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English rhythms in Russian verse: On the experiment of Joseph Brodsky. By NILA FRIEDBERG. (Trends in linguistics, studies and monographs 232.) Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2011. Pp. xii, 209. ISBN 9783110238082. \$140 (Hb).

Reviewed by ELISE THORSEN and DAVID J. BIRNBAUM, *University of Pittsburgh*

Nila Friedberg's *English rhythms in Russian verse: On the experiment of Joseph Brodsky* emerges from the synthesis of two research methods with long histories. The first is QUANTITATIVE POETICS OR QUANTITATIVE VERSIFICATION, which seeks to explore poetic trends and individual practice through formal description (as employed by the Russian Symbolist poet Andrej Belyj at the beginning of the twentieth century) and through chronologically organized, corpus-level descriptive statistics (as in the work of Kiril Taranovski, beginning in the 1950s). In this respect, quantitative poetics as a research method precedes by almost a century the DISTANT READING that emerged from the Literature Lab established by Franco Moretti and Matthew Jockers at Stanford University in the twenty-first century. The second methodological anchor for F's book is GENERATIVE METRICS, a rule-based and constraint-based approach to the analysis of poetic practice in the context of generative phonology, popularized in the second half of the twentieth century by such scholars as Morris Halle and Samuel J. Keyser, Paul Kiparsky, and Bruce Hayes, with F following the versions of the latter two scholars.

F's study can be understood as having two principal research questions. The first, which informs the title of the volume, is: When Brodsky writes innovative Russian verse, can the deviations be understood as being associated specifically with the English verse tradition? The second, which intersects in some ways with the first, is: Should Brodsky's innovative rhythms be regarded as RULE-MAKING OR RULE-BREAKING? F's answers to these questions are formal and statistical claims (or they at least can properly and profitably be understood as such), and for that reason they are amenable to exploration and testing specifically through formal mechanisms of the sort employed in generative poetics and the statistical corpus-based modeling pioneered in the Russian quantitative tradition.

F identifies regularities in the rhythm of English and Russian verse, with the goal of determining whether Brodsky's deviations from the rules and conventions of Russian meter and rhythm are specifically 'English'. The canonical metrical systems of Russian and English are fundamentally the same: both are (or, at least, are often) syllabotonic in orientation, with a preference for binary and ternary meters, so that it is meaningful in both traditions to speak of, for example, iambic tetrameter. Using the term STRESSED to refer to a linguistically stressed syllable and STRONG to a syllable where stress is anticipated according to the ambient meter of the poem, either long words or sequences of stressed monosyllables can produce discrepancies between the meter of a poem and the distribution of actual stresses in a specific line. This situation is exacerbated in Russian because Russian has more long words than English and, except in the case of compound words, does not permit secondary stress.

Poetry would be tedious if the distribution of stress in every line corresponded exactly to the idealized underlying strong ~ weak metrical structure, and both English and Russian verse allow certain types of deviations as variation, rather than violation. As F, citing Roman Jakobson, puts it, one may examine poetic practice ‘in terms of rhythmical constants, i.e., conditions that poets do not violate, and rhythmical tendencies, i.e., statistical frequencies’ (4). F describes systematically the English and Russian norms, only some of which are common to the two poetic traditions, which means that Brodsky’s deviation from a Russian norm might or might not constitute deviation from the corresponding English norm. For example, the English and Russian MONOSYLLABLE RULES (12) are not identical, but they hold in common a provision that a stressed monosyllabic word may occur in weak position, which means that such practice in Brodsky’s poetry, while representing a local deviation from the ambient meter of the poem, could not constitute evidence specifically of a ‘foreign’ or ‘English’ rhythm.

Much of the first chapter is dedicated to narrowing the field of inquiry by identifying common Russian and English practice, so as to concentrate in Chs. 2 and 3 on areas where the traditions differ in ways that may or may not provide evidence of an English flavor in Brodsky’s Russian-language verse. For example, the English and Russian systems of versification diverge in what is conventionally permissible in polysyllabic words. In English verse, a stressed syllable may fall in a weak position if it immediately follows a phonological phrase boundary, that is, a ‘potential break’ in a line (13). By contrast, in Russian poetry the stress of a polysyllabic word may not occur in a weak position (17; where ‘may not’ means not that it never occurs, but that such occurrences resonate as unusual). Violations of this constraint, called POLYSYLLABIC INVERSION, occur frequently in the verse of such twentieth-century poets as Marina Cvetaeva, but with a specifically emotional connotation. Brodsky avoids it almost entirely, even where it would be permitted in English and even in his translations of English-language verse where it occurs (22). This invites a hypothesis that Brodsky may have avoided this feature deliberately because to readers of his Russian verse it would have resonated not as an English flavor (which he did not otherwise eschew), but as Russian practice with specific emotional overtones that were not present in the English sources of the translated verse or in his original writings (27).

