Current Trends in Linguistics

12

Linguistics and Adjacent Arts and Sciences

**

MOUTON

CURRENT TRENDS IN LINGUISTICS

Edited by

THOMAS A. SEBEOK
Research Center for the Language Sciences
Indiana University

VOLUME 12

Linguistics and Adjacent Arts and Sciences

★★

Associate Editors:
ARTHUR S. ABRAMSON, DELL HYMES, HERBERT RUBENSTEIN
EDWARD STANKIEWICZ

Assistant Editor:
BERNARD SPOLSKY

Assistants to the Editor:
ALEXANDRA DI LUGLIO
LUCIA HADD ZOERCHER

1974

MOUTON

THE HAGUE · PARIS

The research reported herein was performed pursuant to a contract with the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, under the authority of Section 602, Title VI, NDEA.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER: 64-3663

Printed in The Netherlands by Mouton & Co., Printers, The Hague

PART THREE

LINGUISTICS AND THE VERBAL ARTS

STRUCTURAL POETICS AND LINGUISTICS

EDWARD STANKIEWICZ

1. Structural poetics is that trend in modern literary theory and practice which tries to apply to the study of literature strict and objective methods and which starts with the premise that literary works, as verbal art, cannot be studied without reference to the linguistic material of which they are made. As a discipline, modern poetics is both old and new. It is old for at its best it is keenly aware of a tradition which goes back as far as Aristotle, the founder of a descriptive science of poetics and of rhetoric, as well as of its ties with literary scholarship insofar as that deals with the structure of literary texts rather than with their extra-literary causes or consequences. It is new in that it is conscious of the modern conception of the autonomous function of art, and in that it shares with its sister-discipline, linguistics, some of its basic concepts, methods, and concerns, as well as many of its practitioners. Although poetics is still considered by many to be a 'baby science' (called so about a hundred years ago by one of its 'modern' pioneers, G. M. Hopkins (1959: 106), who proposed to study poetry with the 'microscope and dissecting knife'), it has grown into a field which covers literature in its most diverse aspects, including verse, prose, stylistics, literary history, and the typology of literary forms. But like structural linguistics itself, to whose twist and turns it shows great sensitivity, it has multiplied into a number of different schools and approaches which profess to be 'structuralist' and in one way or another related to linguistics. Any attempt to reduce the various tenets of these schools to one common denominator could not but fail. Structuralism for these schools can be said (to use the felicitous phrase of J. Piaget) to be more a method than a doctrine. Even structural linguistics, which has an older tradition and more clearly defined boundaries, presents a variety of directions and goals which one would find hard to treat *en bloc* unless one were to point out their most superficial traits or identify with structuralism only one of its schools of thought (as does Piaget in his characterization of modern linguistics, 1968: 63ff.). What can be said to unify the diverse approaches of structuralist poetics is their common effort to infuse poetics with a precise methodology, the use of a common or similar terminology, and the distinction between the literary work as a message and the organizing properties of language and literary conventions as its code or codes. Poetics is indebted to modern linguistics for some of its basic

discriminations, including the one between code and message, as well as for such distinctions as diachrony and synchrony, the 'double articulation' and levels of language, and the axes of simultaneity and succession. Attempting to become an independent science whose focus is the structure of poetic texts and their underlying codes, poetics looks on the one hand towards linguistics and on the other towards semiotics, the general science of signs which incorporates both linguistics and poetics and which explores all types and functions of signs in their multifarious variety and interaction.

The connection of poetics with both linguistics and semiotics was clearly formulated over forty years ago in the *Theses* of the Prague Linguistic Circle: 'Only poetry,' says one of the Theses, 'enables us to experience the act of speech in its totality and reveals to us language not as a ready-made static system, but as creative energy,' while another Thesis proclaims, 'Everthing in the work of art and its relation to the outside world . . . can be discussed in terms of sign and meaning; in this sense aesthetics can be regarded as a part of the modern science of signs, of semiotics.' As the first of these Theses suggests, the relation between poetics and linguistics is not weighed to one side, with the former dependent on or subservient to the latter. Poetry and the making of poetry belong to the most universal and extensive uses of language, and any exploration of the structure of poetry is bound to broaden the linguist's understanding of his subject matter, to reveal the capacities and limits of language, and the extent to which it can be manipulated and changed.

