Refamiliarizing Viktor Shklovsky

CANNON SCHMITT

MY title is paradoxical, possibly wrong. Refamiliarizing means reintroducing the once known but since forgotten on the assumption that familiarity fosters understanding. The logic on view inheres in the root word, "familiar": "known to a person from long or close association."[1] But Viktor Shklovsky (1893–1984), enfant terrible of the Russian Formalists from the second decade of the twentieth century right to the end of his long life (another paradox), contests that logic. *Defamiliarization*, his most significant contribution to literary theory, posits that more familiarity with flogging, sex, or the custom of burying the dead—his examples, to which I will return—results in less rather than more of a sense of what they are.[2] In a consequential opposition, Shklovsky claims we lose the ability to *see* what we encounter frequently; we come instead merely to *recognize* it by its outlines, "as though it were enveloped in a sack."[3] To see it again, to see it in all its particularity, requires the disorientation that arises when the familiar appears before us as precisely, if temporarily, unrecognizable. Since I aim to render strange, to remove the sack, this little essay should of course be called "Defamiliarizing Viktor Shklovsky."

Or maybe not. In the early and influential "Art as Technique" (1917), from which I've just quoted, Shklovsky distinguishes between literary or "poetic" language, manifestly "formed" and therefore difficult, and "prose," practical language of necessity "economical, easy, proper."[4] Poetic language defamiliarizes, exemplifying what for the Russian Formalists was the appropriate object of investigation for literary studies: not literature but "literariness."[5] By implication, to the extent that literary theory, literary criticism, and literary history are about literariness but are not in themselves literary—to the extent that they aspire to the clarity and propriety of practical language—they should not be in the defamiliarizing business. But Shklovsky's practice confounds his theory's distinctions. Hyperbolic, digressive, allusive; mixing literary theory with

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autobiography, and autobiography with fiction; casting literary criticism into the idiom of the political manifesto: Shklovsky's prose is nothing if not poetic.[6] Consider the shock tactics on view in the famous final sentence of an essay about Laurence Sterne's wildly idiosyncratic 1759–67 cock-and-bull story: "*Tristram Shandy* is the most typical novel in world literature."[7] Shklovsky tries to do for literature what he argues literature does for the world; and my job, under whatever title, is to do the same for him: to make you see.

But what sort of enterprise is this for Shklovsky, for me? It's both helpful and discomfiting to hear an echo of Joseph Conrad on the aim of the novelist: "My task which I am trying to achieve is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you feel—it is, before all, to make you *see*!"[8] Thinking through the entailments of "seeing" as a figure for perceiving, and perceiving as what literature enables, and what literary criticism might also enable: this constitutes a crux—possibly *the* crux—of any attempt to come to terms with Shklovsky's significance or propose renewed engagement with his theoretical insights. We could scarcely do better than to begin such a task with Mary Favret's attention to the failure of literary studies to take into account the embodied experience of reading, including especially "moments when reading becomes hardly possible and illegibility threatens"—when the workings of reading break down due to impaired vision.[9] Metaphorizing understanding as clear sight, we overlook the obstacles most readers must have encountered for most of the time written words have been in existence, and which many still encounter. But Favret also makes an essentially Shklovskian point: "Reading within an imperfect system, you may be reading, ironically, better than others."[10] That observation is consonant with the interruptive-cum-revelatory force of defamiliarization, and also, to bring Conrad back in, with the Conradian technique Ian Watt named "delayed decoding," which "combines the forward temporal progression of the mind, as it receives messages from the outside world, with the much slower reflexive process of making out their meaning."[11] So Marlow, narrating part of the upriver section of *Heart of Darkness* (1899), first tells his listeners that "sticks, little sticks, were flying about" before rechristening the projectiles "arrows" and concluding: "We were being shot at!"[12] On Watt's representation, delayed decoding contributes to the verisimilitude of Conrad's fictions by recreating on the page the familiar perceptual drama of initial confusion resolving into sense.[13] Defamiliarization, too, foregrounds perception as such by staging an encounter with the world before categories, before even names—an

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encounter that denaturalizes that world just as, for Favret, reading with difficulty denaturalizes reading.

