

LJUBEZENSKA PISMA

MED TEORIJO IN LITERATURO

ZOO ALI PISMA NE O LJUBEZNI, ROMAN V PISMIH VIKTORJA ŠKLOVSKEGA

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Ruski formalizem naj bi po splošnem prepričanju vzpostavil strogo teoretski diskurz in s tem proizvedel ali poglobil disciplinarno ločitev. Toda že 1922/23 je Šklovski v pisemskem romanu Zoo povezal ta diskurz z literaturo. Zoo metafizijsko preoblikuje tradicionalni pisemski roman in ga prenavlja z zabrisovanjem mej med dokumentarnim in poetskim. Uveljavljeni pogledi na Zoo kot na »poskus praktične uresničitve avtorjevih teoretskih načel« le ponavljajo delitev med diskurzoma in potrjujejo dvomljivo nadrejenost teorije literaturi. Ustreznejša je koncepcija hibridnosti: v romanu se stapljata predmetna raven in metaraven, literatura in kritištvo. Zoo inovativno uporablja »uredniška« parabesedila, ki so sicer tradicionalno vzpostavljala trdno delitev med urednikom in dopisovalci, tu pa hierarhije dekonstruirajo. S svojo vizualno oblikovanostjo postajajo nekakšna »parapisma« in stopajo v epistolarni metadialog. Za pojem »dialoga« med teorijo in literaturo je pomenljivo, da je Šklovski za svoj »kritisfikcijski« podvig izbral žanr pisemskega romana.

Ključne besede: pisemski roman, dekonstrukcija pisemskega romana, potujitev, kritifikcija, metafizika, romantična ironija, parabesedilo, eksil, poetika razseljenosti

1. Teorija in literatura: nekaj pojasnil o zgodovinskih kontekstih (zgodovina teorije in zgodovina literature)

O ruskem formalizmu se običajno spomnimo, da je v analizo literature vpelejal prve sistematične kategorije ter zasnoval literarno teorijo v strogem pomenu besede. Zato se formalistom navadno pripisuje, da so razširili vrzel med obema diskurzoma oziroma da so jo pravzaprav sami vpeljali (z razločitvijo disciplin), ker so – kar se jim na splošno priznava – utemeljili

moderno literarno kritištvo. Formalistična teorija je v bistvu res poudarjala koncepcijo estetske avtonomije besedila in bila od svojega začetka programsko brezbrizna do družbenih in praktičnih vlog umetnosti. Do očitnega 'obrata k družbi', ki se je dogajal v poznejšem razvoju formalizma od sredine dvajsetih let, pa je v glavnem prišlo zaradi vzpona stalinizma in doktrine socialističnega realizma, ki sta hitro zadušila vsakršne avantgardne ideje v umetnosti in kritištvu. Toda obstajala je še ena, zgodnejša in, kar je še pomembnejše, prostovoljna in notranja težnja k odmiku od čiste forme in stroge teorije – povzema jo pisemski roman *Zoo* Viktorja Šklovskega, napisan in objavljen v Berlinu v letih 1922–1923.

Zoo je bil njegovo drugo veliko literarno delo in ko bi Šklovski že takrat ne zaslovel kot teoretik, bi se njegovo ime zapisalo v literarno zgodovino prav zaradi te radikalne inovacije romana v pismih. Zvrstnemu razvoju pisemskega romana je *Zoo* vtisnil pečat modernosti. S sprejnitvijo tradicionalnega vzorca predstavlja nazorno improvizirano montažo heterogenega gradiva, ki nima zgodbe. Iz logike prepovedi in želje sledi, da je ljubezenska tema zavrta, a to je obenem sredstvo, ki jo spodbuja. Najinovativnejše lastnosti eksperimenta Viktorja Šklovskega so metafizijska samorefleksija, paradoks in ironija. Na kratko povedano: »*Zoo* povzroča viden premik v žanru; po letu 1923 ta nikoli več ne bo takšen kot prej.« (Kauffman xix) Z vidika zvrstne inovacije *Zoo* ni nič manj avantgarden od nekaterih drugih prelomnih del iz istih let, kakršna so Joyceov *Ulikses* (1922) ali Rilkejevi *Soneti na Orfeja* (1923), čeprav so se ta v svetovni književnosti bolj uveljavila. Za zgodovinarje pisemskega žanra je torej roman Šklovskega nepogrešljiv mejnik. Toda današnji povprečni bralec ga ne pozna več, povprečni literarni kritik pa niti ne sumi, da sploh obstaja. Pesniška praksa in domišljijsko literarno ustvarjanje formalistov sta po krivici utonila v pozabo – a to dejstvo pove manj o literarni kakovosti teh zapostavljenih besedil (čeprav nobeno od njih ni tako pomembno kot *Zoo*) kakor o današnjem pojmovanju teorije.

Čas je, da ponovno odkrijemo tudi 'drugo' stran formalizma: praktične temelje formalistične teorije in literarne dosežke formalistov. Vse se je začelo z njihovo tesno in ustvarjalno povezanostjo s pred- in porevolucionarnimi avantgardami (ruskega futurizma si pravzaprav ne moremo zamisliti brez formalizma), doseglo vrhunec v dvajsetih letih 20. stoletja z njihovimi lastnimi literarnimi deli (ta obsegajo zgodovinske romane, novele, eseje in spominsko prozo, pa tudi otroško literaturo in scenarije) in seglo še do njihovega vpliva na sodobno literarno produkcijo, saj so predavali na raznih literarnih tečajih¹ (od tod je izšla tudi prva zanimiva porevolucionarna literarna skupina Serapionovi bratje; prim. Greber, »The metafictional turn«). Poleg omenjenih praktičnih dejavnosti, ki so spletle tesno vez med literaturo in teorijo, je treba poudariti, da njihov slog teoretiziranja ni bil prav nič akademski; ravno nasprotno, zgodnji formalizem se je začel kot izziv uveljavljeni akademski filologiji. Prva razprava Šklovskega, »Vstajenje besede« (1914) – pozneje je postala manifest formalističnega gibanja² – bolj spominja na pisanje futurističnega pesnika kakor na delo literarnega kritika. Značilno je, da poznejši uradni povzetki zgodovine ruskega formalizma prikazujejo, kako so Šklovskega grajali zlasti zaradi njegovega dokaj

nesistematičnega, neakademskega načina argumentacije. Toda tisto, kar se z vidika čiste teorije zdi kot hiba, lahko s perspektive transdisciplinarnega mišljenja postane vrлина. Pristop Šklovskega vsekakor ni bil samo premočrtna teorija; to naj velja kot pojasnilo, zakaj na konferenci, posvečeni hibridizaciji teorije in literature, omenjamo osrednji lik neke teoretične šole.

Zoo Šklovskega zagotovo sodi med dokazno gradivo za tezo, da »se teorija in literatura razvijata po vzporednih zgodovinskih tirnicah vse od takrat, ko sta začeli obstajati kot samostojni disciplini« (kakor je bilo zapisano v vabilu na ta kolokvij). Poetika romana *Zoo* se vrača k Sternovemu *Tristramu Shandyju* pa tudi k nemški romantiki; je predhodnica postmoderne ideje igrivega stapljanja kritištva in fikcije.

Za časa Šklovskega še niso poznali čudovitega izraza »kritifikcija«, saj ga je izumil šele Raymond Federman (francosko-ameriški pisatelj in literarni kritik)³ – gre za duhovit jezikovni hibrid, ki poimenuje hibridizacijo diskurzov. Zdi se, da je Šklovski uveljavljal neke vrste 'kritifikcijo' *avant la lettre*. Vendar so bili predpogoji za hibridizacijo tedaj drugačni. Iz tega, kar je bilo povedano o statusu formalizma kot utemeljitelja literarnega kritištva v sodobnem smislu, sledi, da je bilo mešanje obeh diskurzov pred njuno strogo ločitvijo nekaj povsem drugega kakor isto početje po takšni ločitvi. Šele po formalizmu oziroma, natančneje, po kanonizaciji formalizma kot strogega in natančnega teoretskega diskurza ter po vzpostavitvi točno določenih mej med disciplinami lahko ideja hibridne 'kritifikcije' končno postane zares privlačna in zahteva status programa. Toda formalizem je imel tedaj drugačne namene. Lahko rečemo, da je roman Šklovskega posegel v čistost razločenih diskurzov, kar je za avtorja pomenilo, da se je moral gibati naprej in nazaj. Pred časom je še pomagal, da se je znanost o umetnosti končno razvila kot samostojna disciplina, kmalu za tem pa jo je že prepletal z umetnostjo. To transgresijo so ostro občutili tudi njegovi sodobniki formalisti, o čemer priča kritika Jurija Tinjanova.⁴

Kakor koli že, z vidika zgodovine odnosov med teorijo in literaturo je trenutek *Zooja* resnično zgodovinski.