Despite the eternal plaints by poets and philosophers about the tyranny and opacity of language and about its unsuitability for artistic purposes ('Words strain, crack and sometimes break under the burden; under the tension, slip, slide, perish,' writes T. S. Eliot), the truth of the matter is that language is the poet's only instrument, and it remains a flexible and perfect instrument, since 'the major characteristics of style, inasfar as style is a technical matter of the building and placing of words, are given by the language itself, quite as inescapably as the general acoustic effect of verse is given by the sounds and natural accents of the language' (Sapir 1921:226). The poet, Sapir concludes, need not be 'an acrobat,' — 'it is enough for him to make his personality . . . felt as a presence' (Sapir 1921:227).

The test of the soundness of a structural approach to poetry must ultimately be measured by the depth of the explanations it offers about the nature of a poetic text and the general properties of poetry. Poetic texts are complex but objective linguistic phenomena, whether they exist in written or oral form, whether they are new or old, and whether they are works of outstanding authors or of humble 'singers of tales'. And it is in the very treatment of the literary work as an esthetic structure that one may note the greatest divergence in the modern approaches to poetics.

At one extreme of the structuralist spectrum, the literary text is viewed as a deviation from the 'ordinary', spoken language. Poetic language, for Todorov, is the antithesis of 'bon usage', for 'son essence consiste dans la violation des normes

du langage' (1965a:305), while Guiraud defines it is an 'écart par rapport à la norme collective' (1967:4). In this approach (which is in particular favor with generative grammarians; for the general method; cf. the study by J. Katz 1964) the individual sentences of a literary text such as a poem are compared with 'well-formed' sentences of the spoken language in order to measure the degree of their deviation from the norm, with the predictable result that many sentences are indeed 'deviant', and that, as one author puts it (Levin 1964: 37), metaphor is 'content which could have been expressed in direct language without any loss'. Despite its modern terminology and intricate operations, this approach clearly harks back to those traditions of rhetoric where poetry meant 'poetic license' and the use of a certain number of tropes and figures, or 'embellishments'. No attempt is made by these students of poetry to define the difference between deviations that are poetic from those that are not poetic, nor do they provide a clear definition of what constitutes a 'neutral' norm. Poetry which does not deviate (as is often the case in simple folksongs or in classical traditions) would present no real interest for them. The entire approach, then, can be defined as an extension of linguistic analysis to literary texts which are fragmented into isolated sentences that are studied with relation to prose rather than to each other.

No less atomistic, and therefore at odds with the integrated structure of a poetic text is that method which submits the text to a test of response on the part of its readers (or listeners) by means of a so-called 'stylistic device' for the purpose of determining ('directly' and 'rapidly'(!)) stylistic peculiarities and unpredictable forms. The poetic text is believed to consist of no more than a series of verbal stunts which jerk the reader out of 'automatic, semi-conscious decoding' (Riffaterre 1959:166; 168). The difference from the former method is only in that the stylistic deviations are here determined not by the linguist but by the diffused and superficial 'responses' of readers, without any attention to their different norms of expectation or to the fact that old and familiar literary texts still retain their appeal.

Another approach which ignores the specificity of the poetic text is represented by the French school of structuralism which has in the last decade moved into the forefront of structural poetics. This school has taken most seriously the de Saussurian separation of *langue* and *parole,* declaring that only the former (i.e., the poetic code) lends itself to a scientific analysis, whereas the latter (i.e., the text) is a matter of subjective impressions, and consequently of no scientific interest. 'On ne peut pas diviser l'oeuvre; on ne peut parler de la structure de l'oeuvre . . . car il n'y a aucun moyen pour l'attester; on ne dispose que d'impressions contradictoires de différents lecteurs' (Todorov 1968:106). For the representatives of this school the text is as silent and insular as it was for Croce (for whom it was an act of individual expression), since the text presumably refers only to itself. Literature is, according to R. Barthes, 'a system of deceptive signification' which is 'never finally signified'; 'la littérature est au fond une activité tautologique, comme celle de ces machines cybernétiques construites *pour elles-mêmes*' (1964:148). Structural

analysis must consequently become 'une choix pour la syntaxe contre la sémantique' (P. Ricoeur 1963:608) or an analysis which traverses 'la substance de l'oeuvre pour atteindre sa ossature' (G. Genette 1966:34). The literary code or 'literariness' (translated from the Russian Formalist term *literaturnost')* is attained by comparing and abstracting the formal properties of various texts in an infinite regression which leads from text to text, from one level to another, to a primitive 'Ur-code'. 'La poétique', writes Todorov, 'est en quelque sorte un langage — non le seul — dont dispose la littérature pour se parler. Chacune d'elles est un langage qui traite de l'autre; et en même temps chacune d'elles ne traite que d'elle même' (1968:164). The literary text serves, in this system, only to define the code, while the code serves in turn to define the text or itself. The typology of poetic features which is set up by Todorov becomes then a descriptive system, an inventory of rhetorical devices which never intersect and which remain as isolated as the text itself.[1]

