SYNTACTIC PARALLELISM IN THE WORKS OF GUILLÉN AND KHLEBNIKOV

Kristin Vitalich
THANKS!

I have many people to thank for their help on this thesis including Donna Jo and this year’s class of linguistics majors for their great support and suggestions, Laura Souders for invaluable advice, Aurora Camacho de Schmidt for Guillén information and especially I have to thank my fabulous friends for listening to me complain for a long, long time. I blame no one but myself for any mistakes might be in here....
Key to Subscripts

In explaining grammatical functions, the following notation will be used:

N = Noun
Adj = Adjective
Adv = Adverb
V = Verb
P = Preposition
Conj = Conjunction

NP = Noun Phrase
AdjP = Adjectival Phrase
AdvP = Adverbial Phrase
VP = Verb Phrase
PP = Prepositional Phrase
*if = infinitive verb
*imp = imperative verb

Russian

Verbs ___, ___, ___

position 1: Aspect - perfective (pf), imperfective
position 2: Tense - past (Pa), present (Pr), future (Fu)
position 3: Person - ___ ___

position a - first (1), second (2), third (3)
position b - singular (s), plural (p)
position c (when applicable) - male ((m)), female ((f)), neuter ((n))

Nouns and Adjectives

Case: nominative (nom), genitive (gen), accusative (acc), prepositional (prep), instrumental (ins), dative (dat)

Spanish

Verbs ___, ___

position 1: Tense - present indicative (pi), imperfect indicative (ii), preterit (p), future (f), conditional (c), present subjunctive (ps), imperfect subjunctive (is)
position 2: Person - ___ ___

position a - first (1), second (2), third (3)
position b (when applicable) - formal ((f)), informal ((I))
"What makes a verbal message a work of art?" Roman Jakobson ("Linguistics and "Poetics," p. 18) asked this question in his work on the intersection of linguistics and literature, an area whose possibilities have been of interest to students of both disciplines for some time now. Such scholarly curiosity belies a more popular confusion due to the complications we would seem to find in manifesting an artistic vision, very personal and individual by nature, in the medium of language, an unwieldy vehicle given its structural obligations to the more banal world of our everyday lives. In fact, it is precisely the difficulties of language's loyalties to two worlds that have sustained poetry as an art form for this long. As the medium of our daily communications, language is subject to sets of rules that seek to ensure the smooth flow of information from one person to another. These rules govern our usage of language rather strictly, demanding that we respect conventions of sounds, forms and meanings, in order that we might understand who is doing what to whom. However, in the name of art, poets will flout conversational conventions in such a way that we as readers can both recognize the work as outside of natural discourse and understand what the poem is saying. This paper will examine the kind of mechanisms which make the understanding of poetic meaning possible and (hopefully) propose a framework in which to better see and classify the usage of one particular poetic device in the works of two contemporary poets.

Introduction to Poetics

There exist several views on the possible relationship between what constitutes discursive, the language of our daily communications, and poetic, i.e., artistic language. Some believe that poetic language modifies natural language with embellishments that speakers choose to leave out of normal discourse in the interests of time and clarity. Others maintain that these two types of language exist as separate, independent entities, discursive language growing and changing along one line, poetry evolving along another which draws from its own base of traditional elements. Neither of these views considers poetry and discourse as two simultaneous manifestations that fall
under the larger rubric of Language, a theory Jakobson put forward, with poetic and discursive language then coexisting in a symbiotic relationship as *functions* of Language ("Linguistics and Poetics"). Poetry as a phenomenon inside of language, according to his view (to which this paper will adhere), should operate as a constituent of "normal" communication, but how? We will see that poetry, by simultaneously disregarding the rules of grammar and preserving meaning, provides a place in which we can re-evaluate the very nature of systems of communication, the elements of which we are often prone to take for granted.

Let us step back to look at the way poetry itself is constructed in order to understand how a medium that operates in distorting truths that we take for granted in discourse can contribute to a theory of language. Poetry acts from a foundation of its traditions which have required particular compositional features at some point during its history. First of note as a social organ, poetry relied on the habit of certain techniques to establish itself in the eyes of its public as a space where language transcends its normal conversational practices. The heading under which many of these poetic devices fall is known as *parallelism* (Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism"), first noted by Robert Lowth in connection with the Hebrew Bible (Kugel, 12), a term which describes a poetic structure which has its roots in oral traditions where poetry was used as a religious/social teaching tool. Parallel verse employs phonological, semantic and syntactic repetitions like rhyme, meter and metaphor such that successive lines logically develop a previously stated proposition. Let us look at this logic in an example from the Canaanite story of Baal:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) A B C D&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</th>
<th>He gave the gods lambs;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2) A B C D&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>he gave the gods ewes;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) A B C D&lt;sub&gt;i&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>he gave the gods oxen;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) A B C D&lt;sub&gt;j&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>he gave the gods cows;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) A B C D&lt;sub&gt;t&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>he gave the gods thrones;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) A B C D&lt;sub&gt;y&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>he gave the gods a jar of wine;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) A B C D&lt;sub&gt;z&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>he gave the goddesses a cask of wine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Line (1) introduces a proposition.

---

1Coogan, Michael D. *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, p.104
(1) He \( _{\text{SUBJ}} \) gave \( _{\text{VERB}} \) the gods \( _{\text{1O}} \) lambs \( _{\text{D.O.}} \).

The importance of this assertion is of yet unknown -- we wait for the following lines for clarification:

(2) He \( _{\text{SUBJ}} \) gave \( _{\text{VERB}} \) the gods \( _{\text{1O}} \) ewes \( _{\text{D.O.}} \).

Only the direct object is changed leaving all other elements of (2) parallel to (1) and, lambs and ewes, which, while not literally the same, are semantically related. Lines (3) and (4) build on this relationship, oxen and cows, like lambs and ewes belonging to the same class of livestock. The giving act established, there is no alteration in (1)-(4) with respect to subject, verb and indirect object, so that when the initial proposition of (1) is slightly altered in (5), thrones does not belong to the semantic category livestock, this slightly foreign element does not disturb the equilibrium of the poem. Likewise, (6) adds a direct object semantically parallel to neither (1)-(4) nor (5), an addition that verges on disrupting the system of the poem. A jar of wine, however, is parallel to the direct object presented in (7) which modifies the assumptions of (1)-(6) by changing its indirect object. The poem should have momentum enough at this point, though, to tolerate this new element, if only because gods and goddesses are members of the same semantic category.

This example briefly illustrates the process by which parallel verse eases from an audience its consent, justifying the assertions of each line by its relationship with those in its proximity. This system (based on information from the Canaanite example) tolerates change in content and structure so long as its other parallels are maintained. The virtue of the logic of these verses in a social, performative context can also be gathered from what we have observed. With the reiteration of a purpose, altered and augmented little by little, a poem creates its own logic of the occurrence of the events it describes so that, by its finish, a poem has guarded our active agreement throughout its entire reading (whether it be oral or written). According to the social-communicative precepts of poetics, if a poem is regarded by its audience as a religious tool and we have followed the progression of its logic, the events described are actualized, implicating us as actual participants.
in their happening. According to Alter in his commentary on Biblical parallelism:

Language in the biblical stories is never conceived as a transparent envelope of narrated events or an aesthetic embellishment of them but as an integral and dynamic component - an insistent dimension - of what is being narrated. With language God creates the world; through language He reveals His design in history to men. There is supreme confidence in an ultimate coherence of meaning through language that informs the biblical vision. (112)

Structural repetition serves to ritualize the reading and here the contribution of exegetic poetry to its society is two-fold:

1) Content-wise, it retells past events to impart a sense of group history and 2) Structurally, it constructs a space where the utterance of these words is religious in and of itself.

The force of parallel constructions has so become a part of our social vocabulary (and does appear to be present in some form in societies around the world), that its echoes pervade our collective sense of how we should artistically create with words (Fox, 1977). As societies move from their religious foundations to focus on more secular interests, so, too, is the original role of poetry altered, shifting from religious to secular device. More recent poets, in their utilization of poetry as a forum for personal expression, increasingly depart from using parallel structures of verse explicitly to instruct their readers, but the essence of this original contribution of the form still lingers. Though poets in our time tend to be more sparing in their use, traditional poetic devices such as parallelism due to their religious roots continually highlight a potential in language to transcend its daily functions. By defamiliarizing words and taking them out of their discursive environments, poetry and its forms will shoulder the important burden of demonstrating that words are just words. As in language we all agree to conventions of reference, for example, that the liquid with the chemical makeup $H_2O$ is water, we should know (but often forget) that $X$ is $X_1$ is merely an identity that serves to facilitate communication. Poetry exists to qualify the truth value of this identity by reminding us that both the concept or item referred to as well as the word that refers us to it, could exist as separate entities should we choose to let them (Jakobson, "What is Poetry?" p. 750). For the purposes of artistic creativity with language, we then realize that those signs
which we assign to objects are as *mobile* and dynamic as the ideas we seek to capture, and we thereby revitalize the creative forces of language and life.

The usefulness of poetry in a generative grammar, then, also becomes more apparent. Any device that de-automatizes the process by which we create with language as it renders visible the rules that govern intelligible communication should speak to the continuous capacity of a language to generate from itself. Likewise, generative grammar can offer us tools for deciphering the technique of a poet, literary style consisting in large part of how a language's grammatical possibilities are exploited to devise artistic possibilities. A good poem, that is, an "artistic verbal message," should take advantage of language in such a way that it is accessible to its audience while standing away from it. It is this *dialectical* function of poetry which will be examined in this paper, using the work of two poets, Nicolás Guillén of Cuba (1902-1989) and Velimir Khlebnikov of Russia (1885-1922), for a cross-linguistic exploration of those circumstances which make poetry "poetic." Specifically, watching for their usage of the syntactic variety of parallels, we will try to account for the ways in which these two men drew upon their social surroundings to create a world within the poem that (with an active reading) should generate a memory within the reader of the historical source from which it draws these subjects.

Both men lived in important times for their respective societies and each took advantage of their circumstances to create styles particular to themselves and the periods in which they were living and writing. Nicolás Guillén, one of Cuba's most well-known poets, would write during the periods before and after the Cuban Revolution and establish himself as a vital voice for an emerging nation. His poetic innovations in exploring his country's African roots as well as the politics of founding one's own culture, make him one of Latin America's first authors to confront the legacies of a colonial past. Velimir Khlebnikov, writing during a period of considerable upheaval in Russia including revolution and civil war, distinguished himself by his literary experiments, among them mathematical tables of destiny and pioneering manifestoes on various topics. As one of Russian Futurism's most creative minds, his poetry is of note for a language
which draws on ancient sources to depict his fantastic hopes for how things should be. These two men have in common that they intended that their works have a social function -- they speak to an audience to narrate historical events and engage the reader’s consideration of whether or not they are factual.

In their efforts to make their commentaries both familiar and revolutionary, each in the structures of their poetry chose to make selected use of syntactic parallels. This paper takes as its focus the linguistic environments which precipitated their selections, the specific forms which these syntactic parallels take and the results of their usage. Parallelism having passed into optionality as the poetic function of language became secularized, new poetic devices arose to take its place in a sublimation of structural formulas that would peak in something like the more “formless” (or at least, very innovatively formed) works of Nathaniel Mackey, a poet roughly contemporary to both men:

soon, all sun put back
inside the ground, the
Way gone,

would all go down
to on all fours,
wear shells and

furs and chase
our tracks²

Both poets were certainly contemporary enough to have taken substantial liberties in deviating from norms of form yet still retained substantial instances of structural repetition in their work. As Kiparsky (1987) offers in one of the first linguistic studies to test the usefulness of the theoretical tools of generative grammars to unlocking parallelism, a poet’s use of a formerly obligatory/now optional device indicates his or her desire for some sort of meaningful dialogue with poetic tradition. And with their language as a tool to mirrors and vivify the past, the poetry of these two men will educate by engaging and questioning the particularities of what it means to live as a society.

