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CONTRIBUTIONS OF ROMAN JAKOBSON

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INTRODUCTION

In this paper I aim primarily to explicate the linguistic theories of Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) and secondarily to assess critically the way they have been adopted by anthropologists studying language in its cultural context. Several excellent general overviews of Jakobson's work exist, most noteworthy those of Holenstein (55), Waugh (220), and Waugh & Monville-Burston (222). For more specialized interpretations of certain parts of his theories relevant to different interdisciplinary concerns, see reference 2, Armstrong & van Schooneveld (3), Gribble (45), Halle (47-50), Holenstein (56), Kiparsky (152), Leach (156), Mel'čuk (176, 177), Rudy (190), Silverstein (201), Waugh (221), Winner (225), and references 23a and 208a.

While Jakobson's phonological theories are fairly well known by anthropologists, his views on grammatical semantics, pragmatics, and poetics deserve a wider audience, particularly as several important trends in modern anthropology, to be discussed at the end of the paper, are directly indebted to them. A special section is included on Jakobson's ideas on metalanguage which is not usually discussed even though, as will become quickly apparent, they are crucial to other facets of his theories. They are also at the foundation of much research into recent anthropological linguistics. Due to space limitations, I make little effort to place Jakobson's theories in a broader biographical context, however badly needed such a treatment of his work may be [see in part Halle (48), Holenstein (55), Jakobson (127, 128) and Jakobson & Pomorska (143), as well as Waugh & Monville-Burston (222)].

The exposition begins with an overview of Saussurean Structuralism. I stress a side of Jakobson's work that is not often appreciated, namely the

extent to which his theories contain an explicit and quite far-reaching criticism of Saussure, in spite of his acknowledged debt to the Swiss master. Especially emphasized is his reworking of the linguistic sign and his introduction of the concept of teleology in linguistic systems.

Jakobson's immensely influential contributions to the study of child language acquisition and his linguistic classification of aphasic disorders (80, 83, 88, 94, 99, 106, 168–170), in which the idea of implicational universals in phonology, among other things, is propounded, must unfortunately be omitted. I instead proceed to Jakobson's contributions to morphology or grammatical semantics, making two key points. The first has to do with the inextricable relationship of linguistic form and meaning, a point that must be appreciated in light of the history of American linguistics, particularly under Bloomfield's influence and later Chomsky's, which tended to separate the study of meaning from the analysis of linguistic form. The second point concerns the way Jakobson formulated the problem of meaning as entailing the analysis of both constant and invariant meanings (a continuation of structural principles elucidated by Saussure); an important elaboration of markedness theory; and certainly not least, an analysis of how the speech sign refers to (or indexes) the speech situation—this latter insight being one of the foundations of an anthropologically useful linguistic pragmatics.

I then turn to Jakobson's ideas on poetic structure, which he felt was an integral part of linguistic research, given his teleological (or multifunctional) definition of language. His notion of parallelism, which centrally underlies his concept of verse structure, is not always adequately understood, either by his critics or by those who claim to be using his ideas for their own analyses; it is therefore the focus of my exposition.

After I discuss another of Jakobson's teleological analyses, that of the metalingual function, I critically assess the influence of Jakobson's theories on the development of anthropology, particularly structuralism, the ethnography of communication, the study of speech indexicals in social action, and the relevance of his poetics to the analysis of discourse embedded in social situations. The discussion refers throughout to relevant anthropological research, especially in the sections on poetics and metalanguage.

THE SAUSSUREAN LEGACY

Let us for a moment look back at the Neogrammarian school of historical linguistics (15, 17, 186, 187) that dominated the field in the late nineteenth century, for Jakobson was trained in its tenets at Moscow University by F. F. Fortunatov. In theory, this school advocated a strictly "genetic" explanation of language, viewing individual sounds of a particular language as having "evolved" from sounds at an earlier stage. These sound changes were caused,

either by the nature of the articulatory apparatus, or by diffusion and borrowing through contact in war or trade. Finally, the aim of linguistic description was to work backwards through methods of comparative (and language internal) reconstruction to an earlier stage of history—the so-called “proto” language.

Saussure’s early work (198) was a brilliant realization of the historical method and theory of language reconstruction, but he began to realize that ideas implicit in its approach—important theoretical ideas that had not been sufficiently addressed in this paradigm—would have to be made explicit in linguistic theory [see as well Baudoin de Courtenay (8) and his student Kruszewski (153), of the so-called “Kazan School,” whose ideas on the phoneme and the language system antedated Saussure’s (199) celebrated *Course in General Linguistics* (1915)]. Far from seeking to discard diachronic linguistics, Saussure intended to reestablish it on a firmer footing by examining more carefully its hidden assumptions. He reasoned that languages could be reconstructed only after they had been studied in one given state in time (synchronic linguistics), a program that would require a fundamental reorientation of linguistic research.

In brief, sound change cannot be explained solely in terms of phonetics, language contact, and so forth, for language is a system of signs and its sounds are functionally related to each other in a given historical stage. This system constrains the extent to which sounds may change. It acts as a kind of filter, accepting some variations but excluding others (see also 194a).

According to Saussure, communication takes place only if the properties of sound-images (*signifiant*) and the elements of meaning (*signifié*) in a sign are invariant across all those contexts in which the sign is used. This invariance also holds for relations of opposition among signs [what Jakobson (120) would call the principle of “relational invariance”] and constitutes the generalized and collectively shared (i.e. social) language system (*langue*). It was of course Saussure’s famous dictum that linguistics study this system rather than the mechanical, voluntary, accidental, and variable realizations of speech (*parole*).

Because Jakobson was to reformulate this structuralist notion of the sign, it is necessary to dwell on this concept at greater length. Two well-known postulates attach to Saussure’s definition of the sign. These require no special commentary. The first has to do with the sign’s supposedly “arbitrary” nature—the claim that there is no intrinsic (i.e. iconic) connection between the word’s sound-image and its meaning. [What Saussure may or may not have meant by the sign’s “arbitrariness” is discussed by Benveniste (10, 13), Jakobson (148), Friedrich (36), and Jakobson & Waugh (148), to mention only a few.] The second concerns its linear nature, unfolding as it does in time when manifested in *parole*.

Let us also note at least two important theoretical consequences of Saussure's formulation. To begin with, it privileges reference and cognition, making language a "speculative instrument." In addition, Saussure explicitly rules out the nonverbal "object" or referent in his consideration of the linguistic sign, a move he felt was necessary in order both to simplify analysis and to realize his project of a "self-contained" domain of study. Like his great contemporaries Sigmund Freud and Emile Durkheim (26) in their respective fields and the Russian Formalists in literary criticism (and we might add the Cubist painters), Saussure was struggling to establish an autonomous discipline, independent of history, political economy, literary studies, and sociology. In his words (199, p. 16) "language must, to put it correctly, be studied *immanently*; heretofore language has almost always been studied in connection with something else, from other viewpoints." Accordingly, he attempted to delineate a certain essence of language (its so-called system) that would be the proper domain of linguistic inquiry. The study of the linguistic system would be known as "internal" linguistics and would admittedly exclude "many important things—the very ones that we think of when we begin the study of speech" (199, p. 20), but this he felt to be unavoidable if linguistics was to progress beyond the historicism of the previous century. "External linguistics" was the study of speaking (*parole*) and it was supposed not to contain a system and therefore not be worthy of study. Much of Labovian linguistics (154a) and what is called the ethnography of communication (61) calls into question this assumption, but the central figure who first seriously challenged the Saussurean dichotomies was Roman Jakobson. [Other great reinterpreters of Saussure have been Karcevskij (150a) and Benveniste (10).] We shall see that his work attempted to develop the Saussurean concept of internal linguistics while at the same time moving beyond its narrow confines, opening language to a richer semiotic analysis.

Signification without system, according to Saussure, is impossible. To take a simple lexical example we might think that the sound-image of *love* is merely associated with the meaning of "love"; but that idea, asserted Saussure, is merely an illusion fostered by our folk theories of language as basically a naming process. To grasp the sound-image and the concept we must place the sign in a whole web or system of oppositions with other signs in the language: *lover*, *lovingly*, *lover-ly*, etc., as well as *hate*, *affection*, *desire*, etc. There is no more fundamental contribution of structural linguistics than this notion of system, in light of which Saussure's whole torturous discussion of "value" (see 199, p. 115)—so influential to the ideas of Lévi-Strauss, Barthes (5), and many others—must be understood.

As is well known, there exist two types of oppositional relations in the Saussurean system: what he called "associative" (and later would acquire the term "paradigmatic") and "syntagmatic". The sentence *the dolphin swam into the Bosphorous* is one of those "combinations supported by linearity" (199, p.