Besides these 'deviationist', pragmatic, and neo-Formalist approaches to literature there are various schools and centers of structural poetics which pay attention both to the structure of the text and to its underlying codes, and which treat the poetic work not as a hermetically closed and immutable structure, but as a 'struttura aperta' (Umberto Eco) which is interpreted and completed by the reader (or listener) in the process of reading (or listening) in a historically defined social setting and against the background of other more or less interiorized texts. Such an open-ended and dynamic approach to literature, in which the 'text', reader, and underlying codes complement each other, was already foreshadowed in the *Theses* of Jakobson and Tynjanov when they broke away from the static 'immanentism' of early Formalism. To what extent the various centers and workers in the field of poetics subscribe to such an expanded and deepened program of structural poetics remains an open question. The scholarly polemics of the last years have, at any rate, not stood in the way of their mutual collaboration and of the advancement of common goals. Centers of structuralist poetics are now scattered in various parts of Europe and America, and their vitality is attested to by international conferences and a spate of new journals and publications. Particularly active are the centers of poetics or semiotics which have sprung up in the last decade or so in the Soviet Union (especially around the universities of Tartu and Moscow), in Poland *(Instytut Badań Literackich),* in Italy (around the journal *Strumenti critici*), and in the United States (around the journal *Language and Style* and the international journal *Semiotica*). An active school of structural poetics existed until recently (1968) in Czechoslovakia, and new centers have now emerged in West and East Germany and in Yugoslavia. All of these centers pursue somewhat different goals in line with their local traditions and interests (the most important studies in versification appear regularly in Poland,

[1] For an incisive critique of French Structuralism, consult the works of H. Meschonnic, F. Jameson, and especially U. Eco (1968).

whereas significant studies on esthetics and semiotics are being produced in the Soviet Union and in Italy). Despite the lack of a unified approach or methodology, poetics proceeds to probe everywhere the same basic questions of literature, thereby enriching both the study of language and that of language in the function of art.

2. Structural poetics is in many respects a direct descendant of Russian Formalism, from which it has retained some basic premises while rejecting its extreme formulations and solutions. The avowed purpose of Formalism was to transform the study of literature, which was dominated by an emotive impressionism and by utilitarianism, into a discipline of 'laws' or general principles at a time when, as a humanistic discipline (a *Geisteswissenschaft*), it was considered to be unamenable to such an operation. The emancipation of literary scholarship from other sciences (especially psychology and sociology) coincided with a similar development in linguistics, which began to define itself (through the works of Baudouin de Courtenay and de Saussure) as an autonomous discipline set on discovering the general laws of language and its internal development. The same trend is conspicuous in art-history, which has proclaimed to have an internal history of forms without subject-matter and without heroes (Wölfflin's *Kunstgeschichte ohne Namen).* These trends have been connected at the same time with the liberation of the arts from practical pursuits and it is the poets themselves who first provided the new formulations of poetry. These developments coincided, curiously enough, with the emergence of the realistic and psychological novels which tried to get hold of 'reality' by presenting a 'slice of life', or which proclaimed the superiority of 'showing' to the art of 'telling'. This polarization of prose and poetry contributed, no doubt, to a sharper formulation of the programs of poetry as we find them in the writings of the Symbolists and later in those of the Futurists and Formalists. In declaring that 'poetry is poetry, and not another thing' (T. S. Eliot), and that 'art does not compete with elephants and locomotives' (E. E. Cummings), the poets discovered that the essence of a poem is its formal composition, and that the composition is a matter of verbal patterning, or as Mallarmé tried to put it (to his friend Degas), 'it is not with ideas that one makes a poem, but with words' (see Valéry 1958:63). Beginning with Poe's *Philosophy of composition* and Baudelaire's statement that 'grammar, dry grammar becomes the magic of evocation' *(Le poëme de Haschisch,* 1858), one can witness a steady flow of the most fruitful observations about poetry coming from the pens of poets, coupled quite often with the most extravagant claims for its ultimate meaning and mission. In rejecting the previous roles of Seer or servant to society, the poet comes now to see himself primarily as a craftsman, a 'savant austère' who must construct his poem like 'a mathematical formula' (E. A. Poe).

