For Ivana and Maria

Contents

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A Note from the Editors-Translators

Compared to many pre-revolutionary literary critics and their Marxist successors, the Russian Formalist critics are mostly straightforward and accessible writers—Viktor Shklovsky, for instance, has been extensively translated, and comes across clearly in English. Tynianov is a somewhat stranger bird. Though rarely dry and never pedantic, his style can swing wildly between chatty, lapidary, and downright opaque. In his introduction to the 1929 collection *Archaists and Innovators*, Tynianov acknowledged that his language was sometimes difficult and even unclear, but that "language does not merely transmit concepts, … it is also a means of their construction."[1] As translators, we have strived to let Tynianov be Tynianov, which meant maintaining a mostly layperson's register of language in conjunction with sudden bursts of inventive terminology.

This book is the first comprehensive collection of Tynianov's theoretical work in English, as well as the first time that more than two essays appear translated in one consistent voice: prior publications of his theoretical essays have been translated at different times and by different people and scattered throughout anthologies.[2] Tynianov's sense of the complex interconnectedness of literary processes is mirrored in his own compact, sometimes strikingly poetic writing: the same metaphors, phrases, and literary examples keep turning up in

1 Iurii Tynianov, *Arkhaisty i novatory* [Permanent Evolution] (Leningrad: Priboi, 1929) includes "Literary Fact," "On Literary Evolution," "The Ode as Oratorical Genre," "Tyutchev and Heine," "Dostoevskii and Gogol (Toward a Theory of Parody)," "Interlude," and "On Khlebnikov."

2 Some of Tynianov's historical novels have been translated into English: Yuri Tynianov, *Death of the Vazir-Mukhtar*, trans. Susan Causey and Vera Tsareva-Brauner (London: LookMedia, 2018); *Lieutenant Kijé; Young Vitushishnikov: two novellas*, trans. Mirra Ginsburg (1990); *Young Pushkin*, trans. Anna Kurkina Rush and Christopher Rush (2007).

unexpected corners, simultaneously exhibiting new facets and reminding the reader of their previous uses. A further motivation for translating these essays as a group was to demonstrate the remarkable coherence and consistency of Tynianov's thought (notwithstanding his occasionally slapdash terminology) over a wide range of material.

Tynianov's terminology invites further explanation. Certain terms—many of them rather unremarkable words with ordinary dictionary meanings, like *shift* or *plan*—acquire specific meanings in Tynianov's theoretical constructions. These terms pop up in different articles, in application to different material, throughout the collection—and the frequency of these recurrences was, again, a major motivation for undertaking a large-scale translation of Tynianov's work. To take one example: the concept of "shift" (covered by the noun *smena*—meaning both a change or alteration and a length of time, for example "the night shift"—and the related verb *smeshchat'*/*smestit'*) can also mean to "displace" or "supplant"; the idea of "succession" is also present. Of the available options, "shift" is the most open-ended and capacious; we occasionally substitute one of the other options for clarity's sake. Recurring terms like these, along with less familiar Russian literary terms, have been marked in the texts and are defined in the Terms appendix at the end of the volume.

Just as he returns again and again to concepts like that of "shift" or "orientation," Tynianov makes frequent reference to a wide array of figures stretching across three centuries of Russian literature. The first part of the appendix ("Names and Terms") identifies writers and other figures who appear in multiple articles; if a name or term is not identified in a footnote, it will be marked with a superscript N or T and found in this section.

While we felt it crucial to give Tynianov a recognizable and consistent English voice, the copious quotations in his articles (primarily of poetry) were another matter. Wherever possible, we gratefully made use of excellent existing translations: James Falen's masterful, rhymed *Eugene Onegin*, Jesse Zeldin's rendition of Gogol's *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, or Clarence Brown and W. S. Merwin's classic translations of early Mandelstam. When left to our own devices with the poetry, we tended to prioritize Tynianov's theoretical aims; our goal was to demonstrate Tynianov's points about the function of poetic devices rather than to create freestanding poetic translations.

