

The Harmony of the Abyss:
Translating Tiutchev and Mandelstam

by

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A Note on Translation and Transliteration

Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the Russian, including translations of other poets, are my own. Throughout my footnotes, I have rendered Russian language texts, names, and titles into the Library of Congress' method of Russian transliteration, unless I am preserving another author's transliteration. In my own writing, I use a modified version of the Library of Congress' transliteration to reflect names that have grown familiar in another spelling, such as Mandelstam. In the first chapter, I designate masculine rhymes with uppercase letters and feminine rhymes with lowercase letters.

I
THE HARMONY OF THE ABYSS

Introduction A Bookcase

This all began in a bookcase:

It is about that bookcase that I should like to speak now. The bookcase of early childhood is a man's companion for life. The arrangement of its shelves, the choice of books, the colors of the spines are for him the color, height, and arrangement of world literature itself. And as for books which were not included in that first bookcase--they were never to force their way into the universe of world literature. Every book in the first bookcase is, willy-nilly, a classic, and not one of them can ever be expelled.¹

In his autobiography, Шум Времени (The Noise of Time), Mandelstam begins his fourth chapter by discussing his childhood bookcase, in which one could find a twenty-five volume Russian history of Judaism, German contributions from Schiller, Goethe and Kerner, and, of course, a selection of renowned Russian poets. While Mandelstam spends a paragraph detailing the modest qualities of his Isakov edition of Pushkin, another poet's place on the shelf, that of Fedor Tiutchev, is mentioned soon after, almost in passing: "Сюда шел тот, кто хотел разделить судьбу поколения вплоть до гибели, - высокомерные оставались в стороне с Тютчевым и Фетом" ("Hither came those who wished to share the fate of their generation right up to the point of ruin - the haughty ones remained to one side with Tiutchev and Fet").² In the case of Tiutchev, in correlation with Mandelstam's description of his bookcase, the nineteenth century poet proved, truly, to be an un-expellable influence on Mandelstam's poetry, appearing again and again as a subtextual influence over the

¹ Osip Mandelstam, The Noise of Time, trans. Clarence Brown in The Prose of Osip Mandelstam (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 81.

² Ibid, 84.

course of Mandelstam's career. This thesis will examine these subtextual interactions, as well as the larger implications they have for Mandelstam's poetics.

* * *

As Vladimir Nabokov once said of Tiutchev: "Neither Tiutchev's life...nor personality contains that romantic appeal which makes the biographies of Pushkin and Lermontov almost homogeneous with their muses."³ While this initially seems a harsh summation, Tiutchev's life *was* decidedly more tame than those of other great Russian poets (after all, Tiutchev managed to avoid being killed in a duel, exiled or persecuted): over the course of his twenty-two year career as a diplomat living abroad for in South Germany, his only insubordination was travelling to Switzerland without a proper leave from his Ambassador.⁴

While Tiutchev's life was perhaps unremarkable, his poetry was precisely the opposite, despite how the poet felt about it.⁵ Although his poetry is often divided into three categories (nature, love, and politics), he is, undoubtedly, most famous for his nature poetry. Tiutchev was a poet of lightning strikes: his lyrics were often quite short, with each poem reflecting a single exposure to his ever-shifting universe. In this sense, his nature poems were "visions" more than anything else, capturing a scene like a spring thunderstorm or the advancing night with fantastic clarity: his lyrics are not cluttered with tedious philosophizing, nor do they gesture at prepared

³ Vladimir Nabokov, Verses and Versions: Three Centuries of Russian Poetry (Florida: Harcourt Press, 2008), 230.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ A letter from Tiutchev to his friend and editor I.S. Gagarin in 1836 reads, "As far as my versified scriblings are concerned, do whatever you want with them without any limitations or conditions attached, because they're all yours...What I sent you constitutes only the tiniest part of a whole heap of them accumulated over a period of time but lost by the will of fate, or more accurately, some kind of predestination." Cited in Sarah Pratt, Russian Metaphysical Romanticism: The Poetry of Tiutchev and Boratynskii (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1984), 10.

moral conclusions. The poems rely on the images and the mood they depict to convey meaning and evoke a response from the audience.

Furthermore, many of his poems are characterized by a sense of wonderment or awe, especially in the face of nature: the teeming waves of the sea sweep up and churn the reader, just as the streaks of the sun smolder on his forehead before the coming darkness enshrouds him. Other common images and themes that appear in Tiutchev's poetry include the sea, night, dreams, sleep, and chaos; these will be examined throughout the thesis, especially when they come up in the context of Mandelstam's poetry. However, it cannot be said that these themes exist as consistent metaphors in Tiutchev's poetry, as their significations and associations shift and change from poem to poem: while night appears to be a quiet time for creation in a poem like "Тени сизые смешались..." it can also appear as an ominous, destructive figure in a poem like "День и Ночь"; in this sense, the universe of Tiutchev was constantly changing, just like the nature around him. In such a state of flux, the best one can do to attempt to analyze Tiutchev is to trace around his essence, turning him over in one's palms under a light until it a new section shimmers. One must look at a full collection of his poems to fully illuminate him.

* * *

It is this poet of lightning strikes whom Mandelstam included in his bookcase, and as the quote from Шум Времени suggests, Tiutchev was a companion for Mandelstam's entire poetic career. To get a sense of Mandelstam as a poet, we may turn to Omry Ronen:

Mandelstam's semantics contain nothing unmotivated, accidental, or based on automatic associations usually labeled "surrealist" by literary critics. All the elements of Mandelstam's poetic utterances are strictly motivated...As early as 1924, Tynjanov pointed out that the recurrence of certain 'key words' within M's poems is accompanied by subtle semantic shifts and 'leads, at the end, to a new meaning.' In other words, the meaning of certain reiterative lexico-semantic units in M's poems depends on their place and function in the sequence of recurrences and on the structure of this sequence as total...⁶

and soon after:

The other device by means of which Mandelstam 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 lexico-semantic and thematic configurations of the poetic tradition.⁷

Just as Tiutchev had recurring "key words" like nature, night, chaos and dreams in his poetry, and just as these words went through shifts in meanings and significations over Tiutchev's career, this thesis will examine how Mandelstam adopts and incorporates the "key words" of Tiutchev into his own poetry, and how they mutate or change within their new poetic context to find "a new meaning." In examining the various methods Mandelstam uses to integrate Tiutchev into his own poetry, including writing a poem with the same title as Tiutchev, refracting Tiutchevean verse and themes with his own tinges, and taking an image from Tiutchev and making it the protagonist of his own poem, a trend begins to emerge: in alluding to and reiterating Tiutchev, Mandelstam is not only making a retrospective gesture, acknowledging the poetic tradition that came before him, the spot in the universe of world literature Tiutchev occupies in his bookcase, but also a prospective gesture, in that Mandelstam is actively adapting and cultivating these themes, images, and verse to fit within and advance his own poetics. To elaborate on this claim, it is worth

⁶ Omry Ronen, *An Approach to Mandel'shtam* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1983), IX.

⁷ *Ibid.*, X.

examining the origins behind the name of Mandelstam's first collection of poetry, Камень (Stone).

The stone itself comes from a Tiutchev poem entitled "Problème":

Problème

С горы скатившись, камень лёг в долине.
Как он упал? Никто не знает ныне —
Сорвался ль он с вершины сам собой
Или низвергнут мыслящей рукой?

Столетье за столетьем пронеслося:
Никто ещё не разрешил вопроса.

A Problem

A stone that rolled down and off the mountain lies in a valley.
How did it fall? No one knows now —
Did it break off the summit on its own?
Or was it cast down by a thinking hand?

Century after century has passed;
No one has yet resolved the question.

In reading this poem within the context of the retrospective and prospective simultaneity mentioned above, it becomes clear that Tiutchev's nameless stone served as the perfect foundation for Mandelstam: in naming his first collection Камень, Mandelstam takes the original question posed by Tiutchev in his poem, "How did it fall?" and makes it the foundation of his foray into poetic tradition. In other words, gesturing retrospectively to Tiutchev, and namely, Tiutchev's ambiguity ("Никто ещё не разрешил вопроса" "No one has yet resolved the question"), allows Mandelstam to progressively advance his own poetics and to give a resounding answer in favor of a stone that abandoned the peak on its own, a stone that initiated its own course.

Considering the actual significance of a stone for a moment: a stone is a raw material, and a material that has been used again and again over time to a construct

civilizations, streets, houses, columns and so on. By extension, it could be said that Mandelstam is taking the stone of Tiutchev, and using it as the raw material with which he will construct the architecture of his poetics. Mandelstam becomes a craftsman, using the retrospective material of Tiutchev's stone to progressively propel his own poetics within КАМЕНЬ and beyond. For the rest of his career, Mandelstam will be using this material, the stones of Tiutchev that broke off their mountain, and this thesis will attempt to examine how and what Mandelstam constructed. Before delving into the connection between Mandelstam and Tiutchev, it is worth taking a moment to speak on the significance of translating Russian into English, and further, the significance of translation in general.

Translating Russian into English

Like Tiutchev's notion of spoken thought in "Silentium!" (as will be examined), translation is inevitably plagued by the inaccuracies and shortcomings of language. Whether one is translating Russian poetry into English or Spanish poetry into German, it is impossible to convey the original experience of a poem in an alternate language. While it is possible, on occasion, to approach the essence of the original, inevitably, issues of inexactitude in translation, differences in grammar, and subjective preference obstruct an ideal rendition. In this regard, a brief summation of the principal differences between the Russian and English languages seems appropriate, and it will hopefully elucidate some of the aforementioned difficulties of translation, especially for the non-Russian speaker.

One of the most significant distinctions between the languages is that Russian, as opposed to English, is a gendered language. In Russian, as with many other languages, each noun is assigned a gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter). In the cases of words like “mother” the nouns obviously relate to physical gender, although in the case of other objects like “silence,” “sea,” or “chaos,” there is no physical meaning attached to the gender. However, problems arise particularly with pronouns in Russian, as a word like “она” can mean both “it” and “she” in Russian; when one translates such a pronoun into English, he is forced to pick one or the other.⁸

Furthermore, there are no articles in Russian. As a result, when translating a poem into English, one is forced to choose to translate something like “Мысль изреченная есть ложь” as either “*the* spoken thought is a lie” or “*a* spoken thought is a lie.” In this sense, translation is very much a dialogue between the poet and the translator, with each poetic gesture prompting a unique response from the translator depending on the situation (especially in relation to the decisions of what article, if any, to append to a noun in English). Due to the subjective nature of the translator’s experience with the poem, inevitably, Tjutchev will have a different conversation with Nabokov than he has with me, and as a result, Nabokov’s responses and translation decisions will regularly differ from my own. Of course there are situations where the context of the verse dictates the article, but in the situations where it is not readily apparent, opting for an “a” here rather than a “the,” for example, can be quite a grueling conversation for the translator.

Lastly, word order, for the most part, is freer in Russian than in English, as the meaning is dictated by case and the declension of Russian parts of speech. In contrast,

⁸ Such an issue will be discussed in Chapter I in regards to Mandelstam’s “Silentium.”

changing around the order of words in English will either lead to a sentence with an entirely different meaning or to a jumble of nonsense. This element of Russian is particularly trying for a translator attempting to preserve the meter, rhyme, and meaning simultaneously, forcing entire rearrangements of stanzas just to make grammatical sense in English.

Translating Tiutchev and Mandelstam

In many ways, the translation of poetry is the most intimate literary exercise one can engage in. When he translates a poem, he is not only interacting with the language of the original, but with the history and conventions that formed that language, as well as the circumstances that led that particular poet at that particular moment to employ a particular form to engage a particular theme or vision. By extension, as mentioned above, when he translates a poem, he is having a direct conversation not only with the language of the original, but with the poet himself, with each word posing a number of questions for the translator, be they grammatical, lexical, syntactic, etc. However, as a result of the impossibility of perfectly rendering one language into another (the spoken thought, truly, is a lie in this regard), the translator is eternally damned, in that he *must* answer the questions posed by the original poet, although any decision the translator makes will inevitably come up short in some respect. While this seemingly paints a grim picture of the art of translation, at the same time, the beauty of translation exists within the translator's unabating, internal discourse. In other words, being forced to make such poetic decisions, the honorable translator is compelled to get as close to the text as possible

in order to give the best response(s) he can to satisfy the demands of both the original language and the particular poet they are translating. In this regard, it can be argued that the best translations embody a much more intimate interpretation of a text than any form of exegesis.

Inevitably, however, when he translates a poem, the translator provides many answers that compromise the language of the original, the language of the poet, or the form and stylistics of the work, and often, a combination of all three. Furthermore, while the committed translator can allow an intimate, illuminating insight into the workings of their chosen poet's mind, the relationship, of course, can end up working the other way around, tempting the translator to embellish the work with elements of his own poetics; the best translators remain focused on conveying the sense of the original, ensuring they are reflecting the writer and not themselves playing at being poets. However, even these translators, as a result of the choices they make, inevitably convey vestiges of their own poetics and subjective preference: even the most "literal" translation in the Nabokovian sense exists as a hybrid between the voice of the poet and that of the translator.