It is subsequently from Valéry that we learn that poetry is 'the double invention of content and form' and the 'continuous oscillation between sound and meaning' (1958:74, 204), while G. M. Hopkins teaches us that a poem is based 'on paral-

lelism of expression [which] tends to beget or passes into parallelism of thought' (1959:84). These observations and studies of poetry, which continue with the succeeding generations of poets (in the West, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Empson, the New Critic, and in Russia, Belyj and Brjusov), testify to the new and deepened concern of the poets with their craft, since they have been, in effect, engaged in creating a new experimental poetry daring in its breadth and diversity. Among its innovations which have changed the face of modern poetry are: the creation of a new type of syntax (beginning with the poetry of Mallarmé and the Futurist program of *les mots en liberté),* a new type of semantically distant, 'bold' metaphors (in the works of Rimbaud and the Surrealists); the exploits of multiple linguistic codes and of puns (in Valéry's use of French words with allusions to their Latin prototypes; the punning of Lewis Carroll and James Joyce); a new emphasis on sound texture (leading from the musicality of Paul Verlaine to the poetry of pure sound in *zaum'),* free verse and the new *poème en prose;* the exploration of the interplay between the auditory and visual aspects of a poem (beginning with the Calligrammes and Anagrammes of Apollinaire and the typographical arrangements of Majakovskij's verse up to contemporary concrete poetry); the play with and discussions on the merits of various parts of speech for poetry (as in the works of the Imagists), and the juggling of grammatical and derivational forms (as in the poetry of V. Xlebnikov, which set Roman Jakobson on his study of the 'grammar of poetry'). These developments in poetry and in literary theory were bound to put an end to academic literary theory which was biographical, sociological, historical, etc., and to the old (but never defunct) tenets of traditional Rhetoric according to which art is a reflection of Reality (conceived in one way or another) with the addition of ornament (the classical *prodesse et delectare,* or, in Dante's formulation, *veritade ascosa sotto bella menzogna* [Convivio II]). Set on abolishing any reference to external reality (on 'abolition de choses'), modern poetry became hermetic and tried to create a difficult and new language which would differ from ordinary language, or to assimilate the language of poetry to music or the other non-representational arts. It is for this reason that Valéry believes that 'pure poetry' need not carry any communicable meaning and must resemble dance and magic formulas, while the poet must try to 'draw a pure, ideal voice' from 'practical, changing and soiled language, a maid of all work' (p. 81). None of these ideas escaped the Formalists, who learned (primarily from their Symbolist mentor, A. Belyj) that 'form itself has the power to act upon us'.

The belief in a formal art above and apart from meaning, or at least in the possibility of separating the formal and semantic components of art, shaped the ideas of even the more moderate Formalists. 'The material [of poetry],' wrote Žirmunskij, 'is not completely divorced from practical utility and therefore is not completely subject to the laws of purely artistic structure'; consequently 'one can speak [in poetry] of a purely linguistic structure which presents us mainly with phonetic and syntactic problems' (1966:20). These and similar

pronouncements of the Formalists were of course not only a matter of purely theoretical concern, but were intended, at least in part, to justify the poetic experiments of their Futurist colleagues.[2]