123) that is made up of linearly ordered syntagms, *the dolphin* vs *swam into the Bosphorous*, etc. The signs of a syntagm are obviously related to each other by opposition to signs that precede it in the sequence and signs that follow it. [Saussure confuses matters somewhat by referring to these as “discourse relations among signs” (199, p. 123) though discourse properly speaking is part of *parole*, which he had relegated to “external linguistics.” It would be best, therefore, to reserve the term “sequence” for the actual discourse order of signs (*parole*) and “syntagm” for their more abstract, systemic order (*langue*).] Paradigmatic relations are defined negatively as those relations that “are not supported by linearity” (199, p. 123). Thus, a paradigmatic relation exists, for example, between *a* (*an*) and *the*, and one can substitute one for the other in the same syntagmatic slot to produce a different, yet meaningful utterance. (Of course, one could perform the same kind of substitution for other signs in the syntagm.)

These ideas may seem self-evident when applied to language on the level of words or even syntactic phrases. It was quite another achievement to have demonstrated that language also operates as a system on the level of the significant sounds or phonemes.

JAKOBSONIAN PHONOLOGY AND ITS CRITICISMS OF SAUSSURE

Saussure was one of the first to show that phonemes are negative, opposable, and correlative entities, which is how they can function to signal different word meanings. But the end result of Saussure’s analysis was merely a phonological inventory, a mechanical sum of phonemes, without any clear exposition of how these phonemes relate to each other as a system or a whole. It is this shortcoming that the new Structuralism of Trubetzkoy (209–212) and Jakobson (66–68, 81) attempted to redress.

Jakobson managed to show that the holistic (or structuralist) view of language was more insightful than the atomism of the nineteenth century if one probed below the surface facts to see phonemes as more than mere segments or blocks of sound. “Every scientific description of the phonology of a language must above all contain a characterization of its phonological system, that is to say, a characterization of the repertory, proper to this language, of distinctive differences . . .” (120, p. 8). Jakobson’s distinctive-feature system was a fuller and more explicit realization of Saussure’s dictum that linguistic form is abstract (see 199, pp. 137–39).

Jakobson’s Distinctive Features

Jakobson insists that on the phonological (and as we shall see, even higher) levels of language, oppositions are (*a*) binary—involving either the presence of a feature or its absence (e.g. sounds are either continuant or they are not,

nasal or not nasal, etc) or involving more or less of a particular sound quality (e.g. a sound is more acute than another sound that is more grave, etc). This idea is connected with markedness theory, a discussion of which I postpone until the next section. (b) The two terms of the opposition are related to each other in the form of a logical implication (i.e. one cannot think of nasality without also thinking of its absence; one cannot think of acute vowels without also thinking of grave ones; and so forth). (c) Jakobson claimed that these oppositions are “real”—that is, their status is not simply that of analytical abstractions imposed on the data or of signs standing for something else; they are real, concrete relations. [Some descriptive linguists in America did not heartily embrace Jakobson’s binary notions of sound structure. Martin Joos (150) argued that “polar” opposition is no more than a “metaphor” that Jakobson imported from poetics. In a way this was an astute observation, as we shall see, but not in itself a convincing argument for abandoning the “metaphor.”]

Instead of defining features solely according to their manner and place of articulation (d), one can also define them acoustically (138), because the act of communication, as Saussure had already pointed out, involves a speaker and a hearer, an encoder and a decoder of sound-meaning.

This acoustic-articulatory definition of features permits us to formulate the opposition between, say, the English stop consonants in a uniform way. The labials (p, b) are lower pitched than the dentals (t, d); correlatively, the velars (k, g) are lower pitched than the palatals (č, j).

Higher pitch (acute)	t/d	č/j
Lower pitch (grave)	p/b	k/g

In addition, the acute stop consonants can be internally differentiated by yet another acoustic feature, compact vs diffuse (noncompact). This feature ($\pm$ compact) may be roughly described as follows. Some sounds have their bands of energy concentrated in approximately the middle and lower range of the speech-sound spectrum (compact), whereas other sounds have their bands of energy widely separated and dispersed at the upper end of the spectrum (diffuse). The velars and palatals are compact, the labials and dentals are diffuse. Finally, we also have to be able to distinguish between two sets of compact phonemes, č:k::j:g. Note that the palatals are released with more friction, which shows up as a “noise” pattern in the sound spectrograph. Therefore, we can add another feature ($\pm$ strident) to our system. Let us stop the analysis at this point, even though we have obviously not completely described the English consonant phonemes in terms of their constituent features.

	p	b	t	d	č	ǰ	k	g
Compact	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+
Grave	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
Voice	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+

In the above chart we can see that every consonant phoneme is made up of a “bundle” of features that distinguish it from every other phoneme in the system. The significance of this fact for Saussurean sign theory will soon be clarified.

A final point to note is that Jakobson had discovered a way of defining vowels *and* consonants through the *same* system of features. This treatment, which would seem intuitively desirable, had previously escaped linguists until the time when acoustic phonetics, largely through the work of Fant (30) and Delattre, had advanced far enough in the late 1940s and 1950s to make it possible. Here is a feature representation of three English vowels that employs distinctive features we have already seen to be crucial in English consonants:

	i	u	a
Compact	-	-	+
Grave	-	+	+

The idea of defining phonemes through bundles of distinctive features was apparent to Jakobson at least as early as 1928 (see 67). His research on this subject continued for another 30 years and resulted (with the help of Morris Halle) in the momentous hypothesis of a set of 12 acoustic-articulatory binary features that was universal; that is, Jakobson held that all languages construct their phonemes from different combinations of the features from this basic set (98). For example, German combines the features +**compact**, -**grave**, and +**strident** to realize the characteristic palatal fricative consonant *Ich*, whereas English, which uses the same features, does not combine them in quite the same way and therefore does not manifest this phoneme.

Theoretical Implications for Saussurean Structuralism

Jakobson’s 12-feature hypothesis is still controversial, with competing systems of features having been proposed by investigators such as Chomsky & Halle (23), Ladefoged (154b), Hyman (58), and others. If the hypothesis is true, Saussure’s Structuralism must be revised along lines that Jakobson first clarified in his *Six Lectures* (125; see also 130).

His first criticism was levelled against Saussure’s notion of the sign. Saussure’s claim that the sign is fundamentally linear was seen to be an oversimplification once distinctive features were discovered. It was clear that

the phoneme is not a homogeneous segment of sound but resembles a "chord in music" (130), composed of several more primitive signalling units.

Thus the linearity of the sign is better seen as a product of a more fundamental structural principle of speech signs: hierarchy. The same point applies to music (101). While it is true that progression is an indispensable aspect of, say, melody and rhythm, this is too simple a label for a structure that consists of significative units (notes that are part of a hierarchical system known as a scale) patterned to form higher-order units (musical phrases) that are in turn organized into still higher units (melodies), and so forth. In language, distinctive phonetic features are combined into phonemes, which are combined into higher-order denotative units called morphemes to form words or the constituents of syntactic phrases, etc. Without such a notion of simultaneous hierarchy, neither the musical line nor the speech stream can be experienced as a whole in which each part relates to every other. To summarize, hierarchy, not linearity, is the fundamental insight into the structure of signs. This is not to say that the concept of linearity can be disposed of, only that it is theoretically secondary to hierarchy.

Also recast in Jakobson's model of language is the Saussurean injunction to "study form, not substance" (199, p. 113). Here we may invoke the famous chess analogy. The signs of language, Saussure argued, are like the pieces on a chess board. In chess the rules according to which pieces may be moved on the board are important, not the substance from which the pieces are made. Regardless of material, what matters (and this gets us back to the notion of opposition) is that each piece can be distinguished from every other on the board. One suspects that Saussure, who was certainly aware of how near-universal are some of the oppositions he discussed, overstated his case to make the linguists of his day think about signs in a less crudely empirical-materialist way. It follows from the discovery of the universal feature set, however, that in studying form one *is* studying substance. The substances (features) from which the basic building blocks (forms) of language are cast are quite narrowly constrained. After all, there are between 2000 and 6000 distinct languages in the world, so if signs were really analogous to chess pieces, we would expect to find far more variation in phonemic substance than we do (in variable combinations of twelve binary features).

Implications of Jakobson's Teleological View of Language

Jakobson heralded Saussure's advances in the understanding of system but criticized him for failing to draw out additional implications for language theory. In his 1928 Prague Manifesto "The Concept of the Sound Law and the Teleological Criterion" he states: "The revision of the traditional tenet leads to the recognition of the fact that language (and in particular its sound system) cannot be analyzed without taking into account the *purpose* which that system

serves" (66, p. 1; my emphasis; see also 123). The purpose of communication for Saussure (in fact, for all mainstream linguists) was referential; language was used to communicate propositional meaning. But as we now know [thanks in no small measure to the richly conceived functionalism of Jakobson (see 205), the Prague School (28, 40, 96, 174, 215, 216), Malinowski (171), and Buehler (18)], reference is not the only, nor even the primary goal of communication. Nor does one structural system serve all goals. Rather, in the Jakobsonian/Prague School model, language is composed of many different kinds of subsystems, each subsystem being the means to accomplish a particular goal or purpose of communication (95). Language is viewed as a "system of systems" with cross-cutting properties such as binariness, hierarchy, and paradigmatic and syntagmatic oppositions.

