

## Colloquium

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015

10am -5.30pm

**Form and Poetry:** an exploration of  
Russian Formalism - *ostranenie*, city  
poetics, poles of poetic art - metaphor,  
metonymy

**Speakers:**

Mary Coghill

(presentation of completed Fellowship research)

Keith Green

Gareth Farmer

Helen Palmer

Charles Denroche

Anna Robinson

Alex Hills

Tea/coffee provided all day  
Room 243 (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor),  
Institute of English Studies  
Senate House,  
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

Please contact organiser:

[Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk)

visiting research fellow

Institute of English Studies

'The streets shall be our brushes the squares our palettes'  
 (Vladimir Mayakovsky)

# Colloquium

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015

10am - 5.30pm

## Form and Poetry: an exploration of Russian Formalism - *ostranenie*, city poetics, poles of poetic art - metaphor, metonymy

**Dr Mary Coghill** Visiting Research Fellow, Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Studies, University of London [Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk) 'The Development of Roman Jakobson's semiotic interpretation of poetic form and function with special reference to his axial model of the poles of language: metaphor and metonymy; and the application of this developed model to the construction of city poetics with reference to Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetry.'

**Dr Keith Green** Sheffield Hallam University, Principal Lecturer in English Language and Literature [K.M.Green@shu.ac.uk](mailto:K.M.Green@shu.ac.uk) 'The Absent Lute: Thomas Wyatt and the Myths of the Lyric'

**Dr Gareth Farmer** University of Bedfordshire [Gareth.Farmer@beds.ac.uk](mailto:Gareth.Farmer@beds.ac.uk) 'Artifice and/or Critical Formalism'

**Dr Helen Palmer** Goldsmith's, University of London [h.palmer@gold.ac.uk](mailto:h.palmer@gold.ac.uk) 'Formalism is Queer: Defamiliarization 'Between Thought, Language and Bodies'

**Dr Charles Denroche** University of Westminster [denrocc@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:denrocc@westminster.ac.uk) 'What Roman Jakobson told us about metonymy and metaphor in his 1956 essay (on aphasia) and what we can say about the interplay of these phenomena across genres now, nearly 60 years on'

**Anna Robinson** University of East London [a.robinson@uel.ac.uk](mailto:a.robinson@uel.ac.uk) 'The Woods in the City; an attempt to impose structure on a dreamscape'

**Dr Alex Hills** Royal Academy of Music [a.hills@ram.ac.uk](mailto:a.hills@ram.ac.uk) 'Flatland: Composition as Science Fiction'

Tea/coffee provided all day  
Room 243 (2<sup>nd</sup> Floor),  
Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU

Please contact organiser: [Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk)

glass design: city life wallpaper [www.grandecogroup.com](http://www.grandecogroup.com)

Fellowship Colloquium Presentation 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015

Dr Mary Coghill, Visiting Research Fellow (2013-2015), Institute of English Studies, School of Advanced Studies, University of London; Fellow London Metropolitan University  
email: [Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Mary.Coghill@sas.ac.uk)

**The Development of Roman Jakobson's semiotic interpretation of poetic form and function with special reference to his axial model of the poles of language: metaphor and metonymy; and the application of this developed model to the construction of city poetics with reference to Vladimir Mayakovsky's poetry.**

The leaflet produced to advertise this event was inspired by printing done by a contemporary of Jakobson in Revolutionary Russia. Paper was scarce and wallpaper was used for a number of publications.



***Sade Sudei II*: A Trap for Judges II.** (circa 1915): this book was printed on pieces of wallpaper and contains artwork by the Russian artist Elena Guro (1877-1913).



Roman Jakobson 1896-1982

Roman Jakobson's theory of 'poetic function' from his essay 'Linguistics and Poetics' (1960) in *Language in Literature* (1987, p71) is summarised as follows: 'The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination'. This definition all too often becomes the one thing that is studied and yet is often not properly understood when considering Jakobson's commitment to Russian Formalism with its Formalist understanding of 'function', and the central precept of 'literariness'. The Formalists with their interest in structure understood that the artefact, in this instance, the poetic text, exists as something which has its own attributes and properties, and that these are available, in themselves, for study and analysis. This is a fundamental principle which is derived from the Aristotelian empirical desire for observed knowledge and which has been used throughout the centuries to inform scientific observation. The Formalists wished to apply science to language and with the use of linguistics and semiotics, construct a 'science of poetics'. Eichenbaum summed it up, writing in 1924:

The question is not about the methods of studying literature, but about the principles for constructing a science of literature, — about its content, its basic subject, about the problems which organize it into a special science. It has at last become clear that a science of literature, inasmuch as it is not merely a part of the history of culture, must be an independent and specific science with its own field of specific problems. (Eikhenbaum, 1924, 2). As quoted in *Formalist Theory (Russian Poetics in Translation Book 4)* (Kindle Locations 612-617). Eds. Ann Shukman and Michael O'Toole. Kindle Edition.

The definition arises from an analysis where Jakobson states that the 'focus on the message for its own sake, is the POETIC function of language' (1987, p69). This reference to 'message' is part of six categories that comprises Jakobson's structural model for the process of verbal and written communication: addresser, context, message, contact, code and the addressee. Of these six categories the central four (context, message, contact and code) describe the communication from the addresser to the addressee. Jakobson adds a further function to each of these categories. Emotive is added to the addresser, conative to the addressee. The communication itself is further described respectively as: referential, poetic, phatic and metalingual (1987, p 71).<sup>1</sup>

	<i>Context/Referential</i>	
<i>Addresser/</i>	<i>Message/Poetic</i>	<i>Addressee/</i>
<i>Emotive</i>	<i>Contact/Phatic</i>	<i>Conative</i>
	<i>Code/Metalingual</i>	

Hans Osterwalder's analysis in *T.S.Eliot: Between Metaphor and Metonymy* (1978) emphasises the poet's relationship with the poetic message, as one whereby the poet provides a controlling force. This is crucial in accepting that not only does Jakobson's theory state that poetry is a message which concentrates on the message for its own sake, but also that the 'Formalist' definition of 'function' includes the communication role of the poet - where this role releases information about the structure and 'literariness' of the text. Osterwalder's emphasis does two things: firstly, it describes how the strength of the poetic function is a process of communication from the poet and the text to the reader; and secondly, that this produces a semiotic poetic space which can be interpreted by a constructed scientific model. Jakobson went further and extended his theory into an axial model based on the poles of language. This is explored in his essay: 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances' first published in 1956 and see *Language in Literature* (1987). Briefly, here, metaphor is defined as on the axis of selection or simultaneity (that is, without time) and metonymy as on the axis of combination or contiguity (that is, sequential).

Jakobson's axioms have an inherent semiotic rather than linguistic structure. Jakobson's theory of poetic function should be analysed from within the Russian Formalist tradition of the importance of function as communication. As indicated above, a close examination of Jakobson's terms of reference: 'poetic function', 'equivalence' and 'projection' gives rise to an understanding of the sense of movement in Jakobson's model and which contributes to a semiotic structure .