Over the brief but agitated period of its career, Formalist doctrine moved from extreme positions which recognized in poetry the importance only of sound or of the 'sound-gesture' (Polivanov, Jakubinskij, Ėjxenbaum, Brik), to more moderate views of poetry as 'composition' and to the study of its technical devices. In addition to its path-breaking explorations of the formal properties of verse (Žirmunskij, Jakobson, Tomaševskij, Tynjanov), it advanced the study of prose, whose chief esthetic characteristics were seen to lie in the syntagmatic organization of the plot *(sjužet)* at the expense of such elements as the theme *(fabula)* and the hero, which were treated only as a pretext *(motivirovka)* for the construction of the plot (in the studies of Šklovskij and Ėjxenbaum). The analysis of individual works (to which they brought considerable critical acumen) was not for the Formalists a goal in itself, but was used rather as a springboard for the construction of a typology of forms, or (as in the case of Propp) for the reduction of a large body of texts to a finite number of invariant elements. Given the basic premises, the result could not have been more than a taxonomy of technical devices. At a later period the Formalists (especially Tynjanov and his Prague followers) introduced the notion of 'foregrounding', i.e., of the hierarchy of formal elements without, however, coming to grips with the question of the semantic organization of a work. History of literature was likewise interpreted by them as a self-contained and self-regulated process which oscillates like a pendulum from form to form. The only explanatory principle for this constant alternation of forms was the principle of 'de-automatization', i.e., of the awakening of a stultified perception that sets in with the wearing out of forms. The neglect of meaning did not prevent the Formalists from reading into poetry 'deeper' meanings, or from endowing it with a cognitive function. In the same way that some contemporary painters came to claim that the mere arrangement of color and line provides 'a bridge from the visible to the invisible' (Beckmann 1970:98), or that there is 'an innate affinity between pictorial elements and emotional states' (Kandinsky), poetry was believed to be able to provide a deeper insight into reality by jerking the mind from its natural apathy. This theory of 'de-familiarization' *(ostranenie)* which is sometimes considered to be one of Formalism's great insights into literature, was actually implicit in the theories of the Symbolists, and a part of the Romantic inheritance according to which poetry has the power to unveil 'analogies' and 'correspondences', i.e., transcendental truths which are not accessible to ordinary perception. Šklovskij's theory of 'making strange' (which he shared with Pound and Brecht) was formulated a century before him by Coleridge. '[His] general purpose', wrote Coleridge about his friend Words-

[2] Exhaustive historical surveys and critical analyses of the Formalist movement can be found in the works by V. Erlich, K. Pomorska, J. Striedter, and E. Thompson. Useful remarks on Formalist tenets are also scattered in the work of Ju. Lotman.

worth, 'was to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural by awakening the mind's attention to the lethargy of custom' (1817:409).

In addition to their achievements in the study of verse, the Formalists and their associates made important advances in the study of prose, especially in the exploration of the role of 'speech within speech', or the use of dialogue and monologue in the structure of the novel (V. Vinogradov, Vološinov, Baxtin). This line of research, which was initiated in the West by Flaubert and Henry James, the founders of the novel with 'shifting perspectives', and continued by E. M. Forster, Lubbock, Friedeman, and others, could have served the Formalists as a reminder that a work which sets itself 'realistic goals' and tries to capture reality 'as it is', in the flow of its appearances, need not relinquish its function as art and can even create new artistic values. 'A novel', wrote James in *The art of fiction,* 'is a living thing, all one and continuous like any other organism' (1884:5); art must therefore conceal itself, giving the reader the sense of a living presence, for otherwise it becomes 'a betrayal [of the artist's] sacred office' (1884:5). In spite of similar declarations, even the realistic novel (in which the Formalists took little interest) managed to create a new language of metonymy and metaphor, in which small, intimate and inanimate objects began to glitter with the brilliance of poetry (Weinrich 1971:35ff.). In their zeal to grasp and to defend the canons of modern, 'formal' art, the Formalists themselves fell prey to a narrow normative bias, forgetting (or anxious to forget) that entire traditions of art stubbornly pursued referential goals which they managed to harmonize with the esthetic enterprise. It is enough to think of Leonardo da Vinci, whose paintings and drawings are an inexhaustible source of anatomical, zoological, and geological information, and who glorified the power of the eye and of experience, being at the same time fully aware that painting remains 'una cosa mentale' (*Trattato della pittura* [= 1890]:9a). Gombrich adduces the interesting example of Constable, who wrote about his native Suffolk: 'It is a most delightful landscape for a painter. I fancy I see Gainsborough in every hedge and hollow tree' (1960:316). The lesson of this being that man and his art is incapable of imitating nature (or society) without first performing a selection of the pertinent features of experience and without putting them into a mold which reinterprets and organizes this experience. And just as language itself is 'an organization of experience into formal patterns' (Sapir), so verbal art needs must give shape and organization to individual experience in terms of available linguistic and literary codes which are implemented and concretized in specific texts. And since the verbal material of poetry is always meaningful (if one ignores the marginal use of nonsense words in some forms of poetry), any attempt to ignore its semantic aspect becomes just like linguistics without semantics — reductive and one-sided.