This multifunctional, polysystemic view is a radical departure from Saussure, for whom *langue* was homogeneous in function and in system. Built into the Jakobsonian model are (in a certain restricted sense) Bakhtin's homogeneous vs heteroglossic poles of language (see 4). Saussure's vision of a monolithic or uniform language informs almost all of transformational linguistics. Jakobson has claimed that the notion of language as a goal-oriented activity completely escaped Saussure.

Jakobson (67) took strong exception to Saussure's formulation of synchrony as "static" and diachrony as "nonsystematic." He argued that a teleological view of language led to a quite different conclusion—namely, that whatever historical changes occur must "fit" the pattern of a "dynamic" system as viewed in the perspective of a particular communicative goal. Sound change, therefore, is teleological. It must be measured, at least in the example we have been using, against the referential goal of communication or, if the example is from verse, against the poetic function.

GRAMMATICAL SEMANTICS AND THE SHIFT TO PRAGMATICS

Extending the Idea of Structure from Phonology: Markedness

Early in the development of Structuralism, Jakobson (69, 82, 86, 122) saw the feasibility of extending the concept of *markedness*, which had been developed (particularly by Trubetzkoy) in phonology, to the study of morphology:

One of the important properties of phonological correlations consists in the fact that the members of one pair of correlations are not of equal value: that one member possesses the relevant feature, the other does not; the first is designated as being marked, the second—unmarked. The same definition can serve as a foundation to characterize morphological correlations (69, p. 3).

Let us briefly review Trubetzkoy's notion of phonological markedness.

The simplest meaning of markedness has to do with the presence or absence of a given phonological feature. Thus, the English phoneme /p/ is marked for the feature **consonantal** but is unmarked for the feature **vocalic**. Another sense of markedness has to do with the kind of information that each term of the binary opposition carries. A marked term is more focused in its information about sound than the unmarked term. The fact that a sound is **+consonantal** tells one something definite, whereas the fact that a sound is **−vocalic** tells one only that the sound in question is not vocalic; it does not even necessarily imply that the sound must by implication be **+consonantal** because these two features are independent of each other. That is, there are sounds such as the so-called "glides" (in English, examples would be /w/ and /j/) that are defined as being **−vocalic** and **−consonantal**. Conversely, there are sounds such as the "liquid" /l/ and /r/ in English that are defined as being both **+vocalic** and **+consonantal**.

General (Gesamtbedeutung) vs Specific (Grundbedeutung) Meaning

In the same article Jakobson (69) gives a lexical example of what he intends by markedness in morphological categories. The Russian word *osel* means 'donkey.' It is opposable to another word, *oslica*, which has the specific meaning of the female of the species. The former word is unmarked with respect to the feature **female**, the latter is marked. This does *not* mean that *osel* is therefore 'male' in meaning, for in fact this word has a generic sense independent of gender. (The unmarked term can denote a donkey that is either male, female, or neither). It is only if I am then asked, "Is it an *oslica*?" and I reply, "No—an *osel*" that the word now has a gender-specific sense of **+male**.

A morphological category can have two kinds of meanings, a "general" or more invariant meaning (*Gesamtbedeutung*) and a contextually specific one (*Grundbedeutung*) (76). These must be kept distinct in the analysis. Thus, the invariant meaning of *osel* has nothing to do with gender differences, whereas the contextual meaning does.

A linguist knows that speech sounds present, besides phonemes, contextual and optional, situational variants (or, under other labels, 'allophones' and 'metaphones'). Correspondingly, on the semantic level we observe contextual meanings and situational meanings. But variations cannot be acknowledged without the existence of invariants. On the level of meaning as well as on that of sound, the problem of the invariants is decisive for the analysis of a given language at a given stage (121, p. 564).

Although Jakobson lumps both types of meaning under what he calls "semantics," they would in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s give rise to distinct disciplines: semantics (which purports to study meaning that is abstract, context-independent, and associated with *langue*) and pragmatics

(which studies meaning that is concrete, context-specific, and in a sense straddles both Saussurean *langue* and *parole*).

In spite of his disagreements with Saussure, Jakobson never forgot his salutary dictum that in the referential function the signifier is always to be analyzed in light of the signified, and vice versa. American linguistics under Bloomfield's influence, to the contrary, would lead to a separation of semantics from phonology, morphology, and syntax (see 14). The reasons for this development are explained in more detail in the section below on metalanguage. The antisemantic bias of Watsonian Behaviorism dominated American scientific thought in the 1930s and 1940s, including the reigning paradigm in linguistics [though Sapir (196) and Whorf (224) are, as always, an exception]. Chomsky (22a) severely criticized the behaviorist model, but he nevertheless retained the American Structuralist separation of meaning from linguistic form, arguing in *Syntactic Structures* (22) that syntax could be analyzed as "pure form"—as separate from semantics. Jakobson caustically described Chomsky's approach as "a magnificent *argumentum a contrario*" (93, p. 494; and see 84). The active sentence and the passive sentence have different meanings as far as Jakobson was concerned, because the former focuses attention on the actor whereas the latter focuses attention on the object. The two sentences refer to two different phases or perspectives of the same narrated event. Therefore one cannot separate the study of syntax from the study of meaning, just as one cannot separate meaning from an examination of morphology or even of phonology, where sounds have only a meaning-differentiating function.

The Semantics of Grammar—the "General Meaning" of Russian Case

To repeat, the *Gesamtbedeutung* of a grammatical category is invariant throughout all the contextual uses (lexical and syntactic) of that category. General meaning is what Saussure had in mind by *abstract form*, except that it is abstracted on the morphological instead of the phonological level.

The problem is knowing how to abstract such a general meaning from all the specific instances of a case's use. Jakobson was not the first twentieth century Russian linguist to posit the notion of invariant grammatical meaning (see 191), but before Jakobson whenever a specific case was examined (e.g. instrumentality), the various usages seemed to defy any unity or consistency. The most that was accomplished was a "composite of meanings," rather like Wittgenstein's notion of a "family of resemblances" underlying the meaning of the word *game* (226).

As in phonology, the key idea is *relational invariance*. The mistake of earlier approaches is to try to abstract invariance from an isolated category—to examine, for instance, the instrumental case without relating it at the same time to other possible cases in the Russian system. The invariant or general

meaning exists only by virtue of its opposition to other invariants within the same system. Just as one cannot define a phoneme except by opposition to other phonemes, so one cannot define a morpheme except by opposition to other morphemes. One might take several sentences with the same noun in a particular case (say, the instrumental), then vary the noun's case marking (accusative, genitive, locative, etc). This changes the meaning. By generalizing across many classes of nouns, one sees that the semantic opposition between the cases (*Gesamtbedeutung*) is invariant in the different sentences, even though the specific meanings will not be exactly the same in every sentence.

As in phonology, the grammatical oppositions are taken by Jakobson to be binary; one term is marked and the other unmarked with respect to a given feature. According to Jakobson (69, 92), the Russian accusative and dative are opposable to the nominative and instrumental in that the former are marked for "directionality" whereas the latter are unmarked for it. (+**directionality** signals that the action is directed towards the object denoted by the noun.) On the other hand, the dative and the instrumental are opposable to the nominative and accusative in that the former are marked for "marginality" and the latter unmarked for it. (+**marginality** signals the peripheral role of the object with respect to the action.) The remaining cases include two genitives (G1 and G2) and two locatives (L1 and L2). These four remaining cases are opposable to the first four cases according to a third semantic feature "quantification," the genitives and locatives being marked for this feature while the others are not. (+**quantification** signals the extent to which the action embraces the corresponding noun.)

We can represent the entire Russian case system in a way that resembles the phonemes; that is, each case morpheme can be represented as a "bundle of distinctive semantic features."

	N	I	D	A	G1	G2	L1	L2
directionality	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-
marginality	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
quantification	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+

Of course, the analogy breaks down because the phoneme is, as Saussure said, a purely negative entity whereas the morpheme (and its semantic features) have a positive content. For interesting work on Jakobsonian-inspired morphology, see references 203, 218, and 219.