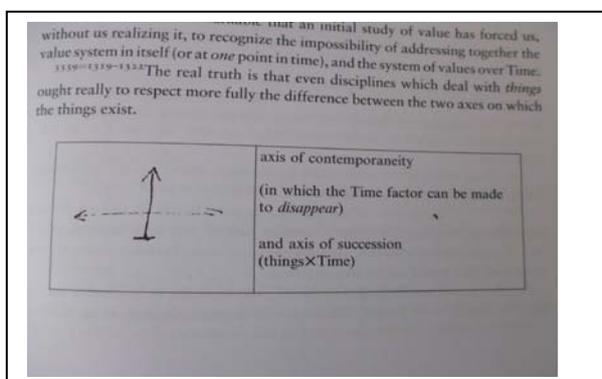
Jakobson's theory of poetic function is further developed through his theory of the poles of language. His work on aphasia in 'Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasia' (originally written in 1956 [1987]) is the most often quoted source for this aspect of his Formalist theory. His poetic function refers to projection of metaphoric poetic language into metonymic, often more prosaic combinations of language. He explores this model through the use of axes which give rise to the metonymic pole (syntagm, horizontal axis) and the metaphoric pole (paradigm, vertical axis). As indicted below, these poles can be developed beyond Jakobson's original structure and this development can provide a space which interprets a city poetic. This cannot be described as a linguistic analysis.

It is generally accepted that Jakobson's use of the paradigm and syntagm, the axis of selection and the axis of combination can be traced from work done by Saussure. But

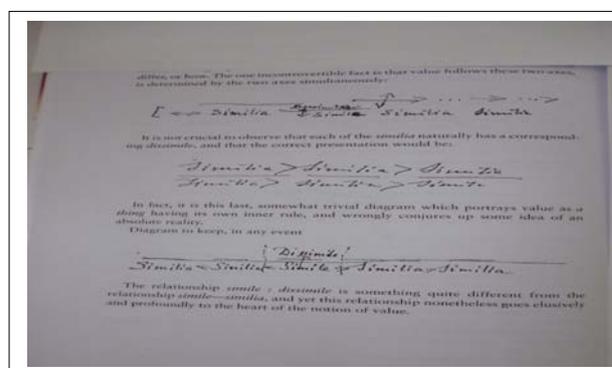
Saussure's ideas are not identical to Jakobson's. In *Six Lectures on Sound and Meaning* (1978 p100) Jakobson writes about the importance of accuracy with respect to the axes and their value:

Saussure on many occasions warned that linguistics, and all sciences which are concerned with values, must be very careful to ascertain the axes on which the entities under consideration are located. He rigorously distinguished two axes: "(1) *the axis of simultaneity* (AB) [syntagm/horizontal] which concerns relations between coexisting things, and from which any intervention by time is excluded, and (2) *the axis of succession* (CD) [paradigm/vertical]" [and see Saussure (1966), Ed. Baskin, p80].

It is important to note that Saussure (in Engler (2008) depicts these axes as medially intersecting each other. It is not clear which axis refers to which value:



(taken from Engler, p337)



(taken from Engler, p240)

Saussure's axes are used for linguistic analysis only.<sup>2</sup> However, in Chapter V of his *Course in General Linguistics* (1966) Saussure writes of his theory regarding syntagmatic and associative relations, that:

words acquire relations based on the linear nature of language because they are chained together. This rules out the possibility of pronouncing two elements simultaneously. The elements are arranged in sequence on the chain of speaking. Combinations supported by linearity are *syntagms* (Saussure (1966), Ed. Baskin, p123)

It would seem from this, that the syntagm therefore represents the sequential combinatory meaning and the association (with the characteristic of simultaneity) represents the paradigmatic (see 'Dissimile' diagram above). Saussure illustrates his theory with the famous architectural example:

On the one hand, the column has a certain relation to the architrave that it supports; the arrangement of the two units in space suggests the syntagmatic relation. On the other hand, if the column is Doric, it suggests a mental comparison of this style with others (Ionic, Corinthian etc.) although none of these elements is present in space: the relation is associative (Saussure (1966) Ed. Baskin p124).

Saussure describes the associative grouping as being a paradigm (p126), as opposed to the syntagm which is ‘always composed of two or more consecutive units’ (1966, p123).<sup>3</sup>

Saussure’s theory of syntagmatic and associative relations (see Saussure (1966) Ed. Baskin pp 125-127) is a prototype for Jakobson’s axial model with its paradigm of simultaneity and syntagm of combination. It is Saussure’s theory combined with Jakobson’s ‘poetic function’ that produces further development of the axes. The debt to Saussure, and the development of his ideas, is acknowledged by others, for example Ladislav Matejka once a member of The Prague Linguistic Circle (see 1978).<sup>4</sup>

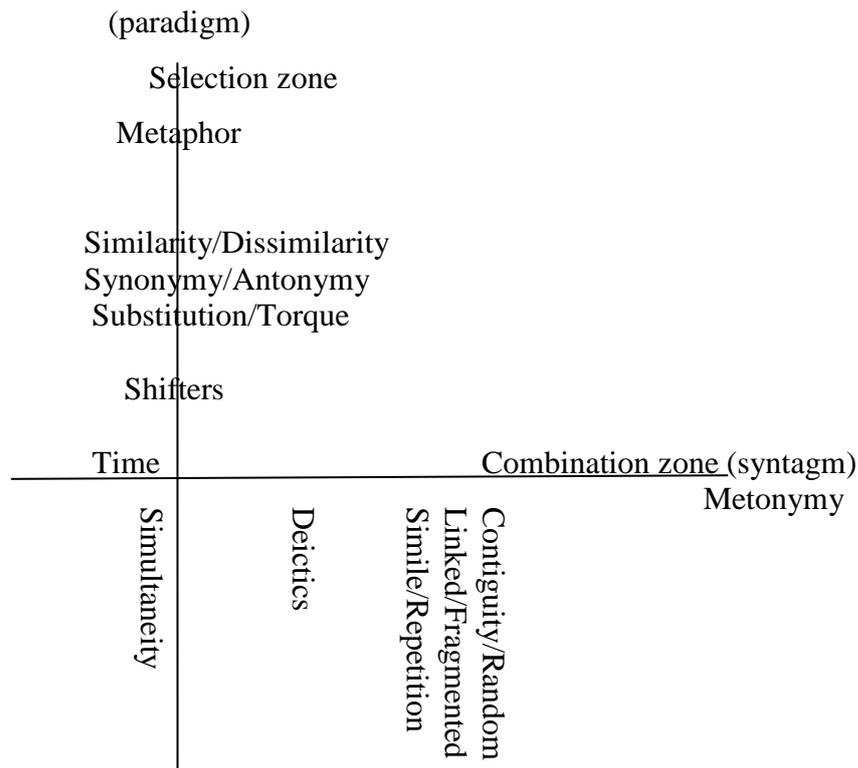
There is also a debt to Alexander Belyj’s contribution to this metaphoric and metonymic categorization. He was a contemporary of Jakobson and his interest in poetry led him to ‘clearly isolate metaphor and metonymy and arrange them in a relation of opposition as two different types of connections’ (see Helle, 1994). Belyj, a member of the Symbolist movement, anticipated the Formalists with his ideas which were acknowledged by Eichenbaum in 1923 (in Helle (1994) p41). His work is mathematically inspired and deserves more study. Unlike Jakobson, his ideas on metaphor and metonymy do not rely on analysis of speech defects, but on his categorisation of different qualities of poetic language. Helle (1994) compares Belyj and Eichenbaum:

‘ For Eichenbaum, metonymy becomes more valuable than metaphor because metonymy does not detach the sign from its semantic series, but only results in a certain displacement of meaning, for example from part to whole, without any pretence of creating qualitatively new semantic dimensions, as does the metaphor. According to Eichenbaum, metaphor thus leads us away from the sign and “over to the idea”...while poetic metonymy to a greater degree focuses on the intrinsic value of the poetic word. The word’s concrete side is thus crucial, and not it’s transferred or symbolic meaning. For Belyj, on the other hand, the strength of poetry lies in the metaphor....This is because Belyj, in accordance with the basic conception of symbolism, in which art is supposed to create new syntheses and new symbolic universes, considers metaphor as the unique way of bringing together different spheres of thought’ (1994, p43).

The above discussion provides some historical basis for the development of the definition of metaphor and metonym within a Formalist theoretical background. The Axial Model below provides a further development of this model. It has been suggested by the author that there are developments to the Saussurean and Jakobsonian models which would allow an expanded Axial Model. This was first undertaken for this author’s PhD thesis completed in 2011 (*A Theory and Praxis*

*of a City Poetic: Jakobson, Poetic Function and City Space; Women, Deixis and the Narrator: A City Poem: Shades of Light: A Triumph of City* Unpublished PhD Thesis, London Metropolitan University (<http://ethos.bl.uk>). Some developments have been made since then to the details but not the overall design of the model.

Jakobson's axial model, as developed by the author (10.15):



*Where:*

metaphor is defined by:

similarity/dissimilarity

synonymy/antonymy

substitution/torque

and metonymy is defined by:

contiguity/random

linked/fragmented<sup>5</sup>

simile/repetition

For Jakobson the poles of language (see his essay 'Two Aspects of Language', 1954 in 1987) define metaphor as having the property of simultaneity and the metonym as having the property of contiguity. Within his structure of language analysis, his poles of language can be arranged as a graph with the property of time on the perpendicular axis. This provides the simultaneity in the metaphoric trope. The syntagm or horizontal axis therefore gives the property of progress through time and this provides contiguity in the metonymic trope. That is, the poetic trope of the metonym is a succession of images placed one after the other, some of which may portray an aspect of the metonym. This includes synecdoche.

The point needs to be made that Jakobson did not extensively define the metonym. He wrote that for poetry the metonym has not generally been explored:

nothing comparable to the rich literature on metaphor can be cited for the theory of metonymy....The principle of similarity underlies poetry; the metrical parallelism of lines or the phonic equivalence of rhyming words prompts the question of semantic similarity and contrast....Prose on the contrary, is forwarded essentially by contiguity. Thus for poetry, metaphor – and for prose, metonymy – is the line of least resistance and consequently the study of poetical tropes is directed chiefly toward metaphor (1987, pp113/4)

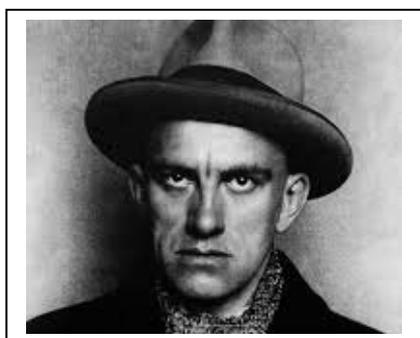
The historical analysis of the metonym includes several schools of study, including its rhetorical and classical origins or more contemporaneously through cognitive linguistics. These provide a number of categorisations and few conclusions. A number of other linguistic based academic disciplines have grappled with the difficult issue of defining the metonym.<sup>6</sup> The contemporary position is that metonyms cannot be altogether classified as separate from metaphor. However, for the purposes of this paper the terms metaphor and metonym are defined by Jakobson's own definitions of these tropes. There is a definition of the relationship between the two in his essay 'Linguistics and Poetics', written in 1960 (in 1987). Here he discussed Slavic folk poetry, with allusion to Goethe:

In poetry not only the phonological sequence but, in the same way, any sequence of semantic units strives to build an equation. Similarity superimposed on contiguity imparts to poetry its thoroughgoing symbolic, multiplex, polysemantic essence.... Said more technically, anything sequent is a simile. In poetry, where similarity is superinduced upon contiguity, any metonymy is slightly metaphoric and any metaphor has a metonymic tint' (1987, p85).

The complexity inherent in this condensed statement requires much analysis of terms and their connections in order to fully understand it. It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine developing theories of the relationship of metaphor and metonym but Jakobson's

definitions which identify the inseparability of the two terms, predate the subsequent work on the relationship between the two done by Cognitive Linguistics.

As mentioned above, Jakobson's Formalist techniques focus on the function of the poetic text with the full and detailed analysis of linguistic, grammatical and semantic parts as a scientific study. The end result of this Formalist approach was intended as a semiotic analysis of the whole of the poem as an artefact in its own right. For Jakobson this is defined by its factual similarity (the text in itself) and its implied similarity (the grammar of the text in itself). Jakobson explains his terms in his essays 'Grammatical Parallelism' (1987, pp145-179) and 'The Development of Semiotics' (1987, pp436-454). Briefly, poetic construction, where words, sounds, themes, patterns are repeated within the poem produce the parallels, the factual similarity. With regards to imputed similarity, he uses terms which derive from the work of the semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce. He uses the example that a picture of a horse is a factual similarity, the word horse designates 'horse' but is imputed, as the word 'horse' is not at all like a horse; the representation of the horse in a poem adds the artifice through the use of parallels, amongst other poetic devices: thus it is the combinations of the imputed similarity which give rise to the artifice and that this develops Peirce's triadic semiotic structure.<sup>7</sup>



Vladimir Mayakovsky photographed in 1924 just before he visited Paris

The second half of this paper illustrates the theory explored above with reference to a poem written by Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930) entitled 'The City' (written in 1925). The poem is about the city of Paris. Please see Appendix for the two versions referred to. 'The City', in the English Raduga Publishers' translation on the handout is 100 lines. The online literal translation (see [www.v.mayakovsky.ru](http://www.v.mayakovsky.ru)) splits the lines in a different way and is comprised of 121 lines. Historically the locations are very significant. Briefly, the Place de la Vendôme is the location of the Ritz Hotel, the

headquarters of Chanel and other wealthy businesses. The Place de la Concorde was the location of the guillotine in the French Revolution and, as mentioned below, more recent political events. Both of these locations are in close proximity to each other in central Paris.