In this regard, one cannot experience a closer relationship to a poet than by translating that poet's work; rather than an exercise of mere repetition, the translator's final product is an animate transcript of a conversation. As a result, translation will always exist as a dynamic medium, no matter how literal the translation.

* * *

There are, of course, other types of translation besides "literal" ones, including those in which the translator attempts to preserve certain aspects of the poetic form

(perhaps the meter or the rhyme scheme), while also performing a translation that preserves the meaning of the original. At this point, it is worth examining Nabokov's views on translation in an attempt to elucidate my own approach to translation.

In the foreword to his renowned translation of Pushkin's Евгений Онегин (Eugene Onegin), Vladimir Nabokov defines three types of "translation":

- i) Paraphrastic: this type of translation offers "a free version of the original, with omissions and additions prompted by the exigencies of form, the conventions attributed to the consumer, and the translator's ignorance."⁹ While such translations may elicit flourishes in diction or idiomatic conciseness, excessive stylisticness inevitably misconstrues the original.
- ii) Lexical (or constructional): according to Nabokov, "this a machine can do under the direction of an intelligent bilinguist."¹⁰ Essentially, this type of translation renders the basic meanings of the words and their order.
- iii) Literal: "rendering, as closely as the associative and syntactical capacities of another language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original."¹¹ This, to Nabokov, is the only form of "true translation."

In regard to the first variant, I hesitate to criticize this form of translation as much as Nabokov, as translating a poem and attempting to preserve the exigencies of form can

⁹ Vladimir Nabokov, foreword to Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse by Alexander Pushkin trans. Vladimir Nabokov (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), vii.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, viii.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

be a fruitful and engaging exercise (I do agree with Nabokov, however, on the other issues he notes with this type of translation). At the same time, however, in attempting to recreate the form, one inevitably compromises the meaning to a certain degree. For example, if I am translating a poem by Tiutchev and attempting to preserve both the iambic tetrameter and the rhyme scheme of the original, I will be forced into treacherous creative decisions, especially at the perilous pitfall that is the end of a line to be rhymed. For example, here is an attempt to preserve the form and meter of the second stanza from Tiutchev's "Как океан объемлет на шар земной":

As ocean swells and circles earth's full sphere,
So too do dreams encircle earthly living;
The night will come – with waves that chatter, hissing
The Element beats its own pier.

In this case, while the translation may sound nice (or horrible) in preserving the form, the meaning is inevitably lost or rearranged: the word "pier," in particular, suggests a manmade structure, while in the original, the Element ("Стихия") beats "its own shore," making it entirely distinct from the world of man within the first stanza. As a result, in the original, the Element compelling and requesting "us" in the second stanza becomes all the more dramatic; here, that effect is diluted with the premature manmade register of "pier."

In order to avoid such predicaments, in my translations of both Mandelstam and Tiutchev, I have done my best to render accurate representations of Nabokov's "literal" variant with my literal translations, in an effort to convey the original meaning of the poem to the best of my ability. However, even then, I am not translating Mandelstam or Tiutchev into English, but into Chris Wade, just as Nabokov translated Eugene Onegin into Nabokov. Considering the inevitability of

this coalescing of my voice with Tiutchev's and Mandelstam's, as well as my own subjective interpretations and responses to the poems, I have decided to appose creative translations to the literal translations, as well. In doing so, although Nabokov would likely throw these works in the trash as paraphrastic rubbish, I hope they will serve to convey not only my individual experience with Tiutchev and Mandelstam, but with each individual poem, as well. Equipped with the baseline of a literal rendition of the poem, the creative translation can breathe a bit more, knowing that the reader has a certain idea of where the poem has come from. In this regard, the creative translation represents the culmination of my own voice combined with that of Tiutchev or Mandelstam. Some of these translations stay close to the original, while others attempt to reflect the rhyme and meter (I perform a complete translation of "Как океан объедлет на шар земной" to accompany my example above) and some do not resemble the original in any form but in the spirit of the poem itself. I believe that in coupling the literal translations with creative translations, I will illuminate not only the spirit of the poem into English between the two, but my own voice and experience with the work, as well.

Lastly, I wanted my translations to embody this progression of a combination of voices: the first iteration of the poem in the original language represents the poet's original voice as it was first presented to me; the second iteration, the "literal" translation represents the first instance of mingling voices, reflected in my decisions in terms of word order and definition; and finally, as already mentioned, the culmination of the process exists in my own creative translation, which may or may not resemble the original at all. This gradual expression of my own voice is not

inspired by arrogance, but rather as a means of visually and literally reflecting a sequence of inspiration and where it can take a translator, and perhaps a reader. Just as Mandelstam retrospectively incorporated Tiutchev into his work, while prospectively advancing his own poetics, I hope my translations will function in a similar fashion.

I

A Silence

*Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter.*

- John Keats

Besides alluding to Tiutchev through the title of his first collection of poetry, Mandelstam continually cultivates a Tiutchevean undercurrent throughout Stone: Mandelstam’s “Silentium,” in particular, is a work in which references to Tiutchev function both retrospectively and prospectively. Obviously, the title alludes to Tiutchev’s earlier poem of the same name, and as a result, it encourages the reader to engage with the semantic and thematic threads commingling between the two works. However, while both poems deal with issues of silence and incommunicability, Mandelstam’s poem resolves on a decidedly different cadence than Tiutchev: in this sense, the incorporation of Tiutchev is a prospective gesture, as well; while Mandelstam is working with retrospective material, he manages to craft something entirely new and distinct.

Prior to examining how Mandelstam takes on this prospective project, it is worth exploring Tiutchev’s original poem to ascertain the thematic foundation Mandelstam would go on to challenge, as well as to acknowledge what he would preserve, if anything. Here is Tiutchev’s poem in the original Russian, accompanied by my own literal translation:

Silentium!

Молчи, скрывайся и таи
И чувства и мечты свои -
Пусть в душевной глубине
Встают и заходят оне
Безмолвно, как звезды в ночи,-
Любуйся ими - и молчи.

Как сердцу высказать себя?
Другому как понять тебя?
Поймёт ли он, чем ты живёшь?
Мысль изреченная есть ложь.
Взрывая, возмутишь ключи,-
Питайся ими - и молчи.

Лишь жить в себе самом умей -
Есть целый мир в душе твоей
Таинственно-волшебных дум;
Их оглушит наружный шум,
Дневные разгонят лучи,-
Внимай их пенью - и молчи!..

Silentium!

Be silent, hide, and conceal
Your feelings and dreams –
Let them, in the depths of your soul
Rise and set
Silently, like stars in the night, -
Admire them – and keep silent.

How can the heart express itself?
How can another understand you?
Will he understand how you live?
The spoken thought is a lie.
Stirring them, you will disturb the springs, -
Drink from them – and keep silent.

Know how to live in your own self -
There is a whole world in your soul
Of mysterious and enchanting thoughts;
An external noise will muffle them,
The day's light will disperse them, -
Hear them sing – and keep silent!

Throughout the work, Tjutchev alludes to language's inherent inadequacy at conveying what one thinks or feels, and as a result, a predilection for silence permeates the poem's form and content from the outset. In Latin, the title of the work

refers to “silence, stillness, quiet, repose, or obscurity,”¹² although critics have offered more elaborate explanations. According to Sidney Monas, “Silentium” “takes its title from a medieval book of monastic discipline and [the word] has to do with the vow of silence.”¹³ Anatoly Liberman introduces another variant: “the title of this poem goes back to classroom usage – the teacher saying ‘Silence!’ because he himself is going to speak.”¹⁴ While the suggested origin of the title differs considerably between these two examples, they both immediately lend the poem a solemn tonality. Reinforcing Liberman’s pedagogical context for the title, the first line’s imperatives infuse the poem with an instructive register: Tjutchev himself demands his audience’s silence in order to proclaim his verse. However, this also introduces an inherent tension that will continue throughout the poem, namely between Tjutchev’s desire to remain within an inner world of “mysterious and enchanting thoughts,” and his poetic impulse, his obligation, even, to deliver his message to external audiences; although Tjutchev wishes to relinquish speech, as a poet he is compelled to write and engage with the very language he condemns.

Regardless of this tension, the imperatives continue: “Молчи, скрывайся и тай / И чувства и мечты свои” (“Be silent, hide and conceal / Your feelings and dreams”). Thus, Tjutchev is not only calling on the reader to remain silent for the duration of the poem (as speech would interrupt his verse and his message), but further, to hide and conceal from language the very emotions that make us human. As

¹² University of Notre Dame Archives Latin Dictionary and Grammar Aid s.v. “Silentium,” <http://archives.nd.edu/latgramm.htm> (Accessed March 27th, 2012).

¹³ Burton Raffel and Alla Burago, *Complete Poetry of Osip Emilevich Mandelstam* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1973), 317.

¹⁴ Anatoly Liberman, *On the Heights of Creation: The Lyrics of Fedor Tyutchev* (Greenwich: Jai Press, 1993), 184.

the communal creatures we are, this is certainly not an easy task: society constantly urges us to express ourselves and our ambitions, to let others know how we feel, etc. However, for Tiutchev, the second we give these thoughts and feelings expression, we have betrayed them.

This is not to say that these feelings and dreams should be disregarded entirely, as Tiutchev calls on the reader (again with the imperative) to “Пускай в душевной глубине / Встают и заходят оне” (“Let them, in the depths of your soul / Rise and set”). In this sense, Tiutchev makes a distinction between two worlds: not simply between an internal and an external realm (as he prompts the reader to admire the feelings like stars in the night, praising the external, natural world), but between an unspoken and a spoken world. In this sense, Tiutchev is also distinguishing between two types of ideas: those that thrive unblemished in the internalized sanctuary of one’s soul, and those that have been spoiled by the inherent restrictions of language. Under these circumstances, one is compelled to question Tiutchev’s own agenda with “Silentium,” as the poem, effectively, goes against everything Tiutchev is trying to communicate; as Richard Gregg puts it, the poem exists as “an ontological absurdity...in which the writer enjoins strict silence on himself because self-expression (i.e., poetry) is impossible.”¹⁵

However, this tension develops a different dynamic in the second stanza. After accustoming the reader with instructive imperatives, here, Tiutchev alters his approach with a series of inquiries: “Как сердцу высказать себя? / Другому как понять тебя? / Поймёт ли он, чем ты живёшь?” (“How can the heart express itself?

¹⁵ Richard Gregg, Fedor Tiutchev: The Evolution of a Poet (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), 91.

/ How can another understand you? / Will he understand how you live?’). These inquiries again bring about the problems speech and language introduce in the first stanza, although rather than demanding that the audience be silent, Tiutchev is now encouraging the reader to entertain his questions (although they shouldn’t speak about them!). In essence, having instructed the readers on how to manage their feelings and dreams within themselves, now Tiutchev is able to challenge their (unspoken) voice, trusting they will contemplate the answers without lending their thoughts to language. The progression of these questions is worth noting, as well, moving from the general expression of a single “heart,”¹⁶ to a dialogue between two people, and finally, to a notion of understanding, and in particular, understanding how one lives. In this regard, Tiutchev places the whole concept of language and human relations into question: can we ever genuinely express what we are thinking or feeling? And even if we could, how can we guarantee another person, and by extension, the world, would understand us? Tiutchev appears to argue that we cannot, as the homogenization of language can never account for all the how of an individual conducts himself: while we may be able to get a general sense of how someone lives, when pressured, language will always fall short in some respect. For that matter, it is worth containing our thoughts and feelings, as anything we express is not only tarnished by language, but it is an outright “lie.”

As in the first stanza, the penultimate line of the second stanza again refers to the natural world, this time with an image of springs. However, as opposed to the

¹⁶ The absence of articles in Russian presents a difficulty in English translation. In this regard, the line “Как сердцу высказать себя?” could be translated as both “How can *a* heart express itself,” or “How can *the* heart express itself.” While the former lends the heart a metonymic quality, standing in for any human being, the latter translation deals with the singular expression of the “heart” itself.

celestial “stars in the night,” the metaphor is fitting in the context of the “inner world” Tiutchev will go on to describe in the third stanza: while our thoughts and feelings may be high-reaching, they originate within ourselves, as does a spring from the underground. Furthermore, as with the “stars in the night” we are encouraged to admire, Tiutchev again introduces an air of reverence for the natural, undisturbed world with the line “Питайся ими - и молчи” (“Drink from them – and keep silent”).