The Pragmatics of Meaning

SHIFTERS, OR INDEXICAL SYMBOLS Before approximately 1957 [the date of publication of Jakobson's epochal article "Shifters, verbal categories, and the russian verb" (89)], invariant semantic features in the Russian case system

(and elsewhere in Russian grammar) were defined as being independent of the act of speaking. It seems that before this time Jakobson did not yet fully realize the problem of incorporating contextually defined features in his analysis of grammatical categories. However, the major point of his 1957 article is to show precisely the extent to which information about *parole* is encoded in grammar. In the same year that Chomsky published *Syntactic Structures* (22) and pushed the notion of a referential and context-free grammar to new limits, Roman Jakobson's monograph explored the notion of grammar in the opposite direction—namely, how language grammaticalizes or encodes features of the context of utterance. Though he did not draw out the theoretical implications of his study in this monograph, Jakobson was one of the first linguists [along with Benveniste (11)] to fully realize the extent to which the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole* had to be redefined, given the fact that pragmatic categories of grammar are far more extensive than was previously imagined. Indeed, with the help of analytical concepts he advanced, linguists were able to see that many categories of grammar presumed to have been “autonomous” in Saussurean *langue* are in fact context-dependent (191, 202, 217).

To this end, he borrowed certain semiotic ideas from the writings of the American philosopher Charles S. Peirce (188), particularly his tripartite distinction of the icon, index, and symbol (see also 104). Charles Morris's version of Peirce has become famous in the pragmatic literature and is used extensively by philosophers, linguists, anthropologists, etc who are interested in the relationship of the verbal sign to something outside itself (be it a verbal or nonverbal reality). Peirce's view of the sign nicely complements Saussure's, and together they round out a holistic conception of semiotics; for if Saussure was almost wholly concerned with language as a self-contained phenomenon—and his exclusion of the object in his definition of the sign reflects this—Peirce focuses on the various modalities by which a sign may refer to its “object.” Here an “object” is loosely conceived of as either a real-world object (such as a tree or house), an event (such as a person chopping down a tree or building a house), an idea, or even another sign (such as a word—*tree* or *house*).

It is perhaps easiest to start with Peirce's notion of the icon. In this modality the sign bears some resemblance to the object it stands for. A map, for example, is an *icon* of a certain geographic space. In an *indexical* mode, the sign does not necessarily bear any physical resemblance to the object it stands for, but it must be in existential relationship with it (spatially or temporally contiguous to it). The map refers in the indexical mode when it is held up before the geographic space it stands for. Finally, the *symbol* refers to its object in all the ways icons and indexes do not. In a symbol, the relationship between the sign and its “object” is established by cultural convention or law. Various symbols (e.g. circles) represent cities on the map. Peirce argues that

the symbol is the most important sign mode in human language. In this respect, he is close to Saussure and to all traditional linguists who argue that language's referential power is due in no small measure to its "arbitrariness." Bear in mind that Peirce intended the icon-index-symbol distinctions to be *analytical* ones. Any instance of signing will nearly always involve a mixture of modes, as in our example of the map.

Taking his notion of "shifters" from Jespersen (149, pp. 123–24) and explicating it with the help of Peirce's sign modes, Jakobson states that "shifters . . . belong . . . to the class of INDEXICAL SYMBOLS" (89, p. 132). The paradigm case of the shifter is the first person pronoun "I." It is an index insofar as "the sign *I* cannot represent its object without 'being in existential relation' with its object: the word *I* designating the utterer is existentially related to his utterance, and hence functions as an index" (89, p. 132). But bear in mind that Jakobson also defines the pronoun as "designating" and not merely denoting the utterer; in other words, the pronoun refers to the idea of the addressor in the speech act. Though the point is essential, it has escaped some philosophers who have attempted to define the nature of pronouns merely in terms of denotation.

The peculiarity of the personal pronoun and other shifters was often believed to consist in the lack of a single, constant, general meaning. Husserl: "Das Wort 'ich' nennt von Fall zu Fall eine andere Person, und es tut dies mittels immer neuer Bedeutung." . . . For Bertrand Russell, shifters, or in his terms 'egocentric particulars,' are defined by the fact that they never apply to more than one thing at a time (89, p. 132).

But, notes Jakobson, this is to neglect the fact that "every shifter . . . possesses its own general meaning. *I* means the addressor (and *you*, the addressee) of the message to which it belongs" (189, p. 132). Thus, there is a sense in which the personal pronoun does have a general, invariant meaning (a *Gesamtbedeutung*) that is a reference to the idea of the speech act. This sense of the pronoun is symbolic (or semantic). The variant meaning of the pronoun dependent upon the context (a *Grundbedeutung*) makes it indexical (or pragmatic).

Besides the category of person, there are also tense, mood, and the evidential, which Jakobson labeled shifters in his 1957 study of the Russian verb. Thus, the preterit tense signals the time at which an event, referred to in the verb, takes place anterior to the time of the utterance. Mood, on the other hand, signals the speaker's view of the action (or actor or goal) being referred to. The evidential marks whether a reported event is gleaned from hearsay (e.g. quotative) or from personal observation and memory.

To some, Jakobson's landmark study more or less initiated what in modern grammatical analysis has come to be known as deixis [see also Buehler (18) and Frei (34) for the early work on this problem; since the field has burgeoned, see also Hanks (52–54)]. The theoretical point to be gleaned is

that grammatical relations once thought to be purely symbolic are on the contrary also deeply indexical. Because grammar is now implicated in *parole*—relational invariants can be found on the level of the speech act—the *langue/parole* distinction, though still analytically useful can no longer be so neatly drawn for specific phenomena [see Hanks (52)]. This problem has still not been addressed adequately in structuralist theory.

ICONICITY IN GRAMMAR One of Saussure's fundamental postulates was, of course, the arbitrariness of the sign. By this he meant that the form of the signifier did not resemble the signified. We have seen how Saussure's linearity principle had to be overhauled in light of the Jakobsonian discovery of the phoneme as a bundle of distinctive features. Now we will see that the claim of the sign's arbitrariness has to be reevaluated as well. The signifier can be "iconic" (in Peirce's sense) of the signified (see also 104, 148).

The data, as usual, comes from Russian. The grammatical forms in which Jakobson claims to find iconicity are all related to verbal aspect (107, pp. 198–202; see also 176). Aspect is a category that, roughly speaking, describes the manner in which the action of the verb is performed. Three aspectual categories are examined: perfective (vs imperfective), which signals that the action of the verb is completed (vs noncompleted); determinate (vs indeterminate), "which signals the integrity and unbrokenness of the narrated event" (107, p. 200); and iterative (vs noniterative), which indicates that an action is repeated or usual in the past. It happens that one member of each pair of morphological oppositions (i.e. the imperfective, indeterminate, and iterative) has the meaning of a nonrestricted or even expanded action.

What is the form of the signifier for each of these aspectual categories? With only a few exceptions, the suffix signaling the meaning of nonrestricted or expanded action is *longer* than the suffix signaling the opposite meaning. Again with only a few exceptions, the vowel of the suffix signaling the meaning of the nonrestricted or expanded action is compact whereas the vowel (if any) of the opposite category is diffuse. Jakobson claims that the "average listener" latently connects the opposition compact-vs-diffuse with large-vs-small symbolism (107, p. 199), so that the opposition of suffix vowels—felt as an opposition of "large" vs "not large"—corresponds to a meaning of expanded action vs nonexpanded action. Thus, whether one is dealing here with the length of the aspectual suffixes or their vowel quality (if any is present), iconicity seems to be prevalent in the signifier-signified relationship.

Jakobson's explorations into the iconicity of grammar have sparked his students and others to consider the problem in more depth, resulting in some of the more interesting work being done in syntax today (46a, 173).

"THE UNDERTHOUGHT OF POEMS"—JAKOBSONIAN POETICS

Russian Futurist Poetry, Cubism, and the Formalist Tradition

As a young man Jakobson was fully alive to the powerful new artistic and scientific currents of the period 1910–1920 (143, p. 7). At this time he began to develop his lifelong intellectual interest in poetry and poetics (63, 64). He claims that "it was the analysis of verse which enabled me to descry the foundations of phonology" (127, p. 125), an important revelation about his intellectual history that has not been emphasized enough. In his youth Jakobson wrote futurist or what is called "transrational" poetry (*zaum*) under the pseudonym of Aljagrov (see 134), imitating the poetic experiments of his friend, the great avant-garde poet V. Khlebnikov. In this type of verse, the referential content is reduced, if not completely obliterated, attention being focused on the structure of language. Thus, Khlebnikov (and Jakobson) could write "nonsense" poetry in which syllables like "ka, ki, ku" could become the "object" of esthetic focus in the line. Neologisms could be made by exploiting a root, the result being that the Russian morphological system of roots and cases, along with its phonemes and morphological patterns, could become the "raw material" of such poetic devices as alliteration and rhyme (see also 37; 193, Ch. 10).