While this collection reproduces about half of the articles included in *Archaists and Innovators*, the main source for original texts was the exhaustively

annotated *Poetics. Literary History. Film* (1977).[3] Edited by Alexander and Marietta Chudakov, and Evgeny Toddes, this seminal volume remains the most comprehensive Russian edition of Tynianov's work and represents a truly heroic effort on the editors' part. As Marietta Chudakova recalls, they spent two years in the archives composing and assembling the notes (over 250 pages' worth), and another four years pushing the volume past the formidable, multitiered behemoth of Soviet censorship. While Tynianov was not himself subject to state repression, many of his contemporary subjects (Akhmatova, Mandelstam, Pasternak, and others) had become unprintable in the years following the initial publication of his articles. For example, Chudakova reminisced about an editor telling her to reduce the number of times Mandelstam was mentioned in the notes from seventeen to two, resulting in some peculiarly convoluted formulations ("compare a different assessment of these same features of the Serapions' prose by the author of 'A Conversation about Dante' […]").[4] Despite these compulsory verbal acrobatics, the notes to the 1977 edition are a priceless resource; we relied on them extensively in our work as translators and have gratefully translated some of them as notes to the English text of the articles.

The articles in this collection present Tynianov's "greatest hits" (his most frequently anthologized foundational theoretical statements like "Literary Fact" and "On Literary Evolution"), in company with denser, thornier works like "The Ode as an Oratorical Genre" and "On the Composition of *Eugene Onegin*," and lesser-known pieces that seem to address narrowly specialized topics: "Tyutchev and Heine" or "On the Screenplay." As its title indicates, *Poetics. Literary History. Film* groups the articles by discipline; by contrast, this collection is organized for the most part in chronological order, in an attempt to demonstrate the continuity of Tynianov's thought as it crisscrosses thematic, generic, and disciplinary boundaries. As each article shows, Tynianov never really wrote "just" about Tyutchev, or screenplays, or odes: while discussing concrete material, often in exacting and illuminating detail, Tynianov always has a larger theoretical point to make, using whatever material is closest at hand

3 Iurii Tynianov, *Poetika. Istoriia literatury. Kino*, eds. M. O. Chudakova, A. P. Chudakov, and E. A. Toddes (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), or *PILK* (as this volume is affectionately known in Russian), is the source for all of the articles translated here except for "On Khlebnikov." Henceforth, the volume will be referred to as *PILK*. Selected notes in this publication are by A. P. Chudakov [*AC*]; additional notes are by Yuri Tynianov [*YT*] and the translators [unmarked].

4 See "The Serapion Brothers. Almanac 1" [Serapionovy brat'ia. Almanakh I], in ibid., 449 n8.

(see Daria Khitrova's introduction for an extended discussion of Tynianov's theoretical practice).

This collection aims to show Tynianov's place in the history of literary theory, while also pointing to the practical relevance of his thinking for literary analysis today. The literary scholar Lydia Ginzburg, who studied with Tynianov in the 1920s, later described the distinctive nature of Tynianov's thinking and its surprisingly broad applicability:

> Tynianov's ideas, rather than being incontestable or irrevocable (that never happens), were applicable in a very enduring and tenable way. There are ideas, indeed very substantial ones, which function exactly as intended and move in a straight line from teacher to student. Then there are thoughts that spread out in circles: they can be influential in various contexts and at great distances from the article or book in which they are first suggested. This is how it worked with Tynianov's ideas. They generated new concepts, were applied and tested in practice. Using material, meanwhile, that Tynianov himself had not studied. Transplanted into a new environment, his conceptions continued working and bringing in new results.[5]

We hope very much that this most recent translation will take root and continue to bring in new results for students of literature all over the English-speaking world.

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5 Lidiia Ginzburg, "Tynianov—literaturoved," in *Zapisnye knizhki* (St. Petersburg: Iskusstvo-SPb, 2012), 447.

Introduction

DARIA KHITROVA

At present, the knowledge of Russian Formalist thought within Anglo-American academic circles is often limited to Viktor Shklovsky's[N] notion of defamiliarization and his distinction between fabula[T] [story or storyline] and *siuzhet*[T] [plot]. Illuminating as they are, both concepts come from the early period of Formalism (which is also the source of many popular misconceptions about the Formalists and their work). At the same time, a whole range of seminal theoretical discoveries by Formalist scholars, Yuri Tynianov in particular, remains largely overlooked or unknowingly reinvented by scholars of different disciplines, from English to Comparative Literature to Film Studies. Tynianov's entrance onto the international stage is an important step in advancing modern literary theory—and recovering its history.

This volume does not offer a complete edition of Tynianov's scholarly works. More translations will hopefully follow. And English-speaking readers have yet to discover Tynianov's historical fiction, which is still widely read in Russia and is among the masterpieces of Modernist prose. That being said, this volume is a groundbreaking step towards rediscovering Tynianov—not just for the sake of historical justice, but for the future of literary studies.

