and fragmentariness and thus activates the "third participant in the game"—the reader/the receiver. Referring to Russian avantgarde artists, the author explores the rise of the significance of "the third" and places it in the context of political power and the rules of the market.

Natan Tamarchenko

Functions of the Trickster in Classic Russian Novel (Questions of Methodology)

Examining the prototype of the trickster and looking at the main directions of its evolution and its changing interpretations, the author identifies the figure of the trickster in the context of canonical Russian novels, an attempt most original since the trickster has hardly ever attracted attention of Russian critics or literary theorists. Having identified two types of protagonists, the author suggests that characters built in contrast to main types may be read as evolved forms of the ancient figure of the trickster.

Bogusław Żytko

The Tartu-Moscow School Years Later

The paper discusses the origins and contribution of the renowned Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics and its subsequent development and contributions to semiotics and to the study of culture in the West and East. Following a brief exposition of the leading role of Yuri Lotman, and the significance of other eminent members of the school, the growth of now independent centers in Moscow and Tallinn is discussed as well as the changes of the focus of interest of semioticians who continue the Tartu methodological tradition. Finally, a general assessment of the relevance and contribution of both the original school and its contemporary continuators is provided.

Peeter Torop

The Tartu School as a School

The paper addresses the question in what sense the Tartu school of semiotics constituted and still constitutes a coherent research community, and in what sense it can be called a school. The author discusses especially two aspects of this question: first, the Tartu school as a trend in semiotic research, and secondly, as a semiotic doctrine. The leading role of Yuri Lotman, the evolution of his thought, and his influence on the school during his lifetime and after his death are exposed as well as the contribution and impact of the school abroad.

Mihhail Lotman

Beyond Text: Remarks on the Philosophical Background of Tartu Semiotics

The paper explores various approaches to the concept of text present in the work of Yuri Lotman and the Tartu-Moscow school of semiotics, which is considered here as primarily text oriented. The object of study, however, is not what has been explicitly formulated, but rather what has not been said or what has only been implicated in the work of Lotman and other exponents of the school. In this way the conceptual paradigm of Tartu-Moscow semiotics is placed in the context of (implied) philosophical perspectives.

Katarzyna Syska

Poststructuralism in Russian Literary Theory after 1991

Against the background of the constraints of Soviet legacy, the paper concentrates on contemporary, post-Soviet tendencies in literary studies in Russia, and especially on poststructuralism. Four dominant trends within post-Soviet literary theory are distinguished: semiotics, traditional literary studies (including historical and theoretical poetics, textual studies drawing from structuralism, narratology, comparative studies and Bakhtin's theory), "new religiosity" and, finally, poststructuralism and cultural studies inspired by Western influences, but adapted to the Russian context. The latter developments are discussed in the paper in greater detail.

Maksim Shapir

The Aesthetic Experience of the 20th century Avant-garde and Post-modernism

Drawing from various attempts to define the avant-garde, from syntactic-semiotic relationships to pragmatics, the article approaches the notion in question in terms of the reactions it provokes and inspires. Seeing the avant-garde as a peculiar form of rhetoric which challenges pre-established assumptions concerning the whole variety of artistic practices, the articles identifies a number of both parallel and contrasting qualities between the internal mechanisms of the avant-garde and those of postmodernist cultural production, some of which run along the line of originality: just as the avant-garde highlighted the uniqueness of its own expression, post-modernism celebrates repetition and intertextuality.

Mark Lipowiecki

An Explosive Aporia

The article traces and analyses the origin of Russian postmodernism, seeing it as a reaction to soviet meta-narratives and the official attempts to control the avant-garde movements. But the particular shape which post-modernism adopted in Russia is also reflecting deeper cultural dominants, notably the lack of a middle ground between various cultural extremes, which in turn appear to constitute the foundations of Russian culture. Russian post-modernism, the article argues, is thus characterised by a constant internal struggle between opposing discourses rather than by a consistent opposition to social and political traditions of modernity.

Mikhail Epstein

The Century's Zero Cycle.

The Explosive Style of the 2000s

Announcing the end of traditional post-modernism, characterised by supposedly meaningless plays on signs and infinite intertextual exchanges, the article offers an attempt to critically appropriate the post-WTC cultural condition by referring to a number of metaphorical cultural explosions which narrate the end of the post-modern era. The explosions in question are related to both real-life terrorist threats as well to the explosive growth of science and technology, which, in the long run, are likely to redefine fundamental social premises along the lines of trans-culturalism.

Aleksander Genis

Onion and Cabbage

Inspired by the structure of the titular vegetables – one having an essence after having been stripped of the outer layers, the other deprived of it – the article proposes a re-reading of Russian literature from the opposing perspectives of the “cabbage paradigm” and the “onion paradigm.” The former is located in the realm of soviet metaphysics, while the latter reverberates with deeper philosophical inspirations in which the meaning is produced by void and chaos. Both paradigms are used as distinct interpretative perspectives and illustrated with relevant literary examples.

Madina Tlostanova

Post-sovietness ≠ Post-coloniality ≠ Post-imperiality,
or what to do after the End of History?

The article contemplates social and cultural consequences of the fall of communism as the dominating socio-political ideology and some attempts to fill up the ideological void left by the withering dogmas of the previous regime. One of the discourses, whose premises seem applicable to the post-soviet reality, is post-colonial theory. However, its immediate application does not seem possible for the variety of geo-political reasons which result in a sense of ideological disappointment turning Russians into new subalterns, devoid of their former imperialist pride and uncertain of their status in the globalized and still globalizing world.

Aleksander Etkind

Sacrificial Motifs

Treating the imperial experience as its departure point, the article identifies a parallel relationship between the empire and the people reflected by the relationship between a man and a woman, the former presented as a noble savage the latter as a victim of the imperialist situation. The space outlined between them is however further complicated by the counter-character of the “man of culture” who interrupts the purity of the idyllic environment and contaminates it with historical and ideological dilemmas illustrated, among other works, in Dostoyevsky's novels.