2. Epistolarna konstelacija v *Zooju*

Zoo je nedvomno eden najbolj zanimivih in duhovitih romanov v pismih vseh časov, in sicer prav zaradi tega, ker uspešno prehaja med teorijo in literaturo pa tudi med fikcijo in življenjem, z medkulturnim dialogom med Rusijo in Evropo vred. Besedilo je izjemno zaradi kombiniranja globokih čustev z izostreno refleksijo. Ganljive evokacije bolečine izgnanstva in neuslišane ljubezni spremlja duhovita metaliterarna igra. *Zoo* preoblikuje tradicionalni roman v pismih v metafikijskem slogu. Poživlja ga tako, da briše meje med dokumentarno in poetično epistolarnostjo. Dobesedno se to kaže v genezi besedila: v romanu naj bi bila fiktivna pisma pomešana z resničnimi pismi ter s takšnimi, ki so bila ali bi lahko bila izmenjana (v sicer pretežno enosmerni korespondenci) med mladim kritikom in damo, ki ji je dvoril, med romanesknim 'jazom' in njegovo ljubo Aljo, *alias* Viktorjem

Šklovskim in Elso Triolet (prav tako rusko izseljenko, poznejšo francosko pisateljico); ona je bila stara sedemindvajset let, on jih je imel trideset.⁵ Šklovski je to knjižico napisal v Berlinu, potem ko je pobegnil iz Sovjetske zveze. Je dokument njegove lastne vmesne eksistence v vicah begunstva, pa tudi nekakšna etnografija »ruskega« Berlina. Toda ko bi roman obravnavali zgolj kot avtobiografsko delo, bi podcenili njegovo teoretsko stremljenje. Roman je nasičen s teorijo, ne samo zaradi tematiziranja formalističnih idej (to sicer tu in tam počne, kar je v besedilu, katerega glavni junak je teoretik, mogoče pričakovati), temveč tudi zato, ker je konstruiran po formalističnih načelih oziroma jih udejanja.

Zž
Pisma ne o ljubezni
ali
Tretja Heloisa

Viktor Šklovski
ZOO
ali
Pisma ne o ljubezni

ZOO
posvečam
Elsi Triolet
in knjigi dajem naslov
»Tretja Heloisa«

Zelo zgovoren je natančnejši pregled naslovnice in naslovnih strani (gl. slike 1–3 v prilogi, str. 143). Dvojna igra z abecedami in jeziki poudarja medkulturne in medbesedilne vidike romana. Nemška sestavina je natisnjena v latinici: ZOO, živalski vrt v središču Berlina in mestno prometno vozlišče. Berlinski živalski vrt (*Tiergarten*) se je nahajal v ruskem delu mesta, ki se ga je prijel vzdevek *Charlottengrad*; poleg teh dejstvenih razsežnosti pa živalski vrt vseskozi dobiva še simbolične pomene ujetosti (emigrant kot opica, ljubimec kot opica). Kljub takšnim predvidljivim toposom je tema menažerije razložena na zanimiv način.⁶ Ostale sestavine naslova pa so neposredno pomembne za epistolarni diskurz. Formula *Tretje Heloise* povleče vzporednico z Rousseaujevim romanom v pismih *Julija ali Nova Heloisa* in njegovim virom, srednjeveškim predhodnikom pisemskih romanc, Heloisinih pisem Abelardu. Prav od tod izvira tudi motiv »pisem ne o ljubezni«. Poleg tega je nadliterarno ime napolnjeno z resničnim življenjem prek besedne igre: Heloisa – Èloisa – Èl'za. Naključna podobnost med različicami ruskega in francoskega imena ima močan simbolni pomen za tisto nit v knjigi, ki se povezuje s francoskim načinom življenja, postavljenim v nasprotje z ruskim, kar je ena od tem odtujenosti. Ljubljena dama namreč v očeh svojega potencialnega ljubimca postaja vse preveč Francozinja, on sam pa se čedalje bolj zaveda svoje ruske identitete in nezmožnosti ter nepripravljenosti za prilagajanje se zahodnjaštvu. Rusko-nemška tema prevladuje že zaradi Berlina kot prizorišča emigrantskega življenja, toda tisto, kar v resnici šteje, sta različni stopnji 'evropskosti', ki zarisujeta ločnico

znotraj 'nezaljubljenega' para. Čustvena razdalja in odtujenost med dopisovalcema se vseskozi interpretira s pojmi kulturnih razlik (francosko – rusko ali evropsko – rusko; prim. Pismi št. 16, 17). Z vidika akulturacije zgodba Šklovskega vsekakor ni ljubezenska.

Ime ženske naslovljenke je sicer prosto prevedljivo in izmenljivo v ruski in francoski kulturi in književnosti, ime avtorja pa ima očitno drugačen položaj. Kulturna dilema je simbolizirana že v grafični podobi naslovnice (oblikoval jo je El Lissitzky; gl. sliko 1), kjer je ime »Viktor Šklovski« vpisano in skrito v črko Z iz naslova Z8 in daje vtis, kot da bi bilo zaprt v kletko berlinskega živalskega vrta oziroma ujeto v past, za rešetke latinskega sloga pisanja. Beseda »Zoo« (za razliko od »Heloise«) ni prečrkovana v cirilico. Tudi navadno natisnjena naslovnica (slika 2) izraža abecedno odtujenost *Zooja*.

Posvetilna stran (slika 3) je zanimiva, ker predstavlja parabesedilni prostor, v katerem se dvoumno prepletata dve vlogi pisca (znotrajbesedilni prvoosebni pisec in zunajbesedilni avtor).

V zvezi s problematiko fiktivnosti je pomenljiva asimetričnost med ženskim in moškim dopisnim partnerjem. Za *njene* položaje obstaja jasno semiotsko razlikovanje s pomočjo imena: Elsa je resnična zunajbesedilna resnična oseba, Alja je znotrajbesedilni lik. Odnos med njima je seveda zadosti jasno vzpostavljen, in sicer ne samo prek sovpadanj v zgodbi, ampak tudi z metaopombo: »Al, Al, El, kličejo, ko poskušajo izgovoriti tvoje ime« (13. pismo, *Zoo, or; Letters* 48). Obstaja vsaj fikcija, da obstaja nekakšna fikcijska razlika. Ni pa nobenih uporabnih imenskih nalepk, ki bi določale znotrajbesedilnega avtorja-zaljubljenca, ni nobenega imena, ampak le »jaz« (ki nikoli ne podpiše svojih pisem); to je seveda obenem tudi »jaz« in avtorski podpis, ki podpira avtobiografski pakt. (Naj mimogrede omenim, da to nerazlikovanje analitikom precej otežuje jasno govorjenje o besedilu.)

Parabesedilna razmejitev avtorskih položajev se nadaljuje v telesu besedila, kjer je peščica Aljinih pisem okvirjena z avtorskimi uvodi, tako da so videti bolj kot vrivki in ne kot samostojne ali enakopravne izjave. Ob upoštevanju celotnega dela lahko torej upravičeno govorimo o moškem subjektu in ženskem objektu. Dopisovanje si prilašča samo ena stran. Samo pod takšnim pogojem je mogoče knjigo »posvetiti« tisti, ki naj bi bila izvorno sama (domnevno) vpletena v pisanje posameznih delov iste knjige.

Šklovski ne prikriva umetelnosti zgradbe, temveč razgalja konstruiranost podob. V enem primeru je razrušena celo avtobiografska iluzija – ko nakaže postopek urejanja besedil in uporabi relikv konvencionalnega romana v pismih, to je fiktivnega urednika (*Herausgeberfiktion*). Fiktivni urednik rekonstruira vrzel v dopisovanju: »Kot se zdi, napisano kot odgovor na komentar, očitno sporočen po telefonu, saj v dosjeju ni ničesar, kar bi ustrezalo tem vrsticam.« (Uredniška opomba k pismu št. 12, *Zoo, or; Letters* 44.) Izrazi, kot sta »zdi se« in »očitno«, zaznamujeta odlomek kot čisto špekuliranje.