²"and when the Moon struck." *Eroding Witness.* p. 57
Methodology

Both Guillén and Khlebnikov employ syntactic parallelisms when they are convenient to address the terms of history and the past. The framework of reading in which these choices will be examined involves a conceptualization of the poems in terms of a communication between us, the readers, and these two poets. This idea will become clearer if we consider that the poem is/was physically in two places at one time. One of these takes place on the day (or days) when the poet writes the poem, the other on the day or days when the reader sits down to read it, but what advantages or dangers might there be in conceiving of poetry in this fashion?

As literary style does in large part consist of the grammatical transformations an author makes frequent use of, literary studies can look to generative grammar to answer questions about the technical processes by which he or she creates a style. Because from among the transformations which an author may choose to use many are optional, some literary and linguistic scholars have proposed to study authors by putting their distinctively phrased items into a phrasings more natural to everyday discourse (Ohmann, 1964). For example, Youmans (1983), in his study of Shakespearean meter, looks at whether or not word and phrasing choices were made to fulfill a particular phonological schema. These scholars chose a very poet-centered approach concerned with the contrasts between discursive and poetic language. While their strategy is appropriate to producing descriptive grammars of literary style, the poem and its history of social function require a different approach. As stated earlier, the performative, ritualized use of poetry in the history of many societies demands that any study of poetry address its dialectic nature as a medium which is created by the reader as well as the poet. To repeat, a good analysis must address the intended communication of the poem which (if successful) brings together two very disparate worlds: 1) the story which the poet tells and 2) the story that the reader perceives. The distance between the worlds of these two participants is severely complicated by time, but we assume that the work of any good poet should succeed, as did poetry in its original socio-religious
function (the Canaanite example) by making a bridge to its reader. This is the mutual agreement of poet and his or her reader with the logic of events described, a task which, at this stage, has these elements:

![Diagram](image)

This is simple looking ideogram, but it is drawn to reinforce the continuous properties of the functions of language to which we have access and display a similar continuum between the function of poet and reader. In this schema, the reader's contribution is drawn as equal to the poet's, but how do we justify such an assertion? The answer to this question involves the determination of truth, quite differently assigned in linguistics, a scientific field which is successful when it converges on one conclusion, and art, where the essence of what is "good" and "bad" or "right" and "wrong" is found "in the eye of the beholder." Thus, poetry as an art form is often accused, even more than the novel or the short story, of being a completely "free" means of expression. As its poetry's form is not beholden to the objective truth (the linguistic avenues of syntax, semantics and phonology found in conversational norms), its readers can allow something like Levertov's:

```plaintext
the entire bouquet
singing its colors
the livelong
empty day, the stones
resanctified.3
```

However, in order to reasonably be considered "poetic," a poem does have to convince those involved of its version of events so that we can agree on the verity of their meaning. For the purposes of constructing a subjective reality, a place where a poem's events do have meaning, its reader must become a subject of the story as well. Phrased in terms of the identity relations discussed earlier, a reader must concede that (for the purposes of reading this poem) X is no longer

---

3"La Cordelle." *Breathing the Water*, p. 74.
X, but Y. And in order to grasp how the poet coaxes this agreement out of us, we must look at how the peculiar continuums of literary and linguistic function shown earlier can participate in the structure of a communication.

As a poem compels most effectively when considered as a single unified structure, it helps to visualize it (Jakobson, "Ling," pp.21-4) in terms of a single communication (Searle, 1971). We know from semantics that there exists a certain framework for communication which, if all its components are respected, should accomplish its goal, i.e., *communicate*. Simply stated, an *addresser* sends a *message* to an *addressee*:

\[
\text{ADDRESSER} \rightarrow \text{MESSAGE} \rightarrow \text{ADDRESSEE}
\]

though this schema alone does not ensure that the success of the act. The addresser has an intention in sending their message, which Jakobson calls *emotive*, and the addressee, upon receiving the message, takes from its sending a *connotative* value. In so far as the emotive content of the message relates positively to its connotative content, the participants in this communication share a *code*. Finally, the communication is precipitated by (or at least participates in) a *context*, those physical circumstances mentioned earlier:

\[
\text{ADDRESSER} \rightarrow \text{MESSAGE} \rightarrow \text{ADDRESSEE}
\]

*[CONTEXT] \[ (EMOTIVE) \rightarrow (CODE) \rightarrow (CONNOTATIVE) \]*

Lastly, we look at those elements of the communication which are specific to its physical circumstances (once again) writing and reading. Making this situation specific to the task at hand, the poet is addressing an audience (we, the reader), which makes the poem analogous to the message in this "communication":

\[
\text{POET} \rightarrow \text{POEM} \rightarrow \text{READER}
\]

This leaves us to discover the peculiarities of how this poem/message is conveyed.

We know who the poet is and we know who the reader is but it turns out that the poem will house a communication of its own. The inner world that the poem creates involves its own
participants, newly mobile *I* and *you* just liberated by poetry’s distending of identity relations mentioned earlier. These personal pronouns represent situational referents whose identities, in their dependence on who is “talking,” must be determined by reader and poet, the communication’s active parties. These grammatical personalities will add another arrow to our communication and expand its terms and we arrive at our final destination:

\[
\text{POET} \quad \rightarrow \quad \{\text{"I"} \leftrightarrow \text{"YOU"}\} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{READER}
\]

* [CONTEXT] \quad \text{(EMOTIVE)} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{(CODE)} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{(CONNOTATIVE)}

In order to navigate the intersection of literature and linguistics, evidence of the syntactic variety of parallels will be used. Parallels should be an interesting barometer of the poetic act for being both scientifically renderable (objective) and utilized to convey the poet’s emotions (subjective). To study the import of this literary device to the structuring of a poem’s information, we will attempt to devise a linguistic restructuring of the poem’s forms that takes advantage of syntactic rules and from there move to commentary on the poem’s content and historical contexts.

### Reading

Our first step in this kind of analysis should be a first superficial read-through with an eye to structural repetition in order to get our bearings and see what kinds of issues arise. The first line of “Ja i Rossija” (“Me and Russia”), a poem by Khlebnikov, consists of the declarative sentence:

(1) Rossija tisjacham tisjach svobodu dal.
    Russia gave freedom to thousands of thousands.

line (2) continues with a discussion of this train of thought:

(2) Miloe delo! Dolgo budut pominit’ pro eto.
    Good deal! They’ll remember this for a long time.

We know line (2) refers to and therefore must have some connection with (1) because of two

---

4 Please note that here I leave the gloss fully translated to approximate a normal, non-analytical reading.

5 Appendix A
words requiring situational referents - *dela* ("deal, thing, occasion") and the substantized demonstrative *eta* ("this"). Lines (1)-(2), then, propose the following information,

(a) Russia gave freedom to thousands of thousands
(b) The situation described in (a) is a good deal.
(c) "They" will remember (a) for a long time.

and having made these judgements we proceed to line (3)

Line (3) will introduce a subject different from those of (1) ("Russia") and (2) ("they") with its "I," and will additionally advance a new premise, information which we glean from the conjunction *A* ("But/And"): 

(3) **A**ja snjal rubakhu.
    But I took off my shirt

With a subject change to *ja* ("I"'), line (3) is a great departure from (1)-(2) Verbally, though, comparison of (1) with (3) is of interest to us for what is similar, *snjal* and *dala*, both past tense verbs. Line (3), we see, will establish a relationship with (1) by means of their verbal similarity yet challenges (1) by its change of subject and the contradictory conjunction *but/and*. These generalizations will serve as a basis from which further logical inconsistencies and similarities in the poem can be drawn out.

In his study of Biblical parallelism, Kugel (1981), discusses a binary form in Hebrew verse where "sentences" (often) take the form,

```
/-----------------
|       |       |
|       |       |
|       |       |
|       |       |
```

where the single slash represents a pause between the first and second clauses and the pair of slashes a final, longer pause. His work addresses the nature of the relationship between the clauses and argues for an important structural dynamic between this clause 1 ("A") and clause 2 ("B"). Previous scholarship had regarded B as subordinant to A, that is, a repetition of A with some sort of literary adornment, but Kugel disagrees:

The medial pause too often has been understood to represent a kind of "equals" sign. It is not; it is a pause, a comma, and the unity of the two parts should not be lost for their division. Indeed its true character might be more graphically symbolized by a double arrow [A<---B] for it is the dual nature of B both to
The equality of the relationship between parallels, then, demands that our reading of the poem travel forward and backward but how can or should we do this?

Kugel’s observations are of note to the methodology of this analysis as an addendum to how we will understand the roles of parallels in these poems. In this reading especially we should be keeping track of how we instinctively want to use the structural repetitions we find and compare this to how we should read accepting the terms of this equal relationship between parallels. And how should we be looking at the relationships between lines in this poem? We do not intend here to use evidence of parallels as a “therefore,” that is, a means to travel from line to line saying that this means this because this means this, but as pivot point at which juncture previous and subsequent lines can be simultaneously engaged. For example, line (3) follows (1) but does not necessarily follow from (1) -- both are of equal standing in our reading which we must remember as we continue to read. We remind ourselves, then, to see the discursive nature of parallels, its constituents A and B in back-and-forth dialogue [A<-->B] rather than just following the unidirectional form “if A, then B.” It may be of use to us to know that the disarming of this rational logic is the project which Khlebnikov seeks to undertake in the fabric of his works.

With these provisos in mind we continue our reading. We know that there was a subject change from (1)-(2) and (3), and line (4) will continue the work that the subject of (3) started, as we see from the linking of (3) and (4) with the conjunction and

(4) I kazhdii zerkal’ni neboskreb moevo volosa. 
And every reflecting skyscraper of my hair.

We see that (4), syntactically has no parallels with (3), or (1) and (2); for that matter, their only connection is a further reference to the ja (“I”) of (3) [“I”-->”my”]. Line (5) works with (4) as we see in its repetition of every from the subject of (4),

(5) Kazhdaja skvazhina
Every pore

though the “body theme” will not be repeated until (6):
Semantically we can pair the items in (4)-(6) by category [building: city; hair: body] and (6) adds another layer of genitives. Line (7) completes the action started in (4) with its verb phrase,

(7) Vyvesla kovri i kumachovnie tkani.
Took out carpets and calicos.

which ends, or perhaps better, completes, the proposition started in (3). Line (8) will introduce a new subject,

(8) Grazhdanki i grazhdane
Women and men

who will belong to the “I” we saw in (4) and (6):

(9) Menja-gosudarstva
Of the state of Me

Introduced in (4) and seen in (5), we now have a “state of Me.” Its residents (the personalities of (8)) will act in the VP of (10):

(10) Tisjacheokonnikh kudrei topilis’ u okon.
Crowded at the window of the thousand-windowed curl.

In a return to the theme presented in (8)-(10), line (11) takes up a new subject, “repeating” with proper names, the male/female plural subject of (8):

(11) Ol’gi i Igori
OlgaS and IgorS

This subject does not belong to a body as we might expect from (9), but instead is followed by adverbial phrases:

(12) Ne po zakazu
Not by order
(13) Radujas’ solnku, smotreli skvoz’ kozhu.
Rejoicing at the sun, looked through my skin.

Line (13) in its first clause describes a manner of doing something, and is followed by the verb

---

6This double-meaning is important. We will return to it in the next section.

