

## **Michael Shapiro: *Retracing the Arc of a Half-Century of Scholarship and Teaching in the Humanities***

A chronological aperçu of the past fifty eight years (1965-2023) in the life of a working scholar with a lasting record of achievement that touches on many details and covers not only strictly academic points but landmarks in an intellectual evolution involving several humanistic disciplines. The outlines of a professorial career provide a rare insight into the sociology of knowledge and are fleshed out by a real-life love story that is haunted by peripeteia, illness, and the death of one's beloved.

### **Relevant publications of Michael Shapiro**

- Asymmetry: An Inquiry into the Linguistic Structure of Poetry*. North-Holland Linguistic Series, 26. Pp. xiv, 231. Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1976.
- Figuration in Verbal Art* [coauthor, Marianne Shapiro]. Pp. xv, 286. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Marianne Shapiro: A Catalogue Raisonné of Her Publications*, 2nd ed. Pp. xvi, 78. Scotts Valley, Calif.: CreateSpace, 2010.
- My Wife the Metaphysician, or Lady Murasaki's Revenge*. Pp. [x], 362. Charleston, S. C.: BookSurge Publishing, 2006.
- Palimpsest of Consciousness: Authorial Annotations of My Wife the Metaphysician, or Lady Murasaki's Revenge*. Pp. 276. Charleston, S. C.: BookSurge Publishing, 2007.
- The Sense of Change: Language as History*. Advances in Semiotics. Pp. xiv, 146. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991.
- The Sense of Form in Literature and Language* [coauthor, Marianne Shapiro]. 2nd, expanded ed. Pp. xxi, 373. Scotts Valley, Calif.: CreateSpace, 2009.
- The Sense of Grammar: Language as Semeiotic*. Advances in Semiotics. Pp. xiv, 236. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.
- The Speaking Self: Language Lore and English Usage*. Second Edition. Springer Texts in Education. Pp. xxviii, 517. New York: Springer Nature, 2017.
- The Logic of Language: A Semiotic Study of Speech*. Pp. xlviii, 308. New York: Springer, 2022.

### **Salient points on the trajectory**

- 1965 • *The Stress of Derived Substantives in Contemporary Standard Russian*.  
Ph. D. Thesis. Harvard University; advisor: Roman Jakobson  
(completed in 1964; unpublished, but mined for articles)  
Research Fellow in Slavic Langs & Lits, Harvard
- 1965-6 National Science Foundation Postdoctoral Fellow in Linguistics, Tokyo Univ
- 1966 appointed Assistant Professor of Slavic Langs, UCLA
- 3rd conference paper ("On Russian Phonostylistics," Annual Meeting of the Philological Association of the Pacific Coast, Univ of Calif, Berkeley)
- 3rd scholarly publication ("The Derivational Morphology of Russian Patrials, I-II, *Lingua*, 16:14-26, 113-129)
- 1967 Marriage to Marianne Goldner, the most accomplished and versatile American Italianist of the 20th century**
- 1968 birth of our magical daughter Abigail (חַבִּיבִּיל 'my father's joy')**  
Marianne appointed Assistant Professor of Italian, UCLA
- first book (*Russian Phonetic Variants and Phonostylistics*).