These futurist experiments in poetry paralleled, as Jakobson realized, the revolution that was occurring in painting (39). Picasso and Braque were carrying to new extremes the pictorial experiments in "seeing" initiated by Cezanne. They were dissolving the represented object on the canvas, though without entirely obliterating it, as happened in the later works of the Russian Cubist painter Malevič, one of Jakobson's friends. Picasso portrayed a nude in his 1907 canvas *Les demoiselles d'Avignon* with both her back and face to the viewer, and in later works further distorted and displaced body parts, emphasizing the relations of volumes, colors, or shades instead of depicting a real-world object. Malevič carried the process one step further by painting geometric forms of different colors with little if any regard for their representational content. These artists were after the "universals" of painting, understood as relationships among elements of form, color, light, and volume, diverging from the tradition of realistic, perspectival art that had dominated painting since the Renaissance (1). In considering below Jakobson's search for the "architecture" of a poem, it helps to keep in mind his knowledge of these Cubist experiments.

It is necessary to consider next the role that Jakobson played in creating the Russian Formalist theory of literary analysis (28, 175, 205). He was a cofounder in 1915 of the Moscow Linguistic Circle (MLK) whose self-avowed dedication was to "the study of Moscow dialects and folklore, and a collective inquiry into the verse and language of the *byliny* recorded in the

eighteenth century" (108, p. 643), and among whose participants were the greatest Russian estheticians and poets of the age (Tomashevskij, Brik, Bobrov, Majakovskij, Pasternak, Aseev, and Mandel'shtam). With characteristic energy he also helped to establish in the same period the St. Petersburg's Society for the Study of Poetic Language (OPOJAZ), which counted among its members Boris Ejxenbaum, Viktor Shklovskij, and Jurij Tynjanov. MLK and OPOJAZ together represented what has loosely become known as Russian Formalism.

As Ejxenbaum (27) makes clear, this school was foremost concerned with establishing autonomy for the discipline of literary analysis; that is, whereas in the past the text was analyzed from the point of view of history, the author's personality, the sociopolitical climate in which he wrote, and so forth, literary studies would now perform an "immanent analysis" (supposedly strictly empirical, or better, phenomenological) of the text, laying bare "the specific properties of literary material, of the properties that distinguish such material from material of any other kind" (27, p. 7). It was Jakobson with his unusual gift for concise, trenchant statement who helped to formulate this "principle of specificity" (64, 73).

In specifying the "literariness" of a work of art, the Formalists made use of the distinction between practical (or everyday) and poetic language [see remarks on Jakubinskij by Steiner (205)]. In the former the linguistic sign is used as a means for communication, whereas in the latter it becomes an end in itself. Hence, the Formalists began to adopt a definition of *the poetic function as a focus on the message for its own sake*, a theory perfectly harmonious with Russian Futurist poetry. The question was how poetic language achieved its end of drawing attention to itself, of deautomatizing everyday language, and the solution came in showing "that the palpableness of form results from special artistic devices acting on the perceiver" (27, p. 13).

What the Formalists were searching for was "a unity of device over a diversity of material" (27, p. 16). For example, some of the most important work being done at this time was in verse metrics, to which Jakobson's 1923 monograph *On Czech Verse* (65) is a significant contribution. Indeed, Jakobson was to continue his exploration in comparative metrics throughout his life (70, 71, 79, 87, 97, 109, 117, 126, 141, 145); the empirical richness and theoretical implications of this work have yet to be fully comprehended (though see 190). This extensive study of verse meter was not, as it is sometimes assumed, independent of his other work on poetry, for in the perspective of the Formalist Tradition it was an auxiliary to a more comprehensive discipline whose aim was a general theory of verse. In other words, the device of meter was part of the device of poetry as a whole. The primary "device" of poetry, Jakobson came to believe, was parallelism.

Concept of Parallelism

What, Jakobson asks, is the “indispensable feature inherent in any piece of poetry” (95, p. 27)? As we have just seen, this question arises from his commitment to the theory of Russian Formalism. More importantly, however, the question reflects his continuing search for the relational invariants or universals of *linguistic form*—this time in another function of language.

In brief, the invariant verbal structure of poetry, according to Jakobson, is parallelism (see also 57, p. 85). According to his technical definition, parallelism results when “the principle of equivalence” is projected “from the axis of selection into the axis of combination” (95, p. 27). In other words, the poet selects from the paradigmatic axis items that are equivalent (similar or contrastive) and then projects them onto the syntagmatic axis in regular fashion. Jakobson had already shown “equivalence,” “selection,” and “combination” to be relational concepts basic to language in aphasia and children’s acquisition of language, and he was intent on showing how poetic form is grounded in linguistic structure. In other words, he was interested in getting at the linguistic explanation for parallelism and its supposed universality in verse.

To illustrate parallelism, consider rhyme—to Jakobson the quintessentially parallelistic structure (128, p. 776). Shakespeare’s Sonnet 129:

Th’ expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action; and, till action, lust
Is perjured, murd’rous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust;
Enjoyed no sooner but despised straight;
Past reason hunted; and no sooner had,
Past reason hated as a swallowed bait
On purpose laid to make the taker mad;
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so;
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme;
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe;
Before, a joy proposed; behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows; yet none knows well
To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

From the paradigmatic axis of language, the poet has selected pairs of words that are equivalent not only in sound (equivalent phonemes) but also in semantic categories, *shame* and *blame*, and projected them in regular fashion onto the axis of combination: that is, they regularly occur at the ends of the lines. Jakobson was quick to point out that “rhyme necessarily involves a semantic relationship between rhyming units” (95, p. 38). “Semantic” is understood as being both grammatical and lexical. *Shame* and *blame* are grammatically equivalent as nouns and are lexically equivalent in their moral connotations.

Iambic pentameter (which is realized in the above sonnet) is also a parallelistic structure involving the regular projection (in this case, simple alternation) onto the syntagmatic axis of two paradigmatic alternants (a relatively stressed versus a relatively unstressed syllable). Alliteration, too, is a form of parallelism. In the first line of Sonnet 129, for example, the marked +**strident** sound is alternated with unmarked –**strident** sounds (i.e. these two classes of sounds are made equivalent) in regular fashion. Again Jakobson would note that this alliteration is a matter of sense as much as it is of sound, the stridency intuitively underscoring the clash, as well as the odd conjunction, of spirit and shame.

Jakobson's hunch that parallelism is essential to the "invariant" nature of poetry has received support from James J. Fox who, in an important comparative study of parallelism around the world, concluded that as a poetic structure it qualified as a "near universal" (33, pp. 69–70). Nevertheless, the hypothesis is still controversial.

GRAMMATICAL PARALLELISM, THE RELATIVITY HYPOTHESIS, AND POETIC DESIGNATION Some of Jakobson's interpreters wrongly assume that his concept of parallelism is confined to phonological forms, as in the case of meter, rhyme, and alliteration. All linguistic levels, however, are involved in the "constitutive device" of poetry, from phonology to morphology (both grammatical and lexical) to syntax (143, pp. 102–3). The last two lines of Sonnet 129's first quatrain show a highly marked parallelism of adjectives: "is perjured, murd'rous, bloody, full of blame,/Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust." The first two lines, on the other hand, show a marked parallelism of prepositional phrases: "The' expense *of* spirit *in* a waste *of* shame is lust *in* action. . . ." Still further levels are involved as we shall see.

Indeed, grammatical parallelism is Jakobson's primary concern. Why should this be the case? Why should grammatical relations (as opposed to, say, lexical meaning) comprise the primary esthetic material out of which verse is fashioned?

The arguments are presented in his celebrated "Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry" (113) and reiterated in other places. For one thing, the poet's use of grammar is inescapable because these are the obligatory relations of language. To be sure, a poet may (and often does) purposively break the grammatical code by using antigrammatical constructions (and thereby deautomatizes everyday speech), but such deliberate violations presuppose a collectively shared code that is in the verse's "background." He gestures towards the grammar even as he attempts to thwart its hold.

From this point is derived an old philosophical and philological claim about the possible influence of language on thought that goes far back to the Romantic tradition. Jakobson credits Jeremy Bentham as "perhaps the first to

disclose the manifold 'linguistic fictions' which underlie the grammatical structure and which are used throughout the whole field of language as a 'necessary resource' " (95, p. 38). It was Sapir (194), and most importantly his student Whorf (224), who worked on this problem in modern linguistics. Jakobson more or less reiterates their hypothesis when he states:

The indispensable, mandatory role played by the grammatical concepts confronts us with the intricate problem of the relationship between referential, cognitive value and linguistic fiction. Is the significance of grammatical concepts really questionable or are perhaps some subliminal verisimilar assumptions attached to them? How far can scientific thought overcome the pressure of grammatical patterns (95, pp. 38–39)?

The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis has recently been given new life. Various empirical studies have suggested that to some extent grammatical categories do influence thought (150b, 166b). Friedrich (38) argues in a somewhat different vein that the hypothesis may be most valid for poetry. After Sapir [(194); and see Friedrich (37) for the reading of Sapir on which my comments are based], Jakobson was one of the first in contemporary linguistics to have taken the hypothesis in this new direction—that is, away from the problem of reference and cognition to that of poetics and "poetic signification."