The elision of metrically extraneous syllables occurs in poetry that Brodsky read from both the English and Russian traditions (42ff.), which raises the question of which of these traditions might have inspired his use of elision, and Brodsky’s early introduction to John Donne’s poetry would have been meaningful in this context. Donne was considered eccentric in his experimentations with verse, but his use of elision generally accorded with two prosodic rules of English-language verse defined by Paul Kiparsky: one that ‘deletes an unstressed vowel medially before a sonorant followed by an unstressed vowel [e.g. *vict(o)ry*]’, and one that ‘turns an unstressed high vowel into a glide before a vowel [e.g. the disyllabic reading of *envious* or *annual*]’ (59). Several features of elision in Brodsky’s verse suggest (or, at least, are consistent with) borrowing from Donne, including the dominance of the Xxx metrical contour and the tendency for the post-tonic elided vowel to be followed by a sonorant or [v]. F infers from these commonalities that ‘Donne and Brodsky would seem to share a common motivation for using this particular word shape for elision purposes. Each of the restrictions on elision that these poets introduce has the same goal: to render the “extra” syllable less noticeable’ (66). Brodsky further constrains his use of elision by consistently omitting stress on the immediate postdisruption strong position, further minimizing the effect of the extra syllable (67).

F’s rejection of the Russian tradition as an influence on Brodsky’s elision rests on two lines of argumentation: that Brodsky uses ABSTRACT elision (‘the syllable is there, but simply does not count’, p. 69), which differentiates him from contemporary Russian poets who used exclusively COLLOQUIAL elision (realized phonetically in speech), and that Brodsky’s use of redundant syllables reflects an internally coherent set of rules, which also differentiates him from other practitioners of abstract elision. Documentation of Brodsky’s elision as abstract comes from sonograms of readings of an iambic line in both the original poetic context and in a prosified version of the text that muffled the meter, where in both cases native speakers never omitted the redundant syl-

lable. This excludes Brodsky's adoption of elision from those Russian poets for whom elision is exclusively colloquial, such as Andrej Voznesenskij in the 1950s and 1960s.

F uses the contrasting cases of Brodsky's and Boris Sluckij's abstract elision to draw a general conclusion about ways of categorizing developments in prosodic norms. Sluckij's elision does not reliably adhere to the prosodic rules observed by Kiparsky regarding intermediary sonorant and glide consonants, let alone the additional constraints implemented by Brodsky. Redundant syllables in Sluckij's verse do not reflect the phonological consistency that characterizes Brodsky's elision, and, more importantly, they are semantically marked, while Brodsky's are semantically unremarkable (78). F thus finds that although Donne, Brodsky, and Sluckij all use elision, Brodsky's usage is closely aligned with Donne's and markedly different from Sluckij's. She explains this as a distinction between *RULE-BREAKERS* and *RULE-MAKERS*: Sluckij, a rule breaker, will disrupt his meter to emphasize a point, while Brodsky, a rule maker, augments the conditions under which redundant syllables can be assimilated (83).

Russian iambic verse has a marked tendency to stress the penultimate strong position less often than the antepenultimate (or any other) strong position (the final strong position is stressed 100% of the time). This metrical pattern, called the *LAW OF REGRESSIVE DISSIMILATION (RD)*, is not a consistent principle of English versification (36–37), and its violation (*ANTI-RD*) in Brodsky's translations from English poetry and his 'English-flavored' poems in the 1960s has been regarded by some as an 'English' feature of his writing (85). F argues that Brodsky's use of anti-RD creates a larger picture, in which English sources or thematics play only a partial role. Periodizing Brodsky's use of anti-RD rhythm in terms of exile (first internal exile to Norenskaja in 1964–1965, then his emigration in 1972–1996), F notes significant shifts in both the prevalence of anti-RD rhythms and the association of anti-RD with references to exile or foreignness (and here she explores anti-RD poetry by writers other than Brodsky), and concludes that Brodsky recognized poems with anti-RD rhythm as a type and created an array of rules for its deployment in order to create the *RHYTHM OF EXILE* (91ff.).

In exploring whether Brodsky's use of anti-RD reflects English or Russian models, using Donne and Cvetaeva as points of comparison, F finds a 'hybrid' Russian-English pattern in some types of verse, while in others Brodsky's use of anti-RD cannot be distinguished from Cvetaeva's (102). In her interpretation of this finding, F refers to a semantic halo that begins with Andrej Belyj's association of anti-RD with alcoholism, deformities, and frightening subjects (104ff.), with later extensions by Cvetaeva (107ff.) and Vladislav Xodasevič (113ff.). Observing that Brodsky himself did not use anti-RD with this meaning, F suggests that he might instead have borne in mind the biographical circumstances of these poets, including their émigré publications, and thus identified his own exile (and then emigration) with theirs (118–19).

