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8

Living through Literature

Essays in Memory of Omry Ronen

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The oil painting shown on the cover is “Fyrtornet III” (The Lighthouse, III) from 1901 by August Strindberg. It was a wedding gift from Strindberg to the writer Gustaf af Geijerstam and later donated to the Uppsala University Library by Henrik and Signe Svanfeldt in 1943.

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Foreword

Omry Ronen was an extraordinary scholar and teacher who continues to have a deep influence on his former students. He taught us to read widely and closely, and to catch the echoes of world culture in lines of poetry and prose. His sense of wonder at language and literature was contagious as he delved into texts with his students, showing how just one word could give rise to surprising and intricate interpretative paths. “There is no poetry without dialogue,” in the words of Osip Mandelstam,¹ and Professor Ronen invited us into the grand conversation between writers, artists, thinkers, and scholars. In his seminars, we experienced the joy of discovering a message in a bottle, sent by a writer to future readers.

This volume of essays is inspired by gratitude for everything Omry Ronen taught us, and we dedicate it to his memory. The essays reflect in various ways his attention to subtext and context.² In a sense, his work on subtexts could itself be considered a subtext for this book, just as his writings, lectures, correspondence, and discussions with us over the years can be seen to constitute its theoretical context. For the volume’s editors, the dialogues we have enjoyed with the authors have felt like a continuation of the rich conversation we were privileged to have with Omry Ronen. Although this conversation commenced at different times and places for each of us, it typically began with Professor Ronen walking into a classroom with a stack of books under his arm, his eyes keenly focused on his students. In command of a phenomenal memory—photographic as well as encyclopedic—he had no need of lecture notes.³

In the course of his teaching, Omry Ronen repeatedly emphasized the importance of the establishment and analysis of facts; he encouraged his students to treat literary scholarship the way a scientist reviews evidence. Ronen admirably cites the Formalist critic Boris Eikhenbaum’s description of his own scholarship: “I consider not the establishment of schemes to be the most important thing, but the ability to see facts [. . .] theories perish or change, while

¹ In the essay “O sobesednike” (On the Interlocutor) (Mandel'shtam 187).

² Ronen made a distinction between his use of the concept of subtext, or intertextual links (*mezhtekstovye svyazi*), and that of intertextuality (*intertekstual'nost'*), used more frequently in Western literary theory. See Ronen, “Podtekst” 250; see also Barry P. Scherr, “Omry Ronen’s Critical Legacy,” introduction to Scherr and Wachtel, eds., *The Joy of Recognition: Selected Essays of Omry Ronen* xx.

³ See “Reminiscences: Omry Ronen as Teacher” in this volume.

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the facts found and established with their help endure.”⁴ In his introduction to this volume, Vyacheslav Vsevolodovich Ivanov, taking the standpoint of the Moscow School of Semiotics (later the Moscow-Tartu School) of which he was a founding member, deliberately uses the word “science” in English to describe our field, and we have kept that word, rather than render it, through back-translation to the multivalent *nauka*, as “literary scholarship.”

The breadth and significance of Omry Ronen’s scholarship makes it difficult to summarize. Ivanov’s introduction traces the main trajectories with a focus on key articles, some of which were republished in Ronen’s 2002 collection *Poetika Osipa Mandel’shtama* (The Poetics of Osip Mandelstam); the book-length studies *An Approach to Mandel’shtam* and *The Fallacy of the Silver Age*; and the essays from *Zvezda* collected (and, as Barry P. Scherr points out, in some cases revised) in his four volumes *Iz goroda Enn*.⁵ Scherr adopts the French term for these essays, calling them “literary causerie” (with reference to a genre that achieved success under the pen of Scottish writer and folklore anthologist Andrew Lang in the late nineteenth century)—a term that captures their eclecticism, sophistication, and yet relatively informal nature (xxxii–xxxiii). Ivanov describes them more closely within the genre of the memoir: he writes of them as “a new literary form for the fusion of literary sketches and memories concerning his own life experience and the recent history of Eastern and Central Europe.”

Ivanov notes the ways in which Ronen retraces the path of his own discovery of a literary work, be it a poem by Innokenty Annensky or a Dostoevsky novel read for the first time in Hungarian translation. While emphasizing that Ronen encouraged us to “view literature as a global endeavor without differences in language or creed,” Ivanov draws our attention to linguistic aspects of Ronen’s scholarship; he asserts that Ronen’s studies “seem to mark the beginning of the future science in which the linguistic study of key words [. . .] supports the results of the analysis of the composition” and suggests that future work in this area will follow Ronen’s lead. Ivanov also analyzes Ronen’s tendency to go against the grain of common thought, for example grouping the innovations of Acmeists with those of Futurists, or examining the semiotics of mysticism and sculpture. Ivanov emphasizes that Ronen encouraged us never to take truisms for granted, to examine every assertion through a critical lens.

Omry Ronen taught a dazzling variety of courses that provided foundational knowledge to his undergraduate students and set his graduate students on their research paths. These included surveys of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian literature, Russian Modernist poetry and prose, Ukrainian poetry,

⁴ Cited from Scherr xix.

⁵ See Scherr xxviii. Scherr translates the title as “From the City of ANN,” while also interpreting Ronen’s own intriguing explanation of the multifaceted title, provided at the end of the first volume (Scherr xliii–xliv; Ronen, *Iz goroda Enn* 342).

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the Russian picaresque, Russian science fiction, Mikhail Bulgakov, Vladimir Nabokov, Alexander Pushkin, Old Russian literature, Russian Formalism, poetics, and rhetoric. Among the reference points in many of his courses were works by Ivan Turgenev and Lev Tolstoy, particularly *Anna Karenina*. The motif of the railroad, as well as the theme of English-Russian cultural connections, serve as a focal point in his article “Pasternak, Zamiatin, and Bradshaw.”

Susanne Fusso examines literary polemic around these two themes in her essay “Mikhail Katkov and Lev Tolstoy: *Anna Karenina* against the *Russian Herald*.” As editor of the journal *Russian Herald*, Katkov was notorious for the vigor and even ruthlessness with which he controlled its contents. Fusso notes that Turgenev and Fyodor Dostoevsky, who published their most significant novels in the *Russian Herald*, tailored subject matter to harmonize with the journal’s general program, while Tolstoy (whose *Anna Karenina* was published serially in the *Russian Herald*) made a point of attacking and contradicting many of Katkov’s most cherished tenets: the progressive role of railroads and credit institutions in Russia’s economic development; England as a model for Russia; the importance of women’s education; the potential of spiritualism to reveal phenomena as yet unknown to materialist science; and, most famously, the participation of Russian volunteers in Serbia’s struggle with the Ottoman Empire. Fusso argues that *Anna Karenina* generates narrative energy from Tolstoy’s polemic with Katkov, which played out in the pages of the journal.

One of the significant lines of Ronen’s scholarship and teaching was metrics. In this he continued the tradition of Kirill Taranovsky and expanded this area of scholarship with new insights, both alone and together with Mikhail Gasparov. Michael Wachtel, whose work, like that of Barry Scherr, has made significant contributions to the study of Russian metrics and semantics, examines what he calls one of the vexed questions in Russian verse theory: hypermetrical stress. In his analysis, he examines two interwoven cultural contexts: that of Russian Modernist poetry, specifically trends within it considered more traditional and more experimental, and debates among scholars of Russian metrics. The focus of Wachtel’s essay is the “traditionalist” Vladislav Khodasevich: the author shows us that the poet could be strikingly imaginative and experimental when working against metrical constraints. He examines Khodasevich’s innovative use of hypermetrical stress to create boldly original poetry, both rhythmically and thematically. As he notes, the choriamb in a 1923 poem, of which Khodasevich himself was critical, make the poem “startlingly ‘modern’”; moreover, Wachtel points to other appearances of the choriamb in Khodasevich’s Berlin poems, thus revealing it as a deliberate rhythmic device. Khodasevich, as Wachtel demonstrates, was “in the thick” of contemporary arguments on Russian verse theory and consciously played with metrical ambiguities.

The next three essays focus on subtexts and contexts. Karen Evans-Romaine writes about one of the subjects of Ronen’s scholarship, the poetry

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and prose of Boris Pasternak. She focuses on two leitmotifs in Pasternak's oeuvre: music and Romanticism, specifically the Romantic tradition in depicting music and musicians. Pasternak's devotion to the composer Alexander Scriabin in his early life is well documented; Pasternak's literary activity began at a time when music achieved a cult-like status in Russia, in no small part through Scriabin's efforts. The status of music as the most divine of the arts, with Scriabin as its semi-divine representative, hearkens back to the Romantic era and the status of Chopin, Liszt, and Paganini as not only stars of the stage, but bearers of qualities—divine and demonic—beyond the reach of others. To some extent, these Romantic composers had Heinrich Heine to thank for fueling the flames of a Romantic cult of the musician, granting them superhuman status. Evans-Romaine argues that Pasternak, an avid reader of Heine in his early life, continued his legacy, modifying it first in Modernist terms and then in the context of the moral issues with which he later grappled. In his poetry on music and musicians and in his essay on Chopin, Pasternak revives and modifies Heine's portrayals, distributing characteristics of Romantic composers and performers in typically metonymical fashion, with aims ranging from the aesthetic to the ethical.

Sara Feldman follows another line in Ronen's scholarship and life: the development of modern Hebrew poetry, specifically the verse of Hayyim Nachman Bialik, whose biography, like Ronen's, is linked with both Odessa and Israel. As Feldman notes, "the same connection to Russian high culture that Ronen had—along with Osip Mandelstam, Roman Jakobson, and other modern East European Jews—drove both scholarship and creative expression in the Jewish national languages of Hebrew and Yiddish." Feldman points out that modern Hebrew poetry developed in the Russian Empire in a language distinct from contemporary Israeli Hebrew, and the body of familiar subtexts has also changed; thus, Hebrew poetry of the Russian Empire is read and understood quite differently today. Feldman discusses the effects of this disconnect in an examination of the image of a mother bird in Bialik's poetry about the rupture from traditional Jewish life in the East European study house. She notes that this figure, associated with the divine presence, also refers to a series of rabbinic texts surrounding the commandment to chase a mother bird away from her nest before taking the eggs. Feldman traces Bialik's imagery to other texts about the bird; this intertextuality, easily missed today by readers of Hebrew, would have been understood by Bialik's readers in the Russian Empire of the late nineteenth century. Here lies the great irony of Bialik's literary context: in Feldman's words, "Bialik's poetry contributed so successfully to the goal of creating modern Hebrew culture that he became a relic of its development." The anguish of the rupture is also the pain of having to choose between cultures; only through a reconstruction of the intertextual chain can that anguish be understood today.

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Stephanie Sandler develops Ronen's tradition of close readings of poetry with an examination of the legacy of Osip Mandelstam in the work of the contemporary poets Ivan Zhdanov, Mikhail Eremin, and Anna Glazova. Sandler takes as a starting point the long-standing perception of Mandelstam as an exemplar of metaphorical and verbal intensity. Mandelstam modeled for later poets a form of poetic utterance that could register shifts in consciousness of the surrounding world. These three poets, Sandler argues, pick up different but complementary versions of Mandelstam's metaphorical compression and verbal intensity. Zhdanov represents a hypostasis of Mandelstam's Hellenic-Crimean poetic world. Eremin's figurations of the natural, linguistic, scientific, and architectural worlds draw on the rhetoric and atmosphere of Mandelstam's poems of the 1930s. Glazova, with her characteristically philosophical orientation, takes up Mandelstam's implicit notions of presence, rendered paradoxically through metaphors of absence. These poets extend the legacy of Mandelstam's poetry—its densely compacted metaphors, its ruminating figures for death and decomposition, and its sense that the poem's chronotope is that of eternity.

Language is at the core of our work as philologists, and at the midpoint of this volume is a discussion on the nature of language and cognition. As Omry Ronen's students, the authors in this collection also acknowledge a debt to Ronen's teachers, among them Roman Jakobson.⁶ Timothy D. Sergay explores Jakobson's evolving attitudes toward the American linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf and the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis," which posits that native language to some degree determines patterns of thought. He analyzes the logical tension between Jakobson's rejection of the "dogma of untranslatability," a dogma commonly associated with Whorf, and Jakobson's frequent affirmations that verse, with its paronomasia and semantic activation of grammar, is indeed essentially untranslatable. Jakobson's thinking here largely follows Edward Sapir and is thus strongly influenced by Franz Boas, the author of the observation that is now so often associated with Jakobson alone, that languages differ not in what information they *may* convey—since all languages are in principle capable of conveying anything—but in what information they are structurally *required* to convey. Jakobson's reception of Whorf is thus essentially one dimension of Jakobson's profound sympathy with the American Boasians. Jakobson regarded the Boasians, especially after about 1960, as authoritative forerunners (like Charles Sanders Peirce) in linguistic structuralism and inter-

⁶ Roman Jakobson also had a connection to the Slavic Department at Uppsala University in Sweden, where this volume is published and where one of its editors currently teaches Russian literature (in the Slavic section of what is now the Department of Modern Languages). Jakobson and his wife fled on foot to Sweden from Norway after the latter was occupied by Nazi Germany in April 1940 (Kučera 877). They remained in Sweden from May 1940 to May 1941 (Jangfeldt 142–44). This was a productive period for Jakobson, who published his study *Kindersprache, Aphasie und allgemeine Lautgesetze* in Uppsala in 1941 (Jangfeldt 145), and was visiting lecturer at Uppsala University (Birgegård 162; Kučera 877).

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est in the *patternment* (Whorf's term) characteristically imposed by a given language. The mature Jakobson's methodology in the analysis of verse, Sergay concludes, is "essentially a development of Whorfianism, seeking in the most granular grammatical and acoustic 'patternment' of poetry a continuation of the semantic, expressive force of not only the given text, but also its 'host language' as a whole."

In an interview in 2000 for *Novaia russkaia kniga*, Omry Ronen answers the question "What literary phenomena of your time proved significant for you?" by referring not only to poets who form the subject of much of his scholarship,

But above all—Nabokov, Nabokov, Nabokov. The great, never setting sun shining for all, the joy and consolation of my days, the founder of a new artistic and moral measure, the potentate of our thoughts, who taught us wanderers what to do. (Ronen, "You Have to Know" lx)

Three essays in this volume are devoted to studies of Nabokov: his readings of other writers, as well as of another writer's reading of his work.

Irena Ronen examines Nabokov's first novel in English, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* (1941). In order to better understand to what degree the first English-language novel by the trilingual writer was akin to contemporary English prose of that period, she reads it in light of three English novels: Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927), Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* (1951), and Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). She finds among them shared themes and variations, as well as deep psychological and spiritual kinships between Nabokov and English novelists of his generation.

Nancy Pollak examines Nabokov's 1962 novel *Pale Fire* in an essay that comes close to the genre of Ronen's *An Approach to Mandel'stam*. Taking as a starting point the link between *Pale Fire* and Robert Frost's most famous poem, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Pollak provides a deep and thorough examination of an intricate web of subtexts to Nabokov's novel—from other Frost verse to *Hamlet*, from a Marilyn Monroe film to Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from Apuleius's *Metamorphoses* through Jean de La Fontaine to Ippolit Bogdanovich to Mandelstam, from A. E. Housman's verse to Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Sphinx"—revealing the labyrinths created by Nabokov to guide, or mislead, the reader, just as character Hazel Shade's steps may have been misguided. Analyzing the deliberate ambiguities of the text, as manifested in its prosody and the choice of subtexts, Pollak questions the certainty with which some interpreters have assumed Hazel Shade's death to be a suicide.

Julie Hansen looks in the other direction, comparing Olga Grushin's novel *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* (2005) with Nabokov's *Pnin* (1957), reading the latter as a significant subtext in Grushin's debut novel. Hansen's essay con-

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siders the various ways in which Grushin pays literary homage to Nabokov, arguing that the Nabokovian subtext is apparent on paratextual, linguistic, thematic, and structural levels of Grushin's novel. Hansen compares the novels' thematic treatments of memory, loss, art, and home, as well as the use of Russian words in the anglophone texts; she identifies similarities in leitmotifs and details of plot. She also considers a subject on which the two authors and texts diverge: the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud. Hansen argues that Grushin's homage to Nabokov can be seen as a way of engaging with an emergent tradition of translingual Russian-American prose.

It is fitting that a volume that begins with a tribute to Omry Ronen by linguist, literary scholar, and semiotician Vyacheslav Ivanov, who taught for a quarter century at the University of California, Los Angeles and thus lived in that cultural and literary center, should end with a study on a literary map of Los Angeles that, in many ways, takes a semiotic approach to the mapping of a city's literary life. The largest literary map in the world, J. Michael Walker's *A City in Mind: A Lyrical Concept of the City of Los Angeles* (2011) depicts the city's cultural history in word and image. Portraits of poets, writers, and musicians—reflecting different time periods, nationalities, ethnicities, and languages—are inscribed into the city's sprawling neighborhoods. Accompanying each portrait is an illuminating quotation from a novel, poem, song, or work of history or journalism. Miller argues that a comparison of Walker's map with Anna Akhmatova's *Poem Without a Hero* yields a provocative set of similarities that suggest the continuing legacy of Russian Modernist thought. The map and the narrative poem concern themselves with the portrayal of the cultural history of their respective settings, the cities of Los Angeles and St. Petersburg. Miller asserts that in an apparent absence of coherence, "The sense that something binds the pieces together is what matters most of all; poetry and art point us back to [. . .] the path to understanding—or acceptance of *no understanding*." Miller ties this to Mandelstam's statement that the ability to make associations between fragments is love.

A love of literature was central to the life of Omry Ronen. As Scherr observes, he

could not separate scholarly pursuits from daily living, from the need to confront personally the political and social realities that surrounded him and within the context of which he had to formulate his own outlook on the world. The ability to analyze, to create a true picture has to apply not only to philological studies, but also to life itself. (xxxix)

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This volume concludes with a poem by Omry Ronen's student Paula Powell Sapienza, written for the memorial symposium mentioned below. Harkening back to Ronen's statement that "The love for what is other defines Mandel'shtam's relation to languages, nations and religions as the instrument and material of poetry" ("Love-for-the-Other" 393), the poem draws our attention to the connections between life, work, literary discovery, and the love that binds all three.

The editors are grateful to the Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Editorial Committee, Vilhelm Ekman's University Fund, and the Åke Wiberg Foundation for grants that have supported publication of this book. We are also grateful to the colleagues who reviewed essays for this volume. We wish to thank Katharine Petty for her editorial assistance during her internship at the Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University during the Spring Term of 2018. And we are thankful to the graphic designer Martin Högvall at Uppsala University for the cover design and for taming our unruly manuscript into this book. Last but not least, we extend our gratitude to Irena Ronen, who provided us with the photograph of Omry Ronen and was always quick to respond to our numerous queries in connection with this project.

The idea for this volume grew out of the symposium "Advancing Omry Ronen's Legacy in Russian Literary Studies," hosted by the University of Michigan Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures on 1–2 November 2013, marking the first anniversary of Omry Ronen's death. Several generations of his former students came together in Ann Arbor to present research inspired by Ronen's work and to reflect on his immense influence on our field, as well as on us as individuals. We would like to thank all of the participants of this symposium, including Olga Peters Hasty, Karen Rosenflanz, and Barry Scherr, who, though not represented among the essays here, presented their research at the symposium and have supported this project in other ways. We are grateful to the University of Michigan's Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures, as well as the Department of Comparative Literature; the Department of English Language and Literature; the Institute for the Humanities; the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies; the International Institute; Rackham Graduate School; and the Office of the Vice President for Research for making this symposium possible. Two of this volume's editors, as symposium co-organizers, would like to thank the third, Herbert Eagle, who as Chair of the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures carried out the great administrative work that brought the symposium to fruition.

At the symposium, we decided collectively on three scholarly projects to honor Omry Ronen's legacy. The first, a collection of articles by Michael Wachtel, Timothy D. Sergay, Olga Peters Hasty, and Sara Feldman, entitled "Poetry as Performance: A Forum in Memory of Omry Ronen," appeared in the *Slavic and East European Journal* in 2015 (Wachtel). The second, the above-cited volume *The Joy of Recognition: Selected Essays of Omry Ronen*, edited by Barry P.

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Scherr and Michael Wachtel, with translations of essays by several of Ronen's former students, appeared with Michigan Slavic Publications in the same year.

As this third project now reaches completion, we are especially conscious of how much Omry Ronen is missed as a scholar, teacher, mentor, and friend. It is our hope that this book, inspired by his memory, will in turn inspire readers to follow in his footsteps, enriching our literary science with new joyful discoveries. May the grand conversation, to which Omry so generously and brilliantly contributed, go on.

<i>Karen Evans-Romaine</i>	<i>Julie Hansen</i>	<i>Herbert Eagle</i>
Madison	Uppsala	Ann Arbor

Note on the font, transliteration, and translation

The font used (for Latin text, but not Cyrillic) is Berling Antikva, created in the early 1950s by the Swedish graphic designer Karl-Erik Forsberg (1914–95).

We have used the Library of Congress system of transliteration, with exceptions for common spellings in English such as the ending -sky (Annensky, Dostoevsky, Mayakovsky, Taranovsky), the names Alexander and Yuri and similarly common English spellings of last names (Bely, Herzen, Scriabin, Tolstoy). For the sake of simplicity and clarity, we have used the German spelling of the name Mandelstam.

Our translation practice follows the principle of greatest accessibility and convenience of researchers wishing to look up cited verse texts, even though this sometimes results in cumbersome in-text citations, e.g., “Sittsevoe tsarstvo” (Ситцевое царство; The Calico Kingdom). All texts are provided with translations—unless otherwise indicated, by the authors of the essays. Russian titles that can be found in Works Cited are cited in Latin letters; however, we have provided first lines of poetry and other quotations from Russian texts in Cyrillic, in order to facilitate electronic searches for Russian texts. We hope this will make it easier for our readers to follow the trails of texts laid out by the authors, just as Omry Ronen invited his readers to follow his literary leads.

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Living through Literature: In Memory of Omry Ronen

Vyacheslav V. Ivanov

It is extremely difficult to write about Omry Ronen and Russian literature. These two themes are tied together in an unusual way. Omry Ronen personified the Russian literary tradition: he lived in it and by it. In Ronen's mind, the meeting points or conflicts between authors, the similarities and differences in their writings, have been revived and continued. He was dominated by the feelings that arise when writers are compared to one other. Their coincidences, common features, and contrasts became his own internal problems.

In speaking of Ronen's important contribution to our science, one should be careful in using the term "intertextual." In his case, it seems appropriate to discuss not only the relationship between two (or more) texts, but also the way in which both of them had penetrated his soul. Ronen wrote on the theory of intertextual relations and on their possible transformation into commentary; that part of his legacy may be called applied literary history. He discovered how to combine conclusions concerning a literary text with facts concerning the external reality around that text, as well as texts by other authors. Vladimir Nabokov's writings were for him the main source of ideas about such a transformation of literary knowledge into a kind of explanation of the possible meaning of the whole composition. He tried to share his knowledge with all readers in his comments, as one may see in his work, together with Mikhail Gasparov, on a detailed commentary on the poems of Osip Mandelstam. Ronen's evaluation of Gasparov's books, and of the differences in their studies of semantics, are analyzed in several of his essays written in Russian.¹ In the completed parts of their commentary on Mandelstam's poetry, Ronen and Gasparov intended to convey their special expertise in a way easily understood by a majority of readers.

Ronen's first book, *An Approach to Mandel'stam*, was a detailed introduction and commentary on two longer poems, "The Slate Ode" (Грифельная ода; Grifel'naia oda) and "1 January 1924" (1 января 1924; 1 ianvaria 1924). Ronen discussed associations connected with specific words and phrases in these two

¹ E.g., "Propisi" and "Os'." Editors' note: on these essays, see also Scherr.

poems, as well as in other verse and prose writings by Mandelstam and other Russian and Western European authors. This introduction to Mandelstam's images remains a wonderful example of this genre inaugurated by Ronen. Major modern scholarly literature on Mandelstam continues Ronen's intuitive search for exact intertextual associations. This classic work remains unsurpassed.

In comments also published later as separate articles (such as "Sumerki svobody," included in *Poetika Osipa Mandel'shtama*),² Ronen described intertextual keys and subtexts. While the part on the possible interpretation of the text belonged to Gasparov, Ronen followed the new trend of Russian verse studies inaugurated by Kirill Taranovsky and later refined by Gasparov. These scholars discovered ways to establish a connection between a certain metrical and rhythmical scheme and the theme of the text. Ronen has studied some lesser-known Russian verse patterns from this perspective; notable in this regard is his essay on the Russian three-foot trochee with a dactylic ending, in which he made important strides in scholarship. (The title of this work, "X₃ DMDM," is a technically abbreviated metapoetic name for such a scheme.)

Ronen opened his first book on Mandelstam with the following declaration:

Reiterative lexical figures are, of course, a widespread phenomenon in poetry. However, their prominence in the poetry of Mandel'stam is a consequence of the new stylistic and semantic function, radically different from that generally observed, e.g., in the poetry of Russian symbolism, in which lexical repetition is usually characterized by monosemy and serves melodic (in B. M. Èjxenbaum's sense) purposes. Polysemous more often than not, Mandel'stam's lexical reiterations form complex and extended strings of shifting, expanded or restricted, parallel, complementary or contrastive meanings which link together pieces belonging to various genres and periods, poetry and prose, original compositions and translations, and create such a network of intertextual relations that the entire literary heritage of the poet emerges as an integral structure. Consequently, it proved to be impossible to decipher the meaning of any repetend in the individual constituents of this structure without exploring its *total context*, i.e., all the instances of the relevant usage in Mandel'stam's corpus, and defining its semantic constants and variables.

In the course of interpretation, such total context is identified with the paradigmatic plane, whereas the poetic utterance selected in it on the strength of the elements which it has in common with the utterance under investigation, with the syntagmatic plane.

The other device by means of which Mandel'stam expands lexical meaning and activates its poetic function is based on the use of direct and veiled quotations, reminiscences, paraphrases, etc. of other writers, particularly, poets of the past. These 'borrowings' are meant to be perceived by the qualified reader as figures of reiteration, set upon bringing back certain lexico-semantic and thematic configurations of the poetic tradition. (*An Approach to Mandel'stam* ix-x)

² Ronen and Gasparov, "Sumerki svobody." Originally published in *Izvestiia RAN. Seriiia literatury i iazyka* 58,5-6 (1999): 3-9.

From this point of view, one may consider borrowings and quotations as a subset of the universal device of poetic repetition. The study of intertextuality has become an important chapter in the discussion of poetic repetition.

Ronen wrote articles on various aspects of the intertextual approach. He stressed some features of his own method, distinct from those of many other scholars who by that time had become interested in such studies. For Ronen, the possibility of semantic variation of the text remained the core idea. One of the innovations introduced in his first book was a detailed analysis of all the variants and preliminary drafts by Mandelstam, published in a supplement.

Ronen sensed the degree of his own involvement in the Russian literary past and present. He considered his own possible future place in the final view of events. He selected the St. Petersburg-based journal *Zvezda* as the ideal venue for his work, deserving of his praise. He devoted special attention to the genre of his essays for publication in that journal. I believe that some issues of this brilliant collection of texts will be remembered mainly because of his collaboration with the journal. Ronen's relatively short essays were first published in *Zvezda* and later collected in cycles that became the four volumes of *Iz goroda Enn* (From the City of N), written and published over a fifteen-year period. The readers of these marvelous examples of Russian autobiographical prose are introduced to Ronen's world. His power to recall texts and facts was truly immense. Moreover, he invented a new literary form for the fusion of literary sketches and memories concerning his own life experience and the recent history of Eastern and Central Europe. As Ronen has remarked, nowadays readers tend to enjoy not so much Russian prose as such, but more the tales told by those who, like him, possessed a vast store of memories about real life.

Ronen wrote for readers interested in the factual roots of literature. He succeeded in changing the whole area of such writing. He created his own methods of sharing his tastes and providing arguments for his conclusions. Perhaps it was the next stage in Russian genre history, which in previous centuries had already witnessed such brilliant achievements as Avvakum's memoirs and Alexander Herzen's *Byloe i dumy* (*My Past and Thoughts*). Ronen continued the tendency to fuse the interpretation of favorite literary texts, the history of his own stages of acquaintance with these texts, and his personal view of the tragedy experienced by Europe in the terrible years of the twentieth century. He found his own path in the work and creativity of a writer, possessing at the same time an amazingly capacious memory and vivid imagination; he developed that combination in a masterful way. Some of the essays, such as "Budapesht" (Budapest); "Shram" (Scar), on childhood during World War II; or "Ulichnoe" (Street Thoughts³) are purely autobiographical. This autobiographical element is present in all four volumes of essays.

³ This is the translation provided by Scherr xxxv.

In his essays, as in life, Ronen was immersed in the multitudes of books he had read and memorized. Sometimes the linguistic side of his textual knowledge seemed truly fantastic, as he remembered precise phrases in various languages and their associations. In the history of Russian literature, Ronen will be remembered among those writers who turned memoirs into a genre capable of conveying the tragic burden of the century of oppression that left traditional culture in ruins. Russian literature opened up for this gifted scholar an area of discovery that could recompense all the difficulties and misfortunes he experienced. He reciprocated with his love of the best Russian texts. He not only appreciated them; he learned most of them virtually by heart. His memory was extraordinarily rich. In his essays one can see and feel various cultural layers whose concurrence produced his original understanding of the world.

Each text discussed in Ronen's essays is shown in various diachronic dimensions. The first of them is the path by which he himself had encountered a particular poem or its author. Let us take as an example Ronen's essay on Innokenty Annensky's "Square Windows" (Квадратные окошки; Kvadratnye okoshki). Ronen begins with an exact description of the intricate path of his acquaintance with the great poet (and, at the conclusion, speaks about the personal hatred toward the poet that he had encountered on the part of some editors). Then, in the poem itself, Ronen shows the principle of the connection between the metrical shape of the text and its semantics. Semantic analysis and metrical research reveal the poem as part of a long Russian tradition. Turgenev is not only seen in his probable relation to the same topic; we are reminded of Turgenev's last writings, familiar today only to some Russian readers, which so appealed to Annensky. The combination of biographical remarks about the details of his personal reading, in various countries and places, and historical evaluation of some of the greatest Russian authors, some of whom have not yet been understood in their native country, brings this essay into the corpus of literature about literature. I believe this is a new kind of writing, introduced into Russian literature by Annensky and fully appreciated and developed by Omry Ronen.

Ronen managed to convey the main features of the epoch in his essays. While reading them, one gains a general view of the important episodes in the intellectual history of the Soviet empire and of those areas of Eastern and Central Europe under its domination. Ronen did not conceal his understanding of the connection between the Soviet regime and contemporary literature. Using the example of a novel written by the oft-read children's writer, Lev Kassil', Ronen showed that it was still possible in a totalitarian country to create works that were not strictly dependent on official ideology. Ronen introduced the term "antitoxic" ("Once in a Lifetime" 294) to describe works that did not harm readers, especially such young people as Omry himself, who as a boy had spent the early part of his life in the Soviet Union and the

next period in Hungary, one of the countries within the Soviet sphere of domination.

We will begin our acquaintance with the bookish part of Ronen's life story with his childhood library. When Ronen comes to the United States at the end of his "years of wandering," Nabokov becomes for him an example of a great writer who was capable of self-sacrifice to enable readers to see both shores of a large literary continent uniting Russian literature and its American counterpart. For Ronen this continent belonged to the world. That may be his distinct contribution to the general history of literature: due to the achievements of such writers as Ronen, we can view literature as a global endeavor without differences in language or creed. From this point of view, his remarks on the fate of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Heinrich Heine in Russia are particularly noteworthy. His essay "Kosmopolit" (Cosmopolitan) is important as a study of the barbarians' attempt to oppose global trends of modern culture.

The essay "Teni" (Shadows) is dedicated to the future and its possible reflections in art and literature (according to a suggestion by Arthur Koestler).⁴ The future is based on our choice. This idea is developed in the essay "Rasput'ia" (Crossroads). Ronen saw future lines of growth of Russian literary writing completely different from the standard list of books that had become obligatory for Soviet elementary schools and their post-Soviet and Western continuation. He saw that the works of the Strugatsky brothers had the significance of great Russian prose; they had transcended the borders of the genre of science fiction to which one might have assigned these brilliant authors. To Ronen, the members of the OBERIU group were great poets. His view of their difference from the Acmeists is expressed in the essay "Inoskazaniia" (Allegory), dedicated to Alexander Vvedensky. Ronen thought that the poetics of OBERIU strove to destroy, or at least compromise, traditionally transmitted meanings; that was its main object. In contrast to OBERIU poets, Acmeists worked on the construction of new meanings.

Among the few poets from the later period whom he accorded particular sympathy was Boris Slutsky. One may disagree with his attempt to decipher the reasons for Slutsky's behavior (such as joining in the official critique of Boris Pasternak), but Ronen's quotations from Slutsky and his remarks about the outstanding features of his poetry show the force of his intuition.

As Ronen became interested in the literary process already during his early reading, a possible future for Soviet literature was a reality to him to a much greater extent than it was for other scholars. It explains why he was so curious about the unfinished (and to this day only fragmentarily published) novel of Evgeny Petrov on travel in the country of communism. Petrov had written chapters, still unpublished, on the fantastic story of a victorious war that would have saved the country from the atrocities of World War II. Working

⁴ Translated by Karen Rosenflanz as "Shadows" in Scherr and Wachtel 349–62.

from this example, Ronen would have studied the characteristic features of Soviet military fantasies (“Odstuplenie”; Retreat, Digression). This approach to the novel seems justified if one takes into consideration that Petrov was personally connected to many well-known top figures of the Soviet establishment.

The early period of Ronen’s literary studies was influenced mostly by the Russian Formalists. His favorite teacher was Roman Jakobson, whose follower he remained until the later stage of development of his approach to literature. As a writer and literary scholar, Jakobson combined the Formalists’ analytical technique with the deep intuition of a perspicacious reader. This intersection of an analytic mind and a poetic gift explains Ronen’s interest in Viktor Shklovsky, evident in his sketch on Shklovsky’s early books and their influence on Nabokov’s *Guide to Berlin* (“Puti Viktora Shklovskogo”⁵). For Ronen, Shklovsky was not only, together with Jakobson, one of the founders of Russian Formalism, which had discovered new ways of analyzing literary devices, including estrangement (*ostranenie*) and the structural opposition of the elements of plot (*siuzhet* and *fabula*). Ronen could not agree with the negative attitude toward Formalism expressed in the first issues of the literary journal *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* (NLO; New Literary Review). Ronen’s comments on Lydia Ginzburg are significant in this regard. She belonged to the young generation of Formalists that, by the time its members had reached old age, was considered by the authors of NLO to be the only group that had avoided the negative sides of the previous generation, that of Shklovsky and Jakobson. Ginzburg edited and published her diaries and notes from the 1920s, and Ronen used these in his evaluation of the younger wing of the Formalist movement. In addition, Ronen appreciated the work of Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Tartu semioticians working to continue and develop some of the Formalists’ achievements. He devoted a special article to the memory of Yuri Shcheglov, a gifted scholar who had begun his structural studies of classical and Soviet literature in Moscow and continued in the same direction in emigration.⁶ Ronen considered Shcheglov’s work on Il’f and Petrov’s novel a contemporary classic, one of a kind.⁷

Ronen’s ideas on the fate of Yuri Tynianov’s theory of the semantics of poetic language were expressed in an interesting study on Alexander Blok and Heine, originally a talk at one of the regular conferences dedicated to Tynianov’s memory (“Blok i Geine”). Ronen had studied other German au-

⁵ Translated by Susanne Fusso as “Viktor Shklovsky’s Tracks in ‘A Guide to Berlin’” in Scherr and Wachtel 202–31.

⁶ Editors’ note: Ronen dedicated the third volume of his essays, *Chuzheliubie* (Love for the Other), to the memory of Shcheglov and Aleksander Moiseevich Piatigorsky (*Chuzheliubie* 4).

⁷ Shcheglov, “O mifologizme romanov Il’fa i Petrova”; Shcheglov, *Kommentarii k romanu “Dve-nadtsat’ stul’ev”*; Shcheglov, *Kommentarii k romanu “Zolotoi telenok.”*

thors, as well as some Roman and Ancient Greek classics (such as Ovid and Pindar), starting with his first book; in their works he found sources for several parts of Mandelstam's odes. Ronen dedicated a special article, later included in the collection of his Russian works on Mandelstam, to the role of another teacher, Taranovsky, in the discovery of the importance of literary context and in the philological study of the connections between different texts ("Iz istorii mandel'shtamovedeniia"; From the History of Mandelstam Studies). His own studies seem to mark the beginning of the future science in which the linguistic study of key words (for instance, in titles) supports the results of the analysis of the composition (as in his article on Alexander Pushkin's *Kapitanskaia dochka* [*The Captain's Daughter*], entitled "M/Zh"). I believe that future linguistic work on meanings will use instruments developed by Ronen. Although some modern semantic works by Russian and Polish linguists (such as Anna Wierzbicka) were oriented toward logical analysis of some initial discrete units of meaning (monads), the path shown by Ronen seems much more productive, at least in the study of poetic functions of the semantic side of language. Ronen came to the following conclusion about the necessary co-existence of two different themes in each poetic phrase:

As every major theme of M[andelstam]'s art, the theme of 'speaking stone' is treated in two mutually opposed keys (this ensures, i.a., a balanced aesthetic approach and prevents inflated overstatement). In this instance, one key is the sublime attitude inherited from Novalis; the other, a parodic stance of militantly antisymbolist acmeism. Both keys, a species of romantic irony, are present in some Voronež poems" (*An Approach to Mandel'stam* 79)

Speaking on the influence of Goethe's geological theories on Mandelstam, Ronen adds: "Novalis, to whom M[andelstam] refers in *Razgovor o Dante* [Conversation about Dante] [. . .], offers another clue to this persistent association. The Hermit in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* calls the miners' craft 'astrology turned inside out'" (*An Approach to Mandel'stam* 65). After citing Novalis's passage in German, Ronen concludes:

This passage is the obvious source of M[andelstam]'s statement in *RD* [*Razgovor o Dante*]: "Stone is the impressionistic diary of weather, accumulated through millions of years of trouble." However, for M[andelstam], mineralogy and "astrology" are one: ". . . it is not only the past, but also the future: it has periodicity. It is Aladdin's lamp penetrating the geological dusk of time future."

The "delightful pages of Novalis," as M[andelstam] described them, are more than casually relevant to the entire range of M[andelstam]'s images of the poetic word and its twofold orientation, toward the past and toward the future: stone—akme—gothic spire or growing vertex of a plant—arrow—disembodied ray of light—star—shooting star waking earth from its sleep—talking stones inside Kaščeje's sleepy mountain. (*An Approach to Mandel'stam* 66)

The semantic bundle of meanings extracted by Ronen in this part of *An Approach to Mandel'stam* seems crucial to an understanding of his ideas on Acmeism and world culture as they developed in the following period.⁸ The intellectual, transrational, and phonetic links of the words and notions *stone—akme*⁹ have been revealed in a number of Ronen's publications on Acmeism.¹⁰ Ronen supposed that the same kind of associations might have led to the special importance of the term “mason” for Mandelstam. Discussing the possible influence of the masonic tradition on Acmeism, he writes:

I can only point out in brief that the Guild of Poets was based on the same model as Freemasonry, that it was established at the time of the revival of interest in Freemasonry in Russia, that the poetry of Gumilev contains explicit allusions to the Masonic craft [. . .] and that Gumilev openly identified himself with that craft [. . .], while Lozinskij's poetry and his choice of material for translation likewise reflected Masonic interests. M[andelstam]'s awareness of the analogy between acmeism and the craft is clearly manifested in his architectural theme and has found expression, i.a., in his anagrammatic interpretation of this affinity: *Kamen'*—*acme*. (*An Approach to Mandel'stam* 194)

Discussing the intertextual sources of Blok's article “О современном состоiании русского символизма” (О современном состоянии русского символизма; On the Current State of Russian Symbolism), Ronen remarks:

The symbols of this essay, the “lilac-blue worlds of art” pierced by the “golden sword” of “Someone's luminous gaze,” derive from the concepts and images developed by Novalis in the final pages of *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*: the multiple worlds of creative imagination and of higher reality, united by conscience, “the sublime voice of the universal whole.” (*An Approach to Mandel'stam* 95)

Ronen's observations on the influence of Novalis on Blok may help readers to recognize the source of comparable images in works by Mandelstam that Ronen analyzed.

Ronen was well-educated in comparative and general linguistics. His contribution to the Formalist-oriented analysis of Russian verse is evident mainly in articles where he uses his knowledge of the laws of language. One of the most interesting is his work on different types of puns (“Kalambury”; “Dva poliusa

⁸ Linguistic remarks on semantic bundles in Mandelstam's prose on Armenia show the possible influence of the ideas of the great philologist Nikolai Marr.

⁹ I have discussed the connection between *akme* (as the source for the name of Acmeism) and the Russian word for “stone” (камень; kamen'), as well as the intertextual relations of Mandelstam's and Novalis's views on mineralogy, in connection with research supported by a grant from the Russian Science Foundation (Российский Научный Фонд, РФФ), project 14-18-0219: “Stone Alive: From Mineralogy to Mythopoetic.” In 2015, I discussed the main conclusions of this research in talks at the meetings of the Institute of World Culture of Lomonosov Moscow State University and at the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

¹⁰ For recent literature on this association in the work of Mandelstam, see Alfonsini.

paronmazii”). Starting with Pushkin and other classic authors, Ronen shows the “device laid bare” of certain puns in avant-garde literature. The genres of riddles and other enigmatic texts also attracted his attention. In one of his essays devoted to compositions of this type, Ronen writes about Pasternak’s semantic characteristics as well: for Ronen they belonged to the same genres of verbal constructions, with shifts of the usual system of semantic connections between words (“Golovolomki”; Puzzles). Ronen also knew well the history of Russian literary criticism, and in his short book on the Silver Age he focused on the history of that title and the role of journalist Ivanov-Razumnik in the post-Symbolist period of the evolution of the Russian literature (*The Fallacy of the Silver Age*).

The early period of Ronen’s study of Mandelstam was dominated by his rising interest in intertextual connections. Later he found important differences between them and links between the text and other objects existing outside of literature. In a collection of articles on Mandelstam published in Russian in the beginning of this century, *Poetika Osipa Mandel’shtama*, Ronen traced his own movement through the work of his favorite poet. He started with the semantic investigation of his poetry based on the logical, rational meanings of the words. In his early articles, he began the study of Mandelstam’s anagrams; he continued that work in later studies. Following some suggestions by his teachers, Jakobson and Taranovsky, Ronen discussed various semantic sides of the text and of the subtexts that help the reader comprehend Mandelstam’s system of devices used to express shades of lexical meaning. Already in these early writings that introduced the principles of future study of Mandelstam, Ronen discovered the primary characteristics of the logical frameworks in Mandelstam’s poetry. In particular, he discovered various subtexts in the poems of Russian poets of the past. This approach became the main trend within Mandelstam scholarship. In this sense, it is possible to assert that the large body of scholarship on Mandelstam today can be seen as the realization of Ronen’s early plan of study. At the same time, I would like to stress as an important feature of Ronen’s commentary on Mandelstam the combination of semantic analysis with serious discussion of the social position of the poet. In his article on Mandelstam’s “Russian voice” (“О ‘русском гоlose’ Осипа Мандельштама”), Ronen was the first to put forth a historical view of Mandelstam’s poems from the early 1930s. During this period of Stalin’s attack on successful peasants,¹¹ Mandelstam was alone among writers in his attempt to defend the importance of the Russian village. Ronen’s article opens the door for future studies of the political side of Mandelstam’s poetry of that tragic time. Mandelstam’s epigram on Stalin can be accurately seen as a rare sign of a poet’s absolutely free state of mind.¹² The epigram should be placed in the

¹¹ Editors’ note: kulaks.

¹² “Мы живем, под собою не чуя страны . . .” (1933). Mandel’shtam 196–97.

context of writing on Russian history and the role of the Russian village. Some key words used in their historical context point toward a large group of poems connected with the continuation of a point of view close to that of the Socialist Revolutionary party, banned after July 1918, that continued to defend the rights of peasants and villagers.

In his notes on lines from Acmeist texts, Ronen discovered some important subtexts of various great poets who started this group together with Mandelstam (“K istorii akmeisticheskikh tekstov”). This article offers a more realistic picture than previously available of Russian poetry and the multifarious connections of Silver Age poets with the poetic heritage of the preceding period.

Ronen’s article on transrational elements in writings of non-avant-garde authors is of significance for the not-yet-written history of Russian literature of the previous century (“Zaum’ za predelami avangarda”; *Zaum Beyond the Avant-Garde*). Ronen was inclined to see transrational (*zaumnye*) images or lines as shared by various avant-garde writers. The idea of possible Futurist innovations in the verse of poets from such seemingly conservative stylistic movements as Acmeism is a great innovation in itself. From the distance of more than a century, we can perceive some of the works of Mandelstam, Pasternak, and Velimir Khlebnikov as belonging to the same group. The non-logical images and expressions are not simply stylistic devices. They reflect some significant similarities in the lives and trends of thought of completely different authors who lived at the same turning point in history.

Ronen did not follow trivial classification of writers and their writing. Particularly revealing from this point of view is his discovery of the connection between Mandelstam’s “Hayloft” (Сеновал; *Senoval*) and “Definition of the Soul” (Определение души; *Opredelenie dushi*) in Pasternak’s verse cycle “Philosophical Musings” (Заняты философией; *Zaniat’e filosofiei*) from his book of verse *Sestra moia zhizn’* (*My Sister Life*).¹³ Future commentary on “Verses on the Unknown Soldier” (Стихи о неизвестном солдате; *Stikhi o neizvestnom soldate*) will include a wealth of subtexts found by Ronen in this crucial text at the intersection of historical, political, physical, and literary themes. (In his understanding of them, Ronen diverged from a definitely incorrect interpretation of this work as propaganda.) A similar fusion of historical and literary motifs has been revealed in an article co-authored with Alexander Ospovat on symbols from Tiutchev in Mandelstam poems (“Kamen’ very”). An important result of the combination of historical analysis of poetic biography and linguistic study of poetic language can be seen in “Molv’,” an essay whose title is based on a rare Russian form; perhaps the title can be rendered by Anthony Burgess’s invention “sprick,” based on some of James Joyce’s transrational experiments. Ronen has shown how to combine a serious historical study of the

¹³ Mandelstam, “Я по лесенке приставной . . .” and “Я не знаю, с каких пор.” See Ronen, “Zaum’ za predelami avangarda” 85, 87.

political biography of an author with a discussion of his or her style. The attitude toward Khlebnikov's school of transrational speech can be seen in connection with the anti-totalitarian views of Marina Tsvetaeva. Future studies of her poetry will likely take the path shown by Ronen.

Ronen has shown that in the study of Nabokov's prose, it is necessary to introduce a general attitude toward the world: thus religion and mysticism found their place in a semiotic description (as suggested in his essay on Nabokov's connection to Modernism ["Istoricheskii modernism"] and in another article on his devils [Ronen and Ronen, "Diabolically Evocative"]).¹⁴ The necessity of such an approach in poetic analysis is shown in the brilliant philosophical essay on the concept of "Not-I" in Annensky's verse ("Ne ia").

Some of Ronen's essays are purely political and can be recommended to students seeking to understand crucial moments in the history of Central and Eastern Europe. In particular, I would like to stress the historical truth that I see in the essay "Marsh" (March; Ronen and Kats), partly describing the terror of Stalin and the atmosphere of his rule, as well as its end.

The sphere of possible subtexts is vast. It was not limited by the written or published form of a possible source. Mandelstam's joke concerning "poor Isidas" had demonstrated the possibility to reconstruct a conversational source of a future poetic image ("Bednye Izidy"). In his article on Tynianov and Mandelstam, Ronen has shown the possibility of finding an oral conversational subtext of some stylistic borrowings ("Ustnoe vyskazyvanie"). His remark on the possible perception of Tynianov's historical novel was examined as a probable explanation for several expressions in Mandelstam's own prose in *Egipetskaia marka* (The Egyptian Stamp).

Among Ronen's discoveries, one of the most stimulating may well have been his attempt to decode the biographical context of a successful literary work. In that regard, his essay "Véra," dedicated to Nabokov's wife, is of particular note. Not only literary texts were lodged in Ronen's memory and reflected in his essays based on his memories: the essay "Marsh" demonstrated his ability to use musical works as signs of the times. The biographical chronology of his own musical and theatrical experience is reconstructed in his essay "Repertuar" (Repertoire). Similarly, he creates a historical semiotic dimension for sculpture in his essays "Zmei" (Snakes) and "Mif" (Myth). The essay and commentary on Mandelstam's two theatrical poems, "Dva soneta Mandel'shtama i dve interpretatsii" (Two Sonnets by Mandelstam and Two Interpretations) could be considered among the best examples of applied literary scholarship. Ronen has posed in precise formulae those questions that in his estimation would likely be crucial for future scholars: when we analyze a poetic text, what methods are needed to select contextual information and data on intertextual connections? How can all these elements outside of the text be

¹⁴ Later revised and published as "Cherti Nabokova."

integrated into it and become a part of its meaning? In the above-mentioned essay on two sonnets by Mandelstam, Ronen expresses his concept of the two main tasks of the future scholar. One concerns the text as a whole. A scholar's full powers of invention are needed to find it. The other concerns distinct signs constituting details of the composition. At this point of study, the role of intuitive guessing becomes fruitful. Ronen himself could unite both these poles in his comments and analyses, and in that union we can see his main contribution to the future study of literature. Of particular note among Ronen's main theoretical contributions to our science is his essay "Tsel'nost',"¹⁵ which reveals the structure of the entire creative world of a writer such as Pushkin or Chekhov.

Following Ronen's style, I would like to add a short epilogue to sum up my personal feelings toward him. When I was studying Mandelstam (only partially permitted after rehabilitation) in Russia, I often read Ronen's first articles and book. In that early Soviet period, it was impossible for him to come to the USSR, and I was not given official permission to go abroad. I found his works the most informative among the growing literature on the poet. I also met a brilliant scholar, Nancy Pollak, who had come to Moscow to continue her study of Mandelstam. She was enthusiastic about the lectures by Ronen that she had attended as a student. (She later wrote an excellent study, *Mandelstam the Reader*, that also included discussions of possible interconnections between her main object of study and other Russian poets, among them Pasternak.)

Reforms made travel to the West possible. I met Omry when, as a visiting professor, I came to UCLA in 1989 to give a series of lectures at the Department of Slavic Studies. One of my courses was an overview dedicated to the history of Russian culture. My audience consisted of several graduate students and all the professors in that department. (At that time my old friend Henrik Birnbaum was department chair; also kindly disposed toward me were Dean Worth and Henning Andersen, whom I had met before at conferences in my native country.) Omry followed my lectures attentively and continued to discuss my ideas expressed in them, even the form of my presentations. He also paid attention to certain details of my talks, and he genuinely seemed to like them. That meant a great deal to me, as those were my first steps in this completely new direction.

Omry and I met and talked several times while both of us were lecturing at UCLA. Among the topics of our conversations was Dostoevsky. Omry remembered his impressions from the first reading of one of his novels in a Hungarian translation. From our conversation I sensed that Omry remembered a text in a particular language. This is what makes his intertextual comparisons utterly exceptional.

¹⁵ Translated by Julie Hansen as "Wholeness" in Scherr and Wachtel 363–83.

When I started to edit the semiotics journal *Elementa*, Ronen was among those few scholars who supported the edition with their contributions. In 1992 he participated in the presentation of the new journal in New York. He writes about this in his essay on Steven Rudy, “Mertvetsy. 2. Rudi” (The Deceased. 2. Rudy). Omry’s book *The Fallacy of the Silver Age* was first published in English as a supplement to the journal.

Later on, when my wife Svetlana and I were invited to give lectures at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Omry was there. In connection with Svetlana’s discussion of the history of Slavic writing, Omry spoke after her lecture on the same topic. I liked his approach to the history of Russian and Church Slavonic. As always, he was quite original. He never repeated well-known theories; his point of view was completely new. When we visited him at his home, there was a discussion of some problems of recent social and political history. Again, he gave unusual speeches. One could not agree with his completely unexpected picture of recent events, but it was always interesting to listen to the impromptu position of a person who had suffered many dramatic events in the history of Europe. Omry Ronen was among those rare scholars who have used this rich historical experience in their struggle for a new understanding of literature.

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Mikhail Katkov and Lev Tolstoy: *Anna Karenina* against the *Russian Herald*

Susanne Fusso

When Ivan Turgenev and Fyodor Dostoevsky published some of their most significant novels in the *Russian Herald* (*Russkii vestnik*), the journal founded in 1856 by Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov (1818–87), they tailored the subject matter to harmonize with the general program of the journal. Katkov was notorious for the vigor and even ruthlessness with which he controlled the journal's contents. Turgenev's *On the Eve* (*Nakanune* 1860) centered on the struggle of Bulgarians, as Slavs and Christians, against their Ottoman overlords, which was a current theme of Katkov's journalism; and *Fathers and Sons* (*Otsy i deti* 1862), at least as originally conceived, participated in Katkov's campaign against the nihilists. In pitching *Crime and Punishment* (*Prestuplenie i nakazanie* 1866) to Katkov in September 1865, Dostoevsky described the novel's conception using Katkov's own discourse about nihilists from his essay on *Fathers and Sons*, and *The Devils* (*Besy* 1871–72) was perceived by contemporaries as one of a series of anti-nihilist novels published and promoted by the *Russian Herald*. The case of Tolstoy, who began publishing in the *Russian Herald* in 1859, after his break with the *Contemporary* (*Sovremennik*), is quite different. Eduard Babaev has called Tolstoy "the model of the independent thinker," who found it virtually impossible to submit to the program of any journal (10). But as William Mills Todd III has explained, journal publication was far more lucrative than publication of separate editions, so Tolstoy could not afford to dispense entirely with venues like the *Contemporary* and the *Russian Herald* ("Ruse of the Russian Novel" 411).¹

¹ Todd has thoroughly studied the poetics and pragmatics of serialization in the nineteenth-century Russian novel. See Works Cited for his articles that deal with Tolstoy.

Author's note: Although my scholarly work has been mainly devoted to prose, I owe an enormous intellectual debt to Omry Ronen, whose teaching profoundly shaped the way I approach the interpretation of Russian literary texts, in both prose and poetry. This essay is a shortened version of Chapter 6 (pp. 163–203) of the book *Editing Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy: Mikhail Katkov and the Great Russian Novel* by Susanne Fusso (Northern Illinois UP, 2017), reprinted here with the kind permission of the publisher.

Once they began collaborating, Tolstoy's attitude toward Katkov in his letters was polite and proper, but he never approached Katkov as a petitioner, the way Dostoevsky and, to a lesser extent, Turgenev did. He also never addressed him "as one writer to another," as Dostoevsky did, apparently sincerely (see Buslaev). There are no letters from Tolstoy to Katkov at all similar to Dostoevsky's long and detailed outlines of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Devils*. The first three works that Tolstoy published in the *Russian Herald*: *Family Happiness* (*Semeinoe schast'e*, 1859), *The Cossacks* (*Kazaki*, 1863), and *Polikushka* (1863), do not seem to be conceived with the *Russian Herald* particularly in mind, either in a conciliatory or a polemical sense. *War and Peace* (*Voina i mir*), the first parts of which were published in the *Russian Herald* in 1865 and 1866 under the title *1805*, does at first glance appear to suit the Russian national program of Katkov. Vast and imposing in size and scope, it appears beautifully designed to promote the national "self-consciousness" that Katkov called for in his earliest articles on Pushkin (although the *Russian Herald* was sharply critical of the philosophy of history expounded in the novel's later parts). *Anna Karenina*, the work that led to Tolstoy's violent break with Katkov, is something different. While Dostoevsky clashed with Katkov over a single chapter in *The Devils* that departed from Katkov's program, a close look at *Anna Karenina* reveals that the entire novel is ideologically opposed to many of Katkov's most cherished plans and ideals.

In 1864, when considering whether to publish *War and Peace* in a journal as opposed to a separate edition, Tolstoy wrote to Katkov, "Of all the journals, I would prefer to publish it in the *Russian Herald* for the reason that it is the only one I read and subscribe to" (PSS 61: 58).² As a reader and subscriber, Tolstoy had absorbed the various points of the program of the *Russian Herald*, and in *Anna Karenina* he called them all into question: England as a model for Russia, the promotion of railroads, the development of industry alongside agriculture, the growth of credit institutions, the Russification of the western provinces, classical education, the education of women, spiritualism, and, most prominently, the participation of Russian volunteers in the Serbian war with the Ottoman Empire. This essay will consider the ways in which *Anna Karenina* derives narrative energy from attacking the program of the *Russian Herald* in the pages of the *Russian Herald*.³

It is well known that Katkov refused to publish the eighth and final part of *Anna Karenina*, probably because of its harsh treatment of the movement of Russian volunteers traveling to Serbia to assist the "brother Slavs" in their struggle with the Ottomans, and that Tolstoy had to resort to publishing it as a

² Tolstoy's complete works will be abbreviated as PSS. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

³ Space constraints will compel me to focus on a few of the highlights of this process. A fuller discussion can be found in my book, *Editing Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy: Mikhail Katkov and the Great Russian Novel*.

separate brochure. What is less obvious is that Part 8 of *Anna Karenina* is only the most blatant and explicit attack made in the novel on some of Katkov's most favored policies and programs. Todd has noted that the *Russian Herald* published articles on many of the current topics discussed by the characters in *Anna Karenina* ("Anna on the Installment Plan" 58; "Ruse of the Russian Novel" 413). But the *directedness* of Tolstoy's novelistic discussions *against* the policies of Katkov and the *Russian Herald* has not been thoroughly studied. The attack on the Russian volunteer movement in Part 8 was not a sudden, unanticipated burst of negativity towards one of Katkov's pet causes; it was only the last in a series of such attacks within the novel, and no doubt had the effect of a last straw. To understand the context of Katkov's rejection of Part 8, it will help to consider in some detail the ways in which *Anna Karenina*, both in its initial general conception and in its intensified engagement with current events beginning in February 1876, is permeated by opposition to the program of Katkov's journal, the program that Katkov had been vigorously defending since the journal's inception twenty years before.

England as a model for Russia

Katkov was well known for his Anglophilia, and he had promoted English institutions and culture beginning with the first issues of the *Russian Herald*. Articles on Parliament, the English jury system, English courts, and figures such as Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, and William Gladstone are a constant feature of the journal. Novels by Wilkie Collins, Charles Dickens, and Anthony Trollope appear in Russian translation, often in the same issues as the installments of *Anna Karenina*.⁴ Katkov's associate E. M. Feoktistov attested that Katkov would carefully excise all unfavorable opinions about England from articles destined for the *Russian Herald* "out of the fear that these opinions might undermine faith in and respect for the country whose internal organization was supposed to serve as a model for Russia" (*Vospominaniia* 93). Alexander Herzen's mocking nickname for the *Russian Herald* was the "Westminster Herald."⁵

Tolstoy made subtle, varied, and satirical use of the French language in *War and Peace*. French continues to be a major linguistic and cultural presence in *Anna Karenina*, but alongside it, English language, culture, amusements, and consumer products play a central role. As with the use of French in *War and Peace*, sometimes English is a benign or neutral presence, such as the English

⁴ *The Law and the Lady* by Collins appeared alongside *Anna Karenina* in the January, March, and April 1875 issues. Trollope's *The Way We Live Now* appeared with *Anna Karenina* in the January, February, March, April, December 1876 and January, February, and March 1877 issues. Todd notes the appearance of Victorian novels in the *Russian Herald* ("Responsibilities" 164; "Anna on the Installment Plan" 55). See also Mandelker.

⁵ Herzen, letter to Turgenev, 9 Feb. 1862, cited in Turgenev 5: 409.

nicknames of Dolly and Kitty. But England is most closely associated with the tragic and violent story of Anna and Vronsky in several ways: the English novel, apparently by Trollope, that Anna tries to read in the train home after her initial infatuation with Vronsky;⁶ Vronsky's English jockey Cord, who trains the mare Frou-Frou, destroyed by Vronsky's blunder during the steeplechase; Cord's daughter Hannah, whom Anna, not long before her death, takes in as her ward, at a time when she is neglecting her own daughter; the frivolous atmosphere of Princess Betsy's dacha, where her guests play croquet and she has a "cosy chat" with Anna (the words are given in English in the original); the faddish lawn tennis, perambulators, baby toys, and luxury goods at Vronsky's estate. As Dolly looks around her room there, "Everything produced in her an impression of abundance and foppery (*shchegol'stvo*) and of that new European luxury about which she had read only in English novels, but had never seen yet in Russia and in the country" (*AK* 127: 842, Part 6, Chapter 19).⁷ But the most pervasive and ominous manifestation of English influence in the novel is the railroad. It was in England that the development of the steam locomotive made the railroad a means of mass transportation in the mid-nineteenth century, a revolution that soon spread throughout Europe.

The railroad

From its beginnings in 1856, the *Russian Herald* published numerous articles on the need to establish and expand railroad lines in Russia, as part of the modernization whose urgency was made evident by Russia's defeat in the Crimean War. Articles on the railroad appeared alongside articles on land reform, industrialization, and the development of credit operations, as part of the general discussion of Russia's economy in preparation for the emancipation of the serfs and the other great reforms of the 1860s. The discussion of railroads in the journal was at its most intense in 1856 and 1857, but significant articles continued to appear in the 1860s. The general thrust of these articles is well represented by one that appeared in the May 1856 issue, D. I. Zhuravsky's "On Railroads in Russia" ("O zheleznykh dorogakh v Rossii"). This contribution is a measure of the quality of writers the *Russian Herald* was able to attract. Zhuravsky (1821–91) was a brilliant engineer who had taken part in the design and construction of the bridges for the first major railway line in Russia,

⁶ With respect to the novel Anna reads in the train, I concur with Gary Saul Morson, who says, "We are told that this novel deals with fox hunts and speeches in Parliament. Anyone who knows the English novel will immediately recognize these incidents as the signature of Anthony Trollope" (96). For more hypotheses on the possible sources, see Cruise.

⁷ I will cite *Anna Karenina* (hereinafter *AK*) first according to the *Russian Herald* publication, followed by the part and chapter in modern editions. On the English element in *Anna Karenina*, see also Lönnqvist; and Jones. Lönnqvist extensively documents the negative aura of the artificial and mechanical that surrounds the English theme in the novel.

the Nicholas Line from St. Petersburg to Moscow (1842–51), and he had won the prestigious Demidov Prize from the Academy of Sciences in 1855.⁸

In his 40-page article, Zhuravsky argues that railroads are needed to improve the material, intellectual, and moral life of Russia, increasing the productive forces of the state and developing Russia's material wealth. He points out that all European peoples have become convinced of the necessity of railroads as a marker of the degree of a nation's enlightenment:

Material well-being gives man independence; independence engenders a feeling of one's own worth, respect for oneself as a person, which constitutes a reliable principle of moral improvement. So we can say that railroads, which in the highest degree promote the rapid development of industrial powers and the increase of the people's material wealth, also serve as a powerful mover for the intellectual and moral development of humanity. (440)

Zhuravsky even claims that railroads will promote peace among nations, causing the interests of private persons in various states to become interwoven, so that "the declaration of war between two peoples will encounter the more obstacles the greater the mass of the population that loses its capital from the cessation of peaceful relations" (442). Railroads "increase the means of defense of enlightenment against barbarism" (444). Zhuravsky quotes French railroad engineer Auguste Perdonnet as having said that if Russia had had a railroad to transport troops to the Crimea, it could have successfully defended Sevastopol (where Tolstoy had seen military action). Zhuravsky's quotation of Perdonnet concludes, "Let us congratulate ourselves that Russia does not have at its disposal this terrible weapon, and let us say that *railroads present the state with a powerful means of defense!*" (444–45, quoting Perdonnet; emphasis in original).

Zhuravsky sees another advantage of railroads: they make it possible for people to live outside the capitals, but within easy traveling distance to them. He notes that, thanks to the Nicholas Line railroad (which he helped to build),

inhabitants of St. Petersburg now rent dachas seventy to a hundred versts away and even further, for example in Vyshnii Volochok, 350 versts away, where life is cheaper in many ways than near the capital. Making it cheaper to travel to St. Petersburg and making it possible to arrive there in a short time permits a greater mass of people than previously to take advantage of proximity to the capital, where wealth and social pleasures are concentrated. This is in part how the civilizing influence of railroads is expressed. (455)

⁸ At the time Zhuravsky contributed to the *Russian Herald*, he was working on a railroad line from Moscow to Orel. In 1857–58 he engineered a metal spire to replace the wooden spire of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg. From 1877 to 1889 he was director of the Department of Railroads in the Ministry of Transport.

Zhuravsky's utopian message is clear:

Railroads, which make movement quick and cheap, will not only give greater value to the natural riches that cover and fill the Russian land, will not only call to life the material powers of the country, but will serve the development of its intellectual and moral powers, and will also give the state the possibility of preserving its independence with less expense than before. (446)

The need for railroads for the development of the Russian economy is taken as a given in many of the articles concerning modernization and political economy that appear in the *Russian Herald* in the late 1850s.⁹

In 1863, well before he conceived *Anna Karenina*, Tolstoy had countered the optimistic view of railroads presented in the *Russian Herald* while responding to the journal's assessment of his pedagogical activities. Although Katkov had promised in a letter of 15 April 1862 that he was going to write about Tolstoy's pedagogical journal *Yasnaya Polyana* in the *Russian Herald*, instead there appeared an article by Evgeny Markov, "Theory and Practice of the Yasnaya Polyana School. Pedagogical Remarks by a Tula Teacher" ("Teoriia i praktika iasnopolianskoi shkoly. Pedagogicheskie zametki tul'skogo uchitel'ia"), in the May 1862 issue (Katkov, SS 5: 601). Markov's article is respectful but ultimately dismissive of Tolstoy's pedagogical theories and definition of education. Markov describes the tone of *Yasnaya Polyana* in terms that may be familiar to anyone who has read Tolstoy's more didactic writings: "The deficiencies of our schools have struck him to such a degree that he has fallen into a strange extreme. He acts as if before him the earth had been moving in a false orbit, and he was the first to whom it fell to turn it back into its true path. You would think that pedagogical experience began only today" (165–66). In rejecting the theoretical bases of Tolstoy's pedagogy, Markov, like Katkov in his letters to Tolstoy, seems to be trying to push Tolstoy back into the role of artist, constantly praising him for the poetic, picturesque, artistic pictures he paints of his school: "Whoever does not draw from this reading useful psychological and pedagogical conclusions *will at least receive aesthetic enjoyment*" (189; emphasis added).

In his response to Markov's article, published in the last issue of *Yasnaya Polyana* (12, 1863), Tolstoy reacted not only to Markov's criticism but to the entire program of "progress" promoted in the pages of the *Russian Herald* from its inception, in particular to "the so highly praised steamships, steam locomotives, and machines" (PSS 8: 342; cited in Stenbock-Fermor 66). Tolstoy rejects the idea that "the application of steam to travel and to factory production" will increase the well-being of the people at large:

⁹ Martin Katz discusses Katkov's promotion of railroad construction: "As in other financial and economic affairs, his motives were essentially political—to foster the creation of an organic political entity" (115).

I see a Tula muzhik who is very close and well known to me, who has no need to make rapid journeys from Tula to Moscow, to the Rhine, to Paris, and back. The possibility of such journeys does not add to his well-being in the slightest. He satisfies all his needs by his own labor, and from food to clothing, he produces everything himself: money does not constitute wealth for him. This is so true that when he has money, he buries it in the ground and does not find it necessary to make any use of it. Therefore, if the railroads make objects of manufacture and trade more accessible to him, he will remain completely indifferent to this greater accessibility. He needs neither tricots, nor satins, nor clocks, nor French wine, nor sardines. Everything he needs and that in his eyes constitutes wealth and the improvement of well-being is acquired by his labor on his land. (PSS 8: 343)

Tolstoy goes on to say that European political economy wants to prescribe its laws for Russia, while in fact railroads do not bring any benefits to the mass of the population, based on their own ideas of their needs and not the benefits “that the progress of civilization wants to forcibly thrust on them” (PSS 8: 344). Far from increasing well-being, railroads destroy forests and increase “urban temptations” (PSS 8: 344). This critique of the railroad would become a central issue in *Anna Karenina* over a decade later.

The centrality of the railroad to *Anna Karenina* is well known and well studied. Liza Knapp gives an excellent overview, tracing the ways in which the railroad “infiltrates the plot and form” of the novel: “The mobility that is so essential to the structure of the novel on the formal level, moving the plots along and allowing them to intersect, reflects changes in the fabric of life that were greatly disturbing to Tolstoy as he wrote *Anna Karenina*” (“Setting” 30).¹⁰ Anna meets Vronsky by accident at the St. Petersburg Station in Moscow, as she arrives to visit her brother Stiva, and happens to be in the same compartment as Vronsky’s mother, whom he is meeting. On that same occasion, a railroad worker is accidentally run over by a train, an incident that Anna reads as a “bad omen” (*durnoe predznamenovanie*); Vronsky travels in the same train with Anna back to St. Petersburg, emphatically not by accident, and declares his love to her on the train platform during a stop along the way; Anna commits suicide near the end of the novel by throwing herself under a “goods train” (*tovarnyi poezd*); and in Part 8, we see Vronsky at a provincial railroad station, on the way to Serbia in the hope of finding death. At both the beginning and the end of the novel, a person is crushed by a train, and in the epilogue, trains are carrying the Russian volunteers, including Vronsky, to Serbia for the purpose of “vengeance and murder,” in Levin’s words.¹¹ The *Rus-*

¹⁰ See also Altman; Stenbock-Fermor 65–74; Jahn; Schultze 118–26; and Baehr.

¹¹ The phrase “bad omen” is in AK 115: 315, Part 1, Chapter 18; “goods train” is in AK 128: 763, Part 7, Chapter 31; “vengeance and murder,” AK, PSS 19: 392, Part 8, Chapter 16. Jahn argues that the train has both positive and negative associations in the novel. In my view, any positive aspects are overwhelmed by the negative tone Tolstoy uses in references to railroad travel, trains, and the commerce enabled by trains.

sian Herald's vision of the railroad as an agent for material well-being, moral improvement, and peace-making is directly contradicted in *Anna Karenina*, where the railroad facilitates frivolous luxury, adultery, suicide, and war.