Whatever the solution of these still controversial questions is, certainly there is one domain of verbal activities where 'the classificatory rules of the game' acquire the highest significance; *in fiction*, in verbal art, *linguistic fictions* are fully realized. It is quite evident that grammatical concepts—or in Fortunatov's pointed nomenclature, 'formal meanings'—find their widest applications in poetry as the most formalized manifestation of language (95, p. 39).

Why, however, should these assumptions, these linguistic fictions, be more powerful in verse than in any other kind of communicative event? The answer is, I believe, to be found in the fact that the Russian Formalists and the Prague School defined poetic function (note that "function" here is not synonymous with "poem") as independent of external conditions of reality and of the author's own personality. The Prague School claimed that in the poem "the poetic function dominates over the strictly cognitive function" (95, p. 39; see also 75, 136), making the poem more autonomous than other communicative events. The influence of grammar in creating "linguistic fictions" will therefore be most pronounced in poetry because powerful external forces (e.g. historical materialism or Freudian psychological complexes), though present, will be less effective and give grammar a freer hand to influence thought.

In his analysis of Shakespeare's Sonnet 129 Jakobson (139) touches on this problem. Consider, for example, the only two animate nouns in the sonnet, *taker* (line 8) and *men* (line 14). "In common usage the unmarked agent of the verb is an animate, primarily of personal gender, and the unmarked goal is an inanimate. But in both cited constructions with transitive verbs the sonnet

inverts this nuclear order. Both personal nouns of the poem characterize human beings as passive goals of extrinsic, nonhuman and inhuman actions" (129, p. 292–93). This marked grammatical usage of animate nouns, drawing the reader's attention to the message, helps subliminally to create the poem's signification (of man being the passive agent of lust). The final couplet (in opposition to the three quatrains) is another instance of grammar helping to create the signification of the poem. The inanimate nouns of the couplet (*world, heaven, and hell*) in the religious context to which the poem refers are "uniques" (there is only one world, one heaven, and one hell), which are "particularized" by the use of the definite article or by the demonstrative pronoun. In the quatrains, on the other hand, the definite article signals either generic meaning (*The' expense of spirit*) or a single member of a class (*the taker* is a "token" of a "type"). Jakobson implies that the opposition between "abstract" or "generalizing" nouns in the quatrains and "concrete" nouns in the couplet creates a designation of some kind of ultimate retribution that is "concrete," "definite," and "near at hand." The semantic meaning of grammatical categories helps on an unconscious level to shape the text's poetic signification. It creates linguistic fictions whose effects on thought, because they operate unconsciously, are compelling. These fictions are the "underthought" of poems.

FROM PART TO WHOLE IN PARALLELISM; THE POEM'S ARCHITECTURE Parallelism works in all of the many hierarchical levels within the poem (and not merely levels of language). Hierarchy can help us to understand the organization of language in any of its functions, including the poetic. Thus, one could argue that in strophe 1 of Sonnet 129 the first two lines and the last two are equivalent (in grammatical contrast, because one involves predominantly prepositional phrases, the other predominantly adjectives), creating yet a higher-order parallelistic structure. Strophes are then seen likewise to be parallel (e.g. the even strophes sharing something that contrasts with what the odd strophes share), creating yet a higher-order structure that spans more parts of the poem. Of course, parallelism need not work exclusively in terms of quatrains but may be an equivalence established between the first seven and the last seven lines of a sonnet, or between the "inner" lines of the sonnet and its "outer" lines, and so forth (this will become clearer below). In brief, the structure of a poem is what Jakobson called its "architecture," the poem's hierarchical parallelistic organization from the most minute level of phonemic rhymes and alliterations all the way to entire groupings of lines. One can apply such analysis beyond the individual poem, for in some verse traditions [e.g. Yemeni tribal poetry (21)] one poem may be composed as a direct response to a previous poem—the response being equivalent to the original in meter, rhyme, alliteration, metaphor, topic and so

forth. The two poems thus comprise a parallelistic structure that one could call an exchange. Even in our modern Western poetic tradition, intertextual relationships can be seen to involve parallelism.

The “architecture” Jakobson claims to be an invariant of poetry entails binary oppositions between various units of a poem—for example, between odd and even verse-units; between outer verse-units and inner ones; between the anterior portion and the posterior one; between center and periphery, etc. In scores of articles, usually written with the help of a native speaker and/or literary specialist, Jakobson analyzed the “architectonic structure” of specific poems (see 100, 102, 103, 105, 111, 114, 115, 119, 132, 135, 137, 139, 140, 142, 144, 147). Nor has he necessarily confined his analyses to written and “high” literature, for he produced several articles on folk texts (129).

AN EXAMPLE: SHAKESPEARE’S SONNET 129 Let us consider briefly one famous analysis, Jakobson’s reading (129) of Shakespeare’s sonnet 129, which is probably more accessible to English readers than his equally controversial readings of Baudelaire’s poems [see Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss (140), Jakobson (111) and the critiques of Riffaterre (189), Culler (24), and Jakobson’s reply to his critics (128)]. The aim here is not only to give a sense of what Jakobson’s poetics are like, but also to suggest how they might be best understood or appreciated. This point is made with reference to Cubism below. I begin with a fairly straightforward exposition.

The text is presented with only sparse commentary on conventional sonnet form, spelling, and punctuation and a “literal rewording” of each strophe’s meaning. (Jakobson divides the sonnet into 4 strophes: Quatrains 1 and 3 are odd-numbered strophes; quatrain 2 and the couplet are even-numbered strophes.) In Section V Jakobson distinguishes the sonnet’s “pervasive features”—the background against which the poet presents “a salient network of binary oppositions” (129, p. 289).

Thus every strophe presents its specific selection of verbal categories, but on the other hand, each strophe is endowed with one instance of the infinitive. . . . A characteristic pervasive feature is the manifest lack of certain grammatical categories throughout the whole poem. It is the only one among the 154 sonnets of the 1609 Quarto which contains no personal or corresponding possessive pronouns. . . . Sonnet 129 avoids epithets. . . . adjectives are not used as attributes but only in a predicative function. . . . Except for the word *men* in the final line, only singular forms occur in the sonnet.

To get the flavor of the analysis, let us consider only two of the binary oppositions.

Odd vs even Jakobson claims, fairly reasonably, that the odd strophes contrast with the even ones in meaning. “The presentation of the theme in the odd strophes of 129 is an intensely abstractive confrontation of the different

stages of lust (*before, in action, behind*), whereas the even strophes are centered upon the metamorphosis itself (II₂ *hunted, and no sooner had* ₃*Past reason hated*; and in IV the way from *heaven to hell*)" (129, p. 291). He then proceeds to show that crucial grammatical categories (substantives, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) occur with different distributions and frequencies in the odd and even strophes, the parallelism of grammatical forms reinforcing the poem's signification. To put it differently, the distribution of these forms accentuates the opposition of odd and even strophes and the opposition of meaning underlying the strophes. "One experiences the link between the external form and the signification" (143, p. 101).

However, though the analysis proceeds to unveil other binary oppositions in the sonnet, it becomes less and less clear (at least to me and some others) how they might support an underlying poetic signification. This point is important, for it has led some critics justifiably to ask what is the purpose of this poem's elaborate architecture. Here is an example.

Outer vs inner "As shown by many four-strophe poems in world literature, the outer strophes carry a higher syntactic rank than the inner ones" (129:294). The outer strophes (I and IV) work by switching the word order [(I) *Is lust in action, and till action, lust* and (IV) *All this the world well knows yet none knows well*] while the inner strophes (II and III) do not. The inner strophes, on the other hand, are marked by "minor clauses deprived of finites and acting effectively in an independent function" (129:295), and "the effacement of the functional limit between adjectives and adverbs may be noted as a specific property of the inner strophes." However, no signification seems to underlie this outer/inner contrast.

In the end, one is left wondering what the poetic signification of some of these formal oppositions would be. But Jakobson's objective was primarily to discover the structural laws of relationship within the poem's verbal "canvas," much as the Cubists had done in painting. I return below to the significance of this point for understanding the "underthought of poems" (128, p. 783).

Jakobson and His Critics

Is it not the case, Jakobson's critics have asked (24, 189), that differing analyses of a poem's grammatical parallelisms would yield differing architectures? With some qualifications, I answer yes, *without* thereby jeopardizing the theory. The same could be said, for instance, of the analysis of phonological (or other linguistic) systems. More than one solution is possible [a point forcefully made by Chomsky (22)], and there is no a priori theoretical reason to exclude this possibility in poetic systems either.