The third chapter ends on a rather allusive interpretation of the gap between early twentieth-century experimentation in anti-RD rhythm and Brodsky's introduction of that rhythm in the 1960s. Whether one is persuaded by F's understanding of exile as the point of connection or not, her careful exploration of local Russian models makes for a richer interpretation than one that proceeds from an assumption that Brodsky's source must have been English verse practice.

In conformity with current best practice in data-driven humanities scholarship, F documents her interpretations through lists, tables, and statistical evaluations in appendices (126–82) and within the body of the text. Identifying *WHAT* a poet did is easier than explaining *WHY*, and alternative interpretations of a metrical shift in Cvetaeva suggest that F may first have decided that the shift must be semantically motivated, and then speculated about what it might mean (24). More persuasive is her explicit contrast of Brodsky's nonsemantic elision with the semantic context of Sluckij's and Donne's (79–82). As noted above, F's work draws productively on linguistic and other formal traditions of poetic analysis. From a literary and cultural studies perspective, it also engages with a set of complex relations between 'underground' Soviet poets and poetry and their published (censored) counterparts in post-WWII Russian poetry. F's contributions are thus twofold, offering both new ways to read Brodsky's verse and an application of poetic analysis at the intersection of formal modeling, quantitative analysis, literary history, and the exploration of influence.

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Case in Semitic: Roles, relations, and reconstruction. By REBECCA HASSELBACH. (Oxford studies in diachronic and historical linguistics 3.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 353. ISBN 9780199671809. \$150 (Hb).

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At first sight, case in Semitic may not seem a very promising topic for an entire monograph: the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic case morphemes is mostly uncontroversial (e.g. Weninger 2011:165), and the functions of the Semitic cases are well established, documented, and discussed in the available literature (see e.g. the bibliography of the book under review). Controversial topics such as the alleged ergativity of Proto-Semitic (see pp. 55ff.) have already been given exhaustive treatment (e.g. Zaborski 1999, Waltisberg 2002). Nevertheless, Rebecca Hasselbach resumes the discussion by combining basic notions of historical and typological linguistics (especially pp. 2ff., 14ff., 90ff.) with Semitic data and proposing some new views on the prehistoric case system (see especially pp. 322–32). On the whole, the book will be most beneficial to linguists unfamiliar with the Semitic case system and for Semiticists seeking to familiarize themselves with notions of typological linguistics.

After a brief ‘Introduction’ (1–15) including some methodological considerations, H presents the morphological evidence from various Semitic languages and discusses the available literature (‘The Semitic case system: Basic evidence and traditional reconstruction’, 16–89). Semitic basically possesses three case morphemes: nominative *-u*, genitive *-i*, and accusative *-a*. In some older languages, these endings may be expanded by the final consonants *-m* or *-n* (mimation/nunation) with language-specific functional scope (e.g. Akkadian *-um*, *-im*, *-am* or Arabic *-un*, *-in*, *-an*, the latter in indefinite function; on mimation/nunation in general see Diem 1975). Apart from this triptotic declension with three case markers, in Arabic and less prominently in Ugaritic there is another diptotic one with only two case morphemes, lacking mimation/nunation altogether and consisting of the endings nominative *-u* and genitive/accusative *-a* (44ff.). The distinction between triptotic and diptotic declensions will become crucial to H’s reconstructions later on (see below). Whether Old South Arabian in its attested historical stages truly had a case system similar to that of Arabic as implied on pp. 26ff., following Stein 2003:95ff., is uncertain (Sima 2006:96).

Ch. 3, ‘Linguistic typology’ (90–124), introduces basic notions such as markedness, grammatical roles, and relations, as well as head vs. dependent marking and typological universals. Ch. 4, ‘Grammatical roles and the alignment of Semitic’ (125–81), is devoted to the discussion of grammatical roles in Semitic, including some conspicuous usages of the accusative, for example, after particles such as Arabic *ʾinna* ‘verily’ and some others, Hebrew *hinne* ‘behold’ (142ff.), or the direct object marker *ʾet* with passive in Hebrew (150ff.). Some topics (e.g. syntactic pivot, pp. 145ff.) are discussed at length that have so far been only marginal to the discussion in Semitics. H can also show once again that there is no evidence for an ergative alignment in Semitic (passim). Ch. 5, ‘Head- and dependent-marking in Semitic’ (182–257), deals with these features in relation to the Semitic noun phrase, discussing, for example, prepositional phrases and various possessive constructions. The semantics of Semitic case markers is outlined in Ch. 6, ‘The function of case markers in Semitic’ (258–326), which provides a good overview of the many case functions attested.

‘The “accusative” *-a*’ (266–313) as well as ‘The “absolute” ending *-Ø*’ (313–22) are particularly highlighted since the functions of nominative and genitive are more restricted (see pp.