- University of California Publications in Linguistics, 49. Pp. x, 55. Berkeley: Univ of California Press)
- 1969 • first description of automorphisms in language (*Aspects of Russian Morphology: A Semiotic Investigation*. Pp. 62. Cambridge, Mass.: Slavica ["Patterns . . . where one morphophonemic alternation mirrors another so that they together form what may be called an automorphic structure in the paradigm, were first described explicitly by Shapiro, who gives several examples of existing or emerging patterns of this kind from contemporary Russian." (Henning Andersen, "Morphological Change: Towards a Typology," *Recent Developments in Historical Morphology*, ed. J. Fisiak, 1-50 [The Hague: Mouton, 1980], p. 34])
- 1970 Marianne's contract terminated (on spurious grounds); initiation of federal and state lawsuits against chairman of Italian Dept and Univ of California (settled out of court, 1975)
- first invited public lecture ("Ideas toward a Coherent Conceptualization of Literary Theory," UCLA)
- 1971-2 Marianne in NY, teaching Italian at Sarah Lawrence College
- 1972-8 commuting between Connecticut and Los Angeles upon Marianne's appointment as Assistant Professor of Italian at Yale
- 1972 • first major article on markedness ("Explorations into Markedness," *Language*, 48: 343-364)
- 1973 • new analysis of Japanese obstruent system ("Tenues and Mediae in Japanese: A Reinterpretation," *Papers in Japanese Linguistics*, 2: 48-65; rev. version in *Lingua*, 33 [1974], 101-114)
- 1976 • markedness-theoretic reinterpretation of poetic structure (*Asymmetry: An Inquiry into the Linguistic Structure of Poetry*)
- new theory of tropes (*Hierarchy and the Structure of Tropes* [coauthor, Marianne Shapiro]. *Studies in Semiotics*, 8. Pp. v, 37. Bloomington: Indiana University)
- paper delivered at C. S. Peirce Bicentennial International Congress, Amsterdam ("Peirce's Interpretant from the Perspective of Linguistic Theory," *Proceedings of the C. S. Peirce Bicentennial International Congress*. Graduate Studies, Texas Tech University, 23, ed. K. L. Ketner et al., 313-318. Lubbock: Texas Tech Press, 1981)
- 1979 first NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers, "Semiotic Perspectives on Language and Verbal Art," UCLA ("I am especially indebted to Michael Shapiro, whose teaching and research were a source of regeneration and inspiration." (James Jakób Liszka, *A General Introduction to the Semeiotic of Charles Sanders Peirce* [Indiana UP, 1996], p. xi)
- 1980 Marianne appointed Associate Professor of Italian (without tenure), NYU; family moves to Manhattan
- new theory of style ("Toward a Global Theory of Style [A Peircean Exposé]," *Ars Semeiotica*, 3: 141-147)
- 1980 • first markedness-theoretic reinterpretation of Russian conjugation ("Russian Conjugation: Theory and Hermeneutic," *Language*, 56 (1980), 67-93.
- 1982 • discovery of ancient Slavic bird cult ("Baba-Jaga: A Search for Mythopoeic

Origins and Affinities," *Studies in Peirce's Semiotic*. Monographs, Working Papers and Prepublications of the Toronto Semiotic Circle, 1982/No. 3, ed. D. Savan, 33-62. Toronto: Victoria University; rpt. in *Figuration*)

- discovery of ancient Slavic bear cult ("Neglected Evidence of Dioscurism [Divine Twinning] in the Old Slavic Pantheon," *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, 10:137-165)

1982-6 Visiting Lecturer with the Rank of Professor in Slavic Languages & Literatures, Princeton Univ, 1983-5; Lecturer in Slavic Languages & Literatures, Princeton, 1985-6

1982-8 Visiting Scholar, Dept of Anthropology, Columbia Univ

1983 Marianne denied tenure at NYU (again on spurious grounds)  
resignation from position as Professor of Russian Linguistics and Poetics at UCLA in order to keep family intact

- First volume of *Sense* triptych, *The Sense of Grammar* ("In conceiving and developing a model of expressive meaning, I have been profoundly influenced by the work of the Peircean linguist and literary theorist Michael Shapiro of Brown University. Shapiro's groundbreaking work on asymmetry in poetry [1976] was my introduction to the theory of markedness, and *The Sense of Grammar* [1983] was my inspiration for grounding markedness in a Peircean semiotic." Robert S. Hatten, *Musical Meaning in Beethoven: Markedness, Correlation, and Interpretation* [Indiana UP, 1994], p. xiv)

- First structural analysis of Pushkin's verse plays ("Journey to the Metonymic Pole: The Structure of Pushkin's 'Little Tragedies'," *From Los Angeles to Kiev: Papers on the Occasion of the Ninth International Congress of Slavists*. UCLA Slavic Studies, 7, ed. V. Markov and D. S. Worth, 169-206. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica)