This conflict between undisturbed and disturbed thoughts continues in the third stanza, which returns to the imperative. However, in the original Russian “Лишь жить в себе самом умей” the imperative is at the end of the line, placing the initial emphasis on the notion of living within one’s own world of “mysterious and enchanting thoughts,” as opposed to the act of “knowing” or “learning.” Tiutchev’s invocation of the natural world in the final stanza is intriguing, in that the day appears to be a decidedly negative force, threatening to disperse one’s inner thoughts, as opposed to the stars and streams praised in the earlier stanzas. Tiutchev’s preference for night and darkness is well documented throughout his poetry, and it appears here to be no different; in this case, night and springs (evoking a sense of the underground) represent a realm of contemplation and introspection, while the day is a force that disperses our thoughts as a metaphor for speech. There may be something to be said, as well, about the connection between night and sleep, a time where individual dreams are unhindered by language and rationality, as opposed to the daytime, during which most humans interact with one another, to ask the price of a jar of honey at the marketplace, to respond to an instructor at school, etc.

As Clare Cavanagh puts it, “In ‘Silentium,’ Tiutchev commands his fellow poets to retreat into the uncorrupted, authentic realm of a self untainted by speech’s inevitable distortions.”¹⁷ However, this command to retreat, in itself, stands in opposition to Tiutchev’s inner realm of unperturbed thoughts, as he has exposed his thoughts to the daylight of language. Therefore, the poem extends beyond a simple polemic against speech to a complex commentary on the poet’s existence, and his inevitable struggle to convey the “mysterious and enchanting thoughts” of his mind to thoughts on a page.

Furthermore, the poem exists paradoxically for the reader, as well: because poetry is an art form that is intended to be read aloud, we cannot give Tiutchev’s verse a voice that is not, according to his aphorism, a lie. While we are instructed to retreat into an inner world, it is when we read the poem aloud that the poem’s nuclear line “The spoken thought is a lie” is fully realized. While Mandelstam’s poem also comments on the respective struggles of the poet and the reader, as mentioned above, he confronts the problem with a decidedly different approach.

* * *

Mandelstam’s “Silentium”¹⁸ takes the foundation of Tiutchev’s poem, that one should retreat from speech’s inevitable distortions into an incorruptible inner self, and

¹⁷ Clare Cavanagh, Osip Mandelstam and the Modernist Creation of Tradition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 41.

¹⁸ Silence – “тишина” – is a fairly common motif in Mandelstam’s early writings, and the word and its derivatives (for example, тихий звук means soft, quiet sounds) appear throughout Камень: “О, тихая моя свобода” (#2), “И тихий звук” (#5), “За радость тихую дышать и жить” (#8), “И тишину переплывает / Полночных птиц незвучный хор” (#15), “Тихо спорят в сердце ласковым / Умирающем моем / Наступающие сумерки / С догорающим лучом,” (#24), and later, from the same poem, “Отчего так мало музыки / И такая тишина?” Yet another important poem in relation to this theme is #11 in Камень:

develops it further, challenging not only the restrictions of speech, but the restrictions of a self, as well. Mandelstam's lyric subject prefers instead to return to a primordial state where he is "fused with life's original foundation," a state of cosmic harmony:

Silentium

Она еще не родилась,
Она и музыка и слово,
И потому всего живого
Ненарушаемая связь.

Спокойно дышат моря груди,
Но, как безумный, светел день,
И пены бледная сирень
В черно-лазоровом сосуде.

Да обретут мои уста
Первоначальную немоту,
Как кристаллическую ноту,
Что от рождения чиста!

Останься пеной, Афродита,
И слово в музыку вернись,
И сердце сердца устыдись,
С первоосновой жизни слито!

Silentium

She has not yet been born,
She is both music and word,
And therefore the unbreakable bond

Ни о чем не нужно говорить,
Ничему не следует учить,
И печальна так и хороша
Темная звериная душа:

Ничему не хочет научить,
Не умеет вовсе говорить
И плывет дельфином молодым
По седым пучинам мировым.

There is no need to speak about anything,
Nothing should be taught;
How sad and fine
Is the dark animal soul.

It has nothing it wants to teach
And it lacks any ability to speak,
And it swims like a young dolphin
Along the gray abysses of the world.

Of all that lives.

The breasts of the sea calmly breathe
But, like a madman, the day is bright,
And the pale lilac of the foam
Lies in a black-azure vessel.

May my lips find
This primordial muteness
Like a crystal note,
That is pure from birth!

Remain as foam, Aphrodite,
And word, revert to music,
And heart, be ashamed of heart,
Fused with life's original foundation.

Throughout his own “Silentium,” it is clear Mandelstam is not only challenging Tiutchev’s themes, but Tiutchev’s approach, as well. For example, while Tiutchev’s title contains an exclamation point, making the title itself an imperative, Mandelstam eliminates this punctuation, making the poem a description instead. Furthermore, instead of beginning with a sequence of instructive imperatives directed at the reader, Mandelstam opts for a thematic framework based on the myth of Aphrodite. Furthermore, as opposed to the largely rhetorical register of Tiutchev, Mandelstam’s poem begins with two stanzas that are entirely narrative-descriptive, establishing the work’s “poetic space and time [as] the world before the embodiment of the goddess of beauty.”¹⁹ This is not to say that Mandelstam completely rejects Tiutchev’s approach, as the third and fourth stanzas allude to Tiutchev’s original poem with their use of the imperative; while Mandelstam preserves elements of Tiutchev’s original work, he adapts them, coordinates them, to fit the scheme of his own poetics.

Examining the first stanza more in depth, however, Mandelstam begins with the line, “Она еще не родилась” (“She has not yet been born”). In my particular

¹⁹ Kiril Taranovsky, *Essays on Mandel'stam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 121.

translation, I've chosen to translate "она" as "she," although the word can also mean "it" in Russian. In the context of the entire poem, this она can refer to either Aphrodite or silence itself ("тишина," the Russian equivalent for "Silentium," is a feminine noun). While the ambiguity is certainly present in the original, one is forced to resolve the ambiguity when translating the poem into English: in English the Russian "она" is *either* "it" or "she," whereas, in Russian, it can be *both* it and she. Clarence Brown argues for translating она as "it,"²⁰ presuming она to refer to silence, which, correspondingly, is un-gendered in the English language. While I do agree with him that silence makes more sense in the context of the rest of the poem (as the "music and word" "the unbreakable bond / of all that lives", etc.) than Aphrodite, I prefer to maintain the femininity of она to preserve the gendered connection between тишина and the goddess of beauty.

Regardless of the translation, in opposition to "Молчи, скрывайся и тай," Mandelstam's first line introduces an immediate subject, and one that will be discussed throughout the remainder of the poem. While silence has not been born, it is still "both music and word" and "the unbreakable bond / of all that lives"; as a result, for Mandelstam, silence represents more than simply the absence of sound. In its primal state, silence is "the unexpressed, virgin thought, the raw material of everything."²¹ Silence can never be exhausted, and as a result, it exists as an endless source that binds all life together; as opposed to Tjutchev's "spoken thought," a lie as soon as it is uttered, silence represents a thought forever unborn, and at the same time, a thought that will always survive, since an unexpressed idea cannot age, wither, or

²⁰ Clarence Brown, Mandelstam (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 166.

²¹ R.H. Morrison, Poems from Mandelstam (Cranbury: Associated University Presses, 1990), 28.

die; for Mandelstam, “language *contains* silence.”²² In this regard, while silence represents, to a certain degree, nothingness, it also represents infinite potentiality.

Furthermore, as the unbreakable bond of all that lives, silence is not only characterized as a state of pre-being, but also as the space between communication, between the music and the word, between the calmly breathing sea and the day raving like a madman, and between the poet and the reader. While Tiutchev opts for a direct confrontation with the reader through the use of imperatives, Mandelstam relies on exposing an innate connection, an innate intermediary that fuses together the cosmic order, including him and his audience. We are advised not merely to live *within* ourselves, but to live within a state of primordial harmony that *precedes* ourselves.

The second stanza continues the narrative-description, evoking an image of the sea, the birthplace, of course, of Aphrodite. As mentioned above, while the stanza’s format distances itself from Tiutchev’s rhetorical series of questions, the evocation of the sea serves a similar purpose for the work: as Tiutchev’s questions literally and figuratively advance his examination of the shortcomings of language, the subject of the sea advances Mandelstam’s mythical framework of Aphrodite. In other words, in Tiutchev’s “Silentium!” the subject of the poem is language and its shortcomings. Therefore, when he introduces questions into the verse, he is advancing his poem by questioning language itself; he is using a type of sentence (interrogative), a type of language, to challenge his poem on language. On the other hand, Mandelstam’s “Silentium” is concerned with the myth of Aphrodite, and by bringing up the sea, the birthplace of Aphrodite, he is advancing the myth behind the poem by using a component of the myth. Thus, as Tiutchev’s poem is about language, he

²² Raffel and Burago, Complete Poetry of Mandelstam, 317.

draws our attention to the language itself; as Mandelstam's poem about Aphrodite, Mandelstam draws our attention to her mythology.

Furthermore, the sea is an especially dynamic image, as it gestures retrospectively to Tiutchev's poetics: the sea is an extremely important subject for Tiutchev, and one that he wrote about quite frequently (see "Сон на море," "Видение," "Певучесть есть в морских волнах," "Как океан объемлет шар земной," etc.). Thus, the sea can be seen as a microcosm for Mandelstam's poetic relationship with Tiutchev: just as he is working retrospectively, adopting an identical poem title and working with one of Tiutchev's most frequent images, Mandelstam is also making new what he has appropriated.

Furthermore, daylight serves a similar function in the second stanza when it makes a disruptive appearance in the poem; not only does it echo Tiutchev's disfavor for the day in other poems ("День и ночь," "Безумие") but even Tiutchev's "Silentium!" in which the daylight disperses the mysterious and enchanting thoughts of one's inner world. In Mandelstam's poem, the daylight shining like a madman is juxtaposed with the calm breath of the sea, an image of harmony when employed by Tiutchev. Both of these natural images function retrospectively as a clear nod to Tiutchev's poetics, but also prospectively, as Mandelstam is able to adapt them as a setting for his own thematic framework of the poem, the mythology of the unborn Aphrodite: "И пены бледная сирень / В черно-лазореваем сосуде" ("the pale lilac of the foam / [lying] in a black-azure vessel").

The third stanza is a solemn rhetorical digression, the poet's only address to himself. As such, this stanza can be seen as the crux for the entire poem: instead of

returning simply to an inner world full of “mysterious and enchanting thoughts,” Mandelstam wants to delve deeper, to return to a “Первоначальную немоту, / Как кристаллическую ноту, / Что от рождения чиста!” (“primordial muteness / Like a crystal note / that is pure from birth!”). He has incorporated the Tiutchevean notion of self-inflicted silence into his own work, but here, he shows how he has progressively developed the theme. In essence, Mandelstam is not only retreating from speech and language, like Tiutchev, but from his own “self”: in returning to the primordial, where animals have not evolved and everything is still intermingling molecules and atoms, or foam, Mandelstam hopes to dissolve his own being in order to join a greater cosmic harmony. In this respect, this third stanza stands as a polemic with Tiutchev’s inner, subjective world of “mysterious and enchanting thoughts,” opposing it with an objective, primeval world that is universal in scope. Further, while Tiutchev laments the impossibility of poetic creation:

Как сердцу высказать себя?
Другому как понять тебя?
Поймёт ли он, чем ты живёшь?
Мысль изречённая есть ложь.

How can the heart express itself?
How can another understand you?
Will he understand how you live?
The spoken thought is a lie.

as Taranovsky points out,²³ Mandelstam speaks of its *uselessness*:

Да обретут мои уста
Первоначальную немоту,
Как кристаллическую ноту,
Что от рождения чиста!

May my lips find
This primeval muteness
Like a crystal note,
That is pure from birth!

²³ Taranovsky, *Essays*, 121.

In other words, Mandelstam would rather return to this primordial state than make any attempt at expressing himself. While this seems problematic at first, especially considering Mandelstam's role as a poet, this "primordial muteness" returns to the idea that silence, although a muteness, is still a material which can be built upon: it is an unborn thought just as much as is the absence of sound. In this case, although there is "muteness," it still rings consistently, purely, from birth. Thus, while Mandelstam is calling for the unmaking of civilization in returning to the primordial, a state in which Aphrodite has not been born, within the same stanza, he is still affording an opportunity for creation. In this regard, Mandelstam's "Silentium" is not simply calling for the complete destruction or dissolution of language and self, but to embrace what could ensue from such a destruction of language and self; there is still an opportunity for poetic rebirth within the surrender of self and language to a primordial state of being — there is still creation in destruction. Thus, Mandelstam is developing the theme of speechlessness he has inherited from Tiutchev by not only transcending an inner self in order to reach a state of pre-being, but also by stressing that the process is not merely retrogressive, but generative, producing a "crystal note / that is pure from birth."

