

"chaos/cosmos," and others, Lotman strived for the spatial description of relations and values in general. The application of semantic oppositions in order to describe cultural texts was not uncommon to the Moscow linguists. As early as 1965, Ivanov and Toporov had established a list of sixteen semantic oppositions such as "life/death," "fortunate/unfortunate," "even/odd," and others to describe Old Slavic cultural texts; they claimed this list was one concrete realization of a universally valid repertory, consisting of about eighty semiotic classifications.

Thus, heterogeneous tendencies converged in the term *culture*, and the 1970s were characterized by the intensive study of cultural texts. Semiotic studies confirmed the orientation toward applied semiotics, although various attempts were made to relate the results to semiotic roots and foundations of semiosis, whether linguistic-etymological reconstructions in their cultural relevance, the reconstruction of proto-myths, or functional brain asymmetry as the biological basis of semiosis. Ultimately, these attempts led to a diversification of interests.

Contemporary Soviet culture was usually not the object of semiotic analyses, and there was no overt discussion of its semiotic organization; rather, by denying Soviet culture the status of a semiotic topic in its own right, it was implicitly treated as a non-culture. On the other hand, Moscow-Tartu scholars were aware of the fact that scientific texts are not only ways to study a given culture but also part of that culture, since they contribute to their culture by modeling its character. In this sense, the Moscow-Tartu School can be regarded as a particular subculture in its own right, and the semiotic texts produced by it can be considered as an alternative cultural model.

[See also Cybernetics; Jakobson; Jakobson's Model of Linguistic Communication; Lotman; Multimodality; and Text.]

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Baran, H., ed. *Semiotics and Structuralism: Readings from the Soviet Union*. White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976.
- Broms, H., and R. Kaufmann, eds. *Semiotics of Culture: Proceedings of the Twenty-fifth Symposium of the Tartu-Moscow School of Semiotics, Imatra, Finland, 27-29 July 1987*. Helsinki: Arator, 1988.
- Eimermacher, K., and S. Shishkoff. *Subject Bibliography of Soviet Semiotics: The Moscow-Tartu School*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977.
- Grzybek, P. "The Concept of 'Model' in Soviet Semiotics." *Russian Literature* 36.3 (1994): 285-300.
- Lotman, J. M., et al., "Theses on the Semiotic Study of Culture (as Applied to Slavic Texts)." In *Structure of Texts and Semiotics of Culture*, edited by J. van der Eng and M. Grgar, pp. 1-28. The Hague: Mouton, 1973.
- Lucid, D. P., ed. *Soviet Semiotics: An Anthology*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977.
- Rudy, S. "Semiotics in the U.S.S.R." In *The Semiotic Sphere*, edited by T. A. Sebeok and J. Sebeok-Umiker, pp. 555-582. New York and London: Plenum, 1986.
- Seyffert, P. *Soviet Literary Structuralism: Background, Debate, Issues*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers 1983.
- Uspenskij, B. A. *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form*. Translated by V. Zavarin and S. Vitting. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973.

—PETER GRZYBEK

**MOTIVATION.** See Linguistic Motivation.

**MUKAŘOVSKÝ, JAN** (1891-1975), Czechoslovakian structuralist, known mainly for his contributions to aesthetics and the semiotics of art. Mukařovský studied linguistics and aesthetics at the philological faculty of Charles University in Prague until 1915; in 1923, he received his doctoral degree for his dissertation, "Contribution to the Aesthetics of the Czech Verse." He became a founding member of the Prague Linguistic Circle in 1926. After teaching at the University of Bratislava from 1931 to 1937, he returned to Prague to become director of the Institute of Aesthetics and professor at Charles University. From 1948 to 1953, Mukařovský was rector of the university.

Mukařovský's works can be divided into several periods. The "formalistic" period (1923-1928) is characterized predominantly by stylistical analyses; not yet acquainted with Russian formalism, Mukařovský understands the works he studies as a continuation of the formalist tradition going back to scholars such as J. F. Herbart (1776-1841), Joseph Durdík (1837-1902), Otakar Hostinský (1847-1910), and Otakar Zich (1879-1934). In his study *Máchův Máj: Estetická studie* (Mácha's "May": A Study in Aesthetics, 1928), Mukařovský claims that the work of art must be understood as a phenomenon sui generis, regardless of any external relations, including those to its creator and to reality.

