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THE RETHINKING OF HUMAN AGENCY AND THE SCIENCE OF LITERATURE: IDEOLOGICAL, SEXUAL AND LITERARY POLITICS IN THE WRITINGS OF RUSSIAN FORMALISTS

This project reassesses the complex relationship between literary criticism and science in the critical practice of Russian Formalists. The monograph that will be the final result of this research will suggest that in the late 1910s and 1920s the Formalists were trying to carve the space for literary studies in a newly formed society by presenting it as one of the scientific disciplines. I am particularly interested in the rethinking of human agency in the writings of Russian Formalists. *Science of the Self: Human Agency and the Legacy of Russian Formalism* is the first sustained study of the ways in which Formalist rethinking of authorship in literature and the arts is the product of the broader project of the creation of the new human in Post-Revolutionary Russia. It will argue that Formalist attempts to institutionalise literary studies go hand in hand with establishing genetics, endocrinology, eugenics, experimental biology and other biomedical disciplines focusing on the human subject as important areas of scientific enquiry in the new Soviet state.

Russian Formalism was a school of literary criticism that emerged in the mid-1910s and peaked by the early 1920s. In recent years there have been attempts to trace the direct genealogical line of descent for literary theory, cultural studies and film studies through the Russia of the 1920s, coming into focus as a site of public debates just before and during the Soviet revolution. As Harvard's professor David Rodowick puts it in his 2014 book *Elegy for Theory*, "it is almost certainly the case that the Russians invented 'theory' in the modern sense for the humanities".[1] Although the tentative "almost" in this sentence reveals the difficult task of reconsidering

Formalism's current status of being an influential, yet methodologically outdated (mainly because of its "scientific" approach), school of criticism, recent work on the movement points to the importance of revisiting this moment of modern cultural history. In a new entry on Russian Formalism in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, commissioned to replace Victor Erlich's article in the three previous editions, Galin Tihanov suggests a new perspective that establishes Formalism's greater importance as an integral part of twentieth-century intellectual history. The Formalist revision of human agency, which moves beyond individuality, facilitated the transition from Romanticist notions of authorship to Post-Structuralist understanding of the author as an element of textual production.[2]

In these studies Russian Formalism is seen as an unlikely Soviet ancestor for Structuralism and Post-Structuralism. Unlike its presumed offspring, however, that boast endless lists of names belonging to major thinkers in practically all fields of the humanities (sociology, history, linguistics, philosophy, psychology, architecture, archeology, anthropology and so on) Russian Formalism revolved around two small groups of young researchers of language and literature, Viktor Shklovsky's Petrograd-based Opoiaz ("Society for the Study of Poetic Language") and Roman Jakobson's Moskovskii lingvisticheskii kruzhok ("Moscow Linguistic Circle"). Moreover, it is often traced to a single article by Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Device", first published in 1917 and reprinted three times before the end of the 1920s.[3] In this article Shklovsky also explains the concept of defamiliarazation or estrangement, which is now closely associated with his name.

What strikes one as a logical contradiction here is that the name of Viktor Shklovsky, a self-proclaimed "founder of the Russian school of the formal method",[4] stands in for the entire movement, a movement that paradoxically originated the idea that "the author is dead" and has no relevance for the study of literature and other art forms. This is indicative of a split between theoretical underpinnings of Formalist theories and modernist practices of self-fashioning and self-promotion the representatives of this movement very actively engaged in. In their theoretical writings many Formalists adopted Osip Brik's famous anti-authorial stance, according to which literary history is not led or promoted by individual cultural figures, but rather by random variations in the repertoire of devices, motifs, and rules that constitute literary texts.[5] This shift away from Romanticist ideas of individual creativity and authorial will allowed Brik to state that if Pushkin had never existed *Eugene Onegin*

would still have been written. As there are not many good translations of *Eugene Onegin* and the text is not as familiar to Western readers as it is known to Russians who, generation after generation, have to learn large excerpts from it by heart in secondary school. For Western audiences the equivalent would be to say that if Dostoevsky was never born *Crime and Punishment* would still have been written, or that if Tolstoy never wrote a word, *War and Peace* would have written itself.

As Brik sums his seminal article "The So-called 'Formal Method'", published in 1923 in the avant-garde journal *LEF* (*The Left Front of the Arts*), "'Opoyaz' maintains that *there are no poets and writers – there are just poetry and writing*".[6] On the other hand, writings produced by the Russian Formalists show evidence of the primacy of autobiographical genres.

The Formalist rethinking of human agency therefore constitutes a two-sided process, whereby the theoretical move beyond individual agency is counterbalanced by a public stance of self-promotion adopted by major Formalist figures, which established them as both artists and "scientists". Examining the role of the author in debates among the Formalist critics, the project engages with the process by which this re-appropriation of human agency corresponds to the shift from fictional to non-fictional genres. Shklovsky's understanding of a literary work as "pure form" both promotes and is indebted to modernist experiments with genre. As he writes on Rozanov's essays, "Of course, these essays reflect the soul of their author. However, the soul of a literary work is precisely its structure or its form."[7] Shklovsky's re-appropriation of human agency shifts the focus away from the author and towards the form, while simultaneously positioning the autobiographical genre as a medium for the construction of authority. My monograph demonstrates that the literature of the period is shaped by the ways in which Formalism's conflicting models of authorship blur the distinction between theoretical, literary and autobiographical discourses.

Although Russian Formalism was the first school of thought to assert literature as an autonomous object of theoretical analysis, their literary and critical writings often play with a blending of the discourses of literature, autobiography and theory. In my monograph I argue that this self-conscious interdisciplinarity became possible because of their rigorous re-thinking of the roles of literature and literary criticism on the map of cultural production in post-revolutionary Russia. To put it in a nutshell, I am investigating how a group of thinkers in the late 1910s and the 1920s

were trying to carve the space for literary studies in a newly formed society by presenting it as one of the scientific disciplines. I suggest that what sets the Formalists against previous trends in literary studies is their conviction that the new type of literary criticism they were producing was characterized by its scientific character (nauchnost').

The notion of scientific soundness, which Formalists inherited from positivism, as Galin Tihanov has suggested, "became a paramount value, and the formalists proved this by their rigorous concentration on the quantifiable aspects of verse".[8] The avant-garde artists and writers of the time also pointed to the intrinsic interconnectedness between arts, literature and science. Aleksei Kruchionykh, leading Futurist artist and poet, recognized that both contemporary literature and literary studies adopted elements of a scientific discourse evidenced, for example, by the title of his 1922 "treatise" *The Shiftology of Russian Verse*.[9] Scientificity marks not only rigorous attempts of both avant-garde artists and the Formalists to present texts as quantifiable objects of analysis, but also their understanding of authorship as a by-product of literary production. The writing subject for Formalists becomes determined by and constructed in language, yet, simultaneously, the notion of the author comes to play a central role in the formation of both modernism as a movement and Formalism as a "scientific institution" and a school of thought.