In relation to this return to "pre-being," Victor Terras, as cited by Taranovsky, points out the theme of the "reversed flow of time" in Mandelstam's poetics, especially in relation to "Silentium." In particular, Terras characterizes the entire poem as the "poet's nostalgia for primordial unity with the cosmos."²⁴ While this notion of a "reversed flow of time" is certainly apparent, it extends beyond the

²⁴ Victor Terras, "The Time Philosophy of Osip Mandel'shtam," *The Slavonic and East European Review* XVII 109 (1969): 351, quoted in Taranovsky, *Essays*, 122.

boundaries of the poem, in that Mandelstam is also flowing backwards in poetic time, as it were, tackling the same thematic obstacles as his poetic precursors, and in particular, Tiutchev. Further, in referencing Aphrodite, Mandelstam mythologizes his collapse into a primordial state within the framework of Greek myth, a framework reminiscent of both Ovid's and Hesiod's respective cosmogonies.²⁵

In other words, within the context of Greek myth, the primordial state Mandelstam hopes to return to exists as a time of infinite potentiality, a time when the world is still forming, and a time of harmonious chaos; this idea of "chaos" is particularly relevant, considering that both Ovid's and Hesiod's myths begin with states of universal chaos. Returning to the idea of this note's birth, and in particular, that it is spontaneously generated from "muteness," the theme is echoed, in particular, in Hesiod's Theogony. Hesiod's cosmos begins from a "gaping" or "abyss" (Gk. *Khaos*) that simply "was" in the beginning: "In the beginning there was only Chaos, the Abyss."²⁶ Further, in the following lines, Gaia, the Earth, is spontaneously generated alongside Tartaros and Eros (who later becomes Aphrodite's companion).²⁷ While this spontaneous generation is never explained, Eros' placement at the beginning of the mythology is worth noting, in that he becomes seemingly as important as both Earth and the Underworld: "Eros is responsible for the generation of the gods (and the universe) because desire, the erotic principle, brings about all the

²⁵ Referring to Book I of Ovid's Metamorphoses and Hesiod's Theogony.

²⁶ Hesiod, Theogony, trans. Stanley Lombardo (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 116. References are to line number. The association with Chaos is also relevant in the context of Tiutchev's works, where it is a frequent image or theme ("Видение," in particular, has striking connections to both Chaos and the Theogony, as will be discussed in the next chapter).

²⁷ "Eros became her companion, and ravishing Desire waited on her / At her birth and when she made her debut among the Immortals. From that moment on, among both gods and humans, / She has fulfilled the honored function that includes / Virginal sweet-talk, lovers' smiles and deceits / And all of the gentle pleasures of sex." Hesiod (Lombardo), Theogony, 201-206.

couplings that follow, to produce the world as we know it.”²⁸ Considering that Aphrodite assumes the role of desire, or at least shares it with Eros, later in the Theogony, the goddess of beauty can be seen as an intermediary between the cosmogony of Hesiod and the mythological framework of Mandelstam’s “Silentium.” In other words, treated as a subject in both Hesiod’s Theogony and Mandelstam’s poem, she exists as a connection linking Hesiod’s initial state of chaos (and Eros’ role in it) to Mandelstam’s primordial muteness in “Silentium,” as well as the connection between the spontaneous generation of Eros in Hesiod to the “crystal note” given birth from muteness.

Furthermore, examining this connection further, if we interpret Eros to represent some kind of first principle for Hesiod’s cosmogony, as the force that “gets things going,” as Robert Lamberton puts it,²⁹ Aphrodite seems to play a similar role or at least to possess a similar degree of potential in Mandelstam’s poem, in that, if her birth is carried forth, she will serve as a generative force for language. As a result, Mandelstam wishes to remain in a state where she has not been born, and further, he actively calls on her to “remain as foam” at the beginning of the fourth stanza. Of course, continuing with the narrative of the Theogony, Aphrodite is born from the foam gathered around the severed penis of her father, Ouranos, cut off by his son Cronos,³⁰ and by calling on Aphrodite to remain as foam, he is calling on Aphrodite, as well, to remain in a state of “pre-being.” Furthermore, considering the

²⁸ Robert Lamberton, introduction to Theogony by Hesiod, trans. Stanley Lombardo, 1-16 (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 13.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ “The genitalia themselves, freshly cut with flint, were thrown / Clear of the mainland into the restless, white-capped sea, / Where they floated a long time. A white foam from the god-flesh / Collected around them, and in that foam a maiden developed / And grew...Aphrodite / Is her name in speech human and divine, since it was foam / She was nourished.” Hesiod (Lombardo), Theogony, 188-210.

circumstances of Aphrodite's birth, Mandelstam is essentially calling on the goddess to remain unformed, to thrive in a state of primordial chaos, much like the chaos that generated Hesiod's cosmogony, rather than to enter a world of speech, a world of decay and corruption.

However, returning to Victor Terras' point, labeling the poem simply as a "reversed flow of time" or a desire to return to a state of pre-being is cutting Mandelstam short. At the same time as he is expressing his desire to return to pre-being and incorporating retrospective gestures along the way, he is also prospectively advancing them, much like the "crystal note / that is pure from birth." While there is a return to precreation, as it were, the hope to return generates a positive force, namely, Mandelstam's poetic creation, the poem "Silentium" itself. In relation to Mandelstam's own poetics, he is entering a temporal state of simultaneity, in which he is confronting, consulting the past and conventions that have come before him, as well as advancing them forward.

The fourth stanza ties together the poem, and furthermore, manifests itself as a representation of this simultaneity that extends beyond the bounds of time and space (just as pre-being predates time and space). For example, the imperative of the first line, "Останься пеной, Афродита," ("Remain as foam, Aphrodite") incorporates the imperative structure Tjutchev uses in his "Silentium!" into Mandelstam's thematic framework of the mythology of Aphrodite; he is simultaneously relating the retrospective and prospective elements of his poem. In addition, thematically, this plea for Aphrodite to remain in a constant state of chaos, never to be given form, relates to the idea of unborn silence that is both "music and word": while both are

unborn, they also represent a state of infinite potential. Here, the ambiguity of the original “она” of the first stanza comes full circle, as well, as the line “Она еще не родилась” (“She has not yet been born”) could both function in relation to unborn silence or a permanently foaming Aphrodite – in the original Russian, it fulfills both readings simultaneously.

Furthermore, the line “И слово в музыку вернись,” (“And word, revert to music”) relates to the first stanza, as well, and in particular, to the line “Она и музыка и слово” (“She is both music and word”). The former is intriguing in that Mandelstam is ascribing a certain musicality to the “pre-being” of language: before speech came about, according to Mandelstam, silence was music. Obviously, this also connects back to the third stanza, when silence is characterized as an actual musical note “that is pure from birth.” However, this also brings back the tension of Mandelstam’s own voice as a poet: while Tiutchev laments the inaccessibility of language and states “the spoken thought is a lie,” undercutting, to a certain degree, his own authority as a poet, Mandelstam seems to be advancing the idea that even silence has a voice, and a musical one at that. As a result, if he, as a poet, were in fact to return to a state of pre-being, he could surrender his poetic voice in lieu of the silence of the primordial, with the confidence that his words would be converted to music. Such a state exceeds the entirely personal bounds of Tiutchev’s realm of the “inner self,” where one can only know his own “mysterious and enchanting thoughts”: in Mandelstam’s primordial muteness, one contributes music to the entire state of “pre-being” by remaining silent.

The next line, “И сердце сердца устыдись,” (“And heart, be ashamed of heart”) obviously echoes Tiutchev’s inquiry “Как сердцу высказать себя?” (“How can the heart express itself?”). This again presents an example of how, in Mandelstam’s “Silentium,” Tiutchev is functioning both retrospectively, in that Mandelstam is directly addressing a question from Tiutchev’s original “Silentium!” but also prospectively, in that Mandelstam gives his own answer to the problem. In this case, the answer seems to be that there is no need to express oneself, and that we do not need to seek understanding from others. According to Taranovsky, “Man’s most sublime spiritual experience lies in merging with the original essence of life, the primeval harmony of the universe.”³¹ In essence, when we return to a state of primordial harmony, there will be no need to express ourselves, as we will be conjoined in the cosmos, “С первоосновой жизни слито” (“Fused with life’s original foundation”), rather than be constrained by the shortcomings of social interaction.

* * *

Having examined the similarities and distinctions in terms of content between the two “Silentium” poems, it is worth briefly examining how their respective forms enhance the points of contrast between the poems.

In comparison to Tiutchev’s “Silentium!” Mandelstam’s work differs on numerous accounts. For example, the poem is four stanzas long, as opposed to Tiutchev’s three. The stanza length differs, as well, with Mandelstam opting for four-line stanzas in contrast to Tiutchev’s six. Furthermore, Mandelstam’s rhyme scheme differs from Tiutchev’s. To elaborate on this last point, the rhyme scheme of

³¹ Taranovsky, *Essays*, 122.

Tiutchev's poem consists of a series of paired rhymes (aa, bb, cc, etc. -), and further, every rhyme in the poem is masculine (with the stress placed on the final syllable), giving the poem, in correlation with its imperatives, a sermon-like quality, hitting the final note of every line's cadence. In contrast, Mandelstam's rhyme scheme is enclosed (AbbA, cDDc, etc.), and it also contains feminine rhymes. While an enclosed rhyme scheme is a fairly common form, one can still examine how it correlates to Tiutchev. It may be a stretch, but considering the paired rhymes of Tiutchev's original, an enclosed rhyme seems to suggest that Mandelstam is effectively enclosing Tiutchev's original work within his own rhyme scheme, just as he is enclosing Tiutchev's themes within his version of "Silentium!"; the retrospective element of Tiutchev's paired rhyme is still present, but Mandelstam advances it prospectively, adapting it to an alternative rhyme scheme, just as he adapts and progresses Tiutchev's original themes.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, Tiutchev's work elicits a sermon-like quality with its consistent masculine rhymes throughout. In comparison, not only does Mandelstam's rhyme scheme contain feminine rhymes, but his verse alternates between masculine rhymes enclosing feminine rhymes and feminine rhymes enclosing masculine rhymes. Thus, not only is Mandelstam including a new element relative to Tiutchev's poem, but he is also varying it; Mandelstam's poem, in terms of form, appears to be much more dynamic than Tiutchev's.

In returning to the difference in stanza number and length, and again, this may be reading too far into it, writing exactly one stanza more than Tiutchev, in consideration of how Mandelstam advances the thematics of Tiutchev's original,

could be seen as a deliberate choice. Not only is he taking Tiutchev's thematics further, opting to return to a primordial state of cosmic harmony, beyond an inner self, but he is also taking Tiutchev's poem farther formally by including another stanza. This is not to say that Mandelstam is simply challenging Tiutchev's poem formally on all fronts, but rather, that he is acknowledging Tiutchev in both form and content, while adding his own touch to the work.

* * *

Returning to the conclusion of Mandelstam's poem, ultimately, his "unbreakable bond / of all that lives" seems to be one that we should leave alone. As a generative force, Aphrodite and the desire she embodies is unnecessary for a primordial harmony, and as a result, the poet adjures her not to be born. Similarly, the word, and by extension, language, is not necessary, either: the poet bids it revert to music, "the spontaneous language of being."³² Although the poems of Tiutchev and Mandelstam deal with the same theme of self-imposed silence, the motivation is distinctly different: while Tiutchev is primarily concerned with the shortcomings of language and its inability to express thought, for a young Mandelstam at the beginning of his career, the notion of a subjective self is just as disturbing and problematic. Rather than simply withholding one's speech in an inner realm of "mysterious and enchanting thoughts," Mandelstam's solution is to retreat from both self and speech into the "mute and boundless unity of 'pre-being.'"³³

³² Ibid.

³³ Cavanagh, *Mandelstam and the Modernist Creation*, 41.

II

A Vision

Having begun our discussion with a poem from Mandelstam's early career, we will now turn to a poem from early Tiutchev, in the hopes that it will serve as a foundation for later connections with Mandelstam's poems, particularly those about night and chaos:

Видение

Есть некий час, в ночи, всемирного молчанья,
И в оный час явлений и чудес
УЖивая колесница мирозданья
Открыто катится в святилище небес!

Тогда густеет ночь, как хаос на водах,
Беспамятство, как Атлас, давит сушу;
УЛишь Музы девственную душу
В пророческих тревожат Боги снах!

A Vision

There is a certain hour at night when all the world is silent,
And in this hour of phenomena and wonders
The living chariot of creation
Openly rolls through the sanctuary of the heavens.

Then, the night thickens, like Chaos upon the waters;
Unconsciousness, like Atlas, stifles the earth;
Only the Muse's virgin soul
Is disturbed by gods in her prophetic dreams.