Credit, industry, agriculture

Although the railroad is associated mainly with the story of Anna, it is Levin who provides a larger socioeconomic context for the meaning of the railroad and its interrelationship with agriculture, credit operations, and industrialization, in the long description of the argument of his book-in-progress that appeared in the April 1876 installment of the novel. This passage crystallizes many of the issues discussed in the *Russian Herald* in the late 1850s, so it is useful to quote it in full. After his marriage to Kitty, Levin has returned to work on his book, "in which were to be set forth the bases of a new kind of economy" (*khoziaistvo*; can also mean 'farming'):

He was now writing a new chapter about the reasons for the disadvantageous position of agriculture in Russia. He was arguing that the poverty of Russia stemmed not only from an incorrect distribution of land property [*pozemel'naia sobstvennost'*] and from a false orientation of policy, but that this was fostered in recent times by an external civilization that had been abnormally grafted onto Russia, in particular means of communication lines [*puti soobshcheniia*], railroads, which brought with them centralization in cities, the development of luxury, and as a result, to the detriment of agriculture, the development of factory industry, credit, and its fellow-traveler, stock-market gambling [*birzhevaia igra*]. It seemed to him that with the normal development of wealth in a state, all these phenomena come only when significant labor has already been put into agriculture, when it has achieved correct, or at least defined, conditions; that the wealth of a country must grow uniformly and in particular in such a way that the other branches of wealth do not overtake agriculture; that in conformity with the known state of agriculture, there must be communication lines corresponding to it; and that with our incorrect use of the land, railroads, called forth not by economic but by political necessity, were premature and instead of fostering agriculture as was expected of them, having overtaken agriculture and called forth the development of industry and credit, had stopped it; and that therefore, just as the one-sided and premature development of one organ in an animal would hinder its general development, so for the general development of wealth in Russia, credit, means of communication, intensification of factory activity, which are undoubtedly necessary in Europe, where they are timely, here only caused harm, having pushed aside the main question that follows—the question of the organization of agriculture. (AK 122: 669–70, Part 5, Chapter 15)

The argument of Levin's book is a kind of refutation of the economic program promoted by the *Russian Herald*, which is embodied in multifarious ways in the dramatic action of the novel.

Soon after the passage quoted above, Levin and Kitty are called to the aid of Levin's brother Nikolai, who lies dying in a hotel. As Knapp has noted ("Setting" 31), the hotel is yet another example of the degradation of Russian life by the railroad:

[The hotel] was one of those provincial hotels built on new perfected models, with the best intentions of cleanliness, comfort, and even elegance, but which because of the public that patronizes them, turn with extreme rapidity into dirty inns with pretensions to modern perfections, and are made by virtue of that very pretension worse than the old, simply dirty hotels. (*AK* 122: 675, Part 5, Chapter 17)

Among the unpleasant details is "the cast-iron, ornamental, gloomy, and unpleasant staircase." The hotel is marked by "dirt, dust, slovenliness everywhere, and together with it some kind of new modern railroad self-satisfied preoccupation" (*AK* 122: 675, Part 5, Chapter 17). In England, the development of railroad travel had given rise to new types of buildings, not only the railroad station but also the railroad hotel. Such hotels used cast iron and wrought iron for visible interior details, as a sign of modernity. A typical example would be the heroically scaled open staircase with ornamental railings in London's Midland Grand Hotel at St. Pancras Station, designed by George Gilbert Scott and opened in 1873.¹² In *Anna Karenina*, the detail of the "cast-iron staircase" is meant to evoke the railroad not as a positive sign of progress and modernity, but as another omen of death. It is not by accident that the "cast-iron staircase" appears again at Vronsky's estate, in the hospital he is building. We see clearly through Dolly's eyes that the hospital, full of new technology (huge sheet-glass windows, "ventilation organized according to a new system," beds with unusual springs, new kinds of gurneys and wheelchairs), is being built not for the needs of the peasants (for one thing, there are no maternity facilities), but as yet another empty display of Vronsky's wealth and imported luxury goods (*AK* 127: 850–51, Part 6, Chapter 20).¹³

The connection between railroads and the growth of credit operations noted in Levin's book was a constant theme in articles in the *Russian Herald* promoting the modernization of Russia after the Crimean War. A typical article is a summary of a speech given by I. K. Babst (1823–81), professor of political economy at Kazan University (at Moscow University from 1857), that appeared in August 1856. In a prologue, the summarizer (probably Katkov) speaks of "the convenience and inexpensiveness of railroads" and asserts that "most of the objections to social improvements arise from an incomplete

¹² See Summerson 36–46. On the "Age of Cast Iron," see Hitchcock 169–90. I am grateful to Joseph M. Siry for these references.

¹³ Knapp has done a brilliant analysis of the ways in which Tolstoy juxtaposes Levin's estate with that of Vronsky ("Estates").

understanding of the usefulness of these transformations" (142). He says that Babst sees the main motivating force of national wealth in capital and discounts fears of the influx of foreign capital:

Let us look more closely and attentively at this comforting and highly significant phenomenon of the migration of capital; let us look directly, and not through the poor spectacles of old theories and views, and the phenomenon will appear to us in a completely different guise. The more cheaply we can satisfy any economic need, the more advantageous for us, because it costs us fewer efforts. If one of the factors in production is expensive, then we try to obtain it more cheaply. [. . .] We are rich in land, rich in natural products, but poor in capital necessary for the strengthening of our production, for the exploitation of the rich and varied products of our motherland, and that means it is obvious that it is much more advantageous for us to make use of cheap foreign capital. (148–49)

In the January 1857 issue, an article signed "E. L." speaks of the necessity of credit institutions for the development of railroads and industry:

In Europe and America the accumulation of capital has been helped by credit institutions, or so-called banks. They have fostered the development of industry. Banks have become one of the most necessary appurtenances of all well-ordered states. With the help of banks, private credit and the credit of the governments themselves have become stronger. Banks do not establish railroads themselves, but by their mediating influence, bringing capital into movement, banks foster the animation of the spirit of enterprise, accustom people to using credit, and consolidate confidence in the usefulness of the self-sufficient benefits of capital, without external support. (275–76)

According to this writer, as Zhuravsky had asserted about the railroad, credit institutions are a beneficial moral influence: "Credit institutions or banks, which fertilize productivity, also disseminate moral fruits in the state, developing feelings of honesty and the strict fulfillment of the obligations that the trading parties have taken upon themselves" (551). A Soviet historian has summarized the economic program of the *Russian Herald* in the late 1850s:

A broad program of bourgeois reorganization of the country, and first of all its economy, is unfolded in the journal. Demands are advanced for the abolition of serfdom relationships, the acceleration of industrial development, the rationalization of agriculture, the establishment of free trade, and the expansion of credit. (Kitaev 83)

The education of the Russian public about credit institutions, banks, and the stock market continued in the pages of the *Russian Herald* into the 1860s, particularly in articles by the Belgian political economist Gustave de Molinari (1819–1912) (see Ronin).

Both Levin in *Anna Karenina* and Katkov recognize the moral and social need for emancipation, but they disagree about the economic consequences

and about the effects of industrialization on the healthy development of agriculture. Like Levin, the writers in the *Russian Herald* link railroads and credit to agriculture, but they see modernization as having a beneficial effect. A typical view is expressed in the January 1857 issue by Iu. A. Gagemeister (1806–78), a senior official in the Ministry of Finance who helped develop the system of state banks in Russia. Gagemeister claims that agriculture can be perfected only with the help of capital and the knowledge acquired through industry and trade:

A surplus of capital and technical powers is always turned to the land. Land serves as the point of departure for the well-being of the nation [narod], and the brilliance of the nation in turn reflects on the land. On this basis, agriculture has reached its highest state of perfection in states in which manufacturing is most developed, namely in Great Britain and in Belgium. (7)

Gagemeister explains that manufacturing industries open the way to improvements, and agriculture follows behind them with slow steps, borrowing from them working capital and technical aid, so that “neither Russia nor any other extensive country can renounce the establishment of factories and manufacturing industries if it wishes for the success of agriculture” (8; see Kitaev 60).

Far from seeing a moral improvement in Russian society as a result of the introduction of railroads, banks, and stock markets, as promised by the contributors to the *Russian Herald*, Levin sees moral corruption. This is dramatized in a conversation he has with his brother-in-law Stiva and the visitor Veslovsky while the three men spend the night in a barn during a hunting expedition. Stiva tells Levin and Veslovsky about the hunting party he attended the summer before at the estate of Malthus, a “famous railroad magnate who was ingratiating himself with society and whom Stepan Arkadievich sincerely considered a fine fellow.” Levin reacts angrily, invoking the recently abolished practice of “tax-farming,” which gave concessions to private individuals to collect taxes, usually on liquor, leading to huge profits:

“I don’t understand you,” said Levin, rising up on his mound of hay. “How are you not repulsed by these people? I understand that a lunch with Lafite is very pleasant, but is this luxury really not repulsive to you? All these people, like our tax-farmers earlier, acquire money, so that while making money they earn the contempt of people, they disregard this contempt, and then with what they dishonorably gained they buy themselves off of the former contempt [. . .] Note that this evil, the acquisition of huge fortunes without labor, as it was with tax-farming, has just changed its form. *Le roi est mort, vive le roi!* They just managed to destroy tax-farming when the railroads and banks appeared: also acquisition without labor.” (AK 127: 305–6, Part 6, Chapter 11)¹⁴

¹⁴ The name “Malthus” is of course a reference to Thomas Robert Malthus and Malthusian economic theory connected to population growth and resource depletion.

Levin is echoing a criticism of the system of railroad concessions that appeared in the *Herald of Europe* (*Vestnik Evropy*) in June 1873:

At first concessions were given for this or the other railroad line without preliminary consideration of which was more necessary, and without any competition. Then there appeared here the Strusbergs, concessionaires who, without their own capital, by entrepreneurship and speculation experience alone, in several years acquired huge fortunes. The former tax-farmers were resurrected in the concessionaires of railroads, with the difference that the enrichment of the concessionaires was incomparably more rapid and less risky than the profits of the tax-farmers. ("Vnutrennee obozrenie" 796)¹⁵

It is appropriate that Stiva, who in this scene defends the quick and easy profits of the new railroad barons and the banks, ends the novel as a "member of the commission of the united agency of the credit-mutual balance of southern railroads and bank institutions" (*mesto chlena ot kommissii soedinennogo agenstva kreditno-vzaimnogo balansa iuzhno-zheleznykh dorog i bankovykh uchrezhdenii*), a job title that sounds like a parody of the titles of articles in the *Russian Herald* (AK 128: 710, Part 7, Chapter 17).

For reasons of space, we will not discuss here the reflections in *Anna Karenina* of other issues with which Katkov was vitally concerned, but will move to the issue that caused Tolstoy's public break with Katkov.

The war in Serbia

Despite the many ways in which Tolstoy questions and undermines Katkov's social, political, educational, and economic programs in *Anna Karenina*, there is no hint in the surviving documents that Katkov made any attempt to change the novel's text regarding these issues. In a letter to Katkov of February 1875, Tolstoy writes, "In the last chapter [the scene in which Anna and Vronsky consummate their relationship—SF] I cannot touch anything. *Vivid realism*, as you put it, is my only tool, since I can use neither pathos nor discussions. And this is one of the passages on which the whole novel stands. If it is false, then everything is false" (PSS 62: 139). Katkov's letter about this has not survived, but he appears to have backed down from making Tolstoy change the scene (see Todd, "Responsibilities" 162–63). As far as we know, Katkov allowed all of Tolstoy's attacks on his favored projects to pass without objection or amendment. Just as he gave Tolstoy special treatment in financial matters, throughout most of the publication of *Anna Karenina* he refrained from the intrusive

¹⁵ My attention was drawn to this reference by Zhdanov and Zaidenschnur (824). "Strusberg" refers to Bethel Henry Strousberg (1823–84), a railway entrepreneur who stood trial in Russia in 1875 for fraudulent bank dealings and was deported to his native Germany. He is alluded to in Part 7, Chapter 6 of *Anna Karenina*, in Levin's conversations in Moscow about the foreigner who is to be deported.

editorial practices that had plagued Evgenia Tur, Turgenev, and Dostoevsky. But when Tolstoy submitted what he then referred to as the epilogue to the novel (later Part 8), with its savage attack on the movement of Russian volunteers to Serbia to aid the Slavic Christians in their fight against the Ottomans, it was apparently the last straw. Katkov demanded changes to which Tolstoy would not submit; Tolstoy published Part 8 as a separate brochure and broke off relations with Katkov.

Articles supporting the Slavic Christians of the Ottoman Empire had been appearing in the *Russian Herald* since 1858. Such articles continued to appear with increasing frequency into the 1870s, especially after June 1876, when the principality of Serbia declared war on the Ottoman Empire, and private citizens began traveling from Russia to fight alongside the Serbs. One notable earlier publication in the *Russian Herald* is a translation of excerpts from *The Christians in Turkey*, by W. Denton, an Anglican priest, which appeared in the January 1864 issue.¹⁶ The article is supplied with an introductory footnote, probably by Katkov, that says, "Never yet has there arisen such a powerful denunciatory voice against the policy of the British government on this question" ("Khristiane" 344). Denton reports on a recent visit to Serbia. Denton's aim is to persuade the British government to stop supporting the Ottoman government in the interests of the balance of power, arguing that they should "no longer actively aid a despotism the most grinding on the face of the earth" ("Khristiane" 346; *Christians* 2). Denton accuses high Turkish officials of the "deepest immoralities." Katkov clearly found it useful to publish Denton's catalogue of the persecutions and debauchery of the Ottoman administration, even though it included Denton's argument that England, not Russia, would be the natural ally of the Christians of the East, since "Russia they dread as a gigantic power on their frontier, which would absorb them, to the loss of all national existence, and they turn away from her with dread, proportionate to her nearness and her strength" ("Khristiane" 381; *Christians* 31).

Later articles on the "Eastern question" continue the theme of the oppression of the Slavic Christians subject to Ottoman rule, but in these articles, Russia is unambiguously presented as the natural protector and savior of the Christians of the East. A typical passage appears in a review by E. M. Feoktistov of a German book on the history of Turkey from 1826 to 1856:

There is not the slightest doubt that the main guilt of Russia before Europe in relation to the Eastern question is the spiritual and blood tie that unites it with the Christian tribes, and its immutable calling to be the intercessor and protector of these tribes. When Catherine II openly took upon herself this holy obligation, one could immediately foresee that on this path there would be no agreement between us and Europe. (24)

¹⁶ I quote from the original English edition of Denton's text.

In the summer of 1876, the frequency of articles on the Eastern question increased, and by December of that year, they appeared in the same issue as installments of *Anna Karenina*, as noted by Todd (“Anna on the Installment Plan” 59). In December 1876 and January, February, and April 1877, installments of *Anna Karenina* appeared alongside articles such as “Turkey, Russia, and Europe from the Point of View of International Law,” which remarks, “Unbiased people cannot regard without sympathy the Slavs who are rebelling against the Turks, who have proved with their whole history an inability to adopt for their state policies those basic elements of civilization whose presence in the state organization alone gives a state the right to be considered a member of the international family” (Ul’ianitskii 450). The last installment of *Anna Karenina* published in the *Russian Herald*, ending with Anna’s suicide, was followed in the April 1877 issue by V. S. Nekliudov’s heralding of Russia’s declaration of war on Turkey:

Alea jacta est. The limit has come to Russia’s long-suffering: that fatal hour has come about which, six months ago, the Russian tsar foretold to his people in the Moscow Kremlin. Everything that could be thought of to preserve peace, everything was exhausted, everything was put into effect. . . . Finally the matter has touched the very honor of Russia, and the Sovereign’s word was spoken: with God, forward! To the holy battle, for the holy cause! (856; the installment of *Anna Karenina* is on pages 709–63)

Besides the articles in the *Russian Herald* that promoted Katkov’s view of Russia as the protector and defender of the Slavic Christians in the East, Katkov himself wrote numerous editorials on the subject in his daily newspaper, the *Moscow News* (*Moskovskie vedomosti*). It is impossible to give an adequate digest of these editorials, but in considering Tolstoy’s shaping of Part 8 of *Anna Karenina*, it will be helpful to look closely at a few key editorials. In August 1876, Katkov reports on the progress of the war between Serbia and Turkey:

Today’s telegrams are being received with joy in all corners of Russia, and in the entire Slavic world. The main forces of the Serbs gained a brilliant victory over the main forces of the Turks. [. .] [The Turks] are fortifying on the left bank of the Morava. This means new battles are to come, new victims. [. .] The news of the victory, which we conveyed in a special supplement, spread like lightning today about the city. A load fell from everyone’s shoulders—over recent days the tense expectation of the outcome of the battle had reached an extreme degree. The same thing is happening throughout all of Russia [*Rus’*]. (14 August 1876, *Sobranie peredovoykh statei* 446)

Two days later he reports, “[at Aleksinac] the Turkish assault columns were overrun and made to flee, the Serbs went on the attack and chased the Turks to the border. Everyone in Russia responded with a joyful greeting to this news of the victories of our brothers in faith and tribe” (16 August 1876, *Sobranie peredovoykh statei* 451). Katkov anxiously follows the fate of Russian volunteers traveling to Serbia, noting that Russian newspapers

are filled with reports about the volunteers who are leaving every day for Serbia and about the material aid to the Slavs that is flowing from all ends of Russia, from all classes of the population. [. . .] All the worse for [the European Turco-philic] if they cannot rise to the comprehension of the historical significance of that powerful force which has been expressed in this ardent impulse of a people [narod] of 80 million. (21 August 1876, *Sobranie peredovoykh statei* 462–63)

Another key editorial is from 6 January 1877, dealing with “the Russian people’s [*narodnoe*] movement of the past year.” Katkov begins by claiming that “in Russia not only the attention of society, but the whole soul of the people [*narod*] has been seized by the struggle that has arisen in the East.” The Russian people, moved by their feeling of “mercy and living faith,” have moved to the aid of their “brothers in Christ suffering from horrible brutalities” (SS 2: 387). Katkov recounts a spontaneous upsurge of support from the Russian common people, taking the form of monetary contributions, sympathy, and compassion. He quotes the head of the Moscow Slavic Committee, I. S. Aksakov:

“When the Serbian troops experienced their first failure, when onto the soil of aroused popular [*narodnoe*] sympathy fell the first drop of Russian blood, when the first heroic feat of love was accomplished and the first pure sacrifice was made in the name of Russia by a Russian for the sake of faith and brothers, then the conscience of the whole Russian land shuddered.” (SS 2: 388)

Katkov continues to quote Aksakov, who describes simple people praying to be sent to the field of battle “to die for the faith”: “One felt that before us in humble form, without proud and self-satisfied bearing stood heroes—I will say more: people of the same temper out of whom came the martyrs of the first centuries of Christianity. Yes, we had the honor of seeing the very soul of the people!” (SS 2: 388).

The earliest versions of Tolstoy’s epilogue to *Anna Karenina* begin with a direct attack on the volunteer movement, in the voice of the narrator (PSS 20: 548–56). These long disquisitions on matters distant from the main line of the plot are reminiscent of the ruminations on the theory of history in the later parts of *War and Peace*. Tolstoy apparently revised this version during his negotiations with Katkov, presenting the criticisms of the volunteer movement in the voices of the characters, particularly Levin and Prince Shcherbatsky, rather than in the more didactic voice of the narrator (PSS 20: 638–39). The substance of the criticisms remains in the final version of Part 8, however, so for ease of analysis we will focus on that text, although it is not identical to the text that Katkov rejected.

In Part 8, Katkov’s holy cause of aiding the Slavic Christian brethren is presented as yet another in a series of high-society fads: “All that the idle crowd usually does when killing time was now done for the benefit of the Slavs. Balls, concerts, dinners, speeches, ladies’ outfits, beer, taverns—everything attested

to sympathy for the Slavs" (PSS 19: 352). Levin's half-brother Koznyshev recognizes that "many people with mercenary, vain goals" are involved in puffing up the Slavic question, and that "the newspapers were printing much that was unnecessary and exaggerated, with a single goal—to draw attention to themselves and to out-shout the others" (PSS 19: 352). He does, however, see the essence of the matter in Katkopian terms:

The slaughter of co-religionists and brother Slavs called forth sympathy for the sufferers and indignation for the oppressors. And the heroism of the Serbs and Montenegrins who were fighting for a great cause engendered in the whole people [*narod*] the desire to help their brothers no longer with word but with deed. (PSS 19: 353)

Just as Aksakov, quoted in Katkov's editorial, had claimed to have seen "the very soul of the people," so does Koznyshev: "The people's [*narodnaia*] soul had found expression" (PSS 19: 353).

Koznyshev's motives for throwing himself into the Slavic movement are suspect, since he has been disappointed by the reception of his recently published book, and so can be classed along with the "commanders-in-chief without armies, ministers without ministries, journalists without journals, heads of parties without partisans," who are seizing upon the Serbian war as a distraction from their own failures (PSS 19: 352–53). Vronsky, abandoning his own daughter to Karenin and joining the volunteers in a form of slow-motion suicide, belongs to the same category. As Stenbock-Fermor notes, Tolstoy may have been drawing on his personal knowledge of the story of A. A. Fet's brother Pyotr Afanas'evich Shenshin (*Architecture* 40).¹⁷ Shenshin had been disappointed in love and had gone to Herzegovina for the uprising of the Slavs and then as a volunteer to Serbia, where he had "fantastic adventures," according to Fet. He could never find a place for himself in Russia, and ended up working in an arboretum somewhere in Ohio, and then disappearing without a trace. In his letters to Fet of 1876–77, Tolstoy constantly asks for news of Shenshin. In contrast to his depiction of the ne'er-do-well volunteers in Part 8, according to Fet, Tolstoy dearly loved Shenshin and considered him "a high moral ideal" (Fet 2: 346).¹⁸

On his way to visit his half-brother Levin in the country, at Kursk Station in Moscow, Koznyshev sees the Russian volunteers leaving for Serbia accompanied by enthusiastic crowds offering bouquets. Everyone he meets is talking about "today's telegram," with the news that "again they smashed the

¹⁷ S. A. Kibal'nik argues that Tolstoy displays sympathy for the nobility of Vronsky's sacrifice, and compares him to Silvio in Pushkin's story "The Shot." The comparison is apt, but in both cases there is a feeling of self-dramatizing, futile romanticism rather than truly admirable self-sacrifice (41–42).

¹⁸ See also Fet 2: 292–93, 308–9, 312–16, 325, 344–46, 382–83; and Tolstoy PSS 62: 217, 253–54, 268, 280–81, 303, 315.

Turks" (PSS 19: 354). Katkov's triumphant editorials about the telegrams bringing news of Serbian victories, alongside the promise that new battles lie ahead, are wickedly satirized a few pages later, when Koznyshev's traveling companion Katavasov goes into a train compartment to talk to some of the volunteers. Far from the "martyrs of the first centuries of Christianity" of whom Aksakov spoke, they all turn out to be empty braggarts of one sort or another. After the volunteers leave the compartment to have a drink, Katavasov and an old soldier in the compartment "began to talk about the latest military news, and they both hid from each other their bewilderment about whom the battle was expected to be with the next day, when the Turks, according to the latest news, had been smashed at all points" (PSS 19: 358).

Just as the crowds cheering the volunteers grow smaller and less enthusiastic as the train gets farther from Moscow, Koznyshev's confidence in the justness of the volunteer movement is called into question by Levin and the old Prince, and even Dolly, when he reaches Levin's country estate. Levin questions the right of any private person to "take on the responsibility for the beginning of a war" (PSS 19: 387). Koznyshev responds in terms that echo the articles in the *Russian Herald* and Katkov's editorials in the *Moscow News* on the subject: "There is no declaration of war here, but simply the expression of human, Christian feeling. They are killing our brothers, of one blood and one faith with us. [. . .] The people [*narod*] has heard about the sufferings of its brethren and has spoken" (PSS 19: 387–88). Levin responds that he himself is one of the people and he does not feel anything of the kind. As in earlier conversations in the novel, the old Prince steps in to express the commonsense view—one that is contrary to everything Katkov stands for:

"I was living abroad, reading the newspapers, and I admit even before the Bulgarian horrors I did not at all understand why all Russians had so suddenly come to love their brother Slavs, but I felt no love at all for them? I was very distressed, I thought that I was a monster or that Carlsbad had had that effect on me. But after coming here, I calmed down, I see that besides me there are people who are interested only in Russia, and not in the brother Slavs." (PSS 19: 388)

After an inconclusive attempt to find out what one representative of the people, the old beekeeper Mikhailych, thinks of the matter, Levin sums up:

"The word 'people' is so indefinite [. . .] District scribes, teachers, and out of the muzhiks perhaps one in a thousand knows what is going on. The rest of the 80 million, like Mikhailych, not only are not expressing their will, but do not have the slightest conception of what they are supposed to express their will about. What right do we have to say what the will of the people is?" (PSS 19: 389)

Koznyshev attempts to turn the conversation by referring to the fact that “all the social organs are saying the very same thing,” to which the Prince replies, “It’s the newspapers that are all saying one thing [. . .] But that’s the same thing as when frogs make noise before a storm.” After pointing out that newspaper editors profit financially from war, he continues,

“Alphonse Karr wrote this splendidly before the war with Prussia. ‘You consider that war is necessary? Fine. Whoever preaches war—into a special front legion and to the siege, to the attack, in front of everyone!’” “The editors would be fine,” said Katavasov, laughing loudly, imagining the editors he knew in this select legion. “Oh, they would run away,” Dolly said, “They’d only be in the way.” “And if they run, then shoot them with buckshot from behind or put Cossacks after them with whips,” the Prince said. (PSS 19: 391)

Although Tolstoy uses the plural “editors,” Katkov was the editor “in front of everyone” in calling for the liberation of the Slavs from the Ottoman yoke. To suggest first that he was promoting war for his own financial gain, and then that he would be too cowardly to fight himself, was a grave insult to the person who had given *Anna Karenina* such a prominent place in his journal.

Koznyshev attempts a defense of the press, saying:

“Every member of society is called to do the deed that is characteristic of it [. . .] and people of ideas carry out their deed in expressing public opinion. And unanimity and the full expression of public opinion is the service of the press and is a joyful phenomenon as well. Twenty years ago we would have been silent, but now the voice of the Russian people is heard, which is ready to rise as one person and ready to sacrifice itself for its oppressed brothers.” (PSS 19: 391)

Levin responds, “But not only to sacrifice, but to kill Turks [. . .] The people sacrifice and are ready to sacrifice for the sake of their soul, but not for murder” (PSS 19: 391). This is a direct rebuke to Katkov’s claim that the motives of the people in joining the volunteer movement stem from “mercy and living faith,” not, as Levin would have it, “vengeance and murder.”

The end of an unhappy family

Instead of the long-awaited ending to *Anna Karenina*, in the May 1877 issue of the *Russian Herald*, on the very last page, tacked to the bottom of a survey of the war in progress with Turkey, complete with maps and troop movements, there appeared the following note:

In the previous issue under the novel *Anna Karenina* there was the note: “To be continued.” But with the death of the heroine the novel essentially was ended. According to the author’s plan, there would follow a short epilogue, about two printer’s sheets, from which the readers could learn that Vronsky, in confusion and sorrow after the death of Anna, is setting off as a volunteer to Serbia and

that all the others are alive and well, and Levin remains at his country estate and is angry at the Slavic committees and the volunteers. The author will perhaps develop these chapters for a separate edition of his novel.¹⁹

Tolstoy was enraged by this note and drafted an angry letter to the newspaper *New Time* (*Novoe vremia*), but later calmed down and did not send it. In the unsent letter, Tolstoy refers to “a note that modestly hid itself in a strange place in the *Russian Herald*” (PSS 62: 331).²⁰ Tolstoy’s letter also parodies Katkov’s summary of Part 8, suggesting that Katkov could have saved everyone a lot of trouble if, instead of torturing its readers for three years with the publication of a long novel, he had simply given its contents as: “There was a certain lady who abandoned her husband. Having fallen in love with Count Vronsky, she got angry in Moscow at various things and threw herself under a railroad car” (PSS 62: 331).

As Stenbock-Fermor notes, Tolstoy was angered by Katkov’s “breach of publishing ethics” in summarizing the end of *Anna Karenina* that he had refused to publish in full (*Architecture* 29). Tolstoy may also have been struck by an article that appeared in the same issue as Katkov’s note, “Memoirs of a Volunteer” (“Vospominaniia dobrovol'tsa”), signed “N. P—ov.” Near the beginning of this account of a young volunteer’s experiences in the Serbian campaign, there is a scene at Kursk Station in Moscow that is extremely similar to the scene at the same station in the epilogue to *Anna Karenina*. The narrator describes being greeted by the excited crowd and seeing a gentleman who gets up on a table and reads a dispatch: “A unanimous shout of ‘Hurrah’ ended the reading. ‘What is it? What were they reading?’ ‘We have smashed the Turks!’ ‘Listen, the Turks are smashed, several guns have been seized’” (221). The account is not devoid of some satire of the volunteers, and even echoes Tolstoy’s text in saying, “The sympathy of the public for us was expressed noticeably more weakly as we moved away from Mother Moscow” (224). Given that Tolstoy had already written the epilogue (including the railroad scene) before this article appeared, the only conclusion is that its author was given access to Tolstoy’s text. The similarities are too striking to be mere coincidence.

“Memoirs of a Volunteer” begins by reprising Tolstoy’s railroad scene, but rather than abandoning the volunteers at that point, as Tolstoy does, leaving the unpleasant impression of them with the reader, the narrator takes us along with him to Serbia. The narrator is a sensible, experienced soldier who abstains from the drinking bouts in which some of his fellow volunteers indulge, and he shows the Russian volunteers being greeted by well-wishing crowds in Romania and Serbia. When he first sees the lights of Serbian outposts, he

¹⁹ Note appended to “Voennoe obozrenie” (signed “M.”), *Russkii Vestnik* 129 (May 1877): 472.

²⁰ In a version of the letter found among Strakhov’s papers, Katkov’s note is sarcastically referred to as “modestly hiding from the eyes of the reader, like a fragrant violet” (Strakhov, *Perepiska* 120). On a letter sent to the same newspaper by Tolstoy’s wife protesting Katkov’s action, see Gusev 257–59.

says, "In my soul there was a whole sea of love for my suffering brothers, and the thirst for vengeance on the Turks simply suffocated me; it seems that the majority of Russians shared my feeling" (234). The picture he paints is much more nuanced than what is presented in Katkov's editorials: not all the volunteers are saints, there are mistakes and setbacks in the military operations, and "vengeance" plays a part in his motivations, as Levin argues. "Memoirs of a Volunteer" is also more nuanced than Tolstoy's portrait of the volunteers in *Anna Karenina*: some of the volunteers are true heroes, and the narrator himself is honest, self-critical, and genuinely concerned about the fate of the Slavic Christians of the Ottoman Empire. It is hard not to see "Memoirs of a Volunteer" as yet another salvo in Katkov's battle with Tolstoy over Part 8.

In his letter to Strakhov telling him that he was probably going to have to publish Part 8 as a separate book, Tolstoy wrote, "It turns out that Katkov does not *share my views*, and it could not be otherwise, since I condemn precisely such people as him" (PSS 62: 32; emphasis in original). To say "it turns out that Katkov does not share my views" is strangely disingenuous, since Tolstoy must have realized from the start that the condemnation of "precisely such people as him" extends throughout the novel, and that given Katkov's towering stature, "such people as him" really means "him."

In an article titled "What Happened after the Death of Anna Karenina" ("Chto sluchilos' po smerti Anny Kareninnoi"), presented as a review of Tolstoy's separate publication of Part 8, Katkov offers aesthetic arguments for having refused to publish the end of the novel, when in fact the actual reasons were political. Katkov gives long excerpts from the last part, as if trying to make sure that the end of *Anna Karenina* did in fact appear in the *Russian Herald*, in a properly abbreviated form. He makes the keen-eyed observation that Anna's name is never mentioned in Part 8, and that the characters seem strangely unaffected by her terrible death. Katkov inserts his journal into the fictional world of the characters, referring to the fourth (April 1877) issue of the *Russian Herald*, in which Anna's suicide had appeared:

Quite a few people have gathered at the family home of the Levins, Sergei Ivanovich is there, and Katavasov, and the old Prince, and Dolly with her children, they talk about a lot of things, but for this whole company it is as if the terrible episode which so struck even readers who knew Anna only from stories, and not from personal acquaintance like these people, had not happened. As if the fourth issue of the *Russian Herald* had not yet reached Levin's estate. ("Chto sluchilos'" 450)²¹

But in general in this essay, Katkov fails to show his usual acumen as a reader. He pretends not to understand why, after the death of Anna, Tolstoy returns

²¹ In a study that compares Part 8 of *Anna Karenina* to the second part of the epilogue of *War and Peace*, Eric Naiman provides a superb analysis of the absence of Anna's name in Part 8.

to Levin's story, even though the two stories have run in parallel throughout the novel:

If the work was not finished [*ne dorabotalos'*], if no natural resolution appeared, then it seems better to have broken off the novel on the death of the heroine than to conclude it with talk about the volunteers, who are not at all to blame for the events of the novel. A broad river flowed smoothly, but did not fall into the sea, but got lost in the sands. It was better to get out ahead of time onto the shore than to sail out onto a sandbar. ("Chto sluchilos'" 462)²²

Katkov's usual directness and ruthlessness as a polemicist are absent in this feeble attempt at self-justification. It is as if Katkov was unable to grapple with the fact that Tolstoy, the writer in whom he placed his highest hopes, had in this novel rejected and ridiculed virtually every one of his most cherished projects for Russian society.

Turgenev told several friends that he never would have finished *Fathers and Sons* if it had not been for Katkov's insistence. Tolstoy at several points was ready to give up on *Anna Karenina*, but was constantly pushed to continue it by Katkov (and the monetary rewards he promised). In November 1875, Tolstoy wrote to Strakhov, "My God, if only someone would finish *Anna Karenina* for me!" (PSS 62: 215; see also 62: 159, 186n, 197, 202, 294). Strakhov was Tolstoy's confidant throughout the writing of *Anna Karenina*, and in one of his letters to Tolstoy he has left us a vivid portrait of Katkov that testifies to the extent of Katkov's investment in publishing the novel. In fall 1875, Strakhov wrote Tolstoy that he had seen Katkov in St. Petersburg. Strakhov wanted to talk to Katkov about his own articles for the *Russian Herald*, but, he writes, "he kept talking about you." Katkov was worried about when *Anna Karenina* would be finished, and also about rumors that Tolstoy might decide not to publish the second half of the novel in the *Russian Herald*. Katkov feverishly insisted to Strakhov that he was making all kinds of concessions to Tolstoy, and that Tolstoy "would have no possibility of extracting more profit" from the novel than by publishing it with Katkov. Strakhov then offers a striking image of Katkov:

I confess, in general this time I felt a certain pity for Katkov, mixed with respect. His emaciated face, gray hair, thin as a cobweb, his heavy manner of speaking and the very form of his skull, which for some reason arrested my attention, produced a painful impression; this person is never calm for a moment—some kind of inner work is constantly and tensely going on in him. (*Strakhov, L. N. Tolstoi—N. N. Strakhov* 219)

²² Dostoevsky published a fascinating response to *Anna Karenina*, and to Part 8 in particular, in his *Diary of a Writer (Dnevnik pisatel'ia)* for July—August 1877. Although Dostoevsky sees *Anna Karenina* as a work that shows Europe that Russia has "our own national 'new word'" to say, he vehemently rejects Levin's and Prince Shcherbatsky's, and by extension Tolstoy's, position with regard to the volunteer movement. Dostoevsky sees Part 8 as Tolstoy's "separation from a universal and great Russian deed and a paradoxical untruth leveled against the people" (Dostoevskii PSS 25: 200, 202).

Given that Strakhov makes this observation as he is being exhorted by Katkov to help push along the production of *Anna Karenina*, the “inner work” was the same work that made Katkov pester Turgenev to finish *Fathers and Sons* and support Dostoevsky as he produced four of his five major novels: the work of creating the canon of Russian literature as a part of world literature. Katkov did not “finish *Anna Karenina* for” Tolstoy, but it would probably not have been finished without him. Tolstoy’s mental battles with every aspect of Katkov’s national program enabled him to generate a novel that, even while escaping the total control of both men, helped to promote that program in the most meaningful way, by adding another masterpiece to the canon of Russian literature. It was this canon that Katkov had seen, since the beginning of his career in the 1830s, as an indispensable element in making Russia a world-historical nation.²³

The last direct communication between Tolstoy and Katkov was a telegram Tolstoy sent him demanding that he send back the manuscript of the epilogue and breaking off any further communications (PSS 62: 332n). But there is a coda to their relationship, one that fittingly takes place at a railroad station in Moscow. In the summer of 1877, Strakhov, who was acting as Tolstoy’s agent in publishing Part 8 as a separate brochure, was on his way back to St. Petersburg after visiting Tolstoy at Yasnaya Polyana and going to the Optina Pustyn Monastery with him. At Kursk Station in Moscow, Strakhov met with Fyodor Fyodorovich Ris, the owner of the printing plant in which Part 8 was to be published. (He had also printed *War and Peace* and was to print the separate edition of *Anna Karenina* in 1878.) Strakhov and Ris traveled from Kursk Station to St. Petersburg Station in Ris’s carriage, and when they arrived, Strakhov realized that his baggage had not been transferred. Ris returned to Kursk Station to try to find it. In his impatience, Strakhov went to wait for Ris near the station entrance:

A new misfortune! I see Katkov riding up with someone to the station. No sooner had I noticed him when he got out of the carriage. I pretended that I did not see him. He passed by, as if on purpose coming close to me, but also did not acknowledge me. [. . .] I admit, this meeting was very unpleasant for me. It is stupid to pretend not to recognize someone, but the task of talking to him seemed so difficult to me that even now I am delighted at the swiftness with which I made the decision not to see him. (*Strakhov, L. N. Tolstoi—N. N. Strakhov* 345–46; see Tolstoy PSS 62: 335, 336n)

The railroad as the locus for chance meetings is a major theme of *Anna Karenina*. Here Strakhov, Tolstoy’s surrogate, had a last, accidental non-meeting with Katkov. Even if Tolstoy was arguing with Katkov throughout *Anna*

²³ Irina Paperno argues that Strakhov “did finish the novel for Tolstoy” by preparing the revised separate edition (103).

Karenina, arguing is still dialogue. In the very last moment of their connection, there was no dialogue, only intentional non-recognition and non-communication.

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Vladislav Khodasevich as Innovator

Michael Wachtel

Anyone who knew Omry Ronen—and certainly anyone who ever sat in his classroom—was undoubtedly astonished to read (in his essay “Propisi”; Прописи; Copybook Headings) how he struggled to learn the finer points of Russian versification. It turns out that Omry did not approach the field systematically; he simply read things that he chanced upon (Eikhenbaum’s *Melodics of Verse*, Nabokov’s *The Gift*, and two of Bobrov’s essays).¹ As he recalled, in these works «я потонул в пучине терминологической синонимии: будь то пиррихии или пэоны, паузники или дольники, а суть дела все не давалась мне в руки»

¹ One of the essays was on Pushkin’s “Songs of the Western Slavs” (*Pesni zapadnykh slavian*; Песни западных славян; a subject that has fascinated many Russian verse theorists); Ronen does not make clear what the second essay was, but it apparently concerned “three-stress pauzniki.” The term “pauznik,” favored by Bobrov, was rejected by subsequent scholars as being obscure and misleading.

Author’s note: My introduction to Khodasevich’s poetry came in the fall of 1984, when, as a graduate student in comparative literature at Harvard, I took a seminar in “Post-Symbolist Russian Poetry” with visiting professor Omry Ronen. That course, designed for students far more advanced than I was, also served as my introduction to metrics. At the end of the course, I submitted a paper called “Tender Hatred and Caustic Love: The Poetics of Vladislav Khodasevich.” My present contribution has nothing in common with that essay, which would not be worth remembering at all were it not for the bizarre history of its “reception.” In those days all papers were typed, and I was too cheap (or perhaps too hurried) to make a copy before submitting it. After all, there were only a handful of students in the class, so I expected to get it back quickly. When some time elapsed, I plucked up my courage and went to speak with Professor Ronen (at the time I would never have dreamed of calling him anything else). He told me that he had read my paper, but still needed time to write out his comments. This exchange repeated itself a couple of times, but the semester ended without my getting it back. I spent the subsequent semester in Moscow, and when I returned, I went directly to the Slavic Department to reclaim my work. I was told that some papers had indeed been lying there for months, but that Professor Ronen had departed for the University of Texas and presumably taken them with him. This sounded implausible to me, and I gave up hope. In the last days of December 2016, after the present essay had been submitted for publication, I received in the mail a large envelope from Irena Ronen. There was my Harvard essay, with Omry’s comments and a post-it from Irena: “Going through Omry’s papers I came upon this one. Happy New Year!” Omry, who always delighted in coincidences that ultimately have meaning, would surely have appreciated my return to Khodasevich and my receiving his severe yet encouraging comments after a delay of more than thirty years.

(“I drowned in an abyss of terminological synonymity: whether pyrrhics or paeons, pauzniks or dol’niks, but the essence eluded me”) (“Propisi” 219). Indeed, as Omry himself eventually recognized, only a genius could have mastered the subject of versification through such haphazard reading.

The first decades of the twentieth century were of course a golden age of poetics scholarship, marked by constant debates, polemics, and profound insights into the nature of Russian verse. However, the flip side of such frenetic activity was confusion; it took several decades before the terminological (and often conceptual) muddle of this work could be overcome. As Boris Tomashevsky regretfully noted in an essay of 1923:

все мы страдаем зыбкостью терминологии, что и понятно при неудовлетворительности существующей терминологии и необходимости соблюдать осторожность во введении новых терминов. Все мы отчасти пользуемся для номенклатурных целей старой терминологией, иногда заменяя ее довольно неуклюжими описательными формулировками. (Tomashevskii 194)

we all suffer from the instability of terminology, which is understandable given the unsatisfactory nature of existing terminology and the necessity of being cautious in introducing new terms. All of us at times use old terminology for purposes of nomenclature, sometimes replacing it with rather clumsy descriptive formulations.²

By the time Omry was studying at Harvard with Roman Jakobson and Kirill Taranovsky, the study of Russian verse form was on solid footing, with the terminology clarified and the ambiguities resolved (perhaps too neatly, as we shall see).³ Today’s students have at their disposal pellucid accounts by Barry Scherr and Mikhail Gasparov, in which decades of claims and counter-claims have been synthesized, allowing the neophyte such a clear view that the erstwhile battleground is forgotten. In this essay, however, I will return to those early days of confusion, because my subject is a poet who was present at the very “birth” of the scholarly study of Russian verse. As I will argue, an assessment of Vladislav Khodasevich’s poetic practice is impossible without an awareness of contemporary discussions of verse theory.

Khodasevich is generally regarded as a major poet, but a traditionalist, if not an outright reactionary. In a famous overview of poetry written in 1924, Yuri Tynianov argued that Khodasevich’s poetic voice was not “genuine” (Tynianov 548–49). By this he meant that Khodasevich did not sound “modern,” that his

² All translations are my own.

³ This was the subject of my paper at the memorial symposium “Advancing Omry Ronen’s Legacy in Russian Literary Studies” at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, on 1–2 November 2013 (subsequently published as Wachtel, “Charts”). The present paper moves from theory to practice in order to demonstrate some specific problems of what has become the canonical approach to Russian versification.

verse did not reflect the experimentation of the day.⁴ More recently, G. S. Smith used statistics to prove that same point: Khodasevich's practice "goes against every single one of the distinguishing features" of the Modernist period in Russia (Smith, "Versification" 388; see also Rubtsova 36–39). However, as we will see, innovation can take many forms.

In his memoirs about Andrei Bely, Khodasevich recalls a crucial event in the study of Russian versification:

Летом 1908 года, когда я жил под Москвой, он <Белый—MW> позвонил мне по телефону, крича со смехом:

— Если свободны, скорей приезжайте в город. Я сам приехал сегодня утром. Я сделал открытие! Ей-Богу, настоящее открытие, вроде Архимеда!

Я, конечно, поехал. Был душный вечер. Белый встретил меня загорелый и торжествующий, в русской рубашке с открытым воротом. На столе лежала гигантская кипа бумаги, разграфленной вертикальными столбиками. В столбиках были точки, причудливо связанные прямыми линиями. Белый хлопал по кипе тяжелой своей ладонью:

— Вот вам четырехстопный ямб. Весь тут, как на ладони. Стихи одного метра разнятся ритмом. Ритм с метром не совпадает и определяется пропуском метрических ударений. «Мой дядя самых честных правил» — четыре ударения, а «И кланялся непринужденно» — два: ритмы разные, а метр все тот же, четырехстопный ямб.

Теперь все это стало азбукой. В тот день это было открытием, действительно простым и внезапным, как Архимедово. Закону несовпадения метра и ритма должно быть в поэтике присвоено имя Андрея Белого. (Khodasevich, *Nekropol'* 55)

In the summer of 1908, when I was living outside of Moscow he [Bely—MW] called me up and, shrieking with laughter, said: "If you're free, come to the city right away. I myself came this morning. I have made a discovery! Truly, a genuine discovery, like Archimedes!"

Of course I came. It was a humid evening. Bely met me tanned and triumphant, in a Russian shirt with an open neck. On the desk lay a gigantic stack of paper, with vertical columns marked. In the columns were dots, whimsically connected by straight lines. Bely slapped the stack with his heavy palm:

"Here you have the iambic tetrameter. It's all here, in the palm of your hand. Poems of the same meter have different rhythm. Rhythm does not coincide with meter and is determined by the omission of metrical stresses. 'Moi diadia samykh chestnykh pravil' has four stresses, but 'I klaniatsia neprinuzhdenno' has two. The rhythms are different, but the meter is the same: iambic tetrameter."

Now this has become rudimentary knowledge. But on that day it was a discovery, truly simple and sudden, like that of Archimedes. The law of the non-coincidence of meter and rhythm in poetics should be called the law of Andrei Bely.

⁴ Omry Ronen has shown just how inconsistent (even illogical) Tynianov was in this judgment ("Khodasevich" 520–23).

Of course, since Lomonosov, all Russian poets had recognized the existence of the pyrrhic foot, but it was Bely who argued that this was not simply an inconvenience, but a means of distinguishing individual poetic styles and a source of aesthetic power.⁵ Through empirical research, Bely demonstrated which rhythmical variants occur most frequently and sought to determine the distinctive “rhythmic handwriting” of each poet.

As the passage continues, however, Khodasevich moves from his initial position of enthusiasm to one of skepticism, when he registers the problems that resulted from this discovery.

Это открытие в дальнейшей разработке имеет несовершенства, о которых впоследствии было много писано. Тогда, на первых порах, разобраться в них было труднее. Однако у меня с Белым тотчас начались препирательства по конкретному поводу. Как раз в то время он готовил к печати «Пепел» и «Урну»—и вдруг принялся коренным образом перерабатывать многие стихотворения, подгоняя их ритм к недавно открытым формулам. Разумеется, их ритмический узор, взятый в отвлечении, стал весьма замечателен. Но в целом стихи сплошь и рядом оказывались испорчены. Сколько ни спорил я с Белым—ничего не помогало. Стихи вошли в его сборники в новых редакциях, которые мне было больно слышать. Тогда-то и начал я настаивать на необходимости изучения ритмического содержания вести не иначе как в связи с содержанием смысловым. Об этом шли у нас пререкания то с глазу на глаз, то в кружке ритмистов, который составил при издательстве «Мусагет». Внесмысловая ритмика мне казалась ложным и вредным делом. Кончилось тем, что я перестал ходить на собрания. (*Nekropol'* 55–56)

In its later development this discovery had its imperfections, about which a lot was written subsequently. At that point, in those first stages, it was more difficult to figure them out. Nonetheless, disagreements between Bely and me started immediately for a concrete reason. Right at that time he was preparing *Ashes* and *The Urn* for publication, and suddenly he decided to rework radically many poems, altering their rhythms to fit the recently discovered formulae. Of course, their rhythmic pattern, taken abstractly, became quite remarkable. But overall the poems were spoiled throughout. No matter how much I argued with Bely, nothing helped. His poems appeared in his collections in new redactions, which it pained me to hear. It was then that I myself began to insist on the necessity of studying the rhythmical content only in connection with the semantic content. We argued about this both tête-à-tête and in the circle of rhythm specialists that formed at the Musagetes publishing house. Rhythm without sense seemed to me false and harmful. The upshot was that I stopped going to the meetings.

⁵ As has recently been shown, Bely first learned of the distinction between meter and rhythm from Emil Medtner, but it was Bely who greatly developed Medtner's observation (Bogomolov, “Emilii Metner”).

According to this account, Khodasevich was intrigued by the idea that different poets instinctively preferred different rhythms, but was disappointed when Bely consciously started to alter his rhythms in accordance with his research. Here it is worth citing another passage from Khodasevich's memoirs, a description of a conversation with Valery Briusov:

Как он радовался, когда «открыл», что в русской литературе нет стихотворения, написанного чистым пеоном первым. И как простодушно огорчился, когда я сказал, что у меня есть такое стихотворение и было напечатано, только не вошло в мои сборники.
 Почему ж не вошло?—спросил он.
 Плохо,—отвечал я.⁶
 Но ведь это был бы единственный пример в истории русской литературы!
 (*Nekropol'* 36)

How jubilant he was, when he “discovered” that in Russian literature there was no poem written with a consistent first paeon. And how naively he was saddened when I said that I had written and published such a poem, but that I had not included it in my collections.
 “Why wasn't it included?”—he asked.
 “Because it's bad,” I answered.
 But this would have been the only example in the history of Russian literature!

Clearly, Khodasevich was himself not immune to the temptation of allowing rhythm to determine semantics. In his essay on Bely's verse in iambic tetrameter, Kirill Taranovsky has shown how Bely's practice influenced that of Khodasevich and, in particular, that the poem “Sittsevoe tsarstvo” (Ситцевое царство; The Calico Kingdom) not only utilizes the same strange variants of the iambic tetrameter favored by Bely, but also the accompanying “grotesque” thematics (Taranovskii, *O poezii* 314–15). Other scholars have found curious “messages” that Khodasevich seems to inscribe in specific rhythmical patterns (Mazur; Wachtel, *Development* 201–04).

I would like to add to these observations. One of the most vexed questions in Russian versification concerns hypermetrical stress. To summarize several decades of argumentation: Russian scholars have struggled to determine what to do with stressed syllables (almost always monosyllabic) that fall on the “weak” syllables of a verse line. In ordinary speech, this is not a problem; speakers simply decide for themselves where they want to place the emphasis in a given phrase. In a poem, however, such stresses are at odds with the established metrical pattern (“rhythmic inertia”). Metrics scholars traditionally ignore such stresses because it is unclear to what extent they should be em-

⁶ John Malmstad and Robert Hughes have identified this poem as “Mysh” (Мышь; The Mouse) (Khodasevich, *Sobranie sochinenii* 503). It is somewhat odd that the poem was written in February of 1908 (and published in April of that year), which would predate Bely's “discovery.”

phasized and, more importantly, because such uncertainty would complicate statistical study. After all, statistics are only useful if they are repeatable. To simplify statistical analysis, Tomashevsky created a convention for the treatment of monosyllabic words that was followed in subsequent generations by Taranovsky and Gasparov. To wit: unless it is obviously unstressed, like a preposition or a conjunction, a monosyllabic word is considered stressed if it falls on a strong position in a line, but unstressed if it falls on a weak position.

This convention works well if the goal is to create statistics that can reliably be reproduced. However, it is not clear that these repeatable and verifiable statistics truly reflect the way Russian poetry is pronounced. Tomashevsky and Taranovsky, while admitting that stresses can appear on weak positions in the line, insisted that these stresses are nonetheless not felt the same way (Tomashevsky 194–95; Taranovsky, “Russkie dvuslozhnye razmery” 48–49). Jakobson would later (201–14) develop this argument by pointing out the special status of monosyllabic words in Russian: they can bear “phonetic,” but not “phonological” stress (i.e., in contrast to disyllabic words, where stress can alter meaning). This special status is of course true, but it does not explain why the auditory impression of monosyllabic words should differ from that of polysyllabic words. And indeed, Gasparov—with characteristic honesty—recognizes that in certain passages, these monosyllabic words in weak positions are clearly intended to take stress, e.g., in Pushkin’s famous rhythmic depiction of the battle of Poltava:

Швед, русский—колет, рубит, режет.
Бой барабанный, клики, скрежет . . .

Swede, Russian—he chops, hacks, cuts.
Drum beats, cries, grating . . .

The first line features a spondee (two consecutive stresses) and the second a choriamb (stresses on syllables 1 and 4). Gasparov does not dispute that such stresses exist or that they are significant, but he argues that they occur “relatively infrequently” (*Izbrannye trudy* 4: 504). It is true that Gasparov occasionally addressed this issue (*Sovremennyi russkii stikh* 180–207; *Izbrannye trudy* 3: 196–213), but the results of this work apparently never influenced his broader thinking about Russian metrics.

The only scholar who has seriously examined hypermetrical stress in the work of a specific poet is G. S. Smith. Curiously enough, his focus was on Khodasevich, and I would argue that this was not coincidental. In looking at Khodasevich’s iambic tetrameter quatrains from the early 1920s, Smith recognized that hypermetrical stress was an important factor, appearing in 75% of the lines he studied (“Stanza Rhythm” 33). In other words, Smith was forced to confront this phenomenon because it occurred with unusual frequency. His essay passed largely unnoticed by students of Russian verse form, but one of

its many merits was to show—as Taranovsky refused to do—that statistical analysis of Russian poetic rhythm can be reconciled with hypermetrical stress. Smith's emphasis was on “stress load,” the relative degree of stressing on each line in a quatrain, so his interest was not on the choriamb as such, but on any and all factors that determine verse rhythm. Still, his results are extremely valuable and relevant to the present discussion. First, he notes that hypermetrical stress appears only at the beginning of the line (and almost always in a choriambic construction, not in a spondee). Second, he shows that it occurs far more often in the first line of a stanza than elsewhere. Finally, he emphasizes that these hypermetrical stresses tend to be strong (that is, they fall on parts of speech that ordinarily demand stress).

Since Smith looked exclusively at Khodasevich, he did not determine whether Khodasevich used hypermetrical stress more frequently or more emphatically than his contemporaries. However, the data presented by Gasparov (*Izbrannye trudy* 3: 196–213) confirm that this is indeed the case. As Barry Scherr interprets Gasparov's data (“Taranovsky's Laws” 350), most Russian poets have placed a strong stress on the first syllable of an iambic tetrameter line between 4 and 6 percent of the time. (Unfortunately, the results of Kayumova's study are not helpful, because she does not distinguish between strong and weak hypermetrical stress.)

For present purposes, it is sufficient if we recognize that choriambic rhythms are a powerful though infrequent means of rhythmic emphasis. This may seem obvious, but in recent scholarship, only Smith was willing to consider this possibility.⁷ In terms of the history of “stikhovedenie,” such a view set apart the “Moscow school” (represented by poet-theoreticians—Bely, Bobrov, Briusov) from the strictly scholarly approaches of Tomashevsky and his successors (Taranovsky and, with rare exceptions, Gasparov). It goes without saying that Khodasevich would have been closer to the views of the Moscow school. With this in mind, I turn to a Khodasevich poem of 1923:

Весенний лепет не разнежит
 Сурово стиснутых стихов.
 Я полюбил железный скрежет
 Какофонических миров.

В зиянии разверстых гласных
 Дышу легко и вольно я.
 Мне чудится в толпе согласных—
 Льдин взгроможденных толчя.

⁷ To be fair, Simon Karlinsky identified the choriamb as a central feature in Marina Tsvetaeva's prosody, where it “becomes a part of a regular and systematically applied pattern” (160).

MICHAEL WACHTEL

Мне мил—из оловянной тучи
Удар изломанной стрелы,
Люблю певучий и визгучий
Лязг электрической пилы.

И в этой жизни мне дороже
Всех гармонических красот—
Дрожь, побежавшая по коже,
Иль ужаса холодный пот,

Иль сон, где, некогда единый,
Взрываясь, разлетаюсь я,
Как грязь, разбрызганная шиной
По чуждым сферам бытия. (*Sobranie sochinenii* 158–59)

The babble of spring will not soften
My sternly clenched verses.
I have come to love the iron gnashing
Of cacophonous worlds.

In the hiatus of wide-open vowels
I breathe freely and easily.
In the crowd of consonants I sense
Piled ice flows crowded together.

A broken arrow striking
From a leaden cloud is dear to me,
I love the sonorous and howling
Clang of an electric saw.

And in life more dear to me
Than all harmonious beauty
Is a shudder along my skin
Or the cold sweat of horror,

Or that dream where, once unified,
I, exploding, fly into pieces,
Like dirt, spattered by a tire
Over foreign spheres of being.

This poem has been the subject of two fine analyses, which allow the present discussion to be brief. As Vladimir Veidle (Weidlé 340–41) noted, this is a programmatic poem about sound, in which the traditional sounds and genres of poetry («весенний лепет»)⁸ are contrasted with the poet's cacophonous reality. Not surprisingly, the poem features unusual consonant clusters that de-

⁸ Interestingly, the drafts (Khodasevich, *Sobranie sochinenii* 440) indicate that Khodasevich initially had written «любовный лепет» (“the babble of love”), thus invoking love poetry rather than nature poetry.

scribe the odd sounds that the poet hears. I will focus my attention not on the sound instrumentation (about which, see the perceptive comments in Bethea 281), but on the rhythmic patterning. In this poem, “the smooth circulation of iambs is deliberately retarded or impeded” (Bethea 279). As an example, Bethea points to the line «Льдин взгроможденных толчя»—described by Veidle as “a fine, expressive, Derzhavinesque phonetic illustration of the object” (Weidlé 340)—and explains its distinctiveness by “the loss of two stresses.” For the convenience of readers, he explicitly marks the stresses in the line, indicating that the line has stresses only on the fourth and eighth syllables. Statistically speaking, such a form would not be terribly rare in Russian iambic tetrameter. This is what Taranovsky would label the “sixth rhythmic variant” of iambic tetrameter, which accounts for 11.2% of the lines in nineteenth-century verse (Taranovsky, “Russkie dvuslozhnye razmery” 97, 101). Most lines of Russian iambic tetrameter contain only one pyrrhic foot, but insofar as a line contains two, this is the most common variant. Bethea follows Taranovsky (and not Smith’s 1980 essay, though it appears in his bibliography) by disregarding what Khodasevich would surely have considered this line’s most striking rhythmic element: the hypermetrical stress that falls on the very first syllable. Though Taranovsky refused to believe that the first syllable registered as a legitimate stress, Bely certainly did. In his essay on Tsvetaeva, he likened this stress pattern to the famous opening motif of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony (Gasparov, *Izbrannye trudy* 2: 156).

Indeed, we can see that Khodasevich deployed this striking rhythmic effect quite consciously. The poem boasts three such lines, all of which describe images of discomfort:⁹

Льдин взгроможденных толчя (stanza 2)

Лязг электрической пилы (stanza 3)

Дрожь, побежавшая по коже (stanza 4)

In a poem of a mere twenty lines, three occurrences of the identical odd rhythmic variant (stresses on syllables 1, 4, and 8) in consecutive stanzas can hardly be viewed as a coincidence. Occurring in 15% of the lines, it is double the (already high) frequency that Smith finds in Khodasevich’s verse of this period. It is safe to say that, as in Pushkin’s famous depiction of the battle of Poltava, Khodasevich uses hypermetrical stress to highlight moments of particular emotional tension.

⁹ In his brief reading, Veidle draws attention to all three of these lines, noting that the passage about the electric saw is “an even more graphic example of sound imitating and expressing sense” (Weidlé 340), but he never explicitly recognizes the rhythmic feature that connects them. Arguably, the line «Всех гармонических красот» is likewise an example of a choriamb, though the stress on the first syllable is less emphatic and the semantics of the line lack the unpleasant associations of the other three.

It should be noted that Khodasevich was extremely critical of this poem. He wrote it in 1923, but returned to it a few years later. He left a comment on the margins of an edition owned by Nina Berberova: «Очень плохо, переправлено, сколько мог, в 1927, в Cаннет» (“Very bad, improved insofar as I was able, in 1927 in Cаннет”). Most readers would disagree with this harsh judgment, but it may well reflect Khodasevich’s annoyance with himself for doing just what he had accused Bely of doing: allowing a rhythmic figure to determine the poem’s semantics. In their commentary, John Malmstad and Robert Hughes cite extensive rejected drafts to this poem (Khodasevich, *Sobranie sochinenii* 440–41), which was initially—and cryptically—entitled “Enjembement” (sic!). While enjambment does not play an especially significant role in the final version, it is revealing that Khodasevich chose an explicitly metapoetic title. Still more striking: the three choriambic lines remain unchanged in the drafts. Indeed, the drafts indicate that he initially attempted yet another choriambic line: «Снов, где тяжелый и единый...», which makes yet clearer the centrality of choriambic lines to his initial conception. (The syntax of this line indicates that it would have been enjambed, perhaps explaining the original title.)

Unless we recognize these rhythmically unusual lines as such, we read the poem as formally unremarkable, as an example of conventional iambic tetrameter. Once we register the presence of the choriambic lines, the rhythm becomes startlingly “modern,” and the rhythmic variety of the verse stands out. I would maintain that it would be difficult to overlook the choriambic lines were it not for the tradition of scholarship (begun by Tomashevsky and canonized by Taranovsky) that insists on the insignificance of hypermetrical stress.¹⁰

It is worth noting that Khodasevich *begins* his “Berlinskoe” (Берлинское; Berlin Poem) with a choriamb:

Что ж? От озноба и простуды—
Горячий грог или коньяк.
Здесь музыка, и звон посуды,
И лиловатый полумрак.

(Khodasevich, *Sobranie sochinenii* 164; stresses added—MW)

So? For a chill or a cold there is
Hot grog or cognac.
Here there is music and the ringing of dishes,
And the lilac semi-darkness.

¹⁰ It is to Smith’s immense credit that, though coming from the tradition of Taranovsky and Gasparov (the latter read and commented on his article), he recognizes the choriambic lines as a rhythmically distinct variant (Smith, “Stanza Rhythm” 34). As far as I am aware, no subsequent scholar has followed this line of inquiry, perhaps because—as Gasparov insists—in most Russian poetry hypermetrical stress is not statistically significant.

This is the only instance of a choriamb in the entire poem, but it supplies a jarring opening that corresponds nicely to the fundamental theme of dislocation. In this case, of course, we cannot speak of any “rhythmic inertia” that undercuts the force of the stress on the first syllable. After all, the first line of any poem is rhythmically undetermined. (Poetic meter can only be distinguished after a minimum of two lines.) Equally to the point: the syntax of this stanza would urge us to put a stress on the first syllable, since sentence breaks, as signaled by punctuation, create natural pauses in any speech, poetic or otherwise, and a question is a particularly marked intonation. It is striking that Khodasevich initially intended this poem to be the second in a cycle of Berlin poems, the first of which begins with the identical rhythmic gesture.¹¹

Нёт, не найдётся сегодня пищи я
 Для утешительной мечты:
 Одни шарманщики, да нищие,
 Да дождь—все с той же высоты.
 (Khodasevich, *Sobranie sochinenii* 167; stresses added—MW)

No, today I won't find food
 For a consolatory dream:
 There are only organ grinders and beggars
 And rain—always from the same height.

The fact that a hypermetrical stress appears on the very first word of two consecutive poems (grouped as a cycle by the poet) makes clear that this is a deliberate rhythmic device. In this particular poem, the hypermetrical stress on the first syllable of a line occurs twice more, in the first line of stanzas three and four. (This tendency is described in Smith, “Stanza Rhythm” 33.) To disregard such effects is to overlook Khodasevich’s conscious rhythmic experimentation.

I close with an observation about one other Khodasevich poem, likewise an explicitly metapoetic text. “Ne iambom li chetyrekhstopnym” (Не ямбом ли четырехстопным; Why not in iambic tetrameter), often considered Khodasevich’s last poem, is a panegyric to the tradition of iambic tetrameter.¹² Since the poem has been the subject of two excellent close readings (Hughes, Kukin), it is not necessary to dwell on the numerous allusions. A more recent analysis (Vasiutochkin) suggests that the poem’s specific rhythmical profile is itself

¹¹ This is one of nine iambic poems by Khodasevich that begin with a hypermetrical stress on the word “Net” (Нет; followed by a comma, which underscores that it should be emphasized). The source is surely Pushkin: «Нет, я не льстец», «Нет, я не дорожу . . .», etc.

¹² The notion that this was Khodasevich’s final poem comes from Nina Berberova. However, Nikolai Bogomolov has offered compelling reasons to question this date (“Iz istorii” 153).

reminiscent of eighteenth-century verse (in particular, that of Derzhavin).¹³ Yet even here we find a line of remarkable rhythmic ingenuity that in no way corresponds to traditional iambic rhythms. I have in mind the second line of the final stanza:

Таинственна его природа,
В нем спит спондей, поет пэон,
Ему один закон—свобода,
В его свободе есть закон.
(Khodasevich, *Sobranie sochinenii* 322)

Its nature is mysterious,
In it the spondee sleeps, the paeon sings,
The only law it has is freedom,
And in its freedom there is law.

The first thing one notices about this line is the marked alliteration (спит спондей, поет пэон): it seems as if Khodasevich has chosen his words for this purpose alone. But the words “spondee” and “paeon” are not simply invoked as *termini technici* to serve as synecdoches of the poet’s arsenal. Rather, they are chosen because they are two of the ways in which iambic poetry finds its distinctiveness. In Khodasevich’s day, both of these terms were the subject of highly charged polemics.

On the surface, the line «В нем спит спондей, поет пэон» exemplifies what Taranovsky called the “first variant” of the iambic tetrameter, in which stresses are found on syllables 2, 4, 6, and 8. Vasiutochkin and Fedotov, who both offer a scansion of the entire poem, read it in precisely this way (Vasiutochkin 123; Fedotov 271). However, I would argue that Khodasevich’s line is not so simple.

A spondee, two consecutive stresses (one of which is therefore hypermetrical), allows a poet to vary the “rhythmic inertia” of the meter: «Швэд, рýсский», to repeat our textbook example. Genuine spondees are not common in Russian poetry, but by counting monosyllabic pronouns as stressed syllables, Bely and Briusov argued for their frequency. (This question was at the center of Jakobson’s attack on Briusov’s ideas about versification; for an overview, see Taranovskii, “Russkie dvuslozhnye razmery” 49; Zhirmunskii 96–97.) Where Khodasevich stood on this issue is uncertain. However, he is certainly playing with this possibility in the line in question, for a spondee “sleeps” (e.g., is hiding) within it. If read emphatically, “В нём спит” would create a spondee, in which case the iambic tetrameter line would take five stresses.

On the other hand, Russian language (and verse) is characterized not only by word stress, but also by phrasal stress (Jakobson 169). And indeed, early

¹³ For a thorough study of the intertextual references to eighteenth-century and still earlier poets, see Hughes.

verse theorists heatedly debated this problem, some claiming that Russian poetry should be understood not in terms of feet (whether binary or ternary), but in terms of “paeons,” where only one in every four syllables gets stressed. According to such a theory, lines like «Адмиралтейская игла» (*Admiralteiskaia igla*) or «Какофонических миров» (*Kakofonicheskikh mirov*) (to continue our examples from iambic tetrameter) represent the rule rather than the exception because even when a line has four *word* stresses, it usually has only two *phrasal* stresses. Thus, a “paeonic” theory of accentuation (championed by Valerian Chudovsky on the pages of the journal *Apollon*; see Zhirmunskii 97–98 and Scherr, *Russian Poetry* 122–24) would argue that a line like «Как труп в пустыне я лежал» (“I lay like a corpse in the desert”) should actually be read as having only two stresses: «Как труп в пустыне я лежал». Which of these readings more accurately reflects the way Russian poetry is recited remains an open question. (It probably depends on the individual reader, in which case no definitive answer is possible.) What needs to be emphasized is that Khodasevich was very much in the thick of these arguments, that he was extremely well-informed. Hence, we can return to the line in question and suggest that “hidden” within that same seemingly fully-stressed line is a “paeonic” reading: «В нем спит спондэй, поэт пэон.»

What I am suggesting, then, is that in the final stanza of his (perhaps) final poem, Khodasevich included a line that can be declaimed in three different ways—with five stresses, four stresses, or two stresses. Obviously, anyone reading the poem aloud would have to decide in favor of one of the three readings. But in Khodasevich’s lifetime the poem was apparently never read aloud. Could this not be understood as yet a final riddle left to the «читатель в потомстве» (“reader in posterity”)? On the page the line retains its mystery, demonstrating both the “law” of iambic verse and the “freedoms” within it. One can hardly imagine a more experimental line of poetry.¹⁴

¹⁴ It is heartening to see a recent comment by Timur Kibirov in response to a question as to whether he himself should be understood as “traditional” or “avant-garde”: «В последние десятилетия такое противопоставление снято. Если речь о вменяемых литераторах и художниках. И весь XX век снималось. В начале него—да: вот он, авангард. Вот она, традиция. Крученых, Бунин. А Набоков—традиционен, авангарден? На мой взгляд, он больший новатор, чем тысяча Крученых. Его романы головокружительно по-новому сделаны, при этом—на первый взгляд—традиционно. Ходасевич—традиционный поэт или новатор? Четырехстопные ямбы. Но новизны больше, чем в Бурлюке или Игоре Северяnine.» (“In the last decades this distinction has become irrelevant. If we are talking about responsible writers or artists. And it was not relevant in the entire twentieth century. At the beginning—yes; there it is, the avant-garde. There it is, tradition. Kruchenykh, Bunin. But Nabokov—is he traditional or avant-garde? In my view he is a more of an innovator than a thousand Kruchenykhs. His novels are made in a dizzyingly new way, though at the same time (at first glance) they are traditional. Khodasevich—is he a traditional poet or an innovator? Iambic tetrameters. But there is more novelty than in Burluk or Igor’ Severianin.”) (Borovikov)

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VLADISLAV KHODASEVICH AS INNOVATOR

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Pasternak, Heine, and the Cult of the Musician

Karen Evans-Romaine

One of the distinguishing traits of the Symbolist movement in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Russia was its musical focus. The mystically leaning, so-called “second-generation” Symbolists, particularly poets Aleksander Blok, Andrei Bely, and Viacheslav Ivanov, placed music at the pinnacle of the artistic hierarchy: music had the power to express emotional and spiritual aspects of being beyond the reach of mere words, indeed the theurgic power to bring the earthly closer to the divine. Bely made the attempt to bring word and music closer in his symphonies (Steinberg). The musicality of Blok’s poetry betrayed his effort to emulate the force of music in words as well. In their work, music achieved virtually divine status. The composer Aleksander Scriabin, closely aligned with the Symbolists of this mystical generation, particularly with Ivanov, worked toward the unity of music and word from the other side, in a religious and philosophical development of Wagner’s *Gesamtkunstwerk*, to achieve a mystical union of heaven and earth and an “all-unity” (всеединство; vseedinstvo), in which the composer (Scriabin himself) served as prophet and vessel (Morrison 184–201; Taruskin 197–227, particularly 206).

