Summary

Rhetoric Today: From Decadence to Renaissance
(Aspects of Theory)

Guest Editor: Valery Vyugin

The revival of rhetoric in the second half of the 20th century made necessary a new definition of this discipline within the contemporary humanities. **Sergey Zenkin** in his article "A Rhetoric of Reading (From the History of 20th Century Academic Ideas)" explores how over the course of this work, an unusual communicative perspective was outlined for it: traditional rhetoric was *productive*, modern rhetoric becomes *receptive*; the former expounded on writing, the latter has turned its attention to reading. Searches for such a new definition can be traced in the works of Roland Barthes, Chaim Perelman, Umberto Eco, Gérard Genette, Paul de Man, Wayne Booth, Sergey Averintsev, Alexander V. Mikhailov, Yuri Lotman, Paul Ricœur and other scholars.

The discussion of the role of rhetoric in argumentation in the perspective of the addressee's assessment of the speaker's efforts, or inversely rhetorical assessment, shows the necessary role of rhetoric in speech thinking, in contrast to its controversial role as eloquent persuasion to promote or hinder evidence-based conviction. **Elena Lisanyuk**'s article "'I Write to You... And Freeze with Fear', or Sergey Povarnin's Rhetoric of Dispute in the Evolution of the Theory of Argumentation" shows that, anticipating the new rhetoric and modern dialectical approaches to argumentation, S. Povarnin's inversely rhetorical ideas turn the speaker's influence on the listener into mutual influence and reduce their rhetorical goals to expressing their thoughts in speech in such a way that it contributes to the achievement of the dialectical goal to the extent that it cannot be prevented by the achievement of rhetorical goals by others.

Nikolay Poselyagin's article "The Climax of Rhetoric: 'Post-Truth' as a Rhetorical Strategy and a Challenge of Reality" discusses a rhetorical aspect of the newly popular term "post-truth" that can be considered as a practical consequence of a social phenomenon described by Jean Baudrillard. A mediaspace in which we are immersed does not allow us to distinguish between reality and simulation, between an actual event or a real fact and simulacrum; as a result, we begin to use a criterion of persuasiveness/non-persuasiveness instead of the truth/falsity and to rely not on the correlation of a narrative with reality but only on an inner coherence, effectiveness, and emotional load of its rhetorical structure. In the situation of post-truth, a concept of veracity is redefined: now it is not a correspondence to reality or a result of independent verifying of facts anymore; it is just the most efficient rhetorical persuasiveness.

The article "Against Narratology (On One Technique of Reading)" by **Valery Vyugin** focuses on a not-quite-familiar view on narrative that brings together several interests of rhetoric, ethics, and the theory

of values. The apparent reading technique associated with this new approach has not yet been fully developed. The majority of presuppositions underlying it were once articulated by the founders of "new rhetoric." Before discussing the technique itself, the author provides an overview of Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, Lucy Olbrechts-Tyteca, and Wayne Booth's theories and clarifies how their approaches may be used for the purpose of this paper, as well as several positions of the contemporary theory of values and ethics. The suggested technique puts into question the priorities of "classical" narratology as it allows to uncover the values that a narrative's creator is trying to impose on their audience.

Russian Literature of the Mid-19th Century and the Social Imaginary

Guest Editors: Alexey Vdovin, Ilya Kliger, Kirill Ospovat, Helen Stuhr-Rommereim

In his article "The Poetry of Democracy: Poetic Language and the Peasant Political Imagination in Savva Purlevskii's 'News about Russia' (1849) and 'Memoirs'" **Kirill Ospovat** investigates the political imagination of the Russian peasantry and its interpretations of freedom and democracy as reflected in two works associated with the peasant entrepreneur writer Savva Purlevskii. Starting from ethnographic evidence of republican principles among peasants and the communal way of life, the author explores the role that erudite literary forms could play in documenting peasant democratic thought. Instead of stable disciplinary ideas about "high" literature as the exclusive property of the cultural elites and concrete literary circles and salons, the article proposes to see a forum of social thinking and speech within literary and artistic forms that was discovered principally by writers and readers from various social strata and classes.