Iurii Tynianov, in his examination of Tiutchev's poetic style in relation to literary genealogy, states that Tiutchev's work "constitutes nothing less than a new poetic genre, the genre of the lyrical 'fragment,' broken off from the eighteenth-century 'monumental' form."³⁴ While labeling a poetic style as fragmentary seems problematic (Tynianov defends the choice in his article), the main point to take away

³⁴ Iurii Tynianov, "Vopros o Tiutcheve," *Arkahisty i novatory*, (Leningrad, 1929), 367-385, quoted in Gregg, *Evolution of a Poet*, 34.

is that Tiutchev was able to carve out a new genre of the short “lyric” from the longer eighteenth-century ode, such as those of Derzhavin; in essence, Tiutchev continues the high rhetoric and metaphysical concerns of the odes, but in small forms, so the resulting feeling is that the poems are “fragments” of something larger. “Видение” is a prime example of a successful Tiutchevean short “lyric,” as well as one of the first appearances of “chaos” imagery, which would go on to prominently feature in Tiutchev’s later poetry.

Tiutchev’s earlier works tend to focus on nature, capturing particular moments of awesome natural phenomena, metaphysical or cosmological transcendence, and even pantheistic mergers between man and his environment. As Richard Gregg describes it, Tiutchev was an observer, seeing “life through the prism of literature.”³⁵ His observations are so compelling, in fact, that they convey a heightened sense of engagement with the surroundings: wherever Tiutchev turns, he illuminates nature as if he is seeing it for the first time. Tiutchev may take a seemingly common experience, such as a spring thunderstorm, and elevate it to a register of extraordinary significance, even to the supernatural. In this regard, these earlier poems of witness are often characterized by a sense of awe in the face of nature and the world, and “Видение” conveys this uncanny sense of wonderment, as well. Additionally, this description of Tiutchev as an observer resonates especially well with the poem and its readers, as we are, by extension, effectively observers of the natural scenery Tiutchev subjects us to. Thus, the wonder of this natural scene is not unique to the poet, and we as readers can find a certain commonality with the author in the observation of the spectacle.

³⁵ Gregg, Evolution of a Poet, 45.

Building on this notion, the title of the poem, “Видение” (“A Vision”) inherently suggests an observer, be it the poet or another onlooker. However, while man and nature sometimes interact in his nature poems, here the presence of man is notably absent: the focus of the poem lies solely on the coincidence of certain natural phenomena. This is reinforced by the lack of any first-person pronoun throughout the poem. Tiutchev makes it clear that the “vision” depicted does not depend on any form of individual, interpretive consciousness; in this case, the role of the poet appears relatively insignificant. Furthermore, just as one cannot tell for sure who the beneficiary of the vision is, one cannot discern any real indications of the era or time period this vision comes from, be it a time of creation, or a contemporary occurrence. The only certainty is that the poem takes place at a “certain hour” in the night. This, in fact, is typical of Tiutchev’s work, in that the landscapes and events he describes are depicted as if they came right out of creation, as they are not attributed with any traces of a particular historical era; it is only the scene of nature that matters, not when it was.

In addition to its inherent suggestion of an observer, the title “A Vision” also prefaces the poem with a dream-like, almost hallucinatory register; there is a certain haze about the landscape that teeters between a dream and being awake (the chaotic imagery and syntax, as we will find out, reinforces this thematic quality of the poem, as well). Furthermore, by ascribing this quality to the poem this early, before the poem even begins, Tiutchev presents the reader with the issue of trusting the narrative and the vision itself. We do not know where this vision came to be, or where it came from: the “vision” referred to in the title may be that of an observer of the scene, but

it could also be a vision from the Muse of the poem's second stanza, provoked by the gods meddling with her prophetic dreams. It could very well be both. The title of the poem, in this respect, establishes an immediate, chaotic ambiguity, and an ambiguity that will be continually reinforced throughout the poem's form and content.

The ambiguity of the title exists not only thematically, but linguistically, as well. In particular, "Видение," in Russian, can mean "a vision," "the vision," and "vision," simultaneously. However, the translator is burdened with the issue of ascribing articles in an English translation, and such a title immediately presents a dilemma. While a title without an article could have had a pun on "vision," referring to actual eye-sight, as well as an apparition, in the English, in this case, I chose to translate the poem's title as "A Vision," rather than "The Vision" or "Vision" in order to stress the fact that such visions are not uncommon in relation to the rest of Tjutchev's body of work. As mentioned above, his nature poetry is often characterized by a sense of awe and wonderment, as well as being associated with or inspired by dreams, the supernatural, etc. For that matter, this one particular poem stands as a single "vision" that will appear again and again in different forms throughout Tjutchev's work.³⁶ Thus, my translation is geared towards placing "Видение" in the scope of the poet's larger body of work, both lexically and thematically.

When we turn to the content of the poem itself, the dream-like ambiguity of the title stands in stark contrast to the first line of the poem: "Есть некий час, в ночи, всемирного молчанья" ("There is a certain hour at night when all the world is

³⁶ See such poems as "Как океан объемлет шар земной..." "День и Ночь," "Безумие," "Святая ночь на небосклон взошла..." and "Сон на Море."

silent”), which is extremely declarative and decisive. Thus, the poet immediately establishes a tension between a world of dreams and visions and the world of nature that is being observed. Along these lines, the first three words of the poem immediately ascribe a definite and temporal quality to the image: “Есть некий час” (“There is a certain hour”). The comma that follows encourages the reader to reflect on this hour’s existence, before ascribing it an additional characterization, in that it occurs “в ночи” (“at night”); beginning with an ambiguous title, Tiutchev immediately zooms in on a very specific moment in time, allowing the observer to localize not only a certain hour, but a certain hour in the night.

This emphasis on the existence of such an hour is also reinforced by the unorthodox syntax of the line. While the line could very easily have read: “В ночи, есть некий час” (At night, there is a particular hour”), Tiutchev instead opts for the existential opening “Есть” (“There *is*”), stressing that such a vision is actually happening. The assonance and sound repetitions of the line “Есть некий час, в ночи, всемирного молчанья” are very rich, as the “e” sound is reflected in “Есть,” “некий,” and “всемирного,” the “ч” in “час,” “ночи,” and “молчанья,” and “но” in “ночи” and “всемирного.” Just as natural phenomena are coalescing (the night, the living chariot, the earth, etc.) together to create the scene we are to behold, so too are the sounds of the language.

Returning to the initial idea of zooming in and the localization of the temporality of the scene, Tiutchev zooms out in scope in terms of physical space with the remainder of the line: “всемирного молчанья,” (“when the whole world is silent,”). Thus, while we are focused on a very particular time period, there is still a

dream-like quality to the writing, as one imagining a whole world that is silent at one point in time is extremely difficult for an observer: the idea, to a certain extent, is absurd. This establishes not only a tension between time and space within the first line, but also comprehension: while we can certainly comprehend a particular hour at night, wrapping oneself around the entirety of the whole world is an immense prospect.

However, the notion that this particular vision is restricted to a particular hour, and an hour that is characterized by absolute silence,³⁷ still allows the reader to localize the general vision. With such a silence, the scene is charged with expectation: something important is about to happen, and the world is quietly waiting with us. Silence is an extremely important theme throughout Tiutchev's work,³⁸ and a theme that is often accompanied by the supernatural and worlds of "mysterious and enchanting thoughts." In this case, the idea of "mysterious and enchanting thoughts" is echoed in the line "И в оный час явлений и чудес" ("And in this hour of phenomena and wonders"). Clearly, for Tiutchev, silence and the night are thematically linked to times of wonderment and the unexplained, the unexplainable. While day illumines and exposes³⁹ the consciousness and encourages social interaction, night conceals and allows for freedom of the unconscious in individualized dreams and visions. Silence is characterized by potentiality, as an

³⁷ This moment of transition characterized by silence also appears in the opening lines from Tiutchev's "Тени сизые смешались...": "Тени сизые смешались, / Цвет поблекнул, звук уснул — / Жизнь, движенье разрешились / В сумрак зыбкий, в дальний гул..." (Gray-blue shadows mingled, / Color faded, sound fell asleep — / Life and movement were resolved / In unsteady twilight, in a distant hum...)

³⁸ See Chapter I on Tiutchev's "Silentium!"

³⁹ Day is often described by Tiutchev as a disruptive force, as opposed to night as a time of creation — see "День и ночь," "Silentium!"

opportunity for fulfillment, and sure enough, the chariot of creation appears before our gaze by the end of the stanza, satisfying our initial expectation.

The fact that the living chariot rolls “openly” through the sanctuary of heaven again reinforces the idea that this particular vision does not depend on any individual artistic consciousness — anyone could bear witness to this particular vision if they turned their eyes skyward. In addition, just as the syntax of the first lines of the stanza reinforces the localization of this particular hour at night, here too is another example of how the form of the poem enhances the content. In particular, while the first line is broken up with a series of commas to induce the reader to reflect on the fact that there *is* a certain hour, and that it exists at night, the rest of the stanza runs openly, as it were, without any punctuational interruptions:

И в оный час явлений и чудес
Живая колесница мироздания
Открыто катится в святилище небес!

And in this hour of phenomena and wonders
The living chariot of creation
Openly rolls through the sanctuary of the heavens.

This notion of “creation” is extremely important, as well, especially in the context of the “Chaos” of the following stanza. As discussed in Chapter I, in both Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*⁴⁰ and Hesiod’s *Theogony*,⁴¹ chaos plays an integral role in the creation of the universe: Ovid’s world is divided and separated from a state of initial chaos, while Hesiod’s cosmos begins from a “gaping” or “abyss” that simply “was” in the beginning. Furthermore, in the cases of Hesiod’s and Ovid’s cosmogony,

⁴⁰ “Before the seas and lands had been created, / before the sky that covers everything, / Nature displayed a single aspect only / throughout the cosmos; Chaos was its name, / a shapeless, unwrought mass of inert bulk / and nothing more, with the discordant seeds / of disconnected elements all heaped / together in anarchic disarray.” Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. Charles Martin (New York: Norton, 2004), I.6-13. References are to book and line.

⁴¹ “In the beginning there was only Chaos, the Abyss.” Hesiod (Lombardo), *Theogony*, 116.

human contribution is nonexistent: the universe simply comes to be, evolving from chaos through the workings of unnamed, supernatural forces. In accordance with this absence of human interaction, in “Видение,” Tiutchev’s vision simply and openly appears as a result of the natural presence of supernatural, nocturnal forces, which thicken “like Chaos upon the waters.” Thus, the image of Chaos, which at first seems to play only a minor role as part of a simile in the line “Тогда густеет ночь, как хаос на водах” (“Then, the night thickens, like Chaos upon the waters”), comes to represent the entire conceptual framework on which the poem is based, from the ambiguous, dream-like quality of the title, to Chaos’ mythological reverberations, to the dramatic oscillations of perspective in the poem.

To elaborate on these oscillations, just as Tiutchev oscillates between a localized hour of night and a world of universal silence within the first line, across its two stanzas, the poem itself oscillates between the heavens and the earthly realm, with night functioning as the intermediary. However, night does not only serve as an intermediary between the celestial realm and its terrestrial counterpart, but also as an intermediary between the chariot of “creation” and the chaos on the waters. Chaos and water are obviously important in Ovid’s cosmogony, but night plays a part, as well, especially in Hesiod.⁴² In fact, the “abyss” of Hesiod’s chaotic, cosmic origins gives birth to the goddess Night, which thickens its presence in “Видение” at that precise moment: “From the Abyss were born Erebus and dark Night. / And Night,

⁴² “The fiery and weightless aether leapt / to heaven’s vault and claimed its citadel... encircling water lastly found its place, / encompassing the solid earth entire. / Now when that god (whichever one it was) / had given Chaos form, dividing it / in parts which he arranged, he molded earth / into the shape of an enormous globe, / so that it should be uniform throughout.” Ovid (Martin), *Metamorphoses*, 1.34-45. Additionally, it should be noted that water also has its place in Hesiod: “Earth’s first child was Ouranos, starry Heaven... Then she gave birth to the barren, raging Sea / Without any sexual love. But later she slept with / Ouranos and bore Ocean with its deep currents.” Hesiod (Lombardo), *Theogony*, 131-133.

pregnant after sweet intercourse / With Erebus, gave birth to Aether and Day.”⁴³ In this respect, night exists as a connection, an intermediary between the forces of creation and chaos in Hesiod and those same forces as they are depicted in Tiutchev’s vision.⁴⁴ It should also be noted that in the Theogony, Night goes on to give birth to Sleep and Dreams, which are not only prominent themes and characters in “Видение,” but across Tiutchev’s poetics in general: “And Night bore hateful Doom and black Fate / And Death, and Sleep and the brood of Dreams.”⁴⁵ Along these lines, it is also worth noting that in Russian, the word “сон” means both sleep and dream, introducing another point of oscillation in the poem, in that the meaning of the word, figuratively and literally, oscillates between sleeping and dreaming.

In regard to all this, the first line of the second stanza both establishes night’s presence (the vowels in “густее” in Russian are thick in themselves, sonically reflecting the thickening of night) and reinforces the ominous mood of the poem, while also relating the poem to the cosmic origins of the universe from a Greek perspective, and even back to the first stanza and the living chariot of creation. Thus, what first appears to be a simple simile expands not only within the context of the poem, but extends beyond the verse into a mythological realm examining the origin of the universe.