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In his foreword to a 1928 volume by Velimir Khlebnikov[N] (another thinker who defied categorization—see "On Khlebnikov" in the present collection),[1] Tynianov offers an assessment that applies equally well to his own aesthetic and literary-theoretical sensibilities: "Standing before the judgment of Khlebnikov's

1 Others have noted the parallel between Tynianov and Khlebnikov. Veniamin Kaverin and Vladimir Novikov's volume on Tynianov—*Novoe zrenie* (Moscow: Kniga, 1988)—is partially built around this analogy.

new framework, literary traditions find themselves flung wide open. The result is an enormous shift[T] in traditions.[2] 'The [twelfth-century] Igor Tale' is suddenly more modern than [contemporary poet Valery] Briusov."[3] (??) Six years earlier, Osip Mandelstam had likewise linked Khlebnikov and "The Igor Tale": "When the vivid and complex language of 'The Igor Tale' was first heard—secular, worldly, and Russian through and through—this was the beginning of Russian literature. And as long as Velimir Khlebnikov, a contemporary Russian writer, is immersed in the thick of Russian etymology, in the darkness of its night, which is so dear to the clever reader, Russian literature is kept alive […]."[4] (??)

Just as Mandelstam considered "The Igor Tale" the origin of Russian literature, we can consider Formalism a kind of point of origin for Russian (and not only Russian) literary theory. But the Formalists showed that historical time is not linear: the distant past can live in the future; the future can be buried under a mountain of cultural layers. "Nothing repeats itself in history," Boris Eikhenbaum[N] wrote, "because nothing ever disappears, it only undergoes various transformations."[5] The same can be said of literary studies: Formalism today "is suddenly more modern" than poststructuralism or postmodernism.[6] Like Khlebnikov, it "burrowed enough pathways in the ground

2 Tynianov's notion of the "shift" is central to his thinking in virtually all of the articles in this collection. See, in particular, "On Literary Evolution" (267–282).

3 "The Igor Tale" (also known as "The Tale of Igor's Campaign" or "The Lay of the Host of Igor") is a late twelfth-century epic poem by an anonymous author. The sophistication of its language and style set it apart from other early Russian writing.

4 Osip Mandel'shtam, *Slovo i kul'tura* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1987), 58.

5 Boris Eikhenbaum, *Lermontov: Opyt istoriko-literaturnoi otsenki* (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1924), 9.

6 I want to state from the outset that I understand "Formalism" to mean the work of the scholars who comprised the core of Petrograd's "Society for the Study of Poetic Language" [OPOYAZ]: Shklovsky, Tynianov, Eikhenbaum, Jakobson, and, up to a certain point, [Boris] Tomashevsky. One of the main reasons that the Formalist method is often misunderstood has to do with the utterly chaotic way its members were counted (something inherited from the literary journal polemics of the 1920s): the ranks of Formalism often include Viktor Zhirmunsky, members of the Moscow Linguistics Circle, members of the Left Front of Art (LEF), and even, in some publications, the Constructivists and Dziga Vertov's "kino-eyes" [kinoks]. While all of these groups and individuals had more or less direct links to the Formalists, trying to assemble a coherent scholarly system from the sum of their works would be to act, as Roman Jakobson put it, like the "police who, when ordered to arrest a certain person, would bring in everybody and everything they happened to find in the suspect's apartment as well as all passersby encountered in the street, just to make sure" (see Viktor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History—Doctrine* [The Hague: Mouton, 1955], 71). The Moscow Linguistics Circle had one link in common with the core members of OPOYAZ—Jakobson; for LEF, the link was Shklovsky (Osip Brik, who had been a key figure in early

to last into the next century." A hundred years have almost passed; Tynianov has yet to be discovered.

To this day, surveys of literary theory often judge Formalism by its name: Formalism privileges form, they claim, and analyzes texts without considering historical context. Both of these assumptions are incorrect. "Without naming Khlebnikov and sometimes without even having heard of him, poets are using him; he is present as a framework, a tendency" (??); the same can be said about Tynianov's legacy as a scholar. "Khlebnikov's language theory was hurriedly declared *zaum*[T], and everyone settled happily for the notion that he had invented a kind of meaningless sound-speech. But the point of Khlebnikov's theory lay elsewhere. He shifted poetry's center of gravity from questions of sound to the question of meaning." (??) That same tendency to simplify led scholars to file away Formalism as a matter of schoolboy excesses, the raging puberty of literary theory, even though the question of meaning—not in terms of fabula or form, but as function—had been raised by none other than the Formalists.