But for Shklovsky such denaturalization can have nothing to do with verisimilitude because it is not like life but like art. This conviction informs his insistence on the divorce between form and content, his making of art-as-form a life unto itself. "*Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object,*" he writes in "Art as Technique"; "*the object is not important.*"[14] Or again, in "Literature without a Plot: Rozanov" (1925), wielding aphoristic compression for emphasis instead of italics: "A literary work is pure form."[15] Or still again, in *A Hunt for Optimism* (1931): "Meanwhile, content is the transformation of form into content, and it can't become content without that transformation."[16] Fredric Jameson, likening such pronouncements to Saussure's bracketing of the referent, writes that the "intent is to suspend the common-sense view of the work of art as mimesis (i.e., possessing content) and as source or purveyor of emotion," with the result the positing of "a system of intrinsically literary elements or facts."[17] Whence the power but also the perceived sterility or dead end of Russian Formalism, which, like its descendant narratology, can appear to reduce literature to craft or, worse, tricks of the trade ("Art as *Technique*"), and to be so thoroughly internalist that it views literary history as the only history. This was the substance of the attack on Shklovsky in *Literature and Revolution* (1924), where Leon Trotsky sardonically ventriloquizes the Formalists as believing the development of poetry "went on arbitrarily from the 'Odyssey' to [Vladimir Mayakovsky's 1915] 'A Cloud in Trousers'; the torch, the wax candle, the electric lamp had nothing to do with it!"[18] We may (ironically enough) admit the value of this separation of literature from extraliterary history in its historical context: at the moment of the invention of formalism as we know it, isolating the literary enabled a better grasp of how it functions. But the risk attendant on such an admission would be that its taxonomizing force might prevent Russian Formalism from being useful to us. Historicizing the isolation of literature repeats that isolation in a different register, cutting off from (continued) life not the literary but Viktor Shklovsky.

But if we treat Shklovsky as the type specimen of the species "unreconstructed formalist," we've mislabeled him. With his help, of course: For how many times over how many decades did he insist that form is all, content nothing? Bringing his own analytical framework to bear, however, allows us to recognize such assertions as of a piece with his claim about the typicality of *Tristram Shandy*: neither straightforward expressions of a sincere conviction nor indulgence in careless sloganeering

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but defamiliarization via hyperbole. Take as additional evidence those moments in his corpus, and there are many, when he disputes the all-sufficiency of form. Some must be discounted—most obviously the recantation penned under the duress of Stalinist persecution and published as "Monument to a Scientific Error" (1930), which reads, in part: "My error was that I took distant or disparate examples of literature from different epochs and nationalities and proved their aesthetic sameness, i.e., I tried to study literary works as an isolated system, without investigating its correlation with the whole system of literature and the economic base that shapes culture."[19] Although delivered here in the robotic intonations of a forced confession for which one's accusers have written the script (definitive in this regard: the de rigueur genuflection to "the economic base that shapes culture"), regret at the programmatic separation of literature from life is repeated more credibly elsewhere. In his last decade, he shapes that regret into a kind of principle: "You need to return to the things you've done, to return if only in order to grow disappointed with them."[20] And so, in a reflection from about the same time on the work he produced in his youth while a member of the Society for the Study of Poetic Language, he declares: "I said that art was beyond emotion, that it did not contain love, that it was pure form. This was untrue."[21]

But neither Trotsky, nor Jameson, nor, it must be said, Shklovsky himself seems to have noticed that emotion, content, and history were there all along.[22] There is nothing arbitrary, to return to the examples given in my first paragraph, about the choice of sex, flogging, and burying the dead as what familiarity blinds us to and literature shows us anew. In Tolstoy's "Shame!" (1895), from which Shklovsky quotes in his initial elaboration of defamiliarization, the explicit argument is that if we saw flogging for what it is we wouldn't put up with it.[23] "Tolstoy," Shklosvky writes much later, "did not believe in common sense, in the life that was around him; he described life not the way it was but the way it should be."[24] But this isn't quite right. Calling into question what passes for common sense does not offer a solution so much as identify a problem. Tolstoy described life the way it was, the way it *shouldn't have been.* "Kholstomer" (1886), for instance, focalized through and partly narrated by a horse, depicts "things such as property, love, man's right to hurt another man" as "strange and absurd."[25] Only from a distance, only at a remove from how things are, can art find the wherewithal to see and show that they needn't be that way. Anatomizing our own (New) formalist moment, Marjorie Levinson distinguishes between what she calls

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"normative formalism," which attempts to "bring back a sharp demarcation between history and art," and "activist formalism," which seeks to "restore to today's reductive reinscription of historical readings its original focus on form."[26] Shklovsky confounds this opposition: for him, precisely the separation of art from life, which to many has seemed a clear effort at depoliticization and dehistoricization, assures the function of art as critique.