Archibald McLeish's requirement that 'a poem should not mean, but be' was obviously inspired by the slogans of modern 'hermetic' art, as well as by the misconception that 'meaning' means simply referential meaning, a view which was

dear to the Positivists and neo-Positivists. Poems are, for I. A. Richards, as they are for Carnap, only 'pseudo-statements' which 'assert nothing' except the emotive, and consequently private 'attitudes' of the poet (cf. esp. Richards 1926, Ch. VI). The emotive interpretation of poetry (which was subsequently embraced by S. Langer and others, and is now again resuscitated by J. Cohen; cf. Cohen 1966: 149, 205) was never accepted by the Formalists who, on the other hand, were content to confine their definition of poetry to its formal structure ('the emphasis is on the message') without specifying the semantic nature of this message. The text thus became a tautological structure, referring only to itself.

3. The discovery that language cannot be reduced to mere reference (or denotation) is one of the most fruitful attainments of modern linguistics, and it was an integral part of Prague structuralist thought in linguistics and poetics. At the IVth International Congress of Linguists (1938), Mukařovsky proposed to expand Bühler's model of language, which included a referential, expressive, and appellative function, by adding to it a fourth, esthetic function which he defined, however, as being self-referential, i.e., as constituting a meta-language. This proposal had the advantage of placing 'poetic language' not only in opposition to merely 'referential language' (as was done in the West by I. A. Richards and the New Critics, and in Russia by the Formalists), but of seeing it in the broader context of the variegated uses of language. Bühler's model had already made it clear that language is not used simply to convey information about the outside world, but also as the foremost vehicle of social interaction. That language is not merely a tool for the description and manipulation of empirical facts had already been fully realized by the British empiricists, those assiduous and tireless students of language as an instrument of cognition. 'The communicating of ideas marked by words is not the chief and only end of language, as is commonly supposed', wrote Berkeley; 'there are other ends, as the raising of some passion, the exciting to or deterring from an action, the putting the mind in some particular disposition; to which the former is in many cases barely subservient, and sometimes entirely omitted, when these can be obtained without it, as I think doth not unfrequently happen in the familiar use of language' (1965: § 20, p. 57). These insights of Berkeley, which show his awareness of the various functions and styles of language, have often been forgotten in modern linguistics, which has tended to treat language as a closed and monolithic system which is independent of speech and society. The treatment of language as a set of 'negative, relative and oppositional terms' which are related to each other, like in a game of chess, in tight, internal configurations, is particularly characteristic of de Saussure's conception of language, and came about as a natural, though extreme reaction to the older theories of language which had treated it only as the 'speech activity' of the individual speaker. It was de Saussure's outstanding merit to attempt to separate the invariant and constant properties of language as a code from the variable and fluctuating phenomena which are displayed in the concrete

message. A more flexible position with respect to the *langue/parole* dichotomy was taken, as we know, by Baudouin de Courtenay, who coined the term 'collective individuality' to indicate the interaction which exists between the obligatory, collective norm and the creative, individual speech-art (1972:20ff.). The relation *langue/parole* cannot, however, be reduced (as thought by de Saussure and as the Geneva school assumed) to the question of a collective norm and individual expression, for the *code* and *speech* present dialectically interrelated and complementary aspects. The separation of *langue* and *parole* is also a shortcoming of some contemporary theories of language. 'The defect of the Chomsky's theory', writes J. Searle in a recent review 1972:23), 'arises from the failure to see the essential connection between language and communication, between meaning and speech-acts. The picture that underlies Chomsky's whole theory of language is that sentences are abstract objects that are produced and understood independently of their role in communication'. Only by viewing the code and the message in their interdependence, or, in Jakobson's terms, by adopting the model of means and ends, is the linguist able to give a full and correct interpretation of language. It is the merit of Jakobson to have refined and broadened Bühler's and Mukařovsky's models by re-defining the nature of some linguistic functions and by adding to them two more functions. Thus Jakobson points out that in addition to the referential, expressive (or emotive) and appellative (or conative) functions, language can also be used in a metalinguistic function (as was made clear by the works of modern logicians), i.e., when the message is used to refer to the code (or to other codes), and in a phatic function which serves to establish, maintain, or sever contact between the interlocutors (1960:356–57). The poetic function is, in turn, defined in opposition to the metalinguistic function: in the former 'the equation is used to build a sequence' whereas in the latter 'the sequence is used to build an equation' (1960:358). Jakobson further points out that the various functions do not occur in isolation but interact with each other in concrete messages in which one or the other function becomes dominant.