The two culprits behind this mishandling of the Formalist legacy are Stalinism and the persistent appeal of a simplified narrative, whose causal logic is so entrenched that we barely notice how its explanations have not changed in a hundred years. In scholarship, causality can be deadly—mostly because of how dismally predictable its results are, how it can only lead to redundancy. If we already know that industrialization or capitalism is the cause, and everything else the effect, why bother reading to the end? Any study becomes, as Eikhenbaum said, "a trip to a known destination with a ticket purchased well in advance."[7] The algebra of literary processes is replaced by finger counting, a neat sequencing of literary epochs, all similarly characterized by social upheavals (and often by the very same ones: in literary history, Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, and Modernism all get to share industrialization like it's some kind of communal apartment). The way to tell that this periodization is, at best, only good enough for a high school cheat sheet is to try to determine the main intellectual currents of our present moment (cf. Hegel's *Zeitgeist*). For every current

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OPOYAZ, had become the leader of LEF and moved away from Formalist theory in the early 1920s). Eikhenbaum and Tynianov treated both of these groups with caution, and sometimes with skepticism or even disdain. They parted ways with Zhirmunsky in the early 1920s; Tomashevsky publicly declared Formalism to be dead in 1927—*DK*.

7 B. M. Eikhenbaum, *Lev Tolstoi: Issledovaniia. Stat'i.* (St. Petersburg: Fakul'tet filologii i iskusstv Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta, 2009), 149. The text is dated July 14, 1928.

there is a countercurrent, as well as countless competitors to both; all of these are constantly changing, and they exist only in dynamic relation to each other. We cannot predict which of them will, in hindsight, turn out to be more prominent than the rest and contribute to our understanding of the period (and give it its name), and which one will seem to us secondary and only attract attention later on—we will find out only after the fact. The present, like any other period of time, is like a soup that is still on the stove. Or, as Tynianov and Roman Jakobson[N] put it: "Pure synchronism is now revealed to be an illusion: each synchronic system has its own past and future as integral structural elements of the system." (??)

The Formalists struggled as best they could to free scholarship from primitive causality—but certainly not from historical context. Tynianov does not mince words in summing up the issue: "Studying phenomena cannot be reduced to studying their [genesis], or else the entirety of the study of mankind would be reduced to studying the only causal act that led to its creation."[8] Historical phenomena, both literary and otherwise, coexist, though not always at the same time: they work separately or in unison. These interactions are a productive area of inquiry; by contrast, the prefabricated hierarchy of factors that assigns one "series"[T] of phenomena (economic, political, social) a leading role as causes, and another (literary, cultural) a subordinate role as effects, is both unproductive and unfair. Literature and art risk being relegated to the role of distant colonies, occasionally reached by the echoes of political and economic events in the capital. History is more complex than that.

A hundred years later, Eikhenbaum's ominous warning still holds true—or has become true again: "Literary scholarship did not expend tremendous effort to liberate itself from serving the history of culture, philosophy, psychology, etc., just to become a servant of the judiciary and economic sciences and to live the sad life of cheap journalism."[9] The rapid transformation of the humanities into a province of the social sciences makes us hope that Formalism is still in our future.

Another victim of the simplified narrative is the very history of Formalism. Viktor Erlich, whose otherwise insightful *Russian Formalism: History—Doctrine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1955) set the tone for Formalism's reception by English language scholarship, decided to organize it around a narrative

8 Quoted in D. Ustinov, "Materialy disputa 'Marksizm i formal'nyi metod' 6 marta 1927," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 50 (2001): 259. Note that Ustinov gives the word "illegible" in brackets, while there is every reason to assume Tynianov means "genesis" (as given in the text)—*DK*.

9 Eikhenbaum, *O literature* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1987), 436.

arc of rise and fall. As a result, Formalism was reduced to the earliest concepts (and not even all of them) introduced by Shklovsky and Jakobson: literariness, device, defamiliarization, and the distinction between fabula and *siuzhet*. The later work of the Formalists is presented as a search for compromise and a gradual retreat from their positions, which, we are told, were not worth defending in the first place because they were too radical. It reads like Erlich is trying to convince the Formalists, now grown up and mature at the end of the 1920s, to be less stubborn, to drop their youthful rambunctiousness, and accept the sober triumph of common sense; this recalls parents of recent college grads talking their children into getting a haircut and buying a nice suit.