7Khlebnikov invents words; we will see more in a later reading.
phrase that both it and (12) modify. We should also note a similarity in the use and placement of locatives in (10) and (13) ("where did they crowd?", "where did they look?").

Line (14), unlike (4)-(13) where no sentence was fully realized in one line, is a complete sentence:

(14) PaJa tjomnitsa rubashki!
The darkness of the shirt has fallen!

Though we should remember that (1) and (2) were complete sentences. Line (14), then most probably has something to do with (1) or (2), but we move on. The repetition in (15) and (3) is exact except for the adverb prosto ("simply"):

(15) A ja prosto snjal rubakhu
But I simply took off my shirt

This time, the A ("But/And") conjunction does not just introduce a new subject/proposition (as did (3)), but refers to what was constructed in (4)-(14), the conjunction’s sentence this time following a series of actions with the same subject, rather than preceding them.

In (16) we find another instance of "giving something to someone," an echo of (1),

(16) Dal solntse narodam Menja
Gave sun to the people of Me

although Menja ("of Me") is introduced, the only new element in (16) if we compare it to (1). This is the same "I" we saw in (4), (6) and (9), and, for its invading a sentence that would otherwise be very much like (1), it stands as a substantial challenge to it, and as such, a second major proposition. On this level, lines (12) and (13) attest to a new state of affairs,

(17) Golii stojal okolo morja
Bare-chested I stood by sea

this golii, we should note, is the "real world" result of taking one’s shirt off. Lines (3) and (15), then, provide evidence of a new metaphorical, as well as linguistic, "state."

The adjective golii will bear continued importance in (18) which also makes reference to (1) with more direct word repetitions than (16) had:

(18) Tak ja daril narodam svobodu.
Thus I gave freedom to the people.

Tak ("thus") being the only element not present in (1) has a two-fold role here. It first references the verbal construction project of (3)-(17), and second plays on a relationship with "golii" -- How was freedom given? Bare-chested-ness. A comparison with his subject's condition in (17) with the action performed in (16) metaphorically incorporating the fates of these two entities, "people" and "I," into one. This action is emphasized by a final gift in (19):

(19) Telpam zagara  
     Suntan to the masses

Distinct from what Russia's giving in (1), this act stands as unique.

Unfortunately, we see that this kind of reading, contrary to Kugel's suggestion of a dialectic function to parallels, still cannot help being encumbered by the line to line process of reading. That is, "reading-through," which will obviously proceeds in this fashion, forces an analysis in which each line is justified by that which follows it -- a reading that cannot achieve a cohesive picture of the poem as a whole. This is a perfectly acceptable method of reading, and in fact exactly what we did with the Canaanite sample, but productive only when we can predict with an overwhelming degree of certainty, that our poet is following a formula of strict parallelism. However, as we heard earlier, neither Khlebnikov nor Guillén will be following any such formula. Both poets use parallelism when appropriate to convey their personal intent. This makes our task to find a analysis of reading for parallels which better allows for the particularities of personal selection restrictions -- not one that will not consider the fulfillment of the parallel form its primary concern.

Reading 2

The first reading of "Rossija i Ja" was a laborious and subjective process that involved

---

8We would not be out of line in saying that Canaanites adhered in large part in fulfillment of strict forms.
selecting "interesting" elements and trying to connect them to each other throughout the poem. We might argue that this accurately reflects our cognitive process in reading, though we would be incorrect to blame cognition for our the inadequacies of our first reading. The failure of line by line reading to address the nature of subjective paralleling demands a different analytical reading, but what? Could there be a way to more efficiently and "objectively" read the poem in order to make similar or even more significant conclusions about what the poem communicates?

In order to find this reading, we need to start from the beginning of this paper and the structure of communication. As the readers in this equation, our focus belongs on the peculiarities of how we read. We note that in the more general receival of the communication, linguistic information is received at its most chaotic whereupon its recipient organizes it step by step according to a method such that it becomes intelligible to him or her. In our evaluation of the reading act, where the actions of the reader/addressee are at the foreground, our perception of the material of the text will likewise follow this method of organization. So, working with an eye to the actual steps of linguistic cognition, our first step in an attempt to glean meaning from the poem must be rather clinical. We start with an examination of the linguistic constituents of the communication, here again the poem "Ja i Rossija."

For the purposes of an analytical literary reading, words are our constituents. Due to their being the first visually unified elements on the page, words are also the first grammatical structures to approach a reasonable level of intelligibility and linguistically make up the material of the terminal string. In order to facilitate the organization of these words, that is, to move from words to higher levels of structure and meaning, we will apply a modified system of grammatical transformations, rules that move from the constituents of terminal strings to a level of grammatical organization where we might better discern the poem's meaning. Our system of transformations will be modified from those one would find in a theoretical syntactic analysis, which we justify by the following reasons: 1) Theoretical linguistics (linguistics applied to discourse) works to uncover the perspective of the body that generates these structures from universal foundations of
language while this analysis goes in the opposite direction; it hopes to isolate and establish the uniqueness and marked quality of the syntactic structures produced by each poet. 2) Transforming the poem as a whole means that we must think of it as one sentence, which, in something like a 50 line poem, stretches the capabilities of transformation (and would make impossible a process like case assignment). 3) Perhaps most importantly, poetic language, by its natural deviance from the discursive variety, will not behave in such a way that we might strictly and advantageously apply conventional transformational rules.

The system of transformations used deviates significantly from given transformational rules (conventions of government and binding.) The linguistic analysis performed here is admittedly very unscientific but hopes to suggest a different dynamism of “sense-making” proper to the reading of literature. Discovering a method of literary linguistic transformations is complicated by (and, as the reader will see, there is no one method to how we do this) as we want to both respect grammatical structure as the foundation which permits poetic machinations and acknowledge that these structures, for the purposes of literary analysis, will be considered poetically secondary. We Following in the words of Searle in his study of illocutionary speech acts, “In our analysis...we must capture both the intentional and the conventional aspects and especially the relationship between them (46).” So, in our linguistic transformations of the poem as a “speech” act, we must simultaneously respect the poem’s integrity as a whole and as the sum of its parts. As we will now explore in this and later readings, the process by which we, as readers, read to get meaning from this whole will utilize parallels as key to structure.9 Lastly and most importantly, the abstraction of the whole to a network of grammatical structures will let us stand back from the line by line process of reading and get a greater observational distance on the material. Let us try looking at the

9NOTE. How we approach linguistic transformations is the most difficult part of this paper as this is the point where contemporary philosophy of language and the practice of linguistics under Universal Grammar have not yet fully reconciled themselves. Trying to incorporate philosophy’s subjective demand that the cognitive processes of the addressee be vital into the one-sided theoretical framework of government and binding is very interesting, though unfortunately completely beyond my abilities right now.
poem again in this light.  

(1) Rossija tisjacham tisjach svobodu dal.
Russia thousand thousand freedom gave

N_{nom} \ N_{dat} \ N_{gen} \ N_{acc} \ V_{pf, pa, 3p}

(2) Miloe delo! Dolgo budet pomint' pro eto.
good deal long time be remember about that

Adj_{nom} \ N_{nom} \ Adv \ Aux_{pa, 3p} \ V_{if} \ P \ N_{nom/prep}

(3) A ja snal rubashku.
But/And I take off shirt

Conj \ N_{nom} \ V_{pf, pa, 1s} \ N_{acc}

(4) I kazhdii zerkal'nii neboskreb moyevo volosa
and every reflecting skyscraper my hair

Conj \ Adj_{nom} \ Adj_{nom} \ N_{nom} \ Adj_{gen} \ N_{gen}

(5) Kazhdaya skvazhina
every pore

Adj_{nom} \ N_{nom}

(6) Goroda tela
body city

N_{gen} \ N_{nom} / N_{nom} \ N_{gen}

(7) Vyvesla kovri i kumachovnie tkani.
take out carpet and calicoes

V_{pf, pa, 3t} \ N_{nom/acc} \ Conj \ Adj_{nom/acc} \ N_{nom/acc}

(8) Grazhdanka i grazhdanke
citizen (f) and citizen (m)

N_{nom} \ Conj \ N_{nom}

(9) Menja-gosudarstva
1 state

N_{gen} \ N_{gen}

(10) Tisjachaokonnikh kudrei isplilis' u okon.
thousandwindowed curl crowd at window

Adj_{gen} \ N_{gen} \ V_{pf, pa, 3p} \ P \ N_{prep}

10 If marked those cases which are transparent by sound/morpheme

11 This ambiguity of case is a perfect example of why our method of transformation must differ from that of generative grammar in preserving what we see in the words exactly how we see them. Our transformations must maintain this ambiguity as we must assume as its double-meaning is what we are presented with. Generative-grammar, however, might try to resolve this ambiguity which is not our goal here.
We can call this level 1, our first linguistic generalization of the constituent material of the poem to grammatical function (level 0 being the actual words). Generalized from specific words, we see that the search for syntactic parallels becomes much easier. One significant parallel, as we saw in the first reading, involves (3) and (15), exactly parallel but for the adverb in (15). Let us make these lines, the largest parallel units on this level, indicators for further reading.
Levell (3) leaving us with three questions -- what happens before (3), what happens between (3) and (15) and what happens after (15)?

We will start with the second question on this list given the concentration of internal similarities in these lines seen earlier. Parallels might be made more apparent with another layer of bracketing, so we transform again, this time for a first phrasal level (level 1):

(5) [Adj Nom N Nom]NPnom
(6) [N gen N gen]NPgen
(7) V pf. Pa. 6s(f) [N Nom/acc]NPnom/acc Conj [Adj Nom/acc N Nom/acc]NPnom/acc
(8) [N Nom]NPnom Conj [N Nom]NPnom
(9) [N gen - N gen]NPgen
(10) [Adj gen N gen]NPgen V pf. Pa. 6s(f) [P N prep]PP
(11) [N Nom]NPnom Conj [N Nom]NPnom
(12) [(neg) P N prep]ADV P
(13) [V ver. adv N dar]VERADV. V pf. Pa. 6s(f) [P N prep]PP
(14) V [N gen N Nom]NPnom

Parallels are more numerous here so let us prioritize, as we did above, by looking at the largest parallel strings. We find that (8) is parallel to (11), (6) to (9) and, to a lesser degree, (10) to (13). Further, elements within (4) are parallel to (6) and (9), and (5). To review:

a) (8) [N Nom]NPnom Conj [N Nom]NPnom
   (11) [N Nom]NPnom Conj [N Nom]NPnom

b) (6) [N gen N gen]NPgen
    (9) [N gen - N gen]NPgen

c) (10) V pf. Pa. 6s(f) [P N prep]PP
      (13) V pf. Pa. 6s(f) [P N prep]PP
d) (4) [Adj gen N gen]NPgen
     (9), (6) [N gen - N gen]NPgen

What should strike us immediately in this summary is that, with the parallels illustrated in (a) and (c) above, the two sentences involved (8)–(10) and (11)–(13) begin and end strictly parallel.
These are the lines whose structures are accounted for by syntactic parallels, but what about the parallel noted above in (c)? These are all genitive NPs and, with another level of transformation, we find that these NPs belong to (4), (5) and (8) respectively. As line (10) is the VP for (8)-(9), we are left with (4)-(10) involved in some sort of genitive parallel. Can we make any such generalization about the lines left in (3)-(15)? We have already noted in (d) a strict parallel in the VPs of (10) and (13) and we see in (12) and (13) that:

(12) \[(\text{neg}) \ P \ N_{\text{prep}} \text{ADV} \]

(13) \[V_{\text{ger}} \ N_{\text{dat}} \text{VER} \text{ADV} \]

Both involve an adverbial predication of the VP (13), already parallel to that of (1), which with only (14) (already anomalous for being the only full sentence in (4)13)) unaccounted for, puts us on solid footing to begin looking for literary generalizations in our reading. We see that:

- genitive establishment
- verbal predication

In working with genitive NPs, the poem will create a progressive analogy between "I" and "Russia,"

```
building -> city -> state
  my hair  -> (my) body  -> me
```

line (9), "the state of Me," completing this genitive construction project. This accomplished, the poem turns to the physical possibilities of the state's constituency: "Crowded at the window," "not by order," rejoicing at the sun," and "Looked through skin." Lines (3)-(15), in brief, serve to
establish a link between "I"'s body and a political state and then show the process of how this state will liberate its citizens, action summed up in (16) -- "I gave sun to the people of Me."