Mukařovský's second period (1929–1934) is characterized by the rise of reflections on general aesthetic problems; it can be seen as the preparation of what was to become structural aesthetics. During this time, Mukařovský became increasingly influential in the Prague Linguistic Circle. He prepared an article, "O jazyce básnickém" (On Poetic Language), for the theses presented at the First International Congress of Slavists in Prague in 1929. During the early 1930s, he wrote studies on a broad spectrum of questions, such as the artist's personality, the poetic work of art as a totality of values, language culture, film, and drama.

His third period (1934–1941) deals with aesthetics in terms of functional structuralism. In his 1934 review on the Czech translation of Šklovskij's *Theory of Prose*, Mukařovský rejects the tendencies of Russian formalism because of their exclusive focus on formal devices. In his study *Polákova Vznešenost přírody* (Polák's "Nature's Sublimity," 1934), Mukařovský defines a work of art as a "structure, i.e., as a totality whose character is defined by its elements and their interrelations, and which, in turn, defines the character and the relations of its elements." One of these elements (the structural dominant) rules over the others and provides the unity of the work of art. Unlike in his earlier works, Mukařovský here rejects immanent analyses in favor of complex structural studies comprising both internal and external (social, political, ideological, etc.) elements and relations. The character of the "structure of structures" cannot be predicted on the basis of the work of art and its structure alone: different structures (with different dominants and different hierarchies of elements) of one and the same work of art may be perceived in changing historical contexts. Thus, the work of art is understood as a particular means of social communication, and it is consequently conceived of as a sign mediating between the sending and the receiving subjects, both being part of a given society. This new semiotic perspective is developed most clearly in Mukařovský's presentation at the 1934 International Philosophical Congress in Paris, "Art as a Semiotic Fact." In it, Mukařovský refers to the Saussurean concept of sign and modifies it for aesthetic purposes by way of introducing the juxtaposition of "material artifact" and "aesthetic object." He also integrates Karl Bühler's tripartite concept of language functions with the Russian-formalist opposition of the practical and poetic functions of language by characterizing

Bühler's three functions as practical and adding a fourth, autonomous, "aesthetic" function to them. Mukařovský's works in the late 1930s are characterized by studies of specific aesthetic concepts such as the aesthetic norm, value and function, and the semantic gesture.

In his works from 1941 to 1948 (most of which were not published at that time), Mukařovský repeatedly deals with questions of individuality in art as a predominantly social phenomenon; this leads him to anthropological theories on the one hand and to Marxism on the other. In this context, he discusses possible connections between structuralist aesthetics and the principles of dialectical materialism as in his 1949 essay "Kam směřuje dnešní teorie umění?" (The Direction of Contemporary Theory of Art). Later, after the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent establishment of Marxism as the official doctrine, Mukařovský reached the opposite conclusion in his essay "Ke kritice strukturalismu v naší literární vědě" (On the Critique of Structuralism in Our Literary Studies, 1951), in which he praises the "great example and brotherly support of Soviet literary studies" and calls structuralism a "masked form of idealism in bourgeois scholarship." In the late 1960s, Mukařovský returned to his former theoretical positions when he published his articles from the 1940s in his *Studie z estetiky* (1966; 2d ed., 1971), followed by the publication of his *Cestami poetiky a estetiky* (1971). These editions paved the way for the international reception of his contributions to structuralism.

[See also Aesthetics; Art; Marx; Materialist Semiotics; Poetics; Prague School; and Russian Formalism.]