Erlich's indefatigable belief in the social ("real life") foundation of literature only proves that science is counterintuitive: to come to the conclusion that the Earth revolves around the sun, and not the other way around, one must overcome everyday habits of perception. What's even more important is that the narrative he proposes, which has taken hold in English language scholarship, is inaccurate: Formalism did not start declining, and then, besieged by crisis and internal disagreements, fall off entirely, only managing to pass its sputtering torch to Prague structuralism, as Erlich (a student of Jakobson, who had moved to Prague) would have it. Toward the end of the 1920s, as a result of disagreements and battles, Formalism settled on two main plans of attack: a collectively authored history of Russian literature and a radical reestablishing of OPOYAZ.[10] There were, of course, disagreements among the core members of the Formalists (Shklovsky, Tynianov, and Eikhenbaum), but these were considered productive. They could not conceive of scholarship without arguments or doubts. Tynianov said of their "dogma-free world": "We are on the way. I don't know where we'll end up."[11]

The opportunity to move freely ahead, without knowing where they would end up—further indication of the Formalists' resistance to causal determinism—was harshly blocked by political dogma.[12] In February 1929,

10 On the reestablishing of OPOYAZ, see A. Galushkin, "'I tak, stavshi na kostiakh, budem trubit' sbor …,' K istorii nesostoiavshegosia vozrozhdeniia Opoiaza v 1928–1930 gg.," *Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie* 44 (2000): 136–153. On the collectively authored history of Russian literature, see Tynianov, *PILK*, 570–571.

11 Quoted in Ustinov, "Materialy disputa," 259.

12 It is hard to imagine that, if an opportunity presented itself for OPOYAZ and its collective work to be revived, they would not have taken advantage of it because of scholarly disagreements or personal grievances (they had fought and reconciled many times before). At the

Eikhenbaum responded to Shklovsky's suggestion that they hold a new debate: "Everywhere you look it's all politics and no scholarship. They will pester us with 'causality,' and rejecting causality will be considered heresy, a deviation, etc."[13] This "deviation" [uklon] referred to the mortally dangerous accusation of Trotskyism (Leon Trotsky had been exiled from the USSR that very same February of 1929). Soon enough Tynianov and Eikhenbaum were fired from the State Institute of Art History for "ideological unfitness"; any new public associations (including literary ones) were virtually banned; censorship and attacks in the press grew to a feverish pitch (the very word "formalism" became a slur and has retained that connotation to the present day). Under these circumstances it was pointless to hold a debate, not because it had already been won or lost, but because at that point any form of discussion was impossible.

Formalism didn't die of natural causes; on the contrary, its life was cut short just when it was getting started. What we are left with is just the preliminary work. That realization makes it even more impressive how many "pathways" the Formalists left behind for future work—especially Tynianov, who was allotted all of ten years from the beginning of his doctoral work to the completion of his last theoretical article. Let us try to reconstruct these pathways.

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It is difficult to summarize Formalist theory because the Formalists never really bothered to formulate it—it was never their goal to do so. They thought of theory as a process, rather than a starting point or a specific destination to which you can buy a train ticket. Theory was useful to them not as a legend explaining a map, but as a means of doing actual work. Their theory

time they had been planning a conceptual volume that would have contained responses to the theses of Tynianov and Jakobson (see Galushkin, "'I tak'": 136–153). This format assumed the existence of internal polemics. The frequently repeated explanation that "external and internal reasons" brought about the decline of Formalism was convincingly refuted by M. O. Chudakova thirty years ago (M. O. Chudakova, "Sotsial'naia praktika, filologicheskaia refleksiia i literatura v nauchnoi biografii Tynianova i Eikhenbauma," in *Tynianovskii sbornik: Vtorye Tynianovskie Chteniia* [Riga: Zinatne, 1986], 103). To take her thought even further, these reasons were really "external and external": the powerful ideological and repressive pressure of the late 1920s created the reasons which we have come to call "internal," such as Tynianov's and Eikhenbaum's pessimism about their ability to "work," Jakobson's inability to participate, Shklovsky's rising fear of repression due to his dubious political past (which, as Galushkin points out, led to his disingenuous repentance and acceptance of Marxism; neither Tynianov nor Eikhenbaum were ever repentant). On the contrary, in their letters of 1928–1929, these scholars discussed their work with overwhelming enthusiasm and energy.

13 Quoted in Ustinov, "Materialy disputa," 278.

grew, became more precise, more complex, and took on new shapes; it was not defined and then applied. In our academic work, the verb "to use" determines our relationship to theory: "you may want to use this or that theorist," a professor will advise their students. Thus theory works less as a question that gets asked than as a predetermined answer, a ready-made dress: you can try it on and see if it suits you. The Formalists would not have recognized this ready-made object as theory; once something had been completed, they considered it over and done with. This is why we cannot "use" formalist theory—but we can continue its work.