What gives (16) license to make this semantically uncooperative (discursively illogical) statement? Lines (17) to (19), by switching from the perfective verbs of (3)-(15) to the imperfects of (17) and (18), step back to give an overarching narrative of the events that have transpired thus far. Lines (17)-(19)'s explanation of how to give someone sun, involves the state of being "bare-chested" in (17), the result of removing a shirt (see (3)-(15)). Now that the subject's ("my") body has been equated with a political state, his standing bare-chested by the sea (17), reflects light ("reflecting building" (4)) through "hair" and "pores" (5), culminating in the people's rejoicing at seeing this sun through his skin. The body/state analogy will finally parallel the sun/freedom analogy seen in (18). "Thus" is another situational referent with its object in the preceding situation, lines (3)-(17), how "I" gave the people freedom. Line (18), by its loose parallelism with (1), will beg a comparison of their two freedom-giving acts and the poem's two as-of-yet unaccounted for lines, (2) and (19), will elaborate. Distinctly unparallel, they indicate a distinct difference -- in line (2), what "they" receive is memory, "for a long time they will remember" the result of the giving act in (1). According to line (19), in the culmination of the body/state, sun/freedom analogies, the masses receive "suntan," a living, vibrant, physical quantity and the result of reflection.

It appears, then, that a more organized search for parallels is well suited to the task of poetic analysis. The introduction to this paper noted that parallelisms would be used selectively by contemporary poets, having passed into optionality as a literary device. For this reason, an analysis which began with a presumption that the poet wrote in fulfillment of a parallel formula risked reading things into Khlebnikov, a selective user of parallels, that were not there. Grammatical abstraction allowed us to be slightly more objective in the process of moving from parallel features (when they appear) to their literary meanings. We used these selected occasions
where Khlebnikov chose to employ syntactic parallels as our primary source for literary inferences on the poem's content. In general terms, we found that Khlebnikov's use of parallelism served to establish an opposition between the actions of the poem's two major subjects "I" and "Russia."

The (almost) *metonymic* parallel of (3) and (15) marks off a space, lines (4)-(14), that contains those parallels most significant to elaboration of the nature of "I." Step by step, the peculiar identity of "I" is unfolded such that, by the poem's end, the subject's substance as a literary personage and a political entity is able to challenge that of Russia, already taken for granted as an historically significant figure.

Parallelism in this poem has served as a solid structural feature from which to attempt more subjective inferences on the poem's content. This account of Khlebnikov's stylistics, though it makes use of grammatical transformations, does not do so with the intention of uncovering the poet's state of mind or intentions in writing. Again, our primary interest in this analysis is in our act of reading, and how, upon receiving of the words in a poem, we might try to organize and prioritize them in order to get meaning from the poem as a whole. We identified parallels, ordered them by degree of intensity and then looked at most to least parallel versus "not" parallel, and these judgements acted as our points of reference in an analytical reading. This reading incorporates Khlebnikov's every word as meaningful, not necessarily because he intended it so, but more because, as this is what we are give, we must treat it as such. *This* is our reconstruction of the poem and, as such, our first dialogue with its author.

Not every reader, and not even every reader looking for syntactic parallels, would read "Ja i Rossija" as we have. From the very first point of our departure with the poem's syntax (the ordering of observations) this analysis becomes highly subjective. However, though our intention is to shed light on the reading process, we do the poet a disservice if we lose sight of his world in our analysis. Our reading, then, should be paired with information on the actual socio-cultural milieu of the poem and these circumstances add another flip of directionality in our communication.

We mentioned that a communication intelligible to both parties would have to take place in a
context that would determine to a significant degree the nature of the circumstantial quantities emotive and connotative content. We might look at Khlebnikov’s emotive intent in juxtaposing “I” with Russia, which is interesting in the context of his contribution to Futurism in Russian literature, a movement often characterized as “anti-establishment.” The competition of the individual, “I,” with the state, “Russia,” for the most authentic liberation of a people, here located in the very sensual context of Khlebnikov’s body metaphor, underscores the importance of language to Russian Futurism. In the views of this movement, as the linguistic minions of present civilization, conventions of sounds, forms and meanings would necessarily shoulder the burden of this political authority. An overthrow of current power structures, especially one taking place in literature, would have to first reappropriate the tools of expression to convey its message. “Transrational language” (zaumnii jazyk), of which Khlebnikov was a pioneer, was created by the Futurians as a means to highlight their content by an assault with radically different forms which theoretically appealed to a more instinctive level of language (Lawton, 1988). Ironically, though, as we saw in our analysis, Khlebnikov’s poetic structure does in large part rely on fairly regular parallel forms. This may indicate a democratic effort on his part to maintain some level of intelligibility in his form or it may just serve as a demonstration of how ingrained parallelism is in our poetic sensibilities. In that this analysis seeks to chronicle the creativity of these two poets, we chose to believe the former. The palpability of the body in “Ja i Rossija,” if nothing else, serves as a metaphoric introduction to the revolution which Futurism sought to effect in literature by its linguistic innovations.

Reading 2 - continued

In analyzing poetry from a literary movement that defined itself by a new relationship to language, have we stacked the cards in our favor? With another “reading” of the work of a
different poet, Nicolás Guillén's “Responde tú” (“Respond”), we will test our method again and see what does and does not work in an analytical reading process. Before beginning to read we see that this poem is made up of four verses [V(1)-(4)], each of which consists of six lines [(a)-(f)]. These are external forms whose relationships to each other we will have to consider in an analysis; that is, as these structural organizations decide our first visual inference from the poem, our analysis must now consider the poem as a constituency of verses made up of lines. Using the same process of transformational leveling, we want to work from the smallest units out, so we will start by looking verse internally and progress to intra-verse comparison.

We find a verbatim repetition in verse (1)'s second and sixth lines, Responde tú (“Respond”), and, since we find this exact same repetition in verses (2), (3) and (4) as well, we generalize this repetition such [from here on, parallel items will be bolded]:

**Verses (1)-(4)**

(a) 
(b) Responde tú
   Responde ñ, 2s(i) you(i)
(c) 
(d) 
(e) 
(f) Responde tú
   Responde ñ, 2s(i) you(i)

Now we look for parallels of the same degree of intensity (verbatim repetition) between verses. We find that verses (1) and (4) differ only by one line:

**Verse (1)/(4)**

(a) ---------
(b) Responde tú
   Responde ñ, 2s(i) you(i)
(c) Dónde hallarás verde y verde,
   where find, 2s(i) green and green
(d) azul y azul,
   blue and blue
(e) palma y palma bajo el cielo?
   palm and palm under the sky
(f) Responde tú

---

12 Appendix B
Respondímp. 2s(i) YOU(i)

A search for more verse-internal parallels will prove unsuccessful [we leave it out in the interests of time] so we proceed to verse comparison. Another layer of transformational bracketing accents line (a) which is parallel in verses (1)-(3):

(a) Tú, que......V_{p,2s(i)} --------> NP_{tu} rel clause_{p,2s(i)}

A final layer of transformations will reveal that the lines involving the question are parallel in all of the verses in being governed by a NP_{2s(i)} and a V_{f,2s(i)}. Of interest is the location of this question in different verses:

Verses (1)/(4) Verses (2)/(3)
(a) (a)
(b) (b)
(c) [.......V_{f,2s(i)}] (c)
(d) (d)
(e) [........]S (e)
(f) [........]S

Let us now take inventory then of what we have:

Level 0 (internal) Level 0 (V(1)/V(4)) Level 1 (V(1)-V(3)) Level 2 (V(1)/V(4)) (V(2)/(V(3)
(a)  (a) Responde tū Responde tū
(b)  Responde tū Responde tū
(c)  Dónde hallarás verde y verde, [.......V_{f,2s(i)}]
(d)  azul y azul, ..........
(e)  palma y palma bajo el cielo? ...........S [.......V_{f,2s(i)}]
(f)  Responde tū Responde tū

Since the parallels in this poem are so numerous, we might choose to start the literary portion of our analysis with the least parallel items, here, lines (c) and (d) in verses (2) and (3). This non-parallel in level 2 should be meaningful according to our theory that optional parallels are important both for when they do and do not exist. Lines (c) and (d) will turn out to be more parallel than we may have thought, each made up of a sentence governed by a VP_{pres iud}:

(c2) y en lengua extraña [V (c3) donde tu padre [V

---

13 V(3)'s (e) is technically in present tense: "How can you live mute?" but as a modal verb expresses possibility, and possibility is directed towards the future, I'm going to allow myself to call this "future."
leaving only the small italicized segments in (c) completely unparallel.

What unifies these parallels of different intensity? Verb aspect and tense demonstrate lucrative possibilities. We will stay with verses (2) and (3) for now and see:

Verses (2)/(3)
(a) Past
(b) Imperative
(c) Present
(d) “Future”
(f) Imperative

All three simple tenses are present as well as the imperative, causing us to question what the significance is of this arrangement of tenses. We look to V(1) and V(4) for clarification. As we saw earlier V(1) and (4) are organized differently from V(2) and (3), their lines (c)-(e) occupied by one long question headed by a second singular informal future subject, but we remember also that V(1) and (4) were entirely verbatim parallel except for their line (a):

These (a)s are clearly not the same, but the past participle desdichado (as its action is in the past), does recall the past relative clauses in (a) of V(1)-(3). This parallel difference in the play with tense will prove be a key to its understanding.

If we take a step back to look at the content of these parallel structures, we find that in verses (2) and (3), “language” and “land” figure repeatedly. These literary themes are traced through the various tenses of their respective verses, revealing the specific ramifications of the use of tenses for the poem’s historical commentary. The subject’s (“your”) actions mentioned above are discussed with respect to the past (a), the present (c) and possible future ramifications (e):

Language: you forgot yours (a), you “chew” someone else’s (c), how can you live mute? (e)
Land: you left the land (a), where your father is buried (c), where will you put your bones? (e)

The only universally, verbatim parallel in the poem, lines (b) and (f), will bookend these situations with the imperative - “Respond.”
Looking at what the play of tenses tells us in verse (1), we find a juxtaposition of past [(a)] and future [(c)-(e)], but it lacks the mediation of the present seen in V(2)/(3), (c)-(d):

You left Cuba     Where will you find it?

This positioning of tenses is crucial to the poem -- "your" actions in the past cause the poem's narrator to ask questions about "your" future because, what is "you" doing now? According to the information we find in V(2) and (3), "you" is trying to live someone else's life by speaking English [V(2)] and living somewhere other than where he belongs [V(3)]. The result of the subject's actions results in the only difference between verses (1) and (4). Line (a), which upon review of our inventory of parallels is the only (a) out of those in V(1)-(4) to not have the NP accompanied by the relative clause [NP_{np}, rel clause_{rel clause_{np},rel clause_{np}}]. The participle *desdichado* plays on the lack of the predicated NP found in V(1)-(3). Our "you," otherwise the subject of the poem's actions here is the object of an action making himself "unhappy." The same question in verse (1) is repeated in (c)-(e), now with the knowledge of what "you" is losing and "you" is asked to respond one final time in V(4), (f). For the demanded answer to the poem's question, we return again to what in V(1) is not parallel to V(4) -- the relative clause in line (a). With our knowledge from V(1)-(3) that this clause carries the theme, we know that V(1)’s theme should correspond that of V(4) and our answer is,

(Cuba)

never explicitly stated, but visible after these investigations.