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Mukařovský, J. "The Esthetics of Language." In *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*, edited by P. L. Garvin, pp. 31–69. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1964a.
- Mukařovský, J. "Standard Language and Poetic Language." In *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*, edited by P. L. Garvin, pp. 17–30. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1964b.
- Mukařovský, J. *Aesthetic Function, Norm, and Value as Social Facts*. Translated by M. E. Suino. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1970.
- Mukařovský, J. *Cestami poetiky a estetiky*. Prague: Československý Spisovatel, 1971.
- Mukařovský, J. "Art as a Semiotic Fact." In *Structure*,

- Sign, and Function*, edited by J. Burbank and P. Steiner, pp. 82–88. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Mukařovský, J. *The Word and Verbal Art: Selected Essays*. Edited by J. Burbank, P. Steiner, and W. Steiner. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977.
- Mukařovský, J. *Structure, Sign, and Function: Selected Essays by Jan Mukařovský*. Translated and edited by J. Burbank and P. Steiner. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.
- Mukařovský, J. "Structuralism in Esthetics and Literary Studies." In *The Prague School: Selected Writings, 1929–1946*, edited by P. Steiner, pp. 65–82. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.
- Sedmidubský, M. "Bibliographie zur Rezeption J. Mukařovský's im westlichen Kontext." In *Zeichen und Funktion: Beiträge zur ästhetischen Konzeption Jan Mukařovský's*, edited by H. Günther, pp. 180–207. Munich: O. Sagner, 1986.

—PETER GRZYBEK

**MULTIMODALITY.** Semioticians are increasingly paying attention to the fact that human social meaning making rarely if ever deploys the resources of a single semiotic system such as language. Generally speaking, the participants in a given occasion of discourse orchestrate the resources of two or more semiotic systems into a single semiotic action. Linguistics has concentrated on the analysis of language in isolation from its codeployment and coevolution with other semiotic modalities, and this is reflected in the kinds of scientific metalanguages that have evolved in the Western tradition since the time of Plato and Aristotle. With the flow of speech sounds, for example, linguistics deploys the specialized metalanguages of phonetics and phonology to analyze distinctive phonetic features and phonological units such as the phoneme and the syllable. The analytical procedures of phonetics and phonology allow the practitioners of these disciplines to determine that any given number of speakers can utter a sound that belongs to a single general class or phonological category. However, this essentially categorical mode of analysis puts to one side many other linguistically nonsalient features that might be relevant to the context of a speech event, such as the affective states of the speaker, individual differences in voice, and so on.

But what of our metasemiotic resources for talking about language and other social semiotic-resource systems and practices? Is verbal metalanguage alone adequate or even desirable for describing the theoretical abstractions that linguists use to model language? How can a purely verbal metalanguage fully

or adequately describe graded or continuous phenomena, varying scalar levels and their interrelations, dynamically emergent phenomena, and complex hierarchical levels of organization in both language and other semiotic modalities? Take the notion of stratification in linguistic theory: for those linguists who view language as a stratified system, the following properties hold:

1. the system consists of an unbounded hierarchy of scalar levels, going in both directions with reference to some focal level;
2. the units and structures at any given level in the hierarchy entertain principles of organization that are specific to that level;
3. there is no direct or causal relation linking the units and structures on any given level and those on some other level—instead, each stratum mutually constrains the other strata and contributes its own specific dynamics to the whole;
4. the further apart two strata are, the weaker the constraints they impose on each other. Thus, lexicogrammar and semantics are strongly cross-coupled in this sense; semantics and phonology or graphology much more weakly so;
5. no level is reducible to some more essential reality at the level below it.

Many of these characteristics involve both topological and multidimensional criteria that might not be described adequately by the primarily digital and categorical criteria of a purely verbal metalanguage.

The diagram presented in figure 1 attempts to communicate all of the features referred to in (1) to (5) that use the combined resources of at least three semiotic systems: the visual grammar of the abstract diagram, the graphological resources of print, and the lexicogrammatical and semantic resources of language. In so doing, this diagram is an instance of a specific multimodal genre of text for describing abstract scientific concepts—in this case, the metatheoretical concept of stratification in language.

Circles contrast paradigmatically in visual grammar with angular forms such as squares and rectangles. The curved form of the circle is associated with organic wholeness and harmony. The center of the circle constitutes the focal point for the concentric rings that "emanate" from this. In figure 1, however, the three innermost circles do not emanate concentrically from a shared center of focus owing to the asymmetric disposition of the circles in relation to

# ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SEMIOTICS

---

Paul Bouissac

*Editor in Chief*

99-1782

Institut für Slawistik  
Universität Graz

Merangasse 70

A-8010 Graz

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

New York 1998 Oxford