As with so many aspects of Russian Symbolism, this virtual cult of music and the musician has its origins in the Romantic era, when composers and particularly performers were elevated more than ever before to the status of superstar. Among the reasons for the promotion of performers to cult figures was the proliferation of reflections of their work in literature and reviews of it in the popular press. One of the figures chiefly responsible for this public relations work on behalf of the music industry was the late Romantic Heinrich Heine, who wrote extensively on musicians and the Paris concert scene. In his belletristic prose work “Florentinische Nächte” (Florentine Nights) and his prose on current affairs, including *Lutezia*, “Über die französische Bühne” (On the French Stage), and various musical reports, especially his “Musikalische Saison von 1844” (Musical Season of 1844), Heine reviewed, reviled, and promoted the leading performing artists of the day, at the height of the Romantic era in music. In doing so, he concentrated not on their music or performances

per se, but rather on their effect on audiences. In reference to *Lutezia*, Heine biographer Jeffrey Sammons writes:

Musical events take up much space in *Lutezia*, for the evident reason that Paris had become a major musical metropolis. The work is consequently a source-book for the historian of music interested in this era [. . .] The focus, however, is more on the events and the personalities than on the music, for which Heine could claim no great competence [. . .] His method was less that of criticism than of a kind of sociology of the arts. He sought analogies between artistic phenomena and social forms [. . .] (325)

In Heine's rendering, musicians became literary characters, even mythological figures, demigods of the Paris concert and social scene. Metaphor came alive and became prophecy, as Heine helped to heighten the cult status of a few performers. Heine had the capacity of a powerful music critic to help musicians achieve a virtually divine status, but also to bring the divine to earth, or even to condemn them to the nether regions.¹ Music at his hands achieved a virtually divine status, but in a sense different from that of the earlier Romantics and later Symbolists.

In Russia, Heine's writings on music and musicians had a tremendous impact on the later perception of these artists, and of great performers in general. His influence reached beyond the era of the intensely symbolic significance of music in Russian Symbolism, to the post-Symbolists Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelstam, and Marina Tsvetaeva.² Just as Heine reported on music from the point of view of the "last Romantic," as he liked to call himself,³ these Modernist poets wrote on music and musicians from the point of view of anti-Romantics, in essence—writers struggling to throw off the symbolic weight music had been given in the work of their immediate literary predecessors. In doing so they followed the favorite post-Symbolist technique of metonymy:

¹ Heine, like any other writer, had his own motivations. In commenting on Liszt's felicitous song settings of Heine, Susan Youens describes the blossoming and subsequent souring of the friendship between these two titans, reflected in Heine's depictions of both Chopin's and Liszt's pianism. As she writes, citing Rainer Kleinertz's study on the Heine-Liszt relationship, "Because this poet was so memorably witty whenever he attacked anyone or anything, it is the acidulous invocations of Liszt in the later poems that have dictated the tone of scholarly comment on the subject" (Youens 66).

² On Heine's influence on Pasternak, see Evans-Romaine, 229–80; E. Pasternak, *Boris Pasternak: Materialy* 234–35. I am profoundly grateful to Omry Ronen, who led me to explore Heine's influence on the work of Pasternak. He repeatedly emphasized in his courses the impact of Heine on Russian Modernist poets. On Heine subtexts with regard to illness, see Ronen, "Neskol'ko primechaniy" 522 and "Golovolomki" 362–63; on Heine's image of poetry as the illness of the pearl, see Ronen, "Rossiia—sfinks" 422, 431.

³ Sammons calls Heine "the last Romantic, at once Romanticism's harvester and gravedigger" (59). Lazar Fleishman has written about the importance to Pasternak of Heine's ambivalent attitude toward Romanticism (*Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics* 79).

they blended and combined characteristics of Heine's musical heroes.⁴ They made composites of Heine's portraits of three leading performing artists: Chopin, Liszt, and Paganini. Their adaptations of Heine's portraits serve to create new images of the artist in the twentieth century, in an age when they felt all too keenly the decline of music in its power to transform the public without political motivation. Their poetry and prose on musicians are infused with a mix of irony and nostalgia.

Pasternak seriously considered a career as a composer and both idolized and studied with Scriabin in his youth. Before turning first to the study of philosophy at Moscow University, on Scriabin's advice, and finally to poetry, Pasternak was also, as Omry Ronen has noted and as I have argued elsewhere, an avid reader of Heine.⁵ Pasternak creates a composite portrait of the musician based on Heine's cult figures in prose that retains many of the features of Heine's performing artists. Pasternak's musician has supernatural powers: he becomes a blending of the pagan thunder-god and the Christian martyr, a magical doctor who cannot heal himself. To some extent he recreates the demigods of the Romantic musical scene. Thus, Heine's work helps create a new cult of the musician as a "god in exile," to modify Heine's phrase, a symbol of the sacred nature of art in an era of the profanation of art in Russia.

Pasternak creates his portrait of the pianist from a composite of Heine's portraits of Chopin and Liszt. Chopin was Pasternak's model musician, the composer whom Pasternak invoked most frequently to discuss the power of music and the martyrdom of the artist.⁶ His depictions of Chopin vary, changing gradually over time. Earlier images of Chopin, particularly those in Pasternak's third book of verse, *Temy i variatsii* (Темы и вариации; Themes and Variations, 1923), are more fiery, complex, representative of the very "romantic manner" he rejects in *Okhrannaia gramota* (Охранная грамота; Safe Conduct, 1931). His 1956 poem "Muzyka" (Музыка; Music) distills these images of the god-like artist to depict a musician contemplatively surveying his kingdom

⁴ On metonymy in Pasternak, see Jakobson.

⁵ Boris Pasternak's path from music to philosophy to poetry, as well as Scriabin's influence on him, has been well documented by biographers. See Barnes, "Boris Pasternak as Musician-Poet and Composer" and *Boris Pasternak*; E. Pasternak: *Boris Pasternak: Materialy* and *Boris Pasternak: Biografiia*. Boris Gasparov examines Scriabin's influence on Pasternak's work as an extension of the musical line from Chopin (Gasparov 134–54).

⁶ Jana Schreiner writes that Pasternak mentions Chopin nine times in his work (92). See also Fischer 105; Platek 189–246; Gasparov, especially 127–83; Fevr-Diupegr. On musical motifs in Pasternak's lexicon see Fateeva 293–322. Kats mentions Liszt, as well as Chopin, Wagner, Tchaikovsky, and Scriabin, as Pasternak's favorite composers: see Kats, *Raskat* 25; Kats, "Muzykoi khlynuv..."; Kats, *Muzykal'nye kliuchi* 105–59. On Pasternak's musical background, see also Barnes, "Boris Pasternak as Musician-Poet." On Pasternak and music, see also Friedrich 183–94; Harer; Schweitzer 89–90. On the Romantic ancestry of Pasternak's works on music, see Cornwell. Polivanova and Polivanov (248) describe the link between literature and music as a "prism through which Pasternak presents a world transformed" and connected to its history.

and his life in music. In his 1945 essay, “Chopin” (Шопен; Shopen), the composer serves, together with Bach, as a model realist in Pasternak’s peculiar definition of romanticism and realism. There Chopin’s life is martyrdom to art, his music a seismic register of life’s events and sensations. Pasternak writes of Bach and Chopin: “Their music overflows with details and creates the impression of chronicles of their lives.” («Их музыка изобилует подробностями и производит впечатление летописи их жизни», Pasternak 5: 62).⁷ Chopin is a realist because he subjugates himself to his music: he is only the medium for a higher message.⁸

In this essay, Pasternak mentions Heine among those contemporaries who wrote about Chopin; he also lists Schumann, Georges Sand, Delacroix, Liszt, and Berlioz. Pasternak immediately brushes aside as distortions much in these memoirs, however. He writes of them:

В этих отзывах много ценного, но еще больше разговоров об ундилах, эоловых арфах и влюбленных пери, которые должны дать нам представление о сочинениях Шопена, манере его игры, его облике и характере. (5: 64)

These reviews contain a great deal of worth but even more conversations about Undines, Aeolian harps, and fairies in love, all of which are supposed to give us some sense of Chopin’s works, the manner of his playing, and his countenance and character.

The very tone of this statement begs the reader to explore further, in order to see what exactly Pasternak finds objectionable, and to find possible clues to his image of Chopin and therefore to his works on the composer. Lazar Fleishman has written of Pasternak’s tendency to “cover his tracks” (“Problems” 43; “Fragmenty” 81). We see this in Pasternak’s use of Heine subtexts on Liszt. While Pasternak follows Heine’s tradition by invoking Chopin in his verse and in his essay, he barely mentions Liszt. That composer’s name does not appear once in Pasternak’s writing, and in his work it appears only once by implication.⁹ As we will see, however, in his depictions of Chopin, and his image of the pianist

⁷ All Pasternak texts will be cited from this edition. The translations are mine.

⁸ Rostopchina writes about the “realism” of Chopin in Pasternak’s essay as an accurate description of Chopin’s music in its musical context (235–36). Livingstone, on the other hand, writes: “Whenever Pasternak praised a work of art he called it ‘realistic.’” (10). Mallac characterizes “romantic” for Pasternak as an equivalent for “second-rate, facile art” (344). Barnes analyzes Pasternak’s definition of realism in the Chopin essay in the context of the rise of programmatic music in the Romantic era, with Chopin, in contrast, remaining true to “absolute” music, with no literary or other textual associations; he argues that Pasternak’s defense of absolute music was all the more important in the face of the tenets of Socialist Realism (“The Image of Chopin”).

⁹ Schreiner writes that the only mention of Liszt by implication is the reference to a Liszt march in Pasternak’s poem “Zamestitel’nica” (292). See also Platek 235. On this march, see commentary in Pasternak 1: 468.

in general, Pasternak draws from Heine's writings on both pianist-composers. This kind of "shift" of identities, of objects, is typical for Pasternak's poetics of metonymy, analyzed by scholars including Jakobson and Fleishman.¹⁰ The result of this composite portrait is an image of the artist, and of music, that combines the two poles of musical genius that Chopin and Liszt represent in Heine's work: the heavenly and the demonic, the delicate and the powerful, the ethereal and the animal, spiritual well-being and insanity.

Heine's depiction of Chopin and Liszt shows significant differences between the two pianists. Heine often juxtaposes the two "geniuses," as he calls them, but he devotes more attention to Liszt, perhaps as a more interesting character. Chopin, in Heine's portrait, comes across as delicate, refined, the darling of the Parisian élite. Heine writes in his essay "Über die französische Bühne":

Chopin ist der Liebling jener Elite, die in der Musik die höchsten Geistesgenüsse sucht. Sein Ruhm ist aristokratischer Art, er ist parfümiert von den Lobsprüchen der guten Gesellschaft [. . .] Die Natur [. . .] gab ihm eine zierliche, schlanke, etwas schwächliche Gestalt, das edelste Herz und das Genie. Ja, dem Chopin muß man Genie zusprechen [. . .] (Heine 3: 352–53)¹¹

Chopin is the darling of that élite which seeks the highest spiritual pleasures in music. His fame is of an aristocratic sort. He is perfumed with the praise of good society. [. . .] Nature gave him a delicate, slender, somewhat frail form, the noblest of hearts, and genius. Yes, one must grant Chopin genius [. . .]

Pasternak's portrait of Chopin matches Heine's in a number of traits. Chopin in Pasternak's essay is also delicate, poetic, exhausted not only from his engagements in society, but also from his artistic work. Pasternak writes that Chopin was:

[. . .] феноменально определенный, гениальный, сдержанно-насмешливый и до смерти утомленный писанием по ночам и дневными занятиями с учениками. (5: 64–65)

[. . .] phenomenally focused, a genius, reservedly ironic and exhausted to death from writing at night and teaching during the day.

Chopin, in Pasternak's estimation, had a "gift for the tragic" («трагический дар», 5: 65). For both Heine and Pasternak, Chopin was as much a poet as a composer. Heine writes in the same essay:

¹⁰ In addition to Jakobson, see Fleishman, "Fragmenty." On the term "shift," see "Fragmenty" 83.

¹¹ All Heine texts are cited from this edition. I am very grateful to Kathleen Evans for her help with my Heine translations.

[. . .] er ist auch Poet, er kann uns die Poesie, die in seiner Seele lebt, zur Anschauung bringen [. . .] (3: 353)

[. . .] he is also a poet. He can make us visualize the poetry that lives in his soul.

In *Lutezia*, Heine calls Chopin “the great composer of genius” (“der große geniale Tondichter,” 5: 442). In “Über die französische Bühne,” Heine writes of Chopin’s literary talent in music:

[. . .] sein wahres Vaterland ist das Traumreich der Poesie. Wenn er am Klavier sitzt und improvisiert, ist es mir, als besuche mich ein Landsmann aus der geliebten Heimat und erzähle mir die kuriosesten Dinge [. . .] (3: 353)

[. . .] his true homeland is the dream world of poetry. When he sits at the piano and improvises, it is as if I were being visited by a compatriot from my beloved homeland, one who tells me the most curious things [. . .]

This passage is echoed in Pasternak’s 1930 poem “Ballada,” about a concert of Chopin given by Pasternak’s friend Genrikh Neigauz. Pasternak writes of the music using the metaphor of an eagle: «Полет орла как ход рассказа.» (The eagle’s flight is like the progress of a story.) (Pomorska 2: 60).

There are details from Pasternak’s essay with regard to the poetry in Chopin (real or, as Pasternak would have it, imagined by nineteenth-century observers) that come from Heine. At the beginning of this essay, I quoted Pasternak’s characterization of these “distorted” portraits of Chopin, “conversations about Undines, Aeolian harps” and so forth (5: 64) that bear no resemblance to reality. Pasternak continues:

До чего превратно и несообразно выражает подчас свои восторги человечество! Всего меньше русалок и саламандр было в этом человеке [. . .] (5: 64)

With what a distorted and confused picture humanity sometimes expresses its ecstatic feelings! This person has so little of these mermaids and salamanders! [. . .]

These water-sprites to which Pasternak objects come from Heine’s portrait of Chopin. In “Über die französische Bühne,” Heine writes of Chopin’s playing:

Manchmal möcht ich ihn mit Fragen unterbrechen: Und wie gehts der schönen Nixe, die ihren silbernen Schleier so kokett um die grünen Locken zu binden wußte? (3: 353)

Sometimes I want to interrupt him with questions: So how is that lovely water-sprite doing, the one who wrapped her silver veil around her green locks so coquettishly?

In addition to these details in Pasternak's essay that come from Heine's portrait of him, there are important aspects of Chopin in Pasternak's description that come from Heine's portrayal not of Chopin, but of Liszt. In contrast to the lyrical Chopin in Heine's depiction, Liszt is fiery, strong-willed, and also the object of adoration in Paris society, but of a different kind: an enthusiasm that borders on frenzy, particularly, as Heine writes, among Parisian women.

Yet Pasternak adapts from Heine his description of a quality that does not fit that image: Liszt's selflessness and sincerity. According to Pasternak, a realist artist, like Bach or Chopin, must be sincere in his art, without caprice. That is part of the sacrifice he must make as an artist, because his gift is not his own. Pasternak writes:

Совсем в ином положении художник-реалист. Его деятельность—крест и предопределение. Ни тени вольничания, никакой блажи. (5: 62)

A realist artist is in an entirely different position. His activity is the cross and predestination. No hint of caprice, no whims.

Of Liszt, Heine writes in "Über die französische Bühne":

Er ist ein Mensch von verschrobenem, aber edlem Charakter, uneigennützig und ohne Falsch. (3: 351)

He is a man of eccentric but noble character, unselfish and without guile.

For Pasternak, however, Liszt's most important quality is his power. Unlike Chopin, Liszt, according to Heine, is a strong character, a force in Parisian society capable of exerting tremendous power over crowds, particularly female ones; he can inspire his listeners into a state of frenzy. Although both musicians are "noble geniuses," Liszt's power can be dark, sinister, and ultimately greater than that of Chopin. If Chopin in Heine's portrayal is a poet, then Liszt is a doctor:

[. . .] der Doktor der Philosophie und Wunderdoktor der Musik, der wieder auferstandene Rattenfänger von Hameln, der neue Faust, dem immer ein Pudel in der Gestalt Bellonis folgt, der geadelte und dennoch edle Franz Liszt! (Heine, "Musikalische Saison von 1844," 5: 531)

[. . .] the Doctor of Philosophy and miracle-doctor of music, the resurrected Pied Piper of Hamelin, the new Faust, followed always by a poodle in the form of Belloni, the titled and yet noble Franz Liszt!

And here we come to a major source of Pasternak's imagery of the artist throughout his verse: that of artist as doctor to ailing art. I have discussed this characteristic of Pasternak's metaphoric system, and its sources in German Romantic writers, elsewhere (Evans-Romaine); here I will confine myself to Heine's prose on Liszt and its impact on Pasternak's portrayal of Chopin. For it

is precisely in the depictions of Liszt in Heine's prose that we find sources for many of the earlier, more dramatic portraits of Chopin in Pasternak's verse, particularly those in *Temy i variatsii*. In that book, in the cycle "Son v letniuiu noch" (Сон в летнюю ночь; Midsummer Night's Dream), there are three poems depicting the power of music in an ailing world. Music is both illness and elemental force, in typically Pasternakian fashion a part of nature, which is itself both powerful and ailing. In Pasternak it is Chopin, not Liszt, who is the doctor. In the second poem from that cycle, "Vse utro s deviati do dvukh" (Всё утро с девяти до двух; All Morning from Nine to Two), the musician is the doctor, and music itself the patient. Pasternak writes:

Опять депешей Шопен
К балладе страждущей отозван. [. . .]
Сейчас ли, чёрные ключи,
Иль позже кровь нам отворить ей? (1: 202)

Yet again Chopin is called by special dispatch
To the ailing ballade. [. . .]
Should we open her veins now, black keys,
Or later?

The piano is to bleed the ballade, on instructions from the doctor (the performer). And in another poem from *Temy i variatsii*, from the cycle "Razryv" (Разрыв; The Break), the piano foams at the mouth: the first line reads «Рояль дрожащий пену с губ оближет» (The quivering piano licks foam from its lips 1: 186).

Pianos in Heine's prose exhibit similar symptoms. In his journalistic piece "Musikalische Saison von 1844", Heine depicts the pianos shaking at the mere announcement of Liszt's arrival and bleeding and crying for mercy when he plays. Heine writes of Liszt:

Er ist hier, der Attila, die Geißel Gottes aller Erardschen Pianos, die schon bei der Nachricht seines Kommens erzitterten und die nun wieder unter seiner Hand zucken, bluten und wimmern, daß die Tierquälergesellschaft sich ihrer annehmen sollte! (5: 531)¹²

He is here, Attila, God's scourge to all Erard pianos, which trembled at the mere news of his arrival and now in his hands once again thrash, bleed, and whimper for the Animal Rescue League to come take up their cause!

Similarly, in "Florentinische Nächte," Heine writes of the piano at Liszt's hands, "The keys seemed to bleed" ("Die Tasten schienen zu bluten," 1: 601).

Here, as in some of Pasternak's poems on music, the piano, or music in general, takes on animal-like qualities. In Pasternak, as quoted above, the piano

¹² This passage was first brought to my attention by Omry Ronen at a seminar on Pasternak and Mandelstam in 1990, as a possible subtext to Mandelstam's poem "Roial" (Рояль; Piano).

licks foam from its lips (1: 186), organ music moves beams like an elephant (2: 83, as we will see below), and in his *poema* (long poem) *Vysokaia bolezni'* (Высокая болезнь; *Lofty Malady*), music or art itself is represented by wild pole-cats, who rip open the throat of the chorale, and rats who fight over concert tickets (1: 406).¹³

Pasternak's description of the even more demonic Romantic musical legend Nicolo Paganini is similarly grotesque, as are Heine's descriptions. In 1915, during his most experimental Futurist period, Pasternak wrote a poem entitled "Skripka Paganini" (Скрипка Паганини; Paganini's Violin). This poem bears the marks of "romanticism" that Pasternak came later to dislike: strongly Romantic imagery, baffling references, elliptical speech—in other words, stylistic features typical of Futurism which, in the style of Vladimir Mayakovsky, Pasternak associated with the "romantic manner" (3: 226).¹⁴ Part of the poem reads as follows:

Он на карнизе узком,
Он из агата выточен,
Он одуряет сгустком
Какой-то страсти плиточной.

Отчетлив, как майолика,
Из смол и молний набран,
Он дышит дрожью столика
И зноем канделябров.

Довольно. Мгла заплакала,
Углы стекла всплакнули . . .
Был карликом, кривлякою—
Messieurs—расставьте стулья. (1: 359)
[. . .]

4
Я люблю тебя чёрной от сажи
Сожиганья пассажей, в золе
Отпылавших андант и адажий,
С белым пеплом баллад на челе,

¹³ On this passage and its "vampiric" implications, see Sergeeva-Kliatis and Lekmanov 161.

¹⁴ Barnes connects this poem with Heine's "Florentinische Nächte" and with Pasternak's 1915 story "Apellesova cherta" (Апеллесова черта; The Mark of Apelles), which features a character named Heine who participates in a poetic and romantic rivalry. Barnes notes the year of this poem's composition as the turning point in which Pasternak sought his own voice, independent of Mayakovsky and Futurism (*Boris Pasternak* 196–97). On that story and Pasternak's conception of romanticism, see also Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak: The Poet and His Politics* 77–79. Cornwell (36) also mentions this poem with reference to its context of literary works about violinists.

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С загрубевшей от музыки коркой
На поденной душе, вдалеке
Неумелой толпы, как шахтерку,
Проводившую день в руднике. (1: 360)

He is on the narrow cornice,
He is sculpted from agate,
He overcomes one with the scent of concentrate
From some kind of stove-top passion.

Responsive as majolica,
Gathered from pitch and lightning,
He breathes the quivering of the table
And the heat of the candelabras.

Enough. The mist has burst into tears,
The corners of windowpanes have had their cry too,
He was a dwarf, a clown,
Messieurs, push the chairs aside.
[. .]

4
I love you black from cinder
From the incineration of passages, in the ashes
Of burnt-out andantes and adagios,
With the white ash of ballades on your forehead.

With a crust hardened from music
On the quotidian soul, far
From the hapless crowd, like a female miner
Who spent the day in the mines.

The entire poem is a series of variations on the motifs of blackness and fire and the themes for which they stand: artistic creation and love. This technique of variation on repeated motifs is typical for Pasternak's poetics of this period. What is particularly intriguing, however, is that Pasternak takes passages from Heine on both Paganini and Liszt in his creation of a portrait of Paganini. The leitmotif of blackness is standard in Heine's depictions of the violinist. In "Florentinische Nächte" Heine writes:

In der Tat, es war Paganini selber [. .]. Er trug einen dunkelgrauen Oberrock, der ihm bis zu den Füßen reichte, wodurch seine Gestalt sehr hoch zu sein schien. Das lange schwarze Haar fiel in verzerrten Locken auf seine Schulter herab und bildete wie einen dunklen Rahmen um das blasse, leichenartige Gesicht, worauf Kummer, Genie und Hölle ihre unverwüstlichen Zeichen eingegraben hatten. (1: 576)

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Indeed, it was Paganini himself [. . .]. He wore a dark gray jacket that reached to his feet, making his figure seem very tall. His long black hair fell to his shoulders in uneven curls forming a dark frame around his pale, corpse-like face, on which sorrow, genius, and hell had engraved their inexorable signs.

Later in the work Heine describes another appearance of Paganini at a concert performance:

Endlich aber, auf der Bühne, kam eine dunkle Gestalt zum Vorschein, die der Unterwelt entstieg zu sein schien. Das war Paganini in seiner schwarzen Gala. Der schwarze Frack und die schwarze Weste von einem entsetzlichen Zuschnitt, wie er vielleicht am Hofe Proserpinens von der höllischen Etikette vorgeschriebenen ist. [. . .] In dem eckigen Krümmungen seines Leibes lag eine schauerliche Hölzernheit und zugleich etwas närrisch Tierisches [. . .]. (1: 577)

Finally a dark figure appeared on the stage, as if it had emerged from the underworld. It was Paganini in his black concert attire. The black jacket and black vest of a dreadful cut, as might be dictated by the hellish etiquette of Proserpina's court. [. . .] In the sharp angles of his body lay a horrifying woodenness and, at the same time, the bestial air of a buffoon [. . .].

As we can see from these passages, Heine portrays Paganini in terms of his blackness, a feature that the narrator associates with the demonic; this same mix of blackness and the vaguely demonic nature of inspiration is what appears in Pasternak's poem. The white, deathlike appearance of Heine's Paganini becomes the white ashes of the ballade on the forehead of Pasternak's heroine, whose portrait becomes mixed with that of the famous violinist. Pasternak's image of the mine comes from another, truly Romantic source: from the Novalisian image of the mine as inspiration in his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, then turned on its head as a kind of earthly hell which entices unwitting victims in E. T. A. Hoffmann's story "Die Bergwerke zu Falun." (The Mines of Falun).¹⁵ Pasternak knew German Romantic literature well, so he must have been aware of the tradition behind this image.

The image of Paganini as a "dwarf" (карлик; karlik) is puzzling, given his famed height and the legendary length of his limbs, to which Heine also refers. This comes from one of Heine's many descriptions not of Paganini, but of Liszt. Of the great pianist Heine writes in "Musikalische Saison von 1844":

Er ist hier, das tolle, schöne, häßliche, rätselhafte, fatale und mitunter sehr kindische Kind seiner Zeit, der gigantische Zwerg [. . .], dessen Wahnsinn uns selber den Sinn verwirrt [. . .]. (5: 531–32)¹⁶

¹⁵ On Novalis and Hoffmann in Pasternak's work, see Evans-Romaine; particularly on this story, 173.

¹⁶ This image of Liszt as childlike and dwarf-like is doubtless important to Mandelstam's enigmatic 1931 poem "Roial," which Lazar Fleishman and Nancy Pollak have discussed in terms of its polemic with Pasternak (Fleishman, *Boris Pasternak v tridtsatye gody* 102; Pollak 107).

He is here, the mad, handsome, ugly, mysterious, fateful, and at the same time childish child of his time, the gigantic dwarf [. . .], whose insanity bewilders our sanity [. . .].

Both poets depict the force of music not only on the animate (as the piano seems to become), but on the inanimate. Not only pianos shake under Liszt's power; he can move stones as well. In "Musikalische Saison von 1844," Heine writes of this force in mythical terms:

Er ist hier, der moderne Amphion, der mit den Tönen seines Saitenspiels beim Kölner Dombau die Steine in Bewegung setzte, daß sie zusammenfügten, wie einst die Mauern von Theben. (5: 531)

He is here, the modern Amphion, who with the sounds of his string playing set the stones in motion at the construction site of the Cologne Cathedral, so that they fit together like the erstwhile walls of Thebes.

Pasternak does not grant this power to Chopin, or to Liszt, but only to Bach, whose organ chorale could turn over beams like an elephant, with the power of Samson in his poem "Eshche ne umolknul uprek" (Ещё не умолкнул упрёк; The reproach had not yet faded 2: 82–85):

Ворочая балки, как слон,
И освобождашь от бревен,
Хорал выходил, как Самсон,
Из кладки, где был замурован. (2: 83)

Turning beams like an elephant,
And then freeing itself from the logs,
The chorale came out like Samson
From the warehouse where it had been walled up.

In the works of both writers, the pianist's power extends to nature and the elements as well. Heine writes in *Lutezia* of Liszt's ascent over the very thunderstorm of which he had been a mere part in his youth, as he describes below. He writes of this storm, and of Liszt's increasing power as a performer:

Wenn er z. B. damals auf dem Pianoforte ein Gewitter spielte, sahen wir die Blitze über sein eigenes Gesicht dahinzucken, wie von Sturmwind schlotterten seine Glieder, und seine langen Haarzöpfe träuften gleichsam vom dargestellten Platzregen. Wenn er jetzt auch das stärkste Donnerwetter spielt, so ragt er doch selber darüber empor, wie der Reisende, der auf der Spitze einer Alpe steht, während es im Tal gewittert: die Wolken lagern tief unter ihm, die Blitze ringeln wie Schlangen zu seinen Füßen, das Haupt erhebt er lächelnd in den reinen Äther. (5: 358)

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Back then, when he played a thunderstorm at the piano, for example, we saw the lightning flash over his face, his limbs trembled as if from a stormy wind, and his long plaits virtually dripped from the cloudburst he depicted. Now when he plays the strongest storm, he himself towers above it, like a traveler standing on top of an Alpine peak while the storm rages in the valley below: the clouds lie far below him, the lightning curls like snakes at his feet, and he lifts his head, smiling, in the pure ether.

Pasternak's pianist possesses similar powers. Although, as many scholars have noted, it is typical in Pasternak's work for the artist, musician, or other protagonist to blend in with the surrounding natural world, to become a part of the storm, in the poem "Pianistu poniatno shnyrian'e vetoshnits" (Пианисту понятно шнырянье ветошниц; The pianist can understand the ragpickers' skulking 1: 203), the pianist seems to have greater power. During the course of the poem, the pianist seems to change from little more than a rag merchant, balancing his burden on his back, to someone who can handle a storm cloud and spread out the map of a thunderstorm:

Он вешает облако бури кирпичной,
Как робу на вешалку на лето в шкаф.

И тянется, как за походною флягой,
Военную карту грозы расстелив,
К роялю, обычно обильному влагой
Огромного душного лета столиц.

Когда, подоспевши совсем незаметно,
Сгорая от жажды, гроза четырьмя
Прыжками бросается к бочкам с цементом,
Дрожащими лапами ливня гремя. (1: 203)

He hangs the cloud of the brick storm,
Like coveralls into the closet for the summer.

And he is pulled along, like a water canteen,
Having spread out the military map of the storm,
Toward the piano, usually full of moisture
From the humid summer in the capitals.

When, rushing in altogether unnoticed,
Burning with thirst, the storm, in four leaps,
Throws itself onto the barrels of cement,
Its shaking paws thundering.

Like the god-like Liszt in Heine, the Pasternakian pianist can hover over the world below. In Pasternak's 1956 poem "Музыка" (Музыка; Music), from his last book *Kogda razguliaetsia* (Когда разгуляется; *When the Weather Clears*), the "sixth-floor resident," whose piano has just been moved into his new

apartment, looks out over the world before beginning to play his newly settled piano. His playing, in turn, carries the night, the thunder, the streets below. Much of the imagery in this poem echoes earlier Pasternak verse on music, for example from “Son v letniuiu noch” and his poem from *Vtoroe rozhdenie* (Второе рождение; *Second Birth*), “Opjat’ Shopen ne ishchet vygod” (Опять Шопен не ищет выгод; Yet again Chopin seeks no gain 2: 75–77), which also involves images of a piano high above the street and its noises. The verses below are from “Музыка”:

Жилец шестого этажа
 На землю посмортел с балкона,
 Как бы ее в руках держа
 И ею властвуя законно.
 [. . .]

Раскат импровизаций нес
 Ночь, пламя, гром пожарных бочек,
 Бульвар под ливнем, стук колес,
 Жизнь улиц, участь одиночек. (2: 175)

The sixth-floor resident
 Looked down onto the earth from the balcony,
 As if he were holding it in its hands,
 Its legal possessor.
 [. . .]

The peal of improvisations carried
 The night, the flame, the thunder of fire-barrels,
 The boulevard under the downpour, the knocking of wheels,
 The life of the streets, the fate of single women.

This power of music in the work of both poets is represented by the smell that the music seems to give off in a kind of synesthetic burst. In Heine, it is, of course, Liszt whose music is capable of inspiring the flowers to smell so strangely and beautifully. He writes in “Über die französische Bühne”:

[. . .] hie und da die süßesten Blumen ihren Duft verbreiten, daß man zugleich beängstigt und beseligt wird, aber doch noch mehr beängstigt. (3: 351)

[. . .] here and there the sweetest flowers spread their scent, making one both fearful and blissful, but mostly even more fearful.

The magical smell of flowers is associated with the powerful performance of Chopin in Pasternak’s 1930 poem “Ballada,” from the «Бессонный запах матиол» (Sleepless scent of Matthiola) to «все соблазны южных смол» (all

the seductions of southern incense) (2: 60).¹⁷ In “Vse utro s deviati do dvukh,” the atmosphere of these magical flowers is almost too much: «томящий дух / Озона, змей и розмарина, / И орлеандры разморило» (the oppressive spirit / Of ozone, snakes and rosemary, / And orleanders knocked you flat) (1: 202). In both Pasternak poems, mixed with these hypnotic flower smells is the overwhelming smell of tobacco smoke, hinting visually of incense. In “Vse utro s deviati do dvukh,” he writes in typically metonymical fashion: «И душно дышат табаки.» (And the tobaccos breathe stifflingly.) (1: 203). These smells are both pleasant and unsettling, a kind of temptation, a hint at the mixed blessing and possibly even evil that music can bring. Music entertains its listeners but, in a sense, also sickens them. The audiences fall victim to its charms.

Above all, according to Heine’s reports, Liszt’s power over audiences is tremendous. Heine writes in “Musikalische Saison von 1844” that the reason for the Parisian “insanity” (“Verrücktheit”) over Liszt must be sought not in aesthetics, but in pathology (5: 533). Liszt’s own insanity bewilders our senses (“dessen Wahnsinn uns selber den Sinn verwirrt” 5: 532). Particularly women in high society are susceptible to Liszt’s hypnotic charms. Heine writes of Liszt as the man:

[. . .] den hier die schöne Welt, besonders die hysterische Damenwelt, in diesem Augenblick mit einem wahnsinnigen Enthusiasmus umjubelt [. . .] Ich spreche von Franz Liszt, dem genialen Pianisten. Ja, der Geniale ist jetzt wieder hier und gibt Konzerte, die einen Zauber üben, der ans Fabelhafte grenzt. (5: 357)

[. . .] whom high society here, particularly the hysterical world of ladies, acclaims at this moment with a crazed enthusiasm [. . .] I speak of Franz Liszt, the ingenious pianist. Yes, the ingenious one is here again, giving concerts that weave a spell bordering on the fantastic.

A similar insanity is the subject of Pasternak’s complex long poem *Vysokaia bolezni*, in which the illness of art (or revolution) infects seemingly everything around.¹⁸ Pasternak reverses the situation, however. It is Chopin whom Pasternak describes with regard to the exhausting attention of the *beau monde* that gives him no peace. In his essay on Chopin, he writes of society as a “swarm”:

[. . .] наоборот, сплошным роem романтических мотыльков и эльфов кишили вокруг него великосветские гостиные, когда, поднимаясь из-за рояля, от проходил через их расступающийся строй [. . .]. (5: 64)

¹⁷ On the image of “smola” in its many manifestations in the work of Mandelstam, see Ronen, *An Approach to Mandel’shtam*. Professor Ronen pointed out the significance of “smola” in this Pasternak poem to me in 1990.

¹⁸ See Boris Pasternak (1: 517) and Sergeeva-Kliatis and Lekmanov (31) on the title. On the musical aspects of the poem, see also Platek 220, 228.

[. . .] on the contrary, high society salons hovered around him in an utter swarm of romantic moths and elves when he got up from the piano and walked through the crowd that let him pass through [. . .].

For both Pasternak and Heine, music becomes more than the pianist or the instrument. In *Lutezia*, Heine writes of Liszt's power to go beyond piano technique:

[. . .] bei Liszt [. . .] denkt man nicht mehr an überschwundene Schwierigkeit, das Klavier verschwindet und es offenbart sich die Musik. (5: 358)

[. . .] with Liszt [. . .] one thinks no more of the difficulty overcome. The piano disappears and music itself is revealed.

In Pasternak's poem on the Bach chorale, "Eshche ne umolknul uprek..." (2: 82–85), the organ disappears in a sense as well, again in a metonymy typical for Pasternak:

Играл не орган, а стена,
Украшенная органом. (2: 83)

Not the organ played, but rather a wall,
Decorated with an organ.

The music then "moves beams" and "breaks free," in the passage discussed above.

Music goes beyond its instrument in another, broader sense in Pasternak's essay. He writes that Chopin's études teach something much more significant than technique:

Этюды Шопена, названные техническими руководствами, скорее изучения, чем учебники. Это музыкально изложенные исследования по теории детства и отдельные главы фортепианного введения к смерти [. . .], и они скорее обучают истории, строению вселенной и еще чему бы то ни было более далекому и общему, чем игре на рояле. Значение Шопена шире музыки. (5: 65)

Chopin's Etudes, called technical guides, are more scholarly studies than textbooks. They are musically presented studies of the theory of childhood and separate chapters from a pianistic introduction to death [. . .]. They teach more about history, the structure of the universe, and other much more profound and general subject matter than about piano playing. The significance of Chopin is broader than music.

Thus Liszt, Paganini, and Chopin in Heine's work, and then in Pasternak's, are extraordinary figures not only in the history of music, but of culture. They were movers of minds and hearts, and they had an impact on the society

around them, for good or for ill. They could spread disease and incite frenzy, or they could heal. In Heine's writings these musicians, though frequently mentioned in the same breath and compared, were utterly distinct, opposite poles of artistic genius, with Chopin at one end and Liszt and Paganini at the other. In Pasternak, however, Chopin as the embodiment of the musician or artist in general takes on the various contradictory qualities of these two pianists in Heine's portrayal. The musician becomes both master and victim, a demonic force and a noble one, the healer and the spreader of disease. In characteristically metonymic fashion, Pasternak takes traits, parts, aspects of Heine's portrayals of these men and develops throughout his life a complex, contradictory, fascinating image of the artist as inspiring to the reader as Chopin was to him. All of these figures go beyond music and become fundamental elements of a lost culture that Pasternak revives in his verse and prose. Heine makes music a societal phenomenon, and Pasternak recreates that society, yet also makes music, like art, a moral phenomenon in an age where art and music were used for immoral ends. Heine had the power of an image-maker, and Pasternak reworked these images within the post-Symbolist context of his own "anti-romanticism." For both, to paraphrase Pasternak, the significance of their musical heroes is far broader than music.

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The *Shekhinah's* Empty Nest: Tracing the Imagery of Apostasy in H. N. Bialik

Sara Feldman

Author's note: Before I ever took a course with Omry Ronen, I had heard of him by word of mouth from other undergraduates at the University of Michigan. They spoke admiringly of Ronen (like the Irish name "Ronan"), and as a result I was quite surprised later on to learn that he was Israeli. The name "Ronen" comes from a Biblical Hebrew root meaning "to rejoice" or "to sing for joy"^{*} and is a fairly typical Israeli last name. At the time when he arrived in Israel, many other European-born Jews were Hebraizing their names.^{**} For his contemporaries, the name change signified a shift in Jewish identity from the Diaspora Jew to the New Hebrew. It was one of a series of modern attempts to transform the nature of Jewishness through language.

Ronen was himself a student of Benjamin (Hrushovski) Harshav, one of the only scholars to have written about Yiddish prosody, who also authored the foundational texts for the study of prosody in Hebrew. In his research, Harshav explains the significance of Russian prosody for the study of modern Hebrew poetry, an art form which largely based itself on what creators knew from Russian poetry.^{***} Indeed, the same connection to Russian high culture that Ronen had—along with Osip Mandelstam, Roman Jakobson, and other modern East European Jews—drove both scholarship and creative expression in the Jewish national languages of Hebrew and Yiddish.

^{*}It appears several times in Psalms 126,5, which promises: "*Hazor'im bedim'ah berinah yiktsoru*" (They who sow in tears / shall reap in songs of joy) (*Tanakh*). This Psalm is also familiar as the Hebrew prayer "*Shir hama'a lot*" (Song of the Ascents) and was quoted in Matityahu Shelem's Labor Zionist folk song "*Hazor'im bedim'ah*" (Those who sow in tears). Though the Psalmist meant this figuratively, in Labor Zionism it took on a new meaning. Common Israeli first names from the same root as "Ronen" (which is also a first name) include Ran, Ron, Roni, Ronit, and Rinah; a younger Israeli radio personality shared the name Omri Ronen. "Omry" refers to a biblical Israelite king (father of Ahab), a sheaf or bundle, or the Jewish tradition of "Counting of the Omer," a time of year that is marked by semi-mourning until Jews cheer up with the unusually outdoorsy holiday of Lag Ba'omer.

^{**}In a famous example, David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel, Hebraized his name (Dovid Grin) out of Zionist conviction. In Omry Ronen's case, however, the motivation was different: he changed his name because he had been involved in the Hungarian Revolution, fighting Soviet invasion, and his parents were still there. It was for their safety.

^{***}Harshav's most thorough examination of this is in his anthology of modern Hebrew poetry (2000).

Introduction

Hayyim Nahman Bialik, the Hebrew national poet, was unaware in the 1890s of just how foreign his work would someday be to those who would read Hebrew in today's State of Israel. Though Bialik is central to the curriculum of Jewish and Israeli culture taught in Israeli schools¹ and also a common Israeli street name, most of his poetry was composed in Europe. Contemporary Israeli readers have lost not merely the Ashkenazi pronunciation and corresponding meter of Bialik's works, but also his cultural palette. Though Bialik was canonized as a classic Zionist poet, his poetry actually articulates his experience in Europe. This is especially apparent in poems about his pious European youth. Bialik was once a full-time student of traditional Jewish texts within the traditional educational system. He left this world as a young man and became celebrated for his contributions to secular literature. His poems about the rupture from traditional Jewish life in the East European study house represent the experience of many other Jewish youth during his time, as well as point him in the direction he eventually took in his vision for modern Jewish culture.

In Bialik's poems about leaving behind the Jewish study house, bird imagery invites the reader on an intertextual journey through ancient scripture, the Talmud, and back to the modern period. In several of these poems, the study house is a bird's nest inhabited by a birdlike *shekhinah* (or Divine Presence). The student, a chick swept up in a storm, abandons the mother bird and her nest. This motif evokes a perplexingly strange commandment in Deuteronomy 22.6–7 that requires one to shoo a mother bird away from her nest before removing eggs or chicks from it. The Talmud's discussion of this commandment claims that the reward for performing it is to live a long life. It also cites a tragic story in which a father asks his son to climb a tree to perform this commandment, and the son dies while obeying his father. Confronted with the problem of theodicy and divine injustice after witnessing this death, Rabbi Elisha ben Avuyah becomes an apostate. By evoking Deuteronomy 22.6–7, Bialik draws a connection between ben Avuyah's ancient apostasy and his own, modern estrangement from the study house. Although the temptations of nature and the modern world draw him out from the traditional study house, Bialik ultimately does not adopt ben Avuyah's model of rebellion.

Like other elements of Bialik's complex poetry, this intertextual chain cannot fully resonate with the contemporary, secular Israeli reader. Ironically, the chain has been broken in part by efforts of Bialik and other secular Zionists to create a Hebrew culture no longer centered on traditional Jewish texts. In addition, readings of the poems that focus on the ideological conflict be-

¹ The Israeli Ministry of Education classifies Bialik along with Maimonides and the rabbinic tradition.

tween traditional Jewish life and the outside world may miss their emotional content: the anguish of choosing between the two. Bialik's secularizing vision would eventually find its expression in his retelling of traditional Jewish lore, *Sefer Ha'aggadah*, which recounts the story of ben Avuyah's apostasy but aims to replace the very intensive study of traditional Jewish texts with a digest in modernized Hebrew.

Today, Bialik's work is curated for its significance to the Zionist project and Israeli identity. Thus, in Israel the favored poems are those reflecting his ambitions, not his experience. These include, especially, nature poems and national poems that do not portray modern Jewish life in Europe, but rather ancient and anticipated future Jewish life in the Middle East. Some examples of these are "The Dead of the Desert," "The Scroll of Fire," and his first publication, "To the Bird." His most popular poem with regard to Jewish life in Europe is surely "In the City of Slaughter," which accuses Jews of weakness and hypocrisy in the face of the Kishinev pogrom, and was used to encourage armed Jewish self-defense.² In contrast, of his poems about leaving behind the study house, "Levadi" ("Alone") and "Lifnei 'aron hasfarim" ("Before the Book Closet") are still given some importance, while "Hamasmid" ("The Constant Student"), is now obscure. However, reading these three poems together reveals that their shared bird imagery is a recurring intertextual reference to the Talmudic story of Elisha ben Avuyah leaving the study house.

Bialik's birds

Birds appear throughout Bialik's poetry, and not exclusively in the capacity of departure from the study house. They represent nature and freedom and are thus also messengers for the cooped-up Jews of Europe. Indeed, Bialik's first published poem, still popular today, was "To the Bird" (1891), imagining a bird that has been commuting between Eastern Europe and Zion, returning after winter:

Do you bring me a greeting from my brothers in Zion,
from my faraway, close brothers?
O the happy! Do they even know
how I suffer, o, I suffer from pain! (*Hashirim* 15)

The speaker asks the bird about those geological features of the Middle East that are mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, such as the Vale of Sharon and the Jordan River. From wintery Europe he imagines the natural beauty of a warm climate. The migrating bird is a chirping and singing emissary from this land, its song comforting the miserable speaker by evoking the longed-for landscape.

² Thanks to Vladimir Jabotinsky's translation of this poem, Bialik became the best-known Hebrew poet among Russian-speakers.

Scholars have shown that Bialik's bird imagery carries traditional subtexts. As Y. Fishel Lachower points out, birds and their nests already served this function in Jewish traditional texts due to their wandering and ability to fly to places that humans cannot (87). Bialik here, like other nineteenth-century Jewish poets, evokes various aviary traditions including the dove sent by Noah after the flood in Genesis 8, and the birds in Psalm 84:3–4³, who have built their nests in the site of the Temple (87–89). Lachower connects these images also with the notion in Lamentations Rabbah, which draws upon Psalm 102:7–8, of the divine as a bird: "I am like a great owl in the wilderness, and an owl among the ruins. / I lie awake; I am like a lone bird upon a roof" (Lamentations Rabbah, Petihta 20).⁴ Thus the bird-Divine Presence is alone in the destroyed-nest Temple, having expelled its own chick-Jews from there, and laments its solitude. Lachower points out that in Hebrew literature of Bialik's time, the motif of a caged bird's longing for freedom was common. Here, the speaker of "To the Bird" laments Diaspora and, as Bialik does in many of his poems, imagines the land of Zion.

The trio of bird, nest, and chicks is not referenced explicitly in the poem. It is found in its biblical and rabbinic subtext. Elsewhere in Bialik's poetry, the trio appears more explicitly. For example, in "On the Threshold of the Study House" (1896, 1897), the line "your nest is sent away, your chicks wandered and fled away"⁵ still seems to refer to the exile following the Temple destruction. The speaker stands on the threshold of the study house and imagines the Temple in ruins, ultimately promising to rebuild it. A Jewish study house

³ "I long, I yearn for the courts of the LORD; my body and soul shout for joy to the living God. / Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself in which to set her young."

⁴ Lamentations Rabbah Petihta 20 reads this as:

Rabbi Aleksandri opened (Psalms 102): *I [kept] watch and I was like a lone bird on a roof*. The Holy One Blessed Be He said "I [kept] watch (to bring my children into the Land of Israel) [to give the Torah to my children], immediately—and *I was like a lone bird on a roof*: how the bird secludes itself from roof to roof and from fence to fence and from oak to oak and from thorny branch to thorny branch, thus when Israel went out from Egypt they were travelling in factions and camping in factions (Numbers 32): *and they traveled and they camped*, and because they came to Mount Sinai they were all made unanimous: "and they camped" is not written here, but (Exodus 19): *and Israel camped there*. In that hour said the Holy One Blessed Be He: "behold, the time when I shall give the Torah to my children." Another thing: *I [kept] watch*—, the Holy One Blessed Be He said: I [kept] watch to rest my *shekhinah* in the Temple forever. *And I was like a bird*: How this bird, at the time when you remove its chicks, sits alone, so said the Holy One Blessed Be He: "I burnt my house and I destroyed my city and I exiled my children to [be] among the nations of the world and I sit alone."

This and all translations, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.

⁵ Evoking Lamentations 4:14–15: "They wandered blindly through the streets / Defiled with blood, / So that no one was able / To touch their undergarments. / 'Away! Unclean!' people shouted at them, / 'Away! Away! Touch not!' / So they wandered and wandered again; / For the nations had resolved: 'They shall stay here no longer!'"

is not just a place where one might read books narrating the destruction of the Temple; it is, after all, the site believed to have provisionally replaced the Temple until the coming of the Messiah.⁶ It is also the place that contained traditional Judaism's most revered people: those who, like Bialik in his youth, studied the Talmud and other sacred Hebrew and Aramaic literature fulltime.

Just as Judaism itself transformed with the destruction of the Temple, Bialik's birds carry a different meaning in poetry that imagines the study house that replaced the Temple. The avian imagery reappears with the combinations of mother bird, nest, and chicks in several of Bialik's poems describing estrangement from the study house and the traditional Jewish canon and community that it represents. In these poems, the nest is not the Temple in Jerusalem. Rather, it is the destroyed Temple's replacement: the study house. The chicks are not an exiled nation, but rather young male students. The mother bird is still the *shekhinah* or perhaps a male teacher. Instead of fantasizing about Zion, these poems give voice to the intellectual and emotional experience of growing uncomfortable in and eventually leaving the traditional Jewish educational system.

The analysis below will trace the development of this imagery and its meaning over three poems. In "Hamasmid" (1901) a *poema* (long poem) that agonizes over the squashing and dimming of the students' lives in contrast to the vitality of nature outside the *yeshiva* walls, the students are represented as birds that can be carried off by the wind. "Alone" (1902) expresses the uncomfortable relationship between the student-chick who wants to fly off like the others and the damaged, guilt-tripping *shekhinah* in the form of a mother bird. "Before the Bookcase" (1910) imagines the wind chasing her away before removing the student from her nest.

"Hamasmid": The birds trapped inside the study house, tempted by the wind

In "Hamasmid" there are two kinds of birds: stifled students inside the *yeshiva* and actual birds outside, which the *masmid* (constant student) ignores along with the wind that carries them. Containing just a few references to birds, this poem is Bialik's most lengthy and detailed poetic farewell to the Jewish study house, years after he had left the relatively open-minded Volozhin Yeshiva. The poem does not articulate the moment of his departure. Its narrator, however, is a man who once studied in the *yeshiva* but left it. As he ex-

⁶ In Tractate Gittin 56b of the Babylonian Talmud, during the terrible Roman siege of Jerusalem, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai asked Vespasian to "give me [the city of] Yavne and its sages" (but not Jerusalem and its temple), which the rabbi later converted into the center of Jewish text study. Mishnah Tractate Rosh Hashanah 4 lists the post-Temple-destruction innovations that he called for, which re-centered Judaism from Jerusalem (temple worship) to Yavne (ultimately, synagogue and *yeshiva*).

plains in the final stanza, “it was not my luck to be lost with you, poor laborers—I departed from your threshold.” Rather than telling that story, however, the poem describes a star pupil’s self-deprivation for the sake of studying old books in a gloomy corner, avoiding the temptations of nature’s beauty, a full night’s sleep, and human affection. His familiarity with the decaying architecture of the *yeshiva*, the characters and emotions that fill the dark spaces, and their relationships with the outside world allow him to express simultaneously his contempt and nostalgia for them without slipping into bigotry or sentimentalism. This mediator demonstrates the impossibility of remaining in the world from which he came and the impossibility of becoming fully separated from his intellectual and emotional foundations within it. Yet throughout, he still describes it as a gloomy sort of prison.

Masmid, or “constant student,” is the status the boy in the poem has achieved through diligent study and memorization of tractates from earliest light until late at night. Bialik describes both the *masmid* and his less diligent classmates as chicks. Yosef Klausner describes these personages of “*Hamasmid*” in the following way:

a kind of young men, who have no analogous counterpart among all the nations and soon will also stop being among [the children of] Israel, a kind of young men, that give up their souls to one unique kind of learning, without paying attention to all the rest of the learning in the world and without anticipating any reward in this world. (548)

These young men were, for Bialik and Klausner, living a stunted kind of childhood with very little interaction with the wider world or even the local landscape outside of the *yeshiva* building. Of course, at the time when the poem and Klausner’s reaction were first published, most of the audience for modern Hebrew literature consisted of men who had received a traditional education. Bialik issues a challenge to his readers, for whom he introduces the *yeshiva* world as if they did not already know it:

Can you interpret the musings of the tender bird,
that which the chirping fledgling expresses in solitude
there in the dark corner in a voice of pure prayer,
which is poured with his heart in the parchments of the Talmud?
(*Hashirim* 122)

In the early twentieth century, this challenge could be met by most people who could read these lines in the original Hebrew because the language was so tightly bound up in the parchments and papers of religious books. It has become more daunting since then, however. The imagined readers, who require a mediator because they do not know the world of the *yeshiva* and its occupants, were once the greatest fiction of this poem. At the time when this

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poem was published, Bialik's small readership had much in common with Bialik and his *masmid*.

The *masmid* is described as a young bird trapped both by the gloomy *yeshiva* walls and by his own yearning to achieve scholarly greatness. The child's studying voice "moans like a dove from the corner of the *yeshiva*" (124). The observer wonders if the boy's "soul, like a bird escaping from its cage" (125), longs for his parents' faces. Yet as the boy daydreams of becoming a rabbi of importance,

Then the hope comes out and casts a net
of the reward for his victory at the head of our hero
and he dreams a pleasant dream in calmness of mind,
gripped like a bird in the ropes of his imagination. (*Hashirim* 128)

Just as winged creatures can be immobilized by traps and cages, the souls of Jewish boys in these poems are confined by traditional study and the walls that contain it. This comparison addresses what Bialik experienced as an unnatural state of affairs. Just as a caged bird unable to fly is a pathetic sight, so too are Jewish boys confined in the study house. "Hamasmid" depicts them as unable to explore nature, the body, love, and outside knowledge.

Bialik also contrasts the birdlike sounds of the boys' Aramaic singsong with the songs of the birds outside, yet uses syntactic ambiguity to suggest a kinship between the two. The *masmid* "moans like a dove from the corner of the *yeshiva*" (128). When this boy is the last one standing and studying, the head of the *yeshiva* is the only one who hears him: "the chirping of his bird does not allow him to sleep" (130).

Meanwhile, beyond these walls, birds and wind (along with sunlight and greenery) are temptations of nature. The song of the student-birds inside and the actual birds outside compete during the day. Vanquished by the student's chanting, "the dawn, the garden, and the smell (*reah*) of the field / fly like a bird and vanish like a cloud" (120). Outside, "the wind (*ruah*) is filled with the rejoicing of birds" (120). As the boys sing out in the study house, "outside on the lintels of the *yeshiva* windows / the sparrow wakes up her nest—her tender children" (120) to praise the sun for its light. As the sun lights up the *yeshiva's* gloomy interior, these songs compete:

clamor from the *yeshiva* filling it
and the joyful singing of the birds surrounding (attacking) it from outside
an old oak as well, abandoned forest,
that has been standing there since days of yore,
that already lived out its days and its root dried up,
and had long stopped bearing oak-fruit—
he, too, seemed rejuvenated and his baldness improved,
which wet at night, refreshed by dew,
and he sees the birds as if seeing his family members
that come to greet him joyfully in the morning. (121)

As M. Ts. Kadri argues, however, the words “he sees the birds” could refer to the student, and not just the oak (184). The conflict between the birds and the students, who are so similar, reflects the conflict that the *masmid* experiences between his Torah study and his other, squelched inclinations.

As we know from the mediating voice of the speaker, one could leave the *yeshiva*. The poema establishes the wind outside as a force that can draw the student away. In the early morning, when it is time for an exhausted *masmid* to go to the study house,

Then it happens that the mischievous wind dances
like Satan from the abundant blueness to greet him,
flatters him and twirls his sidelock,
secretly tempts him, arousing debauchery. (118)

This debauchery is the desire for a few more hours of sleep, the idea of which the boy swats away:

Then the wind descends to the green of the garden,
it whispers, it tempts with a silent, faint voice:
“see, darling boy, how fresh is my bed,
enjoy yourself before your lung rots.” (118–19)

As the wind intoxicates his nostrils with the fragrance of flowers, the boy’s resolve weakens.

Then the lad widens his mouth and inhales,
and widens the neckhole of his open shirt.
And as a man who had carried stones and tired
all his insides will ask and plead for rest.
And he casts his hands into the wind without strength
as if asking, “take me, wind, carry me!
Let us fly from this and find refuge,
This place is too narrow for me, here I am tired!”
But a great gust from the hedge of the garden
reminds the lad that he had strayed from the path (119)

The wind tempts the boy and he almost loses his resolve to put in another day of study. As Ariel Hirschfeld notes, the “path” here is the way of the Torah, and such straying from it is warned against in Pirkei Avot 3:7 (86). The tempting wind is, for Hirschfeld, at once erotic and childish (87). While the *masmid* continues to resist this draw, others—the speaker, other students, Bialik’s contemporary readership, and subjects of the poems we will discuss next—find the *yeshiva* stifling and try to escape.

Another element of this poem, which will become important later in our discussion, is the Divine Presence, or *shekhinah*. The *shekhinah* in this poem serves to confirm the futility of the *masmid*’s efforts to focus entirely on the study of these old texts. Although in later poems, the *shekhinah* would play a

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different role, the speaker of “Hamasmid” imagines that she shares his attitude towards the isolation of the students:

It seems to me, there on the ark from above
an illumination appears like the mirth of an unblemished saint—⁷
the *shekhinah* enjoys the utterance of a babe's mouth.
Or perhaps she mocks her sacrifices,
who bury their lives in darkness, in confinement,
who heroically deliver up their lives for her? (*Hashirim* 124)

If the students are giving up so much of their lives for the will of a god that does not appreciate or reward them, their devotion and abstemiousness seem difficult to justify. One wonders if the speaker might have convinced himself to leave the *yeshiva* after coming to that conclusion. Klausner, shortly after the poem's publication, wrote that it is a poem about

the great war between the book and life—more correctly, between the love of the book and the love of life [. . .] both as an enthusiastic “apotheosis” of the old study house and Torah learning, but also as an aggressive protest against the flight of the soul from the heart and its entry into the written word. (548)

Nevertheless, the speaker of the poem tries to maintain his respect for the boy's pure devotion and the harm it does to him. He expands this to a greater question about traditional Jewish education. Admitting that he himself once studied among these students, but has gone out into the world, he wonders:

How many sheaves would we joyously⁸ harvest,
if only one noble wind would blow among you,
and cleared out the “way of the Torah” we defied,
and paved a path of life up to the *yeshiva*; (*Hashirim* 132)

Ironically, the harvest has turned out to be a vastly larger readership for Hebrew literature, but one that does not notice Bialik's references to Torah sources. “Hamasmid” lays the groundwork for future poems whose use of similar bird imagery would point to such sources.

“Alone”: *Shekhinah* as emotional obstacle

Whereas the lengthy “Hamasmid” had laid out the opposition between the study house and the world outside in some detail, at times using bird imagery to contrast the two, the twenty-four-line “Alone” (1902) relies primarily on bird imagery in its expression of the conflict between the student and the *shekhinah*. In other words, I am reading this poem as one that takes up the

⁷ *Tsaddik* in the original, not a saint in the Christian sense.

⁸ *Berinah* in the original, from the same root as “Ronen.”

subject of “Hamasmid” at a later point in the *yeshiva* student’s rebellion and carries its bird imagery farther along in that process as well. The poem depicts the time period after the student has decided to leave, but before he is able:

The wind carried them all off, the light swept them all away,
a new song made the morning of their youth sing for joy⁹;
and I, a tender fledgling, have been forgotten by the heart
beneath the wings of the *shekhinah*.

Alone, alone, I remained, and the *shekhinah*, she too,
her broken right wing shook above my head.
My heart knew her heart: she trembled with fear for me,
for her son, her only one.

She had already been expelled from all corners, only
a hidden corner, desolate and small, still remained—
the study house—and she hid in the shade, and I was
together with her in her sorrow.

And when my heart longed for the window, for light,
and when the place beneath her wing was too narrow¹⁰ for me—
she hid her head in my shoulder, and her tear
dripped onto the page of my *Gemara*.

Silently she cried for me and clung to me,
as if enclosing me with her broken wing:
“The wind has carried them all off, they all flew off,
And I remain, alone, alone [. . .]”

And a sort of conclusion of a very ancient dirge,
and a sort of prayer, plea, and terror at once,
my ear heard in that silent crying—
and in that boiling tear [. . .] (*Hashirim* 228)

Whereas the briefly mentioned *shekhinah* of “Hamasmid” is a silently mocking observer of the student’s devotion, in “Alone” she is portrayed as a forlorn mother bird hiding in the darkness of the study house. The weeping *shekhinah* clings to the speaker, fearing that he, the last of her chicks, will soon abandon her. The common scholarly understanding of *shekhinah*-as-Jewish-nation in this poem¹¹ is supported by her expulsion from all corners. This sense of persecution heightens the emotional cost of leaving the study house. By leaving her, the student would harm and betray her and all she represents.

Again we have a student who is the last one in the study house, but this chick-student is neither the devoted *masmid* nor the jaded speaker of the pre-

⁹ *Hirminah* in the original, from the same root as “Ronen.”

¹⁰ “Sorrow” in the previous stanza is “*tsoroh*” and “narrow” here is “*tsar*.”

¹¹ For example, Bar-Yosef 195–96.

vious poem. Instead, we encounter him at a moment when he already knows he wants to leave, but has not yet done so. His identity as a student, though predictable to Bialik's readers, is revealed not only by the study house setting, but by the landing of the bird-*shekhinah's* tear on his page of Talmud. The fledgling is held back from his flight only by the *shekhinah's* broken wing and his own apparent compassion. Obviously he, too, will leave. He is already stifled in this dark corner with her and drawn towards the light. In other words, the *yeshiva* student will leave the tradition and make his way—intellectually and physically—in the world outside.

The temptations to leave are similar to those in "Hamasmid": wind, music from outside, light, and space. The wind continues to represent the temptations of life and nature. The appealing "new song" of secular literature¹² and the fast-changing modern world contrast with the liturgical reference of "on the wings of the *shekhinah*," an "ancient dirge" for the souls of the dead entitled "God of Mercy."

This poem presents the appeal of leaving the study house, and the painful emotional context of leaving it, entirely through bird imagery. It develops those ideas of "Hamasmid" further, not only by depicting the student as a baby bird about to be carried off by the temptations of the wind, but also by rendering the *shekhinah* as a mother bird and clingy obstacle to the student's departure. This evokes the commandment to shoo the mother bird away before taking the chicks, because her presence is keeping the student from leaving.

"Before the Book Closet": Flying away

The motif of student-as-bird reaches its dramatic and intertextual peak in "Before the Book Closet" (1910), which uses avian imagery to depict the very moment of departure from the study house. All of the elements are present: study house as nest, *shekhinah*, chick, and the wind that carries him off. Whereas "Alone" takes place shortly before the student flies off, and the student in "Hamasmid" has no intention of doing so, "Before the Book Closet" includes its speaker's recollection of a stormy night when he left the study house.

As in "Hamasmid," the speaker of "Before the Book Closet" revisits the study house years after having gone away. The scene upon his return is even bleaker than the one he left. He introduces himself to the books as a former devoted student, reminding them of how important they used to be to him. A quarter of the way through the poem's 105 lines, he recounts the wretched night of his departure. He was studying, and then a storm of devils damaged the building. The fires, including his candle, went out as his fear increased and

¹² Zusha Shapira, recognizing this as "a song of the (other) nations," identifies it also as a contrasting reference to Psalms 40.2, in which the "new song" is a prayer to God (95).

both *shekhinah* and the image of his grandfather disappeared. He was cast out into the night by the storm. Having returned after years away, he has become so detached from the scrolls within that despite his struggles to understand them, he cannot do so anymore.

The avian imagery of “Before the Book Closet” represents the student as a bird, the study house as a nest, and the wind as having carried him off. Early in the poem, the speaker introduces himself as a former student, and as a bird whose nest is the study house: “From cruising foreign isles my soul is returning, / and as a wandering dove, tired of limb and trembling, / it strikes again at the entrance of the nest of its youth” (375). The secondary meaning of the dove’s return is from Genesis 8.8–9, sent out by Noah from the ark to see if the flood has subsided. Until there is dry land, this dove returns to the ark. Similarly, Bialik’s speaker has cruised or sailed the world and has now circled back to take refuge in the familiar. The outside world seems not to have offered a better resting place, though it turns out that the nest-study house offers only underground tombs. This may reflect Bialik’s own resistance to Russification.¹³

Bialik strongly evokes the commandment to shoo the mother bird away from the nest in his description of the moment when the speaker first leaves the study house. When this bird flew the nest, it was not necessarily on an exploratory mission. Rather, after all the other students are already gone, he is driven away by a storm:

I was the last of the last,
 on my lips fluttered and died the prayer of forefathers,
 And there in a hidden corner, next to your closet,
 the eternal flame was completely extinguished before my eyes.
 At that time I was still young,
 a soft bud had not yet bloomed on my cheek—
 and the winter nights found me, wrathful nights,
 above an ancient book, of torn parchment,
 solitary with my soul’s dreams and its fears.
 Before me there still flickered upon the table
 as the end of the lamp oil, a dark wick;
 in the ruins of the book closet there rummaged a mouse
 an ember on the hearth still whispered its last—
 and I from fear bristled all my flesh
 and my teeth chattered from fear of death.
 It was then a night of horror, accursed night,
 from outside, from beyond the blind-eyed window,
 a tempest of wrath raged and howled,
 the shutters were broken, and in their iron bolts
 all the devils stormed the walls.
 I saw my fortress, and lo it was destroyed,

¹³ See Moss for a discussion of Bialik’s parochialism.

THE SHEKHINAH'S EMPTY NEST

and I saw the *shekhinah* of God leaving her place,
she stole away from behind the ark's curtain,
and the image of my grandfather's profile, a shadow to my right,
and a silent witness and judge of my heart's inclination—
even he disappeared, vanished from before my eyes,
only my candle's flame was still expiring alone
and it swayed and jumped to its death,
and suddenly the window was burst, everything was extinguished—
and I, a tender chick cast out of its nest
into the domain of the night and its darkness. (375–76)

Here, as in the commandment to chase the mother bird away from the nest before taking the chicks, the storm chases away the *shekhinah* before removing the chick from its nest. Although she does not play a large role in the poem, her disappearance leads to the great moment of rupture. If she is the same *shekhinah* as in "Alone," then he cannot be taken while she is present. However, a part of her role seems to be played by the grandfather.

As in "Hamasmid" and "Alone," the wind is the force that threatens the status quo. Here, rather than merely tempting, it does all of the work by damaging the physical structure of the nest-study house, chasing away the *shekhinah*, and removing the student-chick from his nest. The violent and diabolical storm puts out all of the lights, marking the end of the speaker's ability to see and hear what the books have to tell him. He enters the domain of the night, the world devoid of the *yeshiva's* clarity and certainty. His return, described in the poem, is a futile attempt to regain them.

This estrangement from the Torah is a kind of third exile, after the destruction of the two ancient temples. Since text has replaced temple worship, this new exile is not spatial displacement, but intellectual estrangement. The pain of this exile is not eased by whatever the speaker has found elsewhere. He has returned because he cannot find a home elsewhere, like the dove sent out by Noah. Wondering if his digging will lead to nothing, and he will go out into the night again worse than before, with nothing but his spade and "the ancient dust in my fingers," the speaker makes one more aviary reference, i.e., to the wings of the night's black mantle as a potential refuge:

And who knows,
if, as I go out again to the domain of the night
from digging in nation's tombs and spirit's ruins
and nothing is with me and I do not save a thing,
only this spade, stuck to my hand,
and this ancient dust in my fingers—
if not still poorer and emptier than I had been
to the splendor of the night I will not stretch out my hand,
ask for a path the mysteries of its bosom
and a tender shelter in the wings of the blackness of its mantle,
and call out to it, deathly tired: "Come, night,

gather me up, please, splendor of night, and cover me,
do not be a stranger to me; I am a refugee of tombs,
and my soul asks for rest, everlasting calm—" (377-78)

The lapsed student tries to find what he had lost because he seems to have gotten nothing elsewhere but "wrinkled of forehead already and wrinkled of soul," and his failure to salvage anything from his past intellectual life leaves him desperate to find a place for himself where he can stop these physical and intellectual wanderings. Frustrated in this attempt, he makes one final plea to the books: "answer me, stars of God, because I am sad." The poem is an anguished greeting to the books, demanding mutual recognition, an attempt to revisit them that yields nothing of relevance to this adult. He cannot return, and he cannot regain what he had.

As Jews were secularizing, their relationship with the Torah underwent a transformation. It had once been the focus of their study, where they sought to compound answers to questions of Jewish law and sometimes Jewish thought. But when the questions being asked were no longer answerable with the proceedings of Jewish law, when the principles of traditional Jewish thought had been upended and one could no longer depend on the traditional answers, the meaning of the traditional sources was in question.

Just as the grown man cannot see the columns, lines, and letters of the Torah the way he did as a young boy, Bialik's fellow modern Jews could not have the same view of it. The relationship of the modern Jew to the Torah is a subject that has received plentiful attention over the past few centuries, and the breadth and purpose of its expounders is beyond the scope of this essay. But there is a difference between scholars' philosophical and theological examination of this, and the experience of ex-*yeshiva* students for whom Bialik's poem cannot be merely symbolic. Though they may function as a national metaphor, the student's departure and failed return to the study house constitute not only intellectual choice, but also painful personal experience. The symbols are the figurative language describing this experience: the digging among graves, the storm destroying the study house, the aviary images.

The irony of this is that the creation of secular Jewish culture and education necessitated a widespread national estrangement from the canon pored over in traditional Jewish educational settings. By participating in the modernizing movement as it was happening, Bialik facilitated the process by which these very poems became less comprehensible. An intellectual estrangement from the Torah that was the literary foundation of his work and the emotional foundation of its content meant that the eventual readership of Hebrew literature would be estranged from the pain of leaving the *yeshiva* and the texts associated with it.

The lost intertextuality of birds and apostasy

As we have seen, while birds appear throughout Bialik's poetry, what is remarkable about the avian motif in the poems about leaving the *yeshiva* is their resonance far beyond the *shekhinah*-as-bird. For Bialik's contemporary readers, who shared the educational background he grapples with in these poems, the trio of mother bird, nest, and flyaway chick would have evoked not only the passages cited by Lachower and mentioned earlier in this essay, but also the strange commandment in Deuteronomy 22.6–7:

If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young. Let the mother go, and take only the young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life.