Galin Tihanov has recently suggested that Formalism has to be seen as part and parcel of developments on the intellectual stage of the first quarter of the twentieth century. For example, like in psychoanalysis where the subject is governed by hidden forces that only a qualified specialist (a scientist) can hope to uncover, for Russian Formalists the writing subject is also conditioned by forces that are beyond his or her control "most important, the structural characteristics of language".[10] But these forces are, nevertheless, entirely amenable to scientific study and rationalisation. The Formalist idea that literary studies have to be clearly separated from aesthetics, sociology, psychology, and history goes hand in hand with Russian avant-garde's modernist rejection of all the ideas of the past, ill-suited for literature of the new Russia. As the Formalists proclaim, they are not interested in painstakingly trying to find out if Tolstoy was a smoker, but rather in developing, as Brik puts it, "a scientific system instead of a chaotic accumulation of facts and personal opinions".[11] In one of the first studies on Russian Formalism, *Russian Formalism: History, Doctrine*, Victor Erlich argued that such statements were a direct critique

of the "preoccupation with biographical trivia which was so typical of Russian literary history of the first decades of [the twentieth] century".[12]

In his 1926 article "The Theory of the Formal Method", another early attempt to write the history of the movement, Boris Eichenbaum places Formalism among other scientific disciplines, "The relationship between linguistics and the formal method was somewhat analogous to that relation of mutual use and delimitation that exists, for example, between physics and chemistry."[13] In pronouncing the natural sciences as a model for their scholarship, the Formalists thus strove to embody the ideals and values of scientism in a society that had succumbed to the lures of rapid modernisation.

Following the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, Russia's new governing powers began to develop new laws aiming to re-designed all aspect of lives of the citizens of the new Soviet state: from the abolishing of all private property and the redistribution of houses to the rethinking of the dress, physical shape and everyday habits of new Soviet subjects. During the period known as War Communism (from 1918 to 1921) the Bolsheviks began to implement their policies, concentrating on the nationalisation of industry and the control of agriculture.[14] The failure of these policies, that caused famine and led to strikes and peasant revolts, prompted Lenin to order a reversal of policy in 1922, which became known as the New Economic Policy.[15] Although it is often considered to be a more capitalism-oriented economic policy which allowed individuals to own small enterprises, the intellectuals were right to be worried about the new government's intentions with regard to the arts – by the 1923 a new surveillance apparatus had been set in motion as well as the central censorship organ. In other words, as Stuart Finkel has put it, "the avenues for critical public speech had been sharply curtailed".[16]

It is therefore not surprising that Marxist ideologues felt the need to attack some of the more extreme Formalist statements that denied the relevance of social and ideological considerations for the study of art. In his 1923 book *Literature and Revolution* Leon Trotsky severely criticised Shklovsky's 1919 statement, "Art was always free of life. Its flag has never reflected the color of the flag that flies over the city fortress."[17] As I have suggested, by the mid-1920s a number of Formalists had published articles that attempt to rewrite the history of Formalism in order to re-emphasize the relevance of the movement for the Soviet cultural scene. For example, Boris Eichenbaum tried to justify their earlier radical statements, such as the one quoted above, by suggesting that like the Russian Revolution itself

literary theory, too, had to present a radical break away from outdated conventions and theories,

> We knew that […] history demanded of us a really revolutionary attitude – a categorical thesis, merciless irony, and bold rejection of whatever could not be reconciled with our position. We had to oppose the subjective aesthetic principles with an objective consideration of facts.[18]

Like Trotsky, who somewhat unjustly labelled the Formalist approach as "essentially descriptive and semi-statistical",[19] other public opponents of the movement also focused on Formalism's claims to scientificity. Boris Tomashevsky, another advocate of the movement, summarized the main criticism the Formalists were then facing in his article "The Formal Method: In Lieu of an Obituary" also published in 1925. "The other camp accuses us of being scientific", here he proceeds to imitate the voice of the critics in a polemical ventriloquy,

> Poor naïve technical specialists who lost any sense of modernity! How can they understand that the liquidation of all pre-established approaches to literature from sociology and cultural history to bibliography and psychology can only happen in the dying circles of fruitless scholastic sciences.[20]

Both Eichenbaum and Tomashevsky argue that the methods of Formalism were greatly misunderstood. According to them, Formalism does not deny literary criticism's links with other sciences, but is rather interested in a dialogue with them insofar as literature is acknowledged as an independent discipline. The main objection was the tradition within which literature is used to merely draw broader historical or sociological claims or to get closer to the truth about a society at a given time literature supposedly contains and transmits. As Tomashevsky wrote,

> Yes, the Formalists are specialists in a sense that they are dreaming about an independent science of literature, which is interlinked with adjacent fields of knowledge. […] However, to see itself among other sciences literature has to recognise itself as an independent discipline.[21]

The fact that the Formalists were the first to see literary studies as a science with a clearly defined object of analysis (i.e. literary texts) is

of importance for my project. By examining this "scientific" notion of authorship the project casts light on the role of Formalism in the revision of human agency, thus contributing from a specific Russian perspective to a history of ideas in Western literary studies. The resulting monograph will explore the place of human agency in the new model of literature proposed by the Formalists at a historical moment when literary theory is often opposed to science, even when interested in a dialogue with it, as witnessed in the recent relevance of neuroscience and cognitivism in literary studies.[22] In suggesting a new theoretical framework for understanding the notion of literature as an area of scientific study, Formalists engaged with complex questions of literary merit and social value of writing, which emphasise the way in which its institutionalisation in post-revolutionary Russia changed the status of literature as a cultural practice.

In focusing on Viktor Shklovsky, whose work has become increasingly popular outside Russia since the 1960s, this project will not only attract scholars of Russian literature, world modernisms and genre theory but it will also speak to a wider audience of readers who came to know Shklovsky through his autobiographical works such as *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* and *A Sentimental Journey*. Despite such interest to personal experiences of individual Formalists, one of the main objectives of the Formalist movements is that literature is not to be seen as an expression of the author's individuality or a system of hidden messages a critic has to decipher. As Brik puts it in his explanatory article, Formalism "offers a knowledge of the laws of production instead of a mystical penetration into the secrets of creation".[23]

Moreover, in Formalist corpus, the focus shifts away from the critic and his interpretation towards the text itself. For example, Eichenbaum writes,

> We posit specific principles and adhere to them insofar as the material justifies them. If the material demands their refinement or change, we change or refine them. […] There is no ready-made science; science lives not by settling on truth, but by overcoming error.[24]

The inherent flexibility of the Formalist method in this description not only curbs the attacks of its opponents, but also places a text itself and not socio-cultural moment in which it was written as a focal point of literary analysis. The defenders of Formalism are careful to emphasise the relevance of their approach for the Soviet intellectual scene, which

was increasingly dominated by Marxism. Tomashevsky directly responds to a critique that Formalists do "not illuminate literature with ideology" by emphasizing that "Formalism is interested in whatever is present in a literary text, including ideological implications, which are not ignored by any Formalist."[25]

A number of polemics between the Formalists and their Marxist critics resulted in the former's attempts to clearly define what they could contribute to what Brik terms the "proletarian construction of culture".[26] While the Formalists were trying to create a new paradigm for literary studies characterized by its inherent scientificity, they were also forced to turn to their own status within this paradigm by writing themselves into the system of new social relations. The focus on this complex process allows to ask questions considering the changing attitudes about the place of literature and literary criticism within twentieth-century intellectual history.