The poem has been analysed in conjunction with Jakobson's essays on Mayakovsky which were written as a commentary to previously unpublished texts by Mayakovsky for an edition of his work *Russkij literaturnyi arxiv* (1956) published in New York by Harvard University. These essays were published in one of the volumes of Jakobson's Selected Writings, but in keeping with a number of his other essays in various languages, it was published in Russian, in the English edition: *Selected Writings, Vol 5, On Verse, Its Masters and Explorers* (1979) The Hague, Mouton, pp299-354. The details are as follows:

К ПОЗДНЕЙ ЛИРИКЕ МАЯКОВСКОГО (pp382-405), translated as: 'About Mayakovsky's Later Lyrical Poems'; and ДОСТОЕВСКИЙ В ОТГОЛОСКАХ МАЯКОВСКОГО (pp406-412), translated as: 'Dostoyevsky Echoed In Mayakovsky's Work'.

Enquiries were made as to where an English translation of this essay might be found and none was located. Jakobson's essay has been especially translated for this fellowship research and presentation. I am greatly indebted to my colleague Dr Elena Nistor, University of Agronomic Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Bucharest, for arranging the translation in conjunction with Elena Richard and Paul Richard.<sup>8</sup> It is hoped that the full translations of these two essays will be published as a separate paper, linked with this one as an Addendum to this presentation.

Jakobson's analysis of Mayakovsky as a poet and his poetic work in these essays is much more biographical than Formalist techniques would usually produce. Osip Brik made the Formalist position very clear when he wrote in 1923:

The social role of the poet cannot be understood by an analysis of his individual qualities and habits. It is essential to study on a mass scale the devices of poetic craft, what distinguishes them from adjacent domains of human labour, and to study the laws of their historical development (2013-12-05) Formalist Theory (Russian Poetics in Translation Book 4) (Kindle Locations 2723-2725). Ann Shukman and Michael O'Toole, Kindle Edition).

However, the strong use of the personal pronoun or shifter, the ‘I’ poet/narrator, makes ‘The City’, a personal poem although, as demonstrated below, Mayakovsky’s use of the metonym in this poem constructs a poem which is very much about world events. Another poem by Mayakovsky written as a result of the same tour and at around the same time, was ‘Brooklyn Bridge’. This was written after his visit to America in the same year, 1925. This poem, however, moves through various different personal pronouns – shifters - which influence the meaning of the poem.

Jakobson’s essay has, as its translated title: ‘About Mayakovsky’s Later Lyrical Poems’ [AMLLP]. A second essay which directly follows this one in Jakobson’s *Selected Writings, Volume 5* is also about Mayakovsky’s work and translates as: ‘Dostoyevsky Echoed in Mayakovsky’s Work’ [DEMW]. In the first of these essays on Mayakovsky, Jakobson leaves his Formalist commitment in the background. The essay provides a personal overview of Mayakovsky’s life and approach to his work. Crucially, Jakobson, quoting David Burlyuk, writes in the opening paragraph: ‘In Mayakovsky’s literary works, love poems and lyrical cycles befittingly alternate with lyrical epic poems about world events.’ Jakobson sums up Mayakovsky’s early poetic development: ‘Then again “the lyrics of the heart” are replaced by poetry ruled by reason’ (p1/2). [All page refs refer to the translation print out-AMLLP - not the original published text]. To use Mayakovsky’s own poetic summary from his poem ‘Jubilee’: ‘We repeatedly attack/lyrical verses/with bayonets’ [as quoted in AMLLP, p4]. On the same page Jakobson’s commentary provides a personal biographical story about Mayakovsky:

One evening in April 1927, in the restaurant Nezdara in Prague, famous for its vintage Tokay wine, Mayakovsky assured me that his rhythm of alternating genres was unchanged, and real lyrical poems are going to follow the ‘October’ poem’<sup>9</sup> [AMLLP, p4].

Both this essay and the earlier one written by Jakobson ‘On a Generation that Squandered its Poets’ (1931 *Language and Literature* (1987) pp273-300), contain a mood of prescience towards Mayakovsky’s impending suicide. This reveals two things, firstly, that Jakobson has a strong emotional response to the poet that he had known for many years, and secondly that this emotional response sidelined Jakobson’s commitment to Formalism.

The second essay on Mayakovsky’s poetry also specially translated for this Fellowship was: ‘Dostoyevsky Echoed in Mayakovsky’s Work’. This was originally published in the

'International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics' (IJSLP) 1959, No 1/2 (pp305-10). It contains extensive analysis of Shklovsky's interpretation of Dostoyevsky's work. Jakobson analyses Mayakovsky's use of star motifs and imagery to interpret this, and the function of the poet's life [p27 DEMW]. The analysis of Dostoyevsky's work concentrates on how various Russian writers interact with each other's ideas and themes. Towards the conclusion of this essay Jakobson returns to Mayakovsky's work, within the context of how Russian authors used other writers' themes and ideas, including the idea of constructing 'doubles'. Jakobson demonstrates Mayakovsky's ability to treat the same subjects throughout his work in both epic and parodic manner. Jakobson uses the example of Mayakovsky's poem 'About This':

The other double of the autobiographical hero of the older poem "A Man", who calls from the past to "stop the suffering", while the younger double doesn't find a premise for an exchange in the "time being". Furthermore, the lyrical "I" of the poem "About This" has a third and insufferable bedbug double [DEMW, p31].

Mayakovsky wrote a vicious and comic play entitled 'The Bedbug' (1929). He described it 'as being a caricature of his own poem right after he finished it and it was performed' [DEMW, p31]. Finally Jakobson picks up this central theme of analysis of Mayakovsky's poetic works when he refers back to his earlier essay, 'About a Generation that Squandered its Poets', and insists that Mayakovsky's work contained the two themes which are always developed:

Mayakovsky's poetic creation, from his first poems "to his last lines is unitary and indivisible. There is a dialectic development of a unitary theme. There is an unusual unity of symbols. A Symbol that was alluded to in passing is developed and offered from a different angle"....Everything that Mayakovsky wrote is unitary inseparable and inextricable" (DEMW, pp31/2).<sup>10</sup>

Jakobson goes on to argue that Mayakovsky's social poems all end in the future, whereas his love poems end with 'personal love tragedy, inescapable loneliness, and martyrdom' [DEMW, p32]. This is not a dichotomy of themes imposed by history but rather, as Jakobson writes:

The polyphonic character of Mayakovsky's poetry consists in the interruption of both unmerged genres. This is not a theory imposed from the outside and backdated to form the literary inheritance of a dead poet. Mayakovsky wrote many times in his poems and letters, and made oral declarations about the alternation of genres and their dramatic collisions; about the fight between the lyrical and anti-lyrical inspiration. This was not a fight imposed upon the poet. No one could have imposed anything upon such a stubborn poet [DEMW, p32].