This is the commandment to shoo away the mother bird before removing her chicks or eggs, which many aim to fulfill for the sake of long life or simply out of piety. It is known as *shiluah haken*. One may fulfill this commandment by shooing away the mother bird, taking the chicks or eggs out of her nest briefly, and then putting them back in.¹⁴ *Shiluah haken* can be understood as a compassionate gesture: it spares the mother bird the sight of her offspring being carried away. But it can also produce exactly the kind of futile legalistic study portrayed in "Hamasmid." It leads to, in a way, the height of the kind of rabbinic reasoning which modernizing Jews were rejecting.

Beyond the initiation of long rabbinic discussions about how to properly fulfill this commandment, *shiluah haken* carries two other significant meanings. As mentioned earlier, the first instance of the *shekhinah*'s nest losing its chicks is the destruction of the Temple, after which the Temple worship is replaced by text study in the study house, which in Bialik has become a new nest. From this nest, too, there is a departure that cannot be reversed and transforms the chick—the Jew—into a being that cannot return to the way things were. Finally, the commandment evokes a rabbinic subtext as well, one which points directly to the apostasy of a *yeshiva* student: Rabbi Elisha ben Avuyah. It points to Elisha ben Avuyah because his fatal failure to fulfill it is one of the reasons that rabbinic literature offers for his apostasy. The allusions to *shiluah haken* connect the Talmud students' estrangement from the study house with that of an ancient predecessor within Jewish tradition.

Known after his apostasy as Aher ("The Other"), Elisha ben Avuyah had been a figure of interest to modern Jewish intellectuals since the nineteenth century (Schulte 279–82), representing "the moment in Jewish history which had been perceived as [sic] starting point for a Jewish culture which would

¹⁴ Thus the existence of a US company (www.shiluachhakan.com) that promises to take customers to fulfill the commandment at nests it maintains for the purpose.

have developed in close contact with the Greek world and its heirs" (281). For secularizing Jews, "Aher had become a figure that marked a possibility for a secular Jewish identity" (282). By evoking him in these poems, Bialik draws an emotional connection between the legendary apostate rabbi and East European lapsed *yeshiva* students such as himself.

Bavli Kiddushin 39b and Yerushalmi Hagigah 9b¹⁵ tell similar versions of how the story of *shiluah haken* connects to Aher's apostasy. These are compiled in Bialik's own digest of rabbinic lore, *Sefer ha'aggadah*:

And what did Aher see when he left for bad culture;¹⁶ they said: once he was sitting and studying in the Gennesaret Plain and saw one man that went up on top of the palm tree on the Sabbath and lifted the mother together with the children and descended in peace. And after the Sabbath had ended he saw a man who went up on top of the palm tree and took the children and sent away the mother and descended, and a snake bit him and he died. He said: it is said "let the mother go, and take only the young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life"—where is his wellbeing and where is the lengthening of his life? (and he did not know that Rabbi Akiva explained: "so that you may fare well"—in the world that is entirely good, "and have a long life—in the world that is entirely long); and there are some who say: he saw the tongue of Huzpith the Interpreter dragged in the mouth of a pig. He said: that a mouth which issued pearls should lick dust! He went out and sinned.¹⁷ (54–55)

Here the strange commandment achieves a sinister result by shortening a young person's life. This is in spite of the biblical explanation that fulfilling *shiluah haken*, as well as the commandment to honor one's parents, is rewarded with long life. The other rabbis explain this discrepancy as a misunderstanding by Aher: it refers, they argue, to a long afterlife. His ignorance of this interpretation leads him to sin.

For a person who no longer believes in the afterlife, however, Aher's rebellion may express dissatisfaction with such justifications for human suffering. Alon Goshen-Gottstein infers from the passage in Kiddushin 39b that Aher was troubled by the problem of theodicy (75) or the "veracity of the scriptural message" (196). Aher's perspective seems like a response to theodicy: evil and suffering in a world that is supposed to be controlled by divine justice. In the framework of Bialik's poems, the *shekhinah* is gone and so ben Avuyah leaves.

¹⁵ Or cited as: Yerushalmi Hagigah II 2.1: 77b–c.

¹⁶ Bialik glosses "for bad culture" as "to the way of sin."

¹⁷ In Kiddushin 39b, which is focused on explicating the commandment, Aher's apostasy is mentioned because it occurred when he happened to have witnessed an incident in which a father asked his son to fulfill the commandment. This should doubly merit long life for the boy, obeying his father and sending the mother bird away from her nest. The son is bitten by a snake and falls to his death. In Yerushalmi Hagigah and in Ruth Rabbah 6.4, Huzpith is Rabbi Judah.

Perhaps because Judaism has typically existed alongside other religions and cultures, Jewish apostates are often understood as having an inappropriate association with other cultures.¹⁸ The Hebrew word for apostate, *'epikoros*, is derived from the Greek term *epikon* and can be translated just as correctly as “Epicurean.” Epicurus’ philosophy about pleasure, the problem of evil, and the purpose of law, though it may prove relevant to an understanding of Aher and Bialik, are beyond the scope of this essay. The American Rabbi Milton Steinberg deals with Greek philosophy in his 1939 fictional biography of Aher, *As a Driven Leaf*. In this essay, however, I will limit the discussion to parallels between Hellenization and Russification (or, more generally, Westernization).

The figure of Aher straddled Jewish and Greek culture. In the rabbinic literature (also included in Bialik’s anthology), Aher continued to associate with rabbi Meir and even discuss the Torah after becoming an apostate—despite the voice from heaven announcing that Aher could never be redeemed or return to the fold. In a broader discussion of the Jewish interest in bygone heretics, David Biale argues: “In the modern cases, these ambivalences found expression in projecting back on heretical figures from history the conflicts of modernity and transforming these heretics into useful building blocks of modern identities” (128). One of the key questions for nineteenth-century Jewish intellectuals was how much to hang on to Jewish tradition and how much to adopt knowledge from other cultures. Regardless of their stated positions on Russification or Westernization, Bialik and his contemporaries were constructing modern identities that would incorporate elements of Jewish and non-Jewish culture. Svetlana Natkovich has shown how ben Avuyah served nineteenth-century Jewish modernizers with a liminal figure whose fragmentary biography they could fill in to reflect their own ideas about the direction modern Jewishness should take, whether warning against his rebellion or identifying with it. Ben Avuyah’s story, once a significant consideration for charting the course for modern Jewish culture, was repressed after this culture had sufficiently institutionalized. The risk of controversy became so great that by the late nineteenth century, “only writers with self-confidence and renown such as Lilienblum and Y. L. G.¹⁹ could permit themselves to touch upon the figure of ben Avuyah” (Natkovich 127). Bialik does not mention ben Avuyah directly in his poems, but rather in his *Sefer ha'aggadah*. Significantly, this collection does not include the Talmud’s more damning stories about ben Avuyah. It does, however, include those that address the apostate rabbi’s uncomfortable cultural hybridity.

¹⁸ There have been other kinds of Jewish apostasy, such as Hasidism and Sabbateanism.

¹⁹ Judah Leib Gordon (1830–1892), a major Hebrew poet of the *Haskole*. A *maskil* who became an early Zionist, Moshe Leyb Lilienblum’s (1843–1910) best-known work might have been his memoir, *Sins of Youth*.

Most relevant to the poems we have read are the tales of Aher's downfall through his exposure to Greek culture. For example, "a Greek tune [never ceased] from his mouth; and at the time when he used to stand up in the study house, many books of heresy dropped from his lap" (54). The "Greek tune" may remind the reader of the "new song" that tempted the students away from the study house in "Alone," and the "books of heresy" might in some *yeshiva* environments have included Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*, which is mentioned in "Hamasmid" as the reason for one student's expulsion from the *yeshiva* (117). Modern Jews could relate to Aher's interest in non-Jewish, secular, and heretical culture. Indeed, this would be one of the themes of Steinberg's novel. For Bialik and others like him, Russian or Western literature and heretical Jewish texts had once been a furtive pleasure. But unlike in the case of ben Avuyah, these "books of heresy" were often Jewish books, and the "new song" might as well be the modern Hebrew poetry to which Bialik devoted his life. Bialik's oeuvre is a series of further heretical texts.

Additionally, Aher himself is blamed for drawing students out of the study house towards more worldly activities:

When he used to go to a schoolhouse and saw children and books before them he used to say: what are these sitting and busying themselves with here? The craft of this one is builder, the craft of this one is carpenter, the craft of this one is painter, the craft of this one is tailor. And because they would hear thus they would lay down their books and go. (54)

This story, though I cannot attend to it more fully here, satisfies the modernizing ideals of both the *Haskole* and the Zionist movement to which Bialik subscribed. More directly, it speaks to Bialik's sense (in "Hamasmid") that Jewish youths were being wasted on futile study in dark corners, and his declaration that "it was not my luck to be lost with you, poor laborers—I departed from your threshold." Bialik and the speakers of his poems do not lay down their books and go to vocational training, but he did leave for a more modern version of intellectual pursuits. The modern Hebrew identity whose creation he helped to facilitate has very much pulled Jews out of the *yeshiva* and into the workplace.²⁰

Yet despite his own protests against *yeshiva* culture, Bialik did not land on the side of ben Avuyah's Hellenization or of modern-day Westernization. He was an indigenizer, who certainly read the Western and Russian literature that was circulating among other modernizing Jews of his time, but ultimately sought—through *Sefer ha'aggadah* and other projects—to build a secular

²⁰ Indeed, the current moves by Israeli secularists to normalize the ultra-Orthodox community through military service, secular education, and increased employment outside the *yeshiva* system, as well as the strong resistance of the ultra-Orthodox to such assimilation, speak to the ongoing relevance of this cultural conflict even within the majority-Jewish citizenry of the State of Israel.

canon of traditional Jewish sources. Thus his affinity for Aher is not entirely ideological, but one of shared experience.

By hinting at this classical story of Jewish apostasy, Bialik draws his own rebelliousness closer into Jewish tradition. A nationalist who did not openly embrace the influence of the non-Jewish literature that he had read, he was not using the figure of ben Avuyah to promote the study of non-Jewish literature. The temptations referenced in "Hamasmid" are mainly temptations of the boys' sensuality. For Bialik, ben Avuyah is a relatable figure from the rabbinic literature, albeit not a role model. Ben Avuyah's departure from the study house and Jewish law was a significant and painful event, as demonstrated by the other rabbis' various attempts at explaining how that great scholar could have learned the Torah so well and yet turn away from its righteousness. In his own work with *Sefer ha'aggadah*, Bialik stood against the literary Westernization that attracted many of his contemporaries. He opted to secularize Jewish literature rather than Judaize world literature.

Even as he sought new ways of preserving Jewish tradition, one of the major discernible themes of Bialik's work was his rupture from it. As a modernizer and Zionist, he facilitated the process by which many more people came to read and even speak Hebrew. Yet this greater readership for Hebrew literature would not share Bialik's intimacy with the traditional Jewish canon. Readers would, therefore, end up celebrating him without being able to relate to the intimacy with tradition that pervades his poetry.

Orthodox Jews, and especially ultra-Orthodox Jews in Israel, the United States, and elsewhere, still study the traditional curriculum in whole or in part. While the study of the Talmud was once reserved for elite males, it is now available across the board to Orthodox boys regardless of aptitude or family wealth, and increasingly to Modern Orthodox girls. Some continue with advanced study as adults. Options for advanced study include the *kollel*, where those men with wealthy or working wives, or a scholarship, can engage in traditional Talmud study full-time. Individuals familiar with the Talmud might identify Bialik's allusion to *shiluah haken*, as well as its association with Aher. They might not, however, read secular Hebrew literature in the first place. Some individuals who receive an Orthodox education end up leaving their communities in pursuit of a secular life. Many of these are, like Bialik, native speakers of Yiddish with some knowledge of a non-Jewish language and many years of Talmud study behind them. If they were to encounter Bialik's work, the emotional and intertextual content of these poems might resonate with them.²¹

²¹ These lapsed Orthodox Jews are commonly called "OTD," or "Off the Derech (way of Torah)." One such blogger uses the pseudonym "Ben Avuyah" to write fiction about his experiences in the *yeshiva*.

The distance between Bialik's poetry and most of his readership in Israel is both linguistic and cultural. While Israeli readers of Bialik are native speakers of Israeli Hebrew, a language derived from that in which the poetry is written, they are not native to the East European Jewish world of Bialik and are estranged from both its dialect and the culture expressed in the poetry. Both the language and the culture were intentionally engineered away from Bialik's as a part of the Hebrew project of which he was a leader (Bialik even attempted to write poetry in the new accent). Thus, the political significance of his poetry overshadows its portrayal of a once-common emotional experience.

Virtually no one reads Bialik's poetry in the accent in which it was written. Read aloud in an Israeli Hebrew accent, the vast majority of Bialik's poetry becomes stripped of its meter and rhythm as well as a portion of its rhymes.²² Dark, brooding vowels become light and snappy, and many diphthongs disappear. When set to music, the lost meter necessitates extra crooning in order to conform to the musical beats.²³

Likewise, the cultural associations built by imagery and intertextuality fail to carry over without distortion. Bialik was educated in a different canon of both Jewish and non-Jewish texts than his Israeli reader. The Jewish literary canon consisted mainly of the Talmud, as well as the Hebrew Bible, liturgy, and other rabbinic writings. For Bialik, it would eventually include nineteenth-century Hebrew literature and new material published during his lifetime. Today, Israeli schools teach some selected materials from the Hebrew Revival (along with Israeli literature written after Bialik's death and the establishment of the State of Israel) and limited traditional texts.²⁴

Bialik's poetry contributed so successfully to the goal of creating modern Hebrew culture that he became a relic of its development. The price of this success was the muffling of the emotional impact of his poetry, which relies so heavily on intertextuality and the shared experiences of *yeshiva* students. Once a painful rite of passage for modern Jewish intellectuals and activists, the experience of rupture from the *yeshiva* is one from which later generations have been estranged. By following Bialik's matrix of mother bird, baby chick, and nest to the ancient apostasy story of Rabbi Elisha ben Avuyah, we see the subtle way in which he connects his generation's shared experience to its shared literary canon.

²² Thus, even Modern Orthodox Israelis who encounter Bialik's poetry in school and can access its intertextuality will be unable to appreciate its sounds if they do not know the Ashkenazi accent.

²³ Listen to, for example, the 2010 CD *'El hameshorer*.

²⁴ While some Russian literature is still read in Israel today, there is a great deal more translated English- and Spanish-language literature and a great deal less Russian poetry (though the circulation of Russian literature has increased due to the most recent wave of Jews arriving from the former Soviet Union). During Bialik's time of synthetic Hebrew literature, intertextuality was a crucial conveyor of meaning. It was the means by which modern Hebrew literature was able to communicate modern ideas without creating a new vocabulary.

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Mandelstam Among Contemporary Poets: Zhdanov, Eremin, Glazova

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Osip Mandelstam, the modernist poet to whom Omry Ronen dedicated a vast portion of his considerable work as a scholar and essayist, seemed an enigmatic poet in need of decoding when, as a graduate student, Ronen participated in Professor Kirill Taranovsky's seminars on Mandelstam at Harvard University. In Professor Ronen's first book on the poet, *An Approach to Mandel'stam*, which was based on his 1976 dissertation and published in 1983, the subtext method advanced by Taranovsky provides many compelling readings of individual poems, including Mandelstam's long masterpieces such as "Grifel'naia oda" (Грифельная ода; Slate Ode). Beginning in the 1970s, semiotics scholars in Moscow and Tartu had published significant, influential, and demanding theoretical essays about Mandelstam and Acmeism;¹ their broader cultural analysis, which also adduced numerous subtexts along the way, found resonance in Jerusalem, where Professor Ronen resided at the time, and beyond, including in the work of Professor Ronen's own students (for example, Nancy Pollak). A further turning point in Mandelstam studies was the appearance in 1987 of Gregory Freidin's book *A Coat of Many Colors*, with its broadly post-structuralist framework for rethinking the cult that had by then grown up around Mandelstam. Remarkably, a body of scholarship that sought to provide clues for understanding an obscure and difficult modernist poet led within a generation to a major scholarly study that aimed to take apart that poet's now well-acknowledged charismatic appeal, indeed his seeming dominance of the broader conversation about what counted as authentic Russian poetry.

I rehearse what is likely a familiar narrative for readers of this volume because many poets emerging in Russia in those years were themselves part of this broader critical conversation or influenced by it. As Sergei Averintsev was to put it, the canonization of Mandelstam had taken place in the lifetime of a single generation ("Tak pochemu zhe"). And so, as I turn to the work of a few of these poets, it makes sense that we recreate the context in which they first

¹ To cite only one instance, canonized during my graduate school days as "the five" (because of its five authors: Levin, Segal, Timenchik, Toporov, and Tsiv'ian); see Levin et al.

read Mandelstam. It is also an appropriate way to pay tribute to Omry Ronen, who was my teacher, and to recognize that his impact was part of a larger picture in which scholarship and poetry were changing dramatically. How the legacy of Mandelstam was absorbed by poets working after the 1970s, when this scholarship was beginning to emerge and when his poetry became somewhat more widely available (the first *Biblioteka poeta* edition of his poems appeared in 1973), is a much larger story than this essay can tell, but I want to contribute to the work of setting forth that narrative—by exploring the consequences of poetic charisma and authority for later poets, and by tracing the pathways of specific rhetorical features of Mandelstam's poems as they led some later poets in their own work.

My argument will revolve around two aspects of Mandelstam's legacy, one having to do with the now firmly held perception of him as a poet whose work exemplifies the supreme examples of metaphorical and verbal intensity. This is by now a familiar way to read Mandelstam, and it bears mention here mostly by way of affirming the presence of lines of cultural continuity that we might well expect to find. The second is perhaps less obvious: it has more to do with Mandelstam's personal myth, with the enduring sense of him as a poet out of sync with his time and as a visionary in understanding his era's fatal flaws. To some extent, I am picking up on Freidin's work in making this particular claim, and on essays about poetry and politics published since by thinkers as different as M. L. Gasparov and J. M. Coetzee. But this sense of Mandelstam as visionary is as significant for a kind of perceptual jaggedness regarding its political elements; it is on the idea of perception that I will focus. This quality of disjuncture in Mandelstam's poetry, I want to suggest, often appears as a phenomenological alertness, a pointedly sensory engagement with the world and thus a weirdly embodied form of consciousness—weird, I note, because we would not normally think of Mandelstam as a poet of the body.

The time-stopping insights into the present, in all its embodied meanings, is, then, the more surprising feature of Mandelstam's legacy that contemporary poets, by their own acts of creation, can teach us to notice. It is well captured in a line of poetry that opens an untitled poem by Sergei Solov'ev that appeared in 2014: «Что там виднеется, Осип Эмильевич, в нашем окне?» (What can one see, Osip Emil'evich, through our window?) (Solov'ev 57). The poem is filled with Mandelstamian motifs (Lamarck and the phrase «ворованный воздух» [stolen air] in the first two lines alone), and one could fill multiple essays about contemporary poetry by tracking down such references and allusions—a scholarly activity that would itself be a kind of return to the subtextual poetics of Taranovsky and his students. I will note repeated motifs, images, and turns of phrase in what follows, but I find Solov'ev's invitation to an imagined Mandelstam to observe the contemporary world most telling in this poem. Consider the very ordinariness of the proposition; indeed, compare it to its own flamboyant antecedent text, Mayakovsky's ap-

peal to Pushkin in “Iubileinoe” (Юбилейное; The Anniversary Poem, 1924). Solov'ev spares us Mayakovsky's bravado because the only drama that matters in his poem is the drama of consciousness. He imagines Mandelstam as a partner in asking what there is to see in the world in which contemporary poets now live. How does the consciousness of that world register in poetry's languages and forms?

That is a question posed in the work of the three poets to whom I now turn. They are chosen as superb poets in their own right, and as exemplars of different modes of metaphorical intensity and self-consciously registering poetic subjectivity. They are Ivan Zhdanov (b. 1948), Mikhail Eremin (b. 1936), and Anna Glazova (b. 1973), listed here in the order I will present them. They represent different generations; indeed, when Eremin was born, Mandelstam was still alive. They pick up different but complementary pieces of Mandelstam's metaphorical compression and verbal intensity. Zhdanov, particularly in his dreamy landscapes and culturally syncretic representations of aesthetic and erotic pleasures, represents a hypostasis of Mandelstam's Hellenic-Crimean poetic world as we find it in *Kamen'* (Камень; Stone, 1913) and *Tristia* (1922). Eremin's compacted figurations of the natural, linguistic, scientific, and architectural worlds, by comparison, draws on the rhetoric and atmosphere of Mandelstam's poems of the 1930s, particularly his “Vos'mistishiia” (Восьмистишия; Octaves) and other eight-line poems written in Voronezh. Glazova, with her characteristically philosophical orientation as a thinker and as a poet, takes up Mandelstam's implicit notions of presence, a phenomenon which is paradoxically most known through metaphors of absence. For all their differences, however, these poets have some rhetorical elements of diction and even tone in common. They are picking up where Mandelstam left off, extending the legacy of his late poetry—its densely compacted metaphors, its ruminating figures for death and decomposition, and its sense that the poem's chronotope is that of eternity.

Ivan Zhdanov

Zhdanov's poetics have been compared to those of Mandelstam, in some cases in passing or in general terms, but there have been few efforts to trace the pattern of a specific image or word cluster.² Just how illuminating the comparison to Mandelstam might be remains in question, in part because the reliance on metonymy in so many of Zhdanov's metaphors may point to a more useful context in the poetic world of Boris Pasternak, particularly in the image-dense

² See Ivanova for passing comparisons to Mandelstam amid a short and very fine account of Zhdanov's poetics; see Shubinskii for a comment on linguistic similarities and an observation that it is the period of *Tristia* that is most pertinent to Zhdanov's poetry, a sense that I share. For a more pointed set of comparisons, see Oborin.

poems of *Sestra moia—zhizn'* (Сестра моя – жизнь; My Sister Life, 1922).³ But one has only to look at the images, sound texture, and diction of nearly any of his poems to sense how pervasive is the engagement with Mandelstam. I am not choosing randomly here, because I have sought a somewhat shorter poem, but this one gives as good an example as nearly any other:

Двери настежь . . .

Лунный серп, затонувший в Море дождей,
задевает углами погибших людей,
безымянных, невозвращенных.
То, что их позабыли, не знают они.
По затерянным селам блуждают огни
и ночами шуршат в телефонах.

Двери настежь, а надо бы их запереть,
да не знают, что некому здесь присмотреть
за покинутой ими вселенной.
И дорога, которой их увели,
так с тех пор и висит, не касаясь земли,—
только лунная пыль по колено.

Между ними и нами не ревность, а ров,
не порывистой немощи смутный покров,
а снотворная скорость забвенья.
Но душа из безвестности вновь говорит,
ореол превращается в серп и горит,
и шатается плач воскресенья.⁴
(Zhdanov, *Vozdukh i veter* 128)

The Doors Are Wide Open . . .

A sickle moon, drowned in a Sea of rainwater
grazes over the slain with its edges,
these nameless ones, never coming back—
do not know they've been forgotten.
Fires traipse through the forsaken villages,
cackle at night over the telephone wires.

³ I have suggested as much in "Mirrors and Metarealists." The emphasis on metonymy in Pasternak is well known from Jakobson. When asked, Zhdanov himself said only that the most important influences on him were the poets of the "avant garde" (Zhdanov, "Otvety").

⁴ Zhdanov's earlier collections, where the poem first appeared, can be very hard to find, and I cite from the more accessible volume; the poem also appears in another easily available collection: Zhdanov, *Fotorobot zapretnogo mira* (Фоторобот запретного мира) 37. There is no precise date: Zhdanov's poems are undated and often reappear in successive collections; judging from its placement in *Vozdukh i veter* (Воздух и ветер; Air and Wind), the poem dates from the 1980s.

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The doors wide open, yet they should have been bolted,
they don't realize there's no one here to look after
the universe they've abandoned.
And the road they were led down
hangs there since, not touching the earth—
just the knee-deep dust of a moon.

Not jealousy between them and us, yet a ditch,
not the indistinct blanket of impetuous impotence,
but the forgetting's soporific speed.
Still a soul speaks once more from obscurity,
the aureole transforms into a sickle and flames,
and the lament of resurrection roams.
(Zhdanov, *The Inconvertible Sky* 23)

The sea of rain in the first line reminds us of another Pasternak connection in Zhdanov (whose poems are often soaked in rain, unlike this increasingly dusty poem; the ternary meter is also reminiscent of Pasternak). But the elegiac imagery of loss and forgetfulness, the surprise of technology to overcome distance, the landscape of sea, earth, ditch, and moon all call Mandelstam's images to mind. His characteristic paronomasia energizes lines such as: «Между ними и нами не ревность, а ров, / не порывистой немощи смутный покров», and the soul speaking in the last stanza out of unknown depths reminds us of the descents to Hades found in several of the *Tristia* poems. But it is the buried horror of Mandelstam's later work that this poem more vividly unearths, the unnamed and unreturned dead whose loss is all the worse because they are forgotten, and because they do not know they are forgotten. Zhdanov seems to mourn not so much Mandelstam, who is, after all, far from forgotten, but those who shared his terrible fate. If the opening stanza seems to offer a historically specific reference, one that is perhaps picked up in the ditch of the last stanza, the rest of the poem retreats into Zhdanov's customary space of eternity, itself a Mandelstamian moon where the clock face reads the time as eternity (and it is to "Нет, не луна, а светлый тсиферблат" [Нет, не луна, а светлый циферблат; No, not the moon, but a bright clock face, 1912] that the moon of Zhdanov's poem likely refers; Mandel'shtam 102). What makes this particular notion of eternity even more unnerving is that the processes of forgetting are speeded up, in a universe abandoned.

Yet the profound loneliness that inevitably results from this metaphysical emptiness, a world of emptiness much like Andrei Platonov's vast fictional spaces, is attenuated in Zhdanov's poem, and in a way that reminds us again of Mandelstam. The sound heard in the end of Zhdanov's first stanza is a nighttime rustling of the telephone. It is a curious image, not of the voices that telephones would bring to the forgotten villages imaged in the stanza; rather, it is as if the wires themselves were rustling in the night's air. Telephones and radios are technologies that can bring the distant other into remarkable prox-

imity in Mandelstam's poetry, and something of that disembodied voice is also in play in this line of Zhdanov's poem.⁵ The possibility of the voice of the other seems, as is often the case in Mandelstam, only to intensify the loneliness exuded by the poem, a loneliness that is all the more overwhelming in Zhdanov's poem because, until its last stanza, it is as if there were no speaker, no subject to take in all of the poem's objects and sounds, but only repeated comments on what is not known, not remembered.⁶

Typically for Zhdanov, the poem conveys both the sense of a vast expanse and the terrifying possibility of enclosure, through the image of doors ajar which gives the poem its title and reappears in line 7 as doors under pressure to be closed, locked down. Then the poem presents an ambiguous reference to a road, one which has made escape possible but hangs in the air, not touching the earth, as if not a road at all, strangely impassible, knee-deep in dust.

Enclosure is one of Zhdanov's great themes, and one of Mandelstam's great terrors. It is the subject of Zhdanov's ironically more expansive prose work entitled "Mnimye prostranstva" (Мнимые пространства; Ephemeral Spaces), which is about the possibilities of hiding and revelation in the space of a niche. A niche is a metaphysical space, Zhdanov notes, a structure where space and time are combined, as if experientially:

Ниша—тайник, стена и не стена, пауза в стене, призрачное пространство. Не надо искать где-нибудь в мироздании место, где пространство и время совмещены в одно—войди в нишу и ты почувствуешь, что это место здесь.

Войди—и ты отождествишься с ней: станешь кирпичом в стене, частью стены. (Zhdanov, *Vozdukh i veter* 38)

A niche is a hiding place, a wall and yet not a wall, a pause in the wall, a spectral space. Don't bother to look out there in the universe for a place where time and space are joined into one—enter into a niche and you will feel that this is the place.

Enter, and you will be at one with it: you become a brick in the wall, a part of the wall.

The space of a niche creates its own time-space halt in his thinking; he pauses to consider the nature of his own fascination. There is no reason to conclude that he found the word in Mandelstam, although two of his poems do contain this word: one is well-known, "Est' tselomudrennye chary" (Есть целомудренные чары; There are chaste charms, 1909), and the other known

⁵ On the radio in early Soviet culture, see Penka, especially Chapter 3 on Mandelstam.

⁶ The telephone also works in this way in the poetry of Mikhail Gronas, whose poems I regret not treating in this essay. See, for example, the two-part poem that begins "On v telefonnoi budke stoit govorit" (Он в телефонной будке стоит говорит; He stands talking in the phone booth) (Gronas 68–69). For a broader history of the telephone in Soviet culture, see Kleberg.

because it was thought a failure, “Как chernyi angel na snegu” (Как черный ангел на снегу; Like a black angel on the snow, [1914?]) (Mandel'shtam 91, 342–43). The latter has a «церковная ниша» (church niche), while in the former a small space also carries an association with divinities: «У тщательно обмытых ниш / [. . .] Я слушаю моих пенатов.» (At their well-washed niches / [. . .] I listen to my Penates.) And it is in the theological context that Zhdanov himself urges us to look for the sources of this image and thus for the explanation of his attribution to this space its powers of transformation. (You enter the small space of a niche, he writes, and you become one with it.)

We do not have to rely on the rather weak connection I just made to Mandelstam's poetry to see the theological context. Zhdanov provides it himself in another text that relies on the image of the niche, the long poem “Nisha i stolp” (Ниша и столп; The Niche and the Pillar). These two architectural spaces might be thought of as simple binary opposites: one a means of enclosure and insertion, the other a projectile stretching out into space; one small, the other vast. But it is instead the pillar that provides us with the theological clue to the meanings of the niche, particularly in a syntactic formula of two nouns connected by “and”: Zhdanov reminds us implicitly of Pavel Florensky's great study “Stolp i utverzhdenie istiny” (Столп и утверждение истины; The Pillar and Ground of the Truth, 1914). In one of the poem's eight stanzas, we find the following highly metaphorical comparison of pillar and niche:

Не тайник, не тюрьма, не гнездо, не мешок, не могила—
это столб наизнанку, прожектор с обратным свеченьем,
западня слепоты, провиденья червячное рыло,
это ниша твоя, горизонт в переулке осеннем.
Не капкан, не доспех и не просто скелет насекомый—
это больше в тебе, чем снаружи, и больше сегодня, чем было.
Ты стоишь на столбе, но не столпник, горящий в объеме,
ты открыт, но не виден, как будто тебя ослепило.
(Zhdanov, *Vozdukh i veter* 107)

Not a hiding place, prison, nest, sack, or grave—
it's a pillar inside out, a projector with light shooting in reverse,
a trap for blindness, the worm hole of foresight,
this is your niche, the horizon at the end of an autumn lane.
Not a trap, or armor or simple insect skeleton—
it's more inside you than out, more at this moment than before.
You stand on the pillar, but not as a stylite, shining fully,
you are uncovered but not seen, as if you were blinded.

To be, as the final quoted line here suggests, at once open and invisible, blinded by the visions that open out to one standing high on that visionary pillar, is of course to be a poet, to be doing the work of world creation that poetry is meant to do. I invoke here a phenomenological orientation to poetry's work advanced by Martin Heidegger and many others reading in his wake, perhaps

no one more radically or, in this case, more pertinently, than Susan Stewart. When Stewart says, in *Poetry and the Fate of the Senses*, that “the poet risks the dangers of silence and darkness,” she is not just making Orpheus the figure for every poet, she is pointing to the benefits to the poetic enterprise of the way that blindness pressures the poet to feel, to touch, to sense a way through the blackness, to “go beyond the confines of material experience and the necessity to express in visual terms the endless play between the senses and abstraction” (256, 257). In what follows, the poetry of Anna Glazova will provide the most condensed and perhaps most powerful instance of this re-imagining of the poet’s sensory porousness, but we will see versions of it in the poetry of Mikhail Eremin as well, and it is to his work that I now turn.

Mikhail Eremin

In many ways, Zhdanov’s images bring us back to the architectural creations of Mandelstam’s *Kamen'*, although the project of Zhdanov’s verse is more consonant with the poetry in and after *Tristia*. But if we turn to a second example, the poetry of Mikhail Eremin, we find poetry that builds much more on the materials and substances of the later work, particularly the botanical and scientific categories of Mandelstam’s poems “Lamarck” (Ламарк; Lamarck) and especially “Vos'mistishiia.” The connection to the latter is more than imagistic, although we must still consider why the images matter.

The form, though, also profoundly links Eremin to Mandelstam, for he is a poet whose entire body of work, with the exception of a very few early poems, consists of eight-line poems.⁷ It is apparent that he has picked up where Mandelstam left off in working with the eight-line poem (Bak), although Eremin himself has said (in a 2008 public reading in St. Petersburg) that definitive influences on his poetic practice in the 1950s were Pasternak and the poets of OBERIU (Babenko). In the 1950s, though, Eremin had yet to settle on his use of the eight-line form, and one might conjecture that in the 1960s and 1970s, when Mandelstam’s texts became more widely available, that model became more apparent and important. And perhaps it is not unimportant that, as Nancy Pollak has noted, Mandelstam’s eight-line poems were themselves “a response to Pasternak” (410).

Consider this example of Eremin’s eight-line poems, taken from the first of his six volumes of poetry to appear in St. Petersburg in the post-Soviet period:

⁷ I write about this aspect of the work, particularly about its significance for an understanding of Eremin’s obsessive use of a single form, in “Eremin, povtor, zagadka.” Some of the formulations offered here to describe his work appear there as well, as does an observation that Eremin’s use of repetition has connections to Mandelstam’s, as it was studied in Ronen, “Leksicheskii povtor.”

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Не одиночествовать, а единствовать
В той непрерывности, в которой
И ворон, в предыдущей жизни бывший враном,
Пьет чье-то око, чувственное некогда,
И Paris quadrifolia—*
Завету протофита верен,
Из праха, вод и неба создает
Свой организм.

1997

*Paris quadrifolia—Вороний глаз четырехлистый.
(Eremin 71)

Not to dwell in loneliness, but at oneness
In that unremitting, in which
The raven, in his previous life a *corbus*,
Also drinks the eye of something that was once sentient,
And Paris quadrifolia,*
True to the behest of the protophyte,
Out of ashes, waters, and sky creates
Its own organism.

1997

*Paris quadrifolia—the four-leaved “raven’s eye”⁸

This untitled poem is typical of Eremin's octaves. It is iambic with varying numbers of feet (from two to six), and while it lacks strict rhyme, it does offer some patterning in the final words (extra syllables in lines 1, 4, and 5, as if comprising a dactylic rhyme). The poem includes a phrase in a foreign language with an explanatory footnote (some of Eremin's poems have such notes, many do not, and many poems explain one linguistic oddity while passing over others in silence). The syntax of the poem is also a kind of Eremin signature: it begins with two infinitives and no discernible grammatical subject, creating an impersonal utterance, even as the point of the poem seems to have to do with a human's perceptions and insights about some element of the natural world. Not all the most common features of Eremin's eight-line poems are present in this example, to be sure—there are no parenthetical comments, which so often mark the poems, and there is neither dedication nor epigraph. Those extensions upwards, like the added footnotes, often give the eight-line poems added space and require us to read the additions as carefully as we read the poem's eight lines. (I am reminded of Professor Ronen's comment, in one of our seminars in the 1970s, that in Akhmatova's poems the dateline was the

⁸ Some of the locutions here are from a forthcoming translation by Alex Cigale, used with his permission. Translating Eremin's note is a challenge, and I've simply rendered the note literally. In English, one might add, the flower is commonly known by different names: true lover's knot, and herb paris.

poem's last line;⁹ Eremin always dates his poems, but the dates function more to mark them as composed and perhaps completed at a point in time, rather than to expand on the poems' themes, or psychological and cultural underpinnings, in the way that Akhmatova's datelines often do.)

So while Eremin supplements the Latin and official name for the plant in the poem with its less formal Russian name, he does not define the poem's other unusual word, протофит (protophyte). Reading the poem requires that we put these two images into alignment, in effect to ask how a protophyte, which is to say a unicellular organism, can exist in the same poem as a plant species whose name points to its four leaves. In other words, the poem asks how to connect the one-ness of the protophyte with the four-fold structure of the Paris quadrifolia. It poses the question of how to get from one to four, and whether a poem could privilege one of these numerical notions at the expense of the other. In fact, the flower's name, Paris quadrifolia, is already an internal struggle over the way that classification involves counting, for the first word, "Paris," refers not to the French city, but to a pair (Kew), which is to say, to the number two. Eremin may be hoping to underplay that allusion, since he capitalizes the plant name as if it referred to the city, but his poem sets out the contrast between one-ness and four-ness, we might say, by asking how both these options take definitive form in terms of the basic unit of binary pairing. Given the status of eight-line poems in Eremin's poetry as his constant, ever-present form, we should also keep in mind how his rhythms of lineation, of internal groupings within the eight-line structure, also often play on the contrasts of groups of two and four, sometimes set off against a line or set of words that stand alone as an instance of one-ness.

The opening line, and thus the poem's premise, is an instance of binary pairing: a grammatical choice of infinitives, where becoming solitary is put aside in favor of becoming a one-cell entity, something entirely reproducible on its own terms, thus the kind of protophyte to be named in line 5. In line 2, the poem suggests doing that in the uninterrupted flow of both nature and language, where a raven drinks from an eye and when the word for raven, in an earlier life, was spelled differently (what is now *voron* was once *vran*). One-ness is created out of a plant whose botanical name mentions its four-leafed form. The berry-like center of the plant, which is its flower, provides the visual equivalent of the eye that is part of the Russian name, вороний глаз (*voronii glaz*; raven's eye). One-ness, we might say, is conjured from this four-ness, visually in the way that the central spherical dot unites the four leaves, and in the way that the blue berry in the center rises up from the leaves, act-

⁹ I cannot date that comment to a specific seminar, but Julie Hansen recalls that Professor Ronen said the same thing in one of her seminars with him in the early 1990s. I do find in my notes from the seminar on Acmeism, offered Fall 1977 at Yale University, attention to the way datelines in Akhmatova were often changed by the poet to get the poem past the censor or to deliberately mislead the reader (notes, seminar with Omry Ronen, 5 Oct. 1977).

ing as the plant's bloom. One-ness is also conjured up by means of language, given the poem's tightly fused diction and sound orchestration. The botanical image shows itself to be deeply true to the semantics of naming—the epithet *верный* (*vernyi*) meaning true or loyal—, which the poem will use semantically, presented in another recombination of the “v / r / n” consonants that give us “*voron*,” meaning raven. This kind of paronomastic transformation is itself true to the poetics of Mandelstam's poetry, particularly the work of the 1930s.

Equally true to its unicellular nature, then, is the flower or the bird that can create its organism as if out of the elements of the universe, the dust, waters, and sky listed in line 7. And the act of creation is one of the poem's deep themes, sharing that preoccupation with Mandelstam's late poetry, including his “*Vos'mistishia*.” One of the most enigmatic phrases in Eremin's poem is the short narration of the raven's activity. After a line that tracks the raven in linguistic terms—what is now *voron* was once *uran*—the poem offers us this claim:

Пьет чье-то око, чувственное некогда,

I reproduce the line in full and in Cyrillic so that we may study its look on the page and notice its rhythm. It is the only line in this iambic poem that allows for an inversion in one of the metrical feet (the first foot, where we expect inversions to happen), and the inversion inevitably draws our attention to the word that starts the line, the verb “drink” (here conjugated: it drinks, or he drinks). Eremin intensifies attention to the first word of the line by the line's sounds, giving us only “o” syllables for the first half of the line. Its short words press us to hear the three stressed “o” sounds and then to realize that even the unstressed syllables here are the same “o” sound. Semantically the line retains some mysteries, although the word *oko* offers us further clues beyond its obvious use in the sound orchestration, because it is a term that also appears in other everyday botanical names: there is an aster known as *voloch'i ochi* (волочьи-очи), a saxifrage known as *tsarskie ochi* (царские очи), a sundew or drosera called *tsarevy ochi* (царевы очи), etc. The poem also suggests, given the look of the Paris quadrifolia, the image of a bird “drinking” in the flower or center of the plant, something more like what we would expect from a hummingbird than a raven. To take in that flower or berry at the plant's center and perhaps carry it elsewhere is also to propagate the plant, which is what the poem will go on to describe, so this reading of the imagery will make a different sense as we keep reading.

There is a further reading we should keep in mind as well, one that is more metapoetical than botanical or avian: we know from Mandelstam's poetry that drinking, with its way of calling attention to the lips and the mouth, was one of his “constant figures for the poetic process” (Pollak 56). As the raven drinks at the eye of the plant, taking in not the substance of the plant itself (Paris quadrifolia is poisonous, in fact), but the sounds of *voron*, *uran*, *voronii*

glaz, etc., what is produced is the stuff of poetry itself. As the organisms of poems are made of sounds, so the organisms of plants, as the poem tells us in its last line, are made of matter, water, and the sunshine that comes from the sky. In that organic metaphor, so beloved of Eremin and found in so many of his poems, we hear as well an echo of Mandelstam, of what was always, to cite but one example, his «Безлиственный, дикий лечебник, / Задачник огромных корней» (Leafless, wild book of cures, / Problem book of enormous roots) (Mandel'shtam 230). The desolation of those particular lines, from Mandelstam's last poem in "Vos'mistishia" (brilliantly analyzed in Pollak 70–84), is what marks Eremin's remarkable difference from his predecessor. Mandelstam's books in that poem are read alone, we recall («Читаю один, без людей»; I read alone, with no people around), which may be the impetus for Eremin's act of resistance in insisting that one ought not to dwell in solitude («Не одиночествовать»). Perhaps only optimism about language itself could propel a poet to write, as Eremin has done, a multitude of eight-line poems, seven books of them as of this writing. He is demonstrating the inexhaustible resources of imagination, research, and language itself.

Anna Glazova

Among the poets to have written about Mandelstam directly, Anna Glazova stands out: she has provided an extensive set of scholarly and theoretical contexts. A translator of Paul Celan, author of essays and a 2008 doctoral dissertation on Celan and Mandelstam, co-editor of a fine volume of essays on *Messianic Thought Outside Theology*, Glazova has also published five volumes of poetry as of this writing. Her understandings of Celan and Mandelstam are so fully intertwined that it would be difficult to claim that one is privileged over the other.

Glazova's poetry and her relationship to the visible world also have something in common with the work of Ivan Zhdanov (to which, to my knowledge, she has never referred), in that both have gained considerable experience as photographers.¹⁰ Her poetry, like Zhdanov's and like that of Arkady Dragomoshchenko (1946–2012),¹¹ can be intensely visual, and understanding her photography, with its images of the natural world and its plays of light, fabric, shadow, and texture, is probably the best way to start understanding her poetry. But the poems are never only visual, just as the photographs have extraordinary tactile qualities.

¹⁰ Zhdanov's photography is found in print in his 2006 book *Vozdukh i veter* and online on his website. Glazova's photographs may be found on her LiveJournal blog (which she ceased updating at the end of 2015), and on Facebook. She published some of them with a short introductory note as "Комната со светом" (Комната со светом; Room with Light).

¹¹ Glazova has written about Dragomoshchenko's photography practice in "The Fluid Image."

MANDELSTAM AMONG CONTEMPORARY POETS

The poems play out the intense experience of our other sensory faculties, as in this poem with its extraordinary mix of physically concrete materials with abstractions:

сплелось из остатков струн—что-то
негодное но целое. сырые
доски, тонкий лак, вообще мастерство
достались кому-то, но звук в снегу не для слуха.

вихрится увиденное,
тяготит грубый напев,
как из скважины брызжет глубокое,
но оно блестит.

—без права голоса, рот,
замкни, запечатай неясность
того, что точно случается неподалёку.
(Glazova, *Dlia zemleroiki* 13)

woven from the remnants of strings—something
useless but whole. damp
boards, thin lacquer, skill generally
fell to someone, but a sound in the snow is not for hearing.

the seen swirls,
weighs on a rude chant,
the deep jets from a well
but it shimmers.

—having no voice, mouth,
lock, seal the vagueness
of that which certainly happens nearby.
(Ciepiela 63)

This poem is typical of Glazova's work in many ways: no title and no capitalization; short poetic lines in a poem that is itself short; the offering of syntactic remnants alongside grammatically complete thoughts, and of concrete nouns used alongside abstractions.¹² Sense experiences are layered onto one another, and the poem's rhetoric is built from elements of metonymy. The syntactic remnants provide a formal analogue to the rhetoric of metonymy: strings and thin lacquered boards suggest a violin or cello in the first stanza, but one whose sound is unheard. A visual phenomenon in the second stanza

¹² This last quality, the juxtaposition of concrete and abstract as strangely equivalent subjects for sentences or agents for action, is also seen powerfully in the poetry of Ol'ga Sedakova (b. 1949), whose work properly belongs in a much larger discussion of post-Mandelstamian poetry. Her work is fully available online and in the superb four-volume set that appeared in 2010. See especially her essay "Proshchal'nye stikhi Mandel'shtama."

also makes an incomplete sensory impression, nothing more than a shimmering. The final stanza urges us to find a way to enfold, contain, make a kind of sealed imprint or lock up a vague entity («неясность») which is nonetheless certainly, firmly close at hand.¹³ That entity could be the very music made in the first two stanzas, a refrain that is coarse (in sound and perhaps in texture, like coarse cloth; the raw, unfinished boards of the first stanza share that quality of coarseness despite their covering with a thin layer of lacquer or polish). Yet if it is sound, it is sound not for the ear («не для слуха») and with no right to be remade in the body, no way to be moved through voice or mouth («без права голоса»). It can only be held, locked down, sealed shut by the mouth ordered to close around it, and enclosed as well as if by the enveloping lines of the poem itself.

More provisional lines than this kind of description would be hard to imagine, and this too is characteristic of Glazova's stirring, suggestive poetry. Perhaps only Dragomoshchenko had the same gift of being able to circle around an image or a phenomenon so carefully and meaningfully, without releasing it into precise description, but Dragomoshchenko's usual tack was through long lines, long poems, a kind of endless circling and backtracking that, in Glazova's work, is reduced to the tiniest gestures, like a stone dropped into a pool of water that shimmers its circles outward only to disappear.

What is Mandelstamian here? Some of the imagery, to be sure; also the mouth that closes around sounds manufactured by the poem's own words, which reminds us of all the references to the mouth and the lips in late Mandelstam; the sense of sound as weighty—that element of weightedness, *тяжесть*,¹⁴ so powerfully felt in “Sestry—tiazhest' i nezhnost'” (Сестры—тяжесть и нежность) (Mandel'shtam 149) and elsewhere; the sense of sound also as woven (as if in the air of communication between sign-language conversationalists in *Egipetskaia marka* [Египетская марка; The Egyptian Stamp]). Somehow someone has made of that sound a form of mastery, as we are star-

¹³ Here Glazova reprises the last stanza of a Paul Celan poem that inspired her more broadly. Celan writes: “—Entmündigte Lippe, melde, / daß etwas geschieht, noch immer, / unweit von dir”; as translated by Pierre Joris, “—Disenfranchised lip, announce, / that something happens, still, / not far from you” (Celan, *Breathturn into Timestead* 22–23). Glazova has translated this poem in *Govori i ty* (Говори и ты; Speak, Too), so one may also find several collocations that are in her Russian poem: «Без права голоса, сообщи, губа, / о том, что нечто еще происходит / неподалеку» (70). The remnant that opens this poem also appears in Glazova's «сплелось из остатков струн», as does the image of a whirlwind that opens the second stanza. I am grateful to the poet for pointing me to this Celan poem as one she was thinking of in composing «сплелось из остатков струн», and I cite her comment with her permission (e-mail communication, 10 Nov. 2015).

¹⁴ Glazova herself comments on the significance of *тяжесть* in Mandelstam's and Celan's poetry. Indeed, she marks it as one of the images and the physical forces (in the sense of gravity, of being held down, drawn to the earth) that deeply linked the two poets. (See Glazova, “Paul Tselan” 109). Elsewhere in that essay, she discusses Celan's translation of “Sestry—tiazhest' i nezhnost'” (Сестры – тяжесть и нежность).

tled to see in the third line, and the imagery of this poem begins to sound like a strange reconfiguration of Mandelstam's great poem about mastery—its music, its silencing, and the sting of its air («Вооруженный зреньем узких ос»; “Vooruzhennyi zren'em uzkikh os,” Mandel'shtam 269).

These are all important elements, but it is the heaviness that most links this poem to the poetics of Mandelstam as Glazova has laid them out, and we should not be surprised that it is a perceptual category, weight, that most fully reveals Glazova's own poetic project. In an explication of what she took to be the crucial connection between the poetic worlds of Mandelstam and Celan, Glazova provides an account that also helps us to understand her own poems more deeply. She writes, “The gravity of the noun makes the time forms in Mandelstam's poetry manifest in their thickened plasticity. This retardation of time marks Mandelstam not so much as a poet of presence but of the present tense and the density of this tense” (“Poetry of Bringing about Presence” 1114). The slowing down of time is what enables Glazova's own poetry of “bringing about presence,” to use her terms. It lets the poet note a sound otherwise not for hearing in the end of the first stanza; lets her see the shimmering that glimmers forth in the end of the middle stanza, despite the depths from which swirls splash up; and it lays the foundation for the certainty asserted in the poem's last line. In each case, these perceptions happen in spite of some other phenomenon or obstacle, and in each case, they occur in the final line of a stanza, the previous lines of which have set forth the circumstances that may have created some impediments to perception. This sense of difficulty, of obstacle, is another hallmark of Glazova's poetry, and while we associate a semantic difficulty with Mandelstam's poetry and know it to have qualities of enigma or riddle, those are also the enigma or riddling qualities associated with poetry itself (as brilliantly studied by Daniel Tiffany and Daniel Heller-Roazen).

In Glazova's case, the difficulties are as if in the resistances of the world to being rendered as poetry. (This in many ways aligns her with a more Heideggerian project, something like the worlding of the world, as he wrote, as poetry's persistent task.) One senses Glazova's productively ambivalent attitude toward the resistances of the poetic medium itself, rather than those resistances inhering in the world, in her refusal to use capitalization for her sentences; the rules of typography and grammar can be ignored, she shows—comprehension is not particularly impeded as a result. Indeed, the sense of flow from one thought to the next, even when punctuation marks provide pauses or separations, makes comprehension easier. Impediments seem to reside instead in the nature of the things to be described: there are phenomena in the world, the poet seems to say, that are not immediately amenable to description, sounds meant not for hearing, mouths with no rightful access to voice, but by that very delay in apprehension—that slowdown in time Glazova had noted in Celan and Mandelstam—these phenomena take on enormous,

dramatic significance. Representing their resistant being is poetry's task. They are all there is, in a sense, like the enormity that fills small spaces in the poetry of Zhdanov.

The mouth that closes over poetry's enunciations is a powerful image in this poem, but elsewhere in her work, Glazova offers forms of more generous embodiment. Here is one such instance, which, I want to suggest, is surprisingly still more Mandelstamian:

когда между рёбер
откроются поры
будь уверен что дышишь
их кожей из-под кожи теплом.

а замкнутся, ты снова один,
но у тех теперь легче дыхание.
(Glazova, *Dlia zemleroiki* 35)

when pores open
between ribs
you can be sure you are breathing
with the beads of sweat on the skin with the heat from under the skin.

when they close and you are alone you are
the lighter in your breath.
(Ciepiela 85)

A poem about breath cannot but bring Mandelstam to mind, and we sense here particularly perhaps the «красное дыханье, гибкий смех» (red breathing, lithe laughter) that closes the poem “Lamarck” (Mandel'shtam 214): like Mandelstam, Glazova describes the quality of breath in the poem's last line, a quality that changes in the course of both poems. But, just as Eremin eased away from the desperate foreboding of Mandelstam's vision, so Glazova lightens the atmosphere of her poem, particularly in this final line. She transposes the litheness of the laughter in Mandelstam's “Lamarck” onto the breath, marking not, as Mandelstam had, the terrible reversed evolution that saw the destruction of culture in that poem, but rather a biological process of pores opening and closing, of warm-blooded persons themselves closing off—not the imagery of locking something down, of sealing it up—in order that the organism might lighten its own load. The heaviness of the earlier poem is lifted, in a sense, and the grammar of imperatives, while still present, shifts to a more consolatory tone. Be sure, says the poet. It is a remarkable response to an implicit command to be on the alert, to be afraid, that marks so much of the poetry of Mandelstam, and of Celan.

The lightness of breath is a quality Glazova explores in her photography. Breath is a way to give tangibility to the quality of lightness, we might say, to suggest a way that an absence—the absence of heaviness—can be expe-

rienced as a presence. In her photographs, Glazova most often registers this light presence as a gauzy or lacy fabric, the texture of which can obscure or stand as backdrop to a still life of flowers, as in the striking image below from November 2011.

Glazova introduced this image as flowers saved from the compost heap, and it conveys well her usual careful arrangement of found materials. This one is particularly effective in its use of dark gauzy textures, found also in other images. One chrysanthemum is shown textured over by the charcoal-colored fabric; one lies slightly crumpled below, its spidery petals leaning out of the gauze curtain. The photograph prompts us to ask whether the two flowers are the same flower, at two different stages in its decomposition. The arrangement seems to do the mental work of showing us how we can think about the flower, its vividness and its fading, its accessibility to vision and its remoteness, and to show it in two stages, as if putting into a single visual image the unfolding of temporality itself. Glazova takes on what Elaine Scarry has called “the filmy substancelessness of mental images” in visual images like these, as she does in her poetry (60).¹⁵ And, as was the case with the multiplication of numerical categories in Eremin’s poem, we are often pressed in Glazova’s work to ask whether we consider something in the singular or plural. With that question in mind, let us return to the poem «когда между ребер».



When Glazova’s poem ends with the observation «ты снова один», is the statement meant as a consolation or a lament? Or, to return to the complexities of one-ness explored in Eremin’s poem, we could ask whether the discovery is a moment of reunification of the speaking subject. Or is it a moment of solitary self-discovery in a world where the advent of easier breathing has been made available as if only by means of some unnamed and invisible other? What does it mean to say that breath has been made possible only by means of the beads of sweat, sweat evaporating from the skin even as the line is written («с кожи»), sweat rising up from underneath the warm skin («из-под кожи теплом») just at the moment before the pores will close? To be alone is to have

¹⁵ Although Scarry’s discussion has more pertinence to Glazova’s representation of flowers in her photography, the passage is worth quoting in its entirety, because it offers instruction on how to read the botanical worlds of both Glazova and Eremin. Scarry writes: “Phenomena in the actual physical world that have those same attributes of transparency or filminess (such as thin curtains, fog, and mist) can be more easily imitated in the mind than can thick or substantive phenomena. The gossamer quality of many flowers [. . .] the thinness and transparency of the petals [. . .] gives them a kinship with the filmy substancelessness of mental images” (59–60).

the pores of the body tighten up. But we know they will not remain closed: the pores are minuscule substitutes for lungs that are expanding and contracting, the lungs that make that light breathing possible.

In the images of breathing, bodily warmth, and the ribs that enclose and protect lungs, I sense an allusion to one of Mandelstam's poems of 1934, written not long after most of the "Vos'mistishiia," a poem dedicated to Mariia Petrovykh: "Masteritsa vinovatykh vzorov" (Мастерица виноватых взоров; Mistress of guilty glances) (Mandel'shtam 236). The gills of fish imaged in that poem swell as oxygen is extracted from water, but the distinguishing marks of the human are warm-bloodedness and the ribs that are tightly enclosed within the body of the addressee. In Glazova's poem, the tenderness of Mandelstam's line «В теплом теле ребрышки худые» (Thin ribs are in the warm body) turns into something quite different, perhaps because her poem pushes back against the intimacy of the love poem.¹⁶ Even femininity is cast aside in the poem, where the speaker addresses herself in the masculine («ты снова один»), as if finding in that mode of address something unmarked, something more purely experiential, essential. There is a notable reversal of gender in the speaker and addressee of "Masteritsa vinovatykh vzorov," however, as well, and Glazova may be absorbing that particular formal feature of Mandelstam's poem, even as she more openly uses its images.

Where does that leave us, as we think about Mandelstam's presence in contemporary Russian poetry? These three examples of Zhdanov, Eremin, and Glazova—poets from three generations writing in rather different poetic forms—suggest a wide range of possibilities for engagement with Mandelstam's legacy. That is, however, a rather bland formulation, one we might as readily make about the legacy of poets as different as Akhmatova, Khlebnikov, Vvedensky, or, for that matter, Pushkin. What makes Mandelstam different, in my view, is his immediacy in terms of both images and perceptual alertness. In other words, he showed poets how to think. As scholars, we are still coming to terms with the consequences of his lessons. Contemporary poets can begin to show us how those lessons were learned by heart, and how they continue to live in verse.

¹⁶ Glazova may be pushing back against one other erotic association for some of the poem's images, particularly the idea of lightness of breath: Ivan Bunin's story "Legkoe dykhanie" (Легкое дыхание; "Light Breathing," 1916), with its fantasy of feminine sensuality, the feminine wish to physically embody all that men can want (I have in mind the last paragraphs, when Olia Meshcherskaia describes the image of the perfect woman she found in a book in her father's library), and early death. As Zholkovskii notes, light breathing is the synecdoche of this heroine, but it is also an image of simultaneous disappearance and preservation in the balance of the material world (308).

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Jakobson, Whorf, and the Fractal Vision of Language

Timothy D. Sergay

Mais il ne faut pas tomber dans l'idée
banale que le langage est un moule . . .
Ferdinand de Saussure

The years in which Roman Jakobson,
I. A. Richards and Benjamin Lee Whorf
were active simultaneously must count
among decisive moments in the history
of the investigation of the human mind.
George Steiner

The linguistic and anthropological notion that native language unconsciously determines, or at least significantly influences, patterns of cognition, culture, and behavior has been given three major labels. The most general and widely used is “linguistic relativity,” which has a “harder,” “stronger” form: “linguistic determinism.” The narrowest of the three is the “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis,” named for the American linguists Edward Sapir (1884–1939) and his remarkable protégé and successor at Yale, Benjamin Lee Whorf (1897–1941), each of them strongly influenced by Sapir’s teacher, Franz Boas (1858–1942).¹ Whorf in particular, who has been by turns credited and blamed for giving this notion its most striking formulations, seems to have cornered the market on the en-

¹ This article expands upon my presentation “Jakobson, Whorf, and ‘the Dogma of Untranslatability,’” given at the international conference “Translation in Russian Contexts: Transcultural, Translingual and Transdisciplinary Points of Departure” at Uppsala University, 2–7 June 2014. For their suggestions and generous responses to inquiries I thank Jeanette Altarriba, Henryk Baran, Alexander Burak, Jean Boase-Beier, Jonas Dovydenas, Patrick Flack, Michael Flier, Diane Nemeč Ignashev, John E. Joseph, Boris Mintseris, Nancy Newman, Henry Pickford, Irina Pohlan, and all my fellow participants of the “Translation in Russian Contexts” conference, as well as Michael Silverstein, Margaret Thomas, Tomas Venclova, and Linda R. Waugh. I am grateful to Miles Crowley and Katherine Crowe of MIT Libraries’ Institute Archives & Special Collections for assistance and permission to examine materials of the Roman O. Jakobson Collection. Translations of Russian secondary sources are mine.

tire topic: an alternative to the term “Sapir-Whorf hypothesis” is often simply “Whorfianism,” while nexes posited between native language and distinctive cognitive patterns are termed “Whorfian effects.” Nietzsche, who wrote of the “constraint of language” and celebrated the aesthetic defiance of its “columbarium” of “worn metaphor,”² is surely not so widely associated as Whorf with speculations on the capacity of language to inhibit or determine patterns of thought. Whorfian thinking—or what is taken for Whorfian thinking—has become a cultural meme in its own right. “Pop” Whorfianism, especially as exemplified in the observation that the Eskimos have numerous words for snow and accordingly *experience* snow with far greater acuteness than do the native speakers of less boreal tongues, seems ubiquitous. (Boas had observed at most four terms and drew no such cognitive conclusions from their number [Introduction 25–26]; see Pullum.) The title track of the English art-pop diva Kate Bush’s album of 2011 is “50 Words for Snow,” which includes both real Inuit and English words for snow along with Bush’s invented ones, all gamely intoned by Stephen Fry. Eric Heisserer’s screenplay for Denis Villeneuve’s science-fiction film *Arrival* (2016), based on Ted Chiang’s novella *Story of Your Life* (1998), cites the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis by name and gives a pivotal role in the plot to a decidedly wayward formulation of it: “if you immerse yourself into a foreign language *you can actually rewire your brain.*” Dystopian and science-fiction works likewise incorporating linguistic relativity or Whorfianism include Ayn Rand’s *Anthem* (1937), George Orwell’s *1984* (1949), Samuel R. Delany’s *Babylon-17* (1966), and Ursula K. Le Guin’s *The Dispossessed* (1974).³ It is not hard to detect Whorfianism implied in considerations of “politically correct” or “incorrect” language, or of Ronald Reagan’s notorious remark to the BBC in October 1985 that the Russian language lacks a “word for freedom.” “If true,” writes Eric Foner, “this exercise in linguistic diplomacy *would have revealed a deep difference between Soviet and American cultures*” (321; italics mine).

² “Constraint of language” is Walter Kaufmann’s translation of *sprachliche Zwänge* from Aphorism 522 (1886–87) of Nietzsche’s *Will to Power*, from which the formulation “prisonhouse of language” entered English (Behler 142–43). Nietzsche’s conceit of language as a columbarium of the “residue” of obligatory worn metaphorical concepts is developed in the essay of 1873 “Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne” (“On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense”).

³ Orwell’s *1984*, with its “Newspeak,” and Rand’s *Anthem* posit dystopian thought control exercised by a ruling class through the coercive extirpation of select lexicon and even personal pronouns. Such notions amount to Whorfianism turned thoroughly on its head, since Whorf himself (like Boas and Sapir) was concerned with the natural, unconscious, and collective development of grammatical “patternment” and “lexation” aimed at optimal adaptation of the given language community to its circumstances (see Joseph, “Sources” 74–75). Any attempts in art or in life at social engineering through “revolutionary” manipulation of language raise issues of “reverse Whorfianism.” On the deployment of a “Sapir-Whorf *anti-hypothesis*” in neologicistic translation solutions, see Avtonomova (215).

And yet, alternating with waves of enthusiasm for Whorf and his work have come “condescension and scorn” (Ellis 60), which Whorf’s defenders regard as founded on misinterpretation: “The sweeping positions commonly attributed to Whorf—all thought is linguistic, or our thinking is completely determined by language—are simply incorrect attributions” (Ellis 61). As Leavitt observes: “Whorf has become both the best-known ethnolinguist outside the field itself and one of the great straw men of the century” (141). When Adam Gopnik reviews the English version of Barbara Cassin’s *Dictionary of Untranslatables* in *The New Yorker*, he identifies “Whorfian relativism” as the baleful “spectre” haunting “every page of the *Dictionary of Untranslatables*—only to be exorcised by the authors, only to return” (37).⁴ Turning to John H. McWhorter’s 2014 critique of Whorfianism, *The Language Hoax: Why the World Looks the Same in Any Language*, Gopnik credits McWhorter with explaining once again “to a general audience why the idea of linguistic relativism is empty. Patiently dissecting a bad idea, McWhorter explains that even the most robust Whorfian effects, like those in color sorting, involve, at most, microsecond differences in doing tasks” (38).⁵

And so Whorf has proved to be a looming but polarizing figure. He has captured the popular imagination (whether for good or ill) and inspired artists and thinkers, and he has also come in for particularly ill-spirited abuse: “the Whorf hypothesis seems to bring out the worst in those who discuss it” (Ellis 57).

But how was Whorf regarded by his contemporary, the Slavic linguist, pioneering structuralist, literary scholar, poet, polymath, and historian of linguistics Roman Jakobson (1896–1982)—“the father of us all,” as he was remembered by one of his many eminent students, Edward Stankiewicz (“Major Moments” 94)? Could it be that Jakobson’s writings, too, were haunted by this same spectre of Whorfianism? Did he, too, exorcise that spectre, only to see it return? Could Whorfian ideas have influenced the ways that Jakobson conceived of translation and delimited the translatable from the untranslatable? Would Jakobson’s attitudes in various texts suggest “weak” Whorfianism, “strong” Whorfianism, or anti-Whorfianism?

The question has evidently not attracted much sustained attention to date by scholars of either Whorf or Jakobson. In order to suggest here the main dimensions of Jakobson’s reception of Whorf,⁶ I will review some essential

⁴ In scholarly literature, the preferred term is not *relativism*, with its implications of utter determinism and the lack of any neutral or universal frame of reference, but *relativity*, after Einsteinian relativity; see Leavitt (11).

⁵ On McWhorter, see Silverstein, “Whorfians.”

⁶ On the reverse question, the possibility of Jakobson’s influence on Whorf, see Lucy (280n3) and Lee. Lee writes: “Lucy (1992a:298n [read 280n3—TDS]), while acknowledging that Whorf’s contribution in terms of theory was innovative, also notes Jakobson’s ‘contemporaneous concern with categories lacking regular overt morphological marking’ and suggests the possibility of a link between Whorf’s work and that of the Prague School. Although

problems in Whorf studies; some general characteristics of Jakobson's regard for his scientific forebears and earliest teachers, including a certain Humboldtian predisposition that he evidently accepted from both Filipp Fortunatov (1848–1914) and Jan Baudouin de Courtenay (1845–1929); Jakobson's specific regard for Boas and Sapir; the circumstances that I believe deprived Jakobson of the chance to meet Whorf face to face in 1941; Jakobson's enthusiasm for the grammatical "patternment" and "sound symbolism" or iconicity of language, especially as expressed in poetry; the related problem of translatability; and another related interest, one that Jakobson shares with the "Boasians," in the unconscious. Since Jakobson—uncharacteristically, perhaps—did not dedicate whole articles or a scholarly obituary to Whorf,⁷ the problem of "Jakobson and Whorf" requires considerable index-combing in Jakobson's *Selected Writings* and other primary sources to collect and analyze his scattered references to Whorf; I will dilate upon a number of these references.

The first difficulty that confronts any writer on "Whorfianism" is its elusive, mercurial, multifaceted nature. Unfortunately for the subsequent history of linguistics, Whorf died before he could produce a well-integrated, systematized, and formal articulation of his theories. The textbook Whorf was planning at the time of his death, to be titled *Language, Thought, and Reality*, the title that Whorf's protégé John B. Carroll adopted for his famous 1956 anthology of Whorf's writings, might have provided such an articulation (see Carroll 23). Of course, given Whorf's religiously ecstatic cast of mind, which is richly manifest in his final article, "Language, Mind, and Reality," published in the Theosophical Society's journal *The Theosophist*, January and April 1941, how fully "scientific" that articulation might have been remains doubtful. John E. Joseph ("Sources" 101–02) has reviewed the Whorf Papers at Yale and concluded that the influence on Whorf exerted by theosophy, Mme. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, "and other brands of mysticism" far outweighs that of the "Herder-Humboldt line" of German Romantic philosophy of language from which the mainstream of linguistic relativity undoubtedly issues.⁸ "In the case

Whorf was in personal contact with Trubetzkoy on the question of Hopi phonemes [. . .], there is no specific evidence in his papers of a broader influence from the Prague School or from Jakobson himself. My own opinion is that the fact that Whorf conceptualized covert categories in terms of his holistic field theory model of neurolinguistic organization suggests that the link to Sapir's thought was primary" (162).

⁷ Jakobson marked the passing of Boas with a published obituary in Czech titled "Fr. Boas, hrdina práce" (Fr. Boas, hero of labor), but did not devote obituaries to either Sapir (d. 1939) or Whorf (d. 1941). Henryk Baran has written very sensitively on Jakobson's practice of scholarly obituary writing.

⁸ "In short, [. . .] there is no mystery about where at least some of the perspectives of Boas, Sapir, and Whorf came from; *the line from Herder to Whorf is unbroken*, though this is not to underrate the importance of intervening changes and revisions in the basic theses involved" (Brown 16; italics mine). Glock locates Hamann, Herder, and von Humboldt, along with German Idealism as a whole ("mainly Hegel") on the *hermeneutic* strand in his three-strand analysis of nineteenth-century German philosophy of language. Nietzsche belongs to the

of Whorf," Joseph writes, "Sapir succeeded in pulling someone of inherently mystical bent into the mainstream scientific fold, suppressing but not suffocating his theosophical interests in language [. . .], which reemerged in a new form after Sapir's death" ("Sources" 75). Leaving aside questions of inherent mysticism and esotericism, defining the strictly linguistic content of the Sapir-Whorf "hypothesis" tends to result in a proliferation of positions. The effort proceeds by juxtaposing numerous *loci classici* in both Sapir's later writings and Whorf's articles written mainly between 1938, the year of his cancer diagnosis and major surgery (Lee xviii2), and his death in 1941; these articles were published mainly in MIT's *Technology Review*.

Scholars sympathetic to Whorf—a circle that includes Jakobson's students Paul Friedrich (1979) and Michael Silverstein—often point out that Whorf himself wrote only of a "linguistic relativity *principle*," never formulating that principle as a hypothesis, as if to propose a program of experimental confirmation of "Whorfian effects" such as was undertaken, as Silverstein summarizes, in "psycholinguistic research in the behaviorist 1950s" ("Whorfianism" 85). Whorf's positions were first named "a Sapir-Whorf *hypothesis*," writes Leavitt (169), by Harry Hoijer at a conference on language in culture in 1954 (Hoijer). It was soon afterward defined in Carroll's 1956 "Introduction" as "a hypothesis that the structure of a human being's language influences the manner in which he understands reality and behaves with respect to it" (23). "However," notes Joseph,

no term can adequately designate what is in fact a very heterogeneous set of ideas and interpretations. "Linguistic relativity principle" would seem to fail on three counts, since what we are talking about is hardly a "principle" any more than it is a "hypothesis," the "relativity" involved is questionable [. . .], and the term's exclusive association with Whorf seems erroneously to marginalize the role of Sapir [. . .]. In the absence of an authoritative definition, the "Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis" has given rise to a range of interpretations that led the philosopher Max Black [. . .] to jest that "an enterprising Ph.D. candidate would have no trouble in producing at least 108 versions of Whorfianism." ("Sources" 71–72)⁹

Silverstein, in a painstaking and ramified exposition, distills Whorfian thinking to three interlocking "themes," all arising from "Whorf's generally Boasian in-

highly diverse *critique-of-language* strand, of which Glock writes: "its interactions, both positively and negatively, are mainly with the hermeneutic strand; yet it shares the quest for clarity with the [Austrian] logical strand" (371). Joseph's "metaphysical garbage" line in his analysis of the immediate sources of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis ("Sources") clearly bears on the critique-of-language strand, as do Russian Futurism and Formalism, in which Jakobson was, of course, intimately involved.