A drastic rethinking of what makes a new working subject was a crucial element in the Bolshevik rejection of the past. The Formalist critique of the Romanticist understanding of the role of authors and by extension literary critics created a gap which had to be filled with an alternative understanding of subjectivity. By writing human agency in arts and literature into the discourse of science, the Formalists attempted to create the space for all those who performed mental labour in the changing system of social roles. This coincided with the change in their understanding of literary production, with writing now being seen as a profession in service of the new economic system. In the early 1920s a number of articles by major critics explain why Formalism is, in Brik's words, "the best educator for the young proletarian writers".[27] The Formalist agenda for the professionalization of literary activities meant that the author could no longer be seen in terms of the expression of individual creativity and instead acquired a strictly regulated social function.

Eichenbaum's article shows signs of an attempt to find a balance between emphasising a wider importance of the movement and its being an indispensable product of its time, "Actually, the work of the Opoyaz group was genuinely collective."[28] Although Peter Steiner has argued that the only thing that unites individual thinkers within the Formalist movement is their "clear-cut departure from the literary-theoretical tradition in Russia",[29] they repeatedly present themselves as a collective voice of new science of literature, a voice best suited for the uniquely Soviet approach to culture. Boris Tomashevsky's article "The New School of Literary History in Russia", originally presented as a lecture in Leningrad

in 1927 and, one year later, in 1928, in front of the newly formed Prague Linguistic circle, provides an overview of the work done by the Formalist movement. Here Tomashevsky not only presents Formalists as a unified school of "literary history", he also points to the importance of studying literary groups and movements, "The study of diverse groups, of their antagonisms and conflicts, thus became the order of the day. Attention was no longer confined to great writers; it extended to secondary writers, to minor genres, to mass movements."[30] By writing a historical overview of the development of Formalism, Tomashevsky both provides an example of such literary criticism and presents Russian Formalism as an integral part of the new Soviet literary history.

Fredric Jameson suggested that the extensive networking that took place between the Formalist critics and the modernist authors makes Russian Formalism something more than a school of literary criticism. According to Jameson, the Formalists' close affiliation with leading avant-garde artists and cultural figures of the time blurs the boundaries between literary criticism and literature, "an ultimate evaluation of Formalism as a concrete literary phenomenon will bring it much closer to genuinely creative movements such as German Romanticism or Surrealism than to a purely critical doctrine like that of the American New Criticism." [31]

I would like to suggest that the phenomenon Jameson is referring to is closely linked to the Formalist attempt to present literary studies as a field of enquiry indispensible for the cultural environment of the new Soviet State. In an attempt to bring the image of an intellectual worker closer to the emerging template of the ideal Soviet citizen, in their writings the Formalists present themselves as highly adaptable skilled workers in service of a new industry formed under early Soviet policies aiming to improve the efficiency of scientific, technological and cultural production. As Eichenbaum put it, "Science itself is still evolving, and we are evolving with it."[32]

The adaptability of the new Soviet intellectual is a crucial element in the Formalist model of the new cultural industry. According to this model, the new Soviet literature has to be characterized by a complete self-sufficiency which allows it to simultaneously produce theoretical advancements in knowledge and cutting-edge modernist experimentalism. In the writings of major Formalists literary history is often described in terms of random genetic mutations, which is closely linked to idea of social evolution – they bring together the roles of a scientist, writer, critic, journalist and publicist

in an attempt to create an image of a highly efficient multi-tasking Soviet mental laborer.

Arguably Viktor Shklovsky was the first to introduce the themes of social and literary evolutions in his writings. Rad Borislavov offers a discussion of Shklovsky's references to Darwinian trends in literary criticism which had been present in Russian literary debates since the late nineteenth century.[33] According to him, Shklovsky's use of the theme of biological evolution in his discussions of literary history was "[p]artly a rhetorical strategy aimed at defending Formalism against Marxist accusations and partly an attempt at constructing a viable and original literary history".[34] Interestingly, Borislavov argues that Shklovsky's references to genetics and biology in his discussions of literature and literary history were a direct response to Trotsky's critique of what he saw as the Formalist lack of attention to materialist theory of science and the arts, "Trockij compared Šklovskij's attempt to refute materialist interpretations of art to attempts by country priests to disprove Darwinism."[35] According to Borislavov, Shklovsky's engagement with biology and genetics was a rhetorical device, employed to refute the claims that Formalism objects both Darwinism and Marxism.

Rather then seeing Shklovsky's use of evolutionary theories as a rhetorical device, I am exploring the way in which Shklovsky's attempts to present literary studies as a scientific discipline both engage with and are indebted to the institutionalisation of various biomedical disciplines that aimed at "bettering humankind". I would like to demonstrate that Shklovsky's interest in these disciplines manifested in the years directly preceding Trotsky's attack (especially in the texts written during Shklovsky's exile in Berlin that became the focus of Trotsky's attention), which, perhaps, as Borislavov has suggested, provided the initial impetus for Shklovsky's explicit references to genetics on his return to Soviet Russia.

By advocating the drastic revision of ideas of human agency in literature and the arts, Russian Formalists therefore contribute to the wider rethinking of the human subject, the element which, in the years following the Revolution, the Bolsheviks considered an undisputed vehicle of social progress. This new perspective on the Formalist understanding of human agency explains the two-fold nature of my project. On the one hand I am considering how, by presenting an alternative notion of authorship, the Formalists were trying to create the space for literary criticism in the Soviet social and scene by presenting it as a scientific discipline. On the other hand, I am also considering the way in which the writings of Russian

Formalists reveal the changing attitudes to and social positions of newly established sciences in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

In this respect Eichenbaum's phrase, "Science itself is still evolving, and we are evolving with it", highlights the dynamic between cultural activists and their immediate environment. In Eichenbaum's account of "the evolution of the formal method", the urge to break away from practices of literary criticism of the past was supported by the extreme conditions of post-Revolutionary period, which enforced a drastic rethinking of institutional, ideological and material structure of academic life. The role of literary criticism could no longer be to focus on lives and work of individual authors. For Tomashevsky, such focus denies the very possibility of studying literary history because of the clashing categories of influence and "the idea of absolute and hence incomparable individuality of a poet's work".[36]

The Formalists opposed the idea that literary talent is passed directly from one great writer to another, which not only signified, as Tomashevsky suggested, a dead-end of literary theory, but also was incompatible with ideological policies of the new Soviet State. In Formalist practice literary history as a genealogical succession of selected great writers, where "the notion of influence [is] always positive and based solely on the idea of the indefinite perfectibility of the human species," gave way to "a new history rich in wars, or at least in fights and quarrels" against dominant literary forms.[37]

By emphasizing the collective nature of the Formalist movement, Eichenbaum points to their rejection of the understanding of literary history as a succession of individual talents, "from the very beginning we did not see it as the personal affair of this or that individual. This was our chief connection with the times".[38] In an article originally published in 1921, Shklovsky opposed traditional genealogy with a geneticist approach to literary history, "the legacy that is passed on from one literary generation to the next moves not from father to son but from uncle to nephew".[39]