This comprehensive and cohesive model of Jakobson, nevertheless, raises certain questions which must be taken up in further investigations. First it may be pointed out that the established functions do not exhaust all the possible uses of the message. One might, for example, add a 'deferential' (or 'distancing') function which defines the social status of the speakers in the speech-act (a function which is especially conspicuous in languages which employ honorifics and deferential sub-codes, i.e., special grammatical and lexical forms to express this function), and an emphatic function (the distinctive properties of which were studied by such linguists as Gy. Laziczius (1936), Trubetzkoy (1949:16ff.), and Bolinger. Second, it is important to indicate that the nature and hierarchy of the various functions are not only different, but incommensurable. The referential function is obviously the foundation of any complete message or sentence which arises through the use of a predicate and which necessarily establishes (by means of verbal shifters) a relation between the

narrated event and the speech-event. This predicative or propositional function of language makes possible the question about the truth value or modality of any message which distinguishes language from all other sign systems. The other functions of language (e.g., the expressive or phatic functions) are, on the other hand, concomitant with or superimposed upon the referential function and are expressed by limited sets of devices.

If verbal art employs sentences whose foremost feature is their propositional function, the claim that poetry is 'neither true nor false' (as argued by Carnap and his followers) cannot be maintained without further qualification. It is equally misleading to assume that the poetic function is simply 'superimposed' upon the referential function, for such a view would lead to the impasse of the old rhetorical doctrine according to which poetry expresses 'truth' with the addition of, or despite its ornaments. If poetry invariably appears to us as fiction (whether it refers to true or, more often, to imaginary events) and prevents us from raising the question of its direct reference and truth-value, it is rather because poetry is based on the principle of 'multiple exposure' or of simultaneous multi-dimensional reference, i.e., of the multivalence (the so-called 'ambiguity') of its meanings, which is created in the poetic message through the internal relations of its verbal signs. Poetry may tell both profound truths and bald lies (of which folk poets in particular like to boast), but these questions always remain marginal and subordinate to the basic question of opposing and blending different aspects of reality. This marginal, artistically irrelevant question of reference was very well understood and expressed by Cervantes, who has Don Quixote say to the Duchess, 'God knows whether Dulcinea does or does not exist in the world, and whether she is the product of phantasy or not; these are not things whose investigation can be carried through to the end'.[3]

The 'poetic function' cannot, furthermore, be put on a par with the other functions of language, since the code employs no special features to render this function, as it does in the rendering of the other functions. The 'poetic function' is thus always a function of the message itself, and involves poetic use of language or poetic speech, rather than a special poetic function of language. Poetry is, on the other hand, always able to expand the boundaries of the 'ordinary' linguistic code (see below, 5.) just as it tends, far more than 'ordinary' language to combine with other systems of signs.

This tendency towards syncretism of various types of signs is one of the prominent features not only of verbal art but of all arts. According to Sapir, 'poetry everywhere is inseparable in its origins from the singing voice and the measure of dance' (1921:229fn. 11), and it is interesting to note that many languages lack

[3] The passage in Spanish reads as follows: 'Dios sabe si hay Dulcinea o no en el mundo, y si es fantástica o no es fantástica; y estas no son de las cosas cuya averigación se ha da llevar hasta el cabo,' *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, part 2, Ch. 32.

a special word for a poem or the poet and use instead the word for 'song' or the 'singer' (for example in Serbo-Croatian the folk-singer is called *pevač* or *guslar).* Ethnographers have observed that without musical accompaniment, the execution of oral poetry becomes severely distorted, or cannot be performed at all (Ružičić 1934:232). The role of music and of mimicry is also well known from the modern 'chanson' (Weinrich 1971 : 124ff.) which explains why the actual performance (and performer) is often far more important than the verbal text. There are entire genres of folk-literature which lie on the borderline of or oscillate between music and poetry (children-songs, lullabies, dirges, anthems). Modern poetry, which is meant primarily for visual consumption, is also ambiguous as to the proper nature of its signs, and a long tradition of emblems and ideograms, and the use of sets, mimicry and song in the theatre, all testify to the perennial syncretism of the various arts.