Jakobson's conclusion to this essay, where he refers back to Shklovsky's analysis, reveals his own deep fascination for form, Jakobson is a Formalist after all:

It is not coincidental that these notes about Mayakovsky's poetry serve as a background for the notes about Dostoyevsky in Shklovsky's book 'Pro and Contra'. The researcher calls upon us not to confuse the polyphonic structure of confrontational lines [i.e. form] with the discord and gibberish of contradictory declarations [i.e. content], rather he prompts us to meditate on the polyphonic character of the opposing genres [i.e. forms], which shouldn't be confused with the silly chaos of discordant dissonance [i.e. content]' (DEMW, p33. [interpretive comments in square brackets])



Webpage reproduction of contemporary illustration for Mayakovsky's 'The City' ('ГОРОД') by Vladimir Mayakovsky, one of the 1925 Paris poems ([www.vmayakovsky.ru](http://www.vmayakovsky.ru))

How does this fit with what actually happens in this short poem 'The City'? It is not a love poem, it is not written to a woman in Mayakovsky's life. However the poem is often lyrical as well as reflecting life events. A significant poetic device is the use of animal imagery, these are similes as a means for the poet to interpret the city. It is interesting to note that the animal imagery does not survive the Russian translation of the poem by Raduga Publishers (1985). However the literal translation of this poem which is available on [www.vmayakovsky.ru](http://www.vmayakovsky.ru) provides all the similes – the camel, beetles, bison and lapdogs. The poem's length would seem to preclude it being defined as an epic poem, however an examination of its structure and form indicates otherwise.

In *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics (NPEPP)* the entry on epic opens with the following definition:

'An epic is a long narrative poem that treats a single heroic figure or a group of such figures and concerns an historical event, such as a war or conquest, or an heroic quest or some other significant mythic or legendary achievement that is central to the traditions and belief of its culture' (p361).

Cuddon in his *Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (1999) summarizes definitions of the epic poem as having the following characteristics and these can be illustrated with reference to 'The City' which, as a result, emerges as an epic on a very small scale:

**the grand scale, about the deeds of warriors and heroes** – this is depicted by the description of the city as bi-faceted: 'Two cities it is -/one of lawyers and barracks, [lines 1/2] and the poet as a giant and grand figure on his journey of the poet through Paris – 'whose/in hell/fellow-traveller am I?/Not a soul/strides along/at my side.' [lines 22-27]

**of national significance, in a lofty or grandiose manner** – again this can be seen in the opening lines as above and in the metaphoric lines: 'pour down/on Paris and me/your spray,/so that lights/should go blossoming' [lines 67-71]

**a central figure of superhuman calibre** – the poem, unlike some poems by Mayakovsky, for example 'Brooklyn Bridge' written later that same year, has a strong narrator; there is no shift in the personal narrator, no other persona used. This central figure therefore attaches to himself all the personal characteristics detailed in the poem. He describes himself as the poet, the interpreter of his environment in archetypal terms: 'quick,/time, give birth/to another one/like me,/with feet just as fleet.' [lines 43-47]

**a perilous journey** – 'Alone/carry joy and grief/in a lump/and suchlike/human baggage./It's lonesome – forever here alone,/in front [lines 34-41]

**there are various misadventures** – 'Purple-tinged cloud,/be quick/and pour down/on Paris and me,/your spray [lines 65-69]. There is also a sense of misadventure when he describes having trouble interpreting the French advertisement "'*Je suis*" means "I" -/that I understand'/"*chameau*" -/ "I'm a camel" -/well put' [lines 60/61]

**an element of the supernatural** – see references to 'hell' [line 23], 'soul' [line 25], 'One wishes to eat my heart,/by the devil!/It's lonesome.' [lines 51/2], 'we'd go side-by-side/on our dusty ways', and see other references to the heavens [lines 65 et seq.] and the stars 'Let lights fill up all -/the dark of the sky' [lines 75/6]

**there are repeated passages of narrative or dialogue** – this takes place with the advertisements which he describes as 'From the walls' [line 10], this makes them separate or even remote from him – upwards and/or distant. See also the reference to 'Koto' [line 12] and the '*je suis chameau*' [line 56] and his conversation with the advertisement: "'*je suis*" means "I" -/that I understand;/ "*chameau*" -/"I'm a camel" -/well put!')

**and there are elaborate greetings** – he interprets the message of the advertisement as an invitation to 'the wine of love' and it becomes an address to the very central drive for life

‘From the walls they promise:’/ *Un verre de Koto/donne de l’energie*”.../With what wine of love,/I’d like to know,/could anyone stir up the life in me?’ [lines 10-17]

**digressions take place** – the poem takes the reader on a night journey where the weather has an impact on the city which is seen as separate from the poet/narrator [lines 65-90]: ‘Purple-tinged cloud’ to .....’the multiplication table’ This in effect becomes a speech or address to the city – another epic characteristic.

**and there are epic similes** – the poem contains a number of animal similes, the camel is repeatedly both evoked [lines 27-36] and directly referred to [lines 56-63], the cars are described as ‘beetles’ [line 80] and other animal similes are lost in the Raduga Press translation (compare the online translation): ‘torches’/‘bison’, [line 88], and ‘dame’/ ‘lapdogs’, [line 93]. The ‘bisons’ are a reference to the heavy iron lamp-posts which surround the Place de la Concorde. They are constructed with a massive central column which branches, midway up on each side, each branch carrying a large lamp.

Jakobson comments on the lyrical versus the ‘world event’ poems. But here in this poem ‘The City’, the lyrical, if one accepts that this is best represented by the personal pronoun (the poet/narrator) and the metaphor, alternate with the metonymic tropes of world events throughout the poem. The poem concludes with a strong metaphor which has been perhaps poorly translated. Also the way in which the metaphor and metonym are used, indicates that the poem contains the episodic characteristic of the epic. The subject matter is also epic – the city of Paris, the impact of the great city on (in this instance) the poet and his beleaguered journey through it.

Close analysis of the poem with an emphasis on the Formalist as a semiotic rather than a linguistic tool – reveals how the metonym predominantly alternates with the metaphor throughout the poem. Jakobson’s definition of the metonym as on the syntagmatic axis and the metaphor as on the paradigmatic axis of the poles of language is the theoretical basis for analysis here. The following designations for this poem are suggested as:

Lines 1-5 metonymic

Lines 6/7 – is this metonymic ‘it’s as if I have a lump in my throat’ or metaphoric ‘a sense of blocked speech’? It is certainly the beginning of the construction of the ‘camel’ as archetype – but camels carry burdens they do not speak and therefore, as the lump in the throat is transposed later in the poem as a burden – the lump in the throat has the sense of a burden – and is therefore metaphoric.

Lines 8/9 metaphoric

Lines 10 - 13 metonymic, or is it a metaphor as in the literal translation: 'the walls of promise' so that it is the walls that have the quality of promise not the advertisements which carry the message of promise.