⁹ Joseph cites the philosopher Max Black's article of 1969, "Some Problems with Whorfianism." Black was among the most caustic of Whorf's early critics, and yet he concluded his review of Whorf's *Language, Thought, and Reality*: "Whorf's mistakes are more interesting than the carefully hedged commonplaces of more careful writers" (238).

tellectual milieu," namely, "the network of students and others that had, since 1931, formed around Edward Sapir at Yale," but articulated through Whorf's superb methodological and conceptual mastery of Leonard Bloomfield's *Language* (1933), with its spirit of "born-again Vienna positivism," behaviorism, and philosophic operationalism—a mastery that does not preclude hostility to "various obiter dicta of Bloomfield's outlook" ("Whorfianism" 86–87). Joseph traces Whorf's own "informal" definition of the "linguistic relativity principle" of 1940 to Sapir's address to the Linguistic Society of America of December 1928, "The Status of Linguistics as a Science," "cited in virtually every discussion of the 'hypothesis' as being its primary point of departure." "Human beings," Sapir writes, "do not live in the objective world alone [. . .] but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society [. . .]. [T]he 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group" (Joseph, "Sources" 72). In his article "Linguistics as an Exact Science" (1940), Whorf clearly echoes Sapir's similarly titled address:

[W]hat I have called the 'linguistic relativity principle' [. . .] means, in informal terms, that users of markedly different grammars are pointed by their grammars toward different types of observations and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation, and hence are not equivalent as observers but must arrive at somewhat different views of the world. (Whorf, "Linguistics" 221, qtd. in Joseph, "Sources" 73)

The linking of "linguistic relativity" to language-specific "different *views of the world*," of course, is the critical Humboldtian moment, in which we recognize Humboldt's two "worldview" terms, *Weltansicht* and *Weltanschauung*. (The key text is Humboldt's *Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts*, 1836.) But as early as Sapir's *Language* (1921), as Joseph and others have noted, Sapir had clearly distanced himself from Herder, Humboldt, and Humboldt's follower Heymann Steinthal. For Joseph, the moment that Sapir "changed his mind" on whether language exerts a "shaping force on culture" comes in the summer of 1923, when he reads and very warmly reviews C. K. Ogden's and I. A. Richards's book of that year, *The Meaning of Meaning: A Study of the Influence of Language Upon Thought and of the Science of Symbolism* (Joseph, "Sources" 75). But in Ogden and Richards, the notion that language influences thought arises not from the "Herder-Humboldt" line, but from nineteenth-century analytic philosophy, a line that includes the American pragmatist and semiotician so admired by Jakobson, Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), as well as Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947), the Vienna logical positivists, and Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951). For this line, Joseph writes, "*ordinary languages are grounded in metaphysical presumptions which present an obstacle to rational understanding*"; thus, this line can be

termed “the *metaphysical garbage* view of how language influences thought” (Joseph, “Sources” 76). By contrast,

the Herder-Humboldt line in linguistics [. . .] characterizes language not as a source of obstacles to universal logic, but as the embodiment of a national world-view, a kind of spiritual essence without which a culture cannot be adequately understood. Language is thus what we might call a *magic key*: for the claim or implication is that *studying the language of a people is the way to comprehend their minds or souls* [. . .]. The world-view embodied in a language is seen [. . .] as a positive force, producing national unity in its linguistic but also its cultural and social dimensions. Its only negative aspect is the comparatively small one that no individual can ever fully escape the world-view of his or her native tongue. (Joseph, “Sources” 77–78)

Joseph’s identification of these two opposing but intertwining strands in linguistic-relativistic thought, the “metaphysical garbage” line and the “magic key” line, seems comparable to the major intellectual-historical dichotomy with which John Leavitt operates in his *Linguistic Relativities*, between Enlightenment *universalism* and monadist, Romantic pluralist *essentialism*. In Leavitt’s scheme, the Boasians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries represent a theoretically revolutionary “third option, constructed through the refusal to adopt either of the available thought-forms and through a search for different metaphors” (9). The evidence of Jakobson’s reception of Whorf suggests to me that Jakobson is clearly a member of Leavitt’s Boasian revolutionary line, consistently inspired by Peirce’s famous typology of signs (icon, index, and symbol), and nevertheless consistently sympathetic to the spirit of Joseph’s Humboldtian *magic key*. Jakobson’s views on translatability may be seen to divide likewise according to text type and linguistic function between basically universalist and essentialist positions.

Thanks to his characteristic scientific filial piety and warm collegiality, Jakobson’s writings abound in characterizations of what he admired and adopted from many of his forebears, teachers, and contemporaries. As Mel’chuk observes,

Jakobson, more than any other outstanding contemporary linguist, relies on the accomplishments of his predecessors. From the Stoics and Schoolmen to Charles Sanders Peirce, from the unjustly forgotten Mroziński to Baudouin de Courtenay, from Winteler, Whitney and Sweet to Saussure, Boas, Sapir, Whorf, and Bloomfield—all of the most remarkable precursors of contemporary linguistics have been absorbed into Jakobsonian morphological studies naturally and solidly. (180–81)

Vyacheslav V. Ivanov likewise notes that Jakobson’s writings in the history of linguistics brought to bear on contemporary research the ideas “of many underrated or half-forgotten scholars” (29). In the case of linguistic diversity, clearly Humboldtian concerns figured in the work of two eminent teachers

of the young Jakobson, men whom he regarded as pioneering structuralists—both the Indo-Europeanist Filipp Fortunatov, founder of the Moscow linguistic school, and Baudouin de Courtenay, the Polish founder of the Kazan and Petersburg linguistic schools. Among the signal developments in linguistics at the time of the First International Congress of Slavic Philologists in Prague (6–13 October 1929), Jakobson named “the endeavors towards a synthesis of two schools, one of which had been founded by the Pole Baudouin de Courtenay and the other by the Russian F. F. Fortunatov” (“Romantické všeslovanství—nová slavistika” 711). It is worthwhile to cite in full the extract from the unpublished foreword to a Russian anthology of Jakobson’s works that Jakobson translated and included in his “Acknowledgements and Dedication” to the second volume of his *Selected Writings*, in which he links Fortunatov’s (and his own) pursuit of the “sound shape of language” with a Humboldtian perspective on the interdependence of thought and language:

The Moscow linguistic school, faithful to the precepts of its founder, Filipp Fedorovič Fortunatov, has been destined to elucidate, substantiate, and develop his view that language is not a mere “external cover in regard to the phenomena of thought” and not only a “means for the expression of ready-made ideas” but first and foremost it is “an *implement for thinking*”. Or, according to his boldly deepened formulation, “in a certain respect, the phenomena of language themselves appertain to the phenomena of thought”; and “language as such, when our thoughts are expressed in speech, has its being precisely because it exists itself in our thinking”. The pervasive thesis of Fortunatov’s *General Course in Linguistics* (1902–3) asserts that the chief subject of this science is “neither one single language nor some group of languages but all of human language in its history”. In agreement with the ever timely suggestions of the chapter entitled “The signification of sound shape in language”, it is necessary “*to realize that not only language depends on thinking but thinking, in turn, depends on language.*” We are summoned to realize that our thought uses word sounds as signs, “*signs of something that could not be conceived of by our mind without their mediation.*”—More than ever before one submits to the wise simplicity of those weighty, enchantingly angular lines which do equal justice both to language and to thought in their manifold interwovenness. (Acknowledgements v–vi; italics mine)

Baudouin’s entry “Jazyk i iazyki” (“Language and languages”) in the Brockhaus and Efron encyclopedia affirms a Humboldtian position altogether explicitly:

We recognize the validity of Wilhelm von Humboldt’s claim that “language is a creative organ for thought” (*die Sprache ist das bildende Organ der Gedanken*), but one can accept other claims by this same thinker only with reservations, for instance, the claim that “there are no thoughts without language; human thought is enabled exclusively by language” (*es gibt keine Gedanken ohne Sprache, und das menschliche Denken wird erst durch die Sprache*). [. . .] On the other hand, we may without the slightest reservation agree with Humboldt’s opinion that every language is a worldview (*die Sprache ist eine Weltansicht*) (531)

After tracing various Humboldtian positions adopted by Baudouin over his career, Stankiewicz argues that by 1930 Baudouin had specifically “rejected Humboldt’s idealistic interpretation of the relation of thought and language” (*Baudouin de Courtenay Anthology* 35). But Humboldtian themes nevertheless took their place in Jakobson’s development under the influence of Fortunatov and Baudouin. By the time of *Sound Shape of Language*, Jakobson and Linda Waugh would take a radical position congruent with the second claim by Humboldt, the one that Baudouin had viewed warily in the quotation above:

Inner speech is radically elliptic; the sound shape of words receives a merely fragmentary evocation in our mind, and frequently they totally lose their phonic makeup (“zero *signans*”). However, neither these losses nor the tendency to replace verbal signs by other semiotic units permit us to return to *an assumption of wordless, or even signless, asemiotic thinking*. (*Sound Shape of Language* 82; italics mine)

Thus an interest in precisely the German Romantic, Herder-Humboldt line of thinking on linguistic diversity unites the European and American periods of Jakobson’s biography. Jakobson is something of a Whorfian *avant la lettre*, before his encounter with the American Boasians. Of course, as I note above, Joseph has pointed out the critical distance that Sapir maintained from Herder and Humboldt, and cautioned against E. F. K. Koerner’s identification of a pervasively “Humboldtian ethnolinguistics in North America” (Koerner 175). Joseph stresses that the Boasians in particular, with their anti-Eurocentric program, were quite remote from Humboldt’s concern with “how the intellectual power of cultures is causally correlated with the typology of language structure” (*From Whitney to Chomsky* 73n1). Here, by suggesting that Jakobson acquired an early “Humboldtian predisposition,” I mean only the fundamental “manifold interwovenness,” as Jakobson put it, of language and thought, and the affinity of Humboldtian “inner form,” together with Fortunatov’s *formal meaning* (Jakobson, “Poetry of Grammar” 89)—ideas that Jakobson assimilated during his European years—with Boas’s category of *grammatical meaning*. Jakobson would operate consistently with this category, associating it with Whorf and Sapir, and to some extent with Jeremy Bentham’s *linguistic fictions*, in his writings of the later, American period.¹⁰

¹⁰ Further exploring Jakobson’s creative assimilation of the Boasians over a kind of Humboldtian “underpainting,” as I suggest here, would add a new vector to the impressive intellectual-historical project announced by Patrick Flack of reconsidering “structuralism’s deep, complex and rich roots in nineteenth-century German thought” (2). (Indeed, although both are no doubt rightly regarded as American linguists, both Boas and Sapir were in fact transplanted Germans born in the second half of the nineteenth century.) Flack proposes in his outline to generalize “the approach adopted by Sériot (1999) to a large number of Jakobson’s attested intellectual sources,” including such “reconstructed filiations and conceptual lines” as “the origins of Jakobson’s thought in Humboldt (by following the Potebnja-Steinthal filiation)” and many others (Flack 11–12). Amid the many individuals and groupings that popu-

A face-to-face encounter between Jakobson and Whorf has been implied in scholarship, but is doubtful. The authoritative intellectual-biographical sketch of Jakobson by Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston, “On Language: The Life, Work, and Influence of Roman Jakobson,” first appeared in Jakobson’s *On Language* (1990); it has since been republished in updated form in the Berlin, third edition (2002) of *Selected Writings I: Phonological Studies* and again in a Russian translation by Nataliia Avtonomova in Avtonomova, Baran, and Shchedrina (2017). All versions, in recounting Jakobson’s journey to the United States from Sweden in 1941, include the claim that despite a largely unfriendly initial reception by American structuralists, “[Jakobson] did find friends however—Franz Boas, Benjamin Lee Whorf, and Leonard Bloomfield (see Halle 1988)” (Waugh and Monville-Burston 13). Of course, there is no doubt about Jakobson’s warm friendship with Boas and his veneration of him. Jakobson himself attests to these: “I vividly relive our long conversations on the science of language [. . .] where the great master initiated me into the problems which absorbed him during the last years of his life. [. . .] There is something of Marcus Aurelius [. . .] in Boas’ whole life” (“Franz Boas’ Approach to Language” 477). Michael Silverstein has informed me that “Boas signed for Roman and Svatja [Jakobson’s second wife Svatava Pirková (Rudy 84)—TDS] for their 1941 immigration, and they stayed with him in his Grantwood, New Jersey, house across the Hudson by the 125th Street ferry for several months as his guests. For RJ, Boas was the Marcus Aurelius of linguistics, even in that last eighteen or so months of his life” (p.c., 28 July 2016). There is likewise no doubt of Jakobson’s cordial personal relationship with Leonard Bloomfield (1887–1949), despite serious methodological disagreements over such matters as “mentalism” and the inclusion of semantics in linguistic theory. But Halle, in a collection of Jakobson’s and Bloomfield’s correspondence, mentions neither Boas nor Whorf. Stephen Rudy’s chronology has Jakobson arriving on the *Renmaren* in New York harbor on 4 June 1941 (85). At this time, Whorf would have been dying of cancer in Wethersfield, Connecticut (he died on 26 July). Carroll (21) and Lee describe his illness as long and lingering. Lee notes Whorf’s enduring “the primitive form of radiotherapy available at the time” following a major operation in 1938 (Lee, xviii2). To meet Whorf in person, Jakobson would have had to travel from New York City to Wethersfield that very summer, most likely guided by Boas, to visit Whorf in effect on his deathbed, and no such episode seems to be reflected in any of my, admittedly

late Flack’s proposed “Jakobsonian” model for the genealogy of structuralism, conspicuous gaps seem to have been left for the Boasians and especially for Charles Sanders Peirce, who Jakobson insists “must be regarded as a genuine and bold forerunner of structural linguistics” (“Results of a Joint Conference” 565). One can only agree with Flack that Jakobson’s “function as a communicator, synthesizer and passer of ideas between scholars, disciplines and intellectual traditions” is indeed a crucial one (Flack 2), and that the task of illuminating it is inexhaustible.

selective, readings on both men. That Whorf himself would have continued making trips to New York City during these last weeks to consult his Hopi language informant also seems unlikely. I must conclude that even a single face-to-face encounter between Jakobson and Whorf in America is dubious.¹¹

Jakobson's encounter with Whorf did indeed develop into a friendship, even an alliance, but it was strictly intellectual: we must turn to Jakobson's writings to recover, as far as possible, the development of Jakobson's regard for him. Space will not permit me to reproduce here a table of roughly thirty scattered remarks on Whorf, including extensive quotations, gleaned mostly from Jakobson's *Selected Writings*, but their chronology and frequency can be summarized as follows:

Table 1.

Year	Texts mentioning Whorf (number of mentions, excluding citations and indexes)	Texts
1952	1 (1)	"Results of the Conference of Anthropologists and Linguists" (Lévi-Strauss et al. 66)
1956	1 (4)	"Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb" (<i>SW II</i> : 130–31, 134–35, 140, 145)
1958	3 (3)	"On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (<i>SW II</i> : 262); "The Kazan' School of Polish Linguistics" (<i>SW II</i> : 407); "Linguistics and Poetics" (<i>SW III</i> : 45)
1960	2 (3)	<i>Poeziia grammatiki i grammatika poezii</i> (<i>SW III</i> : 65, 76); "Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry" (<i>SW III</i> : 94)
1962	2 (2)	"Retrospect" (<i>SW I</i> : 658); "Efforts Toward a Means-Ends Model of Language in Interwar Continental Linguistics" (<i>SW II</i> : 525)
1964	1 (1)	"A Sonnet from Sidney's <i>Arcadia</i> " (<i>SW III</i> : 276–77)
1965	1 (1)	"Quest for the Essence of Language" (<i>SW II</i> : 353)
1967	2 (2)	"Linguistics in Relation to Other Sciences" (<i>SW II</i> : 664–65); "Language and Culture" (<i>SW VII</i> : 107–8)
1971	1 (1)	"Retrospect" (<i>SW II</i> : 715–16)

¹¹ Linda Waugh has informed me that she finds this argument persuasive and plans to revise the text accordingly in the event of another republication of her and Monville-Burston's sketch (p.c., 22 Oct. 2017). In a review of Jakobson's *On Language*, Charles Lock voiced similar doubts about a certain "statement" (?) by Halle repeated "unquestioningly" by the editors "that Whorf had been a friend of Jakobson's in his early days in New York (13); as Whorf died in July 1941 this seems unlikely" (21).

Year	Texts mentioning Whorf (number of mentions, excluding citations and indexes)	Texts
1974	1 (2)	"The Twentieth Century in European and American Linguistics: Movements and Continuity" (<i>SW VII</i> : 275–76)
1975–76	1 (1)	"Yeats' 'Sorrow of Love' Through the Years" (co-authored with Stephen Rudy) (<i>SW III</i> : 601)
1977–79	1 (4)	<i>The Sound Shape of Language</i> (Jakobson and Linda R. Waugh 2002: 73, 195–96, 198, 267)
1979	2 (2)	"Einstein and the Science of Language" (<i>SW VII</i> :262); "Consciousness and the Unconscious" (<i>SW VII</i> : 161–62)
1983	1 (1)	<i>Dialogues</i> (with Krystyna Pomorska, 45)

As one might expect, a cluster of mentions between 1956 and 1962 suggests a period of enthusiastic reception of John B. Carroll's 1956 anthology, *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Jakobson's study "Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb" (1956) adopts Whorfian terminology, citing Whorf's "The Hopi Language, Toreva Dialect," a text not reproduced in Carroll; otherwise, Jakobson's citations of Whorf are either identified as selections from Carroll—most frequently Whorf's final essay "Language, Mind, and Reality" (1942)—or mentions of the book *in toto*. Jakobson's papers include a copy of the earlier US State Department collection, *Four Articles on Metalinguistics* (Whorf). This collection reproduced "Science and Linguistics" (1940), "Linguistics as an Exact Science" (1940), and "Languages and Logic" (1941) from *Technology Review* and "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language" (1939) from Spier (1941). Jakobson's copy contains no marginalia, however, beyond two possibly errant vertical lines on page 6, in "Science and Linguistics." Thus it remains in principle uncertain whether Jakobson read this collection before 1956. But it seems likely that if Jakobson *had* read Whorf's writings before the Indiana University Conference of Anthropologists and Linguists, held 21–29 July 1952, where I find records of his earliest comments on Whorf, he would have read them in the 1950 State Department collection.

As Miller notes, independently of Leo Weisgerber (1899–1985) and the German "neo-Humboldtians" of the 1920s and 1930s, "[t]he hypothesis of linguistic relativity was probably introduced to America by Franz Boas, became well known through its formulation by his student Edward Sapir, and was vigorously defended in the writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf" (11).¹² Miller

¹² Leavitt also strictly segregates the neo-Humboldtians from the Boasians, stressing that the

cites C. F. Voegelin and Tomas Sebeok's remarks to the 1952 Conference of Anthropologists and Linguists; the topic had become known in the United States as "metalinguistics" or *Weltanschauung* theory (Lévi-Strauss et al. 23). The "Results" volume for that conference (Lévi-Strauss et al.) gives considerable attention to linguistic relativity and Whorf in particular, but not in Jakobson's own contributions. Jakobson's chapter of the "Results" volume mentions neither. In the extensive discussions tape-recorded by John R. Mickey and summarized by Dell Hymes (see Lévi-Strauss et al. vi), Jakobson's comments on Whorf are decidedly wary—and decidedly puzzling:

Jakobson also said *one must be very cautious with the application of Whorf's principles*. Of course, formal categories in language, when obligatory, reinforce elements in everyday experience. These things are not at all projected into our logical operations. These categories do not, for example, say certain words must denote act, or action, or goal. Their whole func[tion] is the distribution of entities as if denoting one or the other. The same word, "walk", may occur in all three positions. They influence strongly operations where emphasis is on the expression, the language. *A beautiful example where a supposed logical category is actually on the level of language is St. Anselm's ontological proof of the existence of God. It is impossible to translate this into Russian, and the argument thus disappears from Russian theology.* (Lévi-Strauss et al. 66; italics mine)

As with Fortunatov's "formal meanings," the terms *formal* and *grammatical* appear closely related to one another and to linguistic *patternment*. Jakobson's remark here that formal categories "are not at all projected into our logical operations" is consistent with the conclusion of his earlier reflections on Boas's "magnificent" introduction to his 1911 *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, in which Boas transcended "Indo-European imperialism" (Jakobson, "Franz Boas' Approach" 478, 481):

Thus linguistic forms exert an influence not only upon poetry and beliefs but even upon speculative thought and "scientific views, which are apparently based entirely on conscious reasoning". In itself *every grammatical pattern, a "civilized" as much as a "primitive" one, is in permanent conflict with logical reasoning*, but nevertheless every language is at the same time "sufficiently pliable" to any terminological needs of culture [. . .]. Thus "it is not justifiable to consider languages as hindering or favoring cultural development." (Jakobson, "Franz Boas' Approach" 482–83; italics mine)

The notion of "permanent conflict" between "every grammatical pattern" and "logical reasoning" suggests Joseph's "metaphysical garbage" line, which in later years Jakobson would not emphasize. But how to interpret Jakobson's matter-

former were truly "essentialist" in outlook, that is, tending to affirm the inescapability of the world picture (*Weltbild*) of the native language and hence to affirm fundamental untranslatability (154–64).

of-fact remark at the conference that Anselm's *Proslogion* is simply untranslatable into Russian and therefore never enters Russian theology? What has happened in the years between 1943 and 1952 to Jakobson's deeply Boasian affirmation, one of a series of such affirmations in his writings, of *essential cognitive (conceptual) translatability*, his affirmation that "every language is [. . .] 'sufficiently pliable' to *any terminological needs* of culture"? Regarding insuperable difficulties faced by translators of Anselm's Latin into Russian, I have so far found no references to this problem in secondary sources. The Russian translation of the *Proslogion* by I. V. Kupreeva published in 1995 contains substantial commentary, for instance, on the polysemy of *cogitare* and *intellegere* (337n37), but no hints at supposedly insuperable difficulties of translation. Semyon Frank's essay of 1930 on the ontological argument, with its careful review of linguistic difficulties in both Anselm and Descartes, would seem to dispel claims that the *Proslogion* never entered Russian theology for linguistic reasons. In any case, during the 1952 conference David Bidney evidently objected: "Jakobson has done injustice to the concept of the ontological proof, which has a long history in philosophy. It should be treated on its merits as an argument, even though rejected" (Lévi-Strauss et al. 66).

By the summer of 1943, Jakobson had certainly come to appreciate Boas himself and had responded sensitively to his death at the age of 84 on 21 December 1942, but evidently he had yet to adopt Boas's great professional regard for Whorf. Silverstein has stressed the significance of that regard precisely because Whorf's academic detractors have so frequently labelled Whorf a mere popularizer and amateur linguist, a chemist and fire-prevention engineer for the Hartford Insurance Company with an armchair interest in Amerindian languages and eccentric, theosophic, and transcendental ideas about the interrelations of language and thought. Reviewing Whorf's innovative distinction of "*overt (phenotypic) categories* and *covert (or cryptotypic) categories*" in Whorf's article "Grammatical Categories," Silverstein notes that although

the original, posthumous publication date was 1945 (in *Language*), editorial footnotes in both the original and reprinted editions give 1937 as the date of writing, which was done "at the request of Franz Boas," with a view to publication in *IJAL*. This is of importance primarily to show the priority of Whorf's position as linguistic analyst and theorist with fully respected professional credentials, in the light of which all his late popularizations must be read. ("Language Structure" 198, 235n5)

But as he wrote "Franz Boas' Approach to Language," Jakobson reflected that Boas, William D. Whitney, who had died fifty years earlier, and Sapir, who had died aged 55 on 4 February 1939, were "*the three great men* lost by American linguistics," whose work "was equally essential in descriptive and comparative linguistics" (483; italics mine). The three—not the four: not Whorf. Whorf had died two years earlier aged only 44, but it was only Sapir's death that Ja-

kobson now proposed commemorating “by the sad Kwakiutl verb *wibālisEm* ‘to perish without reaching the end’” (“Franz Boas’ Approach” 483). It was, of course, the deaths of the leading American Boasians—Sapir, Whorf, and Boas himself—between 1939 and 1942 that surely constituted a striking loss of “three great men” in rapid succession in American linguistics. After about 1960, it would be difficult to imagine Jakobson excluding Whorf from any “short list” of great American linguists that included Boas and Sapir. In 1974, for instance, Jakobson reflects: “In America the science of language produced several remarkable, prominent, internationally influential thinkers—to mention only some of those who are no longer with us, Whitney, Peirce, Boas, Sapir, Bloomfield, Whorf” (“The Twentieth Century” 277).

It is precisely on the topic of translatability that Jakobson has come to be widely linked with Whorf—as an ideological *opponent* to a “strong” or “determinist” version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that would imply untranslatability. McWhorter notes that even Whorf’s adherents reject the notion that the “verbal categories” of a language compulsively restrict its native speakers to experiencing and expressing only the phenomena “marked” and processed by those categories. McWhorter writes: “It is typical—seemingly almost required—to quote founding linguist Roman Jakobson, whose verdict was that ‘languages differ essentially in what they *must* convey and not in what they *may* convey’” (xvii, citing Jakobson, “On Linguistic Aspects” 264).¹³ This observation of language-specific obligatory grammatical categories is, of course, adopted here explicitly from Boas (“Language” 132–33). In the essay in which he affirms this Boasian position, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation,” “certainly the single most quoted essay in the translation studies literature” (Stecconi 157), Jakobson rejects the “dogma of untranslatability” in explicit connection with Whorf, invoking Boas:

Both the practice and the theory of translation abound with intricacies, and from time to time attempts are made to sever the Gordian knot by proclaiming the dogma of untranslatability. “Mr. Everyman, the natural logician”, vividly imagined by B. L. Whorf, is supposed to have arrived at the following bit of reasoning: “Facts are unlike to speakers whose language background provides for unlike formulation of them” [Whorf, “Languages and Logic” 235]. In the first years of the Russian revolution there were fanatic visionaries who argued in Soviet periodicals for a radical revision of traditional language and particularly for the weeding out of such misleading expressions as “sunrise” or “sunset”. Yet we still use this Ptolemaic imagery without implying a rejection of Copernican doctrine, and we can easily transform our customary talk about the rising and setting sun into a picture of the earth’s rotation simply because any sign is translatable into a sign in which it appears to us more fully developed and precise [. . .]. All cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language. Whenever there is a deficiency, terminology can be qualified

¹³ See, for example, Malmkjær 348.

and amplified by loanwords or loan-translations, by neologisms or semantic shifts, and, finally, by circumlocutions [. . .]. No lack of grammatical devices in the language translated into makes impossible a literal translation of the entire conceptual information contained in the original. (Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects" 262–63)

The formulation "any sign is translatable into a sign in which it appears to us more fully developed and precise" is an invocation of Peirce (who goes unmentioned here) and is critical for Jakobson's thinking on meaning. In his "A Few Remarks on Peirce," Jakobson writes:

One of the most felicitous, brilliant ideas which general linguistics and semiotics gained from the American thinker is *his definition of meaning as "the translation of a sign into another system of signs"* (4.127 [in Peirce's *Collected Papers* 1–8, —TDS]). How many fruitless discussions about mentalism and anti-mentalism would be avoided if one approached the notion of meaning in terms of translation, which no mentalist and no behaviorist could reject. The problem of translation is indeed fundamental in Peirce's view and can and must be utilized systematically. (251, italics mine; cf. Jakobson, "Metalanguage" 117)

Jakobson regards *translatability* as effectively synonymous with *intelligibility*, citing with approval the Stoics' characterization of the signified (σημαινόμενον) "as 'intelligible' (νοητὸν) or, to use a more linguistic designation, 'translatable'" ("Quest" 345).¹⁴ This Boasian-Peircean outlook, merged, perhaps, with Jakobson's favorite axiom of Whorf's, "the very essence of linguistics is the quest for meaning" (e.g., Jakobson, "Retrospect" 1962: 658, citing Whorf, "A Linguistic Consideration" 79), implies that Jakobsonian linguistics is nearly always concerned, in effect, with translation, whether or not the creation of an interlinguistic translation is directly at issue.

But has Jakobson's invocation of crucial Boasian and Peircean axioms in this famous passage opposed and defeated Whorf? Should Whorf's "vivid imagination," which has created "Mr. Everyman, the natural logician," be associated with the absurd, misguided linguistic ambitions of early Soviet "fanatic visionaries"? It certainly appears so. It appears that Jakobson is rhetorically grouping Whorf and Whorf's stand-in, Mr. Everyman, with such fanatic visionaries, and that his bringing Boasian thinking to bear against their "visionary" position is an example of "applying Whorf's principles very cautiously," as he recommended at the 1952 conference. Thus Guy Deutscher proposes superseding the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which he defines along essentialist or determinist lines as "the assumption that languages limit their speakers' ability to express or understand concepts" (150) with a "Boas-Jakobson prin-

¹⁴ This Peircean outlook on Jakobson's part seems to me effectively shared by Mikhail Gasparov and Irina Podgaetskaia's approach to verse translation difficulty, in which cognitive "recountability" (*pereskazuemost'*) and translatability (*perevodimost'*) are mutually implied and nearly synonymous. See Sergei (Sergay).

ciple": "If different languages influence their speakers' minds in varying ways, this is not because of what each language allows people to think but rather because of the kinds of information each language habitually obliges people to think *about*" (Deutscher 152). And yet this new principle is precisely parallel to Whorf's own "informal" definition of his "linguistic relativity principle" ("Linguistics" 221), reviewed above. Both Sapir and Whorf would surely have *agreed* with this "Boas-Jakobson principle." Leavitt, in reviewing this maneuver by Deutscher, likewise points out that in effect Deutscher has proposed misleadingly dividing the Boasians against themselves: "It will be evident in what follows that I read Sapir and Whorf, on the contrary, as *developing implications of Boas's program*" (220n3; italics mine). Whorf's contention is that the very fact of Boasian obligatory grammatical categorization of experience leads native speakers of "markedly different grammars," through unavoidable force of linguistic-cognitive habit, through a kind of *pressure* experienced unconsciously, to "arrive at somewhat different views of the world" ("Linguistics" 221). That is why, at length, "facts are unlike" to them: not *insuperably* unlike, not *unrecognizable* as elements of common experience, not so unlike as not to admit of interlinguistic accommodation through lexical and syntactical means, exactly as Jakobson proposes, but simply unlike. Whorf terms the process of grammatically informed interlinguistic accommodation *calibration*, inspired clearly by Sapir and Boas. Scholars sympathetic to Whorf lay particular stress on Whorfian calibration, which underwrites the Boasian affirmation of conceptual, referential translatability. It is clear that Jakobson ultimately recognizes all of this, and that his refutation of the revolutionary lexical interventionist aims of early Soviet "fanatic visionaries" in our passage is not directed, as if by association, against Whorf.

Or, perhaps it would be better to argue that Jakobson's refutation is not *properly* directed against Whorf, or against Whorf's "Mr. Everyman, the natural logician." Mr. Everyman is, I would argue, no dunce, no "rude mechanical" in Whorf's linguistic drama. For Whorf—if not, perhaps, for Jakobson at this point—the characterization "natural logician" is by no means an ironical disparagement. *Natural* in Whorf's rhetoric here does not emphasize lack of proper, rigorous schooling, and need not recall the archaic sense of *natural*, a person with an innate mental deficiency (cf. "a natural idiot"). Mr. Everyman's logic is *natural* in that it originates in "a type of syntax natural to Mr. Everyman's daily use of the western Indo-European languages" (Whorf, "Languages and Logic" 238). The fact that "[t]he point of view of linguistic relativity *changes Mr. Everyman's dictum*" and "he *now reasons: 'Facts are unlike...'*" (Whorf, "Languages and Logic" 235; italics mine) is optimistic with respect to the possibilities of translation and intercultural communication. Ordinary speakers, nonlinguists, even lifelong monolinguals, endowed with normal intelligence can be made aware of linguistic-cognitive divergences between their own languages and another person's and so can come to appreciate a "picture of

the world” at variance with their own. Such ordinary speakers can be made conscious of their normally unconscious linguistic-conceptual biases and so overcome them enough to enter into a process of interlinguistic calibration. The parallel to the overcoming of neurosis through Freudian psychoanalysis of its unconscious origins is clear and seems consistent with the then-current interest in the unconscious.¹⁵

Such calibration, in Silverstein’s linguistics, is linked to both Boas and Whorf: “This is the Boasian or Whorfian idea of the ‘calibration’ of languages one with respect to another *modulo* a universal grammar or space of possible categorial systems” (“Translation, Transduction, Transformation” 96n6; see also Leavitt 113–32). The term *calibration* itself originates in this frequently quoted passage by Whorf: “We are thus introduced to a new principle of relativity, which holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe, unless their linguistic backgrounds are similar, *or can in some way be calibrated*” (“Science and Linguistics” 214; italics mine). But it is not difficult to see Whorf drawing here on a passage in Sapir’s essay of 1924, “The Grammarian and His Language,” a passage that, characteristically for the Boasians, affirms at once both the possibility and the difficulty of translation, drawing analogies from mathematics and geometry:

The world of linguistic forms, held within the framework of a given language, is a complete system of reference, very much as a number system is a complete system of quantitative reference or as a set of geometrical axes of coordinates is a complete system of reference to all points of a given space. The mathematical analogy is by no means as fanciful as it appears to be. To pass from one language to another is psychologically parallel to passing from one geometrical system of reference to another. The environing world which is referred to is the same for either language; the world of points is the same in either frame of reference. But the formal method of approach to the expressed item of experience, as to the given point of space, is so different that the resulting feeling of orientation can be the same neither in the two languages nor in the two frames of reference. Entirely distinct, or at least measurably distinct, *formal adjustments have to be made* and these differences have their psychological correlates. (Sapir, “Grammarian” 153; italics mine)

The possible scale of the cognitive gulfs between disparate “worlds of linguistic forms” to be bridged by such calibration, the degree to which a linguisti-

¹⁵ Whorf depicts a likewise optimistic scenario for second language acquisition under cognizance of linguistic relativity in similar Freudian psychoanalytic terms, including the suggestion of overcoming the learner-analysand’s *resistance*: “If [an English-speaking youth embarking on French lessons] is so fortunate as to have his elementary French taught by a theoretic linguist, he first has the patterns of the English formula explained in such a way that they become semiconscious, with the result that *they lose the binding power over him which custom has given them*, though they remain automatic as far as English is concerned. Then he acquires the French patterns *without inner opposition*, and the time for attaining command of the language is cut to a fraction” (“Linguistics” 225; italics mine).

cally informed, multilingual mind can free itself of the linguistic-conceptual biases of its native language—these interrelated questions occupied all the Boasians. In pursuing them, the Boasians gravitated toward universals, toward Silverstein’s “universal grammar or space of categorial systems” (“Translation, Transduction, Transformation” 96n6), not essentialism, not determinism and untranslatability. As Leavitt observes: “The Boasians were on the lookout for general frames that would facilitate such calibration, whether these were phonetic [. . .] or perceptual” (149). Jakobson asks in “Poetry of Grammar”: “How far can scientific thought overcome the pressure of grammatical patterns?” (89), in a passage that Caton concludes “more or less reiterates” the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (242). Indeed, Jakobson is reiterating here the very question Boas posed in “Language and Culture”:

It is another question in how far the categories of grammar and the general classification of experience may control thought [. . .]. There is little doubt that thought is thus directed in various channels [. . .]. I should not be inclined to overestimate this influence because devices for expressing [various ideas] are ever-present, and may rise into idiomatic use. In this sense, we may say that language exerts a limited influence on culture. (181–83, cited in Leavitt 129)

Thus it would seem that between “Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (written in 1958) and “Linguistics and Poetics” (first presented in the spring of 1958), Jakobson adopts the two senior Boasians’ regard for Whorf. He comes to embrace Whorf’s perspective and contributions fully, with no hint of the ambiguity, irony, or reservations of his earlier remarks, as the author of brilliant technical terms (e.g., *status*, *annexes*, *allophone*, *cryptotype*, *patternment* vs. *lexation*), as a fellow investigator of sound symbolism, and as a conceptual ally of Einstein, who had himself asked in his radio broadcast of 1941 “to what extent the same language meant the same mentality” (Jakobson, “Einstein” 262).¹⁶

The Boasians themselves, and thereafter scholars sympathetic to them, such as Leavitt and Friedrich, found that it was in the artistic or poetic use of language and the question of its translatability that considerations of linguistic relativity acquire their greatest pertinence and persuasiveness. Leavitt sum-

¹⁶ Charles Lock’s review of Jakobson’s *On Language* is one of the few linguistic sources I have located that address Jakobson’s overall relationship to Whorf. Lock concludes: “[Jakobson’s] references to Whorf are routine citations until about 1965 [. . .]. But in the last fifteen years of Jakobson’s life Whorf is treated not merely as an authority on American Indian languages, but as an ally in a common cause”—the cause being “the culmination of Jakobson’s life-long struggle against the three axioms of Saussure,” namely, the arbitrariness of the signifier, the opposition of synchrony and diachrony, and the linearity of the “semiotic chain” (21, 18). For Lock, that culmination took the form of Jakobson’s final monograph (with Linda Waugh) on the iconicity of language, the “speculative and transgressive” *Sound Shape of Language* (21). Setting aside Lock’s emphasis on Jakobson’s reckoning with Saussure, my own findings concur with his, except that I believe that Jakobson’s warmer embrace of Whorf’s work begins at about 1960, not 1965, for the reasons indicated.

marizes: “If poetic language makes all levels of a language resonate (Jakobson 1960), then, as Diderot, Humboldt, and Sapir believed, it is through poetic language that the specificity of a language is most intensely rendered” (202).¹⁷ Caton identifies Jakobson as “one of the first in contemporary linguistics to have taken the [Sapir-Whorf] hypothesis in this new direction—that is, away from the problem of reference and cognition to that of poetics and ‘poetic signification’” (242). He quotes Jakobson’s crucial position “that grammatical concepts—or in Fortunatov’s pointed nomenclature ‘formal meanings’—find their widest application in poetry as the most formalized manifestation of language” (Caton 242, citing Jakobson, “Poetry of Grammar” 89). But Sapir was already puzzling over the paradoxes of literary translation in the context of linguistic-relativity dynamics as early as 1921. In *Language*, Sapir writes:

The literature fashioned out of the form and substance of a language has the color and the texture of its matrix. The literary artist may never be conscious of just how he is hindered or helped or otherwise guided by the matrix, but when it is a question of translating his work into another language, the nature of the original matrix manifests itself at once. All his effects have been calculated, or intuitively felt, with reference to the formal “genius” of his own language; they cannot be carried over without loss or modification. [Benedetto] Croce is therefore perfectly right in saying that a work of literary art can never be translated. *Nevertheless literature does get itself translated, sometimes with astonishing adequacy.* This brings up the question whether in the art of literature there are not intertwined two distinct kinds or levels of art—a generalized, non-linguistic art, which can be transferred without loss into an alien linguistic medium, and a specifically linguistic art that is not transferable. I believe the distinction is entirely valid, though we never get the two levels pure in practice. Literature moves in language as a medium, but that medium comprises two layers, the latent content of language—our intuitive record of experience—and the particular conformation of a given language—the specific how of our record of experience. Literature that draws its sustenance mainly—never entirely—from the lower level, say a play of Shakespeare’s, is translatable without too great a loss of character. If it moves in the upper rather than in the lower level—a fair example is a lyric of Swinburne’s—it is as good as untranslatable. Both types of literary expression may be great or mediocre. (237–38; italics mine)

Sapir continues in this vein in the famous passage from his paper of December 1928, “The Status of Linguistics as a Science,” where, as Friedrich emphasizes, he turns from his “*distinct worlds*” statement immediately to a consideration of poetry:

¹⁷ On the resonance of “all levels of a language” in poetry, Leavitt here summarizes Jakobson’s “Linguistics and Poetics” as a whole; cf. Jakobson’s remarks against “any bias of phonetic isolationism”: “Any attempts to confine such poetic conventions as meters, alliteration, or rhyme to the sound level are speculative reasonings without any empirical justification” (Jakobson, “Linguistics and Poetics” 38).

The understanding of a simple poem, for instance, involves not merely an understanding of the single words in their average significance, but a full comprehension of the whole life of the community as it is mirrored in the words, or as it is suggested by their overtones. Even comparatively simple acts of perception are very much more at the mercy of the social patterns called words than we might suppose. (Sapir, "Status of Linguistics" 162; cf. Friedrich 479–80 and Leavitt 138–40)

Sapir's "two-level" or "two-tier" model, in which, as Friedrich notes, Sapir "differentiated adequately between poetic language and scientific-referential language" (480), seems evident in Jakobson's famous reckoning with translatability in "Linguistic Aspects of Translation." Jakobson had indeed quoted the first passage from Sapir's *Language* with warm approval in his study of 1953, "The Kernel of Comparative Slavic Literature" (64). Having established, invoking Boas, the translatability of "the entire *conceptual information* contained in the original" (Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects" 263), as we saw above, Jakobson proceeds to proclaim the untranslatability of poetry:

The pun, or to use a more erudite and perhaps more precise term—paronomasia, reigns over poetic art, and whether its rule is absolute or limited, *poetry by definition is untranslatable*. Only creative transposition is possible: either intralingual transposition—from one poetic shape into another, or interlingual transposition—from one language into another, or finally intersemiotic transposition—from one system of signs into another (from verbal art into music, dance, cinema, or painting). (Jakobson, "On Linguistic Aspects" 266; italics mine)

Here we have a terminological difficulty in Jakobson's theory of translation as a whole. The crucial distinction between the operations termed *translation* and *transposition* is not fully established. The three varieties of *creative transposition* offered here are, of course, the very same as in Jakobson's famous tripartite scheme of "three kinds of *translation*," defined earlier in the essay (261; italics mine), and it is far from clear how and why a "creative interlingual transposition" must be found less satisfactory than a "translation proper" (266). What is a priori deficient about transposition compared to translation remains unclear. *Musical* transposition, after all, a transposition between keys, suggests a very high degree of self-identity for the composition being transposed. But Jakobson's main distinction between text types that do and do not admit of "translation proper" is nevertheless clear and familiar. Texts in which Jakobson's "referential function" ("orientation toward the referent [. . .] toward the context") is dominant admit of translation; those in which the "poetic function" ("orientation towards the message itself") is dominant do not (Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics" 22, 25). Wherever we detect paronomasia—the grammatical and acoustic smoke that rises in any text from even a momentary ignition of poetry—translation fails and yields immediately to transposition.

Text types dominated by the poetic function are formed of Sapir's "matrix" or "particular conformation" of a given natural language. Sapir's *conformation*, of course, is very close here to Jakobson's favorite Whorfian term *patternment*. For such texts, language has the nature of Joseph's "magic key." Thomas Winner lucidly summarizes Jakobson's resulting "aesthetic semiotics":

Because the aesthetic sign is autonomous and self-oriented, the receiver's attention is attracted to the construction of the sign or sign text. Hence the aesthetic sign, in contrast to signs having other dominant functions, has a maximum dependence on grammar. In its cognitive function, language is minimally dependent on grammatical pattern, since the definition of our experience stands in complementary relation to metalinguistic operations. The cognitive level of language must admit a recoding interpretation, that is, a translation, since metalinguistically untranslatable cognitive data are a contradiction in terms. But when language expresses a dominant aesthetic function, both metalinguistic and inter-linguistic translation become inadequate, for now formal grammatical categories carry a high semantic import [. . .]. Hence the greater difficulty of translating aesthetic texts, and the near impossibility of translating lyric poetry, where the grammatical categories are especially weighty, and where Jakobson's later metaphor of the "poetry of grammar and the grammar of poetry" is thus particularly applicable. (270)

Jakobson explicitly reaffirms the two-level model of translatability in "Language and Culture" (the title repeats that of Boas), this time invoking "the inquisitive linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf" with a proviso against "narrowly isolationist doctrines" (107–08), against the insular essentialism, often ascribed to Whorf, that Leavitt assigns instead to the "sealed-language worlds" of Weisgerber and the neo-Humboldtians (179). By 1967, Jakobson is a confirmed defender of Whorf against facile charges of "hard" linguistic determinism. In a second text of that year, this one titled after both Sapir and Whorf, "Linguistics in Relation to Other Sciences," he summarizes the case with great conviction:

Whorf's acute search hints at a tangled and creative interplay between the array of our grammatical concepts and our habitual, subliminal, mythological and poetic imagery, but without authorizing as to imply some foremost compulsory relation between this verbal pattern and our purely ideational operations or to derive our system of grammatical categories from an ancestral world-view. (665)

Jakobson has become at length quite haunted by the spectre of Whorf—and there will be no exorcism. Through his powerful, lapidary statements of solidarity with Whorf in the 1960s and thereafter, Jakobson seems to have done everything in his power to prevent his own Boasian views of translatability from being adduced against Whorf—although, as we have seen, they *were*—by Whorf's numerous detractors. Thus, Jakobson's typology of translation operations, based on linguistic function and hence on text type, is anticipated

by Sapir. More broadly, the “magic key” vision of poetic language entailed in Jakobson’s model of translation appears distinctly Boasian, and as Jakobson turns from grammatical categorization to the acoustic “underthought of poetry” (Jakobson, “Retrospect” 1981: 783), to the problem of sound symbolism—distinctly Whorfian.

Explicating the subtle, even subliminal, support lent to the semantic, rhetorical, and emotional force of poetic texts by both their “figures of grammar” and their “figures of sound” is, of course, central to Jakobson’s practice as an analyst of verse. Jakobson adopts the terms “figure of grammar” and “figure of sound,” along with “the *inscape* of poetry,” from Gerard Manley Hopkins, who, like Peirce and the Boasians, largely defined the “Anglo-American influence” on Jakobson’s American period (Jakobson, “Poetry of Grammar” and “Retrospect” 1981: 783). But Hopkins is in effect underwritten by Whorf, to whose authority Jakobson appeals immediately upon embarking on his analysis of Yeats’s “Sorrow of Love” with Stephen Rudy: “The poet’s emphasis on pattern reminds one of Benjamin Lee Whorf, the penetrating linguist who realized that ‘the “patternment” aspect of language always overrides and controls the “lexation” or name-giving aspect” (“Yeats’ ‘Sorrow of Love’” 601). The appeal to the authority of Whorf continues as Jakobson turns from largely “categorical” (grammatical and syntactical) analyses to focus on sound symbolism with Waugh in their co-authored study *The Sound Shape of Language*: “The role of sound symbolism in our mental life found an original and penetrating interpreter in Benjamin Lee Whorf” (195). As in the essay on Yeats, Jakobson draws here especially on the most expansively visionary and theosophic of Whorf’s essays, the final one, “Language, Mind, and Reality” (1956), in which, as we have seen, Joseph detects Whorf’s spirit liberated by the death of his mentor, Sapir, from the scholarly discipline Sapir had imposed on it. The final essay does, indeed, seem to anticipate the psychedelic and Eastern religious mystical searches of such figures as Aldous Huxley, Alan Watts, Timothy Leary, Ram Dass, and others, as if the deep appreciation of “exotic” languages might serve as the “magic key” to William Blake’s (and Huxley’s) “doors of perception.”¹⁸ This implied speculative epistemological promise may well be a factor in the popular appeal of Whorf.¹⁹ As Lock observes, enlisting Vyacheslav V. Ivanov, *The Sound Shape of Language* is itself daring, speculative, even perplexing; the authors are unafraid, as Ivanov notes, “to talk about the magic powers of language” (22–23). In analyzing Jakobson’s rhetoric in

¹⁸ See, for instance, such classics of the mid-century “Zen boom” as Aldous Huxley’s *The Doors of Perception* (1954), Alan Watts’s recorded lectures *Out of Your Mind* (first published 1998), Timothy Leary’s *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1964), and the memoir of Ram Dass, *Be Here Now* (1978).

¹⁹ Other factors in the popular appeal of Whorfianism, such as post-World War I “propaganda anxiety,” are perceptively explored by Joseph in “The Popular (Mis)interpretations of Whorf and Chomsky.”

Sound Shape and earlier texts on the problem of sound symbolism, Arby Ted Siraki finds that Jakobson's citations of Mallarmé, Jespersen, and Whorf rather tendentiously favor Jakobson's own implicit view that "iconic" associations of sound and meaning in language are "natural" and in fact universal, independent of language. Indeed, after long quotations of Whorf's "Languages and Logic," Jakobson and Waugh remark: "It would be difficult to present more pointedly the link and competition between the mere building-block use of the phonemes and the *universal feeling-content*, 'basically alike for all persons'" (196, citing Whorf's "Language, Mind, and Reality"; italics mine). The crucial quotation from Whorf, for both Lock and Siraki, reads:

[L]anguage, through lexation, has made the speaker more acutely conscious of certain dim psychic sensations; it has actually produced awareness on lower planes than its own: *a power of the nature of magic*. There is a *yogic* [NB: not *logic*—TDS] mastery in the power of language to remain independent of lower-psyche facts, to override them, now point them up, now toss them out of the picture, to mold the nuances of words to its own rule, whether the psychic ring of the sounds fits or not. If the sounds fit, the psychic quality of the sounds is increased, and this can be noticed by the layman. If the sounds do not fit, the psychic quality changes to accord with the linguistic meaning, no matter how incongruous with the sounds, and this is not noticed by the layman. (Jakobson and Waugh 196, citing Whorf, "Language, Mind, and Reality" 267; italics mine; cf. Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics" 45)

This "magical" and genuinely intriguing claim is, indeed, logically vulnerable in that it is perfectly unfalsifiable. Sounds either "fit" or they do not, and for Whorf, either scenario confirms the claim. Where "the sounds fit," that is, where semantics concur with the "dim," "lower-order" psychical associations, say, of acute vowels with light, as in the Russian *den'* ("day") (Siraki 345), then the lexeme's "psychic ring" is loud and clear, confirming the existence of those associations. But where "the sounds do *not* fit," then this demonstrates something no less impressive: the power of language to override lower-psyche facts, a power of which the layman remains unaware. The pursuit of such sound symbolism at all levels in verse analysis, we might recall, was the grounds on which Jakobson's fellow Russian Formalist Boris Eikhenbaum parted company with him methodologically by the early 1920s. Eikhenbaum objected to Jakobson's and Andrei Bely's insistence on the acoustic redoubling of semantics (see Sergay 198–99, 205–6). Peter Barry has termed the pursuit of acoustic redoubling "the enactment fallacy," referring directly to such "founding texts" for this practice as Jakobson's and Lévi-Strauss's analysis of Baudelaire's "Les Chats" (Barry 104).²⁰ Barry's arguments, directed also at I. A. Richards and the New Criticism, are strong and merit attention to this day.

²⁰ Andrei Fyodorov in effect maintained this "enactment fallacy" line of criticism in successive editions of his *Foundations of the General Theory of Translation (Linguistic Aspects)*. It seems

But our concern here is not the critique of Jakobson's "poetry of grammar" and "sound symbolist" practices, but rather their frank and acknowledged Whorfianism. Jakobson's verse analytic practice by the 1960s is itself essentially a development of Whorfianism, seeking in the most granular grammatical and acoustic "patterment" of poetry a continuation of the semantic, expressive force of not only the given text, but also its "host language" as a whole, exactly as a fractal design remains self-congruent at any possible magnification. *Every level resonates*, as Leavitt put it; every level bears the design. Whorf himself in his final essay, "Language, Mind, and Reality," as Jakobson observed, was intensely interested in the "algebraic" and "geometric" nature of language: "The author discusses the abstract 'designs of sentence structure' as opposed to 'individual sentences' and to the vocabulary, which is a 'somewhat rudimentary and not self-sufficient part' of the linguistic order, and envisages 'a "geometry" of form principles characteristic of each language'" (Jakobson, "Poetry of Grammar" 94, citing Whorf, "Language, Mind, and Reality" 257; cf. Jakobson, "Quest" 353). It seems likely that Whorf would have regarded fractals as an inviting metaphor for his linguistic theories, in which the "patterment" of *an entire language* conditions and expresses the semantic force of its distinctive worldview, but without imprisoning cognition utterly within that view, without forbidding travel between the cognitive and expressive system of one language and that of another. One of Whorf's own characterizations of linguistic patterment already suggests the nature of fractal designs: "The mathematical sciences require exact measurement, but what linguistics requires is, rather, exact 'patterment,'—*an exactness of relation irrespective of dimensions*. Quantity, dimension, magnitude are metaphors since they do not properly belong in this spaceless, relational world" ("Linguistics" 231; italics mine). Jakobson thus finds in Whorf a congenial spirit, unconventional and visionary, a fellow artist and fellow explorer, like all the Boasians, of both the visible and the subliminal, unconscious, chthonic, and mythological strata of linguistic structure. They were the great American "fractalists" of language of the twentieth century. "Fractalism" seems to characterize the picture they shared of the intricate linguistic machinery of mental life.

highly likely that Fyodorov has Jakobson in mind when he cites among the grounds often adduced for the untranslatability of literature, especially poetry, "an exaggerated estimate of the role of the discrete formal element, a metaphysical view of the literary work as an aggregate of elements, each supposedly endowed with significance in its own right" (43).

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Nabokov's First English-Language Novel in the Context of the Anglo-American Prose of His Contemporaries

Irena Ronen

Nabokov wrote *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* in 1941, when he began to look for a new linguistic venue as a writer. By that time Nabokov had established himself as a prominent Russian novelist, short story writer, and poet. The transition to writing in English was not easy, even though Nabokov's childhood and years in Cambridge had helped prepare him to enter the world of English literature. In order to understand better to what degree Nabokov's first English-language novel was akin to English prose of that period, I will discuss three novels: Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927), Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* (1951), and Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). Of these three works, only Wilder's novel appeared before the publication of *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* (RLSK, 1941), while the other two were written afterwards. This essay focuses, therefore, not on mutual influences of these works, which would be limited, but rather on certain themes and variations which Nabokov shared with these three writers.

There are disagreements regarding the merits of RLSK. Edmund Wilson, Nabokov's close friend and literary supporter for many years, considered it to be his best English novel (Karlinsky 21). On the other hand most critics, such as Andrew Field (*Nabokov: His Life in Art* 26), Leona Toker (17), and the author himself, held a different opinion.¹ J. B. Sisson remarked that "both Nabokov's and Field's opinions seem to have prevailed, and this novel is neglected in

¹ In the foreword to his Russian version of his memoir *Other Shores*, Nabokov underrates his first English novel (Nabokov, *Sobranie sochinenii* 144). Field would eventually modify his view, saying that Nabokov's negative judgment of RLSK was "unduly harsh" (VN, *The Life and Art of Vladimir Nabokov* 214). One can find the latest and rather humorous example of pointing out Nabokov's "imperfections" ("endearingly clumsy English") in Finck.

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many studies of Nabokov's fiction" (634). Regardless of the standing of *RLSK* in comparison with his established English masterpieces, this novel marks not only Nabokov's entrance into the world of Anglo-American literature, but a step in his unique contribution to the cultural heritage of world literature.

The narrator of *RLSK*, who uses only his initial, V., is the half-brother of a recently deceased famous writer, Sebastian Knight. V. decides to write a biography of his brother. He meets with those who knew Sebastian well and makes extraordinary efforts to find Sebastian's mysterious lover. V. is determined to delve into the real life of Sebastian, to create a portrait of an exceptionally gifted, elusive, and deeply melancholy man. Estranged from Sebastian when he was alive, V. hopes through his research and writing to reconnect with his brother and to unravel the hidden patterns of his brother's art and of his fate.

Thornton Wilder's *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* is mentioned in *RLSK* as one of the books on Sebastian's bookshelf (39).² The core of Wilder's book, as the author-narrator recounts at the novel's opening, is based on the work of a Franciscan monk from northern Italy, Brother Juniper. The novel deals with the five victims of the collapse of the bridge of San Luis Rey in Peru in 1714. Brother Juniper, who happened to be in Peru at the time and witnessed the accident, takes upon himself an inquiry "into the secret lives of those five persons" (Wilder, *The Bridge* 5). It takes Brother Juniper six years of persistent work to collect all the necessary facts and testimonies in one enormous book. The finished book was then pronounced heretical by the Inquisition, and Brother Juniper was burned alongside it in the great square in Lima.

Although the collapse of the bridge of San Luis Rey was in Brother Juniper's eyes a sheer act of God, he felt compelled to determine "why did this happen to *those* five people? If there were any plan in the universe at all, if there were any pattern in a human life, surely it could be discovered mysteriously latent in those lives so suddenly cut off. Either we live by accident and die by accident, or we live by plan and die by plan" (5).

Nabokov evidently shared Wilder's interest in destiny and randomness. This is apparent in his early tales "A Matter of Chance" and "Details of a Sunset," and subsequently in some of his major stories, "The Return of Chorb" and "Spring in Fialta," and in his novel *The Gift*. In his works written in English, the themes of fate and chance reoccur most frequently, creating a leitmotiv in Nabokov's English prose. When in 1972 Nabokov was asked about the theme of his latest novel *Transparent Things*, Nabokov replied, "Its theme is merely a beyond-the-cypress inquiry into a tangle of random destinies" (Nabokov, *Strong Opinions* 195–96).

² Nabokov used the name Thornton for the image of Russian émigré writer and Nobel Prize recipient Shipogradov ("ship" [шип] meaning thorn, and "grad" [град] meaning town) in his novel *Look at the Harlequins* (O. Ronen, "Istoricheskii modernism" 249). It is noteworthy that Nabokov taught a course on Western literature at Harvard in Spring 1952, following Thornton Wilder, who had taught the same course a year before.

Sebastian's novel entitled "Success," as though referring to Nabokov's Russian novel *Dar* (The Gift), deals with "the methods of human fate" (93), and at its center is an inquiry into a meeting of two lovers, which appears accidental:

And all the magic and force of his art, wrote V. about Sebastian, the author of the novel, are summoned in order to discover the exact way in which two lines of life were made to come into contact,—the whole book indeed being but a glorious gamble on causalities, or, if you prefer, the probing of the aetiological secret of aleatory occurrences (94)

In preparation for his book, Sebastian collects and examines a lot of possibilities, working with the assumption that "the author is able to discover anything he may want to know about his characters" (92). In planning his own book about Sebastian, V. becomes aware that he "would have to undertake an immense amount of research, bringing up his life bit by bit" (31). This same diligent approach is used by Brother Juniper in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. He catalogues thousands of little facts and anecdotes about the secret lives of the five who perished in the accident; "he seemed to be pursued by the fear that in omitting the slightest detail he might lose some guiding hint" (108).

An inquiry into human fate is not the only thematic thread connecting Nabokov and Wilder; another is that of psychological transformation, or what Nikolai Gumilev described in one of his poems, *Pamiat'* (Память; Memory), as «меняем души, не тела» ("our souls change, not our bodies"). The characters in Wilder's book undergo transformation, even metamorphosis, something similar to the dramatic experience that happens to Sebastian Knight's brother at the end of the novel.³

The first victim of the accident in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* that we encounter, Doña María, the Marquesa de Montemayor, undergoes a drastic change because of the separation from someone she loved dearly. After her only daughter left for Spain, the Marquesa started writing letters to her. Her letters become "one of the monuments of Spanish literature" (11). In her everyday life, the Marquesa was an unsightly, untidy, elderly woman with a stutter, who drank heavily. Yet her admiration and unrequited affection for her beautiful daughter led Doña Maria to transform herself from an object of ridicule into a brilliant writer: "Doña Maria would have invented her genius had she not been born with it, so necessary was it to her love that she attract the attention, perhaps the admiration, of her distant child" (14).

Thus in Wilder's novel we can recognize motives and means akin to those in *RLSK*: an attempt to discover the real, secret life of a deceased person (or persons), and the inquiries undertaken to achieve that goal by Brother Juniper

³ It is worth mentioning that *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* can be read as a skillfully told parable about a spiritual, religious transformation. The actress Camila Perichole is the only person in the novel who in some manner affected the lives of all five victims of the accident, and she is one who emerges a reformed sinner.

and *RLSK*'s narrator V. Moreover, both novels portray inexperienced writers who begin writing in order to connect with someone aloof or distant – a daughter or a brother, even a deceased one.

The theme of a complex relationship between brothers connects Nabokov's and Wilder novels. Both writers also had brothers that they had lost. Wilder had a twin brother who died at birth. Nabokov had a brother, Sergei, who would die four years after the publication of *RLSK* in a German concentration camp to which he was transported for being a homosexual.⁴ Brotherly love is the theme of a chapter entitled "Esteban" in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. The identical brothers in Wilder's novel were so close that "love is inadequate to describe the tacit almost ashamed oneness of these brothers" (45). Their unity excluded any other relationships or attachments until tragic love set them apart. The story in the "Esteban" chapter emphasizes telepathy as a common occurrence in the brothers' lives. When one of them was on his way home, the other was always aware of it, even while still several streets away (45). Similarly in *RLSK*, V. claims that he has "inner knowledge" of his brother's character, despite their past distance:

I knew for certain that in such or such a case I should have acted just as he had. Once I happened to see two brothers, tennis champions, matched against one another, their strokes were totally different, and one of the two was far, far better than the other; but the general rhythm of their motions as they swept all over the court was exactly the same, so that had it been possible to draft both systems two identical designs would have appeared. (31–32)

At the thematic center of *RLSK* is the brothers' relationship and the metamorphosis of V., an ordinary person lacking any creative spark, into an author. Some scholars posit that his abilities and inspirations may be guided and suggest that the book V. writes may be even "dictated" by Sebastian. Vladimir Alexandrov, for example, proposes that V.'s "entire biographical enterprise, was patterned or directed by his deceased half-brother" (146).⁵ From the very beginning the fraternal love was one-sided. Sebastian completely ignored his younger half-brother while they lived together in their parents' home, whereas V. tried desperately to get Sebastian's attention, even to the point of mischief, as he explains: "this I do not because I want to annoy him, but merely as a

⁴ According to his biographer Brian Boyd, Nabokov thought that his brother Sergei was safe until one day he had a nightmare about Sergei in a concentration camp. The next day he received a letter from his other brother, Kirill, telling him that Sergei had died in a concentration camp. Boyd adds: "Nabokov had spoken rather harshly of his brother in recent years. Now he was appalled at Sergey's death, filled with admiration at his courageous outspokenness, and mortified that it was too late to make amends" (*Vladimir Nabokov* 88–89).

⁵ According to some scholars, Sebastian may not have had a brother (just as it appears in Mr. Goodman's biography), because speaking of his father, V. calls him "my father" and not "our father" as one would expect (Sisson 635). A counter-argument can be found in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, where Countess Mary, talking to her brother about their father, says "mon père."

wistful and vain attempt to make him notice my existence" (14). In a way, V's writing a biography of Sebastian is an attempt to justify his own existence. Toward the end of the novel, Sebastian's personality seems to take over V., not in the sinister manner akin to a struggle between Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (another book from Sebastian's collection), but through the process of metempsychosis, or reincarnation of the soul through longing for someone.

The brothers are very different. One is a celebrated writer; the other is a shy admirer of his talent. V. knows Sebastian's books so well that it seems as though he had written them himself (201). However V's brother's superiority and aloofness on the one hand, and his own shy, quiet admiration on the other, keep them apart. Sebastian sees his half-brother as belonging to "the obvious and the ordinary" world which he had disregarded for so long (183). Only as death approaches does Sebastian realize that this plain, shy, unremarkable brother of his was the only person likely to come to his sickbed. Sebastian's attitude toward V. undergoes a change consistent with his new outlook: "I find,' he writes to his brother, 'a poetic solace in the obvious and the ordinary which for some reason or other I had overlooked in the course of my life'" (183). V., on the other hand, has never lost his interest in and attachment to Sebastian, even though there were times when he had envied his brother's fame (179). After Sebastian's passing, he feels the urgent need to find out more about his celebrated brother's life, to pay tribute to Sebastian by writing his biography and perhaps to close the gap felt between them while Sebastian was alive. Rushing to Sebastian's deathbed, V. had been hoping for some kind of extraordinary revelation from his all-knowing brother, "some momentous truth" Sebastian would impart to him before dying (200). Yet when he finally reaches a dying man (whom he mistakes for Sebastian), all thoughts of "absolute truth" lose their importance in an overwhelming feeling of love and compassion. "The strange dream I had had, the belief in some momentous truth he would impart to me before dying – now seemed vague, abstract, as if it had been drowned in some warm flow of simpler, more human emotion in the wave of love I felt for the man who was sleeping beyond that half-opened door" (200–201). V's longing for his half-brother eventually leads to a deep spiritual change, a change that would close the gap between the half-brothers and make them one.

The twins in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, unlike the brothers in Nabokov's novel, are extremely close from the very beginning; they can hardly imagine life without one another. When separation befalls, followed by the death of one brother, the other suffers a breakdown. Both authors, Nabokov and Wilder, explore the theme of transmigration of the soul from brother to brother. In *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, Esteban, overwhelmed by guilt and loneliness, begins to identify with his deceased brother.⁶ In Nabokov's novel a similar

⁶ There is an anagrammatic correlation between the names Sebastian and Esteban.

theme, of metempsychosis, is developed in a more subtle and sophisticated manner:

the soul is but a manner of being – not a constant state [. . .] any soul may be yours, if you find and follow its undulations. The hereafter may be the full ability of consciously living in any chosen soul, in any number of souls, all of them unconscious of their interchangeable burden [. . .] I am Sebastian, or Sebastian is I, or perhaps we both are someone whom neither of us knows (203).⁷

Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* also reflects some convergence with *RLSK* on the intertwined themes of psychological or even spiritual transformation and communion between the living and the departed. The narrator and protagonist of Greene's novel is Maurice Bendrix, who is a writer as well. At the beginning of his love affair with Sarah Miles, he is more interested in the life of her husband, a civil servant whom he wants to make a character in his new novel. The character is supposed to be an ordinary, plain man; he is considered important, "but important as an elephant is important, from the size of his department" (Greene 10). There is a trace of arrogance and inhumanity in Maurice's treatment of others. Similarly, in *RLSK*, Sebastian, working on his last unfinished book, is searching for a character who appears to be the parody of an everyman. Sebastian collects photographs of an unknown person whom he calls Mr. H. The photographs show Mr. H. at various stages of his life. Going through them, V. sees an unpleasant, almost repulsive man, "a rather repellent bulldog type of man" (38). In Sebastian's attitude towards others (his brother, his schoolmate, and his lover), one can notice the same trace of indifference (and almost cruelty in the case of his girlfriend Clare), and just as in Greene's novel, this writer eventually changes his attitude drastically. After Sarah's death in *The End of the Affair*, Maurice, previously fully preoccupied with himself, discovers a sense of compassion toward Sarah's husband and his former rival, whom he now views as a man devastated by the loss of his wife. As we have seen, Sebastian's outlook changes as well, especially

⁷ One wonders if Nabokov was familiar with Guy de Maupassant's *Le Docteur Heraclius* *Gloss*, first published in *La Revue de Paris* in 1921. It is a sarcastic tale of a man, a "wise man" according to those around him, who in his pursuit of true knowledge comes upon a manuscript that makes him a believer in metempsychosis. He manages to convince himself that in one of his previous incarnations he was Pythagoras: "Pythagore, c'est moi." Locked in an asylum, Heraclius meets his double, a man who insists that he is the author of the manuscript on metempsychosis; he was Pythagoras and underwent numerous incarnations, from philosopher to poet to mariner: "J'ai été successivement Philosophe, Architecte, Soldat, Laboureur, Moine, Géomètre, Médecin, Poète et Marin" (Maupassant 29). Maupassant treats the transmigration of souls with light irony, while Nabokov interprets the same theme in a much more serious manner: "I feel as if I were impersonating him on a lighted stage, with the people he knew coming and going – the dim figures of the few friends he had, the scholar, and the poet, and the painter, – smoothly and noiselessly paying their graceful tribute [. . .] try as I may, I cannot get out of my part: Sebastian's mask clings to my face, the likeness will not be washed off" (*RLSK* 203). Maupassant is mentioned earlier in *RLSK* (169).

concerning his half-brother, whom he ignored for so long: "I should like for example to ask you what you have been doing during all these years, and to tell you about myself," he writes in his last letter (*RLSK* 183).

There is also a strange affinity between these two novels in the theme of communion between the living and the departed. Greene's novel, of course, contains a powerful religious note. Maurice, bitter and full of hate after Sarah's death, is about to seduce a young woman:

I felt the guilt before I had committed the crime, the crime of drawing the innocent into my own maze [. . .] I implored Sarah, "Get me out of this, get me out of it, for her sake, not mine. [. . .] I don't want to begin it all again and injure her." At that moment an elderly woman approaches him: "Are you Mr. Bendrix?" she asked. "Yes." "Sarah told me," she began, and while she hesitated a wild hope came to me that she had a message to deliver; that the dead could speak. (159)

The woman is Sarah's mother, and her arrival at that critical moment brings an end to Maurice's inner struggle. It has been observed by Nabokov scholars that V. often feels his deceased brother's presence.⁸ The most striking example of Sebastian's involvement is V.'s encounter with Mr. Silbermann, right as V. is about give up his quest to find Sebastian's last love. The sudden, miraculous appearance of this small, talkative man and former detective puts V. back on track in his search. In this way Mr. Silbermann acts as messenger from V.'s dead brother, just as Sarah's mother does in *The End of the Affair*. This parallel reflects a certain spiritual kinship between Nabokov and Greene. Unlike many other writers of the Modernist age, Nabokov did not refrain from hints of the supernatural within the realm of the probable.⁹ In that sense Nabokov displayed affinity to contemporary religious authors, especially Catholics, for whom supernatural occurrences and themes conveyed a special meaning and a message. Interestingly enough, when they met many years later, it turned out that Greene had thought Nabokov was also a convert to Catholicism (Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* 398).

⁸ Sisson points out that *RLSK* can be perceived as "an exquisite ghost story" (637). Perhaps the closest parallel to *RLSK* among Nabokov's own works is his novel *Ada*, where, as Boyd has suggested, "Van's writing his last book might be partly the consequence of Lucette's messages from the beyond," and that "her aura seems to produce in Van this prolonged intensity of mental excitement" (*Nabokov's Ada* 192–93).