One modality of defamiliarization, then, is critical and therefore bound up in specific historical moments and cultural contexts. But there is another. In an interview conducted in 1978, Shklovsky revisits the concept without naming it, apparently reversing but in fact repeating and clarifying the relation his formalism posits between literature and life: "Art always and only deals with life. What do we do in art? We resuscitate life. . . . So what is art's great achievement? Life. A life that can be seen, felt, lived tangibly."[27] From the beginning, and in spite of assertions to the contrary, literature-as-form and all that goes under the label "life"—affect, politics, history, tangibilia—were not separate but constitutively intertwined. The literary never opposed life. That role was and is occupied by routine and complacency, which give rise to the zombielike death-in-life that most of us lead most of the time (at least according to Shklovsky: "We have calluses on our souls").[28] Literary form, which combats automatism by slowing down perception and rendering recognition difficult, returns us to life. With Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in mind we could even say it repairs life. Borrowing from the object relations theory of Melanie Klein, Sedgwick specifies the "desire of a reparative impulse" as "want[ing] to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer an inchoate self."[29] Shklovsky, however, is less a proleptic reparative reader than a theorist of the literary as that which itself seeks to repair or "resuscitate" life, and of form as how it does so.

And so we arrive at the essential Victorianism of Viktor Shklovsky—or, if you prefer, the essential Russian Formalism of (some of) the Victorians. Readers of this journal may already have found themselves silently reciting the following lines from Robert Browning's "Fra Lippo Lippi" (1855):

> we're made so that we love
> First when we see them painted, things we have passed
> Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
> And so they are better, painted—better to us,
> Which is the same thing. Art was given for that.[30]

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Compare one of Shklovsky's most well-known, most resonant dicta: "Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone *stony*."[31] Art was given for that! Although Lippi's "love" may or may not be implied in Shklovsky's "feel[ing] things," Browning via his spokesperson articulates a demonstrably Shklovskian rationale for art as a forming that arrests attention and combats sleepwalking indifference. With characteristic interest in the ideological rifts brought about by historical change, he pits Lippi's humanism against the Christian suspicion of representational art as a threat to the primacy of God's creation. Although the Renaissance and the October Revolution are not exactly commensurable events, Shklovsky's youth was spent in the context of similarly thoroughgoing social and political upheaval, of which he writes, "We thought that life needed to be rebuilt from the ground up."[32] Accordingly, he also faced the question of art's usefulness and legitimacy. Like Browning's monk, he responds with an assertion of its renewal of the world.

"Fra Lippo Lippi" provides one of many opportunities to effect a double defamiliarization, of Shklovsky by the Victorians and vice versa. For a start, the frequency of Shklovsky's direct engagements with nineteenth-century British writing and thought jolts us into recalling that, for intellectuals at work in the early twentieth century, even Russian and Soviet ones, Victorian poets and novelists and philosophers were of immediate rather than historical pertinence. We've already seen how Conrad's articulation of the task of the fiction writer reappears in the Shklovskian account of art as what makes us see. To this we can add the passage in "Resurrecting the Word" (1914)–"arguably the first document of formalist theory" according to Alexandra Berlina, one of Shklovsky's recent translators—in which Shklovsky invokes Thomas Carlyle to establish "the desire for the concrete" as "the soul of art."[33] More substantively, Herbert Spencer's "law of the economy of creative effort" provides the necessary foil for the formulation of the theory of defamiliarization.[34] In *The Philosophy of Style* (1881), Spencer articulates the "general principle . . . of the rules of composition" as "to so present ideas that they may be apprehended with the least possible mental effort."[35] Shklovsky allows that this might obtain in the case of "practical" language but faults Spencer for failing to "distinguish properly between the laws of practical language and the laws of poetic language"—the principle of the latter being to so present ideas and things that they may be apprehended only with considerable (if not necessarily the most possible) mental effort.[36] In *The Theory of Prose* (2nd edition, 1929),

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Shklovsky's chapters on "Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery Story" and "Dickens and the Mystery Novel" illustrate the claim that the difficulty characteristic of poetic language takes the shape, in prose fiction, of plot. By way of his reading of Arthur Conan Doyle and Charles Dickens, among others, Shklovsky gives us the distinction between *story* (in Russian, *fabula*), a series of events in the order in which they must have occurred, taking the time they must have taken to occur, and so on, and *plot* (*syuzhet*), those events as narrated—possibly out of order, or with events that unfolded over a long duration occupying scant space in the narrative, or with a single event narrated multiple times. Spencer grasps only story, the direct and efficient route; plot, "the road of art," is "a crooked road, a road in which the foot feels acutely the stones beneath it, a road that turns back on itself."[37] On this fundamental distinction later twentieth-century thinkers such as Gérard Genette, Seymour Chatman, and Mieke Bal built their elaborate narratological edifices.[38] Which is just to say that the road of literary theory, too, is a crooked one, hopscotching from the Soviet Union to France, the United States, and the Netherlands by way of nineteenth-century Britain.