Lines 14 - 17 metaphoric

Lines 18 -21 metonymic

Lines 22 - 24 is metonymic, line 24 - 'fellow-traveller' is a translation of a Russian word which describes those non-proletarian writers who supported the revolution, this gives the lines a metonymic expression, a simile.

Lines 25 - 27 metaphoric

Lines 28-30 use of pronoun 'your' – this and the full phrase - 'swinging your hump' previews the camel advertisement later in the poem. The lines are metaphoric in the sense that Mayakovsky does not literally have a hump – he *is* the 'poet/camel'. But the metonymic archetype is reflected back onto these lines by the camel references later in the poem.

Lines 32/33 metaphoric 'poetry's waggon'

Lines 34 – 36 metaphoric - see 'lump in my larynx' in line 7 which gives the metonymic image a metaphoric tint.

Lines 37/38 metonymic

Lines 39 – 41 metonymic

Lines 42 – 47 metaphoric – but: line 44 the word 'time', is not an archetype just a reference to speed, in which case these lines are metonymic – 'only time/soon give birth/such as I' (see literal translation)

Line 48 metonymic (synechdoche) 'with feet just as fleet' [as time – suggested interpretation].

Lines 49/50 metonymic

Lines 51 – 53 metaphoric see 'puchit' in the literal translation meaning 'a little gassy' but also see reference to cartoon (of which more below) where it becomes a political point – to become swollen and self absorbed and not useful.

Lines 54/55 metonymic

Lines 56 – 64 camel (advertisement persona) as archetype (metonymic). But the meaning of these lines also contains the poet's effort to translate the meaning literally from the French – this is an epic dialogue. Therefore the sentence 'I am a camel' is not Mayakovsky saying he *is* a camel (metaphoric) but that the advertisement is saying 'I am a camel' and that he

understands the message. However, he has already developed the simile of the 'camel' as an archetype and 'I am a camel' is therefore 'I am as a camel' (metonymic).

Lines 65 – 69 metonymic – 'spray' is a synecdoche

Lines 70/71 metaphoric

Lines 72 – 74 metonymic

Lines 75 - 78 two metaphors – or are they metonyms – is the meaning virtual or literal? 'fill up' in the sense of 'take away, blot out, banish'? The literal translation seems to indicate a metaphoric interpretation: 'During all fire -/and the sky in darkness/and drenched in black dust'. The image perhaps becomes a heaven and hell confrontation.

Lines 79 – 82 metonymic (simile – cars/beetles)

Lines 83 – 86 metaphoric

Lines 87 - 90 metonymic (simile - lights/bison) 'multiplication table' is an extension of the simile.

Lines 91 – 93 metaphoric, the animal image of the lapdogs (see literal translation) would imply a simile but the meaning is 'the square **is** more swell than any [pampered] dame).

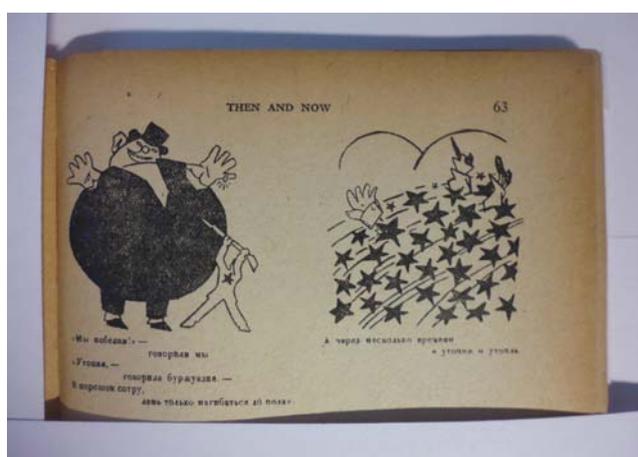
Lines 94 – 100 (see analysis of conclusion below) is this expressed wish metaphoric – the Mayakovsky *is* the column, or an expressed wish for metonymic epic action – the column as simile for Mayakovsky?

In the closing lines of this poem Mayakovsky has used a blending of both metonym and metaphor which cements this poem as an illustration of Jakobson's view that Mayakovsky uses the lyric for personal love poems and the metonymic device for the description of world events. Here it is posited that Mayakovsky has combined both. The poem can be interpreted from the point of view of a metonymic trope, the interpretation of a world event, and from the point of view of a metaphoric one, a personal lyric response to the city of Paris and its potential for revolution.

If the final fourteen lines of this poem are translated using the animal similes, then these lines are metonymic. If the animal similes are omitted from the poem then the final lines become influenced by a more metaphoric use of language. As examples, if the animal similes are included, as in lines 87/88 - 'as if the streetlamps/that stand like torches' [bisons] and 'The square [Concorde]/looks more swell [wealthy/handsome]/than any dame [Vendôme]' [lapdogs] [lines91-93] the overall effect is metonymic. As before described, the lights that stand at the Place de la Concorde actually look like bison heads and by association, the

description of the Place de la Vendôme as (fat pampered) lapdogs because it houses the offices of luxury brands such as Chanel and The Ritz Hotel, can therefore be interpreted as similarly metonymic. This is a complex image and illustrates Jakobson's theory of the 'grammar of poetry' – that poetry is a semiotic sum of its poetic parts not just an analysis of its individual linguistic and poetic components.

The metaphoric interpretation of the image 'The square/looks more swell/than any dame' creates the metaphoric requirement of simultaneity, expanded as: 'the [Concorde] square is "greater than the swell" [Vendôme] dame'. This results in the concluding lines of the poem also being interpreted as more metaphoric, for example, as in line 97: 'if I were... etc' becoming expanded as 'I am the Colonne....marrying/uniting with the Place de la Concorde'.



This cartoon is from a poster designed by Mayakovsky in 1921 (see Marshall, p63) and indicates that the pricking by the Vendôme column may not be metaphoric but literal and metonymic. The cartoon demonstrates that gross (or swell) individual wealth can be released (pricked) by the individual revolutionary in order to empower the many - Mayakovsky as the colonne/bayonet. There was a strike of bank clerks who have been photographed, demonstrating in the Place de la Concorde in 1925 which Mayakovsky may have witnessed. In order to carry this image through, the wealth of the Place de la Vendôme, with its 'colonne', is used by Mayakovsky to provide an image of how he would abandon the wealth of the Vendôme and join with the political history and current protest activity in the Place de la Concorde. As a column/bayonet he will strengthen, team up with (marry) the workers in the Place de la Concorde, who would be empowered. The Russian words, if the grammatical meaning is taken into account, are specifically male: 'я б женился/на Place la Concorde' - 'женился/на' is 'to marry a woman/the Place de la Concorde'. In Russian 'place' or 'square'

– ‘Площадь’ is a female noun. The Russian grammatical language requirements provide this engendering. Mayakovsky has therefore used this linguistic requirement to construct an image which describes uniting male power with female location. This is a political unification and it is as much about abandoning wealth as it is empowering political struggle.