Tako razkazovanje arbitrarnosti se ujema z nereprezentativnim konceptom umetnosti; zanj je Šklovski predložil podobo »narisane okna«, in

to že davno pred Magrittom (22. pismo).⁷ Skrivnost romana *Zoo* je njegova podvojenost: v enem trenutku vidimo okno, v drugem pa le njegovo risbo ali skiciranost – gre za nekakšen učinek migotanja (Kauffmann 22, po Sheldonu, *Victor Shklovsky*). Že po definiciji ne moremo vedeti, ali so Aljina fiktivna pisma res identična z Elsinimi praviimi pismi (čeprav so tako sodobniki Šklovskega kakor poznejši literarni zgodovinarji videz vzeli čisto zares in ženska pisma pripisovali Elsi; to je storila celo Elsa Triolet v svojih poznejših avtobiografskih izjavah; prim. Triolet 15).⁸

Roman vsebuje nekaj pisem, namenjenih še drugim naslovnikom v Moskvi in Petersburgu/Petrogradu. Šklovski ne poskuša zapeljati le svoje dame, ampak tudi druge bralce, celo državne in partijske veljake, ki so ga pripravili do tega, da je zbežal iz Rusije, in so mu po 'prejemu' zadnjega pisma iz romana dovolili, da se vrne domov.⁹ Pisma so torej namenjena znotraj- in zunajbesedilnim bralcem, a čez mero običajnega dvojnega naslavljanja iz pisemskih romanov (kjer vsa pisma preberejo tako osebe na zgodbeni ravni kakor tudi bralci knjige, prim. Altman, *Epistolarity*).¹⁰ Na neki način gre za podobnost z radikalno metalepso, 'nenavadno zanko', ki vodi iz knjige v realnost. Besedilo ima zaradi svoje faktično-fikijske dvojnosti zapleteno zgodovino izdaj, revizij, dodatkov in izrezov.¹¹

Celostno gledano je *Zoo* kompleksen, večpolaren in obenem monopolaren roman v pismih. 'Dežnik', ki ga razpenja avtorska funkcija, nikakor ne vsiljuje homogenizacije ali monologizma. 'Jaz' je namreč že sam na sebi večglasen: je zaljubljenec, »raztrgan« od ljubezni in melanholije; je avtor, ki sodeluje v medbesedilnem dialogu; je znanstvenik, ki ga zanima meta-fikijska igra; vse te hipostaze pa združuje globoka (romantična) ironija.

3. Formalistična teorija zavita v literaturo ali kot literatura?

Glavna vzporednica med formalistično teorijo in formalističnim romanom je seveda koncept žanrske inovacije s potujitvijo in z razgaljanjem postopka. V tem pogledu je *Zoo* podoben *Tristramu Shandyju*, projiciranem v pisemsko obliko.¹²

Že naslov pokaže osnovno strategijo zanikanja: če tradicionalni romani v pismih niso nič drugega kot pisma o ljubezni, potem oznaka »ne o ljubezni« obeta nekaj novega. Motivacija za takšno negacijo se izkaže za zelo zabavno: zaljubljenec se mora izogibati te teme, ker se Alja upira njegovi ljubezni in mu prepoveduje pisati o njej. Zaljubljenec si prizadeva ubogati njeno zapoved in piše o vsem mogočem – o Berlinu, o literaturi, o pisanju pisem, tudi o prepovedi pisanja o ljubezni; to pa počne samo zato, da bi naletel na metafore in vzorce, ki ga »neizprosno vračajo k prepovedani temi« (Sheldon, »Introduction« xxviii; dobro je znano, da je vloga sleherne prepovedi v literaturi ta, da se jo krši – gre za zakon *sižēja*).

Lahko bi tudi trdili, da je pri Šklovskem v progam potujitve (defamiliarizacije) pravzaprav vključena nekakšna familiarizacija: uporablja namreč že znane topose in jih še okrepi, tako da realizira metafore in doseže učinek

'prenovitve'. Značilen primer tega je dvojni motiv 'raztrganosti' od ljubezni in trganja pisem:

Pišem ti vsako noč, potem pa pismo raztrgam in vržem v koš. Pisma oživljajo, se popravljajo in znova jih pišem. Dobiš vse, kar sem napisal.

V tvojem košu za pokvarjene igrače [so moški, ki te obožujejo] [...]

Samo jaz, raztrgan in razcefran kot pismo, kar naprej plezam iz koša pokvarjenih igrač. Preživel bom še ducate tvojih minljivih muh; vsak dan me raztrgaš in vsako noč oživljam, tako kot pisma. (Odlomek iz 13. pisma, *Zoo, or Letters* 48)

Radikalna novost je postopek prečrtanega pisma (19. pismo, gl. sliko 4 v prilogi, str. 144). Bralcu je svetovano, naj ga ne bere – čeprav naj bi pismo, ki ga je napisala Alja, veljalo za najboljše v vsej knjigi –, pač pa naj ga raje preskoči in prihrani za konec. »S črtanjem pisma Šklovski poudari materialnost besedila, združi verbalno in vizualno, zasuka položaje ter se maščuje Alji za prepoved, ki mu jo je naložila« (Kauffman 20). Ironija je, da je odlomek, ki bralcu zapoveduje, naj ne bere izbrisanega pisma, tudi sam prečrtan s pismom vred.¹³ Kretnja črtanja nečesa, kar še vedno ostane vidno in berljivo, oziroma ideja, da je besedilo hkrati prisotno in odsotno, anticipira osrednjo figuro dekonstrukcije.¹⁴ S strukturnega vidika oblikovanja alternativnega konca po »zadnjem pismu« vodi k podobnemu črtanju zadnje besede v romanu – takšna knjiga nima zadnje besede.

Seveda je prenova zvrsti prek metafizijske ironije našla v pisemskem romanu nadvse ustrezno gradivo. Pisemski žanr namreč že v temeljih teži k samorefleksiji: v slehernem pisemskem romanu pisci pisem pišejo tudi o pisanju pisem. Šklovski je samo nekoliko močneje privil vijak in okreplil metapisemski naboj, ga povezal s starimi sredstvi samorefleksije, znanimi iz sternovske tradicije, in s svežimi formalističnimi idejami.

Je *Zoo* torej nekaj takega kot formalistična teorija, zapakirana v literaturo? Kakršno koli mehanično razumevanje tega odnosa bi bilo neustrezno. Uveljavljeni pogled na roman Šklovskega kot na »poskus praktične uresničitve načel, ki jim je sledil kot kritik«¹⁵ utrjuje razdelitev med diskurzoma in potrjuje dvomljivo hierarhično nadrejenost teorije literaturi. Ustreznejši pogled nam odpre koncept kolokvija: pojem hibridnosti, se pravi enakopravna ali celo nerazločljiva interakcija med obema poloma. Objektivna in metaraven se raztapljata v eno literarno celoto; literatura in kritištvo se stapljata («critifiction»). Kot je bilo že pokazano, 'jaz' deluje kot urednik *in* dopisovalec, kot kritik *in* pisatelj *in* zaljubljenec.

4. Dialogizacija dialoškega žanra: Parabesedila in parapisma

Glede na pojem dialoga med teorijo in literaturo bi bilo preveč preprosto pričakovati kakršno koli jasno razdelitev vlog ali besedilnih žanrov – deli-

tve na znanstvena pisma in *belles lettres* namreč ni. Dialog je dialogiziran in hibridiziran globinsko (in to v bahtinovskem pomenu, čeprav bi kaj takega ne pričakovali glede na zgodnja formalistična stališča Šklovskega).¹⁶

Zato menim, da ni posebej plodno obravnavati tistih pisem, ki izrecno tematizirajo formalistične ideje, kar so počeli predhodni interpreti. Gotovo je branje teh pisem zabavno in poučno; v tem smislu je zanimivo zlasti 22. pismo z avtorefleksivnim *mise en abyme*, napisano v slogu romantične ironije – v njem Šklovski omenja, da načrtuje roman *Zoo* kot eksperiment v formalistični poetiki. Z vidika dialoga se je od vsebine treba premakniti k formi (kar je povsem v duhu Šklovskega) in pogledati, kako so ti koncepti predstavljeni bralcu oziroma bralcem in kako je znanost okvirjena ali pa uporabljena kot okvir.

Zato se želim (še enkrat) posvetiti parabesedilom,¹⁷ zlasti pasažam, natisnjenim pred vsakim pismom. Gre za zelo zapleten pojav, o katerem želim postaviti novo tezo. V *Zooju* je vloga uvajalnih delov zasukana: 'uredniška'parabesedila, ki tradicionalno ustvarjajo trdno razmejitev med urednikom (ali kritikom) in dopisovalci (pisci pisem), so v tem primeru uporabljena za dekonstrukcijo hierarhičnih razmerij.

Prečrtano 19. pismo je uvedeno kar trikrat; ima predgovor (»predi-slovie«), pri tem pa takšna pasaža uvaja tako pismo kot tudi predgovor. Te dele so navadno imenovali »epigrafi« (Sheldon, »Introduction« xxix; Kauffman 22), a to je nedvomno zavajajoč izraz. Odnos med temi deli besedila in pismi je bolj podoben komentarskemu ali dražljivemu predgovoru ali napovedniku; imenujmo jih kar uvodniki. V ponatisnjenih in prevedenih izdajah so ti odseki natisnjeni v ležečem tisku, v izvorni berlinski izdaji pa so ločeni v okvirih. Primerjave berlinske izdaje s poznejšimi sovjetskimi izdajami ta vidik navadno zanemarjajo,¹⁸ čeprav je za epistolarnost relevanten. Slika 5 predstavlja nekaj primerov odlomkov, ki bodo še citirani (gl. priložilo, str. 144).