Apart from Shklovsky's explicit references to and citations of the Victorians, there are many implicit connections that, like the one to "Fra Lippo Lippi," appear the more illuminating for being unmarked. It is possible, for instance, to see both defamiliarization and the distinction between story and plot as formalizations of Thomas Hardy's pronouncement that "art is a disproportioning—(i.e. distorting, throwing out of proportion)—of realities, to show more clearly the features that matter in those realities."[39] Hardy means, and in places Shklovsky seems to mean, a disproportioning in relation to how things *are*. But Shklovsky also insists that art's disproportioning should be understood in relation to how things have been written about or sung about or painted. Whence the truth of Trotsky's accusations: Russian Formalist literary history *is* internalist to the extent that it argues that change in literary form is driven by the imperative for new forms to differ from immediately prior ones. The most proximate analogues we have would be Foucault's genealogy, which similarly posits a history without origins or essences, and Adorno's negative dialectics, for which there is no moment of synthesis, only antithesis, anti-antithesis, anti-anti-antithesis, and so on.[40] On this view, Hardy's fiction, for instance, possesses the formal characteristics it does not because it emerged from a specific social, political, and intellectual milieu but because that fiction could not resemble the fiction of Dickens or George Eliot: "The new form makes its

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appearance not in order to express a new content, but rather, to replace an old form that has already outlived its artistic usefulness."[41] All forms must be understood in relation to other, older forms that, having grown familiar, no longer surprise, confuse, or delay us—which is to say, no longer function as form at all.

To grasp what kind of formalism this is and how it differs from our own, it may usefully be contrasted with one of the more popular accounts at the present moment, Caroline Levine's argument that forms offer *affordances*, "potential uses or actions latent in materials and designs."[42] Such a notion explicitly renders form as raw material or natural resource, as if writers looked to Petrarchan sonnets when they needed to convey a compressed series of thoughts with a swerve near the middle the way engineers look to steel when they need flexibility combined with tensile strength for a suspension bridge cable. Thus Levine on *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (1857): "One could say that Thomas Hughes wanted a narratively rich resource like the *Bildungsroman* to transform his repetitive static story of boyish adventures into a more satisfying arc."[43] More satisfying for whom or in precisely what way she does not tell us, but whatever the answers to those questions might be, the relation posited among form, authorial intention, and content is clear: first there is an intention and some content; then there is the finding of a form to suit. In the context of a theory that wants to exalt formalism into a kind of key to all mythologies, this is a strangely mechanistic way to theorize how form works. What goes missing is precisely what Shklovsky stresses, form's thoroughgoing agency—the impossibility of seeing content, form, and author as discrete entities: "A writer's consciousness is . . . determined by literary form. The crises of a writer coincide with the crises of literary genres. A writer moves within the orbit of his art."[44] The difference has been captured well by my colleague Avery Slater, who distinguishes the mechanistic from the holistic conception of form by observing that what the former grasps as a form *for* thinking the latter understands as a form *of* thinking.[45]

Shklovsky gives the account of literature as a form of thinking its definitive articulation, but refamiliarizing ourselves with his work enables us to perceive how frequently elements of his version of it recur in other theorists. We find form's resuscitation of affect, for instance, in Benjamin on the cinema: "People whom nothing moves or touches any longer are taught to cry again by films."[46] Adorno insists on literature's distance from life as the necessary condition for its function as critique when he writes of the "ineradicable connection with reality which is the

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polemical *a priori* of the very attempt to make art autonomous from the real."[47] Gilles Deleuze deploys an opposition identical to that between recognizing and seeing: "Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*" predicated on "the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself."[48] Approached with Shklovsky in mind, familiar twentieth-century literary and cultural theory ceases to be recognizable and so can be seen again.