According to Williams (1982), Guillén wrote this poem as a response to the emigration of many Cubans to the United States following Fidel Castro's coming to power after the revolution. For Guillén, she notes, "their emigration signifies their displacement to a metaphysical void, since it involves a decentering of culture without the possibility of creating a new system of reference (124).” Speaking literarily, the poem describes becoming “Cuban-American” as a subtractive process. The hyphenation of *Cubanidad* ("Cuban-ness"), a quality whose definition would occupy
much of Guillén’s work (Morejón, Williams, *Recopilación*), means a loss of roots. This confusion of a national name leads, according to the logic of this poem, to a loss of future purpose. That is, the dislocations of Cubans to America by their lack of contact with land and language, would result in a lack of reference from which to derive personal identity. Divorced from the Cuban reality as here articulated, the unspoken subject of the poem (the voice addressing “you”) demands an answer as to how (or if) Cuba could be replaced.

“US”: You and I, part 1

Level-ordered transformations have proved their worth as a means of looking for syntactic parallels of varying intensity. Until now, though, the *connotative* literary meaning that has followed from our observations has been left relatively unjustified — we have not yet accounted for this “subjective” portion of our analysis. How might we, then, refine the methods by which we move from the physical organization of “verbal matter,” here syntax, toward the end of our understanding of the poem’s meaning? The movement in our analysis which we should question is where we go after we do or do not find parallels. From which points of the points in linguistic structure do we, as readers, have license to move? Fowler (1981) campaigns for the practice of a “linguistic criticism” of literature that will take into account the formalisms and conceptions of linguistics in its analysis. With regards to implementing such a method, he suggests looking at linguistic features that permit us conjecture in reading, among them items such as modals and personal pronouns. If we consider that naming “connect[s] discourse with its participants and protagonists (p.175),” personal pronouns in particular should provide an arena in which we can further address the physical circumstances of reading and give us a place in which to think of our role as readers.

We return again to the anatomy of our communication. If our objective is a point from which we have the freedom to generalize, personal pronouns should serve our purposes well as any number of people could be assigned to a given pronoun at any number of times. The details of
this "any number" are left to be decided by context. Who is "I" and "you" and "we" will depend upon who is speaking and to whom they are speaking. For the purposes of our reading, we know that, physically speaking, the poet is the addresser and addresses a reader whose identity depends on time and location and who, owing to the dissemination of literature, could be anyone. We also heard earlier that the poem would house its own participants, "I"s and "you"s whom the poet writes with a certain intention. As we do not share a physical space with the poet, we are not simultaneous to his reference and therefore cannot be witnesses to whom specifically he might intend to refer. This makes our task once again to secure meaning from the poem with the knowledge that 1) our reading of the poem entitles us to make attempts at understanding it and 2) since we are not privy to the actual physical circumstances that precipitated its writing we must account for referential ambiguities in a manner that differs from how we assign reference in discourse.

In order to explore how the addition of linguistic features can help our task of moving from parallels to meaning, we will go through another layered analysis of the following untitled poem of Khlebnikov's. It consists of 34 lines in unbroken verse, but further inspection shows an internal hierarchy. Looking for additional superficial structures (as we did with Guillén) reveals that the first 24 of these lines can be broken down into four line sections based on where they divide as sentences while the last 10 lines (so far) do not display structures so regular that we may make similar categorizations. The shapes, to review, that we will be comparing in our reading are first lines (1)-(24) and (25)-(34), as well as the six four-line sections within (1)-(24), where we will begin our analysis. Lines (1)-(4) consist of a question which houses two parallels, the first we find without bracketing at level 0,

(1) Esli ja obrashchey chelovechestvo v chasy
    If I turn (into) humanity in watch

14Appendix C
where both *kaks* introduce the second clause of their respective lines in (2) and (4). After a layer of bracketing at level 1 we see two things in (1) and (2). The first is verbs in agreement for person (V₁s) which will head the VPs revealed at level 2.

(1) [V₁s............]ᵥₚ

(2) [V₁s............]ᵥₚ

and the second clauses in (2) and (4) headed by the modals *esli* ("if") and *neuzheli* ("really/is it possible?").

As these four lines form a question, we should wonder what information it is that they interrogate. The answer we begin to unravel with our level 0 parallel, *kak*, a word that holds many meanings, among them "how" (seen in (2)) and "like" (seen in (4)). We are able to narrow down these meanings because of their verbal environments ("to show how" and "to fly out like") Further, the modals "if" and "really" break lines (1)-(4) into two major dependent clauses. This shows us that there are two parts to the actions described. The verbally determined *kaks* will set up a basic opposition -- first, a factual/physical possibility ("If I put humanity in a watch; And show how the arm of the century moves") which, if performed, might result in the second, hypothetically possible situation of (3)-(4) ("Is it possible that from the stripe of our time; war would fly out, like an unnecessary letter?"). We will want to remember that, though we found *kak* parallel at level 0, its function could not be determined until later levels, each as an "argument" of their respective preceding verb. The clarity of the verbatim repetition compels us to interact with the more meaningful structures to which it draws attention.

The situation proposed in (1)-(4) receives a location in (5) from "there, where." Our
approach to the remainder of (1)-(24) might be helped by a review of what we just inferred from (1)-(4) whose parallels bore a notable symmetry:

1. Modal"if"
2. ..........., \(kak_{fac}\)
3. Modal"really"
4. ..........., \(kak_{hyp}\)

This clean use of high intensity parallels (levels 0 and 1) allowed for a clear distinction between the "possible" ((1)-(2)) and the "possibly possible" ((3)-(4)), but in what does this distinction exist? This would be a good place to remember an unsymmetrically distributed parallel in the factive portion of (1)-(4), the \(V_{1s}\) in (1)-(2), another "I" subject. From these two parallel groupings ((5)-(9) and (10)-(12)), we must continue to address the poet's subject (found in \(V_{1s}\)) and the clause dependencies as those features which will provide clues to this poem's meaning.

Moving on, we transform again to lines (5)-(9) and (10)-(12) at level 1 and find \(V_{1s}\) twice in (7), and once in each of (9) and (10), though only the first in (7) and the one in (9) take the line-initial position we saw in (1)-(2). However, as we took earlier as our guide the four line structures in (1)-(24), we must incorporate the four-line form in our analysis of this repetition. In the factive portion of (1)-(4), our verb appeared twice in (1) and (2), and the Vs of these lines also appear twice within their four-line sentences according to the following pattern:

5
6
7 \([V_{pf}, F_{up} \, 1s\ldots]_{VP} \, [\ldots\ldots\ldots V_{1s}\ldots\ldots\ldots]\)_{rel}
8

9 \([V_{im, Pr, 1s\ldots}]_{VP}\)
10 \([\ldots\ldots\ldots[V_{1s\ldots\ldots\ldots}]_{VP}\]_{S}\)
11
12

The groupings of these Vs are not symmetrical within their four-line structures but comparison of (5)-(8) with (9)-(12) (a move allowed by the poem's content) center more or less symmetrically
about their four-line groupings.

The groupings of Vs in (5)-(12) are tasked with the introduction of a new pronoun. The V in (9) and the first in (7) are exactly parallel in their positions with respect to those we found in (1)-(2), while the others differ unpredictably. We see that the parallel Vs of (7) ("I tell you") and (9) ("I know that you are...") serve to include the pronoun of a new personage, "you," to the situation in the scope of their respective clauses. The parallel Vs which deviated in their positions ((10) and the second of (7)) will establish a relationship between "you" and "I." The second V in (7), if we step out to look literarily, fills "you" in on what "I" does ("I sense [my superhuman dreams]). Line (10) will bring in the first assessment of the nature of the relationship between this "you and "I":

(10) Pjaterkoi¹⁵ vashikh vystrelov pozhimaju svoi ("Like the bullseye of your arrows I squeeze mine.")

Here, the Russian case system will serve as our guide and we add an additional layer of bracketing (level 2),

(10) [[NP_{ins} [adj NP]_{NPgen}]_{NPins}]_{S}

in order to look further at the implications of our V for its clause. The first NP, "bullseye," has conflicted loyalties casewise, on one hand serving as the head for the entire NP which makes it the genitive property of "you," while on the other, its instrumental case marking serves as a "like" so it is this case which governs the NP (we should note, in an echo of the first "like" in this poem, hypothetical kak in (9)). This case marking lets us know that it is the actions of "I" in this line which ultimately concern us. What lines (5)-(12) will accomplish, summarized nicely in (10), is that "you" participates in the factive reality (this we take from the meaning of pjaterkoi, see note) which "I" first opted to contradict by its "if" in (1)

¹⁵Pjaterko has "the pinnacle of achievement" in its meanings; it is the highest grade one can get, the bullseye in archery...; that is, the highest score in a system or game of established order.
first step in this process in (5)-(12), “I” tries to imitate, or at least interact with, the “success” of “you” in the factive world, “squeezing” his own arrow into the bullseye.

In (11)-(12), a repetition of the hypothetical neuzheli (“really”) of (3) first introduces “you” to the proposed reality of “I,” and the next four-line grouping, (13)-(16), will challenge the fictiveness of what “I” might accomplish there. Parallels in these four lines again are symmetrically distributed about the center:

(13) \([V_{im}, Pr, Is]…\)
(14) \([NP]_{VP}\)

(15) \([NP]\)
(16) \(\ldots V_{pf, Fu, Is}]_{VP}\)

The same level 1 transformation we performed on the previous eight lines this time reveals not only our \(V_{1s}\) but in (14)-(15), the NPs which will be their direct objects, significant because both belong to the semantic category “governed provinces.” In spite of this similarity, there is a difference between the two in that the NP of (14) refers to a state which belongs to rulers (presumably in a factive description of how things are) while the NP of (15) is an ancient, mythical city. In a cause and effect relationship like that between (1)-(2) and (3)-(4), the first NP is the object of the action “inundating” which “reveals” the second. Literally in (13)-(14), the factive world of “you” is beginning to lose its control over the determination of what constitutes “factive” reality, as a hypothetical city replaces an “existing” one (15)-(16).

Reading on we transform (17)-(20) to level 1 and, in doing so, reveal parallel Vs of different person:

(17) \([Adj_dat N_{dal}]_{NP_{dat}}\)
(18) \(V_{“be”}, Fu, 3s\)

(19) \([Adj_dal N_{dat}]_{NP_{dat}}\)
(20) \(V_{“be”}, Fu, 3s\)

These four lines are also symmetrical about the middle, setting off, as in (1)-(4), two dependent
clauses:

(17) "when this
(18) will happen,
(19) [then] this
(20) will happen"

Lines (17)-(18) indicate the further substantiation of the reality which "I" has been proposing to effect. These future actions which "I" has been offering to perform are here concretized by a shift from "if" to "when," and by being followed by a factive result in (19)-(20). The NP in (17) refers to the leadership of the state "revealed" in (15)-(16) [Kitezh] and (19)-(20) to a further undermining of the existing state and its monopoly on reality.