1984 founder, first chairman, and permanent member, Charles S. Peirce Sesquicentennial International Congress Organizing Committee (Congress sponsored jointly by Harvard and Texas Tech Universities, September 1989, Cambridge, Mass.)  
second NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers, Princeton ("Most of all I am deeply thankful to Michael Shapiro, who brought me to Peirce. He changed my approach to literature and linguistics; he changed my approach to my students of literature and linguistics--by showing me, in his own example, how one can become a great teacher by exhibiting the openness and curiosity of a serious student." Michael Cabot Haley, *The Semeiosis of Poetic Metaphor* [Indiana UP, 1988], p. xiv)

1986 Visiting Professor of Slavic Languages & Literatures, UC Berkeley (fall term)

- markedness-theoretic reinterpretation of Russian stress ("The Russian System of Stress," *Russian Linguistics*, 10:183-204)

1986 • tropological theory of style ("Style as Figuration," *Stanford Literature Review*, 3:195-211)

1987 ACLS/USSR Academy of Sciences Senior Scholar Exchange, Institute of

Slavic and Balkan Studies, Moscow

1989 appointed Professor of Slavic Langs, Brown Univ

invited address at Peirce Sesquicentennial Congress, Harvard U ("History as Theory: One Linguist's View," Plenary Session on "Peirce and Language" [published in *Peirce and Contemporary Thought: Philosophical Inquiries*, ed. K. L. Ketner, 304-311. New York: Fordham University Press, 1995]

- 3irst markedness-theoretical analysis of meter ("The Meaning of Meter," *Russian Verse Theory*. UCLA Slavic Studies, 18, ed. B. Scherr and D. S. Worth, 331-349. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica)

**1990 graduation of Abigail from Harvard (A. B. in East Asian Langs & Civs)**

third (and last) NEH Summer Seminar for College Teachers, Brown ("You need to know that not a day passes by where I [don't] rely on, call upon, and use the information I gleaned from your seminar. I will be forever grateful." – William P. Dougherty, Ellis and Nelle Levitt Professor of Music Theory and Composition, Drake Univ; e-mail message to MS, January 17, 2013)

elected vice president, Charles S. Peirce Society; president, 1991; fellow [living past president], 1992-

1991 •second volume of *Sense* triptych, *The Sense of Change* ("In this regard [i. e., establishment of a semiotic linguistics], the work of Michael Shapiro, a 3irst-rate Peirce scholar as well as theoretical linguist, is unsurpassed by anyone else in his 3ield" (Vincent Colapietro, "Robust Realism and Real Externality: The Complex Commitments of a Convinced Pragmaticist," *Semiotica*, 130 [2000], 322)

1992 elected president, Semiotic Society of America

founder and editor-in-chief, *The Peirce Seminar Papers: Essays in Semiotic Analysis* (5 vols.)

**1995 marriage of Abigail to Samuel David Snoddy**

1997 co-organizer and chairman, International Colloquium on Language and Peircean Sign Theory, Duke Univ

1998 •entirely new analysis of Shakespeare's poetic technique; ("Sound and Meaning in Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Language*, 74:81-103; rpt. in *The Sense of Form in Literature and Language*); MS's most-downloaded article

- third volume of *Sense* triptych, *The Sense of Form in Literature and Language* ("Michael Shapiro's book demonstrates the enormous scope of scholarly activities to which a Peircian [sic] approach can give rise. It is also a testament to the author's prodigious learning and expertise. To write essays on subjects ranging from 'Wimp English' to 'Dostoevsky's Modes of Signifying' is a feat in itself and one that will stretch the limits of most readers, this reviewer included." – Andrew Barratt, *Slavic Review*, 59 [2000], 932)

2000 removed by Brown provost from Dept of Slavic Langs; title changed to Professor of Slavic and Semiotic Studies; given unique privilege of teaching *ad libitum* under University Courses designation, with own budget and full-time administrative assistant (reporting only to Dean of the Faculty)