⁹ As is quite often the case in Nabokov studies, it was Boyd who underlined the importance of afterlife in Nabokov's poetics, first in his article "Nabokov's Philosophical World" and later in his *Nabokov's Ada: The Place of Consciousness*, where he pointed out ghostly presences in Nabokov's works *Ada*, *Transparent Things*, *Ultima Thule*, and "The Vane Sisters" (192). W. W. Row notes that Nabokov "gives us sufficient evidence to detect the ghostly activity concealed in his written world" (10). Alexandrov provides the most comprehensive study of a transcendent realm in Nabokov's poetics in his book *Nabokov's Otherworld*.

Another English novel, also written by a Catholic, shows some similarities with *RLSK*. In Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Sacred & Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder*, the true nature of the relationship between narrator Charles Ryder and his friend Sebastian Flyte is deliberately obscure, even though there are indications of Sebastian's attraction primarily to men. Cara, the Italian lover of Lord Marchmain, Sebastian's father, calls this relationship one of the "romantic friendships of the English" (Waugh 101). Very close, somewhat romanticized Platonic friendships between men did exist at that time and were still in vogue even in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century. (Vladislav Khodasevich, for example, considered his friendship with Muni as more important and stronger than some of his love affairs, though neither of them had any interest in same-sex romantic relationships.)

Although there is not much in common between the characters of Sebastian Knight and Sebastian Flyte, there are certain affinities in their background: they both attended British universities (Cambridge or Oxford) in the interwar period, and both are known for their eccentricities. Most importantly, they undergo a process of spiritual transformation and have an enormous effect on the lives of others, especially those who recount their stories. Sebastian in *Brideshead Revisited* undergoes a drastic change from a dashing dandy to a drunkard and eventually to a saint-like figure. Sebastian Knight's emotional transformation is also significant, though less obvious. The more prominent change, however, takes place within those who tell us their stories.

The main event in *RLSK* occurs in the hospital, when V. is finally able to reach the sick-bed of the person he believes is his dying brother. The experience of being so close to Sebastian brings about "a sense of security, of peace, of wonderful relaxation" (200). Waugh's narrator Charles Ryder, in watching Lord Marchmain dying, undergoes a life-changing experience of acceptance "for the sake of love":

I suddenly felt the longing for a sign, if only of courtesy, if only for the sake of the woman I loved [. . .] It seemed so small a thing that was asked, the bare acknowledgment of a present, a nod in the crowd. All over the world people were on their knees before innumerable crosses, and here the drama was being played again by two men — by one man, rather, and he nearer death than life; the universal drama in which there is only one actor. (338)

Nabokov's affinity to the English prose writers of his time while he was at work on his first English novel did not affect his ties to his Russian compatriots and literary contemporaries. In his essay on Nina Berberova, Omry Ronen suggests that the portrait of Nina Turovets, or Nina "de Rechnoy" or Madame Lecerf, in *RLSK* is based at least partially on Berberova, who left her lover, the great Russian poet Khodasevich, broken-hearted:

No wonder Nabokov used to take Nina Berberova to brunch at the Parisian “Medved” (The Bear). I think that he did not, as she optimistically suggested at the end of the fourth chapter of *The Italics are Mine*, “[rejoice] seeing her”; rather he undertook a fearless study of a woman whose charm broke down destinies, a woman who measured everything by vulgar contemporaneity, who denounced everything sacred to Khodasevich, and who was the unforgettable and poisonous “lover of life” (O. Ronen, *Iz goroda Enn* 47–48).¹⁰

There is definitely a link between Carswell’s portrait of Sebastian reflected peering into water with “a very slight ripple on the hollow cheek, owing to the presence of a water-spider,” and Mme. Lecerf, the *femme fatale* in Sebastian’s life, since it was the question of a spider on her neck that betrayed her as being Russian (Alexandrov 151). The image of a spider on the neck of a woman in combination with the Narcissus theme came to Nabokov from two short poems by Khodasevich entitled “Pro sebja” (Про себя; About Myself). The first reads:

Нет, есть во мне прекрасное, но стыдно
Его назвать перед самим собой,
Перед людьми ж—подавно: с их обидной
Душа не примирится похвалой.

И вот—живу, чудесный образ мой
Скрыв под личиной низкой и ехидной...
Взгляни, мой друг: по травке золотой
Ползет паук с отметкой крестовидной.

Пред ним ребенок спрячется за мать,
И ты сама спешишь его согнать
Рукой брезгливой с шейки розовой.

И он бежит от гнева твоего,
Стыдась себя, не ведая того,
Что значит знак его спины мохнатой.

¹⁰ «Недаром Nabokov водил Нину Берберову завтракать в парижский «Медведь»; я думаю, что он не «радовался» ей, как она оптимистически предположила в конце 4-ой главы «Курсива», а бесстрашно изучал опасное очарование женщины, разбивающей судьбы, той, равнявшейся на пошлейшую современность, отрекшейся от всего, что было свято для Ходасевича, незабываемой и смертоносной «любительницы жизни». One should exercise caution with regard to Berberova’s criticism of Nabokov—her admiration was mixed with disappointment after she failed to attract him (in a somewhat similar manner to Nina de Rechnoy’s attempts to seduce V.)—and his ensuing decision to keep a distance from her.

IRENA RONEN

No, there is a beauty in me, although it's shameful
to name it to myself,
and even more so to other people—
the soul would not accept their insulting praise.

And thus I live, hiding my delightful image
under a hideous and base guise...
Look, my friend, along the golden grass
a cross spider crawls.

A child would hide behind their mother,
and you, yourself hurriedly brush it away
from your rosy neck.

And it runs from your anger,
ashamed of itself,
unaware of the sign on its hairy back.¹¹

As we can see here, the poet compares himself to a cross spider on his lover's neck, frightening her. In Nabokov's novel there is a colorful scene in which V. tests Mme. Lecerf by telling her, in Russian, that there is a spider on her neck:

The lady stood with her back to us, humming gently, her foot tapping the stone flags.

It was then that I turned to my silent compatriot who was ogling his broken watch.

"Ah-oo-neigh na-sheiky pah-ook," I said softly.

The lady's hand flew up to the nape of her neck, she turned on her heel.

"Shto? (what?)" asked my slow-minded compatriot, glancing at me. Then he looked at the lady, grinned uncomfortably and fumbled with his watch.

"J'ai quelque chose dans le cou.... There's something on my neck, I feel it," said Madame Lecerf.

"As a matter of fact," I said, "I have just been telling this Russian gentleman that I thought there was a spider on your neck. But I was mistaken, it was a trick of light." (*RLSK* 170–71)

In the second poem by Khodasevich, the lyric I compares himself to Narcissus, enchanted by his own image as reflected through his poetry.

Нет, ты не прав, я не собой пленен.
Что доброго в наемнике усталом?
Своим чудесным, божеским началом,
Смотря в себя, я сладко потрясен.

Когда в стихах, в отображеньи малом,
Мне подлинный мой образ обнажен,—
Всё кажется, что я стою, склонен,
В вечерний час над водяным зеркалом,

¹¹ All verse translations are my own.

NABOKOV'S FIRST ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NOVEL

И, чтоб мою к себе приблизить высь,
Гляжу я вглубь, где звезды занялись.
Упав туда, спокойно угасает

Нечистый взор моих земных очей,
Но пламенно оттуда проступает
Венок из звезд над головой моей.

No, you are quite wrong; I am not enchanted with myself.
Is there anything good in a tired hired hand?
I am sweetly stunned, looking at myself,
by the glorious, godlike gem in me.

When in verses, in that minor reflection,
my true image is revealed to me,
It seems like in the evening hour I stand,
bending over the watery mirror.

And, in order to bring my heights closer to me,
I look into the depths, where the stars flare.
Falling thither quietly fades away

The impure gaze of my earthly eyes,
yet the wreath of stars appear
blazing over my head.

Reminiscences of this poem can be traced in the description of Sebastian's portrait:

As I look at the portrait Roy Carswell painted I seem to see a slight twinkle in Sebastian's eyes, for all the sadness of their expression. The painter has wonderfully rendered the moist dark greenish-grey of their iris, with a still darker rim and a suggestion of gold dust constellating round the pupil. The lids are heavy and perhaps a little inflamed, and a vein or two seems to have burst on the glossy eyeball. These eyes and the face itself are painted in such a manner as to convey the impression that they are mirrored Narcissus-like in clear water – with a very slight ripple on the hollow cheek, owing to the presence of a water-spider which has just stopped and is floating backward. A withered leaf has settled on the reflected brow, which is creased as that of a man peering intently. There is a deep furrow between the straight eyebrows, and another down from the nose to the tightly shut dusky lips. There is nothing much more than this head. A dark opalescent shade clouds the neck, as if the upper part of the body were receding. The general background is a mysterious blueness with a delicate trellis of twigs in one corner. Thus Sebastian peers into a pool at himself. (117)

There was something captivating in this latter poem of Khodasevich that attracted Nabokov's interest. He returned to it twice: once in his poetry, in the early poem "Smert'" (Смерть; Death), and later in a prosaic version in the novel under discussion here (I. Ronen, "Stikhi i proza" 190–91). In *RLSK* this reference to Khodasevich is symptomatic: it supports Omry Ronen's suggestion that Berberova was indeed one of the prototypes of the Russian *femme fatale* in Nabokov's novel.

Being bilingual (or rather multilingual), Nabokov mastered the ability to navigate through Russian and Western literatures with equal ease. *RLSK* was written in his transitional period, when he was becoming an English fiction writer, but already in this first effort, Nabokov displayed in his inner attitude with regard to the outer world deep psychological and spiritual kinships with English novelists of his generation, such as Wilder, Greene, and Waugh.¹² Over time, Nabokov's all-embracing sensitivity to other literatures and cultures as well as his own enigmatic creative brilliance put him in a unique position as a 'universal writer.' In his article on Nabokov's role in world literature, Omry Ronen wrote: "By achieving a broad linguistic confrontation and inspired syntheses of several great literary traditions in a twin, yet manifestly whole, body of bilingual writing, unprecedented in the lay verbal art of the Occident, Nabokov became the embodiment of a new, interlingual, transnational literature. That literature, using a coinage out of *Ada*, might be called Amerussian" ("The Triple Anniversary" 173).

¹² Of course, there were other English popular writers at the time whose presence can be tracked in Nabokov's prose on different levels, ranging from influence to parody. Regarding James Joyce, for example, it seems Nabokov deliberately tried to avoid being cast among novelists influenced by the great Irish author. Nevertheless, according to Priscilla Meyer, "Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is an implicit subtext of V's biography of Sebastian, even if V. is unaware of it" (9).

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Kinbote's Remorse

Nancy Pollak

[. . . Д]аже составляя комментарии к таким стихам Мандельштама, как «Венецианская жизнь», или обсуждая лютневский цикл, мы никогда не говорили о личной смерти, а только о смерти культур, государств и забытых слов.

Omry Ronen, "Os"

Disjointed notes, Insomnia's mean verse.

John Shade, "Pale Fire"

"My readers must make their own research"

Charles Kinbote, *Pale Fire*

Part 1

The mid-century American poet Frank O'Hara was apparently referring to *Pale Fire* when he wrote, in these lines from a poem of July 1963: "[. . .] while I sit / and read a novel about / a lunatic's analysis of / a poem by Robert Frost."¹ Later lines confirm the reference to Nabokov's 1962 novel and pinpoint the Frost poem: "why do I always read / Russian exile novels in / summer I guess because / they're full of snow [. . .]" ("[The light presses down . . .]," O'Hara 475–76). "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" ("To watch his woods fill up with snow") is the only Frost poem explicitly mentioned (though not named) in *Pale Fire*; it is also a subtext of the key scene of Hazel Shade's death in Canto 2. Nabokov's later claim that he knew just "one" poem by Frost is obviously inaccurate,² but if he did know just one poem by Frost, it was "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening."

¹ O'Hara's friend Joe LeSueur mentions giving O'Hara "the new Nabokov translation of *Eugene Onegin*, which he could not have liked since he never said a word about it later" (268).

² Abraham P. Socher makes a good case for Frost's "Of a Winter Evening," later titled "Ques-

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It would have been hard for a person of letters in mid-century America not to know “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening,” then Frost’s most famous poem. In the essay “Robert Frost: The Way to the Poem,” published in *The Saturday Review of Literature* on 12 April 1958, the poet John Ciardi made this point indirectly, referring to “Stopping by Woods” as “one of the master lyrics of the English language, and almost certainly the best known poem by an American poet” (Ciardi, “Robert Frost”). In *Pale Fire*, the Zemblan exile Charles Kinbote, comparing the poet John Shade negatively to Frost, called “Stopping by Woods” “one of the greatest short poems in the English language, a poem that every American boy knows by heart . . .” (203).³ Kinbote’s remark, which dates to 1959, anticipates a remark by Nabokov, who told an interviewer in 1964: “[. . .] I believe that rather obvious little poem on the woods is one of the greatest ever written” (Nabokov 1964). Nabokov’s mystification about his familiarity with Frost may have reflected a sense that “Stopping by Woods” was the one Frost poem truly worth knowing.⁴

It is not the only Frost poem quoted in *Pale Fire*. Among others, two sonnets (which share the iambic pentameter of Shade’s “Pale Fire”) should be mentioned. “The Vantage Point,” first published in 1923, is echoed in Shade’s musings about the “best time” for poetry. Shade’s account of the experience of early morning inspiration “upon the lawn / Where clover leaves cupped the topaz of dawn” (lines 877–78) recalls Frost’s rhymes and phrasing in a similar context: “Well I know where to hie me—in the dawn, / To a slope where the cattle keep the lawn.” The reversal of “high” and “low” suggested by Kinbote in his Frost-prompted discussion of the “temperature charts of poetry” (203) is a spatial theme in “The Vantage Point,” with its punning use of the verb “hie” in the octave about the distant view from a hillside and the interjection “lo” in the sestet—a close-up of the earth. Shade’s early morning scene also recalls Frost’s own narrative of his midsummer night’s composition of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” (an all-nighter in June 1922) (Thompson 1970, 236–37); Ciardi refers to Frost’s inspiration at dawn, though he omits the season (1958, 65).⁵ Kinbote calls attention to the compositional disjunction in

tioning Faces,” as a subtext of the opening lines of “Pale Fire.” He also reveals a set of connections linking Nabokov—or Shade—and Frost, suggesting that Nabokov must have read the 12 April 1958 issue of *The Saturday Review of Literature* where “Of a Winter Evening” appeared (“Shades of Frost”).

³ Citations of Kinbote’s apparatus (Foreword, Commentary, Index) are given according to page number in *Pale Fire* (Nabokov 1989). Citations of Shade’s poem are given according to line number in “Pale Fire.” This arrangement blurs textual levels but may facilitate finding.

⁴ Socher makes a comparable argument for “Of a Winter Evening”: “This, I submit, is the ‘one short poem of Frost’s’ that Nabokov truly ‘knew,’ in the intimate sense of having appropriated it for his art.”

⁵ This narrative would have been available to Nabokov beyond Ciardi’s reference. Thompson notes Frost’s multiple and varied accounts of the composition of “Stopping by Woods,” mentioning two sources that date to 1946 and 1955. He also points out Ciardi’s lapses in reporting the event (Thompson, *Robert Frost: The Early Years* 594–97).

Shade's case: "How persistently our poet evokes images of winter in the beginning of a poem which he started composing on a balmy summer night" (79).

A Frost subtext can be added to the multiple sources of Shade's observations about the "pine's bark," "empty emerald case, squat and frog-eyed," and "gum-logged ant" (lines 235–40). That configuration evokes the image of the "dimpled spider, fat and white, / On a white heal-all, holding up a moth" in Frost's sonnet "Design" (1922).⁶ Shade's "espied" introduces the ominous trio, as does Frost's "I found." Frost ends with the equivocal "design of darkness": "If design govern in a thing so small." Shade echoes Frost with the epigraphic "*Life is a message scribbled in the dark.* / Anonymous"—a formula that reflects a comparable equivocation about the source and even the existence of discernable meaning.⁷ The reference to Frost is supported also by Kinbote's characteristically literal commentary to line 238 ("empty emerald case"). Kinbote details the "sunset rambles" he took in Dulwich Forest with his neighbor Shade (14, 118, 168–69). His report about Shade's habit of garrulously commenting on natural phenomena observed on those outings is reminiscent of Reginald L. Cook's narratives of New England woodland walks with Frost, a serious naturalist and, per Cook, raconteur. These narratives were published in literary and regional journals in the 1940s and 1950s.⁸

There are reminiscences of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" in the verse and prose passages concerning Hazel's death. The landscape of Hazel's final excursion is similar to Frost's landscape, as noted by Gerard de Vries, who singles out the second stanza ("Fanning the Poet's Fire" 252–53). Indeed, in both texts the protagonists are located "between the woods and frozen lake." De Vries notes also a quotation in Kinbote's commentary: the phrase "keep a promise," with reference to the reason Hazel's date departed early (196), echoes the last lines of Frost's poem (de Vries, "Fanning the Poet's Fire" 253). Beyond those allusions, the phrases "to the bus stop" and "*Bus stopped,*" which frame Hazel's journey (lines 401, 460), feature the key word of Frost's poem. The "stop" itself is a link between Frost's traveler and Hazel, who also finds herself alone, at night, in a transitional season (winter solstice, spring equinox). The "watchman" and his "uneasy dog" are counterparts to the "watch" of Frost's traveler and the traveler's uneasy horse.

The relevance of a reference to "Stopping by Woods" should be considered in the context of Ciardi's essay. "Robert Frost: The Way to the Poem" was immediately controversial for the suggestion that the poet's stop "symboliz[ed] a death-wish" (Ciardi 15). Ciardi's essay caused a stir among readers; Ciardi re-

⁶ Michael Wood mentions Frost's "design of darkness to appall" in exploring the implications of Shade's "feeling of fantastically planned, / Richly rhymed life" (191).

⁷ See Nabokov's comments about the Karamzin epigram that is a subtext of this "epigraph" (*Eugene Onegin* 3: 145).

⁸ See Cook, "Frost on Frost"; "Robert Frost's Asides"; and "A Walk." See also Socher's comments about the physical resemblance between Frost and Shade.

sponded to an outpouring of letters to the editor ("Letter to Letter-Writers"). Frost himself vigorously disputed this claim in a series of appearances beginning just a week after the publication of the essay. He mocked the suggestion that the poem was about suicide (Ciardi did not use that word) (Henry; Cook, *Robert Frost: A Living Voice* 122–23). In the final scene of Canto 2, the question of suicide is a matter not of symbolism but of fact.

There were no witnesses to Hazel's death.⁹ The watchman, apparently the first on the scene, "came too late" (line 477). The accepted understanding of Hazel's death as a suicide has its origins in the commentary, where Kinbote validates a conjecture about an event for which no first-hand evidence is provided.

Part 2

Kinbote, Shade's editor, is in perpetual search of an ending.¹⁰ His interest in suicide is the most obvious corollary. In the commentary to line 493 he elaborates on the temptation of suicide¹¹ and the possibilities for accomplishing it (219–22). He calls attention to this discussion by citing it four times in the Index, with reference to "Suicide" (309, 312, 313, 314). He expresses the hope he will not "follow the example of two other characters" who, he indicates, have taken this way out (300). The reader is left to identify the two characters. That remark occurs just after Kinbote's report of Jack Grey's suicide in prison (299). No other such death in the novel is confirmed.¹² The second character Kinbote has in mind is probably Hazel Shade.¹³ Hazel is one who "deserves great respect, having preferred the beauty of death to the ugliness of life," Kinbote notes in the Index (312), and the news of Hazel's death at the end of Canto 2 prompts the disquisition on suicide.

Yet the narrator's interest should not be ignored as the reader considers this death. Kinbote's indications are vague. The notation about Hazel's preference for death is unspecific and is not keyed to any line in the poem or to any event

⁹ Shoshana Knapp calls Shade's account of Hazel's final night "an imaginative projection" (108).

¹⁰ In his Foreword, Kinbote insists that Shade's poem lacks a concluding line (15), but he is wrong: "Pale Fire" is finished at 999 lines, at least in a close-up perspective. Even in the absence of a rhyme pair to the last word, "lane," the final, 15-line verse paragraph creates a strong sense of closure. This sense may be due to the construction of the paragraph as a sonnet with a coda, but further analysis is necessary.

¹¹ "If I were a poet I would certainly make an ode to the sweet urge to close one's eyes and surrender utterly unto the perfect safety of wooed death," Kinbote writes (221), ignoring Keats, who did just that, in so many words, in the "Ode to a Nightingale." Kinbote's line is a paraphrase of Keats's stanza 6. Cf. the compensatory identification of a Keats sonnet where no reference was intended (by Shade), in Kinbote's note to line 98, "On Chapman's Homer" (116).

¹² According to Kinbote, for example, Iris Acht's death, "officially" a suicide, was in fact a murder (305).

¹³ Cf. "But then it is also true that Hazel Shade resembled me in certain respects" (193).

KINBOTE'S REMORSE

in the novel. There is no reference to suicide in the index entry under Hazel's name, or in her parents' entries. The phrase from line 493 that Kinbote comments on—"She took her poor young life"—is, characteristically, taken out of context:

People have thought she tried to cross the lake
At Lochan Neck where zesty skaters crossed
From Exe to Wye on days of special frost.
Others supposed she might have lost her way
By turning left from Bridgeroad; and some say
She took her poor young life. I know. You know.
(lines 488–93)

Shade's "She took her poor young life" is not a statement of fact; it represents one of three popular opinions about what happened to Hazel. Shade reports the three opinions, but he does not share any of them.

The first clue is syntax. The verse paragraph includes two sentences containing three speculative statements, linked paratactically, attributed to impersonal subjects. While there is a shift from more general to more select opinion, and from past to present tense verbs, no priority is given to one version over another; all remain in force: "People have thought [. . .] / Others supposed [. . .] / [. . .] and some say [. . .]." The next two sentences, also with present tense verbs, have first- and second-person singular subjects and represent claims to certainty: "I know. You know." What is known to the speaker and the addressee is not stated, but that knowledge of Hazel's fate cannot logically coincide with one of the preceding versions.

Meter and rhyme support this conclusion. The period at the end of the speculative sequence occurs at a masculine (strong) caesura, after the third foot. Intonation ensures that the fourth and fifth feet have hypermetrical stressing, which falls on the pronominal subjects (*I, you*) of the two post-caesura sentences and indicates an adversative relation between those two subjects and the preceding three.¹⁴ The hemistich "I know. You know," distinguished syntactically and prosodically from the preceding sequence, is linked with the following section of the canto by the rhyme word ("know"), which has its pair ("blow") in line 494, after the paragraph break. The final verse paragraph addresses the missing information. Here is what the speaker and the addressee "know":

¹⁴ The sequence "I know. You know" makes no sense in this context if the stress falls on the verb. There is no clear referent: no object of knowledge, given the multiple options in the preceding sequence. (In fact the stress would fall only on the first instance of the verb. In the second instance the stress must fall on the pronoun no matter how the first instance is stressed.)

NANCY POLLAK

It was a night of thaw, a night of blow,
With great excitement in the air. Black spring
Stood just around the corner, shivering
In the wet starlight and on the wet ground.
The lake lay in the mist, its ice half drowned.
A blurry shape stepped off the reedy bank
Into a crackling, gulping swamp, and sank.
(lines 494–500)

The “thaw” and “blow” that characterize the night suggest instability, transition. The equinox is imminent. Intimations of death are here,¹⁵ but they are obscured, as the landscape is.¹⁶ In this context the first two opinions as to the events of that night are just as plausible as the third. Having gotten off the bus, Hazel perhaps did not immediately see the lake, or realize the ice was compromised. The final lines of the canto indicate that the death may have been accidental: “A blurry shape stepped off the reedy bank / Into a crackling, gulping swamp, and sank.” The verb “sink” in its intransitive usage is associated with involuntary actions and often—as in the case of the present subject, “shape”—with inanimate objects; it does not suggest a deliberate move by a sentient being. As Shade recounts it, Hazel’s death sounds like a misstep, not a suicide.

A misstep would be consistent with the picture of Hazel as, like her father, uncoordinated and ungraceful. Shade “never bounced a ball or swung a bat” and “walked at [his] own risk” (lines 127–30); Hazel, he notes, took after him (lines 293–95). According to Kinbote, who may or may not have been quoting Shade, Hazel was “clumsy” (166). She had “swollen feet,” Shade reports (line 354). Shade, by his own account, lagged “one oozy footstep” behind Frost (lines 424–26). Shade is referring to reputation, and Kinbote backs up the general assessment. While admiring Shade’s play on Frost’s name,¹⁷ he insists on the cold conducive to crystalline verse (“high is low, and low high”) (203–04).¹⁸ In

¹⁵ One such hint may be a reference to Innokenty Annensky’s poem “Chernaia vesna” (Черная весна; Black Spring) (*Купарисовый лапест*, 1910), about the “meeting of two deaths” (встреча двух смертей): a funeral procession in the dreags of winter (Annenskii 143).

¹⁶ For the author, the uncertainty of Hazel’s final night was purposeful. Nabokov probably had in mind the conclusion of Canto 2 when he told the visiting Swedish poet Filippa Rolf in January 1961 that he was, in Stacy Schiff’s words, “trying to make the thing obscure” (Schiff 278). The comment pertained to a reading of the first two cantos of the poem in progress; there is nothing else in those cantos, or in the entire poem, that depends on a close parsing of events.

¹⁷ Frost frequently played on his own name in his verse.

¹⁸ Here Nabokov may be disputing the stipulations of Sir John Denham, whose despised “servile path” he adopts as a standard for translators (see Nabokov, “The Servile Path”): “Nor ought a genius less than his that writ / Attempt translation; for transplanted wit / All the defects of air and soil doth share, / And colder brains like colder climates are: / In vain they toil, since nothing can beget / A vital spirit but a vital heat” (“To Sir Richard Fanshew upon his Translation of ‘Pastor Fido’”) (Denham 143–44).

the context of less than perfect frost, Hazel might well have lost her footing on the marshy ground at the edge of the lake.¹⁹

Kinbote's description of Hazel as "clumsy" (166) links her with another supposed suicide. One option mentioned in Kinbote's note on suicide is to "drown with clumsy Ophelia" (220).²⁰ The key word recalls the fall from the willow that sent Ophelia, with her "weedy trophies," into the brook (*Hamlet* IV, vii, 173). Other Nabokovian reminiscences of Ophelia's death admit the ambiguity of the scene. Van Veen acknowledges the contribution of the "treacherous sliver" (*Ada* 497). Pnin recalls how—in Kroneberg's 1844 translation re-Englished—"she floated and she sang, she sang and floated," reminding him of the young women who "floated and chanted" with their garlands in the river at Whitsuntide (*Pnin* 77–79).²¹ According to the verdict of Shakespeare's coroner, revealed in the dialogue of the clowns as they dig a grave, Ophelia merited a "Christian burial" (*Hamlet* V.i.1–5)—that is, she was not a suicide.²² The First Clown explains that for a person who dies by drowning, "if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself" (V.i.18–19). Ophelia was dragged down by her water-logged clothes ("heavy with their drink") (IV.vii.180). These conditions apply in the case of Lucette, whose death, in *Ada*, is also equivocal. As Lucette entered the water, "she went with hardly a splash through the wave that humped to welcome her" (*Ada* 493). Lucette's clothes weighed her down: "those damned thirsty trousers [. . .] felt clogged with Oceanus Nox" (494). If her original intention was suicide, the event was less clear: "That perfect end was spoiled by her instinctively surfacing in an immediate sweep—instead of surrendering under water to her drugged lassitude as she had planned to do on her last night ashore if it ever did come to this" (*Ada* 493–94). Her communication with the "series of receding Lucettes" (494)²³ suggests that Lucette was no longer of the same mind on the brink of death as at the moment of the dive (493).²⁴ What began as a suicide ended less clearly so.²⁵

Hazel's end, too, appears equivocal, but in her case conclusions must be based on second-hand evidence. No informant gets close enough to determine

¹⁹ Cf. "on days of special frost" (line 490). Boyd, among others, points out the "oozy footstep" as an "image that foreshadows Hazel's imminent end" (*Nabokov's Pale Fire* 199).

²⁰ Priscilla Meyer notes "Hazel's Ophelia-like drowning" and discusses the transformations of the "Ophelia" theme in *Pale Fire* and other Nabokov texts (111, 123–26).

²¹ Nabokov's fictional appraisal acquires its own critical function as quoted (in S. Il'in's Russian translation) on A. I. Kroneberg's page in the online resource Lib.ru: Классика (Klassika) (see: http://az.lib.ru/k/kroneberg_a_i/; accessed 18 Feb. 2019).

²² See the commentary on the scenes of Ophelia's death and its aftermath in Harold Jenkins's remarkable edition of *Hamlet* (376n1–2, 544–47).

²³ The representation of the "series of receding Lucettes" recalls the regression of mirror images described by Kinbote as "garlands of girls" in Fleur's mirror (111), in one of the passages associated (e.g., by Meyer 122) with the "Ophelia" theme.

²⁴ Ada suspected this possibility ("if she changed her mind in the cold dark water") (*Ada* 500).

²⁵ Gavriel Shapiro pointed out equivocal deaths in *Invitation to a Beheading* and "Zaniatoi chelovek" (A Busy Man) (conversation, 27 Nov. 2018).

Hazel's motivations²⁶—by contrast with the narrator in *Ada*, who, as Lucette struggles in the water, is so close as to transcribe the slips of her inner monologue: “[. . .] number, okay, or numbness” (494). In Shade's telling, it appears that Hazel left the Hawaiian bar in distress: “[. . .] and with a smile / She said she'd be *de trop*, she'd much prefer / Just going home” (lines 398–400). Shade has clarified in advance: “She hardly ever smiled, and when she did, / It was a sign of pain” (lines 350–51). But the reader is not privy to Hazel's pain, and Shade does not show how it might have led to her death.²⁷

Part 3

The indeterminacy of Hazel's fate is consistent with the divergence of authorial perspectives that is central to *Pale Fire*. While Kinbote seeks an ending, Shade's interest is elsewhere. This becomes evident on the fateful night, as the Shades, waiting at home, propose: “Well, shall we try the preview of *Remorse*?” (line 450). The model for the star of *Remorse*, the “famous face,” in Shade's phrase, with the “grain of beauty on the cheek” (lines 453–55), has been identified as Marilyn Monroe (Nabokov, *Novels 1955–1962*, 892; see also Wakashima)—whom Nabokov happened to meet in Hollywood in 1960 (Schiff 269).²⁸ There is no Monroe movie, nor is there any mid-century American or British feature film, with such a title. (The only movie of Monroe's with a one-word title was *Niagara*, from 1953.) Monroe's best known mid-fifties movie was the breakout vehicle *Bus Stop*, released by 20th Century Fox in August 1956, and presumably available for TV distribution in time for viewing in the early months of 1957, the period to which Hazel's death can be dated.²⁹ Echoes of the title frame the synopsis of Hazel's date, which, as Kinbote notes (204), is crosscut with the Shades' TV chronicle: “To the bus stop . . .”; “*Bus stopped*”

²⁶ This distance from Hazel's inner world has been noted also by others, including Knapp (106–09) and Matthew Roth (“A Small Mad Hope” 39).

²⁷ Late in my work on this essay I discovered two studies that call Hazel's suicide into question: see Eric S. Petrie (2–3 and *passim*) and Haki Antonsson (7). The argument for a different view of Hazel's death is strengthened by these conclusions reached independently. Petrie proposes that Hazel's death was accidental; I suggest that as one possibility. Antonsson, like me, refers to Ophelia's death as a parallel to Hazel's and notes that Kinbote's comments about Hazel's death are not decisive. Both Petrie (5) and Antonsson (7) differ from me in concluding that Shade believed Hazel's death was a suicide.

²⁸ Nabokov might have been aware of Monroe's multiple suicide attempts. Monroe died on 5 August 1962, possibly but not certainly as a result of suicide.

²⁹ On the dating of Hazel's death, see the notes to lines 293 (Hazel died in 1957) and 347 (Hazel died a few months after the barn episodes in October 1956) (183, 185). Petrie suggests “an unspecified day in March” of 1957 (16n13). Shade's account of atmospheric conditions (lines 494–500) supports this conclusion.

(lines 401, 460; emphasis in the text).³⁰ Evidence from the movie supports the reference. Monroe's character, who calls herself Cherie, is the source of the "odd gallicism" (line 455) Shade mentions in his film review.³¹ As an auto-metadescriptive observation, Shade's phrase covers the preceding "grain / Of beauty" (lines 454–55)—a complex calque of the French idiom (*grain de beauté*; beauty mark).³² As a subtextual reference, it points to Cherie's reference to herself as a "chantooze."

³⁰ Kinbote comments on the "merg[ing]" of the two plots, noting the repeated "headlights," one instance in a TV travelogue (line 431) and one instance in the account of Hazel's current travels (204). The echo goes beyond that key word:

where **headlights** from afar
more **headlights** in the fog

The first reference to headlights is also the occasion of an interlingual pun, juxtaposing the English adverb "afar" to the Russian noun *фары* (*fary*; headlights) and its French source, *phare* (headlight).

The headlights of Hazel's journey (and their doubles on the "reflector poles") have a counterpart, and perhaps collaborator, in the fateful "pinhead light" the Shades see "dwindle and die in black / Infinity" (lines 473–74) as they turn off the television at the moment of Hazel's death ("And as life snapped we saw [. . .]," [line 472]). Cf. the "lifelike blur" as the television is turned on (line 405). See also the "pinhead light [that] gleamed ahead" when King Charles was lost on a dark mountainside in a lightning storm (140).

The splitting of the compound *headlight* in *pinhead light* calls attention to its constituents, as does the recurrence of "head" elsewhere in the conjoined TV-Hazel scenes: "Commercials were beheaded" (line 466); "but she, instead / Of riding home, got off at Lochanhead" (lines 401–02). The word or component "head" is associated with accidental death in the companion university novel *Pnin*. Pnin, having fallen down the stairs on arriving with Victor at the Sheppard house, where he lodges (107), brings up Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilyich*: "It is like the splendid story of Tolstoy—you must read one day, Victor—about Ivan Ilyich Golovin who fell and got in consequence kidney of the cancer. Victor will now come upstairs with me" (108). The inclusion of Ivan Ilyich's last name, rarely mentioned in the eponymous story about an accidental death and not included in the title, is soon justified. The deaf Bill Sheppard lies awake and recalls a "dim, distant relation," John Head, killed when lightning struck a poplar tree. (The mechanism is not disclosed.) English-speaking readers who do not realize "John Head" is the namesake of "Ivan Golovin" will nevertheless catch the emphasis on "head," as it is notably repeated in the following sentence: "Victor had, for once, fallen asleep as soon as he put his head under his pillow" (110). Pnin brings "head" with him into *Pale Fire*, where Kinbote refers to him twice as the "Head" of the Russian Department (155, 229) and describes him as a "bald-headed suntanned professor in a Hawaiian shirt" (282). Tolstoy's story, too, makes an appearance in *Pale Fire*, as Shade rewrites Ivan Ilyich's syllogism on mortality (lines 213–14).

³¹ The "odd gallicism" (line 455) links mid-century American popular culture to the literary "French" theme of *Pale Fire*. See Meyer's discussion of French authors and French-Russian-English cultural ties in *Pale Fire* (160–61).

Nabokov would have been attuned to gallicisms, having focused on them in his translation of *Eugene Onegin*: "In a recent article I mentioned some of the complications attending the turning of *Eugene Onegin* into English, such as the need to cope with a constant intrusion of gallicisms and of borrowings from French poets" ("The Servile Path" 97). The recent article is "Problems of Translation: *Onegin* in English" (see 117–18).

³² The allusion confirms Monroe's portrait. An online search for the French counterpart to "beauty mark" turns up Marilyn Monroe—though with a mistranslation and mislocation:

The actress in the Shades' preview was an object of "corporate desire" (line 57), but in *Bus Stop* Monroe played the role of a misfit, in the apt designation of her final film.³³ Her character is a "hillbilly" from "the Ozarks" with pretensions to movie stardom; hence the French name. While Hazel's own use of a French expression, as reported by Shade, was hardly incongruous, given her study of the language and her stay in France (lines 305–06, 336), *de trop*³⁴ indicates her status as an extra—whether she is the third wheel on a date or the occupant of the bedroom between her parents' studies (lines 366–68).³⁵ One critic has called Hazel a "misfit" (Foster 228). Here the Hollywood sex symbol and the unprepossessing intellectual are not so far apart.

In *Bus Stop* Cherie's French accoutrements become a focus and a point of connection—perhaps the only one—with the male lead, a cowboy, who admits his given name is Beauregard. The mismatched affair has an ostensibly happy ending, as Cherie's "Bo," guided by his older companion Virge, acknowledges his shortcomings and makes amends. As on the night of Hazel's date, unseasonable weather (in this case, a sudden snowstorm) hastens the denouement.³⁶ In Hazel's case, "a white-scarfed beau / Would never come for her" (lines 333–34), and her actual date takes off soon after their meeting (lines 391–96). Hazel's relationship with her unsatisfactory suitor has been linked by Brian Boyd to *The Beau and the Butterfly*—the "New York magazine" in which Shade's poem "The Nature of Electricity" was published posthumously (*Nabokov's Pale Fire* 192–93). Noting the allusion to the iconic *New Yorker* cover where the foppish Eustace Tilly interacts with a butterfly, Boyd cites

beauty mark *n* US (mole on the face) grain de beauté *nm*

One of the most famous beauty marks is the one that Marilyn Monroe had on her left cheek.

Un des grains de beauté le plus célèbre est celui que Marilyn Monroe avait à la joue droite. www.wordreference.com/enfr/beauty%20mark (accessed 25 Dec. 2017).

³³ *The Misfits* was released on 1 February 1961, as Nabokov was finishing Shade's poem, completed on 11 February (Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* 419; see also Schiff, 281).

³⁴ Hazel's "French" phrase may have a precedent, if not a source, in a speech tic: "She twisted words: *pot, top, / Spider, redips*. And 'powder' was 'red wop'" (lines 347–48).

³⁵ The symbolic French connection represented by Hazel's conception in Nice is reinforced by two even more obviously symbolic anticipations of her peculiarity, as her parents see it: reminiscences from that trip include the "one blue [sail] among the white," accompanied by two red, and the "one dark pigeon waddling in the crowd" among the usual gulls (lines 438–42). The first image emphasizes Hazel's eccentricity while linking her to her parents; the second emphasizes her singular physical awkwardness.

³⁶ The season is not specified in the movie, but William Inge's play *Bus Stop*, on which the movie was partially based, was set in early spring. A synopsis of the play reveals several relevant details: "The play is set in a diner about 25 miles west of Kansas City in early March 1955. A freak snowstorm has halted the progress of the bus, and the eight characters (five on the bus) have a weather-enforced layover in the diner from approximately 1 to 5 a.m. Romantic or quasi-romantic relationships ensue between Grace and Carl, Professor Lyman and Elma and Cherie and Bo. Virgil and Will are the older authority figures outside the relationships." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bus_Stop_\(William_Inge_play\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bus_Stop_(William_Inge_play)); accessed 19 Feb. 2019).

the title in light of his argument for the plain Hazel's transformation into the lovely *Vanessa atalanta* (Red Admirable) that accompanies Shade in the final lines of "Pale Fire" (Boyd, *Nabokov's Pale Fire* 107, 146–48, 241). Boyd (*Nabokov's Pale Fire* 142, 278n21, 22) supports this argument with reference to the traditional association of Psyche, as the immortal soul, with the butterfly,³⁷ as alluded to in Kinbote's account of one of Shade's rambling narratives (186). Yet the significance of the cover pairing is not self-evident,³⁸ and the relation of the butterfly to Hazel is not straightforward.

The magazine title is also an opportune find, taken from the eponymous 1748 poem by William Kenrick. Shade's academic field is eighteenth-century British literature, with a focus on Alexander Pope (see line 384; cf. Kinbote's comment, 250), but the title appears only in Kinbote's note, and there is no indication that Shade, let alone Kinbote, was aware of the reference. The butterfly of Kenrick's poem, endowed with a "painted vestment," reproaches the "beau" (a man in the guise of an insect)³⁹ for his ostentation and vanity, and for his lack of attention to the "beauties" of the mind, that peculiarly human gift:

To rule the world by reason taught,
On dress disdain to waste a thought,
For he whom folly bends so low,
Ambitious to be thought a beau,
Is studious only to be gay,
In toilet-arts consumes the day [. . .].

The butterfly's message matches the scholarly consensus about the Shades' preoccupation with Hazel's looks at the expense of her obviously superior intellect.⁴⁰

Nabokov links the "toilet-arts" to other arts in *Pale Fire*. In the grooming episode of Canto 4 (lines 835–948) Shade develops A. E. Housman's association of shaving with poetic inspiration from the 1933 lecture "The Name and Nature of Poetry."⁴¹ In the Canto 2 TV sequence, the evocation of Belinda's

³⁷ In relation to his scientific butterfly studies Nabokov noted: "That in some cases the butterfly symbolizes something (e.g., Psyche) lies utterly outside my area of interest" (*Strong Opinions* 168).

³⁸ As Louis Menand notes of the protagonists: "The picture is a joke, of course: which is more ephemeral, the dandy or the butterfly? [. . .] *New Yorker* readers have become used to him, but it's not much clearer eighty years later what he's supposed to represent."

³⁹ The reference to a "papilio" suggests perhaps a swallow-tail butterfly or a moth.

⁴⁰ See the discussions in Knapp (106–09), Wood (195–96), Zunshine (172), de Vries (*Nabokov's Pale Fire* 110; "Hazel Shade's 'Pale Spectres'" 12), Petrie (5–8), and Roth ("A Small Mad Hope" 38–39).

⁴¹ See, e.g., Dustin Condren's tellingly titled article, "John Shade Shaving: Inspiration and Composition in a Selection from *Pale Fire*."

dressing-table from *The Rape of the Lock* (lines 413–16)⁴² is not just a parody of contemporary advertising, nor is the worship of the “Cosmetic pow’rs” to be treated lightly.⁴³ Nabokov quotes another passage from Pope’s “toilet” scene in his commentary to the grooming stanzas in *Eugene Onegin* (1: XXIII–XXVI),⁴⁴ where the manifest parody is complicated by hints of a less judgmental perspective.⁴⁵ The narrator compares Onegin, “a philosopher at eighteen years of age” (1: XXIII, 14; Nabokov, *Eugene Onegin* 1: 105), for example, to the philosopher and serious man of fashion Petr Chaadaev (1: XXV, 5).⁴⁶ William Jesse’s

⁴² As Boyd notes, the dressing-table becomes, in Shade’s account, the “altar in the wood / Where various articles of toilet stood” (*Nabokov’s Pale Fire* 198).

⁴³ See Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, 1: 121–28. Cf. Boyd on the added “ominous undertone” of the “toilet” passage in the context of Hazel’s death for want of “female beauty and grace” (*Nabokov’s Pale Fire* 199). But the vignette may have other functions. The reference to a “vernal rite,” for example, is consistent with the season (“Black spring / Stood just around the corner”).

Grooming is seen in a different perspective in the image of the infinitely reflected “garlands of girls” combing their hair in the “really fantastic” cheval glass (111–12)—a “triptych” contrasting with the “triptych” of the Shade family (lines 381–82). Meyer comments: “Sudarg’s mirror, signed with a diamond, is an emblem of art whose multiple reflections diminish as they recede into the past. Sudarg himself is the mirror image, the reversal of Gradus” (122).

Indeed, the villain of the piece, the “would-be regicide” Jakob Gradus (74), is as repulsive for his grotesque personal habits as for his moral agnosticism (see especially the comment to line 949 [273–84])—and these are scarcely distinguishable: “One finds it hard to decide what Gradus alias Grey wanted more at that minute: discharge his gun or rid himself of the inexhaustible lava in his bowels” (283); “From my rented cloudlet I contemplate him with quiet surprise: here he is, this creature ready to commit a monstrous act—and coarsely enjoying a coarse meal!” (276).

⁴⁴ The six-line passage that continues (after a four-line break) the scene of the “toilet” in *The Rape of the Lock* is quoted in Nabokov’s commentary to *EO* 1: XXIV, 1–8 with appreciation for its “English richness of imagery and originality of diction” (2: 101).

This casket India’s glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.
(*The Rape of the Lock*, 1: 133–38).

The last line is a model for Shade’s lines 94–95: “The verse book opens at the Index (Moon, / Moonrise, Moor, Moral), the forlorn guitar [. . .]” Zunshine (172) finds an echo of Pope’s passage elsewhere in “Pale Fire” (lines 601–02).

⁴⁵ On the possibility of a more nuanced view of the dandy, see Iu. M. Lotman’s commentary to *EO* 1: XXXIII–XXIV (571).

⁴⁶ Also in the commentary to the grooming stanzas in *Eugene Onegin*, Nabokov quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson’s “Threnody” (1844), the elegy on the death of his young son, comparing the prosodic structure of three lines from stanza XXIII (11–13) and three lines from the elegy (Nabokov, *EO* 2: 100). This note almost immediately precedes the quotation from *The Rape of the Lock*. As in “Pale Fire,” the “grooming” theme in the *Onegin* commentary is closely juxtaposed to the event of the child’s death.

biography of the famous dandy George ("Beau") Brummell, which Nabokov cites multiple times in the *Onegin* commentary,⁴⁷ emphasizes Brummell's intellectual virtues.⁴⁸ Brummell, unlike Onegin, was also a poet; Jesse quotes in full his poem "The Butterfly's Funeral" (Jesse 241–42). The Shades' interest in "good looks" (line 324) is only in retrospect, from the enlightened twenty-first century, a mistake.

Part 4

The title of the Shades' movie probably comes from Coleridge's blank verse drama *Remorse. A Tragedy in Five Acts* (1813; originally *Osorio*, 1797). Nabokov had reason to be interested in *Remorse*. It was the source of the sometime epigraph to Pushkin's poem "Anchar" (Анчар; Antiar),⁴⁹ the last two lines of the epigraph to Coleridge's play (which is also a speech in Act 1, Scene 1):

Remorse is as the heart, in which it grows:
If that be gentle, it drops balmy dews
Of true repentance; but if proud and gloomy,
It is a poison-tree, that pierced to the inmost
Weeps only tears of poison!

The image of noxious droplets, pertinent to Pushkin's upas, recurs in various forms—water, blood—throughout the play.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ It's probably not accidental that the quotation from *The Rape of the Lock* in Nabokov's notes to EO 1: XXIV, 1–8 is followed by examples from William Jesse's *Life of George Brummell, Esq., commonly called Beau Brummell*. Jesse refers to Pope's poem in a paragraph that immediately precedes another passage that Nabokov quotes from the biography, though without attribution. Nabokov's phrase "slightly starched" with reference to the fashion Brummell set for "neckcloths" comes directly from Jesse; it is not in quotation marks in Nabokov's text (note to EO 8: XXVI, 10; 3: 478; see Jesse 60–61). Six citations of the *Life* are listed in the index, but Jesse's book is probably the source for still other passages about Brummell.

⁴⁸ Jesse notes "the fact that a feeling of dandyism sometimes forms a component part of a great mind" (13); see also "Still, and inconsistent as it may appear, very superior and clever men have bestowed far more than necessary attention upon their dress" (11). This topic is expanded later in the book (238f).

⁴⁹ See Gustafson 101; Dolinin n6; see also Ronen, "Emulation" 162. The epigraph appeared in a draft of "Anchar" (1828), but not the final version (1832). <http://pushkin.niv.ru/pushkin/stihi/stih-592.htm>

⁵⁰ In the case of the liquid dripping ominously from the roof of a cave where a murder takes place (Coleridge 47–48, 61), that image may have consequences for Kinbote's comments on Shade's "Stiletto of a frozen stillicide" ("eavesdrop, cavesdrop"). Kinbote refers to his discovery of "stillicide" in Hardy, and while "Friends Beyond" is certainly the source of that word (see, i.a., de Vries, "Fanning the Poet's Fire" 253), Hardy's poem does not account for the apprehension of "the cloak-and-dagger hint-glint in the 'svelte stiletto' and the shadow of regicide in the rhyme" (79). *Remorse* might. Roth finds an echo of Coleridge's "Frost at Midnight" in Kinbote's "eavesdrop" (see the Nabokv-I listserv entry [Re: THOUGHTS: stillicide]). *Remorse* justifies its pair "cavesdrop."

Nabokov's translation of "Anchar," "The Upas Tree,"⁵¹ appeared in the 1944 volume *Three Russian Poets: Selections from Pushkin, Lermontov and Tyutchev* (5–6). Nabokov mentions "The Upas" in the commentary to *Eugene Onegin* 1: XXXIII, the penultimate stanza of the five-stanza "pedal digression" (EO 1: XXX–XXXIV), as he designated the sequence (he called it "one of the wonders of the work") (2: 136, 115). His translation of XXX–XXXII, following the formal features of the *Onegin* stanza almost exactly, appeared in *The Russian Review* in 1945.⁵² The rendering of XXXIII, 3–4 reveals the association with and perhaps the influence of "Anchar": "I see the surf, the storm-rack flying. . . / Oh, how I wanted to compete / with the tumultuous breakers dying / in adoration at her feet!" ("From Pushkin's 'Eugene Onegin'" 38). The word "dying" has no direct counterpart in the *Onegin* passage,⁵³ but it occurs in a comparable context in the penultimate stanza of "Anchar": «Принес—и ослабел и лег / Под сводом шалаша на лыки, / И умер бедный раб у ног / Непобедимого владыки» ("Brought [it]—and grew weak and lay down / Beneath the shelter of the hut on a bast mat, / And the poor slave died at the feet / Of the invincible lord").⁵⁴

Nabokov later repudiated the 1945 *Onegin* stanzas for the interpolations and elaborations admitted for the purposes of a metrical, rhymed translation ("The Upas Tree" was of a similar type).⁵⁵ In the 1964/1975 version of

⁵¹ "The Upas Tree" is in iambic tetrameter with alternating masculine rhymes, by contrast with the alternating masculine and feminine rhymes of the original. Nabokov's translation, like the final version of Pushkin's poem, does not include the epigraph; there is an abbreviated parenthetical reference to Leschenault's identification of the upas as *Antiaris toxicaria* (see Gustafson 102 and ng). This is apparently the botanist Jean-Baptiste Leschenault de la Tour (cf. Dolinin).

⁵² Nabokov's 1945 versions of these stanzas are in iambic tetrameter. The rhyme scheme follows Pushkin's with one exception: the adjacent rhymes in the first distich of the second quatrain are masculine, not feminine as in the *Onegin* stanza (see Nabokov's description and designation in his *Eugene Onegin*, 1: 9–14).

⁵³ "Я помню море пред грозой: / Как я завидовал волнам, / Бегущим бурной чередою / С любовью лечь к ее ногам!" (1: XXXIII, 1–4). Cf. Nabokov's 1964/1975 translation: "I recollect the sea before a tempest: / how I envied the waves / running in turbulent succession / with love to lie down at her feet!" (1: 110).

⁵⁴ The lines in the 1945 *Onegin* translation ("dying / In adoration at her feet") are closer to Pushkin's "Anchar" in this respect than is Nabokov's 1944 translation of that poem: "He came, he fell upon a mat, / and reaping a poor slave's reward, / died near the painted hut where sat / his now unconquerable lord." The "Anchar" translation does not reflect the key feature of the two texts, as evident in Pushkin's phrases "brought" (принес) and "at the feet / Of the unconquerable ruler" (у ног / Непобедимого владыки). Probably closer to a hypothetical later Nabokov translation of those lines is a passage quoted in the notes to EO 1: XXXIII, 3–4, from a poem by Thomas Moore, *The Loves of the Angels* (1823). Nabokov writes: "Curiously enough, a paraphrase of 'exhausted slaves / Lay down the far-brought gift, and die' appears in Pushkin's poem *The Upas [Anchar]*, penultimate stanza" (EO 2: 136).

⁵⁵ In his response to Walter Arndt's comment that Nabokov had criticized his *Onegin* translation (1963) for features Nabokov's own 1945 translations shared, Nabokov agreed: "they are exactly what Mr. Arndt says—lame paraphrases of Pushkin's text" (see the addendum to Arndt, "Goading the Pony").

XXXIII there is no reference to “dying.”⁵⁶ But the corresponding lines in the later translation (*EO* 1: XXXIII, 3–4) preserve the core of the parallel Nabokov found between “Anchar” and the pedal digression: “how I envied the waves / running in turbulent succession / with love to lie down at her feet” (Nabokov *EO* 1: 110; 2: 135). The feature common to the two texts is the motif of tribute laid at redoubtable feet, as the purveyor’s final act. The same feature is found in the quatrain Nabokov cites as a source of this image, from I. F. Bogdanovich’s narrative poem *Dushen’ka* (1783–99)—*Sweet Psyche* or *Little Psyche* in Nabokov’s double rendering: “Pursuing her, the billows there / keep jostling jealously each other, / and breaking from the throng in haste / seek to fall humbly at her feet” (*EO* 2: 136–38).⁵⁷

The reference in the two cases is to Venus, who has the role of the heroine’s antagonist in Bogdanovich’s poem and in its sources: La Fontaine’s narrative in prose and verse *Les Amours de Psyché et Cupidon* (1669) and books IV–VI of Apuleius’s novel *Metamorphoses* (*The Golden Ass*) (second century CE).⁵⁸ In both those works the scene that is the counterpart to this seascape, identified by Nabokov, is followed by an account of the consequences of Venus’s torment for Psyche (Nabokov *EO* 2: 137–38).⁵⁹ (Bogdanovich, too, gives a version of that account [59].) Hazel, with her fluent French, could have read La Fontaine. It’s also possible she tried *Metamorphoses*, which might have been the “Latin text” her father was “help[ing] her with” not long before the fateful evening (26 lines, to be exact) (line 363)⁶⁰:

⁵⁶ Nabokov’s work on the four-volume translation of *Eugene Onegin* largely preceded the composition of *Pale Fire*. Nabokov gives the start date for his four-volume translation of *Eugene Onegin* as “about 1950” and the end date as 1957 (*EO* 1: xi). Boyd indicates that Nabokov was at work on the translation by early January 1950, if not earlier (*Vladimir Nabokov: The American Years* 30, 319–20). Julia Trubikhina mentions 1949 to 1957 as the years of Nabokov’s work on *Onegin* (87).

⁵⁷ In this instance the translation is both precise and metrically close, though Nabokov foregoes rhymes and includes just one feminine ending, by contrast with Bogdanovich’s two: «Гонясь за нею, волны там / Толкают в ревности друг друга, / Чтоб, вырвавшись скорей из круга, / Смирненно пасть к ее ногам» (Bogdanovich 56).

⁵⁸ Bogdanovich cites both predecessors: «Издревле Апулей, потом де ла Фонтен / На вечну память их имен, / Воспели Душеньку и в прозе и стихами / Другим языком с нами» (In ancient times Apuleius, later de la Fontaine – / To the eternal memory of their names – / Sang praises of Dushen’ka in prose and verse / In a different language from ours) (Bogdanovich 47).

⁵⁹ Nabokov quotes the relevant passage in La Fontaine, which follows “the second rhymed interpolation in bk. I of *Les Amours . . .*” (*EO* 2: 137). He also mentions *Metamorphoses* 4 as the source of the Apuleius passage (2: 138). It can be identified as paragraph XXXII of that book.

⁶⁰ Alternatively, the parents were glossing *Four Quartets* for her (the source of Hazel’s vocabulary words; see, for example, Boyd, *Nabokov’s Pale Fire* 108–09; Foster 219–25). Another relevant “phony modern poem” (line 376) is T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, also a subtext of *Pale Fire* (see Boyd, e.g., 193f., 238–39). The identification of Jane Dean—who plays a crucial role as the go-between in the case of Hazel’s date—as Shade’s “typist” (line 385) may allude to the episode of the typist and her empty love life in *The Waste Land* (lines 222–56). The

sed Psyche virgo vidua domi residens deflet desertam suam solitudinem, aegra corporis, animi saucia, et quamvis gentibus totis complacitam odit in se suam formositatem (4: XXXII).⁶¹

but Psyche, unwedded, bereft, left at home, laments her forsaken solitude, sick in body, afflicted in spirit, and hates her own beauty, however pleasing it is to all people.

Only the final clause distinguishes this passage from Shade's account of his daughter's misery. Psyche's beauty is functionally equivalent to Hazel's unattractiveness: both heroines are solitary "virgins" (see line 323), ailing in spirit as in body.

The parents' response is comparable. Psyche's "most wretched" father ("miserrimus pater") consults the Miletian oracle of Apollo on behalf of his "most unfortunate" daughter ("infortunatissim[a] fili[a]") and is advised to surrender her to her destined spouse on a mountaintop. In the absence of the "white-scarfed beau," the Shades sent Hazel first "to a château in France," from which "she returned in tears" (lines 336–37) and then on a blind date.⁶² Awkward phrasing (as if a translation from the Russian) obscures the arrangements for Hazel's date—"Jane Dean, my typist, offered her one day / To meet Pete Dean, a cousin" (lines 385–86)—but the parents must have at least approved, since Jane was "deemed a pillar of reliability" (187) by the Shades.

There is evidence that the Shades' participation involved more than approval: "'Are we quite sure she's acting right?' you asked. / 'It's technically a blind date, of course'" (lines 448–49). The second remark (Shade's? Sybil's?)⁶³ seems to imply that in fact (as opposed to "technically") the blind date was something else. Sybil's worry about whether Hazel is duly playing her role raises the question of what her role was supposed to be.

By contrast, Sybil seems hardly worried about Hazel's prolonged absence. The narration underlines her unconcern as time emphatically passes: "You gently yawned and stacked away your plate.⁶⁴ / [. . .] / [. . .] The tall clock / Kept

epigraph to *The Waste Land* also comes from a "Latin text"—another famous Roman novel, Petronius's *Satyricon*. The subject of those lines is the Cumaean Sibyl, who instructed Aeneas in preparation for his journey to the underworld.

⁶¹ Mikhail Kuzmin follows Apuleius fairly closely in his 1929 translation: «а Психея, в девах вдовица, сидя дома, оплакивает пустынное свое одиночество, недомогая телом, с болью в душе, ненавидя свою красоту, хотя она всех людей привлекала» (but Psyche, a widow as a maiden, sitting at home, laments her desolate solitude, ill in body, with pain in her soul, hating her beauty, although it attracted all people) (Kuzmin 145).

⁶² If the two destinations are considered as part of one narrative, there may be an echo of *La belle et la bête* ("Beauty and the Beast"), the French tale modeled on the story of Psyche and Cupid. The heroine is sent by her family to the château of the "beast" as his future wife.

⁶³ Punctuation and phrasing in Véra Nabokov's translation indicate that this is Sybil's remark (*Blednyi ogon'* 45)—as is consistent with the sense of the lines.

⁶⁴ Plates in *Pale Fire* are associated with magical effects: see the examples of the conjurer from Kinbote's childhood (28); the artist Eystein, "a prodigious master of trompe l'oeil" (130); the

on demolishing old root, young rock" (lines 478, 481–82). A parallel yawn occurs just before Shade's death, again accompanied by the gesture of returning a flat object to its place, and juxtaposed to the image of the urgent clock: "So this alarm clock let me set myself, / Yawn, and put back Shade's 'Poems' on their shelf" (lines 983–84).⁶⁵ In Shade's case the studied obliviousness in the face of death seems to be his author's emphasis; Shade himself claims to be "reasonably sure" he will "wake at six" the next morning (lines 979–80), and nothing appears to undermine the sincerity of this profession or its reasonableness. But Sybil's case is less clear. Sybil is not a function of her husband and, as her name hints (and as Kinbote realizes), she is more knowledgeable than he. (Kinbote's observation that Shade was "mortally afraid of his wife" [228] should perhaps be taken more than figuratively.)⁶⁶ This differential may be reflected in Shade's comment about the parents' understanding of their daughter's death: in the sequence "I know. You know" (line 493), the second pronoun is more strongly stressed than the first. What does Sybil know? The solution to Psyche's distress is instructive for Hazel's case. To appease Venus's wrath, and to win her spouse, who is Venus's son Cupid, Psyche must carry out a series of tasks. In her protracted ordeal (see Kuzmin's 1929 translation of Apuleius: "страдания души невинной" [1931, 185; *Met.* 6: XV]), she attempts suicide multiple times (*Met.* 6: XII, XIV; Bogdanovich 101–07). When, in the final challenge (the fourth in Apuleius and La Fontaine, the third in Bogdanovich), she is sent on an errand to the underworld, she climbs a tower (Apuleius, La Fontaine; Bogdanovich has a "hut" [избушка]),⁶⁷ thinking a fall the most direct route to the world of the dead (cf. Kinbote's prescription for suicide: "falling, falling, falling" [220]). But the tower in both sources instructs her otherwise, noting that if she takes one of the "ordinary" routes to the underworld, she will have no way back (see *Met.* 6: XVII).

The possibility of a descent can be discovered in Kinbote's comments on the arrangements for Hazel's date. The reference occurs through another subtext from Housman (who in a parallel life was a renowned classics scholar). Kinbote quotes "To an Athlete Dying Young" in backing up Pete Dean's explanation about the "promise" he had to "keep," "made to one of his dearest fraternity friends, a glorious young athlete whose 'garland' will not, one hopes,

poltergeist (165); the poet's "duplicat[ion]" of reality outside the window (33).

⁶⁵ Support for the connection between "stacked away your plate" and "put back Shade's 'Poems' on their shelf" (line 984) is found in the two other instances of "stacked," both referring to the index cards on which Shade's poem was composed (101, 288). See the comment by Savely Senderovich and Yelena Shvarts (115) about the imagery of precious metals that is associated with Shade's stacked index cards in the first of those instances.

⁶⁶ The suspicion was mutual. Meyer notes: "Sybil is prescient in her dislike and distrust of Kinbote, who leads Shade to his doom" (184).

⁶⁷ *Met.* 6: XVII; La Fontaine www.lafontaine.net/lesPoemes/affichePoeme.php?id=39 (accessed 9 Dec. 2018); Bogdanovich 120.

be 'briefer than a girl's'" (196).⁶⁸ Juxtaposing Housman's most famous poem to Frost's,⁶⁹ Kinbote offers an alternate model for the protagonist's death: not stopping by woods but descending to the shades: "So set [. . .] / The fleet foot on the sill of shade [. . .]."⁷⁰ // And round that early-laurelled head / Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead [. . .]."⁷¹

Psyche chooses a different route, following the instructions given by the tower and undertaking the task set by Venus: to retrieve a container from Proserpine (see e.g. *Met.* 6: XVI). Bogdanovich refers to *зоршечек* (a small pot); he does not specify the contents, which are revealed later to be a smoke that spoils the heroine's beauty (119, 121). La Fontaine has "une boîte de son fard," i.e., a box of Proserpine's cosmetics.⁷² In Apuleius the requested object

⁶⁸ This passage represents an overlapping of three voices: Kinbote paraphrases Jane Dean's report of Pete Dean's excuse. The phrases from "To an Athlete Dying Young" are evidently Kinbote's interpolations ("glorious" is one, in addition to the words in quotation marks and the echoes of the title). Cf. Kinbote's anecdote, in the Foreword, about the student skit where he was "pictured as a pompous woman hater with a German accent, constantly quoting Housman [. . .]" (25).

A. E. Housman was a fellow of Trinity College when Nabokov was a student at Cambridge (see Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years* 171). Nabokov valued Housman's poetry as a young man and continued to appreciate it in later years (*Strong Opinions* 43). Housman's intonations can be discerned in Nabokov's "The Triple Dream," the earlier of two translations of Lermontov's "Son" (Сон; The Dream), published in *Three Russian Poets* (31) (the later version appeared in the Translator's Foreword to *A Hero of Our Time*). One of the Housman texts echoed in "The Triple Dream" is "It nods and curtseys and recovers," number XVI in *A Shropshire Lad* ("To an Athlete" is XIX). A passage from Coleridge's *Remorse* appears to be a subtext of Housman's poem ("A jutting clay stone / Drops on the long lank weed, that grows beneath / And the weed nods and drips [*Remorse* 4: i; Coleridge, 48]).

⁶⁹ The connection between Housman and Frost hinted at in the textual juxtaposition is confirmed by one of those calendar intersections Nabokov was fond of; see his comments on "fatidic dates" (*Strong Opinions* 75). The two poets were both born on 26 March. Kinbote gives the relevant years for each one (1859–1936 and 1874) (269, 203), but not the date; he may not have been aware of the shared birthday. But Nabokov would have been. (The palindromic confirmation in Frost's year of death, 1963, was not yet established.) The 15-year difference in age is just a year shy of the difference between Shade and Kinbote—at least as claimed by Kinbote. He and Shade shared a 5 July birthday, though the dates were actually 17 years apart. (Shade was born in 1898 and Kinbote in 1915.) Kinbote calls attention to this difference by fudging it: "it was my birthday too—small difference of sixteen years, that's all" (161). Nabokov does not seem to have been aware, for all the prevalence of avian imagery in *Pale Fire*, that Frost parodied Housman's poem about a prize-winning athlete in his own lesser-known poem "A Blue Ribbon at Amesbury," about a prize-winning chicken.

⁷⁰ Along with "shade," "sill" too may be a marked word; cf. the "sill or ledge" the would-be suicide must "select [. . .] very carefully" (220).

⁷¹ That last phrase refers to the incapacity of the shades in the underworld: the loss of former power is a characteristic feature of the Homeric dead (see Garland 1, 133). The "garland briefer than a girl's" refers to the transitory fame of the young athlete, now among them (the "girl's" garland is made of roses, to which laurels are compared in the third stanza of Housman's poem).

⁷² See www.lafontaine.net/lesPoemes/affichePoeme.php?id=39 (accessed 9 Dec. 2018). La Fontaine's phrase is of particular interest. The container is a "box," which is close to Apu-

is “beauty” (*formonsitas*), to be carried in a small box (*pyxis*) (*Met.* 6: XVI), but the contents turn out to be a “mist” or “vapor” (*nebula*) that brings Psyche instantly to a “Stygian slumber” (*infernus somnus ac vere Stygius*) (*Met.* 6: XXI). The alternate versions are apparently equivalent as far as Venus is concerned.⁷³

Psyche’s journey in search of “beauty” puts her in the company of Persephone (Proserpine), Odysseus, Orpheus, Aeneas, and other ancient heroines and heroes who made the descent to the underworld and returned alive. Hazel, as the daughter of the Shades (Latin *umbræ*, as in *Aeneid* 6 *passim*; cf. Russian *тени*), is linked to the classical realm of the dead. The locus of her disappearance (lines 474–77, 499–500) has features of Avernus, the entrance to that realm. The “reedy bank” and the “swamp” recall the Stygian marsh (“Stygiam [. . .] paludem,” *Aen.* 6: 323).⁷⁴ Father Time, the tardy “watchman,” could be a stand-in for Charon, the ferryman of the dead across the Styx (*Aen.* 6: 325–26), who was conflated with Chronos (“Father Time”) in some ancient sources. His “uneasy dog” may correspond to Cerberus, the hellhound that guarded the gates to the underworld (*Aen.* 6: 417–25; *Met.* 6: XIX) and might have forestalled Hazel’s entry.

As the daughter, in particular, of Sybil Shade, the namesake of Aeneas’s guide, Hazel has a ready psychopomp, as her father might have predicted (“There is always a psychopompos around the corner, isn’t there?” [226]).⁷⁵

As the daughter of Sybil Shade, née Irondell, Hazel has a specific connection to Psyche’s heroic descent. A second tradition links Psyche to the swallow, which is associated with death and resurrection through its disappearance in winter and return in the spring.⁷⁶ Nabokov alludes to this tradition in the poem “Lastochka” (Ласточка; The Swallow: «Однажды мы под вечер оба . . .»), which is attributed to the hero of his 1937 novel *Dar*: “that swallow” (ласточку

leius’s term. The contents are called “fard,” which can be translated as “cosmetics” or “make-up.” This word goes back to the PIE root *perk- that is also the origin of the Greek *Procnæ*, the name of the mythological figure who was turned into a swallow.

⁷³ Cf. Bogdanovich: «Умыслила [Венера] свою умножить красоту, / А Душеньку привестъ, сколь можно, в дурноту» ([Venus] plotted to increase her beauty, / And to bring Dushen’ka, as far as possible, to a state of ugliness) (116).

⁷⁴ Michael Seidel temptingly suggests that John Shade viewed Hazel’s death in terms of an “Avernian” descent. He quotes the last two lines of Canto 2 but does not elaborate (843). He, too, notes the significance of the name Shade in this connection. Zunshine proposes a parallel between Shade’s visit to I. P. H. and the explorations of the afterlife by Odysseus and Aeneas (171–72).

⁷⁵ Sybil appears to have some familiarity with the underworld: “As you remarked the last time we went by / The Institute: ‘I really could not tell / The difference between this place and Hell’” (620–22).

⁷⁶ The butterfly and the swallow overlap in the swallow-tail butterfly, which, in his memoir-essay “Butterflies,” Nabokov cites as the one that awakened his passion (*The New Yorker*, 12 June 1948). Cf. Boyd’s comments about the ciphered references to the butterfly species *Papilio nitra* and *Papilio indra*—the Nitra and Indra Swallowtails—in Kinbote’s Index (Boyd, *Nabokov’s Pale Fire* 241, 287n15).

ты—a “swift”⁷⁷ in *The Gift*, 106) is envisioned as “life in flight” (жизнь на лету) (*Dar* 107). Kinbote notes the derivation of Sybil’s birth name “from the French for ‘swallow,’” i.e., *hirondelle*; he pointedly refers to her as Sybil Swallow (171, 173).⁷⁸ Hazel comes to life in the old barn (185–93), an appropriate habitat for a swallow.⁷⁹ Her identity as a swallow’s offspring is reinforced by her association with blindness: whereas Hazel’s parents refer to her “blind date” (line 449), Kinbote refers to her as a “blind date” (196). “There is a mysterious connection between swallows and blindness,” Kirill Taranovsky notes, with particular reference to the swallow’s fledglings, whose sight, according to legend, the parents would restore by means of the herb celandine (Taranovsky, *Essays* 159; “Razbor” 146n184; see also Ronen, *An Approach* 264).