So, too, familiar nineteenth-century literary and cultural theory. Witness the most Shklovskian passage in the whole of Victorian literature, which I've been holding in reserve until this concluding paragraph, and which itself appears in a conclusion:

> *Philosophiren*, says Novalis, *ist dephlegmatisiren, vivificiren*. The service of philosophy, of speculative culture, towards the human spirit, is to rouse, to startle it to a life of constant and eager observation. . . . In a sense it might even be said that our failure is to form habits: for, after all, habit is relative to a stereotyped world, and meantime it is only the roughness of the eye that makes any two persons, things, situations, seem alike. While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend.[49]

Shklovsky could be glossing these lines from the "Conclusion" to Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873) when he writes: "Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war."[50] But the emphasis falls differently. Although apparently with much more reason than the settled Oxford don to view existence as a "continual vanishing away, [a] strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving," Shklovsky lacks Pater's painfully keen sense of evanescence.[51] Despite his close friendship with Mayakovsky, ended by the poet's suicide; his exile in Berlin after participating in an anti-Bolshevik plot, from which he thought he might not be allowed to return home; the early death of his sister; the execution of his two brothers; the sudden and complete transformation of the Russia of his childhood and youth into the Soviet Union of the rest of his life—despite all this, Shklovsky conceives of the necessary struggle as that against solidity, not impermanence.[52] For Pater, life must be rescued from dissolution; for Shklovsky, ossification. And whereas Pater lists art as one among several possible avenues of rescue, for Shklovsky art in its incarnation as

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form is all in all. Shklovsky's form dephlegmatizes, vivifies. Shklovsky's form, a form of thinking, is also a form of living.

Notes

1. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "familiar (*adj.*)."
2. "Defamiliarization": one English rendering—the one I prefer—of Shklovsky's Russian coinage *ostranenie*, first used by Lemon and Reis in *Russian Formalist Criticism*. Other possibilities include "enstrangement," adopted by Sher and Berlina, and "estrangement," favored by Boym. See Sher, "Translator's Introduction: Shklovsky and the Revolution," in Shklovsky, *The Theory of Prose*, xviii–xix; Berlina, "Translator's Introduction," in Shklovsky, *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 23; Boym, "Estrangement as a Lifestyle." Full disclosure: I don't read Russian. But I'm emboldened by Boris Eichenbaum's observation that Shklovsky "was able to revive Sterne without knowing the English language" to hope I might revive Shklovsky without knowing the Russian one. Eichenbaum, *My Chronicle* (1929), quoted in Shklovsky, *A Sentimental Journey*, viii.
3. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, 11.
4. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 23.
5. "The object of the science of literature is not literature, but literariness—that is, that which makes a given work a work of literature": Roman Jakobson, quoted in Eichenbaum, "The Theory of the 'Formal Method,'" in Lemon and Reis, *Russian Formalist Criticism*, 107. Compare Shklovsky: "roughened form and retardation [are] the general *law* of art." "Art as Technique," 23; emphasis in the original here and throughout.
6. As Shklovsky claims about himself: "To become an ichthyologist, as they say, one doesn't have to be a fish. As for me, I am a fish—a writer who analyzes literature as art." Shklovsky, *Bowstring*, 295. All his translators call attention to the peculiarities of Shklovsky's prose. Sher, for instance, refers to his "this-worldly, rough-textured, 'laborious' and elliptical style that bristles with extravagant comparisons, witticisms, trenchant puns, liberal use of italics and endless digressions from the main theme." "Translator's Introduction," in *The Theory of Prose*, xviii.
7. Shklovsky, "The Novel as Parody: Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*," in *The Theory of Prose*, 170.