Nekateri uvodniki so vestno strnjeni povzetki tega, kar sledi v pismu, nekateri so ironične nasprotno izjave (sicer pa v njih nasploh prevladuje ironična modalnost). V uvodniku zgoraj omenjenega pisma gre na primer za posmehovanje samemu teoretičnemu vložku:

Dvaindvajseto pismo,

nepričakovano in, po mojem mnenju, do skrajnosti odvečno. Vsebina tega pisma je očitno pobegnila iz neke druge knjige istega avtorja, vendar se je sestavljavcu knjige morebiti zdelo, da je pismo neobhodno potrebno zaradi raznolikosti. Pismo se je med pošto križalo s pismom [Alje] o Tahitiju.

(*Zoo, or, Letters* 79)

Ironijo spremljata namerna pomešanost in pomnožitev subjektivnih položajev: kdo je 'jaz', ki se postavlja za razsodnika nad avtorja-znanstvenika in sestavljavca-urednika?

V naratološkem smislu ta parabesedila nedvomno sodijo na raven uredniškega procesa. Iz tega so kritiki sklepali, da je delitev vlog med epi-

stolarnimi in uredniškimi besedili oziroma vlogami jasna, meja med zaljubljenčevim in urednikovim glasom pa razločna,¹⁹ tako da so »ironično vzvišenost«¹⁹ pripisovali uredniku (Kauffman 22). Vendar pa ob natančnejšem pregledu postane jasno, da je urednikov glas globoko vpleten v ljubezenski konflikt in nikakor ne predstavlja odmaknjenega položaja, kaj šele znanstvenega metapoložaja.

Trinajsto pismo,

napisano med šesto in deseto uro zjutraj. Zaradi takšnega obilja časa je pismo dolgo. Ima tri dele. Edino pomembno je opažanje, da ženske v določenem berlinskem Nachtlokalu znajo držati vilice.

Petindvajseto pismo,

O pomladi, Prager Diele, Ehrenburgu in pipah. O času, ki mineva, in ustnicah, ki se obnavljajo – o srcu, ki je popolnoma izčrpano, medtem ko omenjene ustnice samo izgubljajo barvo. O mojem srcu. (47, 90)

To je zelo ambivalenten glas, ki pripada več kot le enemu diskurzu. Pravzaprav uvodniki razkrivajo še en dialog, s katerim se urednik odziva na pisce pisem, tudi nase, in naslavlja bralce ter jim pošilja pisemska sporočila.²⁰

Celotna knjiga je na podoben način opremljena z uvodniki in še s serijo predgovorov k vsaki izdaji. Ta besedila niso naslovljena le na dejanske bralce knjig (med njimi na sovjetske politike); Šklovski namreč vodi dialog – v drugi osebi – s svojo lastno preteklostjo, svojo prejšnjo knjigo in z Elso – v pismu, poslanem iz Rusije v Francijo.

Uvodniki sicer spominjajo na ironične opombe v Rousseaujevem romanu v pismih, toda takšna parabesedila izvirajo že iz zgodnjih romanesknih konvencij, ko so služila kot uvodi v poglavja in/ali sestavljala vsebinska kazala. Njihove parodične različice so nastale precej pred *Tristramom Shandyjem*, najdemo jih celo že v *Don Kihotu*, kjer je kar nekaj povzetkov vsebine poglavij, ki ne vsebujejo točnih informacij o vsebini, ampak delujejo kot metafizijski triki.²¹

Zoo predstavlja novo kombinacijo: Šklovski kombinira postopek povzemanja iz klasičnega romana s fiktivnim urednikom iz romana v pismih (*Herausgeberfiktion*). Nastalo hibridno vrsto parabesedil v pisemski obliki bi lahko imenovali 'parapismo'. To zamisel podpira vizualna predstavitev uvodnikov: postavitev, ki je bila izbrana za prvo izdajo (ni pa bila reproducirana v nobeni od poznejših izdaj), je tem 'parapismom' dejansko dala izgled pisem v majhnih ovojnica. Ta pisma so torej zapleten dvoglasni element v pisemskem metadialogu.

Glede na 'dialog' med teorijo in literaturo je zelo pomenljivo, da je Šklovski za svoj kritifikcijski podvig izbral ravno dialoški žanr romana v pismih.

Iz angleščine prevedel Marko Juvan

OPOMBE

¹ Ti tečaji, ki so v letu 1920/21 potekali na peterburškem (tedaj petrogradskem) Inštitutu za umetnostno zgodovino, so bili tako rekoč tečaji »ustvarjalnega pisanja« *avant la lettre*.

² Richard Sheldon in Victor Erlich sta sicer polemizirala o vlogi Šklovskega pri ustanavljanju formalizma. Z današnje perspektive pa je »Vstajenje besede« nedvomno kanonizirano kot njegov začetek.

³ Prim. njegovo zbirko člankov z istim naslovom (1993).

⁴ Za citat v angleškem prevodu prim. Sheldon (»Introduction« xxxi) in Kaufman (17).

⁵ Elsa Triolet (1896–1970), poznejša žena Louisa Aragona, je napisala nad 30 knjig, zvečine v francoščini. Po naključju je bila prva ženska, ki je prejela Goncourtovo nagrado. Poetiko eksila pri Šklovskem in Trioletovi je nedavno odlično primerjala Tippner (»Aller et retour«).

⁶ Prim. Eisen, pogl. »The Menagerie« (60–65).

⁷ »Obstajata dve razmerji do umetnosti. / Eno gleda na umetnino kot na okno v svet. / Ti umetniki skušajo z besedami in podobami izraziti tisto, kar je onstran besed in podob. Umetnike te vrste lahko upravičeno imenujemo prevajalce. / Druga vrsta razmerja gleda na umetnost kot na neodvisno obstoječe reči. / Vsebina umetnosti so besede, razmerja med besedami, misli in ironija misli, njihova razhajanja. Če umetnost sploh lahko primerjamo z oknom, je to samo narisano okno.« (Pismo 22, 80)

⁸ Redka izjema je Wolffheim, ki ima ženska pisma za ponaredke (»fingierte Gegenbriefe«, 341). A. Tippner vprašanje o (ne)pristnosti razglasi za manj pomembno, ker naj bi vsa ženska pisma tako ali tako obstajala samo prek avtorizacije moškega pisatelja. To sicer drži, vendar pa omenjena ideja o načelni neodločljivosti poudarja dekonstrukcijsko in metafikijsko igro s subjektivnostjo (Tippner, »Adressat« 237).

⁹ S tem zelo na kratko povzemam zapletene politične implikacije, o katerih razprave še vedno potekajo. Izraziteje polemični pogled na zadevo najdemo pri Sheldonu (»Surrender«).

¹⁰ Ključno je, prvič, da roman Šklovskega nima konsistentne zgodbene ravnine, in drugič, da ima zadnje pismo drugačen status. Da bi ga lahko brali kot peticijo, ga je treba brati kot del celotne zgradbe – kot »odprto pismo«, za katerega je konstitutiven literarni kontekst. Poleg tega pa lahko deluje tudi kot »retorično pismo« (tako ga lahko označimo po analogiji s terminom 'retorično vprašanje'), se pravi, kot pismo, na katerega je bilo že odgovorjeno.

¹¹ Najboljši pregled zgodovine teksta najdemo v angleškem prevodu Richarda Sheldona; zajema tudi vse različice v poznejših sovjetskih izdajah *Zooja*.

¹² Eno leto pred *Zoojem* je Šklovski napisal svoj slavni članek o Sternovem *Tristramu Shandyju*.

¹³ To potezo strukturne ironije Steiner v svoji sicer prodorni analizi ironije in metaironije v *Zoo* spregleda.

¹⁴ Linda Kauffman je prva poudarila dekonstrukcijske vidike *Zooja* (prim. zlasti str. 19, 20, 29). O derridajevskem pogledu na potujitev pri Šklovskem prim. Crawford.

¹⁵ Prim. geslo Thompsonove v standardnem *Handbook of Russian Literature*.

¹⁶ Poudarjeno bahtinovsko branje drugih vidikov *Zooja* ponuja Linda Kauffman.

¹⁷ Parabesedilnost se je pomaknila v žarišče pozornosti sodobne literarne vede (prim. Greber, »Paratext als Paartext«). A. Tippner razlaga »razširjeno perigrafijo« *Zooja* kot scenografijo intenzivne avtorske samorefleksije in sredstvo distan-

cirane komunikacije, ki v razmerju med bralcem in avtorjem proizvaja pisemsko intimnost.

¹⁸ Prim. zlasti Sheldonov uvod in komentar k angleški izdaji.