The ubiquitous and simultaneous use of language for various functions makes it difficult to draw a sharp line between its esthetic and non-esthetic functions, and one can speak only of a continuous scale which goes from densely structured poetic texts to the use of poetic devices in everyday communication. This question can never be decided in internal terms alone, since the definition of art and of a work of art also depends on fashions and styles, and on the 'intention' of the reader as much as on that of the artist (e.g., a work of art executed primarily for a non-esthetic purpose may be 'read' as a purely esthetic product when the original purpose is ignored or forgotten). The use of formal devices, such as verse, is certainly insufficient for the definition of verbal art, as was recognized by Aristotle, who saw that Empedocles and Homer have nothing in common except verse *(Poetics,* I, 1447b). Artistic prose tends, on the other hand, always to be rhythmically organized, or to vary the use of prose with that of verse (as in *The Tale of Genji,* or Boccaccio's *Decameron*), or finally to be set apart from non-poetic prose in its oral delivery (Chinese artistic prose, for example, is chanted). Certain forms of 'ordinary' language (especially scientific prose) are totally set on a referential function though the use of poetic figures or metaphors has never been a hindrance in the expression of 'clear and distinct ideas' (Descartes, for that matter, used more metaphors than some of his contemporary French playwrights (Weinrich 1963: 340), while other forms of discourse which pursue pragmatic functions, are usually couched in poetic form (as, for example, ritual formulas, charms, and children's verse which is used for didactic or meta-linguistic purposes, and contemporary advertisements)). There are, on the other hand, entire poetic genres, such as the proverb, which are inextricably woven into the concrete speech-act and serve as a metaphor for the given non-poetic message. Truly poetic texts, however, tend to assert their independence from concrete and practical contexts, and are recognized as such through the unity and density of their internal structure. Such works are generally marked by a maximal integration of their form and meaning, i.e., by the use of form for the structuring of meaning and by the dependence of meaning on the structured form. Such works are frequently set in the form of verse, so that

verse itself has come to be seen as the paradigm and embodiment of the poetic principle.

4. Although poetry does not need to have recourse to any special language or to deviate from the norms of a given linguistic code, it presents 'the innate art of language intensified or sublimated' (Sapir 1921:225), and involves in a deeper sense a complete reinterpretation of the 'neutral', non-poetic use of language. This reinterpretation effects in poetry: 1) *the syntagmatic character of the message* (see below, 6.1.), 2) *the status and participants of the speech-act* (6.2.), and 3) *the relations between the levels and elements of language* (6.3.), producing, in effect, a new kind of code. The Russian structuralists are thus essentially right when they call this code 'a secondary modeling system', as Novalis did before them when he spoke of poetry as 'a second language', or 'Sprache in der zweiten Potenz' (1945–46: vol. 3, p. 93; cf. Sørensen 1963:201).

5. Before discussing the transformations which language undergoes in poetry, we should note that poetry does indeed at times expand the limits of a given linguistic code by using certain features which are not otherwise encountered. These features belong to various levels of language, but are not used at random: they are either a part of older poetic traditions which are zealously preserved, or they serve to perform special poetic functions. Thus it is known that the oral delivery of Russian poetry has been (since the 17th century, when Russian acquired from Polish its syllabic verse) on a special, archaic pronunciation of the unaccented vowels (in particular *o),* while the 'declamatory style' has also been marked (as we know from Turgenev) by a nasalized reading of the vowels (Tomaševskij 1948 : 235ff.). The Yugoslav singers deliver their songs in a 'Turkish' manner that involves a shift in the quality of various vowels (M. Braun 1961:48, fn. 1). The use of archaic grammatical forms and of neologisms and foreign, 'exotic' names is extremely widespread, especially in modern poetry. Certain modern poetic schools (e.g. the Imagists) have tried to construct an entire poetics on certain parts of speech (on nouns or on verbs), while copious examples of grammatical and lexical peculiarities have been recorded in the folklore of Russia and Macedonia (Evgen'eva, Koneski). Equally common is poetic freedom in word-order for the purpose of semantic foregrounding or sharper syntactic parallelism. Folk-poetry is particularly prone to use onomatopoeia and interjections, exhortative and nonsense words (of the *hey nonny nonny* type). These elements frequently perform a compositional function delimiting the opening or ends of stanzas or entire songs, and complement or support the use of other, non-verbal devices (melody, clapping of hands, mimicry). The choice of language is sometimes used to distinguish entire genres or to mark poetry in opposition to prose (e.g., the choice of different dialects for different genres in Greece, the use of a superdialectal *koine* in Serbo-Croatian epic poetry, the special languages of the Icelandic and Irish poetic guilds).