The subject "I" has now accomplished the overthrow of the reality in which "you" lives, a result which reverses the dynamics of the relationship first broached in (10). The subject now permits "you" to speak in (21)-(24) and level 1 bracketing of these lines reveals an interesting verbal juxtaposition:

(21)
(22) Vpf, Fu, 3s
[------------------]
(23) Vpf, Fu, 2p
(24)

Though phrase-initial and grouped symmetrically about the middle, these two Vs do not agree for tense and person. Their parallel positioning will indicate the same two-clause dependency logic that we have been finding (note too the verbatim parallel of "and when" in (21) to (17)), but in the second clause of the four lines, which has previously served to determine our "actual" outcomes, "you" for the first time has a voice in its own fate. The past tense V in (24), found in a quotation from "you," is anomalous (all other Vs have been present and future) but facilitates a semantic connection:

(24) "we waited” <> (22) “the promised stone"
that serves to strengthen the marked relationship between the two clauses in (21)-(24). Further, this verbal disagreement between (22) and (23), in the context of our cause and effect clauses, shows that the relationship of “I” to “you” now is that of liberator; the subject “I” accomplishes in (1)-(22) that for which “you” had hoped centuries. And how? -- by “turning humanity into a watch,” in a literary return to (1)-(4).

As the liberator of “you,” “I” has a new control over reality which it proclaims in (25)-(34). These proclamations will grammatically reference (1)-(24) for justification, though their parallels with the preceding section will be less predictable than those we have just seen. We work again with superficial structures, those lines which make up sentences, and begin with (25)-(26). We see that (26) serves as a contrast to (10),

(26) \([\text{NP}_{\text{ins}} \text{ NP}_{\text{gen}}\text{NP}_{\text{ins}} \text{V}_{\text{imp}}]_S\) \(<-----\) (10) \([\text{NP}_{\text{ins}} \text{[adj NP]}_\text{NP}_{\text{gen}}\text{NP}_{\text{ins}}]_S\)

its substantial revision being that the first NP is now the genitive property of “I” rather than “you” as well as the object of an imperative issued by “I.” Substantively, with the power of mandate, “I” makes its own decisions in this reality and finally does show “you” how the centuries move -- by moving them. Meanwhile, lines (27)-(28) address the possibilities proposed to be the results of the actions of “I” in (3)-(4). With another “imperative,” “states” (presumably responsible for war in (4)) are told to grow as “self-killing states.” The figurative success of this reality, we see, depends on being without government, an assertion confirmed later with a proclamation of “sovereignless”-ness, a status which is evoked in both (29) and (30).16

The poem’s last four lines return to the four-line forms of (1)-(24) and also to our original V₁s, here found without a partner in (31). In (31)-(34), the four-line form follows the project of (5)-(30) and works with the knowledge of what transpired “there.” These lines house an additional V not immediately apparent in Russian which does not overtly specify the present tense of “to be”:  

16Khlebnikov invents another word in (30). It is an adjective which, among other things, has “sovereignless” in its meaning.
This is a parallel of Vs, like most of the others, which is in agreement for person and tense and symmetric about the middle. The present tense of "to be" is also important to the poem as a signal to the reader that it has stepped out of the network of "my" proposed reality in order to explain the purpose for such a proposal. This explanation is found in the description in (31)-(34) of how things are. How they are is that the present (indeed, our presence to the reading of this poem) from which "I" is addressing his audience is just a blip in time. In order to comprehend the mystery of a greater picture that contrasts our insignificance we need the kinds of "thoughts" which "I" continually offers in this poem. The urgency of our consideration of this mystery is given by the second V (defacto partner of the first in (31)) which we would expect to find in (34) based on all of our parallels of verbs and symmetry. Our training will cause us to force a parallel with the only other V in (34), the underspecified, unresolved (and psychologically unsettling) verbal adverbial phrase "someone is dying." This is Khlebnikov's genius in using parallels. They draw us into this created reality, and then, in the final return to these four-line forms in (31)-(34) where the poem breaks back into the present where we sit reading, is able to reference us the readers of this poem in his "you."

Khlebnikov's poem offers an understanding of why we are here in its confrontation of our situation's reality. In particular it questions "your" (read: our) need to stave off the actual reality of the meaninglessness of our situation in our beliefs in the primacy and necessity of things like "states" and "rulers." The destruction of the factuality of these objects draws into question the reality which they found and the role of "you" in it. We saw that Khlebnikov uses this "you" in these final lines to reach out to the reader, but we should question what it means for us to be a part of "you." Our first step in this search must follow from our knowledge that, in order for there to
be a grammatical "you," there must first be an "I" and this is the personage whose identity we must now question.

Westeijn (1985) requests that there be a distinction made in literary analysis between the various "I's" found in Khlebnikov's poetry. One of these, the lyrical "I" figures as "a fictional construct, confined to the fictional world the text creates and as an instance of the text not to be identified with the poet." As a poetic "I," it does not have to make strict reference to the poet so it is free to take on whatever traits the poet might like it to have. The "I" in this poem, demonstrating a trait characteristic of Russian Futurist poetry, serves to create a distinction not between "I" and "you" which we might grammatically expect, but between "I" and "not I" (p. 227). The systematic breaking down of "reality" in this poem, in using the deductive logic with which our present, oppressive reality operates, highlights this distinction. The poem's "I" takes issue not with "you," who turns out to be a victim of the reality it has been living in, but with the true subjects of this reality, entities such as states and war which would make "you" (us) their victim. We see then that, though "you" can be applied to us, the readers, we are more appropriately a part of "I" as we are made privy to his reality.

The function of Khlebnikov's poetry as a social document is unique. This poem did serve as a place in which to elaborate a personal identity, a possibility which we discussed in the introduction to this section. However, in keeping in line with Westeijn's suggestion that this "I" acts as a subjective place holder and not as a strict reference to a grammatical person, this personal identity does not necessarily refer exclusively to the poet. Thus, Khlebnikov's "I" is not necessarily singular and will seek to incorporate others (in this poem, "you") into the organ of a greater political We.

"US": You and I, part 2

We will look again at how personal pronouns assist in engaging reader participation, this
time in another poem by Guillén, "¿Puedes?" ("Can you?")\(^{17}\) also from his collection *Tengo*. We begin by looking for superficial structures of organization and find that the poem alternates between two different line groupings -- there are four, ten-line verses interspersed with four, three-line verses, a structural hierarchy that gives us the following groupings as possibilities to look at: verse internal, comparison between the ten-line verses, comparison between the three-line verses and, finally, comparison between the two varieties of verses.

In order not to overextend our analysis, we will focus our search for parallels to comparisons between ten and three line verses among themselves and then between the two varieties of verses. This analytical strategy again presumes that the poem's verse organization structure is visually primary, and will prove to be sufficient for our task. We start by looking at the ten line verses and at level 0 find one verbatim parallel in (a) in verses (1)-(4):

(a) ¿Puedes venderme .......
   _Canpi, 2s(i) sellinfr+Ii,o._

At level 0 in the three-line verses, line (c) is also a verbatim parallel in verses (1)-(4):

(c) Nadie _ tiene, nadie.
   _No one_ havepi, 3s no one

If we bracket once more to level 1, the grammatical structures involved are visible and their parallels clearer assisting us in a comparison between the two varieties:

1. (a) VNP ~ (1)* (a) (c) NP [NPw V]VP, NP
2. (a) VNP ~ (2)* (a) (c) NP [NPx V]VP, NP
3. (a) VNP ~ (3)* (a) (c) NP [NPy V]VP, NP
4. (a) VNP ~ (4)* (a) (c) NP [Npz V]VP, NP

We should also note that the noun which we see cross-referenced by the subscripts w-z between

\(^{17}\) Appendix D
The system of parallels diagrammed above turns out to be sufficient for an analysis that will reasonably elucidate the "personality" issue. Reviewing, the strongest parallels we found between the ten-line verses involved their Vs in line (a), between the three-line verses the majority of the components of the sentence in (c) were parallel, and finally the parallel we found in our comparison of ten- and three-line verses, was the odd man out of the previous two, the cross-referenced NP (NPs w-z) found in both (a) and (c). The movement of this NP from direct object (in (a) of the ten-line verses), to subject (in (a) of the three-line verses) and back again to direct object (in (c) of the three-line verses) is a progression which occupies the body of the poem and, as we will see, underlies its meaning.

Each verse will explore the relationship of "selling" to the quantity being sold, beginning with an examination of "air" where two forces are at work in its grammatical transition. One part of this process is modifications to the VP throughout its appearances in the ten-line verse. The VP begins as a modal plus and infinitive in (1):

\[
puedes + venderme
\]
\[
can_{pi, 2s(1)} + (sell_{1n}^{1o})
\]

Adverbial qualifications of the modal will follow -- \textit{tal vez} ("maybe") in (3), \textit{acaso} ("perhaps") in (4) and the conditional \textit{me venderías} ("you could sell me") in (5) -- moving the possibility expressed by the modal V ("can you") in (1) farther into the realm of the hypothetical. The second linguistic modification, which takes place simultaneous to the first, is a predication of our NP, the
relative clause in (1)-(2):

(1) ......NP [que [V [ ]pp]vp
(2) y [ ]vp y [ ]vp]rel

The NP is semantically transfigured from aire to *viento* ("wind") in (3) and *tormenta* ("torment") in (4), and receives another relative clause in (7)-(9):

(7) [que [V
(8) [ ]pp [ ]np
(9) [ ]pp y [ ]np]vp]rel

These varied predications of our NP flesh out the definition of "air" displaying that it is a quantity that is capable of taking many forms as well as something tangibly located in specific circumstances (PPs). This increase in air's tactility and capability provides a contrast with the increasing undermining of the reality of the VP. The possibility of coordinating our NP with our VP (the possibility of selling air) is a problem given irony in (10) where the bare N "air" is both a quantified object, *cinco pesos de aire* ("five pesos of air") and predicated on its own, *aire fino* ("fine air"). After this questioning of the selling act in the ten-line verse our NP moves into subject position and serves as the theme of lines (11)-(13),

(11) [NPw [V and V
(12) [ ]pp]vp]s
(13) np [npw V]vp, np

where, for its ability to act on its own as the subject of S in (11)-(12), is more definitively a quantity that cannot be "had," confirmed in (13).

The poem continues to interrogate the selling act in the second grouping of verses. Again our NP, here *cielo* ("sky"), will be modified by relative clauses, both in (15)-(16), and in (18)-(19). In the ten-line verse (2), the quantification of our bare N (which we saw briefly in (5) and (10)) is continued and expanded:

(17) [una parcela de tu N]Q
(20) ..........[un dolár
Such right-branching places our N in an object position, a linguistic structure which literally discusses how sky would be put under the control of the personality "you." The selling of sky, as its is quantified by terms of measurement of the semantic category "established by the government" ("dollar," "kilometer,"...), is given an historical context; the possibility of its quantification is a function of the past actions of "you" who, thinking sky can be owned, phrased it in objective terms of buying and selling. However, in the three-line verse (2), our NP once again moves to subject position. By being a part of circumstances that do not involve "you" (being high in the clouds), sky, like air, is found to be something that one cannot have.

Verse 3 will combine all of the linguistic experiments with modifying our bare Ns which we have seen with thus far. This agua ("water") is modified by relative clauses in (28) and is semantically transfigured in (27), (30), (35) and (36), both of these modifications in combination with the quantification we saw in verses (2). The mixing of these modification strategies will juxtapose the literary results each of them seeks to achieve. We saw earlier that "left-branching" options -- semantic alterations and relative clauses -- demonstrated the real world mutability of our NPs ("the air that passes between your fingers and hits your face and musses your hair" (1)-(2)), while right-branching quantifications of our NPs sought to control them ("two kilometers of sky" (21)-(22)). These two tactics on one hand endow our bare N with the power to behave as a subject, and on the other, try to bring it under the control of "your" selling act as its object. These are unreconcilable positions with respect to the thematic status of our NP, which again in the three-line verse from (37)-(39) will be fully subjective.