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8. Conrad, *The Nigger of the "Narcissus,"* 147.
9. Favret, "The Pathos of Reading," 1318.
10. Favret, 1319. Compare Shklovsky on riddles: "In veiling the whole, the riddle forces us to rearrange the signs of a given object, thus showing the possibility of diversity, the possibility to combine the previously irreconcilable in new semantic arrangements." *Bowstring*, 80.
11. Watt, *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, 175.
12. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 75.
13. A second function of delayed decoding for Watt: "the verbal equivalent of the impressionist painter's attempt to render visual sensation directly," it confirms Conrad as himself an impressionist. *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century*, 176.
14. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 12.
15. Shklovsky, "Literature without a Plot: Rozanov," in *The Theory of Prose*, 189.
16. Shklovsky, *A Hunt for Optimism*, 73.
17. Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language*, 83.
18. Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, 165. Trotsky quotes Shklovsky to substantiate this claim: "Art was always free of life, and its color never reflected the color of the flag which waved over the fortress of the city." *Literature and Revolution*, 164. The sentence appears in Shklovsky's *Knight's Move*.
19. Shklovsky, "Monument to a Scientific Error," n.p.
20. Shklovsky, "The Lungs Are for Breathing. Thoughts Out Loud," in *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 331. This piece was originally published in Russian in 1983 as part of *The Theory of Prose*, which bears the same title as but is substantially different from a book Shklovsky first published in 1925. Berlina writes of this repetition that the "choice of title is typical of Shklovsky's relationship to his early writing. On the one hand, the mature publication appears to negate the very existence of the formalist volume by taking its place; on the other, the new book calls attention to the old one." *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 295.
21. Shklovsky, "Words Free the Soul from Narrowness: About the OPOYAZ," in *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 304. The Society for the Study of Poetic Language, or OPOYAZ, counted among its core members Shklovsky, Lev Jakubinsky, Yevgeny Polivanov, Boris Eichenbaum, Osip Brik, and Yury Tynyanov.
22. When, looking back, Shklovsky writes of "life" in his early work, he locates it in his memoirs and fiction rather than his literary theory:

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"Back then [in the nineteen-teens and twenties] I used to say that art had no content, that it was devoid of emotion, while at the same time I wrote books that bled." *Bowstring*, 440.

23. "To strip people who have broken the law, to hurl them to the floor, and to rap on their bottom with switches. . . . Just why precisely this stupid, savage means of causing pain and not any other—why not prick the shoulders . . . with needles, squeeze the hands or feet in a vise?" Leo Tolstoy, "Shame!," quoted in Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 13.
24. Shklovsky, "Words Free the Soul from Narrowness: About the OPOYAZ," in *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 305.
25. Shklovsky, *Bowstring*, 88.
26. Levinson, "What is New Formalism?," 559. As "bring back" and "restore" make clear, Levinson views New Historicism as New Formalism's crucial predecessor and principal literary-theoretical interlocutor.
27. Shklovsky, quoted in Vitale, *Shklovsky: Witness to an Era*, 57.
28. Shklovsky, "Resurrecting the Word," in *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 67.
29. Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, 149.
30. Browning, "Fra Lippo Lippi," in *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*, 49, ll. 300–4.
31. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 13.
32. Shklovsky, quoted in Vitale, *Shklovsky*, 106.
33. Berlina, in *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 53; Shklovsky, "Resurrecting the Word," in *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*, 65.
34. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 10.
35. Spencer, *The Philosophy of Style*, 11.
36. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 10.
37. Shklovsky, *The Theory of Prose*, 15; for the Dickens and Conan Doyle chapters, see 101–16 and 117–46.
38. See Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*; Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*; and Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*.
39. Quoted in Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, 229.
40. See Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"; and Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*.
41. Shklovsky, *The Theory of Prose*, 20.
42. Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*, 6.
43. Levine, 15.

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44. Shklovsky, "Bely and Ornamental Prose," in *The Theory of Prose*, 171. To be fair, Levine's paragraphs about Hughes and the bildungsroman also state that forms bring "their own ways of organizing experience with them." But too often the forms in *Forms* seem inert in themselves, either devoid of power unless colliding with one another or possessed of merely negative agency. Witness, for instance, the first of Levine's formalist dicta: "*Forms constrain*. . . . [F]orm is disturbing because it imposes powerful controls and containments." Although associated with Foucault in the preface to *Forms*, such a conception is deeply anti-Foucauldian. The theorist who insisted on power as productive rather than repressive ought to give us form that produces—and not because it affords but precisely because and only insofar as it constrains. Levine, *Forms*, 15, 4, x.
45. Avery Slater, comment, University of Toronto Department of English Fall Research Roundtable, October 27, 2017, Toronto.
46. Benjamin, "One-Way Street," in *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, 89. My thanks to Dana Seitler for pointing out this moment in Benjamin.
47. Adorno, "Commitment," 178.
48. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 176. For a provocative discussion of this passage in the context of how to think thinking, see Bewes, "Reading with the Grain: A New World in Literary Criticism," 13–15.
49. Pater, *The Renaissance*, 236–37.
50. Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," 12.
51. Pater, *The Renaissance*, 236.
52. Space does not permit further discussion of Shklovsky's astonishing and tragic life but does permit recommendation of his memoirs, including *A Hunt for Optimism*; *A Sentimental Journey*; *Zoo: Or, Letters Not About Love*; *Third Factory*; and *The Hamburg Score*.

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