¹⁹ »V ironičnih epigrafih, s katerimi uvaja vsako pismo [...] ni več frustrirani ljubimec, saj se spreminja v pisatelja-tehnika, sedečega za mizo kakor navaden čevljar, ki oblikuje surovo gradivo svojih doživetij s priljubljenimi orodji« (Sheldon, »Introduction« xxx). »Urednikov ironični glas je vseskozi v kontrastu s tesnobnim glasom ljubimca« (Kauffman 22).

²⁰ Mestoma uporabljaja način žive izvedbe, kakor da bi nastopal na odru (npr. »poslušajte« v 1. pismu), in sicer na odru varieteja, kjer je on sam mojster ceremonije (prim. 22. pismo).

²¹ Samo nekaj časa pred *Zoojem* je Šklovski napisal članke o obeh omenjenih klasikih, čeprav se je v njih ukvarjal bolj s sivejsko kakor pa s formalno kompozicijo.

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Dodatek



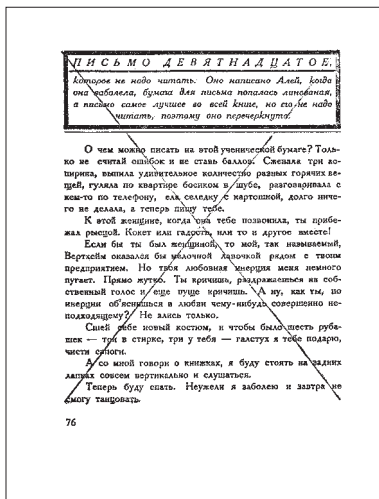
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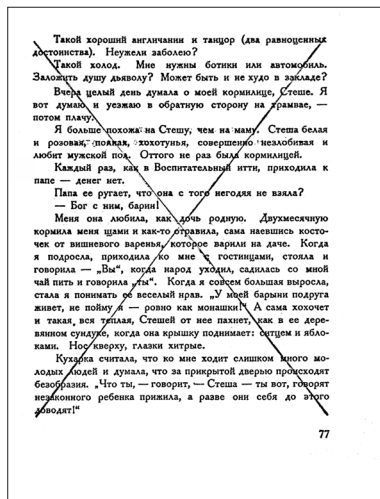
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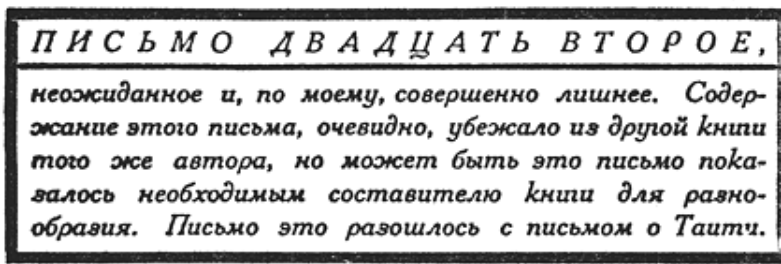
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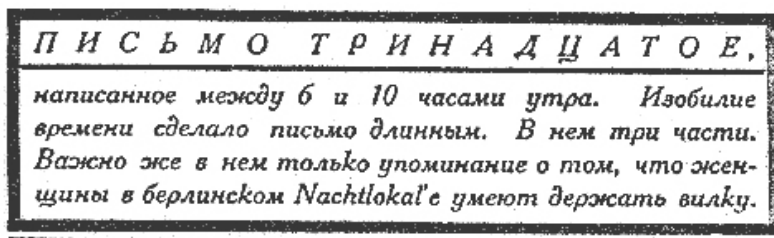
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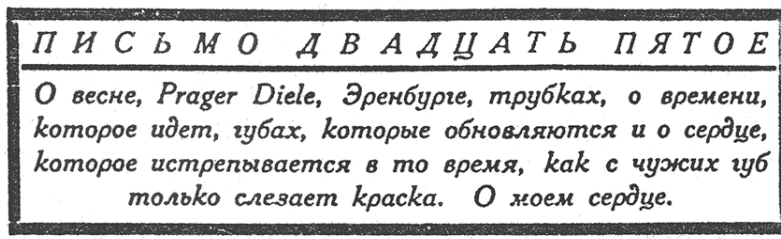
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Slika 5.1 (Pismo št. 22)



Slika 5.2 (Pismo št. 13)



Slika 5.3 (Pismo št. 25)

LOVE LETTERS BETWEEN THEORY AND LITERATURE

VIKTOR SHKLOVSKY'S EPISTOLARY NOVEL *ZOO OR LETTERS NOT ABOUT LOVE*

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The Russian Formalists are generally perceived as having established a rigid theory discourse, thereby producing or extending the disciplinary division. However, as early as 1922/23 Viktor Shklovsky wrote his remarkable epistolary novel Zoo, which unites both discourses. Zoo reshapes the traditional epistolary novel in metafictional style and revitalizes it by blurring the borders between documentary and poetic epistolarity. The established view of Shklovsky's novel as an "attempt to put into practice the principles to which he adhered as a critic" repeats the division between the discourses and reconfirms the dubitable hierarchy of theory over literature. A more adequate view is gained by the idea of hybridity. Object level and meta level, literature and criticism are being merged. One of the most intriguing aspects of Zoo is its new use of the "editing" paratexts that traditionally established the stable division between editor and correspondence and that are now used to deconstruct hierarchies. These paratexts form, also by means of their visual design, some kind of "paraletters" and are part of an epistolary meta-dialogue. With regard to the notion of a "dialogue" between theory and literature, it is highly significant that Shklovsky chose the dialogic genre of the epistolary novel for his critical enterprise.

Keywords: epistolary novel, deconstruction of the epistolary novel, defamiliarization, critification, metafiction, irony, Romantic irony, paratext, exile, poetics of displacement

1. Theory and Literature: Some Remarks on Historical Contexts (History of Theory and History of Literature)

Russian Formalism is usually remembered for introducing the first systematic categories into the analysis of literature, as well as for setting up a theory of literature in the strict sense of the word. This is why the Formalists are

generally perceived as having extended the gap between the two discourses, or even as having produced it in the first place (in terms of disciplinary division), because they are widely considered to be the founders of modern literary criticism. Essentially, Formalist theory emphasized the notion of the esthetic autonomy of the text. From its outset it was programmatically disinterested in the social and practical functions of the arts. As to the later development of Russian Formalism from the mid 1920s, its unmistakable “social turn” was largely due to the rise of Stalinism and the doctrine of Socialist Realism that soon led to the extinction of all avant-garde ideas in the arts and in criticism. Yet there was another earlier – and, more importantly, voluntary and intrinsic – tendency away from pure form and away from rigid theory: something that is epitomized in Viktor Shklovsky’s epistolary novel *Zoo*, written and published in Berlin in 1922–1923.

Zoo was his second great literary book and, if he had not already earned a reputation as a theorist by that time, Shklovsky’s name would have entered literary history for this radical innovation of the epistolary novel. Within the generic development of the epistolary novel, *Zoo* is the hallmark of modernity. In a reversal of the traditional pattern, it presents a demonstratively improvised plotless montage of heterogeneous materials. Following the logic of prohibition and desire, the amatory theme is inhibited and by that very device reinforced. The most innovative features in Shklovsky’s experiment are metafictional self-reflection, paradox, and irony. In short, “*Zoo* effects a perceptible displacement on the genre; after 1923, it will never again be quite the same” (as stated in a major study on the genre; Kauffman xix). As regards genre innovation, *Zoo* is no less avant-garde than other groundbreaking texts of the same years, such as Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922) or Rilke’s *Sonette an Orpheus* (1923), which, however, gained more prominence in world literature. Thus, for historiographers of the epistolary genre, Shklovsky’s novel is an indispensable landmark. At the same time, today’s average reader will not know the book any more, and the average literary critic will not suspect that it exists at all. The poetic practice and imaginative literary work of the Formalists has unjustly fallen into oblivion – something that tells us less about the literary quality of those neglected texts (even if none can claim the same importance as *Zoo*) and more about today’s conception of theory or theoreticity.

It is time to rediscover the “other” side of Formalism: the practical foundation of Formalist theory and the literary outcome generated by the Formalists. This begins with their close and creative connection to the pre- and post-revolutionary avant-gardes (in particular, Russian Futurism is unthinkable without Formalism); it culminates in the 1920s in their own literary works (ranging from historical novels, short stories, essays, and memoirs to children’s literature and screenplays), and it extends to their impact on contemporary literary production due to their engagement as teachers of literature courses¹ (from which emerged the first interesting post-revolutionary literary group, the Serapion Brothers; cf. Greber, “The metafictional turn”). Beyond all these practical activities that resulted in close relations between literature and theory, it should be emphasized that

the style of theorizing itself had nothing academic at all; on the contrary, early Formalism had begun as a challenge to established academic philology. Shklovsky's first paper, "The Resurrection of the Word" (1914) – the manifesto of the Formalist movement to come,² has more in common with the writings of a Futurist poet than with those of a literary critic. Characteristically, later official summaries of the history of Russian Formalism show that Shklovsky's work was particularly criticized for his rather unsystematic, nonacademic style of argumentation. However, what seems a fault in terms of pure theory may be a virtue from the perspective of transdisciplinary thought. At any rate, Shklovsky's approach was not streamlined theory alone, which explains why the figurehead of a school of theory can be brought up at a conference dedicated to the hybridization of theory and literature.