In verse 4, our NP, tierra ("land"), is populated. Instead of the modifications to the bare N that we saw in verses (1)-(3), here other NPs of the semantic category "prehistoric things one might find in the land" are distributed among the ten lines of the verse. Moreover, these NPs
appear in the verse in various (natural) states of predication, the bonds of which are broken by their placement in the lines of the poem; that is, we are watching how, as a constituent of the "selling" VP these NPs will be broken up [NP boundaries have been highlighted]:

\begin{align*}
(41) & \quad \ldots \ldots \text{[adj adj} \\
(42) & \quad \text{N [ ]PP} \text{NP, [N} \\
(43) & \quad \text{[ ]PP} \text{NP and [adj N} \\
(44) & \quad \text{adj [ ]PP} \text{NP} \\
(46) & \quad \text{[ ]NP, [N} \\
(47) & \quad \text{[ ]PP} \text{NP, [mil millones de N} \\
(48) & \quad \text{[ ]PP} \text{NP?}
\end{align*}

The discomfort of these broken NPs questions what implications this breaking carries, namely: Can (should) "you" make the natural unnatural? This question is further indicated by a subsequent similar disruption of the our VP, \textit{puedes venderme ___} ("can you sell me ____"), in (48)-(50):

\begin{align*}
(48) & \quad \ldots \ldots ? \text{[Modal} \\
(49) & \quad \text{inf} \text{i} \text{NP}_{2} \text{VP, [ [Modal} \\
(50) & \quad \text{inf} \text{i} \text{NP}_{2} \text{VP, [ [Modal} \text{i} \text{VP]S}
\end{align*}

The final underlined modal where this verbal breaking up ends is perhaps not the unnatural breaking that we saw with our NPs. This modal can stand as a free entity, but as such it no longer questions a specific act (the act of selling air, sky...), but becomes a more generalized questioning of possibilities. The \textit{connotation} of this combination of the verbal and nominal breaking is that the selling (and buying) which "you" would like to do (or already has done), in the estimations of this poem's voice, imposes an order on natural order which is chaotic and even destructive.

The fourth three-line verse will indicate one last, crucial distinction in the space of what this poem considers possible. The linguistic consistency and simplicity of all of the three-line verses have worked to contrast the instability and complexity of their ten-line counterparts. Both for their short length and the fact that the Vs in their (a)-(b) take no direct object as one of their thematic roles, these three-line verses distinguish the temporary-ness of the act of selling from the limitless process of living. With respect to the quantities of the poem who, by their total, summarize the
matter of physical existence, we might say that a life worth living does not preoccupy itself with the unnatural semantic encumberments of materialism. No one has “it” but everyone can experience it because, as we see in (52), *La tierra tuyo es mía.* (“Your land is my land.”).

The taking on of themes in the poem (the NP that moves between object and subject) is of interest for the literary values these movements suggest. In a progression that could be said to approximate the transition of states of matter, through verses (1)-(4) our NP becomes an entity of increasing substance. From the complete intangibility of air, to sky to which one might point, to water which can be touched but not contained and, finally, to land which can be both touched and bounded, the evolution of these thematic quantities to being more and more attainable is accompanied by a verbal undermining of the idea that one might have the capacity to do so. This play of possibilities, we will see, centers more subtly around the interaction of the poem’s two key personalities.

Guillén’s “¿Puedes?” focuses on the issue of what it means to be Cuban less overtly than does much of his other work. His energies here are directed to a dialogue with the country’s history of colonization although we still see a sense of rooting in Cuban themes in the treatment of land as a properly Cuban quantity. Written in the latter half of his literary career, this poem shows a new level of Guillén’s sophistication with the concept of *mestizaje* (“mixing, incorporation, being many things at once...”) which is fundamental to his writings (Morejón, 1982). The poem’s layers of matter, air--->sky--->water--->land, not only establish a progression to solidity, but also integrate into one entity/identity (the poem’s subject) the multiple facets of the physique of Cuba. This depiction of multiplicity in “¿Puedes?” as the place where the poem’s various NPs find the strength to live independently is in line with Chrisman’s characterization of Guillén’s view of mestizaje as “a solution and not a problem [sic] (pp. 817-8)” The physical solidarity of the poem’s subject, finalized in its fourth stanza, transfigures land as something that can be owned to something that has its own strength which is based on an awareness of its history in multiple forms. That this land is finally revealed to have fossils that would obviously predate colonization
is an important literary tool for transferring who may legitimately decide the terms of history. It is crucial to note, however, that this poem’s syntactic parallels build to this realization with a simultaneous step-by-step denial of “your” ability to own Cuba.

The grammatical generalization of obvious historical personalities (since we know that this book was written to celebrate the triumph of the revolution, we may assume “you” carries a veiled reference to Spain) to personal pronouns serves another key function. The voice which has been narrating the poem’s events and whose addressing creates this “you” alludes to a first person “I” or “we” (never made explicit) which has the power to deny “you” its material desires. This voice also acts as a personality greater than “you” which has been witness to and intimate with this land in a way that “you” cannot hope to understand on its own. This is Guillén’s covert and authoritative appropriation of Cuba’s history for its people who he includes in the first-person narration of its future history after the revolution. Guillén’s “you” carries a two-leveled reference which will weed out the believers from the skeptics -- those who agree with the logic of the poem’s version of events are invited to be a part of Cuba’s We (this next stage in its history) and, toward those who still do not understand, “we” direct our criticism.

Conclusion

This paper has been structured in the form of a thought exercise -- by no means does it pretend to have uncovered what linguistic literary analysis is. It merely hopes that in its successes and failures it raises some questions about how literary meaning interacts with human life and language. The readings of each of these poems have tried to increase their sophistication in working with leveled grammatical transformations as a tool for recovering meaning from the content and form of the poem. The “analytical reading” first evolved from a line-by-line process (our first reading of “Ja i Rossija”), to a transformation of the poem in its entirety (our second). The advantage of treating the poem as a whole, and not as a collection of isolated sentences or phrases, had two parts (again due to the anatomy of communication). First, we respected that the
poet created it as such; that is, approaching the paper with something to express, the poet writes with an emotive intent to convey his or her meaning, a meaning which he or she will encode by the structural choices which he or she makes in the material of the poem:

\[
\text{ADDRESSEER} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{MESSAGE} \\
(\text{EMOTIVE}) \quad \rightarrow \quad (\text{CODE})
\]

Second, approaching the poem with a desire to understand it, the reader intends to "make" connotations about the poem's meaning based on what he or she decodes from the material which the poem's structure bears. We see, then:

\[
\text{MESSAGE} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{ADDRESSEE} \\
(\text{CODE}) \quad \rightarrow \quad (\text{CONNOTATIVE})
\]

The combination of these two schemas, as we saw in the introduction to this paper, was what we worked with to do our part to ensure a successful communication of poetic meaning.19

The two participant structure of poetic meaning presents some interesting complications to the presumptions of generative grammars. According to the generative model, the production of an utterance involves moving from a deep structure (DS) to surface structures (SS) where the material of the utterance's meaning is organized;

\[
\text{DS} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{SS} \\
\text{move } \alpha
\]

what distinguishes poetry from discourse is that in its model of production, that the poet will make these moves (we might call this move "\(\alpha\)") very consciously. In generating a poetically meaningful utterance, our starting material is what is read, the poem's SS. This SS is produced

18 Though people do not "make" connotations, I use the verb make here to highlight connotation as the reader's creative process, an idea which this paper has sought to establish.

19 Let us note, though, that our understanding of "reading" by being so severely generalized evades more person-specific contributions to the derivation of meaning which have a great impact, for example, Kristin Vitalich's intent to make the poem relevant to her life on November 25th or something like a surge in popularity of the poem among Russians in 1993.
according to the diagram above, though since move “α” is conscious rather than unconscious, a reader attempting to get at a poem’s meaning, must adopt a similarly conscious method of dismantling these structures. In our efforts to accomplish this, we performed an analytical reading that examined a mutable and universal poetic tool, parallelism, to get an idea the kinds of options the poet was working with in his or her structuring of information. The deorganization of poetic SS, therefore, utilized linguistic rules, modified level-ordered transformations of poetic constituent structure. The intention of readings one and two was to simultaneously address the meaning the poet makes and the meaning that the reader makes; or better, to acknowledge that a poet’s production of a poetic utterance requires two participants.

To respect the poem’s origins in DS as a meaning, we wanted to move further away from line-by-line readings which may have detained us in multiple, linear derivations of individual sentence’s meanings. Our new goal was a reading that was not unidirectional and our unified transformation of the poems let us see them as one space of meaning so that parallels could be read forward and backward as A<-->B. By regarding the poem thus as one “object” (Fowler, p.187), however, we admittedly lost some of the better actualities of meaning that a discursive reading allows. In abstracting the linearity of reading to concentrate on retrieving meaning from form, the poem’s verbal texture became less apparent to our reading. These constituent features are the very physical qualities of a poem which carry a great deal of its meaning making our first readings particularly inadequate if we acknowledge that both Guillén and Khlebnikov are noted for heavy use of the “sounds” apparent in the rhythms of everyday conversation in their communities. It appeared, then, that the syntactically motivated reading which looked only at the form of the poem’s parallels was in need of a more dynamic relationship with its “sensual” properties.

For this reason, in the reading the second, untitled Khlebnikov poem, transformational searches for parallels were moved to a servile role in the analysis. Examination of linguistic features such as personal pronouns added back links to the sensory world and, for as much, a
Works Consulted


whole new layer of referential possibilities. Theoretically speaking, the desire to not rely so
heavily on form as the keeper of poetic meaning necessitated a distancing from SS. This did not
involve a move back to DS (which would have entailed being privy to the poet’s literary intentions)
but to phonological form (PF)²⁰ and logical form (LF):

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{DS} \\
\downarrow \text{move "α"} \\
\text{SS} \\
\text{PF} \\
\uparrow \text{move α} \\
\text{LF}
\end{array}
\]

In poetics where production of an utterance is marked for being a conscious process, we find that
LF is likewise not necessarily so “logical.” Move α, which takes us from SS to LF (what should
(could) be understood), is the notion which we tried to interrogate in our last readings.
Khlebnikov’s untitled work and Guillén’s “¿Puedes?” went in leveled back-and-forths between
structure and its referents, adding back the line-by-line, time sensitive aspect to reading that we
sacrificed earlier. This performance of reading makes the logic of the poem actual and present to
us and, thus, our reading becomes an encounter with the poet which is able to bridge the separation
of time; “you” could be me and “I” could be our poet which would mean that “we” were “talking.”

The presencing of poetic logic, as our examples have hopefully shown, abstracts the poetic
subject (“T”) such that we might make some larger generalizations about the subjective possibilities
in our conception of poetics. These four poems were written by Khlebnikov and Guillén as
denials of the reality of the one official history they had been given and to inscribe a new one.
Poetics has again carried its original socio-religious function of creating a place where Truth is
actualized, providing each of us with the tools with which to be the (literary) subjects of our own
fates.

²⁰An analysis of PF would also be very interesting here considering the sonoric achievements of both men
but there was not time.


Martínez Estrada, Ezequiel. *La Poeta Afroaficubana de Nicolás Guillén*. Montevideo: ARCA, 19??.


Searle, J.R. “What is a Speech Act?” *The Philosophy of Language*.