Mayakovsky not only alternated metaphoric and metonymic expressions throughout his life, but also alternately through this poem. And in a final layer of extra skill he combined the tropes, enabling two interpretations within the one conclusion. He used the metonymic to interpret world events and the metaphoric as a lyrical form to interpret the more personal emotions, his commitment to revolution. As a final point, his metaphoric expressed wish in the final lines (‘I swear/if I were’, lines 96/97) allows the concurrent metonymic revolutionary action. It is also a heroic image which also provides an epic conclusion to the poem – he *is* the uprooted column marching to the Place de la Concorde, and he acts *as* the enabler. This refers back to the requirements of the epic listed by Cuddon earlier in the paper: Mayakovsky is a central figure of superhuman calibre and performs the deed of a warrior or hero.

In conclusion, is there a case for arguing that the alternate use of the metaphor and the metonym is a poetic form which reflects the city? What is the function of the metonym in expressing satire? Contrary to Jakobson’s belief that metonymy is the province of prose, it has been found extensively in Mayakovsky’s poem ‘The City’ where it is used as a complex poetic tool. A complex structure of poetics has been achieved providing an epic interpretation of both the personal and the ‘world event’ in poetry which has the city as its subject. My final comment is that city poetics needs to pay attention to the metonym as a poetic form. Further research into the nature of the metonym and its expression in poetry needs to be undertaken. It is very much hoped that this will be achieved by this researcher’s next project.

## Bibliography

- ALLEN, K (2008) *Metaphor and Metonymy: A Diachronic Approach* Chichester, Wiley Blackwell
- CUDDON, J (1999) *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* London, Penguin Books
- DANCYGIER, B and SWEETSER, B (Eds.) (2014) *Figurative Language* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press
- DEIGNAN, A (2005) *Metaphor and Corpus Linguistics* Amsterdam, John Benjamins
- DENROCHE, C (2015) *Metonymy and Language: A New Theory of Linguistic Processing* New York, Routledge
- DIRVEN, R and PÖRINGS, R (Eds.) (2003) *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast* Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter
- GEERAERTS, D (2010) *Theories of Lexical Semantics* Oxford, Oxford University Press
- GORDON, E.V. ((Ed.) (1974) *Pearl* Oxford, Clarendon Press [1953]
- HELLE, L (1994) Metaphor and Metonymy: a Theme with Variations *Scando-Slavica* Vol. 40, pp37-52
- JAKOBSON, R (1979) (Ed. Stephen Rudy) *Selected Writings Vol. V: On Verse, its masters and Explorers* The Hague, Mouton
- JAKOBSON, R (1987) (Eds. K Pomorska and S Rudy) *Language in Literature* Cambridge MA, Belknap Press
- LAKOFF, G and JOHNSON, M (2003) *Metaphors We Live By* Chicago, University of Chicago Press [1980]
- LAKOFF, G and TURNER, M (1989) *More Than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* Chicago, University of Chicago Press
- MARSHALL, H (N/D) *Mayakovsky and His Poetry* London, The Pilot Press
- MAYAKOVSKY, V (1985) *Selected Verse, Vol. I* (Translated by Victor Chistyakov) USSR, Raduga Publishers
- OSTERWALDER, H (1978) *T. S. Eliot: Between Metaphor and Metonymy: a Study of his Essays and Plays in Terms of Roman Jakobson's Typology* Bern, A. Francke
- PREMINGER, O AND BROGAN, T.V.F. (1993) *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* Princeton, Princeton University Press
- SAUSSURE, F de (1966) *Course in General Linguistics* (Trans. W Baskin) New York, McGraw-Hill
- SAUSSURE, F de (2008) *Writings in General Linguistics* (Trans. and Eds. R Engler and C Sanders) Oxford, Oxford University Press [2006]
- SHUKMAN, A (1977) *Russian Poetics in Translation Vol. 4 Formalist Theory* Oxford, Holdan Books

## APPENDIX: City by Vladimir Mayakovsky – English and Russian

<p>CITY</p> <p>One Paris - lawyers, barracks, other - no barracks and no Herriot. Do not tear the second eyes - this gray city. From the walls of promise: "Un verre de koto donne de l'energie " Wine Love What and who excite my life? Maybe criticism They know better. Maybe their and listen to the right. But who I am, to the devil, a fellow traveler! Not a soul no steps beside. Like before, his rock the hump ahead poetovyh carts - Carry, one and joy, and sorrow, and other Human belongings. I'm bored here one ahead - poet It does not need much - let only</p>	<p>time soon give birth such as I, swift. We are near go road pollen. One Desire puchit: I'm bored - I wish to see in person, who is I companion ?! "Je suis un chameau", in the poster are letters, each - foot. Quite true: "Je suis", - this "I", and "chameau" - is "I'm a camel." Purple cloud probably stoop down, me Paris and fields, so only probably bloom lights length Champs-Elysees. During all fire - and the sky in darkness and drenched in black dust. In the fire beetles All systems buzz automobiles. Steady water the earth is burning, lights asphalt before burning, as if</p>	<p>bison lights multiplication table. Area handsomer thousands Dame lapdogs. This area b justified each city. If I was Vendome Column, I'd married at the Place la concorde.</p> <p>ГОРОД</p> <p>Один Париж — адвокатов, казарм, другой — без казарм и без Эррио. Не оторвать от второго глаза — от этого города серого. Со стен обещают: "Un verre de koto donne de l'energie" Вином любви каким и кто мою взбудоражит жизнь? Может, критики знают лучше. Может, их и слушать надо. Но кому я, к черту, попутчик! Ни души не шагает рядом. Как раньше, свой раскачивай горб впереди поэтовых арб —</p>
---	--	---

неси,  
 один,  
 и радость,  
 и скорбь,  
 и прочий  
 людской скарб.  
 Мне скучно  
 здесь  
 одному  
 впереди,-  
 поэту  
 не надо многого,-  
 пусть  
 только  
 время  
 скорей родит  
 такого, как я,  
 быстроногого.  
 Мы рядом  
 пойдем  
 дорожной пыльцой.  
 Одно  
 желанье  
 пучит:  
 мне скучно —  
 желаю  
 видеть в лицо,

кому это  
 я  
 попутчик?!  
 "Je suis un chateau",  
 в плакате стоят  
 литеры,  
 каждая — фут.  
 Совершенно верно:  
 "Je suis", -  
 это  
 "я",  
 а "chateau" — это  
 "я верблюду".  
 Лиловая туча,  
 скорей нагнись,  
 меня  
 и Париж полей,  
 чтоб только  
 скорей  
 зацвели огни  
 длиной  
 Елисейских полей.  
 Во все огонь —  
 и небу в темь  
 и в чернь промокшей  
 пыли.  
 В огне

жуками  
 всех систем  
 жужжат  
 автомобили.  
 Горит вода,  
 земля горит,  
 горит  
 асфальт  
 до жжения,  
 как будто  
 зубрят  
 фонари  
 таблицу умножения.  
 Площадь  
 красивей  
 и тысяч  
 дам-болонок.  
 Эта площадь  
 оправдала б  
 каждый город.  
 Если б был я  
 Вандомская колонна,  
 я б женился  
 на  
 Place la concorde