The allusion to the mythological is a common element of Tiutchev’s poetics, and one that is often juxtaposed with natural phenomena, such as the scene of “Видение.” In this regard, for Tiutchev, mythologization is a poetic technique that

⁴³ Hesiod (Lombardo), Theogony, 123-125.

⁴⁴ Recall the discussion from Chapter I of how Aphrodite functions as a connection between Hesiod’s cosmogony and Mandelstam’s “Silentium” (page 16).

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 211-212.

allows him to animate a scene in such a way as to suggest a universal, ancient sense of commonality and oneness, much like Mandelstam's harmonious state of pre-being in his "Silentium." In other words, by attributing a quality of myth to a scene, the reference extends beyond a thematic relation, manifesting itself temporally, as well: by introducing an undercurrent of mythology, Tiutchev offers a point of relation for the reader, allowing him to connect the depicted scene with the familiar, common mythology of the past. In essence, told and retold throughout history, myths and legends become recognizable across the bounds of time and space: myth itself exists as an intermediary between the reader and the poet, allowing us to connect with the author, as well as to simultaneously relate to the ancient poets and traditions that explained the same nature we are a part of.

In this respect, just as man finds commonality in and cannot separate himself from the tradition of mythology that precedes him, so too is man inherently connected to the nature around him, from the roaring waves of the sea to the strikes of lightning in the distance. Thus, the correspondence between nature and myth in Tiutchev's nature poems succeeds precisely because they both rely on an interconnectivity between man and his role in the world. For Tiutchev, myth and natural scenes are not merely opportunities for poetic flourishes, but valid truths that connect us.

Returning to the poem, the word "unconsciousness" in the line "Беспмятство, как Атлас, давит сушу" ("Unconsciousness, like Atlas, stifles the earth") again reinforces the dream-like quality of the verse, as well as the idea that night is the time of sleep and dreams, and a time when man loses control of his consciousness. Again, however, there is tension in the language Tiutchev elects to use

here, comparing something as intangible as unconsciousness to a concrete, anthropomorphic grip like Atlas'. Juxtaposed to night thickening itself on the waters, this notion of free-ranging unconsciousness occupies the entire space between heaven and earth.

Furthermore, the word *Беспамятство* is worth discussing a bit further, as, like *сон*, it has multiple meanings in Russian. For example, it can also mean “amnesia,” “oblivion of everything,” “an absence or lack of memory,” and in certain contexts, “madness.” The word is one of, if not the most, enigmatic of the poem. I’ve chosen to translate the word as “unconsciousness,” as the word, in English, also has a number of different interpretations, such as a lack of consciousness (like someone who is knocked out cold), something not consciously held or deliberately planned or carried out, or, most importantly in the context of the poem’s dream-like quality, a sense of freedom from self-awareness or conscious thought. In such a state of unconsciousness, often induced by sleep, man’s thoughts leave him and escape into the world, and I believe this is the sense of the original Russian. If, however, the word can be taken to refer to a loss or lack of memory, this too could have significant ramifications for mankind on earth; after all, how much do our identities and how we conduct ourselves depend on the function of memory? Without memory, we lose our conception of our surroundings and how to interact with them; if such an amnesiac state stifled the earth, surely, we would find our existence altered significantly.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ This lack or loss of memory appears again in the poem “Святая ночь на небосклон взошла...” with the line: “Упразднен ум и мысль осиротела –” (“His mind is emptied, his thought orphaned”). There are other connections between the poem and “Видение,” including the line “И, как виденье, внешний мир ушел” (“And, like a vision, the external world has departed”).

Whatever the intended meaning, the line relates, as well, to the first stanza, in which the whole world is stifled by silence.

Furthermore, the theme of myth is again reflected here, much more explicitly, in the mention of Atlas, the titan whom Zeus condemns to eternally hoist the heavens above his head. Again, this relation to myth is not meant to distance the reader from the text. It instead seems to function as an intermediary between man and his own role in the universe, and more importantly, history. In relating retrospectively to Ovid and Hesiod, as well as the cosmic creation of our world, Tiutchev is performing a function that is very similar to how Mandelstam employs Tiutchev in his own work.⁴⁷ Tiutchev is taking the retrospective conceptions of myth and creation and adjusting them, adapting them, to communicate his “vision.” Thus, when Mandelstam refers to Tiutchev, he is, by extension, also engaging in the works of Ovid, Hesiod, et al, that Tiutchev engaged on his own. There is a certain simultaneity in this act, relating all the poetic tradition that came before these poets to their own present contributions. Myth, like nature, is something that encompasses man and engages him; although he is not engaged in physical space, he is engaged in intellectually retrospective space, which he can progressively alter as he sees fit.⁴⁸

This thread continues when Tiutchev includes the “Muse’s virgin soul” in the poem’s penultimate line. Of course, the reader will recall the tradition of Ancient Greek poetry of invoking the Muse, although, in accordance with Hesiod and Ovid,

⁴⁷ This will be further detailed in Chapter III on Mandelstam’s “Концерт на Вокзале.”

⁴⁸ “Poetry is the plough that turns up time in such a way that they abyssal strata of time, its black earth, appear on the surface. There are epochs, however, when mankind, not satisfied with the present, yearning like the ploughman for the abyssal strata of time, thirsts for the virgin soil of time.” Osip Mandel’shtam, “Word and Culture” trans. Jane Gray Harris and Constance Link in Mandelstam: Critical Prose and Letters (Ann Arbor: Ardis Publishers, 1979), 113.

both of whom alter the tradition by not invoking the Muse at the beginning of their works, here too, Tiutchev is playing with the convention of the Muse. While the Muse typically inspires the poet, here, the Muse is entirely passive, her sleep and her prophetic dreams disturbed by the gods. Thus, Tiutchev is engaging the retrospective space of myth, although he is altering it to fit the chaotic schema of “Видение”: the Muse does not offer an ordered, reliable source of inspiration, but rather, a series of dreams spurred on by the gods.

The final lines of the poem also relate the form of both stanzas in terms of punctuation. For example, the first lines of each, “Есть некий час, в ночи, всемирного молчанья” (There is a certain hour, at night, when all the world is silent”) and “Тогда густеет ночь, как хаос на водах, / Беспмятство, как Атлас, давит сушу” (“Then, the night thickens, like Chaos upon the waters; / Unconsciousness, like Atlas, stifles the earth”), are broken up by pauses within and at the end of the lines, emphasizing the particular elements of the verse, forcing the reader to confront the natural phenomena individually as they come. However, in each stanza, these deliberate pauses give way to an enjambment with the remaining lines leading up to the stanzas’ cadences: “И в оный час явлений и чудес / Живая колесница мирозданья / Открыто катится в святилище небес!” (And in this hour of phenomena and wonders / The living chariot of creation / Openly rolls through the sanctuary of the heavens”) and “Лишь Музы девственную душу / В пророческих тревожат Боги снах!“ (“Only the Muse’s virgin soul / Is disturbed by gods in her prophetic dreams.”). While both stanzas begin with ordered and dramatic pauses, they

both give way to a quickening, almost chaotic surge to the end of their respective stanzas.

It is also worth noting the poem ends on “снах,” or “dreams.” Thus, the theme of dreamy night, introduced between the title and the first line of the poem, extends to become pervasive throughout the entire poem. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the word “сон” has a double meaning of “dream” or “sleep,” oscillating between both meanings, just as the poem oscillates between the night, the heavens, and the earth.

In addition, in terms of the poem’s overall form, the meter of the poem is chaotic, as well, shifting back and forth between iambic hexameter, iambic pentameter, and even a line of iambic tetrameter. Naturally, this shorter line stands out syllabically and rhythmically, and in terms of its contribution to the content of the poem, the line “Лишь Музы девственную душу” serves as Tiutchev’s retrospective play on the Greek poetic tradition of invoking the Muse. However, as mentioned above, Tiutchev’s late introduction of a passive Muse is not consistent with other poets, such as Homer, who began their epic works immediately with an invocation of an inspiring Muse; in this case, through the form of the poem, Tiutchev draws even more attention to his altering of the retrospective space and tradition of poetry.

It is also interesting to note how the rhythm of the poem is initially slowed by pauses in both stanzas, just as “unconsciousness, like Atlas, stifles the earth.” Ultimately, however, this stifling cannot be fully contained, as both stanzas of the poem unleash from a shorter meter in their penultimate lines (pentameter in the first and tetrameter in the second) into longer meter for their cadences (hexameter in the first and pentameter in the second). In this regard, it seems Tiutchev is alluding to the

fact that even if one attempts to restrain Chaos, it cannot be contained, and it will continue to exist as a pervasive element in both mythological and natural domains.

III

A Concert

Kiril Taranovsky, in his Essays on Mandelstam, cites the following observation from Benedikt Livshits, a Russian poet writing at the same time as Mandelstam:

Не новых слов ищет поэт, но новых сторон в слове, данном как некая завершенная реальность – какой-то новой, доселе не замеченной нами грани, какого-то ребра, которым слово еще не было к нам обращено. Вот почему не только «старыми» словами орудует поэт: в стихах Мандельштама мы встречаем целые строки из других поэтов ; и это не досадная случайность, не бессознательное заимствование, но своеобразный прием поэта, положившего себе целью заставить чужие стихи зазвучать по-иному, по-своему.⁴⁹

It is not new words that the poet searches for, but new aspects of the word, given as a certain completed reality – some new facet not noticed by us before, some edge that the word has not yet turned toward us. That is why the poet does not only wield “old” words: in the poems of Mandelstam, we encounter whole lines of writing from other poets; and this is not an annoying accident, nor an unconscious borrowing, but the unique device of the poet, who has set himself the goal of making the poems of others resound in a different way, in his own way.

Furthermore, within the same essay, Kiril Taranovsky adds his own thoughts on the matter:

The assumption that Mandelstam considered his reading as potential raw material for his own creative work seems to be fairly reasonable. Not only literature, but architecture, painting and music, as well as philosophy, history, and even natural sciences, were sources of his inspiration. Thus, the investigation of all of Mandelstam’s literary and cultural sources becomes a very important prerequisite for a better understanding and fuller appreciation of his poetry.⁵⁰

In this regard, “Концерт на Вокзале” (“Concert at the Railway Station”) functions as a prime example of how Mandelstam incorporates subtexts (several invoking Tiutchev) to elucidate “новых сторон” in the words of other poets. Along these lines, the poem is both retrospective, in that it alludes to poets of the past, but prospective, as well, in how Mandelstam gives the ideas behind these subtexts new life in his

⁴⁹ Benedikt Livshits, “V sitadeli revoljucionnogo slova,” Puti tvorčestva 5 (1919), quoted in Taranovsky, Essays on Mandel’shtam, 3-4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

work, illuminating different senses and sides of the words left untouched or undiscovered in other verse. Considering that this poem was written about ten years after Mandelstam's Камень appeared, "Концерт на Вокзале" also illustrates that Mandelstam was still engaging and grappling with Tjutchevean themes in his later poetry, rather than just in his earlier work.

In this case, Mandelstam is writing about a biographical setting he was very familiar with growing up,⁵¹ as well as commenting on the historical import of the coming age of the twentieth century. At the same time that "Концерт на Вокзале" is an elegiac poem reminiscing both on Mandelstam's childhood and the death of the nineteenth century, the poem cannot help but look forward to the apocalyptic future of an age beyond the iron world. Here is the poem quoted in full:

Концерт на Вокзале

Нельзя дышать - и твердь кишит червями,
И ни одна звезда не говорит,
Но, видит бог, есть музыка над нами, -
Дрожит вокзал от пенья аонид,
И снова, паровозными свистками
Разорванный, скрипичный воздух слит.

Огромный парк. Вокзала шар стеклянный.
Железный мир опять заморожен.
На звучный пир в элизиум туманный
Торжественно уносится вагон.
Павлиний крик и рокот фортепьянный -
Я опоздал. Мне страшно. Это сон.

И я вхожу в стеклянный лес вокзала,
Скрипичный строй в смятении и слезах.
Ночного хора дикое начало,
И запах роз в гниющих парниках,
Где под стеклянным небом ночевала
Родная тень в кочующих толпах.

⁵¹ "I remember well the remote and desolate years of Russia, the decade of the nineties, slowly slipping past their unhealthy tranquility and deep provincialism – a quiet backwater: the last refuge of a dying age... behind the high podium of the glass railroad station in Pavlovsk, the change of conductors, which seemed to me a change of dynasties... all in all, I picture the nineties in my mind in scenes scatted apart but inwardly bound together by the quiet misery and the painful, doomed provincialism of the life that was dying." Mandelstam (Brown), Noise of Time, 69.

И мнится мне: весь в музыке и пене
Железный мир так нищенски дрожит,
В стеклянные я упираюсь сени;
Горячий пар зрачки смычков слепит.
Куда же ты? На тризне милой тени
В последний раз нам музыка звучит.