Taranovsky’s subject is the “blind swallow” that is the central shared image of Mandelstam’s “twin” Lethean poems, «Когда Психея-жизнь спускается к теням» (When Psyche-life descends to the shades) and «Я слово позабыл, что я хотел сказать» (I forgot the word I wanted to say; “Lastochka” [Ласточка; The Swallow]) (Mandel’shtam 147–48, 146). This image provides a useful parallel in the case of Hazel. In Mandelstam’s poems the blind swallow is analogous both to the heroine “Psyche-life” and to the forgotten word and bodiless thought (see Taranovsky, *Essays* 157–58n16; “Razbor” 145 and n16). Omry Ronen discusses the plot of these poems with reference to the act of recollection “describ[ed] [. . .] in terms of the Orphic or Eleusinian *katabasis*” (“Dry River” 177). He notes the Apuleian subtexts of images in several of the “Lethean” poems, including the “jar of perfume” offered to Psyche by the shades (“Dry River” 184n19).⁸⁰ This container is just such an essential item as the Eurydice-like forgotten word—an object of vital importance. Thus Ronen compares the “jar of perfume” and also the “mirror” of «Когда Психея-жизнь . . .» to the “jug, mirror, and comb” carried in Mandelstam’s “Egyptian ship of the dead,” which is, Ronen writes, “fully supplied with ‘everything necessary for life’” (“Dry River” 179 and n13).⁸¹

⁷⁷ Swifts are unrelated to swallows but may appear similar. See www.audubon.org/news/is-swallow-or-swift.

⁷⁸ Kinbote’s unexpected reference to Pnin as “a regular martinet in regard to his underlings” (155) might be explained as an identification with the martin, also a member of the swallow family (*Hirundinidae*), though of a different genus (*Progne*, not *Hirundo*). Nabokov, who was attuned to suffixes (as, interlingually, in “martinet” www.etymonline.com/word/martinet#etymonline_v_9659), might have chosen “underlings” for the diminutive ending it shares with “fledgling.”

⁷⁹ The barn swallow (*hirundo rustica*) is the most common type of swallow worldwide. See www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/barn_swallow.

⁸⁰ Both Irina Kovaleva and Levon Hakobyan discuss these subtexts in detail. Neither is aware of Ronen’s comments. However, Kovaleva notes M. L. Gasparov’s “undeveloped” reference to a “motif from Apuleius,” as Gasparov calls it, in “Kogda Psikheia-zhizn”; Gasparov, in turn, cites Ronen’s “Dry River” (Gasparov 221).

⁸¹ Ronen notes a parallel between the plot of Nabokov’s novel *The Eye* and another of Mandelstam’s “Lethean” poems, “Я в хоровод теней” (Into the round-dance of shades) (“Vera”).

In the final distich of Mandelstam's poem, the heroine, having "descend[ed] to the shades," hesitates on the point of crossing back («И медлит передать / Лепешку медную с туманной переправы» [And [the soul] is slow to hand over / The copper cake for the foggy crossing]). It's not clear that Hazel makes the return journey.

Part 5

The way back is more difficult than the descent (*Aen.* 6: 125–29). Aeneas's path was labyrinthine (Doob 239–40). In La Fontaine the return is represented explicitly as the navigation of a "labyrinth": Psyche requires a "thread" (*ficelle*) to accomplish it.⁸²

The imagery of the labyrinth in *Pale Fire* is associated primarily with Kinbote. Shade is a reluctant maze-walker (Penelope Doob's term [56–57 and *passim*]). He prefers "method A," "penless" composition (line 862), to "method B," where the pen "physically guides the phrase / Toward faint daylight through the inky maze" (lines 851–52). But Shade appears to be a maze-maker (Doob). Kinbote calls attention to a series of closed curves in Shade's poem. He is puzzled by the "lemniscate left / Upon wet sand by nonchalantly deft / Bicycle tires" (lines 137–39), glossing "lemniscate" correctly as a "unicursal bicircular quartic" while failing to grasp Shade's depiction of the bicyclist's trick or the reference to the sideways figure 8—the infinity symbol (136). He acknowledges the heavenly destination of Shade's rubber band *qua ampersand* (another "unicursal [. . .] quartic") when he "religiously put[s] it back" around the batch of Shade's manuscript index cards (Foreword 15; cf. lines 533–34). Shade's "web of sense" (line 810) prompts Kinbote's anecdote about the "battered clothbound treasure" lent to him by the owner of the motor court in his Utana refuge. Kinbote offers an excerpt from the book, which he identifies as "the Letters of Franklin Lane"⁸³:

⁸² "Vous avez besoin de votre ficelle à une autre chose; car vous entrez incontinent dans un labyrinthe dont les routes sont fort aisées à tenir en allant; mais, quand on en revient, il est impossible de les démêler: ce que vous ferez toutefois par le moyen de cette ficelle" (You need your thread for something else; for you will immediately enter a labyrinth of which the paths are very easy to follow on the way; but when one returns thence, it is impossible to untangle them: you will do that, however, by means of this thread) (*Les Amours*).

⁸³ The reference is to *The Letters of Franklin K. Lane, personal and political* (Kinbote's excerpt appears on p. 464). The author is Franklin Knight Lane (1864–1921), the U. S. Secretary of the Interior (1913–20) and an early figure in exploring questions of environmental conservation and stewardship. Nabokov acknowledges the real existence of "Frank Lane" in a 1967 interview (*Strong Opinions* 73; the interviewer, Alfred Appel, Jr., invokes the "master thumb" from Lane's note as a manifestation of authorial presence in Nabokov's fiction). A copy of Lane's *Letters* located in the Cornell University Library was checked out four times in the 1950s, during Nabokov's decade at Cornell, with due dates of 20 March and 9 October 1953 and 29 January and 16 August 1954. One of those dates, 9 October 1953, coincides with a semester the Nabokovs spent in Ithaca, according to Boyd (*Vladimir Nabokov: The Ameri-*

Here is a passage that curiously echoes Shade's tone at the end of Canto 3. It comes from a manuscript fragment written by Lane on 17 May 1921, on the eve of his death, after a major operation: "And if I had passed into that other land, whom would I have sought? . . . Aristotle!—Ah, there would be a man to talk with! What satisfaction to see him take, like reins from between his fingers, the long ribbon of man's life and trace it through the mystifying maze of all the wonderful adventure . . . The crooked made straight. The Daedalian plan simplified by a look from above—smeared out as it were by the splotch of some master thumb that made the whole involuted, boggling thing one beautiful straight line" (261).^{84 85}

In referring to the end of Canto 3, Kinbote is probably comparing Lane's Aristotle with the players of Shade's "game of worlds": the unidentified ones that give meaning to random events ("Making ornaments / Of accidents and possibilities") (lines 806–29). But Shade's players are not like Lane's Aristotle. They create the arrangement. They do not traverse it as a path. The "web of sense"—"some kind / Of correlated pattern in the game"—is a counterpart to Lane's "mystifying maze" and antithetical to its resolution as a straight line.⁸⁶ *Pale Fire* is full of birds (Johnson, Socher)⁸⁷ and images of flight, but the Daedalian plan is not, as has been suggested, the design of Icarus's wings; it is the

can Years 225). Aside from certain cuts, designated in Kinbote's text by ellipses, there is one change in wording (Lane has the definite article: "there would be *the* man to talk with"), and there are several alterations of punctuation.

⁸⁴ Kinbote has an interest in final actions (and also in the profound effects of surgery; cf. 210). The last gesture of the "diplomat and Zemblan patriot" Oswin Bretwit (306), also "on the eve of his death" ("on the following morning he was to be hospitalized and possibly operated upon [he was, and died under the knife]"), clinched the case for his nobility of character, as acknowledged by Kinbote's hypothetical transoceanic handshake (176–77). See also Kinbote's regretful note about a line from Pope referring to Zembla, found on a manuscript card written by Shade "on the eve of his death" (and thus not included in the poem) (272). The plaintive query "While shaving his stubble off?" suggests Kinbote has not grasped the sense of Shade's "grooming" episode.

⁸⁵ Etymology, too, links Lane's "ribbon" with the "lemniscate": "from Late Latin *lemniscus* 'a pendent ribbon,' from Greek *lēmniskos* 'woolen ribbon, woolen tape' [. . .]." www.etymonline.com/word/lemniscus#etymonline_v_43312

⁸⁶ The word "maze" occurs three times in *Pale Fire*. The word "labyrinth" occurs once, with reference to the stacks in the Icelandic Collection of the Wordsmith library, where Gradus wanders in his search for King Charles (281). While this is a small sample, the occasional association of "maze," as opposed to "labyrinth," with confusion (see Doob 98–99) does not appear significant here (Gradus is lost in the labyrinth of the stacks). In Russian the distinction is not relevant: both "maze" and "labyrinth" are *labirint* (see the corresponding four instances in *Blednyi ogon'* [60, 200, 247, 266]).

Also probably not relevant is the distinction between the unicursal and multicursal variants of the labyrinth. Lane's "ribbon" appears to represent a single path. Doob notes the conceptual compatibility of the two types (e.g., 3).

⁸⁷ Socher notes the "pervasive avian imagery" in *Pale Fire* by contrast with the butterflies that are ubiquitous in Nabokov's work and significant here too. Cf. Nabokov's comment from the 1964 *Playboy* interview, reprinted with two small changes in *Strong Opinions*: "All I know is that at a very early stage of the novel's development I get this urge to garner bits of straw

blueprint of the labyrinth.⁸⁸ It also demands deciphering. Nabokov altered the punctuation of the passage Kinbote copied out; in the most consequential change, he eliminated the quotation marks that enclose “Daedalian plan” in Lane’s text (cf. Lane 464). A look through *The Letters of Franklin K. Lane* leads to its source in Ralph Waldo Emerson’s signature poem “The Sphinx” (1841) (Lane 95, 191, 419).⁸⁹ The Sphinx hopes for an answer to her riddle (“Who’ll tell me my secret / The ages have kept?”):

The fate of the man-child, –
The meaning of man, –
Known fruit of the unknown, –
Daedalian plan.

Nabokov, if not Kinbote, evidently recognized this source. The “blear-eyed, seventy-year-old man” who lends Kinbote the book resembles Emerson’s “old Sphinx” as she is characterized by her interlocutor, “a poet”: “Thy sight is growing blear.”

Kinbote has already stated his view of Shade’s “game of worlds”—“I abhor such games” (189)—while recognizing that this is “the ‘game’ in which [Shade] seeks the key to life and death” (254). Kinbote’s gratification on acquiring Lane’s *Letters* (“I did not” [regret borrowing it]) indicates, by contrast, his own sympathy with Lane’s position. Whereas Shade’s interest, like the Sphinx’s, is the pattern itself,⁹⁰ Kinbote, like Lane, would rectify the “Daedalian plan.”

and fluff, and eat pebbles. Nobody will ever discover how clearly a bird visualizes, or if it visualizes at all, the future nest and the eggs in it” (31).

⁸⁸ Boyd (*Nabokov’s Pale Fire* 272–73n34) and Connolly (157–58) speculate that the “Daedalian plan” refers to the story of Daedalus and Icarus, but Lane’s phrase “mystifying maze” ensures the reference to King Minos’s labyrinth. Cf. Johnson’s reference to Daedalus’s maze in his discussion of the “labyrinth of incest” in *Ada* (“The Labyrinth” 243–44).

⁸⁹ “The Sphinx” was first published in *The Dial* in 1841. Saundra Morris pinpoints the significance of the poem for its author: “The Sphinx’ appears first in every volume of Emerson’s own design that contains it—three of the four books of his poetry he himself shaped” (Morris 550).

⁹⁰ Hence Shade’s conclusion:

And if my private universe scans right,
So does the verse of galaxies divine,
Which I suspect is an iambic line. (lines 970–76)

His realization is an answer to earlier despair:

How ludicrous these efforts to translate
Into one’s private tongue a public fate!
Instead of poetry divinely terse,
Disjointed notes, Insomnia’s mean verse! (lines 231–34)

Shade’s complaint is a reference to Horace’s famous dictum urging the poet to avoid the “servile path” of the translator (*Ars poetica*, lines 128–35)—which Nabokov willingly

Like Lane, he seeks a resolution of the pattern—in Kinbote’s case, an exit from the maze.

King Charles’s escape from Zembla in a red sweater involves an initial descent past a decapitated psychopomp (“there had somehow wandered down, to exile and disposal, a headless statue of Mercury, conductor of souls to the Lower World” [132–33]).⁹¹ Red wool is a prominent motif on the journey. If the “yarn clew”—the “ball of red wool” knitted by the disguised Baron Mandevil (146)—is not spurious,⁹² it may be further evidence of the exile’s search for a way out of the labyrinth.⁹³ Here, along with the later figurative sense (“clue”), the original sense of “clew” is implied: it is a “ball of thread,” as associated with Ariadne’s aid to Theseus (the second sense of “yarn” may be hinted at too; cf. Shade’s use of that word as “tale” [226]).⁹⁴

This labyrinth is Kinbote’s own. The maze he would exit from is first of all King Charles’s doomed love for his “banished queen,” whose image torments his sleep (205, 209):

The gist, rather than the actual plot of the dream, was a constant refutation of his not loving her. His dream-love for her exceeded in emotional tone, in spiritual passion and depth, anything he had experienced in his surface existence. This love was like an endless wringing of hands, like a blundering of the soul through an infinite maze of hopelessness and remorse. They were, in a sense, amorous dreams, for they were permeated with tenderness, with a longing to sink his head onto her lap and sob away the monstrous past. They brimmed with the awful awareness of her being so young and so helpless. They were purer than his life. (210)

proclaimed his own [“The Servile Path”]). The quotation comes from the lines “publica materies privati iuris erit, si / non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem” (*Ars poetica* 460) (“A public story will become your own property, if you do not dwell upon the whole circle of events, which is paltry and open to every one” [Horace, *Works*]). The phrase “servile path” (see Nabokov [1959, 106] on its source in Sir John Denham’s 1647 poem “To Sir Richard Fanshaw . . .”) represents Horace’s “vilem [. . .] orbem,” which is probably the prompt for the adjective in Shade’s phrase “Insomnia’s mean verse.” Shade would have been aware that Pope quoted earlier lines from this passage in the *Essay on Criticism*: “Be not the first by whom the new are tried, / Nor yet the last to lay the old aside [. . .].” Cf. “Difficile est proprie communia dicere; tuque / rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus, / quam si proferres ignota indictaque primus” (lines 128–30) (“It is difficult to write with propriety on subjects to which all writers have a common claim; and you with more prudence will reduce the Iliad into acts, than if you first introduce arguments unknown and never treated of before” [Horace, *Works*]).

⁹¹ The “pinhead light” that guided the King to safety in the lightning storm (140) substitutes for the headless Mercury.

⁹² Cf. Nabokov’s warning about snares set by the author “so as to entangle the one entering the labyrinth with the false thread of the pseudo-Ariadne” («чтобы поддельной нитью лже-Ариадны опутать вошедшего в лабиринт») (*Drugie berega*, ch. 13, 4).

⁹³ Knapp points out that Hazel, like Baron Mandevil, is a knitter (line 340); she links this hobby, and other web-related activities of Hazel’s, to Shade’s “web of sense” (Knapp 111).

⁹⁴ Cf. the Online Etymology Dictionary, s.v. “clue,” on the source of the original sense of the word in connection to Ariadne’s thread and the Cretan labyrinth. www.etymonline.com/word/clue?ref=etymonline_crossreference#etymonline_v_13857 (accessed 19 February 2018).

Echoes of Mandelstam's «Когда Психея-жизнь спускается к теням» and related texts do not amount to quotation, but may support an understanding of Kinbote's maze as an experience of *katabasis* (note the opposition between “surface” and “depth” that is the premise of the account). Characteristic in this context is Kinbote's “tenderness”; cf. «с стигийской нежностью» (with Stygian tenderness); «И в нежной суетке не зная, что начать» (And in the tender commotion not knowing what to undertake).⁹⁵ The parallelism of key phrases is highlighted by a comparison with Véra Nabokov's translation: «Эта любовь была как непрерывное *ломание рук*, как *блуждания души* по бесконечному лабиринту безнадежности и раскаяния» (*Blednyi ogon'* 200). The first phrase should be compared with Mandelstam's «И руки слабые ломают перед ней» (And they wring their weak hands before her).⁹⁶ The second recalls the straying of the word-Psyche in Mandelstam's essay “The Word and Culture” (*Слово и культура*, 1921): «Слово—Психея. [. . .] И вокруг вещи слово блуждает свободно, как душа вокруг брошенного, но не забытого тела» (The word is a Psyche. [. . .] And around the thing the word wanders freely, like a soul around a cast-off but not forgotten body) (Mandel'shtam 215).

When Hazel died, Shade “knew there would be nothing” (line 648; cf. “I know. You know”)—no posthumous sign (lines 647–52). Kinbote is the one who takes on Hazel's task: descending to the labyrinth. This is the place where not Hazel, but Disa “still dwells” (205).⁹⁷ That present tense is unique in *Pale Fire*.

Shade sees just the “preview of remorse” (line 450). For Kinbote, whose dreams of Disa represent what is “purer than his life” (434), the experience recalls the lines from Emerson, whose name, Nabokov must have recognized, is a near-anagram of the key word: “And the joy that is sweetest / Lurks in stings of remorse.”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Ronen cites “с стигийской нежностью” as an example of the association of *tenderness* with death in the “Lethan” poems (*An Approach* 156).

⁹⁶ Compare Mandelstam's «руки слабые» and Housman's “strengthless dead.”

⁹⁷ This identification makes topographical sense: as some readers have noted, Disa's name links her with Dis, a Roman god of the underworld. It makes another kind of geographical sense: Kinbote suggests a connection between Hazel and Disa with regard to the Villa Paradisa and Hazel's conception in Nice, not far from Disa's ancestral estate (204).

⁹⁸ There is no indication that Kinbote exits from the maze—except by Nabokov's fiat, in his declaration that Kinbote committed suicide after finishing his work on Shade's poem (*Strong Opinions* 74).

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The Pleasure of Translingual Punning: Homage to Nabokov in Olga Grushin's *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*

Julie Hansen

In Chapter Four of Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Pnin* (1957), the eponymous protagonist gives the teenage Victor a book. Victor "intended to praise it—first, because it was a gift, and second, because he believed it to be a translation from Pnin's mother tongue" (Nabokov, *Pnin* 374–75). But Victor guesses wrong: the novel in question is Jack London's *The Son of the Wolf* and this mistaken assumption leads him to misread it. "Rather unfortunately," the narrator relates, "Victor lit upon a passage about Zarinska, the Yukon Indian Chief's daughter, and lightheartedly mistook her for a Russian maiden" (375).

Readers of *Pnin* can be forgiven the same mistake of taking this novel, written in English, for a translation from the Russian. The same holds true of another, more recent anglophone novel by a Russian author: *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* (2005) by Olga Grushin. Both of these novels have eponymous Russian protagonists with names difficult for anglophone readers to pronounce. Both are sprinkled with Russian words and expressions, such as "*slava Bogu*" (Nabokov, *Pnin* 309) and "*Vashe zdorovie!*" (Grushin, *DLS* 5), as well as references to Russian literature and culture.

Similarities can also be seen in the linguistic trajectories of the two authors. Both learned English as children and adopted it as a literary language after moving to the United States—arriving, as Omry Ronen writes of Nabokov, on "a new shore, the Amerussian shore of the new world literature" ("Emulation" 70). Both are translingual writers, defined by Steven G. Kellman as "authors who write in more than one language or at least in a language other than their primary one" (ix). In Kellman's taxonomy, Nabokov belongs to the category of "ambilinguals," who have written significant works in more than one language, while Grushin belongs to "monolingual translinguals," who write in one, non-native language (12). Of course, Nabokov (1899–1977) and Grushin (born 1971) belong to different generations and waves of emigration.¹ Whereas Nabokov's

¹ For a breakdown of four generations of Russian émigré writers, see Wanner 4–5. I am grateful to Helena Bodin, Timothy Sergay, and Adrian Wanner for their comments on early drafts of this essay.

Pnin was preceded by nine novels in Russian and three in English, *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* was Grushin's debut novel, appearing more than six decades after Nabokov's first English-language novel, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* (1941).² In interviews, Grushin often names Nabokov as her favorite writer (Grushina, "Russko-amerikanskii pisatel"; Grushina, "Ol'ga Grushina"). She mentions the influence of Gogol and Chekhov as well, but gives primacy of place to Nabokov.

Paratexts to Grushin's novel draw connections to Nabokov.³ The front cover of the first US edition features this blurb by the writer James Lasdun: "Steeped in the tradition of Gogol, Bulgakov, and Nabokov, Grushin is clearly a writer of large and original talent" (Grushin). A paper band around the cover of the Russian translation encourages the reader to associate Grushin with Nabokov with the words: "Nabokov's linguistic paradoxes come to life" (Лингвистические парадоксы Набокова оживают) (Grushina, *Zhizn'*). The author's preface to the Russian version points out that both *Lolita* and *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* were first brought out by the Putnam publishing house (Grushina, *Zhizn'* 5). But Grushin's homage to her translingual predecessor runs deeper, appearing on a subtextual as well as paratextual level. As Evgenia Butenina observes, Grushin "aspires to consistently embed Nabokovian and other literary (and painterly) codes in her writing, as if picking up his narrative with the story of post-revolutionary Russia, which he could only imagine" (210).⁴

In this essay, I will compare *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* to *Pnin*, focusing on similarities in plot, theme, leitmotifs, and wordplay. In approaching these two texts, I take as my starting point Omry Ronen's view of relations between texts, which diverges from definitions of intertextuality by many Western scholars.⁵ Ronen preferred the term "subtext" for "an existing text of a different author that becomes reflected in a work by the writer being studied" (Scherr xix). Building on Kirill Taranovsky's four types of poetic subtext (i.e., a text that provides inspiration for a later text; a text with corresponding rhythm and sound; a text that offers an interpretative key; and a text with

² To date, Grushin has published two more novels: *The Line* (2010) and *Forty Rooms* (2016).

³ I use the term "paratext" in accordance with Gérard Genette's definition of paratexts as "verbal or other productions, such as an author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations," which "surround" and "extend" the text, "in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book" (1).

⁴ Kristen Welsh analyzes intertextuality with Nabokov's writing in *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*, showing how Grushin adapts "Nabokov's artist-hero to Soviet circumstance" (75). Welsh examines Nabokov's 1924 story "La Veneziana," his memoir *Speak, Memory* (1966), and the novels *Zashchita Luzhina* (1930, *The Defense*), *Priglasenie na kazn'* (1936, *Invitation to a Beheading*), *Dar* (1938, *The Gift*), and *Lolita* (1955). Welsh's analysis focuses on the theme of art, which, although present, is not as prominent in *Pnin*.

⁵ As Barry Scherr explains, "Intertextuality, [Ronen] felt, replaced Bakhtin's emphasis on 'the word' with what he saw as the vague notion of 'discourse'" (xx).

which a later text polemicizes), Ronen added two more: thematic subtext; and linguistic, historical, and literary presuppositions (“Podtekst” 253).⁶ In the analysis below, I will argue that *Pnin* comprises a subtext for *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* and that an awareness of this connection enriches the reading experience and opens up interpretative possibilities.

Protagonists and plots

The protagonists are both middle-aged: Pnin is 52 years old at the novel’s opening and 56 at its end; Sukhanov is 56 throughout. Pnin is a Russian exile in 1950s America with an untenured teaching position at the fictional Waindell College. Leona Toker describes him as:

a complex character whose scholarly research keeps diverting him from the “average reality” but who comes back to this reality and makes pathetic efforts to cope with it, who is constantly left in the lurch by his loved ones but returns kindness for callousness, who combines a survivor’s guilt with resilience and love of life, who suffers pain but tries not to share it with others (17)

For Pnin, “average reality” entails a struggle to understand—and make himself understood by—Americans. Something of an underdog, the “tragically lonely, farcically talking, poor and pure Timofei Pnin” (Senderovich and Shvarts 23) is more immediately likable than Sukhanov, who is a privileged member of the Soviet nomenklatura. Nevertheless, *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* is also a tale of pain and loss.

As editor-in-chief of the fictional journal *Art of the World*, Sukhanov enjoys numerous privileges, including a spacious apartment on Belinsky Street, where he lives with his family. This comfortable existence is disturbed, however, when he involuntarily begins to recall the past. Memory passages reveal the traumatic death of Sukhanov’s father during the Stalinist period and his own involvement with the underground movement during Khrushchev’s Thaw. We learn that he was an artist whose surrealist-inspired paintings got him into trouble with the state until, in 1963, he sold out in exchange for “safety, constancy, tranquillity” (Grushin, *DLS* 316). Now, in 1985, as Gorbachev’s policy of glasnost heralds changes in Soviet society, Sukhanov is divested of his cultural capital. By the novel’s end, the journal has placed him on indefinite leave, and his wife and children have moved out of the “glittering, echoing Moscow apartment where he was condemned to live from this day forward, exiled from his work, his family, his very existence, talking to no one for weeks at a time save his own reflection” (235). The memory process compels

⁶ In “Podtekst,” Ronen exemplifies three functions of the subtext: semantic and referential (254); iterative, evoking “poetic déjà vu” (258); and metalinguistic (262–63). For Ronen’s discussion of Taranovsky’s definition of subtext, see his essay “K. F. Taranovskii i ‘raskrytie podteksta’ v filologii.”

Sukhanov to question his choices, and he ultimately leaves everything behind, resolved to take up painting again.

Whereas Pnin's exile is literal,⁷ for Sukhanov exile is a metaphor for loss of power and prestige. Pnin's status has been precarious all along, as Besemeres observes: "Pnin's position at Waindell College abuts on a precipice, his one-man department in constant danger of folding" (393). Pnin has principles, however, which are apparent in his "constitutional incapacity for linguistic and cultural compromise" (Besemeres 405). The latter half of Sukhanov's life, by contrast, is characterized by compromises he comes to regret.

Both plots involve mishaps, cases of mistaken identity, and misadventures. At the opening of Nabokov's novel, Pnin is, unbeknownst to him, on the wrong train for Cremona, where he is due to give a lecture; he then boards the wrong bus, leaving his bag behind.⁸ Later in the novel, Pnin has difficulty finding his way to the country home of friends (377–80). Barabtarlo explains how mishaps are built into each of the chapters:

At the beginning the reader finds Pnin satisfied, serene, almost sanguine, totally and blissfully unaware of impending doom, ignoring its numerous signs. Later, as the chapter progresses and the clouds gather, he invariably faces some unforeseen misfortune (24)

The novel's second page states that "Pnin at the moment felt very well satisfied with himself" (*Pnin* 302). Sukhanov, too, enjoys a sense of satisfaction in the novel's opening scene, thinking, "Everything in his life was well arranged, yes, everything was perfect, and most deservedly so" (*DLS* 9). But this "wonderfully warm, mindless feeling of overall well-being" (*DLS* 9) soon gives way to a series of misunderstandings. Sukhanov has difficulty navigating public transportation and, over the course of the plot, loses his bag, wallet, and keys. He experiences short-term memory lapses, forgetting names, dates, and recent conversations.

Disorientation figures prominently in both novels. Pnin is "a disoriented Russian immigrant who is persistently differentiated from himself" (Besemeres 396). Sukhanov gets lost physically as well as metaphorically. The literary device of *ostranenie* (defamiliarization) appears in both works, exemplified in Pnin's uncomprehending perception of a basketball hoop as a "curious basket-like net, somewhat like a glorified billiard pocket—lacking, however, a bottom" (*Pnin* 401).⁹ When Sukhanov's eyeglasses get stepped on, the cracked left

⁷ The novel *Pnin* has been described as "a tragicomedy of emigration, of life in a foreign language" (Senderovich and Shvarts 24). Similarly, Mary Besemeres notes, "There is a tragicomedy (not merely a crosscultural farce) involved in the loss, through emigration, of everything corresponding to Pnin's deepest habits and intuitions" (393).

⁸ This is the first indication of what Gennadi Barabtarlo refers to as the "Mishap Theme" of Chapter One (70). Noting that "the novel opens on a Friday in October of 1950," he pinpoints the date to the thirteenth and comments: "Friday the thirteenth is a perfect day for the monstrous heap of mishaps that Pnin is put to suffer in the first chapter" (16).

⁹ For an interesting analysis of this passage, see Besemeres 392.

lens gives him a new, distorted view of the world, “endowing his own reflection in the window with the multifaceted eye of an insect” (*DLS* 255).

“Pnin accumulated sorrows,” observes Brian Boyd (3), and the theme of loss is central to both novels. “Is sorrow not [. . .] the only thing in the world people really possess?” wonders Pnin (*Pnin* 333). As past memories begin to haunt Sukhanov, he experiences “wrenching sorrow” (*DLS* 24). Near the novel’s end, he reflects on his own accumulated sorrows and wonders if “perhaps he himself, and no one else, was to blame for the loss of his position, his family, his sense of self; perhaps all the destruction in his life was, in fact, the inevitable, logical conclusion to the choices he had made all those years before” (*DLS* 315).

The comforts of home

A longing for a home, and the subsequent loss thereof, drives both plots. By necessity rather than choice, Pnin continues to lead the itinerant life of an exile; Chapter Three of the novel gives a brief history of his many and various temporary lodgings. Early in the novel, Pnin boards with the Clements—“the first house he really liked and the first room he had occupied for more than a year” (342), but the return of the Clements’ newly divorced daughter requires him to move again. In Chapter Six, Pnin believes he has finally found the ideal home and throws a housewarming party (a “house-heating soiree” in Pnin’s words, 406). In a passage harking back to the narrator’s earlier observation “that one of the main characteristics of life is discreteness” (310), we read: “The sense of living in a discrete building all by himself was to Pnin something singularly delightful and amazingly satisfying to a weary old want of his innermost self, battered and stunned by thirty-five years of homelessness” (401). The knowledge that Pnin is about to lose his teaching position (revealed to the reader before Dr. Hagen breaks the news to him) renders the party scene all the more poignant. As Joan Clements remarks afterwards, “if anybody needs a house, it is certainly Timofey” (417). In the final chapter, the narrator spots Pnin driving out of town with his dog in a small sedan “crammed with bundles and suitcases” (435).

Sukhanov recalls living, as a child, in a communal apartment, with constant conflicts and suspicion among the neighbors. As an adult, he basks in creature comforts in his well-appointed apartment—“a marvelous, self-contained world of hot baths and fresh clothes and steaming teas and strawberry jams and maybe even strong liqueurs” (*DLS* 278). Another passage describes a kitchen that “seemed wonderfully cozy and intimate and at the same time eternal, like some masterly painting of family togetherness, some vision of an ideal life. . . .” (320). But like Pnin, Sukhanov abandons his home at the end of the novel.

Both narratives contain detailed descriptions of domestic settings, which serve to underscore their loss and also, in Sukhanov’s case, a recurring sense of

the uncanny.¹⁰ As I have shown in a previous article, several allusions to Freud invite a reading of Grushin's novel in light of his theory of the return of the repressed (Hansen, "Memory Unleashed"). *Pnin* also invokes Freud, though to very different effect, in keeping with Nabokov's negative view of psychoanalysis.¹¹ Nabokov makes fun of Freudian theory in several passages, particularly those depicting Pnin's ex-wife Liza and her new husband Dr. Eric Wind, both psychotherapists.

Barabtarlo observes that "the ensuing satirical description of various psychoanalytic techniques is what may well be the most detailed and vehement manifestation of the Freudian theme in Nabokov's novels" (158). The author's and narrator's distaste for psychotherapy is shared by the protagonist: "It is nothing but a kind of microcosmos of communism—all that psychiatry, rumbled Pnin" (*Pnin* 333). Grushin's protagonist, by contrast, makes no direct reference to Freud, although the narrative hints at his ideas about the uncanny, dreams, and memory.

Language

Both novels highlight language, although in different ways. The list of objects with which Pnin struggles in his daily life—gadgets, electric devices, spectacles, zippers¹²—includes the English language, which presented "a special danger area in Pnin's case" (*Pnin* 306). In a letter to a publisher, Nabokov described his protagonist as "handicapped and hemmed by his inability to learn a language" (qtd. in Barabtarlo 14). Barabtarlo identifies Pnin's speech as "one of the main thematic characteristics" of the novel, summarizing its idiosyncrasies thus: "Pnin constantly mispronounces words, garbles the English syntax (light-heartedly imposing the lax Russian word order onto the more rigid English construction), ignores both the definite and the indefinite articles, and so forth" (64). Pnin even second-guesses Webster's Dictionary:

he decided to look up the correct pronunciation of "interested," and discovered that Webster, or at least the battered 1930 edition lying on a table in the Browsing Room, did not place the stress accent on the third syllable, as he did. He sought a list of errata at the back, failed to find one (*Pnin* 352)

¹⁰ It is noteworthy in connection with this that Sigmund Freud's concept of *das Unheimliche* is etymologically linked with the word "home."

¹¹ Nabokov referred to Freud as "the Viennese quack" (*Strong Opinions* 47). According to one scholar, Nabokov "sustained the grandest and most extravagant contempt for psychoanalysis known in modern literature" (Green 1).

¹² Pnin wages "a constant war with insensate objects that fell apart, or attacked him, or refused to function, or viciously got themselves lost as soon as they entered the sphere of his existence" (*Pnin* 305).

The narrative draws the reader's attention to language by conveying, through free indirect speech, Pnin's "Pninish" (Barabtarlo 88). Misspellings replicate Pnin's mispronunciations (Barabtarlo 91). Within a paragraph-long digression on Pnin's pronunciation, the narrator notes, "He had enormous difficulty ('dzeefeecooltsee' in Pninian English) with depalatization" (*Pnin* 343–44). Pnin's distressed search for whiskey and soda in the kitchen cupboard is conveyed to the reader through his words as spoken to Joan: "I search, John, for the viscous and sawdust" (339). Pnin is shown "Englishing the Russian" (308) words for things, for example: 'office' as "*kabinet*" (415), 'receipt' (by way of the Russian word *kvitantsiia*) as "quittance" (308), 'catastrophe' as "cata-stroph" (308). As Barabtarlo's detailed commentary demonstrates, Pnin's speech showcases mistranslations of Russian words and idioms, such as "extremely sympathetic colleagues" (*Pnin* 371–72),¹³ as well as amalgamations of Russian and English proverbs, such as, "The cat, as Pnin would say, cannot be hid in a bag" (327).¹⁴

Throughout the novel, the narrator comments on the incorrectness of Pnin's speech, remarking, "If his Russian was music, his English was murder" (343). His idiolect is noted by other characters, as well; Laurence Clements avers that Pnin "employs a nomenclature all his own. His verbal vagaries add a new thrill to life. His mispronunciations are mythopoetic. His slips of the tongue are oracular" (416–17).

Language errors are made, however, by all non-native speakers in the novel. The narrator notes the American Susan's "funny functional Russian" (392), as well as misuse by the German-speaker Hagen, "who, though a lesser addict of the present tense than Pnin, also held it in favor" (420). As Senderovich and Shvarts point out, Pnin "is not monolingual. Besides his garbled English, he has an excellent command of French" (28), though, ironically, this disqualifies him for a job in the French Department. Thus, Pnin's world is multilingual, and Russian elements in the text are intrinsic to the plot and characterization.

By contrast, English has no given place in Sukhanov's world. The setting of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* is monolingual; all dialogue takes place in Russian, although conveyed in English.¹⁵ Like *Pnin*, Grushin's novel contains numerous transliterated Russian words, frequently in connection with greetings, food, and literary references. While translanguaging in *Pnin* serves a mimetic purpose, the translanguaging aspects of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* are visible only on the level of the text, not in the fictional world. Translanguaging in this case is thus a transaction between text and reader—a transaction of which the fictional characters are unaware. It functions as a stylistic device that creates

¹³ See Barabtarlo 181.

¹⁴ See Barabtarlo 97. While reading a Russian exile newspaper, Pnin encounters this conflation of two English idioms: "He who lives in a glass house should not try to kill two birds with one stone" (*Pnin* 351).

¹⁵ This is an example of transmesis, i.e., "Texts that mime a language reality such that the medium does not match the object depicted" (Beebee 6).

a defamiliarizing effect for the reader, in parallel to Sukhanov's growing sense of disorientation in the early glasnost era.¹⁶

Puns

Like their authors, Pnin and Sukhanov take pleasure in punning.¹⁷ Pnin has “a bright foreigner’s fondness for puns” (*Pnin* 404), even bad ones. For example, when inviting a colleague to his housewarming party, Pnin adds, “Bring also your spouse—or perhaps you are a Bachelor of Hearts?” This prompts the narrator to exclaim, “Oh, punster Pnin!” (406). In the opening scene of Grushin’s novel, the self-satisfied Sukhanov puns to himself about his status as “a man who is himself something of a weight in the art world, pun most certainly intended” (*DLS* 10). Here, a pun is signaled in advance of the punchline, which comes in the subsequent sentence: “For the past twelve years Anatoly Pavlovich Sukhanov had occupied the most influential, most enviable post of editor in chief at the country’s leading art magazine, *Art of the World*” (10). The magazine title comprises another pun, alluding to a fin-de-siècle journal with a similar name but strikingly different esthetic: *The World of Art* (1898–1904), edited by Sergei Diaghilev and Alexander Benois.¹⁸

One of the recurring puns in Nabokov’s novel arises from non-russophone characters’ difficulty in pronouncing Pnin’s last name. Mispronunciations and approximations are spelled out to comic effect—for example, when Pnin is referred to as “Dr. Neen” (374) or “Professor Pun-neen” (315). Mispronunciations go both ways: Pnin calls Mrs. Thayer “Mrs. Fire” (318) and Joan “John.” Omry Ronen notes that proper nouns are a rich source of puns and allusions in literature, producing:

¹⁶ Issues related to the readers of translingual literary texts are particularly interesting. Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson write, using Nabokov’s works as an example: “How does one delimit, define, and, not least, interrelate the social groups being addressed by the bilingual text? Sometimes it is evident that they are largely two separate, monolingual groups, like Nabokov’s Russian and English readers. As static rubrics, however, such binary linguistic definitions of audience mask significant factors of generational time and social space. Nabokov, for example, struggled to adapt his Oxbridge English to the American market, while his Russian was losing pace with a half century of change in his native country. His biographers show that he also chortled at the linguistic puzzles and puns between versions that would, he knew, fascinate and frustrate a third group, the significant spectrum of Anglo-Russian exiles and academic scholars who would help guarantee his posterity as a bilingual author of transnational fictions” (Hokenson and Munson 12).

¹⁷ Nabokov’s predilection for puns is evidenced by his correspondence with Edmund Wilson, who cautioned him against overusing them with an American audience (*Barabtarlo* 234). Senderovich and Shvarts note that Nabokov “did a good deal of punning and other tongue-twisting in his Russian period, but as he switched to English, linguistic clowning, verbal *harlequinage* or *pulcinellata*, became compulsive” (40).

¹⁸ For further discussion of this pun, see Hansen, “Making Sense” 544–45.

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a special type of intertextual reference, as a rule, historical or biographical, which comprises “meaningful names” of characters (usually minor), place names, titles of imaginary works of art, invented trademarks, and the like. Essentially, these names function in the same way as other allusive material, but with a greater share of multilingual blending and punning that has to be taken into account (“Emulation” 65)

In both novels, names carry significance and generate confusion for the fictional characters (and, perhaps, for the reader); they provide material for puns and function as leitmotifs. The name of Sukhanov’s estranged friend Lev Belkin not only signals Pushkin’s *Belkin’s Tales* (Повести Белкина; Povesti Belkina) as a Russian subtext, but is also “associated with ‘belka’ (‘squirrel’) as a symbol of fragility” (Butenina 211). Squirrels comprise a leitmotif in Nabokov’s novel, and an echo of the Russian word *belka* can be heard in the last name of Pnin’s first love, Mira Belochkin. Names also serve as a defamiliarizing device, as Barabtarlo points out in connection with *Pnin* (87). In Grushin’s novel, mention of “some nice young man named Misha Buryshkin or Broshkin or Burykin who was also in love with Nina” (276), in reference to the later Minister of Culture Mikhail Burykin, has a defamiliarizing effect.¹⁹ This recalls Lev Tolstoy’s use of the device in *War and Peace*, when on the eve of the Battle of Borodino, Pierre Bezukhov enquires about the name of the village ahead: «—Бурдино или как?—сказал офицер, с вопросом обращаясь к своему товарищу.—Бородино,—поправляя, отвечал другой» (Tolstoy 170).²⁰

The following pun in *Pnin* is translingual, appearing in English, yet based on Russian words: “A horsefly applied itself, blind fool, to Pnin’s bald head” (390). As Barabtarlo notes, the Russian word for horsefly (*slepen’*) derives from the word for ‘blind’ (*slepoi*) (210). Sukhanov, as far as we know, is monolingual, but Grushin’s narrator puns translingually: for example, Sukhanov overhears the Russian word *babochka* and wonders if the speaker is referring to a “‘bow tie’ or ‘butterfly’—but the night swallowed the rest of the sentence and he tried to convince himself she was discussing lepidoptery rather than Belkin’s unfortunate neck decoration” (19–20).²¹ This mention of lepidoptery lays bare the pun for the non-russophone reader, alluding at the same time to Nabokov.

¹⁹ For a discussion of the functions of names in Grushin’s novel, see Hansen, “Making Sense” 550–53.

²⁰ In Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky’s translation: “‘Burdino or something?’ said the officer, turning to his comrade with the question. ‘Borodino,’ the other replied, correcting him.” (Tolstoy 761).

²¹ For a more detailed discussion of puns in *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*, see Hansen, “Making Sense” and Hansen, “Translating the Translingual Text.”

The protagonists remember the past

Memory is a central theme in both novels. The seven chapters of *Pnin* “span four and a half years of ‘concurrent time’ and more than half a century of retrospection” (Barabtarlo 19). The plot of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* unfolds over the course of eleven days in August of 1985, but covers, through 20 memory passages interspersed throughout its 23 chapters, approximately half a century of Soviet history. Memory is a two-edged sword; sometimes the protagonists reminisce with pleasure, but they also struggle to hold unsettling memories at bay.

Pnin contains two passages that recount memories from the protagonist’s life in Russia. Here the onset of a memory is described as a physical affliction. The first passage occurs in Chapter One, when Pnin, having disembarked from the wrong bus to Cremona, enters a park and is suddenly overcome with nebulous physical symptoms, which he recognizes from four previous bouts of this “pain and panic,” “discomfort and despair” (311). A “wave of hopeless fatigue” makes him sweat, feel “terrified,” and wonder variously if it is food poisoning, pneumonia, or a heart attack (310). Pnin feels as if he were dissolving into his surroundings, and this serves as a plot device, as Barabtarlo explains:

Whenever Pnin melts into his background during his bizarre spells, he invariably sinks into his past, and the more powerful and protracted the swoon, the deeper he sinks [. . .] This peculiar symptom affords N[abokov] a nice opportunity to retrieve yet another bit of his subject’s biography without disturbing the surface of narration. (211)

Let us examine how the first memory passage is constructed. A long paragraph recounts how eleven-year-old Timofey lies in bed with a fever, gazing at the wallpaper in search of a pattern. The next paragraph briefly returns to the present, in a manner so subtle that the reader could easily miss the transition. The first sentence contains details associated with fever (i.e., the delirious search for a pattern in the wallpaper) and the ordinary life of a child (school, dinner, and bedtime). Yet the protagonist’s “sense of being late for some appointment” alludes to a circumstance of Pnin’s present, namely his need to get to Cremona on time (313). The second sentence could apply to either temporal plane:

The foliage and the flowers, with none of the intricacies of their warp disturbed, appeared to detach themselves in one undulating body from their pale-blue background which, in its turn, lost its papery flatness and dilated in depth till the spectator’s heart almost burst in response to the expansion. (313)

The “spectator” here can be read as either the adult Pnin viewing the park plants against the sky, or the child Timofey imagining that the wallpaper is moving. The third sentence describes concrete details of a nursery, thus locat-

ing it in childhood, while the fourth sentence creates the effect of a double-exposed photograph: “And although the witness and victim of the phantasms was tucked up in bed, he was, in accordance with the twofold nature of his surroundings, simultaneously seated on a bench in a green and purple park” (313).

This “twofold” effect recalls the poem “Sorrentinskie fotografii” (Соррентинские фотографии; Sorrento Photographs, 1926) by Vladislav Khodasevich, whom Nabokov held in high esteem.²² The poem ekphrastically describes how the accidental double-exposure of film plates overlays pictures taken in Russia with images of Italy. As a result, the speaker “is perceiving two moments of time almost simultaneously, and consequently retrieving the present which exists in the past and the past which exists in the present” (Bethea, “*Sorrento Photographs*” 62). Here, as in *Pnin*, the melding of two disparate settings from the life of an émigré—one pre-exilic, the other post-exilic—connected by “wild correspondences” (Khodasevich 270) serves as a metaphor for the workings of memory.²³

²² Nabokov’s 1939 obituary of Khodasevich declares him “the greatest Russian poet of our time, Pushkin’s literary descendant in Tyutchev’s line of succession” (“On Hodasevich” 223). This view is repeated in Nabokov’s *Speak, Memory* (285) and 1962 foreword to *The Gift* (“Foreword”). The poem “Sorrentinskie fotografii” belongs to Khodasevich’s last verse collection, *Evropeiskaia noch’* (European Night, 1927).

²³ As David M. Bethea observes, “the theme of memory [. . .] is the fulcrum of the entire work” (“*Sorrento Photographs*” 61). See also Bethea’s analysis of this poem in *Khodasevich: His Life and Art* (296–316). The link to memory is made explicit in the poem’s opening and closing stanzas, the latter of which also speaks of loss:

Воспоминанье прихотливо
И непослушливо. Оно—
Как узловатая олива:
Никак, ничем не стеснено.
Свои причудливые ветви
Узлами диких соответствий
Нерасторжимо заплетет—
И так живет, и так растет. (Khodasevich 270)

Memory is capricious
as well as contrary—
like the knotty olive,
it cannot be hemmed in.
Inextricably it weaves
in knots of farfetched correspondences
its whimsical branches—
and so it lives, and so it grows. (trans. by Bethea, “*Sorrento Photographs*” 60–61)
.....

Воспоминанье прихотливо.
Как сновидение—оно
Как будто вещей правдой живо,
Но так же дико и темно
И так же, вероятно, лживо . . .
Среди каких утрат, забот,

After the above-quoted passage, Pnin returns to the present, as indicated by the time: “It was now four-twenty. He blew his nose and trudged to the station” (314). Yet this “rememorative ‘spell’” (Barabtarlo 22) has aftereffects: looking out over his audience at the Cremona Women’s Club, Pnin has a “brief vision” (316) in which people from his past are superimposed on present ones:

In the middle of the front row of seats he saw one of his Baltic aunts [. . .] Next to her, shyly smiling, sleek dark head inclined, gentle brown gaze shining up at Pnin from under velvet eyebrows, sat a dead sweetheart of his [. . .] Murdered, forgotten, unrevenged, incorrupt, immortal, many old friends were scattered throughout the dim hall among more recent people (315–16)

Pnin recalls his “sweetheart” again in Chapter Five, when he visits friends at their summer house, called The Pines. The memory is foreshadowed early in the chapter in the following description of the rural setting:

An inscrutable white sky hung over a clover field, and from a pile of firewood near a shack came a rooster’s cry, jagged and gaudy—a vocal coxcomb. Some chance intonation on the part of this slightly hoarse bird, combined with the warm wind pressing itself against Pnin in search of attention, recognition, anything, briefly reminded him of a dim dead day when he, a Petrograd University freshman, had arrived at the small station of a Baltic summer resort, and the sounds, and the smells, and the sadness— (378–79)

И после скольких эпитафий,
Теперь, воздушная, всплывет
И что закроет в свой черед
Тень соррентинских фотографий? (Khodasevich 275)

Memory is capricious.
Like a dream, it seems
alive with prophetic truth,
but is just as wild and obscure
and, probably, just as false . . .
Amidst what losses and troubles,
and after how many epitaphs,
now, belonging to the air, will it surface,
and what shall overlay in turn
the shadow of Sorrento photographs? (trans. by Bethea, “*Sorrento Photographs*” 69)

Another similarity between this poem and *Pnin*, as well as with *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*, involves their depictions of light. As Margarita Nafpaktitis points out in her analysis of photographs as a device in Khodasevich’s poem, its lines are “shot through with light: a motorcycle headlight, the yellow lights of an inn, candles, the Morning Star, sunbeams at dawn” (Nafpaktitis 396). In his review of *Evropeiskaia noch'*, Nabokov writes, “In the world of Khodasevich the sort of optical-pharmaceutical-chemical-anatomical deposit [that forms] on many of his poems is especially interesting. [. . .] Numerous references to [the poet’s] reflection in the mirror . . . in the windowpane . . ., etc. relate likewise to this optical level” (qtd. in Bethea, *Khodasevich* 276). Later in this essay, I will discuss reflected light as a leitmotif in *Pnin* and *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*.

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Barabtarlo observes: “The wind, in an attempt to draw Pnin’s attention to certain combinations of the recurrent details connecting his present with the past, prompts his memory and generates recollections of a long-gone summer and of his trysts with Mira” (194).²⁴ Interrupted by a gas-station attendant’s trivial remark on the weather, the memory reasserts itself thirteen pages later when, after a game of croquet, Pnin experiences the same symptoms as in Chapter One:

A certain extremely unpleasant and frightening cardiac sensation, which he had experienced several times throughout his adult life, had come upon him again. It was not pain or palpitation, but rather an awful feeling of sinking and melting into one’s physical surroundings—sunset, red boles of trees, sand, still air. (391–92)

The memory passage, which is three pages long, describes the veranda of another country house, rented by the Belochkin family in the Baltic resort town where Pnin spent his eighteenth summer. The Pines’ hostess Susan has just called everyone to tea from the porch of the house, but Pnin lingers on a bench on the lawn. He looks toward the porch and sees not his contemporary friends, but people from his past. Because the settings are similar, the transition between the present and Pnin’s memory appears seamless:

Two kerosene lamps cozily illuminated the porch of the country house. Dr. Pavel Antonovich Pnin, Timofey’s father, an eye specialist, and Dr. Yakov Grigorievich Belochkin, Mira’s father, a pediatrician, could not be torn away from their chess game in a corner of the veranda, so Madam Belochkin had the maid serve them there—on a special small Japanese table, near the one they were playing at—their glasses of tea in silver holders (392)

The narration superimposes the past on the present, offering a comment on the trick played on Pnin by memory:

Timofey Pnin was again the clumsy, shy, obstinate, eighteen-year-old boy, waiting in the dark for Mira—and despite the fact that logical thought put electric bulbs into the kerosene lamps and reshuffled the people, turning them into aging émigrés and securely, hopelessly, forever wire-netting the lighted porch, my poor Pnin, with hallucinatory sharpness, imagined Mira slipping out of there into the garden and coming toward him among tall tobacco flowers whose dull white mingled in the dark with that of her frock. (393)²⁵

²⁴ As Besemeres points out, this memory is foreshadowed already in Chapter Three: “Pnin’s recollection of Kroneberg’s Ophelia in connection with Russian girls bathing among wreaths foreshadows a more painful personal memory which is forced on him later in the novel. After himself bathing in a pool on the country estate of a fellow Russian émigré to America, Pnin is plunged into conversation with a woman who by way of introduction reminds him of the ‘terrible end’ of a mutual acquaintance, her own cousin, Mira Belochkin” (397–98).

²⁵ Emphasizing the plight of the exile, Besemeres uses the metaphor of a filter to describe the dual image—of past and present—in this scene: “Pnin’s vision is filtered through the

This memory passage is briefly interrupted by the sound of a 1950s radio broadcast, but then continues with an account of how “history broke their engagement” (393) during the Russian Civil War of 1918–22, how they married other people as émigrés in Berlin, and how Mira perished in a concentration camp during World War II. Her fate explains why Pnin has struggled to repress the memory:

In order to exist rationally, Pnin had taught himself, during the last ten years, never to remember Mira Belochkin [. . .] because, if one were quite sincere with oneself, no conscience, and hence no consciousness, could be expected to subsist in a world where such things as Mira’s death were possible. One had to forget—because one could not live with the thought that this graceful, fragile, tender young woman with those eyes, that smile, those gardens and snows in the background, had been brought in a cattle car to an extermination camp and killed by an injection of phenol into the heart, into the gentle heart one had heard beating under one’s lips in the dusk of the past. (394)

As Toker points out, “Pnin is shown deliberately controlling his thoughts and suppressing memories that could rekindle old wounds” (30). The narrator observes “how reluctant he was to recognize his own past” (*Pnin* 427).

Suppressing memories is a defense mechanism for Sukhanov, too. He does not wish to recall how he, as a boy, witnessed his father’s fatal fall from a window; how he participated in the underground movement during the Thaw; or how, in 1963, he betrayed his ideals by publishing art criticism in service of the state. The significance of memory in the novel is signaled from the outset, as the Sukhanovs ride in their chauffeured Volga to the Moscow Manège for the gala opening of a retrospective exhibit of the work of Nina’s father, a fêted socialist realist painter. When Nina steps out of the car, we read: “Behind her lingered a smell—the elegant perfume of tonight, whatever it was, and underneath, numerous layers of other fading scents, which had accumulated over time in the backseat of their Volga like so many sweet, barely discernable ghosts of past outings” (2). Several pages later, the metaphor of shooing away “a persistent fly” (9) describes Sukhanov’s avoidance of disturbing memories. Repression of memory at the societal level is noted when Sukhanov observes that the exhibit had been curated to exclude “grim militant works” from the Stalinist period (6).

An early memory passage is preceded by a feeling of confluence of past and present. Sukhanov walks through Moscow’s old Arbat neighborhood and sees an open window:

twilight of his obstinately and obtusely American surroundings”; “Pnin has to remember this archetypal, heightened moment from his time with Mira via his untoward, present experience in exile: surrounded on the holiday estate not by his and Mira’s parents, but by fellow Russian émigrés, whose advanced age and expatriate condition remind him of his own” (399).

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As its frame swung out, the sun shot through the glass in a fiery orange zigzag, and out into the street spilled the zesty smell of roasted chicken and the rich honey of some classic romance [. . .] And suddenly Anatoly Pavlovich felt an odd, poignant tug at his heart, as if at that moment all these colors, smells, and sounds of a Moscow evening came together in just this way solely in order to re-create some long-forgotten combination—that of another quiet Arbat street lit by another nearing sunset, seen by a child peering out of the open window of a cramped kitchen where another chicken, a remote ancestor of this one, had been roasting in an oven, while somewhere in the dim heart of the apartment a phonograph had whined soulfully, swelling with the very same romance by Varlamov . . . (46–47)

A later memory passage reveals a turning point in Sukhanov's life. At the end of 1962, at the symbolic age of 33, his involvement in the underground movement costs him his teaching position at the Surikov Art Institute. His father-in-law, Malinin, invites him to his apartment and proposes a Faustian bargain over a glass of French cognac. Sukhanov agrees to write socialist realist criticism denouncing surrealism. The memory of this arises when Sukhanov is locked out of his apartment and goes to Malinin's to fetch a spare key. Malinin lives in the same apartment as in 1962, and so certain details of the setting coincide with the memory. The transitions between the temporal planes are subtle and no longer demarcated, as in earlier passages, by a switch from third-person to first-person narration. As a result, past and present appear to blend in a way that challenges the first-time reader to separate the temporal threads. The same is true for Sukhanov, who tastes, in 1985, the Courvoisier he had sipped nearly 23 years before (307).

The reader's memory

With both novels, the attentive reader remains one step ahead by virtue of a perspective that the protagonist lacks. The careful reader (or re-reader) can foresee impending mishaps, such as when Pnin mixes up his typed lecture with a student's essay (*Pnin* 309) or Sukhanov turns up one day late for the Minister of Culture's party (*DLS* 183). The reader can, as Barabtarlo notes in reference to *Pnin*, "check the accuracy of a character's memory and study its aberrations" (27). A narratorial aside hints at this game in the parenthetical exclamation, "this was Tuesday, O Careless Reader!" (*Pnin* 350).

In particular, Chapter Six of *Pnin* offers opportunities for the reader to make connections that remain beyond the ken of the protagonist. After the party, Hagen asks Pnin for "a glass of water or beer." Pnin thinks, "Whom does he remind me of? [. . .] Eric Wind? Why? They are quite different physically" (414). The section ends here, and there is no further discussion of the question, but the attentive reader can recognize a similarity of circumstances with a previous scene, where Eric Wind many years earlier tells Pnin, over a beer, the

heartbreaking news of his intention to marry Liza. Like Wind, Hagen has bad news for Pnin; in this case, it is that he will lose his teaching position.

Earlier in the novel, the reader has an opportunity to pick up on Mrs. Thayer's hint, missed by Pnin, of his impending displacement from the Clements' house. Several pages later, we read: "something that Pnin had half heard in the course of the day, and had been reluctant to follow up, now bothered and oppressed him, as does, in retrospect, a blunder we have made, a piece of rudeness we have allowed ourselves, or a threat we have chosen to ignore" (353–54).

Sukhanov has a similar nagging feeling after his conversation with the Minister of Culture at the gala opening. Distracted by the discovery that his chauffeured car is no longer parked outside, Sukhanov fails to register the Minister's invitation to a party:

Immediately he told himself it was only his imagination, but it nonetheless triggered a surge of sudden fear in him, as if some irreparable damage had been done—as if [. . .] the Minister had begun to say something important, something absolutely vital, perhaps, and he, engrossed as he had been in his confusion, had missed it, missed it unforgivably, missed it forever . . . (12)

The protagonist is unable to connect the dots, but the reader can. This possibility occurs in many of Nabokov's works. As Boyd observes:

Nabokov always envisages that mortal memory might be the forerunner of a consciousness to which the past might be directly accessible, open for the kind of endless reinvestigation which could lead to the discovery of the watermarks of time. Because as readers we can continue to re-examine the fictive past, Nabokov can offer us the shiver and thrill of discovering in the novel's events harmonies (qtd. in Barabtarlo 27)

The narrative structure of both novels invites the reader to see the past reflected in the present, as the two converge in the protagonist's consciousness. Reflection—in the sense of an optical phenomenon, as well as a cognitive activity—figures prominently in both novels, as will be shown below.²⁶

Optics, ornithology, lepidoptera

Nabokov and Grushin both make ample use of leitmotifs, which, according to M. H. Abrams's definition, reinforce themes through "the frequent repetition within a single work of a significant verbal or musical phrase, or set description, or complex of images" (169–70). Here I will focus on three leitmotifs: optical reflections, birds, and butterflies.

²⁶ For a fuller analysis of the theme of memory in Grushin's novel, see Hansen, "Memory Unleashed."

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Barabtarlo notes the significance of the reflection motif in nearly every chapter of *Pnin*. Shiny surfaces, such as mirrors, glass, and water, create optical reflections and refractions in many passages of both novels. *Pnin* recounts Victor's development as an artist and experimentation with optical refraction:

He placed various objects in turn—an apple, a pencil, a chess pawn, a comb—behind a glass of water and peered through it at each studiously: the red apple became a clear-cut red band bounded by a straight horizon, half a glass of Red Sea, Arabia Felix. The short pencil, if held obliquely, curved like a stylized snake, but if held vertically became monstrously fat—almost pyramidal. The black pawn, if moved to and fro, divided into a couple of black ants. The comb, stood on end, resulted in the glass's seeming to fill with beautifully striped liquid, a zebra cocktail. (367)

In painting a black sedan, Victor strives to capture reflections in its shiny surfaces, “by making the scenery penetrate the automobile” (366). If discreteness is “one of the main characteristics of life,” as the narrator claims in connection with *Pnin*'s first memory spell (310), the following passage shows that it is not necessarily a main characteristic of art:

Now break the body of the car into separate curves and panels; then put it together in terms of reflections. These will be different for each part: the top will display inverted trees with blurred branches growing like roots into a washily photographed sky, with a whalelike building swimming by [. . .] This mimetic and integrative process [Victor's art teacher] called the necessary “naturalization” of man-made things. (366)

Similarly, Sukhanov as a young artist explored “reflections—of houses in pools of rainwater, of shaving men in bathroom mirrors, of wives in their husbands' glasses, of constellations in cups of tea” (259).²⁷

Chapter Four of *Pnin* concludes with an image of a reflection on wet pavement: “It was a pity nobody saw the display in the empty street, where the auroral breeze wrinkled a large luminous puddle, making of the telephone wires reflected in it illegible lines of black zigzags” (376). Chapter Two of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* opens with a similar image: “Streetlamps swam through the liquid mist, their pale reflections drowning in an inverted world of running asphalt” (17). On the next page we read: “A car splashed by, stirring red zigzags in its wake; they followed it with their eyes. When it passed, Marx Avenue reverted to shiny blackness” (18).

The leitmotif of reflections appears on the very first page of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*, in a description of Nina applying lipstick:

²⁷ The two novels bear further similarities with regard to visual art. Both employ the device of ekphrasis and mention the use of natural pigments (*Pnin* 367; *DLS* 330, 354). See Shapiro for a study of “Nabokov's penchant for painting as a leitmotif of his creation” (4).

she flipped open a compact, balanced its small convex pool of glittering blackness on her palm, slid a peach-colored pillar of lipstick out of the golden coils of its case, and proceeded to bend her face this way and that, trying to chase her reflection out of the shadows. Unexpectedly [Sukhanov] caught sight of a delicately painted eye as it flitted along the surface of the mirror, but she moved her hand, and the eye blinked and vanished. [. . .] Finally the elusive reflection became trapped in the ray of the streetlamp, and she traced the contours of her full mouth in two quick flicks of her wrist, pressed her lips together with a tiny pat, and dropped the lipstick back into her purse. He heard the lock shut with a rapacious snap, saw out of the corner of his eye a cold burst of fire as a diamond earring passed through the light (1–2)

More reflections occur inside the Manège, where light bounces off champagne glasses and jewelry: “light danced playfully off every gesture, transforming a lifted champagne flute into liquid gold, setting a flock of sparks aflutter over an extended hand, causing tiny explosions with every turn of a woman’s head” (4).²⁸

Reflections further serve as a metaphor for Sukhanov’s process of reminiscence. Midpoint in the novel, he experiences “the by now familiar sensation of fleeting recognition, of his past and present endlessly reflecting off each other in a multiplying infinity of mirrors” (173). Metaphorically, the past is refracted through the present.

The leitmotif of birds appears in metaphors, as well. In *Pnin*, a radiator sounds like “a caged songbird” (342) and the English Department is “an aerie of hypochondriacs” (410). In Grushin’s novel, Sukhanov’s anxiety when confronted by his past is expressed as an “unnameable feeling [. . .] beating its great black wings in the hollow of his soul” (27).²⁹

Pnin and *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* both describe flocks of pigeons, coincident in the latter case with the onset of Sukhanov’s second childhood memory:

a hundred pigeons took off at once, tearing the air, erasing the trees and the roofs [. . .] and forgetting everything else, Sukhanov stared, stared at their flight, stared at their wings. . . .

The birds flew in rustling, sparkling, ever-widening circles above his head, their hundreds of wings lifting and falling in reverberant staccato, glowing with rosy translucence against the sunset (49)

²⁸ The metaphor of a flock foreshadows another leitmotif in the novel, namely that of birds, discussed below.

²⁹ The word “flock” is used repeatedly as a metaphor in *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*: “a flock of sparks aflutter over an extended hand” (4); “a flock of articles” (36); “a flock of disturbing dreams and irrelevant suspicions” (71); “the page disintegrated into a flock of darkly luminous shreds” (144); “fluttering flocks of irrelevant associations” (166); “a flock of ugly sensations” (270); “a flock of pastel-colored pages” (313); “toy blocks gathered in a flock on the desk” (335).

As Pnin walks to the library, “an elliptic flock of pigeons, in circular volitation, soaring gray, flapping white, and then gray again, wheeled across the limpid, pale sky” (349). Later in the novel, Pnin’s etymological digression at his housewarming party ends with the Latin word for “pigeon” (411). At The Pines, one of the guests mistakes “Yellow Warblers for stray canaries” (384), and Sukhanov’s mother has a yellow pet canary.

In *Pnin*, the bird motif culminates in Chapter Six, the opening of which mentions birds in French as well as English: “in a pretty edition of Mallarmé’s poems an especially able scholiast had already underlined in violet ink the difficult word *oiseaux* and scrawled above it ‘birds’” (396). When a professor of anthropology, T. W. Thomas, approaches Pnin with a question about “a local cake” from the “Skoff region” that is “baked in the form of a bird,” Pnin mistakes him for the ornithologist Thomas Wynn.³⁰ Pnin excitedly replies, “I know all about those *zhavoronki*, those *alouettes*, those—we must consult a dictionary for the English name” (405). Pnin invites “the man interested in bird-shaped cakes” to his housewarming party, throughout which he alludes punningly to ornithology (408).³¹

Interestingly, this passage can serve as a subtextual key to one of the more opaque translanguing references in Grushin’s novel. Toward the end of the narrative, Sukhanov visits his mother’s apartment in search of his Dalí-inspired paintings he had hidden away in a closet years before. Here Sukhanov encounters his cousin Dalevich, whom he perceives as a figure out of a surrealist painting: “He wore Dalí’s suit and Magritte’s hat, and held a boxed cake in one hand—Sukhanov could read the name ‘Ptich’e Moloko’ on the lid” (312). No gloss or contextual explanation is given for the Russian words, but cake is mentioned again several pages later, in a description of the kitchen “with its table ready for tea, its old porcelain clock on the wall, the richness of the creamy bird’s-milk dessert crumbling on the plates, the leaves rustling against the windows” (319–20). As I have shown elsewhere, this odd-sounding dessert contributes to the novel’s bird motif, as well as to the theme of surrealist art, creating at the same time a defamiliarizing effect—especially for non-russophone readers unable to draw a connection between it and the Russian name of a popular cake dating from the late-Soviet period (Hansen, “Making

³⁰ The narrator recounts Pnin’s perpetual confusion of the two: “a person whom Pnin knew as Professor Thomas Wynn, Head of the Ornithology Department, having once talked to him at some party about gay golden orioles, melancholy cuckoos, and other Russian countryside birds—was not always Professor Wynn. At times he graded, as it were, into somebody else, whom Pnin did not know by name but whom he classified, with a bright foreigner’s fondness for puns as ‘Twynn’ (or, in Pninian, ‘Tvin’)” (404).

³¹ In a manner typical for this novel, the guest’s identity as the anthropologist becomes clear from a conversation (about a research grant) that takes place out of Pnin’s earshot, and thus he remains out of the know (409). The mix-up leads Pnin to make a pun incomprehensible to all but himself, the narrator, and the reader: as he serves cocktails, Pnin says, “or better to say flamingo tails—specially for ornithologists” (409).

Sense" 554). Anglophone readers can, however, see it as an allusion to the "bird-shaped cakes" in *Pnin*.

As Boyd points out, "literature and Lepidoptera dance an elaborate *pas de deux* through seventy years of Nabokov's life" (4). Nabokov uses the motif of butterflies to write himself into the fictional world of *Pnin*. In Chapter Five, while visiting The Pines, Pnin and his old friend Konstantin Ivanich Chateau spot "a score of small butterflies," a detailed description of which is followed by Chateau's remark, "Pity Vladimir Vladimirovich is not here [. . .] He would have told us all about these enchanting insects," to which Pnin replies, "I have always had the impression that his entomology was merely a pose" (389). Barabtarlo comments:

Pnin could not be expected to know that Nabokov was a distinguished lepidopterist and expert in the taxonomical labyrinths of certain genera of butterflies and moths, that he worked as a Research Fellow at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology (1942–1948), and that he published a score of scientific papers on lepidoptera (209)

Lepidoptery is also mentioned in Chapter Four, where Victor's imagination accords Pnin "a family resemblance to those Bulgarian kings or Mediterranean princes who used to be world-famous experts in butterflies or sea shells" (360), and again in Chapter Six, which describes the beginning of the 1954 Fall Term at Waindell: "Again, on serene afternoons, huge, amber-brown Monarch butterflies flapped over asphalt and lawn as they lazily drifted south, their incompletely retracted black legs hanging rather low beneath their polka-dotted bodies" (396). Grushin also places Nabokov in her novel indirectly, alluding to him through mention of butterflies and moths, in addition to the pun on *babochka* discussed above.³² Later, Sukhanov's bow ties and neckties are referred to as "perfectly respectable specimens" (68) and "lovely silk specimens collected like rare butterflies on his infrequent European sojourns" (74).

All three of these leitmotifs—reflections, birds, and butterflies—converge in the concluding chapter of *Pnin*, in which the narrator recounts his memories of the protagonist. These motifs resound a final time, one after the other. The first memory contains a brief description of how "the blue dab of a window in miniature was reflected in the glass dome of an ormolu clock on the mantelpiece" in the waiting room of Pnin's father, an ophthalmologist in St. Petersburg (423). In the second memory, the narrator is "spreading, underside up, an exceptionally rare aberration of the *Paphia Fritillary*, in which the silver stripes ornamenting the lower surface of its hindwings had fused into an even expanse of metallic gloss" (425). In the third memory, Liza appears in "a charming new dress as dove-gray as Paris, and wearing a really enchanting

³² In addition to the passages already mentioned, butterflies are mentioned six times, and moths three times, in the novel.

new hat with a blue bird's wing" (429). By weaving the same leitmotifs of reflections, butterflies, and birds into *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*, Grushin pays homage to Nabokov.

Conclusion

As the analysis has shown, *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* evokes several aspects of *Pnin*. Both novels treat the theme of memory and the subthemes of disorientation and home. Reflections, birds, and butterflies appear as leitmotifs in both. And both foreground language through translanguing elements and wordplay. In addition to the allusions within Grushin's novel, paratexts point the reader toward Nabokov. To return to Ronen's definition of subtext, *Pnin* can be seen as an inspirational, interpretative, and thematic subtext of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*. Further, Nabokov's switch from Russian to English as his literary language and his predilection for punning constitute, in the case of *The Dream Life of Sukhanov*, the types of subtext Ronen called linguistic and literary presuppositions.

By evoking her predecessor, Grushin pays homage to Nabokov's work and, at the same time, signals an ambition to continue the tradition of Russian-American literature founded by Nabokov, whose bilingual oeuvre has yet to be surpassed, as Ronen notes:

By achieving a broad linguistic confrontation and an inspired synthesis of several great literary traditions in a twin, yet manifestly whole, body of bilingual writing, unprecedented in the lay verbal art of the Occident, Nabokov became the embodiment of a new, interlingual, transnational literature. ("The Triple Anniversary" 173)³³

The numerous references to Nabokov and resonances with *Pnin* in Grushin's *The Dream Life of Sukhanov* enrich the reading experience, expanding the author's game with the reader beyond the novel to an intertextual level. As authors, both Grushin and Nabokov seem to take pleasure in challenging the reader with puns, translanguing wordplay, and literary allusions. The attentive reader who takes up the challenge is richly rewarded with the pleasures of discovery and recognition.