Vladimir Mayakovsky; taken from the Raduga Publishers USSR edition (1985) translated by Victor Chistkyov

- (1) *...and no Herriot...*—Eduard Herriot in 1924–1925 headed the French Government  
 (2) “Un verre de Koto donne de l’énergie” – “One sip of Koto brings new energy”.  
 (3) *fellow-traveller* – reference to writers of non-proletarian origin who nevertheless accepted the Revolution. In the conditions of the ideological and aesthetic battles and literary polemics of the period, the term was often applied rather arbitrarily.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Where, very briefly: ‘context’ is verbal or written, ‘message’ is the text itself, ‘contact’ is the common ground between the participants’ ‘code’ is the common language. And where ‘emotive’ denotes emotional content, ‘conative’ denotes a call to addressee’s attention (‘Look!’), ‘referential’ denotes the application of contextual knowledge, ‘poetic’ denotes focus on the message for its own sake, ‘phatic’ denotes ritual of communication exchange (‘are you listening?’) and ‘metalingual’ denotes ratification between addresser and addressee (‘what do you mean?’)

<sup>2</sup> as Jakobson explains:

‘Whether it is a matter of words within a syntactical unit, of morphemes within a word, or of phonemes within a morpheme, it is always a matter of things ranged in succession to one another, i.e., on the axis of succession. On the other hand, in language each of these units necessarily belongs to a system of similar and opposable values. These series of interdependent values are ranged on the axis of simultaneity [for Saussure this is the syntagm]. Thus, on the axis of succession [for Saussure this is the paradigm], *amō* might be linked with *patriam*, or more accurately the transitive verb combines with the accusative of the noun; and, on the axis of simultaneity, *amō* is connected on the one hand with *amās*, *amāmus*, *amābam* etc.’ (1978, p101).

<sup>3</sup> Saussure’s analysis explores the dichotomy between the spoken and the written word. He is not, however, being fully binary in his analysis when he acknowledges that: ‘Whereas a syntagm immediately suggests an order of succession and a fixed number of elements, terms in an associative family occur neither in fixed numbers nor in a definite order’ (1966, p126). His example is the French word: *enseignement*.

<sup>4</sup> Matejka writes:

‘Both the Formalists and Structuralists paid close attention to Saussure’s observations about the paradigmatic and syntagmatic usage of verbal signs, although they did not apply it without modifications. Eventually, the concept had to be substantially redefined, so that Saussure’s syntagmatic procedure could embrace two varieties of combination, concurrence and concatenation, both distinguishable from the selection characterizing Saussure’s paradigmatic procedure.

In Jakobson’s studies, the opposition between paradigmatic and a syntagmatic procedure was early recognized as being connected with the two fundamental poles dominating the verbal operation: the metaphoric pole, making use of similarity, and the metonymic pole, making use of contiguity. In his study of Pasternak’s prose (in (1987) [1927]), Jakobson applied the binary concept of the metaphoric and metonymic poles as a classificatory device of two profoundly different types of poetic creation. The opposition of the metaphoric and the metonymic, exemplified in the domain of verbal art, was linked in Jakobson’s subsequent investigation with the very bases of human capacity in using verbal signs’ (1978, pp293/4).

And see also Matejka’s article ‘Jakobson’s Response to Saussure’s Cours’ (1997) where Jakobson’s critical approach to Saussure is analysed and acknowledged.

<sup>5</sup> A late interpolation to this model is the suggestion that the rhetorical device of concatenation is appropriate as an aspect of metonymy to be inserted into the combination zone/syntagm. This device is used in the Old English poem ‘Pearl’ with great effect and thus demonstrates that metonymy in poetry is not a new aspect of poetic form.

<sup>6</sup> Definitions of this poetic trope originate with classical rhetoric and have been further investigated with varying degrees of success by semantics, stylistics, cognitive linguists and corpus linguists for example:

ALLEN, K (2008) *Metaphor and Metonymy: A Diachronic Approach* Chichester, Wiley Blackwell

DANCYGIER, B and SWEETSER, B (Eds.) 2014) *Figurative Language* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

DEIGNAN, A (2005) *Metaphor and Corpus Linguistics* Amsterdam, John Benjamins

DENROCHE, C (2015) *Metonymy and Language: A New Theory of Linguistic Processing* New York, Routledge

DIRVEN, R and PÖRINGS, R (Eds.) (2003) *Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast* Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter

GEERAERTS, D (2010) *Theories of Lexical Semantics* Oxford, Oxford University Press

<sup>7</sup> Jakobson refers to Saussure’s groundbreaking work on ancient poetry and then again to his own development of the semiotic Peirce where he suggests that there is a fourth mode to be added to Peirce’s icon-index-symbol triad and that this is artifice:

‘The “artifice” is to be added to the triad of semiotic modes established by Peirce. This triad is based on two binary oppositions: contiguous/similar and factual/imputed. The contiguity of the two components of the sign is factual in the *index* but imputed in the *symbol*. Now, the factual similarity which typifies *icon* finds its logically foreseeable correlative in the

---

imputed similarity which specifies the *artifice*, and it is precisely for this reason that the latter fits into the whole which is now forever a four-part entity of semiotic modes' (1987, pp451/2).

<sup>8</sup> Elena Richard is a translator who holds a M.A. in Russian Linguistics, from the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at Bucharest State University, Romania, and a B.A. in Russian and English from the same University, where she taught Russian before relocating to the United States. She translated from Russian into Romanian Sergey Bulgakov's *The Unfading Light* (Contemplations and Metaphysical Reflections), Anastasia, Bucharest, 1999 and Leo Tolstoy's *About God and Humanity* (Selections from the Last Years of His Diary. 1907-1910), Humanitas, Bucharest, 2005, 2008, 2015. She is a member of the Romanian Association of Literary Translators (Artlit) and currently resides in Nuremberg, Germany.

Paul Jude Richard edited the English translation of Roman Jakobson's articles. He is a teacher and translator and holds an M.A. in Russian Literature from the Department of Slavic Languages and Literature at University of Wisconsin-Madison, an M.A. in Russian Studies from Middlebury College, Vermont, an M.A. in German Studies from Middlebury College, Vermont and a law degree from Tulane University, New Orleans. (details as at 20.4.15)

<sup>9</sup> Tokay wine comes from a region of Hungary where a special fungal botrytised fermentation process produces this particular wine. In the eighteenth century the peasants working in the vineyards were originally given it to drink as substandard but it subsequently became a wine for a specialist and expensive taste.

<sup>10</sup> The full quote from the original essay in the translation used in *Language in Literature* (1987) is as follows: 'The poetry of Mayakovskij from his first verses, in "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste", to his last lines is one and indivisible. It represents the dialectical development of a single theme. It is an extraordinarily unified symbolic system. A symbol once thrown out as a hint will later be developed and presented in a totally new perspective' (pp275/6).