Alexey Vdovin's article "The Devilish Temptation of a Cab Driver: The Genealogy and Sociology of a Popular Literary Plot" traces and analyzes the genealogy, morphology, and sociology of the plot about the temptation of cabman (or cabby), popular in prerevolutionary Russian literature. Based on a representative corpus of more than two dozen texts, both by canonical authors (Nikolai Polevoy, Nikolay Nekrasov, Anton Chekhov, Maxim Gorky) and by forgotten ones, the author identifies the metaplot of most of these stories and offers a sociological and cultural explanation of it. The main reason lay in the fact that the moment of a ride with a carriage driver and a potential conversation with him was perceived by the educated elite (who produced the bulk of the texts) as a moment of rare trusting communication with a representative of "the people" in a mode of the partial removal of the class distance.

Ilya Kliger in his article "Social Imaginary in Russian Realist Fiction: The Case of Pisemsky's *One Thousand Souls*" examines A.F. Pisemsky's novel with an eye to methodological questions related to the study of "social imaginaries." Begun in the pre-reform period of political "stagnation" but published when the politization of the public sphere had reached its peak and when interest in reformist state activity was at its height, the novel reflects this historical rupture. The fourth and final part of the novel introduces the problematics of state power, departing

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from the standard Western-European novelistic tradition of limiting its purview to processes of socialization and the vicissitudes of private lives. The paper highlights this deformation of traditional narrative and thematic material, suggesting that such deformation is more broadly characteristic of Russian realist narrative.

Helen Stuhr-Rommereim's article "Constructing and Deconstructing a New View of the Masses: Pseudo-autobiographical Narratives of the Raznochintsy Realists" outlines the standard coming-of-age narrative that appears across short works by the *raznochintsy* writers Nikolai Pomialovsky, Fedor Reshetnikov, Alexander Levitov, and Nikolai Uspensky. It shows how these writers grounded their literary legitimacy in their shared experiences. Placing their work in conversation with Lev Tolstoy's autobiographically-based coming-of-age trilogy, the article proposes that these authors invented themselves as a social type defined by the capacity to comprehend the expansive reality of Russian life as a form of social "usefulness." At the same time, their writings reveal an eventual loss of faith in the potential for literary narrative to give coherence to a stratified social body.

Leo Tolstoy and Colonialism

Using new archival research, **Edyta Bojanowska** in her article "Was Tolstoi a Colonial Landlord? The Dilemmas of Private Property and Settler Colonialism on the Bashkir Steppe" establishes key facts about the most understudied aspect of Lev Tolstoi's biography — his Samara estate. Integrating imperial history with the theoretical perspective of settler colonial studies, the article argues that the estate functioned within the context of Russia's settler colonialism in Bashkiria. While this experience contributed to Tolstoi's rejection of private property, it never erased his enthusiasm for Russia's manifest destiny as a settler civilization. Sympathizing with the plight of Russian settlers, Tolstoi remained perplexingly indifferent to the suffering of the semi-nomadic Bashkirs they displaced. These findings complicate Tolstoi's status as Russia's premier anticolonial writer, urging a more capacious framing of the problem of empire in Tolstoi's art and thought.

The article is followed by the discussion held by **Mikhail Dolbilov**, **Julia Krasnoselskaya**, **Olga Maiorova**, **Marina Mogilner** and **Edyta Bojanowska**.

Inside Media: The Latest Poetic Practices and Aesthetics of the Information Environment

Guest Editors: Denis Larionov and Alexey Masalov

Anna Rodionova's article "The Connection is Established: Intricacies of Poetry, Technology and Power" reviews the conceptualization of the connection between poetry and technology in Russian language poetry of the 20th century. The author relies on individual metapoetic phenomena (manifestos, autocommentaries, etc.) ranging from symbolism to metarealism. Theorizations of the

contact between poetry and technology are analyzed in the context of the transformation of perception. The problematic implications of this possibility are also mentioned, in particular in their relation to the social order of a given historical period and the role of progressivist ideologies in its establishment.

The article "*Volume V: Programs* by Aleksandr Kondratov: On the Path Towards Cybernetic Poetry" by **Mikhail Pavlovets** is devoted to a figure of "philological school" of the Leningrad underground, Alexander Kondratov. The plan for the "collected works" implied the creation of 12 volumes of artworks written in all three forms of literature — prose, verse and hybrid, representing the widest paradigm of topics and artforms, both traditional and avant-garde. The collection was thought of as a kind of "matrix" of generative programs, from which it would be possible to create an immeasurable number of texts on certain topics, or of certain genres or forms. One of the parts of this collection was supposed to be a volume (or book) called *Programs* (*Programmy*) — a compilation of Kondratov's works in the area of cybernetic poetry.