Jakobson has been taken to task for ignoring literature as an "institution" with its own norms (24), which must be taken into account when reading any

poem. Such criticism seems justified only if one ignores Jakobson's Slavic studies, spanning a period from the 1930s to the mid-1950s in which he tried to achieve an immanent analysis that was true to the genius of the local tradition, a task directly relevant to current concerns in the so-called field of ethno-poetics (62, 207). Nowhere is this more patent, for example, than in Jakobson's research into the form of Czech Gothic poetry (72), which he carefully and painstakingly differentiated from fifteenth-century Hussite verse (77), showing an acute awareness of historical shifts in the apperception of poetic form. If, then, Jakobson was aware of literary conventions important in the reading of poetry (or any other literary genre), his major concern had to be with the universals or constants (as opposed to cultural specifics) of poetic form. If one is left wondering what is the poetic designation of certain formal oppositions in a particular poem (e.g. Sonnet 129), it is because one still insists that poetic form must be wedded to referential meaning. Jakobson seems to be suggesting that any conjunction of referential meaning and poetic form is significant but is not the *raison d'être* of the architecture. The architecture is autotelic; it is simply the essence of poetic form. To put the point in relation to Jakobson's intellectual heritage, the intent of the analysis is to discover the structural laws of relationship within the poem's verbal "canvas," much as the Cubists had done in painting. In the Cubist experiments too the referential object was never (and one might argue could never be) obliterated, nor was that the artists' primary aim. Their goal was to uncover the "universal forms" of painting. In a similar manner, it was Jakobson's aim to uncover the "universal form" of the poetic function.

Why should poems have such internal architectures? The answer could only be that such is the grammar of language in its poetic function, an argument whose circularity Jakobson fully acknowledges and condones (129, p. 767). Just as the referential function has its grammar, so does the poetic one. Or, if one were to invoke human cognition, one could say that "the abstractive power of human thought, underlying . . . both geometrical relations and grammar, superimposes simple geometrical and grammatical figures upon the pictorial world of particular objects and upon the concrete lexical 'where-withal' of verbal art" (113, p. 44). Jakobson repeats with evident approval Baudelaire's conclusions that " 'regularity and symmetry . . . are among the primordial needs of the human mind' " (129, p. 772).

In my opinion, a more tenable criticism of Jakobsonian poetics, and of the Russian Formalists in general, is a Marxist one; namely, that it only superficially deals with the problem of "transcendent analysis"—examination of the relationship of the poetic text to its sociohistorical context. Jakobson & Tynjanov (146) attempted to stress the importance of this relationship to the study of literature in general (perhaps under pressure from the Marxist intelligentsia, which was beginning to turn against the Formalists in the 1930s

and 1940s) and on several fascinating and noteworthy occasions Jakobson sought to overcome this shortcoming, particularly in his articles on Hussite poetry (77) and Pushkin's statue (78); but the fact remains that these efforts were piecemeal, scattered, and certainly not as compelling or comprehensive as the research into "immanent form." Despite his warnings that the poem is not self-contained, Jakobson essentially treated it as such.

Of course, the only major exception to this approach in the structural-functional tradition was probably Mukařovský (178–185). Like Kenneth Burke (19) in America at approximately the same time, he tried to open up the poetic work to a multifunctional analysis, and to ground its reception/interpretation in cultural-historical realities, without at the same time losing sight of art's universality. Without wishing to belittle Mukařovský's outstanding and as yet underrated achievements, I should point out that he, like Jakobson, did not elucidate the power that literature can have to transform and create social reality. It remains to be seen whether such a transcendent view is compatible with immanent analysis in the Russian Formalist tradition. Yet transcendent analysis is absolutely vital to the social sciences' appreciation of the relevance of art to their central problems.

JAKOBSON AND THE METALINGUAL FUNCTION

Less well known, and certainly underdeveloped in Jakobson's oeuvre, are his contributions to the study of metalanguage. It is important not to lose sight of these, however, because of their influence on recent work being done in linguistics (especially anthropological linguistics).

In line with his teleological approach to linguistic analysis, Jakobson (95, 124) distinguished the metalingual function from the referential and poetic functions (not to mention several others discussed by him in his seminal articles; see especially 95) on the grounds that in the former, natural language is being used to "speak about the verbal code itself. . . . thus we may speak in English (as metalanguage) about English (as object language) and interpret English words and sentences by means of English synonyms and circumlocutions" (124, pp. 116–17). He acknowledged that logical positivists like Tarski and Carnap were among the first to bring the problem of metalanguage to the attention of philosophers. One should also point out that Gregory Bateson (7) realized the importance of metamessages in ethology at approximately the time that Jakobson was writing on metalanguage in linguistics.

For Jakobson (118:720), metalanguage was a means for solving the problem of semantics, which, as we have seen, was deliberately sidestepped in (post-)Bloomfieldian American linguistics. As Bloomfield had defined the problem of semantics, meaning had to be based on an exhaustive analysis of the relevant features of the object or referent external to the language. This

formulation made meaning intractable and therefore seemed to justify his assertion that the study of linguistic form should become independent of the study of meaning. Jakobson argued that this formulation was ill conceived, and he did so by invoking Peirce's admonition that "any sign translates itself into other signs in which it is more fully developed" (124, p. 117); that is, speakers can say what a linguistic sign means. According to Jakobson, the study of semantics should be based on metalanguage, as defined above, rather than the language-external referent, making semantics tenable. As he put it, "such equational propositions ordinarily used by interlocutors nullify the idea of verbal meanings as 'subjective intangibles'. . . . Metalingual operations with words or syntactic constructions permit us to overcome Leonard Bloomfield's forebodings in his endeavors to incorporate meaning into the science of language" (124, pp. 117–18). This position is also held by Dixon (25), Silverstein (202), and others, though not without qualification, as I show below.

It is to Jakobson's credit that he continued to emphasize the importance of the metalingual function to the problems of linguists and clinical psychologists, but his formulation suffers on several counts. For one thing, he strictly distinguished between the poetic and metalingual functions; yet if the former is defined as a "focus on the message for its own sake," the speaker/hearer must, at least implicitly, take the linguistic sign as the object of his/her own conscious, or more likely unconscious, awareness. Consider, for example, the basis of poetic meter in English: The poet uses stress (as opposed to tone or syllabic quantity) because this feature is phonemically important in the language—a fact of which the poet must be at least subliminally aware (116). That is, the fact that stress "feels right" must be explained largely by the poet's awareness of the code (204). We grasp the metaphorical nature of Romeo's utterance "And Juliet is the sun" in part because we understand the code we invoke to interpret it (see also 172).

The second, less serious problem entails the theoretical relationship of the metalingual function to Jakobsonian grammatical semantics. As we have noted, Jakobson was one of the first to realize that certain grammatical categories—the so-called shifters and other "duplex" signs—must be defined in relation to the speech situation. He was also one of the first to realize the extent to which these shifters involve metalanguage. "Both the message (M) and the underlying code (C) are vehicles of linguistic communication, but both of them function in a duplex manner; they may at once be utilized and referred to (= pointed at)" (89, p. 41). Jakobson notes that Vološinov's (217a) category of *reported speech* (e.g. "he commanded, 'you are not to go!' ") illustrates a duplex sign. Then, himself exemplifying the very category he is discussing, he wittily quotes Vološinov's definition: "REPORTED SPEECH is speech within speech, a message within a message and at the

same time it is also speech about speech, a message about a message" (89, p. 41; see also 12). The latter part of this definition brings out the metalingual character of reported speech (the verb "command" describes the kind of speech act quoted in the embedded sentence).

If one distinguishes semantic (nonshifter) categories from pragmatic (shifter) ones in the grammar, then it has seemed to some theorists (202) that one should also analytically differentiate between two kinds of metalingual reference, metapragmatics (such as reports of the use of language forms) and metasemantics (such as dictionary definitions), on the grounds that the one critically involves reference to the speech situation while the other does not. Some interesting and important work in anthropological linguistics has been done recently under the rubric of metapragmatics, as herein defined (154, 166a). In brief, much of what today is called metapragmatics stems in large part from analytical elaborations or refinements of Jakobson's original discussions of the problem of metalanguage [though see also Benveniste (11, 12)].

JAKOBSON'S INFLUENCE ON ANTHROPOLOGY

Jakobson did not specifically analyze cultural or sociolinguistic data [although his work on the relationships between Slavic languages and cultures (85, 90, 91, 133) have inspired cultural anthropologists (Leach 156)], but as must be clear from the preceding survey his influence on anthropology was still considerable. His programmatic statements (110, 112) on the relation of language to other cultural signaling systems have been widely read by anthropologists. Also important to anthropology have been his ideas on (a) the structural phonemic model, as elucidated above and adapted by Lévi-Strauss and the componential analysts; (b) his teleological (or multifunctional) view of language, expanded by ethnographers of communication; (c) his notion of grammatical semantics and in particular his contribution to the study of speech indexicality, reworked for cultural analysis by Silverstein and his students; and (d) his poetics, particularly his concept of parallelism, which has proved useful in the understanding of discourse. Not all of these ideas have proven equally fertile when transplanted from their original soil to anthropology, and some have only recently begun to bear fruit. Therefore in this section I aim to criticize anthropology's use of certain parts of Jakobson's linguistics and to emphasize the potential of others only recently being developed.