In a 1923 book, published in Berlin, Shklovsky not only continues using kinship terminology to discuss literary history, he proclaims himself as the father of the formula, "According to the law – established for the first time, as far as I know, by me – in the history of art the legacy passes not from father to son, but from uncle to nephew."[40] Such model of literary history defies the understanding of history as a linear progression. As Shklovksy writes, the formula "from uncle to nephew" "is proven by canonization. […] The history of Greek literature, with its successive development

of the epic, lyric, drama, comedy, and novel, is explained not by the creation of one form of art out of another, but by gradual canonization of ever-new types of folklore."[41] Here Shklovsky presented the view on literary evolution which was later adopted and developed by both Iurii Tynianov and Roman Jakobson.[42]

This view of literary history moves away from seeing it as the type of an evolutionary process, where old forms give way to new genres. Rather, according to this model, at any given moment there are "not one, but several lines of literature, among which one dominates".[43]

Literary history is here described as a self-regulating system which, at different points in time, brings out certain styles and genres, which then drift away only to re-emerge at a later point, when social conditions for its dominance become more favorable. In Tomashevsky's later description of the Formalist move away from models of literary history based on the ideas of succession and direct inheritance from one writer to another, literary history is precipitated by the resistance to dominant trends in criticism, literature and the arts. As he writes, "The formula 'the inheritance of the nephew from the uncle' was popular. This implied that the primary driving force in literary evolution was repulsion – that is, the tendency to react against the dominant literary forms of the century."[44]

These considerations to what extent literary works are shaped by their environment, according to the histories of Russian Formalism written in the 1920s, resonate with the evolution of writings by Formalist critics, especially by Shklovsky, which often react to either Marxist critics (for example, in his 1925 book *Theory of Prose* he directly responds to Trotsky's critique) or various policies regulating what sort of literature a Soviet writer can produce. The difficulties Shklovsky faces in trying to find his place in the rapidly changing system of social relations in this period is complicated by the fact that he, threatened with arrest for his earlier political activities, had to escape from Russia in March 1922 and spend over a year living in exile in Berlin.

In what follows I am going to discuss an episode of early-Soviet self-censorship which reveals the difficult dynamics in the literary, scientific and sexual politics of early 1920s Russia. In uncovering this dynamic, I will explore the ways in which Russian Formalist theories of literature and language engage with scientific advances in other disciplines, particularly those in agricultural engineering and biotechnology. The focus is on Viktor Shklovsky's epistolary novel *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love*, in which he attempts to respond to tightening censorship regulations by

linking attempts to control literary production to the changing regulations of sex life and reproduction of new Soviet citizens. In this discussion the theoretical question of evolution of Formalism is juxtaposed with sexual politics in post-revolutionary Russia, which is here interlinked with the science of genetics and animal breeding.

Zoo, or Letters Not about Love provides a compelling case study of the changing regulations of both sex life and reproduction of new Soviet citizens and the production of literature by new Soviet writers. I will suggest that these regulations resulted in increasingly uneasy relationships between individuals, between people and their professional roles, and, importantly, between authors and their texts, which had to be written to fit the ideological agenda, be hidden in desk drawers or undergo extensive editing that produced numerous textual variants. In Shklovsky's lifetime five different versions of *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* were published between 1923 and 1966.

Shklovsky initially wrote and published *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* while living in exile in Berlin in 1923. Another version of the text was published in Leningrad only one year later, in 1924. Although the two editions came out almost back to back, the second version was substantially different from the first one. Both texts are written as a series of letters to Elsa Triolet ("Alya" as the text refers to her), who forbids the author to write about love. In the Berlin edition seven out of the twenty nine letters comprising the book are written by Triolet. Although her name was not on the cover of the book this launched her own literary career. After reading a manuscript of *Zoo* Maxim Gorky, another prominent Russian literary figure then living in Berlin, remarked that the best letters here were not written by Shklovsky.[45] Following his advice Triolet extended a letter, in which she writes about her trip to Tahiti, into a book published in 1925.[46] Curiously, all but one letter attributed to Triolet were cut out of the second "Soviet" edition of Shklovsky's text. What in the first edition is presented as a correspondence between a man and a woman, in the second version becomes a literary device "laid bare," to use Shklovsky's own term: the initial conversation where Alya asks the author not to write about love is now merely summarized in the preface to the book, "This is the plan of the book for you. She forbids him to write about love. He reconciles himself to this and begins to tell her about Russian literature."[47] In Formalist theories exposing techniques used in the writing of the text launches a mechanism of "deautomatizing" the reader's perception of the text, thus producing the effect of estrangement. The aim of this device is

to offer a reader to conceive reality in an unusual way. For example, in Shklovsky's words, estrangement makes a stone "stony".[48]

In *Zoo* the initial exclusion of Shklovsky's correspondent and the addressee of the letters disrupts the communication process, and letter-writing becomes an excuse to write a Formalist analyses of other literary texts.[49] Moreover, by shifting attention away from the female protagonist in the second edition, Shklovsky re-enforces the authority of a far more powerful censor. In the final letter of the novel, which is no longer addressed to Alya, Shklovsky asks the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (ВЦИК) to grant him permission to return to Russia. This unexpected shift from poorly disguised love letters-cum-critical articles to a formal declaration creates a parallel between troubled sexual politics produced in the text and an ideological unease of the exiled author's pleas for return. If in the first edition the final letter announces that Alya never existed and is merely "the realisation of the metaphor" of the author's inability to live outside Russia,[50] in the second edition her letters are excluded from the book altogether.

Although in both editions Alya represents "Pan-European" culture and symbolizes values Shklovsky cannot come to terms with, the first, Berlin, edition attempts to construct a dialogue between the West and post-revolutionary Russia. It opens with Alya's letter to her sister Lilya Brik, who at the time was at the centre of both Formalist and avant-garde literary circles (notoriously she was a lover of both the Formalist Osip Brik and the poet of the Revolution Vladimir Mayakovsky).[51] The descriptive header, in which Shklovsky introduces the letter, sets the tone for this international correspondence, "Written by a woman in Berlin to her sister in Moscow. Her sister is very beautiful, with glistening eyes. The letter is offered as an introduction. Just listen to the calm voice."[52] Since most of Alya's letters are omitted from the edition published in the Soviet Union, here Shklovsky offers a different kind of an introduction.

The first letter to the second edition directly addresses the drastic restructuring of social relations which was instrumental in the revolution's attempt to transform mankind. Moreover, the letter creates an uneasy link between the utopian technological imagery and the depictions of sexual crime. Shklovsky, who fought the First World War as the armoured-car driver and mechanic, argues that it was confiscated cars that allowed the workers to take part in the revolution. As he writes, "You brought the revolution sloshing into the city like foam, O automobiles! The revolution shifted gears and drove off."[53] Here the revolution acquires the properties

of both an automated mechanism and its human driver, which questions the distinction between the organic and the mechanical. Moreover, the revolutionaries themselves acquire prosthetic body parts, as Shklovsky writes, "Subways, cranes and automobiles are the artificial limbs of mankind."[54] Here Shklovsky describes the mechanisation of individuals, something that was often presented as harmful effects of industrialisation on the psychology and physiology of individuals, for example, in Russian science fiction of the time,[55] as a celebrated aspect of the Revolution's fight for the modernisation of society.