JA I ROSSIJA
“Me and Russia”

Rossija tysjacham tysjach svobodu dala.
Rossija thousand thousand freedom give, Pa, 3s
Mloec delo! Dolgo budut pomnit’ pro eto.
Good deal, long time remember if about this pre
A ja snjal rubakh
And But I nom take off, Pa, 1st(m) shirt acc
I kazhdi zerkal’ii neboscreb moevo volosa
And every nom reflecting skyscraper my gen hair gen
Kazhdaja skvazhina
every nom pore nom
Goroda tela
city gen body nom / city nom body gen
Vyvesla kovry i kumachovye tkani.
take out, Pa, 3s(f) carpets acc nom and calicos acc nom
Grazhdanki i grazhdane
citizens nom (f) and citizens nom (m)
Menja-gosudarstva
I gen state gen
Tysjacheokonnykh kudrei toplilis’ u okon.
thousand windowed curl gen pl crowd pf, Pa, 3p at window gen pl
Ol’gi i Igors nom
Ne po zakazu
Not by order dat
Radujas’ solnscu, smotreli skvoz’ kozhu.
Rejoice, sun adv look pf, Pa, 3p through skin gen
Pala temnica rubashki!
fall pf, Pa, 3s(f) darkness shirt gen
A ja prosto snjal rubashku --
And But I nom simply take off pf, Pa, 1st(m) shirt acc
Dal solnce narodam Menja!
give pf, Pa, 1st(m) sun acc nom people dat I gen
Golyi stojal okolo morja.
Bare-chested nom stand, Pa, 1st(m) near sea gen
Tak ja daril narodam svobodu,
thus I nom give (gift) im, Pa, 1st (m) people dat freedom acc
Tolpam zagara.
mass dat suntans nom acc

Appendix A
translit and gloss
Me and Russia

Russia gave freedom to thousands of thousands.
Good deal! They’ll remember this for a long time.
But I took off my shirt,
And every sparkling building of my hair,
Every pore
Of the city of my body
Hung out carpets and calicoes.
Women and men
Of the state of Me
Crowded at the windows of thousand-windowed curls.
Olgas and Igors
Not by order
Rejoicing at the sun, looked through my skin.
The shirts of darkness have fallen!
But I simply took off my shirt --
Gave sun to the people of Me!
Bare-chested I stood by the sea.
Thus I gave freedom to the people,
Suntan to the masses.

Appendix A

translation mine
RESPONDE TÚ...

Tú, que partiste de Cuba,
you, that departed, from Cuba
responde tú,
respondes, you respond
¿dónde hallarás verde y verde,
where find, green and green
azul y azul,
blue and blue
palma y palma bajo el cielo?
palm and palm under the sky
Responde tú.
respondes, you respond

Tú, que tu lengua olvidaste,
you, that your tongue forget, from
responde tú,
respondes, you respond
y en lengua extraña mastiças
and in tongue strange
el gúel y el yu,
the “well” and the “you”
¿cómo vivir puedes mudo?
how live, mute
Responde tú.
respondes, you respond

Tú, que dejaste la tierra,
you, that left, the land
responde tú,
respondes, you respond
donde tu padre reposa
where your father rests
bajo una cruz,
under a cross
¿dónde dejarás tus huesos?
where leave, your bones
Responde tú.
respondes, you respond

Ah desdichado, responde,
Ah unhappy respondes, you respond
responde tú,
respondes, you respond
¿dónde hallarás verde y verde,
where find, green and green
azul y azul,
blue and blue

Appendix B
from Obra Poética v.2
RESPOND...

You, that left Cuba,
respond,
where will you find green and green,
blue and blue,
palm and palm under the sky?
Respond.

You, that forgot your language,
respond,
and in strange language chew
the well and the you,
how can you live mute?
Respond.

You, the left the land,
respond,
where your father rests
under a cross,
where will you leave your bones?
Respond.

Ah unhappy one, respond,
respond,
where will you find green and green,
blue and blue,
palm and palm under the sky?
Respond.
Если я обращаюсь в часы
if I turn (into) humanity
Ne vyletit voina, kak ne nuzhnaja izhitsa?
not fly out, like not necessary
I pokazhu, kak strelka stoletija dvizhetsja,
and show how century move
Tam, gde rod ljudei sebe nazhil pochepui,
there where root people accumulate piles
Pjaterkoi vashikh vystrelov pozhimaju SV01,
puzzle your arrows squeeze
I znaju, chto vy -- pravovernye volki,
I know truebelieving wolves
Kazhdovo pravitel' stva sushchestvujushchevo gaika
every state existing screw
I, kogda devushka s borodoi
and when girl's beard
Brosit obeshchannyi kamen',
throw promised stone
Vy skazh(e)te: “Eto to,
you say that
Chto my zhdali vekamu."
that we nom waitim, Pa, 1p centuries gen
Chasy chelovechestva, tikaja,
watch nom humanity gen tick veravd
Strelkoi moei mysli dvigaite!
arrow ins my gen thought gen move imp 2p
Pust' eti vyrastut samoybiistvom pravitel'stv i knigoi -- te.
let imp these rise self killing ins states ins and book ins these
Budet zemlya bespovelikaja!
be Fu, 3s land nom sovereignless nom
Predzemsharvelikaja!
before earth sphere great nom
Bud' eti pesn' povelikoju:
let imp her song nom sovereign ins
Ja rasskazhu, chto vcelennaja -- s kopot'ju spichka
I nom tell pt, Fu, 1s that universe nom with scratch ins match nom
Na lice scheta.
on face pre calcultion gen
I moja mysli -- techno otmychka
and my nom thought nom exactly lockpick nom
Dlya dveri, za nei zastrelivshisja kto-to...
for door gen behind her die veradv im someone nom
Untitled

If I put humanity in a watch
And show how the arm of the century moves,
Really from our gap of time
Would war not fly away, like an unnecessary letter?
There, were the root of people accumulated piles
Sitting as 1,000 years in armchairs of the spring of war,
I tell you that I sense from the future
My superhuman dreams.
I know that you are truebelieving wolves,
Like the bullseye of your arrows I squeeze mine,
But do you really not hear the rustling of fate’s needle,
Of that wonderous seamstress?
I inundate with the strength of my though of deluge
Structures of existing states,
Fantastic grown Kitzeh
I reveal to the ignorance of the old serf.
And, when the gang of chairmen of the earth’s sphere
To the old hunger will be abandoned the golden crust,
The screw of every existing state
To our screwdriver will be obedient.
And when the girl with the beard
Throws the promised stone,
You will say, “This is
That for which we waited centuries.”
Watch of humanity, ticking,
Move like the arrow of my thought!
Let them grow as self-killing states and through this book!
Earth will be sovereignless!
Preland---sovereign!
Let this be our sovereign song:
I say that the universe is a scratch of a match
On the face of a calculation,
And my thought is a lockpick
For the door behind which someone is dying...

Appendix C
[my translation]
¿PUEDES?
"Can you?"

¿Puedes venderme el aire que pasa entre tus dedos
able pi, 2s(i) sell if I dat the air that pass pi, 3s between your fingers
y te golpea la cara y te despeina?
and you dat hit pi, 3s the face and you dat uncomb pi, 3s
¿Tal vez podrías venderme cinco pesos de viento,
maybe able c, 2s(i) sell if I dat five pesos of wind
o más, quizás venderme una tormenta?
or more maybe sell if I dat a torment
¿Acaso el aire fino
perhaps the air fine
me venderías, el aire
I dat sel le, 2s(i) the air
(no todo) que recorre
not all that travel pi, 3s
en tu jardín corolas y corolas,
in your garden corollas and corollas
en tu jardín para los pájaros,
in your garden for the birds
diez pesos de aire fino?
Ten pesos of air fine

El aire gira y pasa
the aire turn pi, 3s and pass pi, 3s
en una mariposa.
on a butterfly
Nadie lo tiene, nadie.
no one it have pi, 3s no one

¿Puedes venderme cielo,
able pi, 2s(i) sell if I dat sky
el cielo azul a veces,
the sky blue sometimes
o gris también a veces,
or grey also sometimes
una parcela de tu cielo,
a parcel of your sky
el que compraste, piensas tú, con los árboles
it that buy p. 2s(i) think pi, 2s(i) you with the trees
de tu huerto, como quien compra el techo con la casa?
of your vegetable garden like who buy ps, 3s the ceiling with the house
¿Puedes venderme un dólar
able pi, 2s(i) sell if I dat one dollar
de cielo, dos kilómetros
of sky two kilometer
de cielo, un trozo, el que tú puedas,
of sky a bit it that you able ps, 2s(i)

Appendix D
from Tengo
de tu cielo?
of your sky

El cielo está en las nubes.
The sky be in the cloud
Altas las nubes pasan.
High the cloud pass
Nadie las tiene, nadie.
No one it have

¿Puedes venderme lluvia, el agua
able, sell, you dat rain the water
que te ha dado tus lágrimas y te moja la lengua?
that you have given your tears and you moisten the tongue

¿Puedes venderme un dólar de agua
able, sell, you dat a dollar of water
de manantial, una nube preñada,
of spring a cloud pregnant
crespa y suave como una cordera,
curly and smooth like a lamb
o bien agua llovida en la montaña,
or well water rained in the mountain
o el agua de los charcos
or the water of the puddles
abandonados a los perros,
abandoned to the dogs
o una legua de mar, tal vez un lago,
or a league of sea maybe a lake
cien dólares de lago?
100 dollars of lake

El agua cae, rueda.
The water fall, roll
El agua rueda, pasa.
The water roll, pass
Nadie la tiene, nadie.
No one it have

¿Puedes venderme tierra, la profunda
able, sell, you dat land the profound
noche de las raíces; dientes
night of the roots teeth
de dinosaurios y la cal
of dinosaurs and the calcium
dispersa de lejanos esqueletos?
disperse of far skeletons

¿Puedes venderme selvas ya sepultadas, aves muertas,
able, sell, you dat jungles already buried birds dead

Appendix D
Spanish and gloss
from Tengo
La tierra tuya es mía.
The land yours be pi 3s mine
Todos los pies la pisan.
all the feet it tread pi 3p
Nadie la tiene, nadie.
no one it have pi 3s no one
CAN YOU?

Can you sell me the air that passes between your fingers
and hits your face and musses your hair?
Maybe you could sell me five pesos of wind,
or better, maybe sell me a torment?
Perhaps the fine air
(not all) that travels
in your garden corollas and corollas,
in your garden for the birds,
ten pesos of air?

The air turns and passes
on a butterfly.
No one has it, no one.

Can you sell me sky,
the sky blue sometimes,
or grey too sometimes,
a parcel of your sky,
that which you bought, you think, with the trees
of your vegetable garden, like one who buys the ceiling with the house?
Can you sell me a dollar
of sky, two kilometers
of sky, a bit, what you can manage,
of your sky?

The sky is in the clouds.
High the clouds pass.
No one has them, no one.

Can you sell me rain, the water
that has given you your tears and moistens your tongue?
Can you sell me a dollar of water
from a spring, a pregnant cloud
curly and smooth like a lamb,
or better water fallen in the mountain
or the water of the puddles
abandoned to the dogs,
or a league of sea, maybe a lake,
one hundred dollars of lake?

The water falls, rolls.
The water rolls, passes;
No one has it, no one.

Can you sell me land, the profound
night of the roots; teeth
of dinosaurs and the calcium
disperse of far skeletons?

Appendix D
[my translation]
Can you sell me jungles already buried, dead birds, fish of stone, sulfur from the volcanoes, a thousand million years in lowering spiral? Can you sell me land, can you sell me land, can you?

Your land is my land. All feet tread on it. No one has it, no one.