Jakobson talked about Tynianov's "faith in the coexistence of the present and the past, [...] the continuity between yesterday's memories, and prototypes and portents from the distant past."[14] This observation holds the key to Tynianov's scholarship. The present and the past, the contemporary and the historical, do not follow each other like marks etched on a ruler; they coexist, they live side by side. Grandmothers wear the fashions of their youth, their daughters find them outmoded, their granddaughters don't notice, but their great-granddaughters copy their style—and all the while, the original dress is still there. They are all contemporary. The contemporary person does not know what will happen tomorrow, but neither does history. "We don't know where we'll end up." We still don't know where they would have ended up. And if any given day has its tomorrow, then history is just a muddle of contemporaneities, none of them ready or resolved.

Tynianov sees the history of literature not as a history of results pinned down in time, but a history of processes, unfinished and unresolved. The opening chapter in his novel about Alexander Griboedov[N] [*The Death of the Vazir-Mukhtar*] concludes with the words: "Nothing had been decided yet."[15] This is also the starting point for Tynianov the scholar: it describes the nature of contemporary literature as well as its history. In Tynianov's view of history, a writer like Shakespeare or Pushkin[N] is not yet a monument. His is not a history of finished results, but a dynamic system of possibilities, a history of what happened and what did not happen. It is a history of doubts and choices, of what was decided and what was rejected or did not come to pass. "There are roads we have lost, rivers that dried up or changed course."[16]

14 R. O. Jakobson, "Iurii Tynianov v Prage," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 5 (The Hague, 1979), 561.

15 Iurii Tynianov, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Moscow/Leningrad: GIKhL, 1959). 2:12.

16 Iurii Tynianov, "Predislovie," in *Dnevnik V. K. Kiukhel'bekera* (Leningrad: Priboi, 1929), 3.

We can draw two conclusions from this. First: Tynianov's method is to examine the literary text as a process.[17] He is interested in drafts, preliminary work, crossed out sections, typos, misattributions, misunderstandings, mishandlings, and everything else that happens to a text in the course of its creation and subsequent life—and not out of some archaeological curiosity. A text does not emerge fully formed from its author, like Athena from the head of Zeus. The many doubts surrounding a text—the structure of the plot, the choice of meter, stylistic changes—are proof of the broad spectrum of possibilities inherent in the literary system. But even when the text is printed and becomes a finished material object, the text itself is more than just a sum total of its parts; it remains a process—a dynamic and often contradictory system of relations and interactions. Formalism is not interested in form, but in *formation*—the deformations and transformations that occur as part of the ongoing process of the text, which, counterintuitively, never comes to an end.

The second conclusion is that what is possible does not always come to be. Choices are not always successful. Elements of a text can be in conflict, sticking out or jostling with each other. Things that have been cast aside (by the author, or by history as written by the victors) can turn out to be more productive. Mistakes and accidents can be systemic. The periphery, the place where the system ceases to operate, can tell us more about its workings than the center. This is Tynianov's chosen material. His favorite characters are misfits, both people and texts; not the finished results of history but its rough drafts and lost roads. The poets Wilhelm Küchelbecker[N] and Pavel Katenin[N] were written out of literary history in the 1820s, and that action seemed irreversible at the time. However, when literature is seen as a process, "nothing has been decided yet" and the "outcasts" have every right to become heroes.[18] "Woe from Wit," the comedy that cemented Griboedov's[N] legacy, was the successful side effect of his unsuccessful work on a tragedy; as Tynianov demonstrates, the pathos of high tragedy is still in the text, peeking out from under its comic surface.

The most salient feature of Tynianov's critical legacy is his ability to theorize literary history while historicizing literary theory. Tynianov's theory of

17 Tynianov's student at the State Institute of Art History, Tamara Khmel'nitskaya, has a very insightful article about this, "Emkost' slova" [The capacious word], in *Vospominaniia o Iu. N. Tynianove. Portrety i vstrechi*, ed. V. A. Kaverin (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1983), 121–137.

18 *Otverzhennye* [The Outcasts] is the standard Russian translation of Hugo's *Les Misérables*, and Tynianov wanted to use this title for a publishing project that remained unrealized—an anthology of Russian poets who were mocked or became critical failures in their lifetimes in spite of the evolutionary significance of their experiments. See Tynianov, *PILK*, 431, 538.