In recent years the historians of science have suggested that scientific and political revolutions in Russia go hand in hand and the project of creating the new Soviet citizen is indebted to the legacy of biological engineering, which was institutionalised in the late nineteenth century within the Imperial Academy of Experimental Medicine.[56] Mikhail Bulgakov's fascinating 1925 novel *Heart of a Dog* provides a bitter commentary on the Soviet project of transforming mankind, when a dog named Sharik, who like the inhabitants of H.G. Wells's *The Island of Dr Moreau*, was changed into a human being only to create havoc both for its maker and the Soviet authorities.[57] Not unlike Bulgakov's literary experiments, in Shklovsky's descriptions, if left to its own devices the unbridled speed of modernity with its cybernetic machine-men can also take a dangerous turn.

To support his thesis that, "What changes a man most of all is the machine",[58] Shklovsky provides an account of a gang of Moscow car mechanics who were forcing women into their cars in order to drive them outside the city and rape them. It is not the crime itself, but the criminals' response to the question why they did it that attracts Shklovsky to this episode: they were simply bored. In the letter it is precisely the lack of the sense of purpose that leads to socially and sexually transgressive behaviour.

During the first weeks following the seizure of power the Bolsheviks began to enact new laws and legislations aiming to guard and regulate sexual and family lives of citizens that would help them to create radically new social relations.[59] However, as the questions of sexuality remained a highly disputed topic, questions of sexuality became the subject of an ongoing policy discussion, while continuing to play an important role in debates among leading artists and cultural figures. The debates were divided between the idea that sexuality had to be liberated from outdated moral prejudices and, on the other hand, that it should be completely subordinated to proletariat's class interests. The episode of sexual crime

which Shklovsky recounts in the second edition of *Zoo* reflects the confused perception of the new sexual economics. As Catriona Kelly et al. have put it, the sexual freedom that followed the revolution was merely "the freedom from," not "freedom to", "People sensed that former constrictions had vanished, but they still did not know what to do with that freedom. The result was an incomplete, negative freedom – like the freedom of a thirsty man to wander in the desert."[60]

Although Shklovsky is careful to state that the men were executed, their behaviour is described as a result of their lack of purpose in the newly formed society, "An engine of more than forty horsepower annihilates the old morality. Speed puts distance between a driver and mankind. […] An engine attracts a man to what is accurately called crime."[61] In his analysis of the public coverage of "The Case of Chubarov Alley", which became the code-name for a rape of a student by a group of factory workers in a deserted park in 1926, Eric Naiman explains that although at the time rape was not considered to be a capital offense, and the punishment for gang rapes rarely exceeded five years, in certain cases rape could be reclassified as banditry.[62] In presenting rape as part of a utopian imagery of highly technological modernity, Shklovsky gives up any attempts to describe the behaviour of the factory workers in terms of human motivations. The woman's experience of the crime is reduced to her concern that the rapists would take her fur-coat, to which they respond with a curt phrase, "We're not thieves". Shklovsky comments on the fact that, throughout the episode, the criminals address her as "miss" by confirming that "She was a miss [baryshnia]," i.e., a representative of bourgeois culture. However, they do not put claim on her personal belongings: both in "The Case of Chubarov Alley" and the episode described by Shklovsky only women's bodies become collectivized.

Dan Healey has suggested that "Early party ideology implied that rape was somehow a 'relic of the past' or a 'depravity' reflecting bourgeois man's proprietorial view on women."[63] In the case of gang rapes, however, it is not individual's materialistic values but the collective aspect of the crimes that not only ensured its countrywide coverage but also changed the legal perception of the gravity of the crime.[64] The language of Shklovsky's description is devoid of any references to sexual desire. In fact, the men are characterized by a remarkable lack of agency, with an automobile engine being responsible for the deed rather than the criminals. In Healey's argument, the elimination of the desiring subject is instrumental to the construction of post-revolutionary sexual discourse,

"Soviet forensic medicine institutionalized the party's technocratic, rationalizing understanding of sexuality, and contributed to the silencing of desire in the Soviet 'sexual revolution.'"[65]

During the years of War Communism rape became a recurrent imagery of the avant-garde's call for the destruction of the past, which was seen as an essential step in the making of the new society. As Naiman puts it,

> rape – in its metaphorical transformation – for the first time became a *positive* symbol: the assault on the earth was essential to the building of an unprecedented, resolutely phallic and iconoclastic proletarian society.[66]

Although in the introductory letter added to the 1924 edition of *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* Shklovsky references back to the urge to wipe out pre-revolutionary ways of thinking, rape enacts the dystopian potential of technology.

Shklovsky's fellow-citizens who, as he states, "were not worse than any others",[67] in this letter are grinded up by the revolutionary machine, which "annihilates the old morality" but fails to produce a new set of values. This equally concerns car mechanics and cultural workers. In the same letter Shklovsky proclaims himself "a man with knowledge of speed and no sense of purpose".[68] This confession creates an uneasy link between Shklovsky's own "crimes" that resulted in his exile (and consequent inability to contribute to building a new society in Soviet Union) and sexual crimes of executed convicts. In Shklovsky's book sexuality is connected not only to crime, but also to the process of writing, which becomes an object of criminal investigation under the eyes of a censor. According to Naiman's argument, crime and illness are as important in utopian narratives as language and history.[69]

In *Zoo* Shklovsky often returns to the historical situation of Russian émigré, arguing that Russian thinkers and writers are out of place in Western capitals. Although in Europe Russian writers could publish their work without a controlling eye of Soviet censors, starting from 1922 Soviet authorities reviewed the books published abroad and most of them were prevented from distribution in Russia.[70] For example, Shklovsky points to the unsustainability of Berlin-based Russian publishers because the books they produce hardly ever reach Russia, "The books come running, one after another; they want to run away to Russia, but they are denied entry."[71] As I have suggested, by adding accounts of sexual crime to the Soviet edition of *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love*, Shklovsky responds to

tightening censorship regulations by linking attempts to control literary production to the changing regulations of sex life, which often entail negative results.

Paradoxically, in Shklovsky's account of his life in exile, away from Soviet regulations of sexual and creative expression, both his professional and sexual lives are put on hold. In response to Alya's letter where she describes her trip on an ocean liner, Shklovsky writes that Russian men, who had lost their ballroom slippers and tuxedos to the revolution, are now losing their women to foreigners, "Foreigners have a mechanical propulsion – the propulsion of an ocean liner, on whose deck it's nice to dance the shimmy. […] The revolution has lost its propulsion."[72] The lost political purpose of those who were involved in the revolution and were later discarded by the new Soviet authorities here is directly juxtaposed with their inability to achieve sexual satisfaction.