³³ When asked, in an interview, which writers published in his lifetime had been significant for him, Ronen mentioned the Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti, Mandelstam, Khodasevich, and Vvedensky, concluding, "But above all—Nabokov, Nabokov, Nabokov. The great, never setting sun shining for all, the joy and consolation of my days, the founder of a new artistic and moral measure, the potentate of our thoughts, who taught us wanderers what to do" (Ronen, "You Have to Know" lx).

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“Lost in Love”: Reading a Literary Map of Los Angeles in Light of the Russian Silver Age

Kelly E. Miller

Preface

Imagine Nikolai Gogol speeding along not in a troika, but rather in a black convertible with its top down heading south on highway 101 toward downtown Los Angeles. The writer has left nineteenth-century St. Petersburg, where his play *The Inspector General* was first staged, and arrived in twenty-first-century Los Angeles, where the satire was once re-interpreted in a 1949 Warner Bros. motion picture starring Danny Kaye in the lead role.¹ Attired in a formal jacket and wearing a bob and moustache unruffled by Santa Ana winds, Gogol clutches the wheel with his right hand. He gazes forward somewhat anxiously as he motors by Anais Nin and Charles Bukowski. With left arm upraised, he addresses not Russia, but the city of angels, declaiming lines from *Dead Souls* translated into English by Vladimir Nabokov for a lecture to American college students:

“What is the incomprehensible secret force driving me towards you?
Why do I constantly hear the echo of your mournful song as it is carried from
the sea through your entire expanse?” (38)

The answer is that Gogol has arrived on “a new shore, the Amerussian shore of the new world literature,” which Omry Ronen helped us understand in all its profundity and absurdity (Ronen, “Emulation” 273). If he were to keep on driving and turn west toward highway 110, Gogol would overtake Wanda Coleman reciting lines from her poem, “That Other Fantasy Where We Live

¹ Entitled *The Inspector General*, the film was “suggested by the play by Nikolai Gogol”—according to the credits—and adapted into a screenplay by Philip Rapp and Harry Kurnitz. Thomas Leitch observes that Hollywood’s *The Inspector General* “uproot[s] the story from Russia, placing it in an underspecified middle-European Ruritania—an especially ironic development for its star, who was born David Daniel Kaminski to Ukrainian immigrants who had settled in Brooklyn” (35).

For Ever,” as she levitates over a different black convertible and kisses her husband, Austin Straus—also an artist and poet—in an homage to Marc Chagall’s painting, *Birthday* (1915). Continuing on his journey, Gogol will encounter Tupac Shakur, whose music is reportedly admired by Vladimir Putin’s aide, Vladislav Surkov (Tadeo). And if Gogol were to extend his fanciful journey, he might meet the lead singer of the punk rock group X, Exene Cervenka, who confessed to a journalist that her favorite poet is Anna Akhmatova (Monick). Without a doubt, phantasmagorical St. Petersburg has merged with the mirage of Los Angeles. The result is an international carnival that trespasses boundaries of space and time. Immersed in the semiosphere, readers discover that all texts seem to interrelate—if the mind is open to the “joy of recognition,”² the identification of correspondences, and the delight of discovery.

Introduction: A literary map in a library

In the summer of 2011, J. Michael Walker—an American artist who resides in Los Angeles—created this unusual portrait of Gogol and other writers in an artwork entitled *City in Mind: A Lyrical Map of the Concept of Los Angeles*, which may be the largest, if not the most ambitious, literary map in the world. Over four feet tall and twenty-one feet wide, the map depicts the city’s cultural history in word and image at a scale nearing that of an urban mural or the backdrop of a theatrical set. Walker created the map at the suggestion of David Kipen and Colleen Jaurrette, founders of Libros Schmibros, a nonprofit lending library and bookshop located in the Boyle Heights neighborhood of Los Angeles. Kipen was working that summer to prepare for a six-week residency hosted by the UCLA Hammer Museum’s Public Engagement program. Kipen’s idea was to create a pop-up “interpretation” of his bookshop in the Hammer Museum’s lobby gallery, and he recruited Walker to create an artwork that might help museum visitors visualize literary Los Angeles (Libros Schmibros). The idea of creating a “literary map” was born. After quickly gathering the names of writers and relevant quotations to include on the map, Walker began to draw with color pencils on an enormous scroll of glossy white paper that he found in his studio. He completed the map in less than one month, just in time for Kipen’s residency to begin on 27 August 2011. The map was pinned above bookshelves on the western wall of the gallery through 5 November 2011.

City in Mind: A Lyrical Concept of the City of Los Angeles (hereafter referred to as *City in Mind*) defies easy description, in keeping, perhaps, with the challenging size and complexity of its subject: a global city founded as a village nearly three hundred years ago. Close to fifty portraits of poets, writers, musi-

² *The Joy of Recognition* is the title of a collection of Omry Ronen’s essays published after his death (Scherr and Wachtel).

cians, and others—reflecting different time periods, nationalities, ethnicities, and languages—are inscribed into the city’s sprawling neighborhoods, from Lincoln Heights to the Pacific Palisades, covering almost two dozen miles of urban territory. Accompanying each portrait is a quotation from an artistic, musical, journalistic, or historical text that contributes in some way to an understanding of the city and its identity. These portraits and quotations are arrayed along the major highways and roads of Los Angeles, whose lines create a lacy structure and visual rhythm for the map.

The people and texts represented on the map are either directly or metaphorically related to the cultural development of Los Angeles from its beginnings in the mid-eighteenth century to the present day. Some figures, such as Raymond Chandler, Joan Didion, Aldous Huxley, and Joni Mitchell, all of whom lived and worked in Los Angeles, have overt connections to the city. Other figures, such as James Joyce and Nikolai Gogol, whose portraits also appear on the map, seem anomalous at first. What connection might these figures, who never visited L.A., have to the city? Visual art allusions in the work follow a similar pattern: some references, like an allusion to a painting by David Hockney, who resides in L.A., are expected, but an allusion to Marc Chagall, who never lived in the city, is more surprising. The viewer or reader is left to sleuth out the connections, as she learns the city—and herself—by reading the map and engaging with its associated texts.

How might one approach a critical reading or analysis of such a work? What theoretical approaches and models could be helpful? To what preceding texts, maps, and works of art might such an invention be compared? These questions—and others relating to new technologies and pedagogy—I posed to myself in 2012, when UCLA Library Special Collections acquired Walker’s map with the intention of permanently displaying the work in Powell Library, located at the center of the campus in Westwood. The Library also planned to digitize the map and make it available online through its digital library. Because the papers of a number of the writers on the map are held by UCLA Library Special Collections, including those belonging to Aldous Huxley, Henry Miller, and Anais Nin, among others, the Library is well positioned to foster public conversation and educational initiatives on Los Angeles literary and cultural history. Within the first year of its acquisition, the map was fully digitized—a monumental task because of the size of the work—and made available through UCLA Library’s Digital Collections.³ The physical installation of the map in Powell Library was more arduous to organize; it took place four years later—in the fall of 2016, following the construction of a custom

³ UCLA Library’s Digital Collections offers viewers the opportunity to explore the digitized literary map and zoom in on particular details. To access the map, go online to “UCLA Library Digital Collections,” and search for “Lyrical Map of the Concept of Los Angeles.” See: <http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/viewItem.do?ark=211g8/zz002h27qf>

exhibit case. The map is now on permanent exhibit on the library's ground floor and accessible for viewing by the general public.

Constructed in 1929, Powell Library itself is one of the original buildings on UCLA's campus and named after the twentieth-century librarian, writer, and book collector, Lawrence Clark Powell (1906–2001), who served as UCLA's University Librarian from 1944 to 1961. A portrait of Powell appears on Walker's map alongside a quotation from one of the librarian's books, "*Ocian in View*," a title drawn from the journals of Lewis and Clark. Walker quotes Powell's observations of the natural landscape of his L.A. neighborhood: "From living in Beverly Glen, I came to love the surrounding range of chaparral, oak, and sycamore" (Ulin 398). Not coincidentally, Walker places Powell's portrait just above a rendering of Ray Bradbury, who lived in adjacent Cheviot Hills. In the early 1950s, Bradbury typed the manuscript of his dystopian novel *Fahrenheit 451* on a rented typewriter on the ground floor of the UCLA library building that would eventually be named after Powell himself. Bradbury wrote about the experience in an essay entitled "Investing Dimes: Fahrenheit 451":

There, in neat rows, were a score or more of old Remington or Underwood typewriters which rented out at a dime a half hour. [. . .] Between investing dimes and going insane when the typewriter jammed (for there went your precious time!) and whipping pages in and out of the device, I wandered upstairs. There I strolled, lost in love, down the corridors and through the stacks, touching books, pulling volumes out, turning pages, thrusting volumes back, drowning in all the good stuffs that are the essence of libraries. What a place, don't you agree, to write a novel about burning books in the future! (200)

As the Head of Powell Library at the time that the map was acquired, I hoped to ensure that students would have the opportunity to engage with Walker's map—as a means of learning about the city of Los Angeles and, hopefully, deepening their understanding of its literary and artistic culture, and their own place within it. I met with J. Michael Walker and learned more about the map in conversation with him. With library colleagues, I co-taught several undergraduate courses about the map, and we invited Walker to give guest lectures in the courses, so that students could learn from him and interact with him.⁴ Studying Walker's literary map in the context of a university library and in dialogue with the artist himself gave the students opportunities to conduct research on L.A.'s cultural history in a dynamic way.

Trained as a scholar of Russian Modernism, with a particular focus on word-image relations in early twentieth-century Russian culture, I was attracted to the map in part because of its blend of poetry and visual art and

⁴ Robert Montoya and I co-taught "Mapping Literary Los Angeles," a General Education freshman seminar at UCLA, in Spring 2013, and Doug Worsham and I co-taught "Mapping Literary LA," a Digital Humanities capstone seminar at UCLA, in Spring 2014.

its portrayal of a Russian writer (Nikolai Gogol) and allusion to the work of a Russian painter (Marc Chagall). I was also drawn to its hybrid genre, that of the "literary map." Perhaps the most exhaustive treatment of the genre is the exhibition catalogue for a large survey of literary maps from the Library of Congress, published in 1999, called *Language of the Land*. The curators of the exhibition, Martha Hopkins and Michael Buscher, argue that a literary map "records the location and identity of geographical places and features associated with authors and their works and serves as a guide to the worlds of novelists, poets, dramatists, and other authors of imaginative literature" (xv). Hopkins and Buscher point out that literary maps "likely evolved from illustrations in books, many of which—for example, Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), contain maps that locate the book's action" (8). From their origins as illustrations, literary maps evolved in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries into tools for teaching as well as cultural tourism.

Within the genre of literary maps, Walker's artwork has at least one significant precursor. In 1987, Aaron Blake Publishers released *The Literary Map of Los Angeles*. At 20 by 27 inches, the map is just a fraction of the size of Walker's map and able to be folded up and placed in the back pocket of a tourist exploring L.A.'s streets. Designed by Molly Maguire and illustrated by Linda Ayriss, the map depicts 65 L.A. authors standing and/or sitting around a pool, as if on the set of a theatrical production (Hopkins and Buscher 105). In formal attire, tuxedos and gowns, the writers stand looking into the water, on whose surface is inscribed a map of L.A.

Although it bears some similarities with the 1987 map, including the use of portraiture and inclusion of major highways and roads, Walker's map sets itself apart from it in several ways: by including both word and image, emphasizing diversity, incorporating references to nature, and leaving empty space for other writers to be added—if only in the imagination. On a formal level, *City in Mind* includes not only visual portraits of writers and other cultural figures, but also verbal quotations from literary works, songs, and other works. In this sense, Walker's map is more densely saturated with textual information. *City in Mind* is also more inclusive of the diversity of literary culture in Los Angeles. Unlike the Blake map, which depicts mostly white men, Walker's map alludes to Japanese-American, Mexican-American, and African-American writers, men and women who have contributed to shaping the culture of the city. The natural landscape of the city, including trees, the river, and native animals—are referenced, not just the theatrical or filmic aspect of the city. *City in Mind* also leaves more blank white spaces on its surface than the 1987 map; the empty areas on the map indicate an unfinished quality, an openness to future additions: *Who should be added to the map? Who has been forgotten or neglected? Who has yet to become a writer in L.A.? What words about L.A. are still to be written?* The open space on the map is all the more significant because the map is now displayed in a university library, where students—

future writers, historians, musicians, etc.—are preparing themselves for their professions. Within the context of the library, both physical and virtual, students can read the full works alluded to on the map and begin to imagine themselves participating in the cultural conversation the map depicts.

Comparison with Akhmatova's *A Poem Without a Hero*

The more I studied Walker's literary map, the more I began to apprehend and appreciate its intertextual qualities and descriptive strategies. I began to see it first and foremost as an artwork. As I pondered the variety and complexity of its literary, musical, and visual references, I was reminded of another capacious, richly allusive artwork by Russian poet Anna Akhmatova, entitled *A Poem Without a Hero* (1940–62). I first studied this work in a seminar on the genre of the *poema* (long poem) that Omry Ronen taught at the University of Michigan in Fall 1996. Reading Walker's artwork in the light of Akhmatova's helped me to look differently at both works, viewing them in a more spacious manner, discerning corresponding structures, patterns, and themes.

At first glance, Akhmatova's poem, a mid-twentieth-century Russian work of verbal art, might be perceived as having nothing at all in common with the literary map, an early twenty-first century American work of visual art; however, a comparison of the two works, one a long poem, the other a literary map, reveals intriguing similarities that arguably expand our understanding of both artworks. The poem and the literary map are each constructed around a core narrative based on true historical events, but the overall composition is fragmentary or episodic. Although both works abide by fidelity to space, they do not abide by chronological time; instead time is treated synchronically in both—all historical periods collapse onto a single plane. This collapsing allows for play to occur, resulting in unexpected juxtapositions, just as different experiences co-exist and interact in the memory or consciousness of an individual reader or viewer.

Walker designs a map that follows the historic path that a Spanish missionary named Father Juan Crespi took in August 1769, when the expedition of which he was a part reached the site of what is now roughly the Lincoln Heights area of downtown Los Angeles. The expedition, known as the Portola Expedition, then traveled west on a trail that would later become Wilshire Boulevard. The map relies on the rhythm of the network of highways and roads—and the cars travelling along them—to cohere the map visually. The literary map's core narrative begins at the top right corner of the work, where J. Michael Walker has written a prose poem featuring Father Crespi, whom he refers to as "L.A.'s first published poet." In his expedition diary entry for 2 August 1769, Crespi writes: ". . . to my mind this spot can be given the preference in everything, in soil, water, and trees, for the purpose of becoming in time a very large plenteous mission of Our Lady of the Angels of La

Porciúncula . . ." (339). *Porciúncula* is the name given to the river now known as the Los Angeles River. It is also the name of a chapel within the Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli, located near Assisi, Italy, where St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Franciscan order, lived. The editor and translator into English of Crespi's diaries, Alan Brown, writes: "Father Crespi's joy is obvious when a first-ranking saint's day coincided with the discovery of an important locale—for instance, when he was able to name the site of present-day downtown Los Angeles after Francis's church, feast, and plenary indulgence: Our Lady of the Angels of the Portiuncula" (64). Walker rewrites Crespi's text in a manner that is both humorous and poignant: "It's the first hot Wednesday in August, 1769. As Spanish soldiers dismount hollow horses in the parking lot of La Playita Seafood Restaurant, Father Juan Crespi takes in the scene below Lincoln Heights." Of course, neither the neighborhood of Lincoln Heights nor La Playita Seafood Restaurant existed in 1769, but Walker superimposes the twenty-first-century map of Los Angeles onto that of the eighteenth century, so that the layers of time come together. At the conclusion of his prose poem, Walker writes, "Time and space are measured by the lives of saints and today they meet on an axis bold as love: On this feast day of St. Francis' holy chapel, L.A.'s first published poet declares the Chumash's home to be "Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de la Porciúncula." Walker adds, "L.A. begins here."

Like the map, *A Poem Without a Hero* also has a core narrative nestled in the midst of a complicated composition. Assembled out of many parts, *A Poem Without a Hero* is comprised of a foreword, multiple dedications, an introduction, several chapters, and an epilogue. Certain structural motifs help cohere the complicated composition. For instance, the poem is divided into three main parts and there are three main protagonists. In "Part One, The Year Nineteen Thirteen: A Petersburg Tale," a party of costumed visitors from 1913 arrive at the poet's room nearly 30 years later, transgressing laws of time. The poet's private dwelling space is quickly transformed into the setting for a 1940 New Year's Eve masquerade ball, in which figures from the poet's past, long since dead, come alive. The three main characters are based in part on several of Akhmatova's friends and acquaintances who were involved in a pre-revolutionary intrigue. Vsevolod Kniازهev, a novice poet already involved in an affair with an older poet, Mikhail Kuzmin, fell in love with the actress and dancer, Olga Glebova-Sudeikina. Unfortunately for Kniازهev, Sudeikina was not interested in him. Suffering from her rejection—and also, reportedly, from having seen her together with the poet Alexander Blok, the young poet committed suicide. Part Two consists of comments by the poet's editor, who is baffled by the ambiguities and complexities of Part One, and the poet's response—a justification of her work. Finally, Part Three consists of an "Epilogue," set in 1942, in which the poet mourns the wartime destruction of Leningrad, the Soviet-era name for St. Petersburg, as she is evacuated to Tashkent.

The literary map and poem share other similarities that are worth exploring: 1) a focus on the city as setting and subject; 2) the use of representational portraiture and masks to explore questions of identity; and 3) a view of art's function as sense-making, or cohering meaning out of fragments. Both the poem and the literary map are self-consciously absorbed with the challenge of defining the self in the modern world, and they each seem to arrive at a similar conclusion: identity is stitched together through the help of quotations from world culture that intersect in an urban environment oriented to the "other." Like the cities that serve as their subjects, the works themselves—the map and the poem—might be described using Yuri Lotman's term "eccentric structures." Such structures, he writes, "tend towards openness and contacts with other cultures" (192). Verbal quotation and visual allusion are the strategies, the methods for revealing or manifesting this openness.

City as setting and subject

Walker's map and Akhmatova's poem are concerned with the portrayal of the cities in which their works are set: Los Angeles and St. Petersburg, respectively. They each reference earlier texts—both visual and verbal—related to the creation of those cities. The title of Walker's map, "A Lyrical Map of the Concept of Los Angeles," is depicted in a cartouche that includes the name of the artist, J. Michael Walker, and the date of creation, 2011. The subtext is an 1898 cadastral map of L.A. County that was "compiled from official maps" by a county surveyor, E. T. Wright, and rendered and hand-colored by a draughtsman, C. N. Perry. Unlike this map, which was created in order to "[define] all lines which are the boundaries of school and road districts, judicial townships and election precincts," *City in Mind* is created for the purpose of revealing Los Angeles's *literary* culture. Walker exchanges the roles of surveyor and draughtsman for that of "designer and cartographer," transforming the cartouche for his different purposes. By choosing the roles of "designer" and "cartographer," Walker is emphasizing the artist's task of *arranging* and *locating* people and their works within the space of the city. He also substitutes "lyrical" for the word "official," replaces "concept" with the word "county," and removes the reference to the state of California. The effect is to elevate the discourse of the map, which now becomes an aesthetic and philosophical commentary on the city, one that no longer exists within a larger entity, a bureaucratic state, but on its own—significant in and of itself and freed from the confines of political and administrative frameworks.

Walker's allusion to the nineteenth-century map of L.A. is significant for several reasons. First, it references the past, pointing to multiple temporal layers synchronically existing in *City in Mind*. Second, the allusion indicates that the literary map is, indeed, meant to be read *as a map*—that is, it functions as an artifact made for the purpose of orientation and navigation. The viewer

is guided through a new experience of the city's cultural geography. When it was first displayed in the Hammer Museum, *City in Mind* was celebrated in the local press for this reason. Glen Creason, map librarian at the Los Angeles Public Library, remarked that "[*City in Mind* is] the best new map of Los Angeles seen in years." He stated that "[Walker's] artwork is superior to almost all cartographers since he is an artist first; moreover [he is] a gifted portraitist and seems to have researched the images thoroughly" (Fuentes).

Just as Walker explicitly makes L.A. the setting and subject of his work, Akhmatova identifies the city of St. Petersburg as the setting and subject of *A Poem without a Hero*. One of her strategies for describing the city is to quote earlier literary texts associated with the city. For example, Part One of the poem is entitled "The Year Nineteen Thirteen: A Petersburg Tale." The subtitle is an allusion to Alexander Pushkin's long poem, "The Bronze Horseman: A Petersburg Tale" (1833), which itself references previous Russian writing about the city founded by Peter the Great. By invoking Pushkin's work, Akhmatova places *A Poem Without a Hero* firmly in the tradition of Russian literary portrayals of the city. In her book *Akhmatova's Petersburg*, Sharon Leiter writes that *A Poem Without a Hero* represents "the outcome of [Akhmatova's] search for a poetic structure, which could encompass the full complexity of her vision of the city"; Leiter calls the poem "a grand resummoning, not only of the prerevolutionary Petersburg past, but of the city's literary tradition" (199). Indeed, Akhmatova's poem has become a key work in the larger canon of "the Petersburg text" that Vladimir Toporov and others have explicated.

In their depictions of their respective cities, both Walker and Akhmatova allude to specific places, landmarks, and natural features that can be pinpointed geographically. For example, Walker depicts hotels, restaurants, and people in their appropriate locations and settings in Los Angeles, from Lincoln Heights to Malibu. When possible, he notes the specific addresses where writers and other cultural figures lived. This geographical accuracy allows Walker to play with temporal layers more easily, co-locating writers on the map who never had an opportunity to interact in life. For instance, he depicts Raymond Chandler (1888–1959) and Tom Waits (b. 1949)—a chronologically impossible pairing—sharing a drink at the bar of the Musso and Frank Grill, a restaurant on Hollywood Boulevard that opened in 1919. The restaurant became a gathering place for well-known writers in the 1930s and 1940s, and is still operating today (Dawes 104).

Likewise, Akhmatova's poem situates itself at the center of St. Petersburg, in the mid-eighteenth-century Sheremet'ev Palace, the "House on the Fontanka" canal, where the poet lived off and on between 1933 and 1954; today, tourists can visit the Anna Akhmatova Museum in the palace. *A Poem Without a Hero* also references other locations in St. Petersburg, including the Mariinsky Theater, the Summer Gardens, and the Stray Dog Café, where artists and writers gathered before World War I. Thus, both the literary map and

the poem include place names—landmarks in their respective cities—that are significant synchronically and diachronically and have been either the location for the creation of art or been featured in art. The chart below provides a comparison of different types of spatial, temporal, and cultural information included in the poem and literary map; these features are components of the respective portrayals of St. Petersburg and Los Angeles created in the works.

Feature / Type of Data	<i>A Poem Without a Hero</i> (long poem)	<i>City in Mind</i> (literary map)
Names for the city	Leningrad, Piter, St. Petersburg	Los Angeles, L.A., <i>Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles</i>
Weather	winter, wind, cold, dark, moon, fog	heat, desert, winds
Natural Disasters / Threats	flooding	earthquake, fire
Rivers	Neva	Los Angeles (Porciúncula)
Dates	20 th century; 1913; 5 March 1941	August 1769
Historical events, periods	pre-World War I, World War II—Siege of Leningrad	Founding of L.A. by Father Juan Crespi, World War II Japanese-American internment; Chavez Ravine / Dodger Stadium
Museums / Palaces	Hermitage, Sheremet'ev	Hammer
Parks / Gardens	Summer Gardens	MacArthur, Will Rogers
Restaurants / Cafes	Stray Dog Café	Musso and Frank Grill
Non-celebrities	unnamed citizens who perished in Leningrad during the Siege (World War II)	unnamed maid, unnamed residents of Skid Row, etc.
Languages	Latin, Italian, French	Spanish
Literature	Shakespeare, Pushkin, T. S. Eliot, ...	Chaucer, Gogol, Joyce, Mann, ...
Music	Chopin, Bach, Shostakovich	Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne, Tupac Shakur, ...
Painting	Goya, Botticelli, El Greco	Bellini, Chagall, Hockney, Moller, ...
Theatrical Arts / Film	Mariinsky Theater; masquerade	Fritz Lang, <i>Metropolis</i> ; Mexican mask

In an era of *linked data*, such information could be digitally associated with other related information on the Web. The exercise of linking the data in the two texts with their respective subtexts—both verbal and visual—could serve as both a research and pedagogical activity, a means of studying and teaching the inherent “openness” or “eccentric” nature of these artistic works and their urban subjects.

Comparing the two works—the map and poem—leads the viewer and reader to note obvious correspondences between the cities, Los Angeles and St. Petersburg. Both cities have foreign names associated with Christian saints. Los Angeles is Spanish and was named by a Franciscan missionary in honor of an Italian town associated with St. Francis, and St. Petersburg is Dutch and was chosen by the city’s founder, Peter the Great, the imperial Russian ruler who conquered the Swedes. The cities’ orientation to the “other” is encoded in their very names; in the case of St. Petersburg, such otherness resulted in the name change to Petrograd during World War I. Both port cities, Los Angeles and St. Petersburg, were also founded in the eighteenth century (St. Petersburg in 1703, Los Angeles in 1781) on lands inhabited by other peoples: St. Petersburg on land where Ingrian Finns resided, and Los Angeles on territory inhabited by Chumash. Both cities have struggled to define themselves artistically apart from their older, larger siblings, Moscow and New York. Both cities experienced relatively slow population growth initially, but then expanded rapidly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today both cities have similarly sized populations: St. Petersburg—at 4.9 million, Los Angeles at 3.9 million (United Nations). In approaching their cities as subjects, however, Akhmatova and Walker are not interested in such generalities; instead, both are focused on the specific way that words helped bring their cities into being and affected the lives of others. Both artworks invoke their cities’ respective populaces. For example, Akhmatova dedicates her poem to anonymous citizens:

I dedicate this *poema* to the memory of its first audience—my friends and fellow citizens, who perished in Leningrad during the siege. I hear their voices and remember them, when I read the poem aloud, and for me this invisible chorus is an everlasting justification of the work. (543)

In *City in Mind*, Walker includes his own “invisible chorus,” portraits of equally nameless, everyday inhabitants. Some of the portraits are actually self-quotations from a previous body of his own work created during the years 2000 and 2007 and collected in a volume entitled *All the Saints of the City of the Angels: Seeking the Soul of L.A. on Its Streets / Stories and Paintings*, published in 2008. Walker studied the streets of Los Angeles named after saints and created portraits of everyday people in the role of these saints. In the book, he weaves their stories into his own retelling of the tales of the saints’ lives. Included on the literary map are portraits of people he encountered on Skid

Row. One of these portraits on the map depicts a young woman who holds a sign bearing a quotation from Joyce; we learn in *All the Saints* that her name is Jevona or “Santa Ynez.”

Like St. Petersburg, Los Angeles is an “eccentric” city as defined by Lotman. He writes that:

[t]he eccentric city is situated “at the edge” of the cultural space: on the seashore, at the mouth of a river. The antithesis that is activated in this case is not earth/heaven but natural/artificial. This city is founded as a challenge to Nature and struggles with it, with the result that the city is interpreted either as the victory of reason over the elements, or as a perversion of the natural order. (192)

Both Los Angeles and St. Petersburg are situated at the western edges of their countries and on the shores of large bodies of water. The Los Angeles River runs through L.A., which lies along the Pacific Ocean, and the Neva River runs through St. Petersburg to the Gulf of Finland and out to the Baltic Sea. In part, due to their locations on coasts, Los Angeles and St. Petersburg struggle with the threat of natural disasters. St. Petersburg historically suffers from flooding, the catastrophe that occurs in Alexander Pushkin’s “The Bronze Horseman”; Los Angeles struggles with the absence of water—drought and fire, not to mention earthquakes.

Lotman notes that “eccentric cities” are always associated with eschatological myths: “predictions of ruin, of doom and the victory of the elements will be part of this city’s mythology” (192). They are also associated with the carnival (“the world turned upside down”) and the theatrical. Lotman writes that the “architecture of [St. Petersburg . . .] gives the feeling of a stage set,” and that the city is constantly aware of the presence of an audience or spectators (197). The quality of dramatic, unusual light in both Los Angeles and St. Petersburg contributes to the theatrical nature of these “eccentric” cities. The atmosphere in Southern California is marked by the sheer constancy and intensity of sunshine, an illuminating spotlight, while that of St. Petersburg is marked by the extreme contrast of “white nights” in the summer and near total darkness in winter. *City in Mind* alludes to the heat and light of Los Angeles, and Akhmatova’s poem depends on the dark, cold winter weather of St. Petersburg to foster its phantasmagorical atmosphere. In their artistic works, Akhmatova and Walker each reveal their cities’ “eccentric” characteristics through yet another means: the use of portraits, masks, and doubles—all associated with the stage, a place of conscious performance for a present audience.

Portraiture and masks

Both Akhmatova and Walker emphasize the significance of portraiture, perhaps because of their shared humanistic orientation and fascination with the mutable nature of identity. In his book *Portraiture*, Richard Brilliant writes that "portraits are art works, intentionally made of living or once living people by artists, in a variety of media, and for an audience" (8). But this definition only hints at the complexity of a genre that, ultimately, Brilliant argues, is "a particular phenomenon of representation in Western art that is especially sensitive to changes in the perceived nature of the individual in Western society" (8). Because all elements of identity are ultimately unstable, the portraitist's task is always one of grasping at impossible stasis. Whether consciously or unconsciously, Akhmatova and Walker both appear to develop a method of coping with this dilemma: they fashion new portraits by alluding to other pre-existing portraits within new contexts.

In his analyses of Acmeist poetry, Omry Ronen focused almost exclusively on verbal subtexts, but he welcomed the study of non-verbal texts. And he helped us understand how non-literary texts, such as art historical writing or architectural criticism, can serve as subtexts for poetry; he pointed out that they can function as material for the poet by doing the work of transposing non-verbal art into words. In my own dissertation, which Professor Ronen supervised and supported, I sought to identify and explicate painting subtexts in Akhmatova's poetry. I was working within a structuralist tradition that embraces all art forms as coexistent within the semiosphere. For example, in their co-authored study, *Anna Akhmatova and Music (Anna Akhmatova i muzyka)*, Roman Timenchik and Boris Katz explicated the sources and meaning of musical subtexts in Akhmatova's poetry.

A Poem Without a Hero is subtitled a "triptych," a term typically associated with a multi-paneled work of visual art. In the Russian artistic tradition, a triptych is most closely linked to the icon. *A Poem Without a Hero* features multiple intertextual triptychs: three allusions to composers (Chopin, Bach, and Shostakovich) and three allusions to Western European painters (Goya, Botticelli, and El Greco). Akhmatova points to existing portraits by famous artists as masks or doubles for individuals she mentions in her poem. Each of the three allusions to European painters, Goya, Botticelli, and El Greco, offers a means to portray friends and acquaintances of the poet in the year 1913. For instance, Goya serves as a mask for the poet Mikhail Kuzmin, and a reference to *Primavera* provides a mask—in the figure of *Flora*—for Akhmatova's friend, Olga Glebova-Sudeikina. Moreover, the reference to El Greco may serve as a mask for the painter Amedeo Modigliani, whom Akhmatova met in Paris in 1909.⁵

⁵ I discuss these painting allusions in greater detail in my dissertation, *Painting and the Poetry of Anna Akhmatova*.

Just as Akhmatova includes allusions to literature, music, and visual art, Walker, too, embraces multiple art forms on his map, ranging from music, literature, art, film, and even non-aesthetic forms, such as journalism, and they are arrayed in rhythmical patterns that follow the curving lines of L.A.'s highways. Walker calls his literary map a "lyrical concept," evoking poetry, song, and philosophy all at once. But portraiture is arguably the dominant form of art on the map. An example of Walker's simplest method of quoting portraiture is the depiction of Gogol. In this instance, Walker portrays Gogol just as he appears in an iconic portrait of the writer painted in Rome by Fedor Moller; the only change is Walker's choice to place Gogol behind the wheel of a convertible on an L.A. highway.

More complex quotations occur when Walker blends references to multiple works of portraiture in a single rendering of a writer's image. For example, in his portrait of the writer Aldous Huxley in *City in Mind*, Walker blends visual allusions to two portraits, that of Bellini's Doge Leonardo Loredan (1501–02, National Gallery of Art) with that of a photograph of Huxley, a headshot made in 1957 in New York City by Bernard Gotfryd (Bernard Gotfryd/Hulton Archive/Getty Images).⁶ On the map, Bellini's Doge now holds his head in his right hand, as if lamenting the dark future of Los Angeles in the year 2108 that Huxley imagined in his dystopic novel *Ape and Essence*. According to Lionel Rolfe in his book *Literary L.A.*, "no city ever had a more gloomy prophecy created for it than Huxley created for L.A. in that book written primarily in the Mojave" (52). Walker's allusion to Bellini's portrait of the Doge appears to be inspired by Huxley himself, who compares Los Angeles with Venice in the seventeenth century. Like St. Petersburg and Venice, Los Angeles is transformed from a "utopian ideal city of the future" into "a doomed city" (Lotman 193) whose demise the writer has the power to foresee.

Other examples of Walker's use of masks or doubles include his portrayal of Wanda Coleman and her husband Austin Straus in the guise of Bella and Marc Chagall, a quotation from Chagall's painting, *Birthday* (1915), as was mentioned in the preface.⁷ Walker uses the same strategy—replacing an artist with a writer or poet—at another location on the map when he substitutes Joan Didion for David Hockney in a reimagining of Hockney's self-portrait with his lover, *Portrait of an Artist (Pool with Two Figures)* from 1972.

⁶ Huxley lived in Los Angeles for more than twenty years, where he befriended, among others, Igor Stravinsky, who settled in West Hollywood in 1939. In "The Ballet Libretto" for *A Poem without a Hero*, Akhmatova mentions Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* as a source and inspiration (*My Half Century* 140).

⁷ Chagall's art is alluded to publicly in L.A. on a mural adorning an exterior wall of the Jewish Cultural Center in Venice in Los Angeles. Walker mentioned to me that Straus was Jewish, so the allusion to Chagall was, in part, to honor Straus.

The three main characters in the first part of Akhmatova’s poem are given a series of masks—theatrical, literary, and painterly. One of the most readily identifiable sets of masks is that of Pierrot, Harlequin, and Columbine, characters of the *commedia dell’arte*, who became popular in Russia in the early twentieth century. On Walker’s literary map, the *commedia dell’arte* is not evoked, but, instead, another sort of masquerade: the Mexican Day of the Dead, a commemoration of loved ones who have passed away. Skull and devil masks are part of the celebration. The reference to this tradition is rendered alongside a quotation by Pulitzer-prize winning food critic Jonathan Gold, describing the fiery hot dishes served at a Mexican restaurant called Antojitos Carmen that he reviewed in 2011. Gold writes:

The *huarache* will make you suffer, first through its physical heat, then through the heat of *El Chamuco* [the devil], then through the jet-black fungus that will paint your teeth the color of charcoal before it oozes down to stain your favorite shirt. You will like the suffering. (*L.A. Weekly*)

On the map, an anonymous figure—perhaps Gold himself—wears the mask of a red-eyed devil with black-tipped horns, a chef’s apron, and a visor bearing the name of the restaurant. In his book *Counter Intelligence: Where to Eat in the Real Los Angeles*, Gold writes: “The greatest Los Angeles cooking, real Los Angeles cooking, has first a sense of wonder about it, and only then a sense of place, because the place it has a sense of is likely to be somewhere else entirely” (vii). Walker’s homage to Gold is especially poignant in 2018, the year in which Gold passed away at the age of 57. The literary map, like Akhmatova’s poem, gains elegiac qualities as the humans it portrays die. Other writers, who were alive when the map was created, but have since passed away, include Wanda Coleman, who died in 2013, and her husband, Austin Straus, who died in 2017. The map itself now serves as a commemoration of the dead and the way their words continue even when the creators are gone.

Function of art and the role of quotation

Another instance in which the literary map and poem seem to be in dialogue with one another is the way that Akhmatova and Walker approach the function of art itself. One of the key images on Walker’s map is that of a nude female figure, head lowered, eyes lowered. A quotation in Spanish by Jorge Luis Borges appears above her: “Now the whole world (everyone, everything) is within me, inside me.” Similarly, in her 1959 poem “Creation,” Akhmatova allows art or “creation” to speak for itself:

... it says:
 I remember everything simultaneously,
 Like the distant beam of a distant lighthouse,
 I carry the universe before me,
 Like an easy burden in an outstretched palm,
 And in the depths, mysteriously growing, is the seed
 Of what is to come... (*Complete Poems* 721)

Akhmatova argues that art, having an enormous capacity for memory, is capable of transforming the “universe” into a manageable handful, which in turn bears the beginnings of the future within itself. As I was working on my dissertation, Professor Ronen pointed out to me that in this poem, Akhmatova is implicitly referencing the image of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ child, as depicted in the iconographic type of the Mother of God known as “Hodigotria” (She who shows the way). Offering the earliest image of the Virgin, one derived from an icon allegedly painted by St. Luke, this icon type depicts the Mother of God holding the Christ child lightly in her left arm and pointing to him with her right hand. Creation is that which can be held in the hand, holds all of the past lightly, and contains the seed of the future.

The epigraph to *A Poem Without a Hero* is an inscription on the crest of the “House on the Fontanka” in St. Petersburg, where Akhmatova lived for so many years. It reads: *Deus conservat omnia*. Akhmatova’s poetry—from some of her earliest works through this last major work—involves collecting significant fragments and details from multiple layers of the past and reassembling them into a coherent, synchronic present whole that, in turn, bears possibilities within it for future creation. Akhmatova writes in one of the numerous introductions to *A Poem Without a Hero*, “As from a tower, I survey everything . . .” (*Complete Poems* 548). She envisions the artist as one imbued with vision and a benevolent power to cohere experience through the assemblage of fragments.

Conclusion: On love-for-the-other

The fact that the poem is an example of high culture and the literary map is a work of popular culture does not keep this comparison between the two works from being fruitful. What unites these two works is their choice of setting (eccentric cities), an orientation to art as a way of making sense of human existence, and a strategy of using quotations and masks to depict the world. Both the map and the poem are inherently Modernist works, manifesting a self-conscious tendency on the part of the artist to inscribe himself/herself into the work and, therefore, into the portrait of the city itself. In *A Poem Without a Hero*, the persona of the poet, the “I,” is powerful and present, but also receptive and expectant. Akhmatova writes: “The first time this poem came to me . . .” (543); she is the mediator or medium, who hears the voices and words

of others, and is entrusted to convey them. In *A City in Mind*, the persona of the artist is also strongly felt: J. Michael Walker is the only visual artist whose name is written on the map. And both works seem to take on a life of their own—beyond the imagining of their creators; both artworks are large and unwieldy. Walker told me that he was not able to unroll the entire literary map in the studio where he works at his home, because it was simply too large for the space. Akhmatova wrote that her poem tormented her, because it kept returning to her, wanting to grow. She explained, “The Poem proved to be more capacious [*vmestitel'nee*] than I first thought. It imperceptibly assumed events and feelings from different layers of time, and now that I have finally rid myself of it, I see it as a complete and single entity” (*My Half Century* 127).

Perhaps this comparison points to a larger argument that might be made about the ability of art to provide compelling, cohering depictions of the city and the self simultaneously. Lotman writes that “[t]he city is a complex semiotic mechanism, a culture-generator, but it carries out this function only because it is a melting-pot of texts and codes, belonging to all kinds of languages and levels” (194). The human being, the individual consciousness, is like this too: a complex semiotic mechanism interacting with the city. How does the individual consciousness in the city then orient to others?

What if the artist is so open and receptive that the image and words of the other shine through, like a palimpsest? The most open works are arguably those where the artist herself releases her sense of self, listening to the “*chuzhoe slovo*”—the word of the other that resonates. In the “First Dedication” of *A Poem Without a Hero*, Akhmatova writes:

... and because I don't have enough paper,
I am writing on your first draft.
and here a strange word (*chuzhoe slovo*) shows through (*prostupaet*),
and, like that snowflake on my hand long ago,
melts trustingly, with no reproach. (545)

In this sense, *A Poem Without a Hero* exists as a palimpsest. The poet is writing on paper through which a word (belonging to another poet) emerges. And the person to whom the word belongs no longer lives. The only thing that remains is the word. The word is rescued, the voice recovered, the story told. Likewise, Walker, in conversation, told me that when he opened the roll of large white paper to begin his literary map, he found a drawing already there. He had forgotten that he had started to draw on the paper earlier. The image found there was that of a woman, and so he decided to incorporate her into the map itself. She became the lady of the angels, the largest female figure on the map, a nude with long dark flowing hair—the one who contains all within her. Thus, the map, too, functions as a palimpsest of sorts.

Akhmatova's poem and Walker's map are both inclusive and open to the other—who has existed or exists now—and the future unknown. Both

works acknowledge—whether through words or the inclusion of open space itself—that which still seeks to be written, created, drawn, imagined. The artists are watching for, and awaiting, the “eternal return.” In this hopefulness and promise of recurrence, the power of death vanishes. As Akhmatova writes:

There is no death—everyone knows that,
It's insipid to repeat it,
But what exists—let them tell me.
Who is knocking?
Everyone is here. (*Complete Poems* 554)

Akhmatova and Walker reward the initiated, those who are familiar with that which is quoted or depicted, while challenging the uninitiated to investigate, learn, and discover—and even to include themselves. They invite the novice into the fold. For a graduate student who recognizes the names of European painters in Akhmatova's work, there is a path into the poem, a way of beginning to understand the Russian Silver Age, the city of St. Petersburg, and her own place in relationship to it. For an undergraduate student who recognizes only Tupac on the literary map, Tupac becomes the entry point into Los Angeles; his songs become a way of beginning to grapple with the city and find his own place in it.

Is the lesson of both these works that the human is at the heart of cities? And that human identity emerges only out of relationship with the other? Out of quotation of the voice of another? If so, then Omry Ronen might refer us to Mandelstam. In an essay entitled “Love-for-the-Other” (“Chuzheliubie”), Ronen wrote, “A person lives among people who are divided into own and other, related and unrelated; a nation—among other nations, friendly or hostile; a language and culture—among other languages and cultures” (384–85). Living in St. Petersburg or Los Angeles, both “eccentric” cities, oriented away from themselves, the other becomes the object of love, the desired. Ronen writes:

All poetry, in Mandel'shtam conception, is the assimilated—predicted or repeated—alien, it makes an alien world one's own and gives one's own to those who are alien, juxtaposing various languages and ages. In this two-way connection of the other with one's own and the repetend with the reiteration is the guarantee of the eternal novelty of poetry.

Hence Mandel'shtam's “love-for-the-other” (“чужелюбие”). Apparently, he alone in modern Russian literature, speaking in *Journey to Armenia* (*Puteshestvie v Armeniiu*) about the joy of immersion in a society of people of another race, “in whom you take vicarious pride,” used this word. (“Love-for-the-Other” 391)

“The love for what is other defines Mandel'shtam's relation to languages, nations, and religions as the instrument and material of poetry” (Ronen, “Love-

for-the-Other" 393). Like Mandelstam, Akhmatova and Walker are sufficiently confident as artists to allow the self to be defined in relationship to the other. Both of the works considered here are without a single hero. In the triptych, there is no hero but rather an interaction between three figures, whose identities shift and transform. Likewise, in the literary map, no protagonist takes center stage; instead, the dozens of writers portrayed exist primarily in relation to one another, their own texts and previous texts, and the geography of the city.

Akhmatova wrote her poem over a period of 22 years, and Walker created his literary map spanning approximately 22 miles in just three weeks. But both speak to one another. Might the *poema* be read as a literary map? Might the literary map be read as a *poema*? Both genres use space in productive ways, as a form of "design constraint." Akhmatova's text reveals itself on the space of the page, sequentially, but also points us to the existence of space itself. The way that letters construct the space of the text becomes significant; see, for instance, the acrostic for "The White Hall," in Chapter One (*Complete Poems* 552). And Walker's map reveals itself on the surface of the paper only to point us to the pages of the books it cites. As Ulises Carrión writes in "The New Art of Making Books": "If two subjects communicate in the space, then space is an element of this communication. Space modifies this communication. Space imposes its own laws on this communication." Might the *poema* and the literary map be considered "new books" according to Carrión's definition?

In his essay "On the Nature of the Word," Mandelstam wrote: "Having expended its philological reserves brought over from Europe, America began to act like someone now crazed, now thoughtful. Then all of a sudden, she initiated her own particular philology from which Whitman emerged; and he, like a new Adam, began giving things names [. . .] Russia is not America; we have no philological imports. . ." (78). Perhaps Mandelstam is correct. But one wonders still: might it be possible to find Venice in Russia, and Venice in America, and through this shared doorway, enter into a glorious carnival that does not frighten, but rather affirms a common humanity? The young Akhmatova thought that "everything mourns for the forgotten, for its own springtime dream," but the older Akhmatova knew that as long as there is love itself, the openness to the word of the other, the pieces do not all have to cohere (*Complete Poems* 100). Coherence comes through *awareness* of the fragments, the ability to hold the fragments, even when they do not all fit or make sense. The human ability to make associations between the fragments—that is love, Mandelstam suggests. The sense that something binds the pieces together is what matters most of all; poetry and art point us back to this way, the path to understanding—or acceptance of *no understanding*. When love is all there is to eat, as Wanda Coleman writes in her poem "In That Other Fantasy Where We Live Forever," then artists can live on the word of the other, the trace of the other, and, in this way, perpetuate life (56).

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Reminiscences: Omry Ronen as Teacher

As a teacher as well as a scholar, Omry Ronen left an indelible imprint on his students. This chapter contains reminiscences from some of his former students on his teaching. Some of these reminiscences are written by former students who participated in the memorial symposium “Advancing Omry Ronen’s Legacy in Russian Literary Studies” at the University of Michigan in 2013 but were unable to contribute an essay to this volume.

Professor Ronen at Yale University

SUSANNE FUSSO, Wesleyan University

Omry Ronen was unfailingly tough and demanding in class and unfailingly warm and kind outside of class. Some of my most cherished memories of graduate school are of conversations with him and Nancy Pollak in his Yale apartment, in front of a cozy fireplace.

Perhaps the most important lesson I learned from Omry, one that continues to be central to my teaching, is the vision of the grand conversation that goes on among literary artists over the centuries, whether it’s called *podtekst* or intertextuality—the depth and complexity of poetic (and prosaic) quotation, which is as illuminating for Dostoevsky as it is for Mandelstam.

OLGA PETERS HASTY, Princeton University

Omry amazed all his graduate students with his exceptional knowledge of Russian poetry, his photographic memory, and phenomenal recall that enabled him to recognize subtexts and to trace their significance. This was something we marveled at and incorporated into our thinking. Omry taught us to be aware of poetic details and the interrelationships they entered into within individual poems, their authors’ oeuvre, and the poetic tradition. Such recognition of the vast span of meaning that particularity can generate remains crucial to deep readings of poems and has transfer value to other areas of inquiry as well.

NANCY POLLAK, Cornell University

I’ve thought many times about how for me teaching is inseparable from my having been Omry Ronen’s student. The pleasure of teaching poetry started with learning about poetry from Omry. The connection with my students

continues what began in his classes. Among the particular lessons that came out of studying with Omry, three stand out, and these are mainstays of my teaching. The first is the question “so what?": it's all very well to make an observation, but why does it matter? The second is caution: a modest claim is stronger than an excessive one. The third is respect for the poets we're trying to understand: trust their words.

STEPHANIE SANDLER, Harvard University

It is a tribute to a great teacher that we remember the lessons learned, that his voice and his ideas echo in our own classrooms. More than anyone else I studied with, Omry remains the one I think of as my teacher, even when I wander very far from his ways of reading.

Professor Ronen at Harvard University

MICHAEL WACHTEL, Princeton University

Omry's approach to pedagogy was what I would call “old school.” His syllabus was half a page long, consisting of one or two sentences followed by a list of the poems we were to read, generally two per week. Class began with our attempts to translate the poems, which sometimes provoked his laughter, but was always followed by his assurance that “published translators make much worse mistakes.” Our contribution generally ended there. The rest of the seminar was devoted to his far-reaching commentary and erudite interpretations. Since Omry's own mentor Kirill Taranovsky often sat in the classroom as an auditor («Не правда ли, Кирилл Федорович?») Omry would proudly ask after making a particularly arcane point, it would have taken considerable courage to interrupt. Though I was often perplexed by Omry's references, I was always amazed by his knowledge of texts, subtexts (usually cited by memory), and secondary literature. Omry imparted a staggering amount of information and did so in a way that, while intimidating, was entertaining and unforgettable. I still remember exactly which poems we read and, in many cases, precisely what Omry had to say about them. To my regret, we never reached the material for the final class, which was to cover Nabokov's “An Evening of Russian Poetry.” As a first course on Russian poetry, it was a trial by fire, but I am tremendously grateful that I persevered. In my own teaching, I likewise insist that students translate every word (and I find, alas, that it is very easy to laugh when they make mistakes), and I unapologetically spend an hour or two on a single poem. I try to compensate for my much weaker command of the material by eliciting a bit more discussion.

Professor Ronen at the University of Michigan

KAREN EVANS-ROMAINE, University of Wisconsin–Madison

At the first meeting of our graduate course on Pushkin, Professor Ronen announced the reading assignment for the semester: “Read all of Pushkin.” So that it sank in, he repeated the assignment: “all of Pushkin.” We gulped and silently exchanged glances, realizing that it was going to be a challenging semester. We set to work, and the more we read, the more amply we were rewarded in understanding the references from Professor Ronen’s lectures. His assignment for a seminar on Pasternak and Mandelstam, at which he distributed a syllabus consisting of a seven-page reading list (including the complete works of both poets) to which I still refer, was worded similarly: “Look for subtexts. You have to look everywhere.” The message behind those assignments has stayed with me since: in order to interpret any one work, we need to try to gain as broad and as deep an understanding of its context as we can. When I decided to write on Pasternak, I remembered Professor Ronen’s words and got to work, reading or rereading everything I could get my hands on. He challenged his students, assuming that we were capable of meeting the challenge if we worked hard, reading broadly and deeply (and, it often seemed, constantly). His mentorship was extraordinary: challenging, inspiring, encouraging, and generous.

While I will never come anywhere near his erudition, I have tried to pass on to my students some small part of what we learned in Omry Ronen’s courses. His teaching has influenced not only my teaching of literature and culture, but of language. As I recall, he taught graduate courses mainly in Russian, and he patiently spoke with his students, native speakers of Russian or not, in Russian if we wished, outside of class as well. I have tried to continue that encouragement of speaking Russian not only in the classroom, but in the hallways. I try to convey to my students his love of the Russian language and the sheer joy of traversing linguistic seas.

SARA FELDMAN, Harvard University

Ronen lectured no matter the size of his class, but he was also attentive to the reactions of his students. He used to interrupt himself to ask me what I was thinking about whenever I made a face. While he clearly believed in talent, he knew it needed to be developed: though published errors by established scholars irked him, unpublished errors by students were opportunities for further instruction.

Ronen was known for his exceptional mentorship of women students. Some male students, accustomed to being the center of attention, assumed that he was biased in favor of women. This just demonstrates that it was—or is—still peculiar for a professor to take women students seriously as intellectuals. I owe a great debt to his confidence in my ability to do the work.

Ronen was accessible to his students despite his unceasing scholarly work. He answered emails within hours. He would welcome an unexpected knock on his office door, which he left conspicuously ajar while talking to a student. This practice, which applied clear professional boundaries to a congenial teacher-student relationship, is one which I follow whenever possible.

MARIYA LOMAKINA, Independent Scholar

Professor Ronen's classes had an amazing sense of unity and solidarity among its members. We all felt fascinated by the material he so eloquently taught and by the sense of luminous gaiety that remained with all of us after his lectures. Omry Ronen had a gift for inspiring people. Energetic, with a quite original sense of humor, he could teach his classes to just one student. I happened to be that student when a community of graduate students at the University of Michigan organized a strike and requested all of us not to attend any lectures. Professor Ronen eagerly rescheduled his lecture for a Saturday afternoon. When I turned out to be the only student who came for that class, he delivered his lecture to me alone. I could not believe that Professor Ronen was going to give his lecture only to me; I felt honored. There was something humble in his posture as he wrote on the board, noting the titles of the poems and even making a drawing of the "descent of the divinity" («нисхождение божества»). The lecture was on Gumilev's "Поэма начала" (Поэма начала; Poem of the Beginning), and it was as inspiring and formal as any other he would teach at a regular time. It was sad that it had to end. When this course resumed at its regular time the next week, he never reproached his students for their absence and remained silent on the subject, leaving in my memory that mysterious and sacred word "Om" in Gumilev's poem that could never be pronounced. Professor Ronen was a talented scholar and teacher. His energy, sense of humor, dedication to Russian literature, and extraordinary kindness have inspired many of his students to stay in touch, to teach, and continue to conduct research on Russian literature.

KELLY E. MILLER, University of Miami

I remember Professor Ronen entering the classroom to lecture. He would walk in with a small stack of books in his hand, usually three or four, and he would place them on the table in front of him. He lectured without notes—and often without even opening the books, but with incredible precision. In retrospect, I believe the books served as sparks for his memory. For me, their physical presence in the room was powerful—a way for writers to participate in an ongoing, living conversation. Now, when I teach—or even when I lead meetings as a librarian, I often bring along a book or two that might serve as inspiration.

REMINISCENCES: OMRY RONEN AS TEACHER

KAREN ROSENFLANZ, The College of St. Scholastica

На стекла вечности уже легло
Мое дыхание, мое тепло.
Запечатлеется на нем узор,
Неузнаваемый с недавних пор.
Пуускай мгновения стекает муть—
Узора милого не зачеркнуть.
О. Мандельштам

In class with Professor Ronen, one always had the impression that he had at his mental fingertips a vast library of quotations, references, poems, dog-eared tomes and arcane trivia through which he moved nimbly, with pianistic dexterity, seeking out and lingering on one note or another as the lecture required. I won't ever forget receiving the thirteen-page, closely typewritten reading list for our Pushkin seminar; the light and laughter that would sparkle in Professor Ronen's eyes as he paused dramatically to wait for the full import of something he had said to sink in; bad puns based on authors' last names; the digression on interwar mutton prices as a portent of military invasion; or the indication, in our class on the picaresque, that the embodiment of evil was a character lacking a sense of humor. Yet more profoundly than these fragments, of course, Professor Ronen instilled in me a lasting love for the semantic and poetic potential of words, their sound repetitions, muted reiterations and interwoven conversations within the edifice of literature both written and as yet unwritten. He taught the infinitely variable and refined power of words to express sniper-like precision and oblique, delicate intricacies. Always deeply involved in his research, Professor Ronen had, I think, an acute awareness of his position in a long tradition of literary scholars and teachers, and of the ripple effect that his own work would have in influencing future scholars. It is an immeasurably precious and lasting legacy.

PAULA POWELL SAPIENZA, Sacred Heart Jesuit Retreat House

It was Professor Ronen's jaw-dropping command of literary memory that first attracted me to him as his student. My mind raced to keep up with his while at the same time, and no less quickly, my heart raced, exhilarated by an intellectual mastery that was beautiful to behold. Yet what stands out even more when I reflect upon what Omry Ronen meant to me as a teacher is his unflagging passion for Russian poetry and his deep dedication to and loving generosity toward his students.

I still see the sparkle in his eye as he would unwrap the layers of his beloved poems. As he did, I sensed in him a waiting and a watching to see who among us might catch that same spark of delight and like him kindle it into a flame. His was a deep and fiery joy and love of literature that wanted to, *needed* to be

shared. His passion inspired me. It also taught me that I would never be truly satisfied until I also set my mind and heart on what elicits that same life-giving energy and joy in my own life.

Most of all, I remember Omry with great affection because of his unfailing generosity and kindness as a human being. He rejoiced in my successes and defended me even in my failings. He sought to help me discover the best of what I had to offer as a scholar. He gave me hope. I give thanks that he was such an integral part of my life. May we all, his students, be given the gift to reflect in our own unique ways his passion for and love of the beauty of this life.

TIMOTHY D. SERGAY, University at Albany

A moment in Russian philological history recorded by Lidia Ginzburg in her recollections of Tynianov ("Tynianov the Scholar," 1965, 1974) captures for me in very short space—although he does not figure in it, and could not have figured in it—the spirit of Omry Ronen's granular encyclopedism. It is the moment where Ginzburg reflects on how firmly Tynianov the daring generalizer and theoretician based his work on sheer positivistic command of facts, facts accumulated in awe-inspiring quantities. Ginzburg writes that Tynianov used to recount to his students how during his university years he had once asked the literary historian Semen Vengerov where in Herzen's journal *Kolokol* (Колокол; The Bell) he should look for certain articles he needed, and Vengerov had replied, aghast, "Do you mean to say that you are about to graduate, but you haven't even read the whole run of *Kolokol*? How is that possible?" Tynianov recounted this exchange with pleasure and certainly as a word to the wise. The wise undoubtedly included (indirectly) Ronen. Ronen's own words to the wise were occasionally at odds with Vengerov's, in that he was dismayed to see his graduate students in literature poring over methodological landmarks of the past, even the relatively recent past. He himself, the possessor of Vengerovian mastery of factual literary material, discouraged us from even attempting to assimilate *everything*, to "encompass the unencompassable" (he was fond of quoting Koz'ma Prutkov's aphorism «Никто не обнимет необъятное»). "Pass your exams by swotting up [the concise histories of Russian literature by Prince Dmitry] Mirsky, and get to know what people are working on *in these very days!* Take an interest in *that*. Decide where you want to make your own mark." I am translating from Russian here and somewhat paraphrasing, but I do so with great confidence in my memory of these remarks. Ronen's influence on my own teaching and scholarship lies in the contrast, perhaps, between his personal example of breathtaking, prodigious erudition and his earnest advice to us to define a coherent, specific direction for our own journeys through Russian philology. Those two notions, or poles—Ronesque breadth of erudition and Ronesque coherence of method and aim—are the standards by which I have ever since privately measured my own scholarly shortcomings.

REMINISCENCES: OMRY RONEN AS TEACHER

JULIE HANSEN, Uppsala University

Omry Ronen was known for his impressive memory. It was as if he could go back, in his mind's eye, to the particular page on which he had read a poem or line of prose years before and retrieve it exactly as it appeared there. I never saw him teach from notes; he always seemed have the structure of the day's lesson ready in his mind when he entered the classroom. Besides this, he was always fully present with his students, making the topic of discussion relevant, even urgent, to us. I believe it was this intense focus together with his genius that made his words so memorable to his students, even decades later.

I was reminded of all this on the day I learned of Omry's death. It was late afternoon in Uppsala when the sad news reached me, shortly before I was to teach a seminar on *Anna Karenina*. Normally I looked forward to this seminar as a highpoint in a survey course on Russian literature, but this time my heart was heavy as I walked across campus in the early November dusk. Then, having entered the classroom, I discovered I had forgotten my notes. There was no time to go back to my office; I had to improvise. In doing so, I suddenly became conscious of how much of what I tell my students about *Anna Karenina* comes from Omry. Although I never took a course with him specifically devoted to this novel, my understanding of it was greatly influenced by his comments and observations within a variety of courses and conversations. Without my notes at hand, I realized that my own teaching is inextricable from what I learned from him. And while I cannot ever hope to emulate Omry's encyclopedic memory and vast knowledge, I always try to be fully present with my students in the way he was with us, and to convey the love of literature that he instilled in us.

IRENA RONEN, Independent Scholar

My very first classes with Omry Ronen were in Jerusalem. At the age of 18, I had just enrolled in the precollege program at Hebrew University, intended for new immigrants and young people post-military. One of Omry's classes was on Masterpieces in Literature (in which he introduced me to Rabelais). I found it fascinating. His lectures were unscripted; it felt as though he were constantly improvising. When he quoted from the novels he discussed, he would translate as he went. The lecture room was his stage; he spoke while pacing, with his head held high up, pipe in hand, using expressive pauses and oratorical gestures. His lecture style had the majestic touch of a skillful performer.

Quite recently a friend, who had never met Omry, asked my children if they had ever attended their father's classes. The answer was yes, and they both agreed that the experience was not unlike sitting down at our family dinners. The particulars of his extensive, some would say encyclopedic, knowledge surprised even those closest to him. My daughter Anna remembers how in fifth grade she was involved in a science fair project on dolphins,

REMINISCENCES: OMRY RONEN AS TEACHER

and she was quite excited to impart some of her newfound knowledge at the dinner table. She was rather taken aback when Omry began to speak in precise detail about aquatic mammalian life. It was years later that she learned he had translated three volumes on the subject.

Omry enjoyed teaching a variety of classes, from Nabokov to picaresque novels. With all the sophistication of his vast erudition, he never lost his down-to-earth sense of humor, clearly linked to his roots in Odessa. On his nightstand one could find Nabokov or Kipling, Il'f and Petrov, Proust or Eric Ambler, or a guide to the best wines of that year.

I was once asked how it felt to be married to a genius. Omry didn't consider himself a genius. He would say, "Roman Jakobson was a genius, a genius with some limitations, as is always the case with geniuses." Roman Jakobson, after all, was one of his teachers.

Omry Ronen

By *Paula Powell Sapienza*

In the beginning I told myself it was his breathtaking intellect.
I had so much to learn.

Now what I hold onto is none of the intertextual exercises
that left me stretched
and spent.

Instead I see a classroom.
Before me stands a small, spry man,
eyes twinkling,
the beginning of a smile forming on his lips.
He is in love,
in love with the words, the poem, the poet.

Another room.
He enters with a dark-haired, beautiful woman.
I learn later she is his wife.
He attentively takes her coat,
looks at her tenderly as she sits
before taking his place beside her.

A hallway.
I walk with a guest.
He turns the corner.
“Professor, I’d like you to meet my mother.”
He takes her hand firmly, speaks his delight.
His words are not mere social pleasantries.

A seminar room.
I am one student, alone.
We work.
I come one day with an offering,
two texts seemingly linked.
He is triumphant.
I am relieved.

The gifts that remain the heart remembers.
Is it easier to lift a stone than to utter the word “love”?

Notes on Contributors

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KAREN EVANS-ROMAINE is Professor of Russian in the Department of German, Nordic, and Slavic at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and director of the UW–Madison Russian Flagship program. She received her Ph.D. in 1996 from the University of Michigan, where her doctoral advisor was Omry Ronen. Evans-Romaine's research focuses on Russian literature, with reference to German-Russian literary relations and intersections between literature and music, and Russian language pedagogy. She is the author of *Boris Pasternak and the Tradition of German Romanticism* (Sagner, 1997) and of articles on Pasternak and Marina Tsvetaeva. She is co-author, together with first author Richard Robin and Galina Shatalina, of the two-volume Russian textbook *Golosa (Voices; Pearson)*; co-editor, together with Dianna Murphy, of *Exploring the U.S. Language Flagship Program: Professional Competence in a Second Language by Graduation* (Multilingual Matters, 2017); and co-editor, together with first editor Tatiana Smorodinskaya and Helena Goscilo, of the Routledge *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture* (2007).

SARA FELDMAN is Preceptor in Yiddish at Harvard University. She earned her doctorate in 2014 from the University of Michigan, where she was one of Omry Ronen's last students. Her dissertation, "Fine Lines: Hebrew and Yiddish Translations of Alexander Pushkin's Verse Novel *Eugene Onegin*, 1899–1937," won a Michael S. Bernstein Dissertation Award. She is currently preparing a monograph, *People of the Russian Book*, about Jewish Pushkinism in Hebrew and Yiddish. Her other interests include translation, film and theater, Yiddish tango, and Hebrew and Yiddish prosody.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

SUSANNE FUSO is Marcus L. Taft Professor of Modern Languages and Professor of Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Wesleyan University. She received her Ph.D. from Yale University, where she studied Acmeism and poetic techniques in Russian prose narratives with Omry Ronen. She is the author of *Designing Dead Souls: An Anatomy of Disorder in Gogol* (Stanford UP, 1993), *Discovering Sexuality in Dostoevsky* (Northwestern UP, 2006), and *Editing Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy: Mikhail Katkov and the Great Russian Novel* (Northern Illinois UP, 2017). Her translations include *A Russian Prince in the Soviet State* (the stories, memoirs, and letters from exile of Vladimir Sergeevich Trubetskoi, Northwestern UP, 2006), the 1835 version of "The Portrait" by Gogol (Pegasus Publishers, 2006), and *Trepanation of the Skull* by Sergey Gandlevsky (Northern Illinois UP, 2014). Her translation of Gandlevsky's novel *Illegible* is forthcoming from Northern Illinois UP in 2019.

JULIE HANSEN is Associate Professor of Slavic Languages at the Department of Modern Languages and Research Fellow at the Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University in Sweden. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan with a dissertation, supervised by Omry Ronen, on the theme of madness in Russian Symbolist poetry, prose, and theory. Her research interests include memory studies, multilingualism in literature, translation theory and practice, and Russian and Czech Modernism, on which she has published numerous articles. She is co-editor of the volumes *Transcultural Identities in Contemporary Literature* (Rodopi, 2013) and *Punishment as a Crime? Perspectives on Prison Experience in Russian Culture* (Uppsala University, 2014). She has recently guest-edited special issues of *Translation Studies* and *Journal of World Literature* (2018).

VYACHESLAV VSEVOLODOVICH IVANOV (21 August 1929 – 7 October 2017) was a world-renowned linguist, Indo-Europeanist, anthropologist, and literary scholar. From 1991–2015, he was professor in the Slavic Department and Indo-European Studies Program at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he was designated distinguished research professor upon his retirement in 2015. After earning a Ph.D. from Moscow State University in Hittite and Indo-European grammar in 1955, he established himself as an authority in fields as diverse as Indo-European studies, Balto-Slavic linguistics, machine translation, psycholinguistics, cultural anthropology, mathematical linguistics, semiotics, and literary studies, including prosody and poetics. During his astonishingly prolific scholarly career, Ivanov published over two dozen books and over 2,000 articles. He also served as Chair of the Structural Typology Department of the Institute of Slavic Studies in Moscow, Director of the Library of Foreign Literature, Director of Moscow State University's Institute of World Culture, and Director of the Russian Anthropological School of the Russian State

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University of the Humanities. Expelled from Moscow State University in 1959 for defending Boris Pasternak's art and Roman Jakobson's scholarship, he was invited back 30 years later and was subsequently appointed a full member of the Russian Academy of Sciences (as well as other national academies, including the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the British Academy). In 1962, Ivanov and Vladimir Toporov organized the Moscow Symposium on the Structural Analysis of Sign Systems; this event is generally acknowledged to be the founding of the Moscow School of Semiotics (later to become the Moscow-Tartu School). Ivanov was founding editor of *Elementa: Journal of Slavic Studies and Comparative Cultural Semiotics* (1993–2000). In addition to his extraordinary erudition and prodigious memory, Ivanov represented a living link to the literary and scholarly world of the last half century, a man who conversed and collaborated with many of the greatest linguists, literary scholars, anthropologists, poets, and politicians of the age.

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KELLY E. MILLER is an Associate Dean at the University of Miami Libraries in Coral Gables, Florida. She is the former Head of Powell Library at UCLA and a recipient of the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) Postdoctoral Fellowship in Academic Libraries. She received her Ph.D. in Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan with a focus on early twentieth-century Russian poetry and its relationship to visual art. Her doctoral advisor was Omry Ronen, and her dissertation was entitled "Painting and the Poetry of Anna Akhmatova". With Zdenka Brodská, she co-translated Bohuslav Reynek's *Fish Scales* (Michigan Slavic Publications, 2001), and has authored numerous articles primarily on contemporary libraries. She has taught at the University of Michigan, Dickinson College, University of Virginia, and UCLA.

NANCY POLLAK is Associate Professor of Comparative Literature and Russian at Cornell University. She is the author of *Mandelstam the Reader* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1995) and of articles on Russian and American poetry. She studied with Omry Ronen first as an undergraduate at Yale and later as a graduate student there.

IRENA RONEN is an independent scholar. She holds degrees from the Hebrew University and the University of Michigan in theater studies and Slavic languages and literatures. She is the author of a book on the semantic structure of Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* (1997) and of articles on Batiushkov, Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Tiutchev, Khodasevich, Nabokov, the Russian Formalists, and Eisenstein. She and Omry Ronen collaborated on two articles: "Diabolically

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Evocative: An Inquiry into the Meaning of a Metaphor” (1986) and “Pamiat' i 'Vospominanie' u Viacheslava Ivanova i Vladislava Khodasevicha” [“Memory” and “Recollection” in the Poetry of Viacheslav Ivanov and Vladislav Khodasevich] (2010).

STEPHANIE SANDLER studied with Omry Ronen during his visiting professorships at Yale University, where she was a graduate student. She is Ernest E. Monrad Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University, where she chairs the Slavic Department. She has published on Pushkin and other modern poets, including *Commemorating Pushkin: Russia's Myth of a National Poet* (Stanford UP, 2004) and the edited volume *Rereading Russian Poetry* (Yale UP, 1999). She co-edited *The Poetry and Poetics of Olga Sedakova* (U of Wisconsin P, 2019), and she is one of the authors (with Andrew Kahn, Mark Lipovetsky, and Irina Reyfman) of a new *History of Russian Literature* (Oxford UP, 2018).

PAULA POWELL SAPIENZA is a spiritual director at Sacred Heart Jesuit Retreat House. She holds a doctorate in Slavic Languages and Literatures from the University of Michigan and wrote her dissertation on the rhetorical dictionary of Victor Shklovsky, under the direction of Omry Ronen. She taught at Union College and Fairfield University, where she also served as Associate Director of Collegium, a national organization of Catholic colleges and universities that sponsors colloquies on faith and intellectual life. Paula completed her training in spiritual direction and the Spiritual Exercises through the Ignatian Spirituality Program of Denver, later serving as its Director.

TIMOTHY D. SERGAY is Associate Professor at the University at Albany and a scholar and translator of Russian. As a graduate student at the University of Michigan, he studied Russian poetry and poetics under Omry Ronen. After working in scholarly publishing and journalistic translation, he completed a dissertation on Boris Pasternak at Yale University. At UAlbany, he teaches Russian and survey courses on Russian literature, film, and contemporary politics. He has published articles in English and Russian on poetry, translation theory and criticism, and verse translation. His translations include an annotated English edition of the “memoiristic novel” by Alexander Chudakov *A Gloom Is Cast upon the Ancient Steps*, as yet unpublished.

MICHAEL WACHTEL is a professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Princeton University. He is the author of several books on Russian poetry as well as the co-editor of *The Joy of Recognition: Selected Essays of Omry Ronen* (Michigan Slavic Publications, 2015).

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