Concert at the Railroad Station

It is impossible to breathe, and the firmament teems with worms,
And not a single star speaks,
But God knows, there is music above us, -
The station trembles from the singing of the Muses,
And, once again, having been rent by steam engine whistles,
The violin air is fused.

The enormous park. The glass sphere of the station.
The iron world is again spellbound.
To a sonorous feast in misty Elysium,
The carriage rushes solemnly.
A peacock's cry and a piano's rumble –
I'm late. I'm afraid. This is a dream.

And I am entering the glass forest of the station,
The ranks of violins are confused and in tears.
The savage origin of the night chorus,
And the scent of roses in rotting hotbeds,
Where, under the glass sky,
The native shade spent the night among nomadic crowds.

And I think: covered by music and foam,
The iron world is trembling like a beggar.
I lean against the glass walls;
The hot steam blinds the pupils of the bows.
Where are you going? At the funeral feast of the dear shade,
For the last time, the music sounds for us.

The poem's opening, "Нельзя дышать" ("It is impossible to breathe") is extremely significant in the context of the rest of Mandelstam's poetics, as breathlessness and speechlessness overwhelming the poet is a theme that comes up again and again.⁵² In this case, the dash after дышать reinforces this breathlessness, as it forces the reader to hold his breath before continuing the line "и твердь кишит червями" ("and the

⁵² For a complete listing of Mandelstam's poems touching on the subject, see Taranovsky, *Essays*, 10-14.

firmament teems with worms”). As with Tiutchev’s opening to “Видение,” here again is an instance of how form complements content.

The ominous image “и твердь кишит червями, / И ни одна звезда не говорит” (“and the firmament teems with worms / and not a single star speaks”) imbues the line with an apocalyptic register that will continue throughout the poem. Furthermore, these lines are the first instance of subtext in the poem, as they reference the Lermontov poem, “Выхожу один я на дорогу” (“Alone I set out on the road”):

Выхожу один я на дорогу;
Сквозь туман кремнистый путь блестит.
Ночь тиха. Пустыня внемлет Богу,
И звезда с звездою говорит.

В небесах торжественно и чудно!
Спит земля в сиянье голубом...
Что же мне так больно и так трудно?
Жду ль чего? Жалею ли о чём?

Уж не жду от жизни ничего я,
И не жаль мне прошлого ничуть.
Я ищу свободы и покоя!
Я б хотел забыться и заснуть!

Но не тем холодным сном могилы...
Я б желал навеки так заснуть,
Чтоб в груди дремали жизни силы,
Чтоб, дыша, вздымалась тихо грудь,

Чтоб, всю ночь, весь день мой слух лелея,
Про любовь мне сладкий голос пел,
Надо мной чтоб, вечно зеленея,
Темный дуб склонялся и шумел.

I come out alone onto the road.
Through the fog, the stony way glistens,
The night is calm, the wilderness hearkens to God,
And star speaks with star.

In the sky, all is solemn and wonderful!
The earth sleeps in azure radiance...
Why then do I feel so pained and troubled?
Am I waiting for something? Am I regretting anything?

I do not expect anything from life,
And I do not regret my past at all.
I seek freedom and peace;
I would like to forget myself and sleep...

But not with the cold sleep of the grave:
I would like to fall asleep forever,
So that the forces of life would doze in my breast,
So that it would heave in gentle breathing,

So that the whole night, the whole day, my hearing would be
soothed
By a sweet voice singing of love;
And, forever green,
A dark oak would bend and rustle over me.

However, in contrast to the apocalyptic tension of Mandelstam's verse, Lermontov's poem establishes a definitive sense of cosmic harmony with the lines "Сквозь туман кремнистый путь блестит. / Ночь тиха. Пустыня внемлет Богу, / И звезда с звездою говорит." ("Through the mist, the stony way glistens; / The night is calm, the wilderness listens to God, / and star is talking to star") and, from the second stanza, "В небесах торжественно и чудно!" ("In the sky, all is solemn and wonderful!"). Considering how Mandelstam's rendition stands decidedly against this harmony, instead alluding to an image of an impending cataclysm, it is clear that Lermontov's subtextual presence exists as a point of departure for Mandelstam: just as Mandelstam chronicles the death of the nineteenth century, the world of music, so too does he chronicle the death of past poets and their conventions. To Mandelstam, the foreboding world of the twentieth century is far from harmonious, and invoking and disputing Lermontov's poem makes this dissonance even more formidable.

However, while many critics are quick to point out the Lermontovian subtext in the stanza, few recognize the dynamism of the lines, in that they also allude to Tjutchev. In particular, the notion of a pronounced silence among nature is clearly reminiscent of "Видение" ("A Vision"), in which "Есть некий час, в ночи,

всемирного молчания” (“There is a certain hour, at night, when all the world is silent”). Just as silence serves to establish a sense of expectation in that poem, so too does Mandelstam establish a silent scene to convey his vision, as it were, of the railroad station; as the silence in Tiutchev’s poem allows the living chariot of creation to roll openly through the heavens, overseeing the collision of earth and water, dreams and consciousness, chaos and order, here, Mandelstam also establishes expectation in the reader with the silence of the stars to preface the collision of the world of music and the world of iron, the past and the present.

This idea of silence also connects both Tiutchev and Mandelstam’s poems entitled “Silentium”: in the case of the former, Tiutchev advocates returning to an inner world of silence in which “mysterious and enchanting thoughts” thrive, while Mandelstam supports returning to a state of primordial harmony in which silence, rather than existing solely as the absence of thought or speech, exists as a substance, a manifestation of infinite potentiality. In this case, the line “Но, видит бог, есть музыка над нами” (“But God knows, there is music above us”) relates not only to Lermontov, in which “Ночь тиха. Пустыня внемлет Богу” (“The night is calm, the wilderness listens to God”) but to Mandelstam’s “Silentium,” as well, in which silence (the silence of the stars perhaps) can be both music and word, and an intermediary that pervades the primordial state of harmony Mandelstam hopes to return to. As mentioned above, however, “Концерт на Вокзале” is a poem of dissonance, and as a result, the “music above us” does not originate in the stars’ silence, but in “the violin air” emanating from the station. While the “violin air” is still fused, the cosmic harmony overhead catalyzed with music, the subtextual

preference for silence from his own “Silentium” as an embodiment of primeval harmony, undercuts what is achieved in Mandelstam’s first stanza: in Mandelstam’s ideal, primordial state, the silence of the stars would be able to achieve the harmony on its own, but it is only through the “violin air” that such a state is achieved. This is not to say that Mandelstam simply creates a polemic between silence and noise, as the music of Mandelstam’s verse is decidedly different from the conversing stars that achieve Lermontov’s cosmic harmony. The music in “Концерт на Вокзале” is manmade, and it emanates from a manmade structure; as opposed to Lermontov’s, Mandelstam’s harmony is not pervasive in nature, and it only extends as far as the sound waves from the violin strings take it.

Another relation to Tiutchev, and specifically, to his poem “Видение,” is how the description of the firmament and its dissonance lends the poem a sense of chaos (which stands in stark contrast to Lermontov’s poem and its cosmic harmony, as well). Chaos is a particularly important theme for Tiutchev, and one that is often associated with the night and the release of the unconscious; similarly, night is also a chaotic time for Mandelstam, and a time that he experiences as both positive, as “the time of poetic creation, the time when thoughts and feelings mature”⁵³ (this will be discussed more in the next chapter) and negative, which seems to be the case here.

The final two lines of the first stanza, “И снова, паровозными свистками / Разорванный, скрипичный воздух слит” (“And, once again, having been rent by steam engine whistles, / The violin air is fused”) is also reminiscent of another Tiutchev poem, “Тени сизые смешались...” (“Gray-blue shadows mingled”) in

⁵³ Stephen Broyde, *Osip Mandel’shtam and His Age*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 149.

which the sky mingles together, as well as nature and man: “Всё во мне, и я во всем!...” (“Everything is in me, and I am in everything!...”). Furthermore, during Tjutchev’s poem, “звук уснул” (“sound fell asleep”), harkening back to the silence of Mandelstam’s stars. Again, however, Mandelstam’s poem is characterized by dissonance, and as a result, the subtexts of poems related to harmony (“Выхожу один я на дорогу,” “Silentium” and “Тени сизые смешались”) serve more as points of contrast for Mandelstam’s poem, rather than methods of support; Mandelstam has retrospectively engaged their thematics, although he has prospectively deemed them incompatible with the current age, and in response, he has adjusted them to reflect the disjointed state of the railroad station. Fittingly, the last line of the stanza in the original Russian “Разорванный, скрипичный воздух слит” contains elements of both dissonance (Разорванный) and harmony (скрипичный воздух слит), suggesting that the two are struggling against one another.

What began as a simple reversal of Lermontov’s lines in the first stanza of “Concert at the Railroad Station” develops into a rich and deep subtextual dynamism that extends beyond “Выхожу один я на дорогу” (“Alone I set out on the road”) to Tjutchev (“Видение,” “Silentium!” and “Тени сизые смешались...”), to Mandelstam’s own “Silentium” and back to the violin air fusing itself above.

* * *

Another frame of Mandelstam’s subtextual approach in “Concert at the Railroad Station” is the use of mythological references in the first and second stanzas of the poem. The Muses and Elysium are clear allusions to ancient Greece, but both references also have extensive poetic traditions associated with them. Although we

have already examined the role of the Muse in Tiutchev's "Видение," it is worth reiterating that the tradition of invoking the Muse is a practice inseparable from poetic history. In this instance, the allusion is dynamic in that it relates Mandelstam to all the poets who have invoked the Muse before him, including Tiutchev, while still allowing Mandelstam to add his own contribution to the tradition. Here, Mandelstam directly challenges the poetic expectation of the role of the Muses: it is not the poet who is affected by the Muses, but rather, the station that "trembles" from their singing. In an age when the mechanical, the "iron world," displaces the "music" of the past, Mandelstam's Muses do not behave in accordance with their poetic tradition, as they affect an inanimate object, a railroad station, rather than the poet himself. As much as previous poets have toyed with the tradition of invoking the Muses, Mandelstam is deliberately challenging the convention. Furthermore, considering that Mandelstam is "late" to the concert, it appears he has missed out on any inspiration from the Muses anyway; the fact that the Muses sing separately from Mandelstam associates the death of the tradition of personally reaping inspiration from the Muses with the poem's chronicle of the death of the nineteenth century. Just as the other poets Mandelstam invokes are dying off with the age, so too are the Muses who inspired those poets. The funeral at the station is mourning the loss of poetic convention and expectation as much as anything else.

In addition to referencing the Muses, the mention of Elysium⁵⁴ is particularly intriguing; Elysium, of course, is the subdivision of Hades or the Ancient Greek underworld to which the gods convey certain favored heroes and individuals after

⁵⁴ "In the middle of the nineties all Petersburg streamed into Pavlovsk as into some Elysium." Mandelstam (Brown), *Noise of Time*, 70.

death. Many poetic heroes visit the underworld in their quests, including Odysseus, Aeneas, and Dante, the latter of whom Mandelstam wrote about extensively.⁵⁵ In each case, the dead help the heroes, by providing them with either the information or the motivation needed to continue their respective quests: Odysseus receives a prophecy from Tiresias about his eventual triumphant return to Ithaca, Aeneas confronts his father, Anchises, who explicates his son's future lineage in Italy that will lead to a Golden Age for the Roman Empire, and Dante confronts his great-great grandfather, Cacciaguida, who reassures Dante that the poet will achieve immortality in his writing following his retelling of his travels to the afterlife.⁵⁶

In this sense, in "Концерт на Вокзале," so too is Mandelstam visiting an underworld of sorts, namely, a poetic underworld, through his mythological and subtextual references; within this underworld, the poet is able to descend into the past to celebrate what has come before him, but to also further his own poetry when he resurfaces. In this regard, Mandelstam is dependent on the past just as much as he is

⁵⁵ See Osip Mandel'shtam "Razgovor o Dante."