In one of the letters added to the second edition, which Shklovsky's introductory note deems so indecent that he is hoping it had not been sent, the unfulfilled sexual urges of former revolutionaries are metaphorically linked to the eroticized imagery of animal breeding:

> When horses are breeding (it's positively indecent, but without it there wouldn't be any horses), the mare often gets nervous; some protective reflex sets in and she refuses to yield. […] A pint-sized stallion is brought it – he may have a really beautiful soul – and led up to the mare. They flirt with each other, but just as soon as they begin to work things out (in a manner of speaking), the poor little stallion is seized by the scruff of his neck and dragged away [to make way for the real inseminator]. The pint-sized stallion is called a 'teaser.'[73]

As the work of Nikolai Kremetsov has demonstrated, in Russia genetics as a discipline came into being only after the revolution of 1917. Within the decade after the revolution, however, "genetics had become a full-fledged discipline with dozens of laboratories, departments and periodicals".[74] The state's investment in plant and animal breeding was one of the main catalysts for this rapid institutional growth.[75] Interestingly, in Shklovsky's account it is not the technical advancements developed by animal breeders, but the feelings of a stallion who is not allowed to contribute his genetic material to the development of Soviet agriculture that is taken into consideration.

Shklovsky first used the imagery of horse breeding in a 1922 letter to Maxim Gorky,

> My love affair with the revolution is deeply unhappy […] We, Socialists Revolutionaries, were 'ploughing' [yarili] Russia for the Bolsheviks. Perhaps, the Bolsheviks are also only "ploughing" [yariat] Russia and it will be the peasant [muzhik] who will use it.[76]

Interestingly, describing his dissatisfaction with his own role in the Revolution, which consisted in preparing Russia for the Bolsheviks, Shklovsky uses an old Slavonic verb "yarit'" (ярить). Being etymologically linked to the name of a pagan Slavic god of vegetation, fertility and spring, Yarilo, the word has both agricultural and sexual connotations – in old Slavonic it refers to engaging in sexual intercourse. In *Letters Not about Love* the protagonist's sexual frustration is inseparable from his cultural and political displacement. By comparing himself to unsuccessful inseminators in horse breeding, Shklovsky also refers to the Formalism's struggle to find its place in a Marxist society. In a 1924 article published on his return to Soviet Union he writes, "Russian intelligentsia played a role of teasers in the history of Russia."[77]

However, I would like to suggest, that in writing *Letters Not about Love* Shklovsky tries to present himself as an exemplarily Soviet citizen who has put in practice revolutionary asceticism not only in his rejection of Western consumerism, but also through sexual abstinence. Although, as I have suggested, after the Revolution sexuality was a highly debated issue, Dan Healey has argued that it was not personal satisfaction but the interests of the new society that was being presented as a priority for Soviet people, "The prevailing view in the party, inherited from Russian radicalism, was that individual fulfilment must wait until the revolution is secured and socialism developed."[78] In *Zoo* Shklovsky presents sexuality as a savage and unruly force – even the technicalities of horse breeding are pronounced indecent rather than being celebrated as an importance step in the betterment of Soviet agriculture. In another letters he gives an account of his encounter with an anthropoid ape confined to a solitary cage in Berlin's Tiergarten, "The ape languishes – it's a male – all day long. At three, he gets to eat. He eats from a plate. Afterward, he sometimes attends to his miserable monkey business. That's offensive and shameful. You tend to think of him as a man, yet he is utterly without shame."[79]

Although the utopian speed of modernity "annihilates the old morality", the ape's putting his sexual needs on display is seen as a transgressive act. After all, even in a futuristic society of Zamyatin's 1921 dystopian novel *We*, where houses are constructed of glass and sex lives of subjects are strictly regulated by authorities, on certain nights, "the blinds [are] modestly lowered".[80] Although in *Zoo* Shklovsky refuses to turn a blind eye to the ape's auto-erotic activities clearly expressing his disapproval, in Andrei Platonov's fascinating 1926 text *The Anti-Sexus* Shklovsky acts as an unexpected proponent of the fictional electromagnetic masturbating device. The text, which remained unpublished during Platonov's lifetime, first appeared in print in 1981 in a special issue of *Russian Literature*.[81] The first English translation came out last year in a New-York-based magazine the *Cabinet*.[82] The text is written as a promotional pamphlet, issued by a fictional production company, and is supposedly merely "translated" by Platonov.

The patented device, which is manufactured in both male and female models that could be adjusted for either personal or collective use, is promising to relieve sexual urges, which prevent people from serving their social and economic functions. The main text of the brochure, which announces the company's extension into the Soviet market after the international success of this "world-wide company", is followed by testimonials by a number of "notable persons", from Henry Ford and Oswald Spengler to Gandhi and Charlie Chaplin. A playful critical preface written by the "translator" condemns the subject matter of the pamphlet as cynical, vulgar and pornographic, adding that the text is translated into Russian because of the style of its writing.

If the main reason for the publication of the text is to reveals the bourgeoisie's moral bankruptcy, it is therefore highly surprising to see the name of Viktor Shklovsky among the reviewers of this collective hi-tech masturbator. Shklovsky first met Platonov shortly before "The Anti-Sexus" was written, when Platonov worked as an agricultural engineer in Voronezh and Shklovsky was writing about flying clubs in Soviet countryside for *Pravda*.[83] Curiously, in the testimonial to The Anti-Sexus, which Platonov attributes to Shklovsky, the exclusion of women is linked to both masturbation and writing, "Women too shall pass, just like the Crusades. Anyone can see this: the point is the form, the style of the automatic age, and absolutely not its essence, which doesn't exist."[84] In Platonov's text the masturbation machine becomes a Formalist literary device, like Shklovsky's *Letters Not about Love*, capable of defamiliarising

preconceived ideas about the relationship between men and women. As Aaron Schuster suggested in an article accompanying the recent English-language publication of "The Anti-Sexus", Platonov produces a subtle joke, where, "literary formalism is ultimately a form of literary masturbation – the pre-eminent enjoyment of the scientific age".[85]

Within this literary dialogue between the two authors, Platonov depicts Shklovsky as being willing to accept masturbation if it is used as part of the Soviet agenda to erase any traces of bourgeois individualism by controlling sexual relations of new Soviet subjects, "Sweet shame made into state practice, though it remains a treat. Now one doesn't have to live so dimly, as if in a condom."[86] Here the technocratic control over subjects' sexualities becomes a means to end Shklovsky's personal and literary erotic turmoil. Curiously in this sentence Platonov quotes Shklovsky's memoir *The Third Factory* also written in 1926, where Shklovksy complains, "I live dimly, as if in a condom."[87] Condom, a potentially harmful object that undermines State control over population while licensing pleasure over duty, in Shklovsky's description becomes an ultimate boundary between the self and the other, completely isolating the subject from the outside world.[88] Moreover, my comparing himself to the content of a used condom, Shklovsky mirrors his use of "teasers" as a metaphor of wasted genetic material. Throughout Shklovsky's texts written in Berlin, his professional belonging to Russian Formalism isolates him from the life in Russian émigré community, as he writes in *Zoo*, "I am bound by my entire way of life, by all my habits, to the Russia of today. I am able to work only for her."[89] Alya, the recipient of Shklovsky's love letters, is written into the discourse of literary theory, "her house is encircled by Opoiaz."[90] In Russian the phrase "opoyasan Opoiazom" is a pun, the adjectival participle "encircled" or "surrounded" and the name of Shklovsky's Leningrad-based research group, Opoiaz ("Society for the Study of Poetic Language"), are practically homophonous.