2001 appointed to Board of Advisors, Peirce Edition Project (served for 9 years)

## **Marianne diagnosed with incurable cancer**

### **2003 death of Marianne (לוימיה)**

2004 on leave from Brown; move back to Los Angeles

- preparation and posthumous publication of Marianne's campus novel *Higher Learning, A Novel*. Pp. 311. Charleston, S.C.: Book Surge); establishment of website, <http://www.higherlearninganovel.com> (= <http://www.marianneandmichaelshapiro.com>)

2005 retirement from Brown; appointed Professor Emeritus of Slavic and Semiotic Studies

- preparation and publication of volume of Marianne's articles, incl. previously unpublished ones (*From the Critic's Workbench: Essays in Literature and Semiotics*. Pp. xii, 522. New York: Peter

Lang) 2006 •only work of fiction (*My Wife the Metaphysician, or Lady Murasaki's Revenge*. Pp. [x], 362. Charleston, S. C.: BookSurge ["To create a literary monument to one's beloved is work that justifies one's whole life and is something rare in history." – Savely Senderovich, Professor Emeritus of Russian Literature and Medieval Studies, Cornell Univ]; Guest Book, <http://www.marianneandmichaelshapiro.com>, June 21, 2009)

2008 establishment of unique language blog (<http://www.languageore.net>)

2009 •first edition of *Marianne Shapiro: A Catalogue Raisonné of Her Publications* ("The photograph of Marianne is a gem: it captures both her beauty and her poignant earnestness as a survivor of a personal history that was marked by repeated injustices which tested her morale but did not overcome her will to find and express the highest meanings that poetry can attain. . . . She was like a virtuoso musician who has mastered her instrument as a medium of artistic interpretation. . . . Marianne left us a wonderful legacy of poetic truth for which we can all be grateful." – Eugene Vance, Emeritus Professor of French, Comparative Literature and Comparative Religion, Univ of Washington; Readers' Responses, [www.marianneandmichaelshapiro.com](http://www.marianneandmichaelshapiro.com))

2010 move back to East Coast (Vermont, New York)

- second edition of *Marianne Shapiro: A Catalogue Raisonné of Her Publications* (includes two tributes)

2011 Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, Green Mountain College, Poultney, Vt. (spring term); taught course on Philosophy of the Russian Novel

2011- joined Society of Senior Scholars, Heyman Center for the Humanities, Columbia; appointed Adjunct Professor, to teach Literature Humanities courses in Core Curriculum (inter alia)

2014 "Paradox: Word, Symbol, Concept," Keynote Address, 39th Annual Meeting, Semiotic Society of America, Seattle, Washington, October 2014

2017 publication of Second Edition of *The Speaking Self: Language Lore and English Usage*

2022 publication of *The Logic of Language: A Semiotic Analysis of Speech*

2024 life continues as *rōnin* (浪人) [= samurai with no lord or master during the feudal period in Japan (1185–1868); in modern Japanese usage also designates a salaryman who is between jobs.]

## **Appendix A: Journals in which Michael Shapiro's articles have appeared**

*Acta Linguistica Hafniensia: International Journal of Linguistics*  
*The American Journal of Semiotics: The Journal of the Semiotic Society of America*  
*American Speech: A Quarterly of Linguistic Usage*  
*Ars Semeiotica: International Journal of American Chinese*  
*Journal of Semiotics*  
*Diachronica: International Journal for Historical Linguistics*  
*Elementa: The Journal of Slavic Studies and Comparative Cultural Semiotics*  
*General Linguistics*  
*International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*  
*Journal of Indo-European Studies*  
*Journal of Linguistics: Journal of the Linguistics Association of Great Britain*  
*Journal of Literary Semantics*  
*Language: Journal of the Linguistic Society of America*  
*Linguistics*  
*Lingua: An International Review of General Linguistics*  
*Papers in Japanese Linguistics*  
*Poétique*  
*Russian Language Journal: A Journal of the American Council of Teachers of Russian*  
*Russian Linguistics*  
*Russian*  
*Literature*  
*Scando-Slavica*  
*Semiotica: Journal of the International Association for Semiotic*  
*Studies Slavica Hierosolymitana: Slavic Studies of the Hebrew*  
*University*  
*Slavic and East European Journal*  
*The Slavonic and East European Review*  
*Stanford Literature Review*  
*Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*  
*University of Toronto Quarterly*  
*Word: The Journal of the International Linguistic Association*