Shklovsky's *Zoo* is certainly evidence for the thesis that "theory and literature have evolved on the same historic trajectory ever since the very emergence of their disciplinary existence" (as outlined in the invitation to our colloquium). The poetics of *Zoo* harkens back to Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as well as German Romanticism and anticipates postmodern ideas of playful mergings of criticism and fiction.

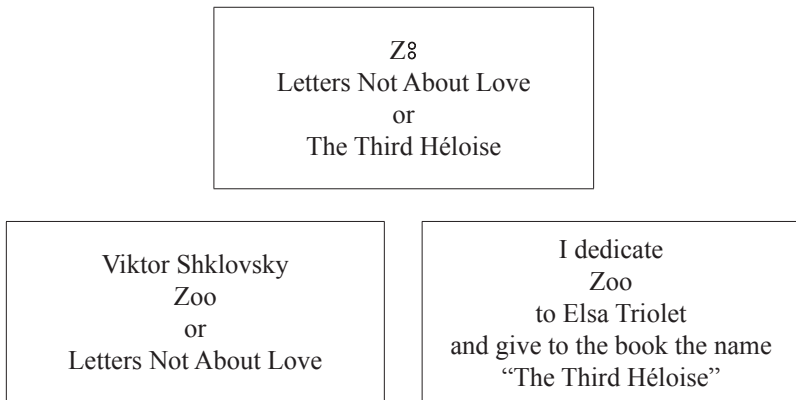
Shklovsky's era still lacks the wonderful term "critifiction" (coined by the French-American writer and literary critic Raymond Federman)³ – an ingenious linguistic hybrid for naming the hybridization of discourses. One could argue that Shklovsky practices a kind of "critifiction" *avant la lettre*. Yet the preconditions for hybridization are quite different in the two cases. It follows from what has been said about the status of Formalism as the founder of literary criticism in today's sense that mixing the discourses before their strict separation is a different matter from doing the same thereafter. Only after Formalism – or more correctly, only after the canonization of Formalism as a strict and rigid discourse of theory, and after the formation of definite disciplinary borders – can the idea of hybrid "critifiction" develop its ultimate attraction and claim programmatic status. For Formalism, the agenda was different yet. Shklovsky's novel, we might say, interfered with the purity of separate discourses, which meant that the author had to go both backwards and forwards. Just recently he had helped to finally establish scholarship on art as a discipline in its own right, and now he was about to intertwine scholarship and art. This transgression was also sharply felt by his fellow formalists, as a review by Yuri Tynyanov shows.⁴

All in all, viewed within the history of the interrelation of theory and literature, the moment of *Zoo* is truly historic.

2. The epistolary constellation in *Zoo*

Zoo is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable and ingenuous epistolary novels ever written, for the very reason that it manages a crossover between theory and literature as well as between fiction and life, including a cross-cultural dialogue about Russia and Europe. The text is rare in its

combination of deep emotion and sharp reflection: a moving evocation of the pain of exile and unrequited love and, at the same time, a witty metaliterary play. *Zoo* reshapes the traditional epistolary novel in a metafictional style. It revitalizes it by blurring the borders between documentary and poetic epistolarity. This can be taken quite literally in view of the textual genesis: the novel is said to mix fictional letters with real ones, letters that were or might have been exchanged (in a rather one-sided correspondence) between the young critic and the lady he courted, between the novelistic “I” and his beloved Alya, alias Viktor Shklovsky and Elsa Triolet (a Russian emigrant like himself and a future French writer; she was 27, and he was 30).⁵ Shklovsky composed this little book in Berlin after fleeing the Soviet Union, and it is a document of his own intermediary existence in the limbo of exile, as well as a kind of ethnography of “Russian Berlin.” Ultimately, the text is structured by a poetics of displacement. To take the work simply as an autobiography would be to underestimate its theoretical drive. It is saturated with theory, not just in the sense that it discusses Formalist ideas (which it does occasionally, as could be expected in a text whose protagonist is a theorist), but in the sense that it is constructed on such principles or, more precisely, that it performs them.



A closer look at the cover and the title pages (Fig. 1–3, see Appendix, p. 321) is very informative. Double play with alphabets and languages highlights the intercultural and intertextual aspects of the novel. The German component is printed in Latin letters: ZOO, the zoological garden in the midst of Berlin and a central interchange for urban transport. The Berlin *Tiergarten* was located in the Russian section of the city nicknamed *Charlottengrad*, but beyond such factual aspects it is recurrently used in its symbolic meaning of captivity (the emigrant as an ape, the lover as an ape). Despite such foreseeable topoi, the theme of the menagerie is expounded in an interesting way.⁶ The other components of the title are of direct relevance to the epistolary discourse. The formula of the *Third Héloïse* establishes a parallel to Rousseau’s epistolary novel *Julie ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* and its respective source, the medieval forerunner of all epistolary romances, the letters by Héloïse to Abelard. Here, too, originates the motif of “letters not about

love.” In addition, the archliterary name is charged with real life by means of a pun: Héloïse – Éloïza – Él’za. The accidental similarity between the Russian and the French name varieties is highly symbolic for the strand in the book that is connected to the French lifestyle as opposed to the Russian, one of the topics of estrangement. In the eyes of her would-be lover, the beloved lady is becoming too much of a Frenchwoman, whereas he himself is becoming increasingly aware of his Russianness and his inability and unwillingness to adapt to Western (“European”) ways. Shklovsky discusses the old dichotomy of Russia vs. the West in terms of several oppositions that run through the émigré community. The Russian-German theme dominates because of Berlin as the place of émigré life, but what really counts is the different measure of “Europeanness” that forms the dividing line between the couple “not in love.” The emotional distance and estrangement between the correspondents is continually interpreted in terms of cultural difference (French vs. Russian or European vs. Russian; cf. Letters 16, 17). With respect to acculturation, Shklovsky’s story is definitively not a love story.

While the name of the female addressee is freely translatable and exchangeable between Russian and French cultures and literatures, the name of the author evidently has a different status. The cultural dilemma is already symbolized in the cover graphics (designed by El Lissitzky, Fig. 1), in which the name *Viktor Shklovsky* is inscribed and hidden in the letter Z of Z8, as if engaged in the grids of the Berlin Zoo and entrapped behind the bars of Latinity. The word *Zoo* is (unlike *Héloïse*) not transcribed into Cyrillic. The printed normal title page (Fig. 2) also displays the alphabetical alienness of ZOO.

The dedication page (Fig. 3) is interesting because it is the paratextual space where the two writer roles overlap ambiguously (intratextual first person writer and extratextual author).

With reference to the problem of fictionality, there is a notable asymmetry between the female and male correspondence partner. For *her* positions, there exists a neat semiotic differentiation by name: Elsa is the extratextual real person, and Alya the intratextual personage. Of course, their interrelation is well enough established, not only by plot coincidences, but also by a meta-remark: “Al, Al, El, they shout – trying to pronounce your name” (Letter 13, *Zoo*, or, *Letters* 48). At least there is the fiction that there is some fictional difference. However, no such useful name label denotes the intratextual author-lover, no name but the “I” (he never signs his letters), and of course this is simultaneously the “I” and the authorial signature underlying the autobiographical pact. (This non-differentiation makes it difficult, by the way, for the analyst to speak clearly about the text.)

The paratextual demarcation of authorial positions is continued in the body of the text, where the few letters by Alya are framed by authorial introductions so that they look like insertions rather than autonomous or equal enunciations. With respect to the entire work, it is therefore justified to speak of a male subject and female object. The correspondence is appropriated by one side. Only on such a condition is it possible to “dedicate” the book to somebody who was originally involved herself (allegedly) in writing parts of it.

Shklovsky does not hide the artificiality of the composition. On the contrary, he displays the constructedness of images. In one instance, even the autobiographical illusion is destroyed – by a reference to the editing process, that is, by using a relict of the conventional epistolary novel, the *Herausgeberfiktion*. The fictional editor reconstructs a gap in the correspondence: “Written, it would seem, in response to a comment apparently made by telephone, since the dossier contains nothing in writing along these lines” (Editorial to Letter 12, *Zoo, or, Letters* 44). Formulations such as “apparently” or “it would seem” mark the passage as pure speculation.