The troubling political position of the author, which prevents him from taking part in developing the science of literature within the Formalist movement, in *Zoo* is inextricably linked to the image of unrequited love, early Soviet sexologies, genetics and, somewhat disturbingly, the practice of horse breeding. However, unlike "the teaser" whose genealogical line is tragically interrupted, Shklovsky, through Russian Formalism's investment in Darwin's theories, associates literary history with random genetic mutations. In another book written during his miserable but rather fruitful year of exile, Shklovsky returns to the idea that literary genealogy

is not a linear succession from one literary generation to another, but one in which, "the legacy passes not from father to son, but from uncle to nephew".[91] Formalism's interest in genetics points to the fact that even though its "affair" with the Russian Revolution was an unhappy one its legacies became an integral part of twentieth-century intellectual history. As Michael Holquist has aptly observed, the title of another of Shklovsky's 1923 books, which is borrowed from chess, *The Knight's Move*, "is perhaps the best metaphor for the Formalist perception of literary genealogy".[92]

NOTES

1 David Norman Rodowick, *Elegy for Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014) 98-99. Similarly, in 2004 Galin Tihanov wrote, "I submit that modern literary theory was born in the decades between the World Wars, in Eastern and Central Europe – in Russia, Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland – due to a set of interesting cultural determinations and institutional factors." Galin Tihanov, "Why Did Modern Literary Theory Originate in Central and Eastern Europe? (And Why Is It Now Dead?)," *Common Knowledge,* 10:1 (2004) 62.

2 Galin Tihanov, "Russian Formalism," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Alex Preminger and T.V.F. Brogan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012) 1239-1242.

3 Viktor Shklovskii, "Iskusstvo kak priiom," *Sborniki po teorii poeticheskogo iazyka*, vol. 2 (Petrograd, 1917) 3-14; Shklovskii, *Poetika* (Petrograd: Opoiaz, 1919) 101-114; Shklovskii, *O teorii prozy* (Moscow: Krug, 1925) 7-20; Shklovskii, *O teorii prozy* (Moscow: Federatziia, 1929) 7-23. Translated by Benjamin Sher as "Art as Device," *Theory of Prose* (Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990) 1-14.

4 Viktor Shklovsky, *Sentimental´noe puteshestvie* (Moscow; Berlin: Gelikon, 1923) 229; translated by Richard Sheldon as *A Sentimental Journey: Memoirs, 1917-1922* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970) 226.

5 Osip Brik, "Tak nazyvaemyi formal'nyi metod," *LEF*, vol. 1 (1923) 213-215; translated by Richard Sheldon as "The So-called Formal Method," *Art in Theory*, ed. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992) 323-324.

6 Brik, "The So-called Formal Method," 323.

7 Viktor Shklovsky, "Literatura vne siuzheta," *O teorii prozy* (Moscow: Krug, 1925) 162-178; translated by Richard Sheldon as "Literature Without a Plot," *Theory of Prose* (Elmwood Park: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990) 189-206.

8 Tihanov, "Russian Formalism," 1240.

9 Aleksei Kruchionykh, *Sdvigologiia russkogo stikha* (Moscow: MAF, 1922).

10 Tihanov, "Russian Formalism," 1240.

11 Brik, "The So-called Formal Method," 324.

12 Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History, Doctrine* ('s Gravenhage: Mouton, 1955) 54.

13 Boris Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'" *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, translated and with an introduction by Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012) 108.

14 For a detailed discussion of the landscape of literary criticism during this period see Stefano Garzonio and Maria Zalambani, "Literary Criticism During the Revolution and the Civil War, 1917-1921," *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, edited by Evgeny

Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011) 1-16.

15 See, for example, Natalia Kornienko, "Literary Criticism and Cultural Policy During the New Economic Policy, 1921-1927," *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond*, edited by Evgeny Dobrenko and Galin Tihanov (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011) 17-42.

16 Stuart Finkel, *On the Ideological Front: The Russian Intelligentsia and the Making of the Soviet Public Sphere* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007) 4.

17 Viktor Shklovsky, "Ob iskusstve i revolutsii," *Iskusstvo kommuny,* 17 (30 March 1919) 2, translated by Richard Sheldon as "Regarding Art and Revolution (Ullya, Ullya, Martians)," *Knight's Move* (Normal: Dalkey Archive Press, 2005) 22. Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, edited by William Keach; translated by Rose Strunsky (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005) 140.

18 Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'" 106.

19 Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, 139.

20 Boris Tomashevskii, "The Formal Method: In Lieu of an Obituary," *Sovremennaia literatura. Sbornik statei* (Leningrad, Mysl', 1925) 144-153.

21 Tomashevskii, "The Formal Method: In Lieu of an Obituary," 144-153.

22 See, for example, Mark J. Bruhn and Donald R. Wehrs, eds., *Cognition, Literature, and History* (London: Routledge, 2013); David Williams, *The Trickster Brain: Neuroscience, Evolution, and Narrative* (Lanham: Lexington, 2012); Patricia Waugh, "Thinking in Literature: Modernism and Contemporary Neuroscience," *The Legacies of Modernism: Historicising Postwar and Contemporary Fiction*, ed. David James (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 75-95.

23 Brik, "The So-called Formal Method," 324.

24 Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'" 103.

25 Tomashevskii, "The Formal Method: In Lieu of an Obituary," 144-153.

26 Brik, "The So-called Formal Method," 324.

27 Brik, "The So-called Formal Method," 324.

28 Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'" 138.

29 Peter Steiner and Sergej Davydov, "The Biological Metaphor in Russian Formalism: The Concept of Morphology," *SubStance*, vol. 6/7.16, Translation/Transformation (Summer, 1977) 149.

30 Boris Tomashevsky, Gina Fisch and Oleg Gelikman, "The New School of Literary History in Russia," *PMLA* 119.1 (January 2004) 129.

31 Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) 48.

32 Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'" 138.

33 Rad Borislavov, "Revolution is Evolution: Evolution as a Trope in Viktor Shklovskii's Literary History," *Russian Literature* 69 (2011) 209-238.

34 Borislavov, "Revolution is Evolution," 210.

35 Borislavov, "Revolution is Evolution," 217.

36 Tomashevsky, "The New School of Literary History in Russia," 129.

37 Tomashevsky, "The New School of Literary History in Russia," 129.

38 Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'" 138.

39 "Literature Without a Plot," *Theory of Prose* (Elmwood Park: Dalkey Archive Press, 1990) 190.

40 Viktor Shklovsky, *Literature and Cinematography*, translated from the Russian by Irina Masinovsky; introduction by Richard Sheldon (London: Dalkey Archive Press 2008) 33.

41 Viktor Shklovsky, *Literature and Cinematography*, translated from the Russian by Irina Masinovsky; introduction by Richard Sheldon (London: Dalkey Archive Press 2008) 33.

42 ee Tynianov's 1924 article "Literary Fact, Iurii Tynianov, "Literaturnyi fakt," Iurii Tynianov, *Arkhaisty i novatory* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1929) 5-29; and Jakobson's 1935 lecture "The Dominant," Roman Jakobson, "The Dominant," Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature*, edited by Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987) 41-46.