The article "Fragments of Machine Discourse: Technological Writing as a Trigger for a New Type of Reader's Pleasure in Andrey Cherkasov's Poetry" by **Maxim Dryomov** and **Anna Pismanik** examines the aspect of pleasure from reading in the texts that Andrey Cherkasov, a contemporary Russian-language poet, created using machine writing methods (including predictive text, spam generation, the output of a word frequency analyzer, etc.). The effect that these texts have on the reader seems to be fundamentally different from the way that one perceives "neural network poetry" and similar experiments. In this work, an attempt is made to describe the mechanism of this difference using Gilbert Simondon's philo-

sophy of technology, as well as other theoretical frameworks.

Denis Larionov's article "Together and on the Screen: Notes on Poetic Works in Social Media" attempts to consider the specifics of the creation and reception of works of the latest poetry in the information environment created by new means of communication (new media), working with the help of algorithms that exceed those described by Alan Turing in complexity and both open up more opportunities for Russian-speaking authors and create more specific restrictions. Based on the theoretical research of domestic and foreign researchers and critics (Aleksandr Skidan, Vitaly Lekhtsier, Nicolas Bourriaud, Jonathan Flatley, Luciana Parisi), poetic works are considered as a kind of "cast" of unstoppable social communication in a situation of collapse of the public sphere in its classical understanding.

In his article "Mediaperformativity of Aristarch Mesropyan and Glikeriy Ulunov" **Alexey Masalov** examines the performative foundations of poetic texts in the era of new media. The author offers the category of media performativity, which implies that actions in such texts and media hybrids are carried out not only with the help of words and bodies, but also with the help of various media. In the media hybrids of A. Mesropyan, media performativity structures the logic of video games and poetic data, as well as a special console for the reader's perception of them, opening with a command line and combining symbols and graphic elements, when the combination process itself becomes an aesthetically significant action through the media. In the poem "lem-(Mikhail Tukhachevsky)" by G. Ulunov, the media-performative flickering between memory and meaning, storytelling and the embodiment of its mechanisms exposes the problem of the

relationship between the subject and the discourse of power that creates history, understanding and possession.

Anna Nizhnik's article "Women's Writing and Its Mode of Existence in the Digital Environment" states that woman as an anthropological Other is constructed with the help of signs of language and objectification, which is supported by the logic of media as a screen. Such objectification gives rise to multidirec-tional attempts to interpret women's poetry: on the one hand, it fits into the existing symbolic hierarchies; on the other hand, it is perceived as a set of affects to which the "Internet swarm" responds as a special mode of media-tion. The case of the "f-writing" platform is analyzed from the point of view of mass and elite reception, which prob-lematizes the very "female subject" of the statement, which becomes a media object.

Poetological Studies

Vasilisa Šljivar's article "A Time of Death in Gennady Gor's Poetry" is on the poetry of Gennady Gor viewed through the prism of the blockade phenomenon and one of his poetry's quintessential themes — the theme of time. Motifs are uncovered by which the poet elaborates on the theme of blocked time, primarily the motif of the river, but also the motifs of water, spring, breasts, children, child-ren's drawings, etc., as well as the close-ly related themes of death and the body. The analysis, performed while taking in account the culturological and historical context, allows Gor to regain his place as a direct heir of the Russian historical avant-garde.

Katarzyna Syska in her article "Ivan Vyrypayev's *Illusions*: Poetics of Con-templation" examines the work of the dramatist who stages his plays himself, and one can notice a close relationship between the poetics of the texts and the way they are staged. One of the charac-teristic features of Vyrypaev's plays is the principle of the mutual undermining of semantic and formal elements that form a polyphonic structure that is difficult to comprehend rationally. For analysis the author uses the method of close reading, as well as paying special attention to discursive strategies of characters and narrators.

Zsuzsa Hetényi's article "Fashion, Brands, Mythopoetics: Units of Emotion in the Story 'One Vogue' by V. Pelevin" explores Victor Pelevin's text, that con-sists of a single complex sentence and is easily subjected to microanalysis, which reveals an unexpected depth of thought, thanks to the breadth of the cultural codes and intertextual allusions inserted by the author. A large number of brand names, highlighted also graphically in the text, create a semantic field opposed to the cultural codes. The short text deve-lops a chain of scenes, shows five cha-racters, their thoughts and feelings, and in their "inner theaters" shows the influ-ence and mechanism, if not the essence of the world of industrial advertising and the global consumer civilization. This world — according to the socio-anthro-pological theory of Elemér Hankiss, for all its falsity — is the savior of modern man, the guarantee of his self-assertion and the illusion of survival.