Such an exhibition of arbitrariness corresponds to the nonrepresentational concept of art for which Shklovsky proposed the image of the “sketched window” – well before Magritte (Letter 22).⁷ The secret of *Zoo* is its duplicity: in one moment one sees the window, in the next moment the sketch or the sketchedness – a kind of flicker effect (Kauffman 22, after Sheldon, *Victor Shklovsky*). By definition, one can never know whether Alya’s fictional letters were identical to Elsa’s real ones (though Shklovsky’s contemporaries as well as later critics took the appearance at face value and ascribed the female letters to Elsa, as did Elsa Triolet herself in later autobiographical statements; cf. Triolet 15).⁸

The novel includes a few letters to further addressees in Moscow and Petersburg/Petrograd. Shklovsky tries to seduce not only his lady but other readers, including the state and party leaders that caused him to flee Russia and who, after “receiving” the novel’s last letter, allowed him to return home.⁹ Thus, the letters are aimed towards intra- and extratextual readers – exceeding the usual double addressedness of epistolary novels (by which all letters are read by the personages at the plot level and by the book readers; cf. Altman, *Epistolarity*).¹⁰ In a way, this resembles radical metalepsis, a “strange loop” that leads out of the book into reality. Because of its real-fictional duplicity, the text has a complicated history of editions, revisions, additions, and cuts.¹¹

Altogether, this is a very complex multipolar and at the same time monopolar epistolary novel. By no means, however, does the “umbrella” organized by the authorial function impose homogenization or monologism because the “I” itself is multivoiced: a lover “torn” by love and melancholy, an author engaged in intertextual dialogue, and a scholar interested in metafictional play, whereby all of these hypostases are united by a deep (Romantic) irony.

3. Formalist Theory Wrapped up in/as Literature?

The main parallel between Formalist theory and the Formalist novel is, of course, the concept of genre innovation by defamiliarization (or *enstrangement*, to use the newly coined translation of Shklovsky’s term *ostranenie*)¹² and by laying bare the device. In this respect, *Zoo* appears like a *Tristram Shandy* projected into epistolarity.¹³

The title exhibits the basic strategy of negation: if traditional epistolary novels are nothing other than letters about love, the label “not about love”

promises something new. The motivation for this negation proves to be very entertaining: the lover must avoid the topic because Alya resists his love and forbids him to write about love. He seeks to obey her verdict by writing about anything – about Berlin, about literature, about letter writing, including, of course, the verdict not to write about love – only to come across metaphors and patterns “which return him inexorably to the forbidden theme” (Sheldon, “Introduction” xxviii; the function of any inhibition in literature is, as is well known, its violation – the law of *sjuzhet*).

One could also argue that part of Shklovsky’s defamiliarization program is something like familiarization, in the sense that he takes up familiar topoi and makes them even more intense, through realization of the metaphor – with a similar effect of “making it new.” A case in point is the twin motif of “being torn” by love and the tearing of letters:

I write you every night, then I tear up the letter and throw it in the wastebasket. The letters revive, mend, and I write them again. You receive everything I’ve written.

In your wastebasket for broken toys [are the men who adore you] ...

Only I, torn and shredded like a letter, keep climbing out of the wastebasket for your broken toys. I will survive dozens more of your passing fancies; every day you tear me up and every night I revive, like the letters. (excerpt from Letter 13, *Zoo*, or, *Letters* 48)

A radically new device is the crossed-out letter (Fig. 4, see App., p. 322). The reader is advised not to read this letter – which is said to be the best letter of the whole book, written by Alya – but to skip it and read it at the end. “By crossing out her letter, Shklovsky highlights the materiality of the text, combines the verbal and visual, and turns the tables by taking revenge on Alya for the injunction she took on him” (Kauffman 20). Ironically, the very passage that tells the reader not to read the extinguished letter is itself crossed out together with the letter.¹⁴ The gesture of crossing out something that still remains visible and readable, the idea of making a text simultaneously present and absent, anticipates a central figure of deconstruction.¹⁵ Structurally, the creation of an alternative ending after the “last letter” results in a similar crossing out the last word of the novel – such a book has no last word.

Of course, generic revitalization through metafictional irony has found a perfectly suitable object in the epistolary novel. The epistolary genre has a constitutive tendency towards self-reflection: in any epistolary novel, letter writers write about letter writing. Shklovsky simply turned the screw and intensified the meta-epistolary drive, combining it with the old self-reflexive devices known from the Sternian tradition as well as with recent Formalist ideas.

Is *Zoo* something like Formalist theory in a literary package? Any mechanical concept of that relationship would be inappropriate. The established view of Shklovsky’s novel as an “attempt to put into practice the principles to which he adhered as a critic”¹⁶ repeats the division between the discourses and reconfirms the dubitable hierarchy of theory over litera-

ture. A more adequate view is gained by reference to the key concept of the colloquium: the idea of hybridity, that is, an equal or even indistinguishable interaction between the two poles. Object level and meta level are dissolved into one literary whole, and literature and criticism are merged (“critifiction”). As has been demonstrated, the “I” acts as editor *and* correspondent, as critic *and* writer *and* lover.

4. Dialogization of a Dialogic Genre: Paratexts as Paraletters

Regarding the notion of a “dialogue” between theory and literature, any expectation of neatly distributed roles or textual genres would be too simple. There is no dichotomy of scholarly letters and *belles-lettres*. The dialogue is deeply dialogized and hybridized (in a Bakhtinian sense, even if this may appear unexpected in view of Shklovsky’s early Formalist positions).¹⁷

This is why I think it is less fruitful to focus, as previous critics did, on those letters that explicitly thematize Formalist ideas. Naturally it is amusing and very instructive to read those letters, especially the 22nd letter with its self-reflective *mise en abyme* in the manner of Romantic irony, in which Shklovsky mentions his projected novel *Zoo* as an experiment in Formalist poetics. However, from the perspective of dialogue, it is necessary to shift from content to form – quite in the spirit of Shklovsky himself – and to see how those concepts are presented to the reader(s) and how scholarship is framed or is used as a frame.

Therefore I would like to focus once more on the paratexts,¹⁸ especially on the passages preceding each letter. This is a very intricate phenomenon, and I would like to propose a new thesis. In *Zoo*, the function of these introductory passages is reversed: the “editing” paratexts that traditionally establish a stable division between editor (or critic) and correspondents (letter writers) are now used for the deconstruction of hierarchies.

The crossed-out Letter 19 is even triply preceded: it has a preface (*predislovie*), and both the letter and the preface are introduced by such a passage. It is common practice to call these passages “epigraphs” (Sheldon, “Introduction” xxix; Kauffmann 22), but this is certainly a misleading term. The relationship of these pieces to the letters is more like a commenting or even teasing foreword, or like a trailer; one might call them editorials. In reprints and translations, these texts are printed in italics; in the original Berlin edition, they were set apart and framed by squares. In comparisons between the Berlin edition and the later Soviet editions,¹⁹ this aspect is usually neglected, although it is relevant in terms of epistolarity. Fig. 5 presents some examples (the passages to be quoted below, see App., p. 322).

Some of the editorials are dutiful synopses of what follows in the letter, and some are ironic anti-statements (on the whole, the ironic mode is predominant). For example, in the editorial to the aforementioned letter, the very theoretical input is mocked:

Letter Twenty-Two

Unexpected and, in my opinion, utterly superfluous. The content of this letter obviously escaped from some other book by the same author, but perhaps the compiler of the book deemed the letter indispensable for reasons of variety. The letter crossed in the mail with the letter [from Alya] about Tahiti. (Zoo, or, Letters 79)

The irony is accompanied by a deliberate obfuscation and proliferation of subject positions: who is the “I” that places itself as judge above the author-scholar and the compiler-editor?

In narratological terms, these paratexts clearly belong to the level of the editing process. This led critics to assume a clear role distribution between epistolary and editorial texts and functions and a distinct demarcation of lover’s voice and editor’s voice,²⁰ whereby the “ironic detachment” was ascribed to the editor (Kauffman 22). But on closer examination it becomes clear that the editor’s voice is deeply entangled in the amorous conflict and represents by no means a detached position, let alone a scholarly meta-position.

Letter Thirteen

Written between six and ten a.m. That excess time made the letter long. It has three parts. The only important thing in it is the observation that the women in a certain Berlin Nachtlokal know how to hold a fork. (47)

Letter Twenty-Five

About spring, the Prager Diele, Ehrenburg, and pipes. About time, which passes, and lips, which renew themselves – about a certain heart that is being worn to a frazzle while the lips in question are merely losing their paint. About my heart. (90)

It is a highly ambivalent voice, belonging to more than one discourse. In fact, the editorials display a second dialogue in which the editor reacts to the letter writers, including himself, and addresses the reader, sending him or her an epistolary message.²¹

In a similar fashion, the entire book was provided with editorials, with a series of prefaces to each edition. These texts are not only addressed to the actual book readers (among them, the Soviet politicians); Shklovsky conducts a dialogue – in the second person! – with his own past, with his former book, and with Elsa – a letter sent from Russia to France.