Lévi-Straussean Analysis of Kinship and Myth

As is well known, the structuralist phonemic model was used by Lévi-Strauss as an analogy for understanding nonlinguistic cultural data (e.g. myth, kin-

ship relations, marriage, art, etc). In his 1945 article "Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology," Lévi-Strauss asserted that linguistics "will certainly play the same renovating role with respect to the social sciences that nuclear physics, for example, has played for the physical sciences." He then explicitly compared kinship terms with phonemes as "elements of meaning" that are unconsciously integrated into "systems" (157, p. 32; see also 158). Even more than in his kinship studies, Lévi-Strauss invoked this model in his analysis of myth, particularly in the so-called "mytheme" (159–164).

An adequate critical assessment of Lévi-Strauss's analogy would entail a paper in itself. Several investigators (213) familiar with the linguistic model have noted that the analogy breaks down in crucial places and ends up obscuring, rather than revealing, Lévi-Strauss's true insights into mythic structure. It would be fair to say that Lévi-Strauss never really understood the importance of the linguistic concept of function to the structuralist model he invoked. Hence he ignored the fact that language is structured according to its manifold (i.e. purposive or goal-oriented) uses. Thus, the criticism to be leveled against Lévi-Strauss is that he failed to see just how teleological Jakobsonian linguistics is in comparison to Saussure's (which focuses almost exclusively on reference) and, in turn, how this difference crucially affects the adoption of the concepts of structuralism. Lévi-Strauss assumed one structure for all uses, whereas the essence of Jakobsonian linguistics is that language is not homogeneous with respect to the code. When all is said and done, it is difficult to say what Lévi-Strauss gained by taking the "structuralist insight" from linguistics rather than adopting the more general notions current in biology or even Cubist and Futurist art. Structuralism's particular lessons of function and subsystem seem either to have escaped, or to have been entirely ignored by, their major proponent in anthropology.

Jakobson did little to discourage the misuse of the culture/language analogy, in spite of the fact that he undoubtedly disagreed with it. Jakobson himself explained this restraint in terms of his enduring friendship with Lévi-Strauss (M. Silverstein, personal communication). However, it could be argued that in the long run such misuses of linguistic models in cultural analysis do more harm than good in bringing the fields together.

The Distinctive-Feature Model in Kinship Studies

The same could be said of the way the terms "component" and "feature," familiar to linguists from Jakobsonian phonology and morphology, have been employed to characterize primitives in kinship terminologies (44, 151, 165, 166 and many other componential analyses; see also 200). This criticism has been raised, for example, by Silverstein (202), and also by Huddleston (57a). Again, it is not possible here to detail the criticisms, which are at least three-fold (though see 223): that the structure of the two-place predicates of

the kin term is not analogous to the “bundle” of one-place features in the phoneme; that the analysis ends up reifying a structuralist binary model of language that is in many instances forced upon the data; and that important contextual (pragmatic) meanings are obscured by the genealogical model.

Functional Analysis of Speaking

As mentioned above, the multifunctional perspective on communication is one of the hallmarks of Jakobsonian linguistics. This, by contrast with the “analogous” use of the structuralist phonemic model, had a lasting effect on the development of anthropological linguistics in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly in the so-called “ethnography of communication” being developed by Dell Hymes (59, 60, and 61) and his students (9). “Functional” cannot be paraphrased simply as “goal-oriented.” There are at least two ways speaking might be understood as goal oriented: (a) a (verbal) response might be related in a mechanical, purely causal way to an end (or stimulus), as in the classical behaviorist formulation; or (b) the speaker might have an *Einstellung* (a stance or orientation) toward a goal of communication, as in the Buehlerian formulation [see also Buehler’s critique of behaviorism (18)]. The latter kind of goal is far more subjective, far more the creation of the knowing actor, than the former. Goal-oriented behavior in the second sense informs Jakobson’s “function.”

This being the case, the door is opened for the subjective view of the actor, important to an understanding of speaking. In a sense Hymes (59–61) realized this when he strongly advocated “emic” models of speaking—that is, descriptions of what actors hold to be appropriate ways of speaking. In my opinion, the ethnography of communication should more fully explore the subjectively held notions of speaking in order to bring it into alignment with a more modern concept of culture (42, 43, 200). Some anthropological linguists, profoundly influenced by the ethnography of communication, have developed the subjective view of speaking more fully along these lines (see, for example, 6, 54a), though more needs to be done.

Speech Indexicality in Cultural Description

Jakobson developed the idea of indexicals for the analysis of speech in its referential function but said little about their importance to the nonreferential uses of speech. Research in this area has been pushed by Silverstein (202) and his students. Speech indexicals are commonly used for the purpose of marking social distinctions. One such distinction is gender (46, 195). Different vocabularies may also be used to index the relative social statuses of the addressor and addressee, as in Southeast Asian speech communities (29, 41). One may similarly analyze the pragmatics of pronominal usage (16, 35), kinship terms (167, 214), or any aspect of *parole* important to understanding social organization.

Curiously little has been done, by Jakobson or (to my knowledge) anyone else, to extend the notion of speech indexicality to the study of the poetic function. Because the text of a modern poem is less obviously than a pre-literary poem anchored in an external sociopolitical context, one might question the utility of the indexical approach, but this is to overlook the well-known fact (202) that indexicals can also serve a text-internal function—that is, of pointing to antecedent or following text. In other words, this is part of a larger question of text coherence (cf. 51) in poetic discourse. One example of how indexicals achieve that coherence would be rhyme, which Sapir (192) long ago realized has not only a euphonic and semantic function in the poem, but also indicates the end of a rhythmic unit. In effect, it serves the poetic function by indexing the meter.

Poetics and the Study of Discourse in Cultural Context

Poetic figures such as metaphor and metonymy (74), were explored by Jakobson throughout his career, primarily because he believed they were so fundamentally grounded in the structure (paradigmatic vs syntagmatic) of language. Of late, many anthropologists reacting positively or negatively to Jakobson's ideas on the subject, have used metaphor as a key with which to elucidate culture (see, for example, 31, 32, 37, 197). Kenneth Burke (20) has also advocated an understanding of culture through poetic tropes, although for him metonymy has always been more crucial than metaphor.

More important than Jakobson's ideas on tropes is his notion of the "architectonic" structure of the poetic text. This notion has only just begun to catch on in anthropological analyses of native discourse.

Throughout the world, inquirers are constantly finding new systems of verbal art based on canonic parallelism. Moreover, through anthropological research assimilating the principles of linguistic methodology, such as that of James Fox, we are discovering the existence of close ties between parallelism in poetry and in mythology, including ritual (143, p. 104).

One could single out Fox (33, 33a), Hymes (62), and Urban (214a) as examples of what Jakobson here refers to. If one is interested in the relationship of discourse to cultural context (the idea that discourse may actually create the structure of the social situation) Jakobson's ideas on parallelism can be useful. For example, in Yemenite tribal poetry (21) the structure of verse is unmistakably parallelistic. The patterns of meter, rhyme, and alliteration are used both to compose culturally recognizable forms of verse and to structure social competition in which honor is achieved by beating the opponent. On a higher level of parallelism, the exchange of poems in a particular genre serves also as a social exchange: an exchange of gifts at a wedding; the exchange of provocation-and-challenge in a dispute; and the exchange of pieties in a religious festival. Finally, the parallelism of poetic exchanges is constitutive

of the tribal self, which is ideologically wrapped up with concerns of language. It is probably in Jakobson's poetics that the most fruitful and as yet largely untapped applications to discourse will be found. It is also perhaps here that anthropology will realize the "transcendent analysis" advocated by Jakobson and Tynjanov.

CONCLUSION

While the anthropological use of an "analogous" structural model based on the phoneme is part of a Jakobsonian legacy that has now been virtually abandoned, other aspects of his linguistic theories will probably stimulate future research—the study of speech indexicals, the metapragmatic operations of language, a multifunctional exploration of speaking in its sociocultural setting, and the study of parallelism in poetic discourse.

To a noteworthy degree anthropology in the last decade has become "logo-centered," as evidenced not only in the growing subfields of sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and ethnopoetics but also in such metaphors as "culture as a text" or "culture as dialogue," which dominate its rhetoric, and in the new stylistic experiments of ethnography. More and more sessions at the annual American Anthropological Association Meetings are devoted to language in its social context or to understanding culture in ways that we understand speaking or verbal art. As long as this trend continues, the influence of Jakobson's ideas will continue to be felt in the years to come.

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