43 Shklovsky, *Literature and Cinematography*, 33-34.

44 Tomashevsky, Gina Fisch and Oleg Gelikman, "The New School of Literary History in Russia," 129.

45 Richard Sheldon, "Introduction," Viktor Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love*, translated and edited by Richard Sheldon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971) xxiii-xxiv. See also B.V. Mikhailovskii, L.I. Ponomarev, and V.R. Shcherbina, eds., *Letopis' zhizni i tvorchestva Maksima Gor'koga*, vol. 3 (Moscow, Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1958-1960) 320-330.

46 Elsa Triolet, *Na Taiti* (Leningrad: Atenei, 1925).

47 *Zoo, ili pis'ma ne o liubvi* (Leningrad: Atenei, 1924) 14, translated by Richard Sheldon as *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1971) 108.

48 Shklovsky, "Art as Device," *Theory of Prose* 6.

49 For the role of letters in modernist textual production see my article on the public correspondence between Shklovsky and Jakobson Asiya Bulatova, "'I'm writing to you in this magazine': The Mechanics of Modernist Dissemination in Shklovsky's Open Letter to Jakobson," *Comparative Critical Studies* 11.2–3 (2014): 185–202.

50 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 103.

51 See, for example, Lilia Brik, *Pristrastnye rasskazy*, ed. by Iakov Groisman and Inna Gens (Nizhnii Novgorod: Dekom, 2011) and Bengt Jangfeldt,

Mayakovsky: A Biography, translated by Harry D. Watson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

52 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 11.

53 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 117.

54 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 115. Tim Armstrong has argued that in modernist imagery there two ways of incorporating the machine into the human body, "Negative prosthetic" represents the clinical use of technology and "involves the replacing of a bodily part, covering a lack," whereas a "positive prosthetic" "involves a more utopian version of technology, in which human capacities are extrapolated." Tim Armstrong, Modernism, Technology, and the Body: A Cultural History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 78.

55 See, Anindita Banerjee, "Creating the Human," *We Modern People: Science Fiction and the Making of Russian Modernity* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2012) 119-155.

56 See, for example, Nikolai Krementsov, "Big Revolution, Little Revolution: Science and Politics in Bolshevik Russia," *Social Research*, 73.4 (Winter 2006) 1173-1204. See also, Nikolai Krementsov and Daniel P. Todes, "Dialectical Materialism and Soviet Science in the 1920s and 1930s," William Leatherbarrow and Derek Oxford, eds., *A History of Russian Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 340-367. In his recent book *Revolutionary Experiments* Krementsov explores how the rapid institutionalization of science in post-revolutionary years became a subject of both public discussions and many literary works of the time. Nikolai Krementsov, *Revolutionary Experiments: The Quest for Immortality in Bolshevik Science and Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

57 Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Heart of a Dog*, translated by Michael Glenny (London: Vintage Classic, 2009).

58 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 115.

59 See Gregory Carleton, *Sexual Revolution in Bolshevik Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005) and Frances Lee Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex: Lifestyle Advice for the Soviet Masses* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2007).

60 Mark Banting, Catriona Kelly and James Riordan, "Sexuality," *Russian Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, edited by Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1998) 312.

61 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 116.

62 Eric Naiman, "The Case of Chubarov Alley: Collective Rape and Utopian Desire," *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999) 250-288.

63 Dan Healey, *Bolshevik Sexual Forensics: Diagnosing Disorder in the Clinic and Courtroom, 1917-1939* (DeKalb: Illinois University Press, 2009) 83.

64 Frances Bernstein has demonstrated that, in the 1920s, sexual health propaganda focused on presenting the dangers of having sex with multiple partners. Bernstein, *The Dictatorship of Sex*. Similarly, according to Naiman, in media coverage of "The Case of Chubarov Alley" the fact that the convicts contracted gonorrhoea from one another during the collective rape was used as a sign of the degree of their moral corruption. Eric Naiman, "The Case of Chubarov Alley."

65 Dan Healey, *Bolshevik Sexual Forensics* 9.

66 Naiman, *Sex in Public* 284-285.

67 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 119.

68 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 119.

69 Naiman, *Sex in Public* 12

70 See Herman Ermolaev, *Censorship in Soviet Literature, 1917-1991* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997) and Arlen Viktorovich Blium, "Forbidden Topics: Early Soviet Censorship Directives," translated by Donna M. Farina, *Book History* 1.1 (1998) 268-282.

71 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 29.

72 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 63.

73 Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 123.

74 Nikolai Krementsov, "Genetics as an International Science" and "The Road to Moscow," *International Science Between the World Wars: The Case of Genetics* (London: Routledge, 2005) 13-53.

75 In Krementsov's account, the institutionalization of endocrinology is also tied together with animal husbandry. See "Hormons and the Bolsheviks: From Organotherapy to Experimental Endocrinology, 1918-1929," *Isis* 99.3 (2008) 486-518. Frances Bernstein has also discussed the importance of experiments on domesticated animals for the development of Soviet views on gender differences and heterosexuality. Frances L. Bernstein, "'The Dictatorship of Sex': Science, Glands, and the Medical Construction of Gender Difference in Revolutionary Russia," *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practice,* ed. by David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 200) 138-160.

76 Quoted in Shklovsky, *Gamburgskii schet: stat'i, vospominaniia, esse, 1914-1933* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1990) 417.

77 Shklovsky, "Probniki," *Gamburgskii schet* 160.

78 Healey, *Bolshevik Sexual Forensics* 5

79 In Sheldon's translation the phrase "monkey business" is translated as "simian needs." Shklovsky, *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love* 26.

80 Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*, translated and with an introduction by Clarence Brown (New York: Penguin Books, 1993) 13.

81 Andrei Platonov, "Antiseksus," *Russian Literature* 9 (1981) 293.

82 Andrei Platonov, "The Anti-Sexus," *Cabinet* 51 (2014) 48-53.

83 A. Iu. Galishkin, "K istorii lichnykh I tvorcheskikh vzaimootnoshenii A.P. Platonova i V.B. Shklovskogo," *Platonov: Vosspominaniia Sovremennikov*, ed. by N.V. Kornienko and E.D. Shubina (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1994) 172-183.

84 Platonov, "The Anti-Sexus," *Cabinet* 51 (2014) 53.

85 Aaron Schuster, "Sex and Anti-Sex," *Cabinet* 51 (2014) 45.

86 Platonov, "The Anti-Sexus," 53.

87 Shklovsky, *Trit'ia Fabrika* (Moscow: Krug, 1926) 93.

88 Although in Western Europe from the very beginning of the twentieth-century birth control was seen as the triumph of reason over nature made possible by the ability to finally take control over reproductive functions of human beings, Russian society was ambivalent about contraception. See Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-siecle Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). Naiman provides an example of Rozanov's *Fallen Leaves* (1913-1915) where the heterosexual non-procreative act (i.e. the use of birth control) is labelled as masturbation and "sodomy." Eric Naiman, "The Creation of the Collective Body," *Sex in Public* 27-78.

89 *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love 103*.

90 *Zoo, or Letters Not about Love 38*.

91 Shklovsky, *Literature and Cinematography* 33.

92 Michael Holquist and Katerina Clark, "Bakhtin and the Formalists: History as Dialogue." *Russian Formalism: A Retrospective Glance*, edited by Robert Louis Jackson and Stephen Rudy (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1985) 88.

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