

NARD50: Methodology of literary criticism

Russian Formalism

Description:

This lecture/seminar focuses on Russian Formalism. It is designed to introduce to PhD students the concepts of this literary critical movement with a specific focus on how Formalism is presented, applied and received in the English-speaking academia and criticism. It will look at Russian Formalists through the eyes of its translators such as Michael Holquist, Caryl Emerson, and Benjamin Sher to see key differences in the Russian and English-speaking approaches to literature. A discussion of language and cultural dependence of theory will follow, with a specific view of Russian Formalism. Capitalizing on the views of those who are instrumental in introducing Russian Formalism to English-speaking readers, a lecture will provide an overview of key concepts of the critical school, thus presenting an introduction to “Russian Formalism for English speakers”. Lastly, a discussion will follow over several primary texts by prominent Russian Formalists in their English translations. The two authors in focus will be Viktor Shklovsky and Mikhail Bakhtin.

Keywords:

Formalism / formal method; OPOJAZ; Defamiliarization (estrangement); Literariness; Story/plot (fabula/syuzhet); Polyphony; Heteroglossia; Dialogism; Carnavalesque

Literature (entries marked with * will be closely discussed in class):

I. Overviews:

*Emerson, Caryl. “Critical Models, Committed Readers, and Three Russian Ideas.” In: *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 11-33.

Erich, Victor. *Russian Formalism: History – Doctrine* (The Hague: De Gruyter Mouton, 1980), eBook (EBSCOhost) accessible here:

<http://ezproxy.muni.cz/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,uid&db=nlebk&AN=559073&lang=cs&site=eds-live&scope=site>.

Holquist, Michael. *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1990]).

Thompson, Ewa M. *Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New Criticism : A Comparative Study*. (The Hague: De Gruyter Mouton, 1971), eBook (EBSCOhost) accessible here:

<http://ezproxy.muni.cz/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,uid&db=nlebk&AN=560895&lang=cs&site=eds-live&scope=site>. (For an

overview, see especially Ch. I “Marking the Boundaries: Russian Formalism” (pp. 11–33); for further reading, see Ch. II “The Development of Principal Concepts” (pp. 55–110)).

Steiner, Peter. *Russian Formalism: A Meta-poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

Wellek, René. "13: Russian Formalism," and "15: Mikhail Bakhtin." In: *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950. Vol. 7: German, Russian, and Eastern European Criticism: 1900–1950* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991): 318–47 and 354–71.

II. Other Readings:

- *Bakhtin, Mikhail. "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse." In: *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, translated by M. Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981): 41–83.
- *Booth, Wayne C. "Introduction." In: *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics* by Mikhail Bakhtin, translated and edited by Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984): xiii–xxviii.
- *Sher, Benjamin. "Skhlovsky and the Revolution." In: *Theory of Prose* by Victor Shklovsky, translated by B. Sher (Champaign & London: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991): xv–xxi.
- *Shklovsky, Viktor. "Art as Device." In: *Theory of Prose*, translated by B. Sher (Champaign & London: Dalkey Archive Press, 1991): 1–14.