The editorials are reminiscent of the ironic footnotes in Rousseau’s epistolary novel. Basically, however, such paratexts stem from early novelistic conventions in which they precede the chapters and/or form the table of contents. Mock versions begin long before *Tristram Shandy*; they can be found as early as in *Don Quijote*, in which several chapter summaries do not give correct information about the contents, but are metafictional gimmicks.²² *Zoo* presents a new combination: Shklovsky combines the device

of the summary from the classic novel with the construction of a fictional editor (*Herausgeberfiktion*) from the epistolary novel. The resulting hybrid type of epistolarized paratexts could be called the “paraletter.” This idea is reinforced by the visual presentation of the editorials: The layout chosen for the first edition (not reproduced in any later edition) made these “paraletters” indeed look like letters in small envelopes. These paraletters are an intricate double-voiced element in the epistolary meta-dialogue.

With regard to the notion of a “dialogue” between theory and literature, it is highly significant that Shklovsky chose the dialogic genre of the epistolary novel for his critifictional enterprise.

NOTES

¹ Taking place at the Petersburg (or, at that time, Petrograd) Institute of Art History 1920/21, these were, so to speak, “creative writing” courses *avant la lettre*.

² Regarding Shklovsky’s contribution to the founding of Formalism, there was a controversy between Richard Sheldon and Victor Erlich. However, in today’s perspective, “The Resurrection of the Word” is clearly canonized as the starting point.

³ Cf. his eponymous collection of articles (1993).

⁴ For a quote in English translation cf. Sheldon (“Introduction” xxxi) and Kauffman (17).

⁵ Elsa Triolet (1896–1970), later the wife of Louis Aragon, wrote more than 30 books, mostly in French. Incidentally, she was the first woman to receive the Prix Goncourt. A good recent article (Tippner, “Aller et retour”) compares Shklovsky’s and Triolet’s poetics of exile.

⁶ Cf. Eisen, ch. “The Menagerie” (60–65).

⁷ “There are two attitudes toward art. / One is to view the work of art as a window on the world. / Through words and images, these artists want to express what lies beyond words and images. Artists of this type deserve to be called translators. / The other type of attitude is to view art as a world of independently existing things. / Words, and the relationships between words, thoughts and the irony of thoughts, their divergence – these are the content of art. Art, if it can be compared to a window at all, is only a sketched window” (Letter 22, 80).

⁸ As a rare exception, Wolffheim considers the female letters to be faked (“fingierte Gegenbriefe,” 341). Tippner declares the question of (in)authenticity secondary because all of the female letters exist only by authorization through the male writer anyway. Although this is true, the above idea of principal undecidability would stress the deconstructive and metafictional play with subjectivity (Tippner, “Adressat” 237).

⁹ This is a much-abbreviated summary of the complicated political implications, which are still being discussed. For a more polemic view on the case, cf. Sheldon, “Surrender.”

¹⁰ The crucial points are, first, that Shklovsky’s novel does not have a consistent plot level and, second, that the last letter has a different status. In order to function as a petition, it must be read as part of the entire construction – an “Open Letter” for which the literary context is constitutive. In addition, it may function as a “rhetorical letter” (as we may call it by analogy with the term “rhetorical question”); that is, a letter that has already been answered.

¹¹ The best survey of the textual history is given in the English translation by Richard Sheldon, who includes and comments on all the variations in the later Soviet editions of *Zoo*.

¹² Cf. Benjamin Sher's new translation of Shklovsky's *Theory of Prose* (viii–ix and 149).

¹³ The year before, Shklovsky had written his famous article on Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*.

¹⁴ This trait of structural irony is neglected in Steiner's otherwise sharp analysis of irony and meta-irony in *Zoo*.

¹⁵ Linda Kauffman was the first to emphasize the deconstructive aspects of *Zoo* (cf. especially pp. 19, 20, 29). For a Derridian view on Shklovsky's defamiliarization, cf. Crawford.

¹⁶ Cf. Thompson's entry in the standard *Handbook of Russian Literature*.

¹⁷ An emphatic Bakhtinian reading of other aspects of *Zoo* was offered by Linda Kauffman.

¹⁸ Paratextuality has moved into center focus of current scholarship (cf. Greber, "Paratext als Paartext"). Tippner explains the "extended perigraphy" of *Zoo* as a scenery of heightened authorial self reflection and a means of distant communication producing epistolary intimacy in the reader-author relationship.

¹⁹ Cf. especially Sheldon's introduction and commentary to the English edition.

²⁰ "In the ironic epigraphs which preface each letter ... he ceases to be the frustrated lover and becomes the writer-technician, sitting at his table like a cobbler and shaping the raw material of his experience with a number of favorite tools" (Sheldon, "Introduction" xxx). "The edito's ironic voice is constantly at odds with the anguished lover's voice" (Kauffman 22).

²¹ In places, he uses the manner of a performance, such as presenting a program on stage (e.g. "slushaitе..."/ "listen..." in Letter 1); namely, the stage of a variété theater with himself as the master of ceremonies (cf. letter 22).

²² Shortly before *Zoo*, Shklovsky had written articles about both classics, though dealing more with plot composition than formal composition.

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Appendix



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

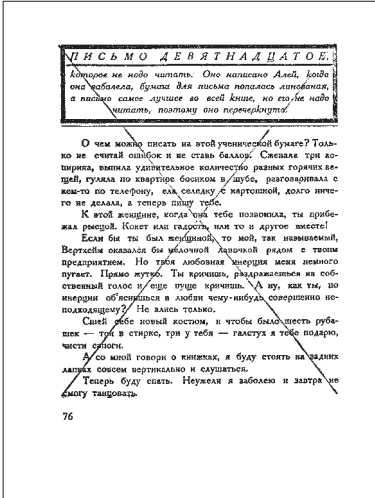


Fig. 4.1

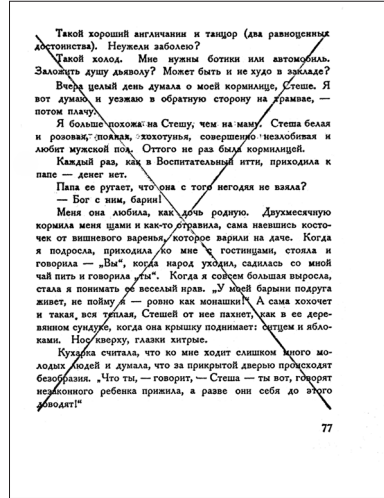


Fig. 4.2

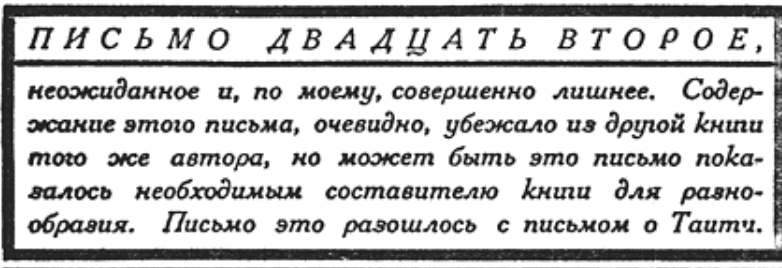


Fig. 5.1 (Letter No. 22)

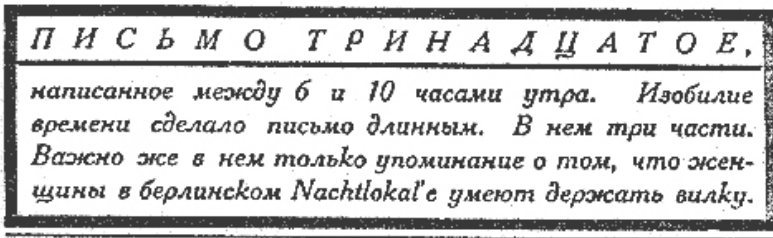


Fig. 5.2 (Letter No. 13)

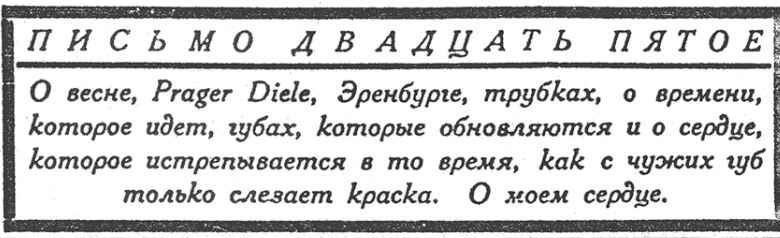


Fig. 5.3 (Letter No. 25)