## **Appendix B: Courses taught by Michael Shapiro**

Elementary Russian (1st year - UCLA and Princeton)  
Intermediate Russian (2nd year - Harvard, UCLA, and Princeton)  
Russian Composition and Stylistics (4th year - UCLA and Princeton)  
Advanced Russian Grammar and Reading (4th year - UCLA; 3rd year - Princeton)  
Introduction to Comparative Slavic Linguistics (graduate - UCLA)  
Russian Phonology (grad & undergrad - UCLA)  
Russian Morphology (grad & undergrad - UCLA)  
Historical Commentary to Modern Russian (undergrad - UCLA)  
Russian Dialectology (grad - UCLA)  
Studies in Russian Literature: Pushkin (undergrad, in English - UCLA)  
Russian Poetry (undergrad, in Russian - UCLA)  
Introduction to the Analysis of Poetic Texts (undergrad, in Russian - UCLA): From Mid-18th Century through Precursors of Symbolism  
From Late 19th Century through Contemporary Soviet Verse  
Russian Folk Literature (undergrad, in Russian - UCLA; in English - Princeton)

Seminar in Structural Analysis [Linguistics] (grad - UCLA)  
Seminar in Russian Poetry (grad - UCLA)  
Seminar in Literary Analysis (grad - UCLA)  
Pushkin (undergrad, in Russian - UCLA; grad - Brown)  
Russian Poetics (grad - UCLA)  
Semiotic Perspectives on Language and Verbal Art (postdoctoral seminar – UCLA, Princeton, Brown)  
Seminar in Russian Literature: Lermontov (grad - UCLA)  
Russian for the Olympics (1st year - UCLA)  
Seminar in Russian Literature: Poetic Theory (grad - UCLA)  
Semiotic Perspectives on Language and Literature (grad - Princeton)  
Contemporary Literary Theory: Its Russian Roots (grad & undergrad - Princeton)  
Russian Symbolism (grad & undergrad - Princeton & Brown)  
Eighteenth-Century Russian Literature (grad - UC Berkeley)  
Dostoevsky (undergrad - Brown)  
Seminar on Semeiotic Structuralism (grad - Brown)  
Slavic Contributions to Literary Theory (undergrad & grad - Brown)  
Tolstoy (undergrad - Brown)  
Russian Literature in English Translation (undergrad - Brown)  
Gogol (undergrad & grad - Brown)  
Seminar on Prosody and Versification (grad, in Russian - Brown )  
Linguistic Theory and Models of Language (grad - Brown)  
Introduction to Russian Poetry (undergrad - Brown)  
Seminar in Russian Literature: Pasternak [grad, in Russian - Brown]  
Seminar on Poetic Structure (grad – Brown)  
The Russian Novel (Brown - undergrad and grad)  
Seminar in Russian Literature: Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (grad, in Russian – Brown)  
The Russian Lexicon (undergrad, in Russian – Brown)  
Russian and East European Folklore (undergrad – Brown)  
Seminar in Russian Literature: Gogol's *Dead Souls* (grad – Brown)  
Introduction to the Historical Study of Language (undergrad – Brown)  
Interpretation, Theory and Practice (Peircean Semiotics) (undergrad – Brown; grad – Columbia)  
Russian Poetry and Poetics (undergrad – Brown)  
Philosophy of the Russian Novel (undergrad - Green Mountain College)  
Masterpieces of European Literature [Literature Humanities] (undergrad – Columbia)