⁵⁶ For Tiresias' prophecy, see Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles (New York: Penguin, 1996) XI.110-150. As for Dante and Aeneas, the relation between the two in Dante's *Divine Comedy* is an interesting one. Dante explicitly states in the *Inferno* that he is *not* like the poetic hero, "But why should I go there? Who sanctions it? / For I am not Aeneas..." (*Inferno*, II, 31-32), although the appearance of Dante's ancestor, Cacciaguida, in the Sphere of Mars of *Paradiso* is preceded by the lines, "With such affection did Anchises' shade / reach out (if we may trust our greatest muse) / when in Elysium he saw his son" (*Paradiso*, XV, 25-27). In this regard, Cacciaguida's arrival is coupled with an explicit reference to Virgil's epic poem, referring to Aeneas' descent to meet his father, Anchises, in the underworld. In terms of similarities, both confrontations provide their respective heroes with a sense of duty: in the case of Aeneas, he is destined to found a homeland for the displaced Trojans ("Anchises showed his son each point of interest / And fired his lust for glory in the future" (Virgil, VI, 888-89)), while Dante is told he will achieve literary fame and political retribution if he is truthful in his account of the afterlife. In this respect, future history is a source of motivation, as well, as Anchises encourages his son to found a glorious empire, and Cacciaguida encourages Dante to cement his place in literary history (see *Paradiso*, XVII, 130-142). It could be said that Mandelstam finds similar motivation in the poetic underworld to advance his own poetics for the future. Lines above are from the following sources: Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Classic, 2004), Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso* trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Bantam Classic, 2004), and Virgil, *The Aeneid* trans. Sarah Ruden (New Haven: Yale UP, 2008).

on the future, as his visit to the underworld allows him to garner shades of other poets, as it were, including Tiutchev, as well as influence from mythology to advance his own verse. To a certain extent, this journey to the underworld is also reminiscent of Mandelstam's desire in his "Silentium" to return to a primordial state of cosmic harmony, and a state in which all poets, in theory, would commingle. However, as this state appears to be unachievable, a temporary sojourn to the poetic underworld suffices in "Концерт на Вокзале."

Just as the Muse reference invokes Tiutchev as well as mythological and poetic tradition, so too does Mandelstam's mention of Elysium, as Tiutchev has a poem alluding to Elysium, as well:

Душа моя, Элизиум теней,
Теней безмолвных, светлых и прекрасных,
Ни помыслам години буйной сей,
Ни радостям, ни горю не причастных, —

Душа моя, Элизиум теней,
Что общего меж жизнью и тобою!
Меж вами, призраки минувших, лучших дней,
И сей бесчувственной толпою?..

My soul, an Elysium of shades,
Silent shades, bright and beautiful,
With no involvement in the thoughts of this reckless age,
Or with its joys or griefs, -

My soul, an Elysium of shades,
What do you have in common with life!
What do you, the ghosts of bygone, better days, have in common
With this crowd that does not feel?

Not only does this poem connect through the reference to Elysium, but also through the word "тень" or "shade," which plays a significant role in Mandelstam's poem: "Родная тень в кочующих толпах" ("The native shade spent the night among nomadic crowds") and "На тризне милой тени / В последний раз нам музыка звучит» ("At the funeral feast of the dear shade / For the last time, the music sounds

for us”). Thus, it may not be farfetched to propose that Tiutchev, whose “soul is an Elysium of shades” is the “dear” shade Mandelstam is mourning the death of, or, at the very least, the shade Mandelstam would consult during his visit to the poetic underworld. Along these lines, in Tiutchev’s poem, his soul is estranged from a restless age, a sentiment that Mandelstam echoes with his elegiac description of the irreconcilability between the aged world of music and the world of iron.

Furthermore, Tiutchev’s poem also speaks of his soul’s shade, asking “Что общего меж жизнью и тобою! / Меж вами, призраки минувших, лучших дней, / И сей бесчувственной толпою?..” (“What do you have in common with life! / What do you, *the ghosts of bygone, better days*, have in common / With this *crowd* that does not feel?”).⁵⁷ Just as Tiutchev notes the dissonance between the ghosts of a better past and the current age of a “crowd that does not feel,” Mandelstam, in “Концерт на Вокзале,” mourns the poetic ghosts of Tiutchev, Lermontov and all the poets who invoked the muses, as it were, whose poetic traditions will perish with the coming of this new, apocalyptic age, an iron age of “nomadic *crowds*.” Finally, in this regard, Mandelstam takes the retrospective theme of Tiutchev’s estranged shade and prospectively advances it, as the death of Mandelstam’s shade at the end of “Концерт на Вокзале” fully realizes the shade’s severance from the current age, the “restless” age of the twentieth century.

Outside of the mythological references, the line “Я опоздал. Мне страшно. Это сон.” (“I’m late. I’m afraid. This is a dream.”) is also extremely important in the context of Tiutchev, as it not only lends the poem a dreamlike quality (see commentary on “Видение»), but it also reinforces the idea that for Mandelstam, the

⁵⁷ My italics

night is at times ominous and foreboding, echoing the menacing presence of dreams and night in Tiutchev's "День и ночь" ("Day and Night") and "Сон на море" ("A Dream at Sea"). This mood is reflected in Mandelstam's "savage chorus" of the night, as well as the lines "It is impossible to breathe, and the firmament teems with worms, / And not a single star speaks," "The station trembles," "The iron world is again spellbound," "The ranks of violins are confused and in tears," "rotting hotbeds," and "The iron world is trembling like a beggar." As with Tiutchev, this mood of uneasiness is only realized in the collective of such images, rather than through a single instance. For example, while a spellbound iron world may not seem disquieting at first, in consideration of the poem's other verse, the image becomes dreamlike and sinister, as if an unknown sorcerer is manipulating the scene.

In addition to mythological, subtextual, and thematic evocations, Mandelstam also evokes multifaceted meanings within single words. Even the title of the poem, "Концерт на Вокзале" exemplifies and takes advantage of the dynamism of language with the word "вокзал." In Russian, as Omry Ronen points out,

Concerts used to be called *Vauxhalls* in Old Russia after the concert hall at Vauxhall Gardens in London. Because there was a concert hall at the first Russian railroad terminal in Pavlovsk, the word вокзал has eventually come to signify a railroad station in general. Blending as it does, historically, the notions of iron (железная дорога) and of music, the word has been chosen by Mandelstam as a perfect symbol of the 19th century, the iron age and the age of music.⁵⁸

As for an example from the actual poem, the line "Скрипичный строй в смятении и слезах" ("The ranks of violins are confused and in tears") is worth examining in more depth. The word "строй," in particular, poses a difficult problem for the translator, mainly due to its numerous potential meanings, some of which include a formation or rank (as in a military formation), a system or arrangement, general order or structure,

⁵⁸ Ronen, *An Approach*, XVIII.

harmony, or a musical tone or pitch. Thus, when Mandelstam employs the word *строй*, he is simultaneously evoking these various definitions; in the context of the music of the station, this multifaceted usage is particularly evocative. In this case, the violins' pitch is reinforced musically with *строй*, as is the sense of the violins' arranged order. However, *строй* also attributes a combative tension to the violins (echoing the collision between the worlds of music and iron) with the military sense of the definition. Within a single word, Mandelstam brings an extreme dynamism to his entire verse.

We should not be surprised that the word plays an important part in Tjutchev's poetics, as well. The poem "Певучесть есть в морских волнах" ("There is melody in the waves of the sea") serves as a particularly good example:

Est in arundineis modulatio musica ripis.

Певучесть есть в морских волнах
Гармония в стихийных спорах,
И стройный мусикийский шорох
Струится в зыбких камышах.

Невозмутимый строй во всем,
Созвучье полное в природе, —
Лишь в нашей призрачной свободе
Разлад мы с нею сознаем.

Откуда, как разлад возник?
И отчего же в общем хоре
Душа не то поет, что море,
И ропщет мыслящий тростник?

И от земли до крайних звезд
Всё безответен и поныне
Глас вопиющего в пустыне,
Души отчаянной протест?

*Est in arundineis modulatio musica ripis.*⁵⁹

There is melody in the waves of the sea,
Harmony in the elemental clashes,
And an ordered, musical rustle
Flows through the unsteady reeds.

There is an imperturbable order in everything,
A complete accord in nature, -
Only in our illusory freedom
Do we realize a dissonance with it.

Whence, how did this dissonance arise?
And why, in the general chorus
Does the soul not sing the same thing as the sea,
And why does the thinking reed grumble?⁶⁰

And why, from the earth to the farthest stars
Is there still no answer
To the voice crying in the wilderness,⁶¹
The desperate soul's protest?

In this poem, the word *строй* is used to enhance the idea of an unspoken order in nature, a harmony that extends beyond man's comprehension; in fact, it is only when man attempts to comprehend such order in his "illusory freedom" that he recognizes a dissonance.

Again, while this reference to Tjutchev is a retrospective gesture, it is also prospective, in that Mandelstam is developing the theme for his own purposes. In this case, instead of expressing an idea of natural order, in "Концерт на Вокзале," the use of *строй* in the line "Скрипичный строй в смятении и слезах" ("The ranks of violins are confused and in tears") alludes to a harmony that is only achieved with manmade instruments, and even then, it is a harmony which is immediately undercut,

⁵⁹ The epigraph is taken from 'Epistolae' by Decimus Magnus Ausonius (about 310-394 A.D.) The original verse slightly differs: "Est et arundineis modulatio musica ripis..." ("And there is musical harmony in the banks covered with reed...")

⁶⁰ A reference to Pascal's *roseau pensant*. This will be discussed in relation to Mandelstam in Chapter V.

⁶¹ From the King James version of the Bible: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa 40:3). This is then quoted in the four Gospels in connection with John the Baptist; he complains that, although he is preaching of the coming of the Lord, no-one (or few) will pay attention.

“confused and in tears.” Furthermore, in Tiutchev’s poem, dissonance only arises when man exercises his consciousness, reinforcing a separation between the order of nature and man, which is reflected in the poem’s form. For example, man’s dissonance, or his realization of the dissonance, in the line “Разлад мы с нею сознаем” (“Do we realize a dissonance with [nature’s order]”) is placed at the end of the second stanza, and as a result, it stands in stark contrast to the *строй* of the stanza’s first line “Невозмутимый строй во всем,” (“There is an imperturbable order in everything”):

*Невозмутимый строй во всем,
Созвучье полное в природе, —
Лишь в нашей призрачной свободе
Разлад мы с нею сознаем.*

Thus, the verse is a visual manifestation of this inherent tension between the natural order and man’s subjective consciousness: the two bookends of the stanza represent opposite sides of the spectrum, pulling the verse in two directions.

In this regard, Mandelstam’s poem differs from Tiutchev’s both in content and in form: the dissonance of the violins appears to arise on its own accord, and in contrast to the tension spread across a stanza between the *строй* of the natural order and man’s dissonance with it in Tiutchev, Mandelstam’s compromised *строй*, “Скрипичный строй в смятении и слезах” (“The ranks of violins are confused and in tears”) is contained within a single line. In this sense, Mandelstam’s disturbed harmony is constrained entirely to the world of man, the world of the manmade, reflected in the restraint of the image to a solitary line. Mandelstam has already refuted any notion of natural order within the first stanza, refuting Lermontov at the same time, and here, the only harmony or order of the poem is compromised as soon

as it is established – it cannot even be carried over a line break. In the new age of the twentieth century, it seems there is no hope for order.

The first line of the poem's last stanza, “И мнится мне: весь в музыке и пене” (“And I think: covered by music and foam”) brings the thematics of Mandelstam's “Silentium” back into the frame, as the mythology of Aphrodite's birth, discussed in Hesiod, is dependent on foam.⁶² Here, once again, Mandelstam introduces a retrospective mythological reference to prospectively advance his own verse: in this case, Mandelstam uses the “foam” of Aphrodite's birth to reflect the birth of the twentieth century, the age of iron. However, this age is a menacing age, and its birth is juxtaposed with the death of the “dear” shade of the world of music, of the past, and of Tiutchev. Thus, the interconnectivity of this subtext links Mandelstam not only to Hesiod, but to his earlier poetics in his “Silentium,” and by extension, Tiutchev's “Silentium!” as well. In this regard, this line represents another subtextual decision on Mandelstam's part that has dynamic and multifaceted dimensions.

The mythology of Aphrodite's origins runs parallel to the various iterations of the station as a “железный мир” (“iron world”), an image reminiscent of Ovid's various ages of man detailed in the first book of his Metamorphoses.⁶³ In short, beginning with the Golden Age, an age of innocence and ignorance similar to that of the Garden of Eden, the ages of man gradually progress into lesser metals (Silver, Bronze, Iron) as man's bliss gradually deteriorates into a state of corruption and self-preservation, coupled with the gradual exploitation of nature. The last of the ages, the Iron Age, is the age in which man is the most corrupt:

⁶² As discussed in Chapter II

⁶³ Ovid (Martin), Metamorphoses, I.126-221

Last was the age of iron: suddenly,
all forms of evil burst upon this time
of baser mettle; modesty, fidelity,
and truth departed; in their absence, came
fraud, guile, deceit, the use of violence,
and shameful lusting after acquisitions.⁶⁴

In relation to Mandelstam's poem, this association with Ovid seems particularly relevant, as "Концерт на Вокзале" stands as an elegiac recital for the funeral gathering of the nineteenth century and the coming of a new age. Considering the aforementioned menacing qualities of the age, as well as Mandelstam's own fear, this age does not seem to be a promising one. Furthermore, the setting of a railroad station and the onset of industrial mechanization carries out the thematic exploitation of nature present in Ovid.

Returning to the idea of the violins "confused and in tears" and even more so, the "savage origin of the night chorus" from the third stanza, threads of Ovid's notions of chaos appear in the verse. In an attempt to reconcile the two, one can consult Tiutchev's "О чем ты воешь ветр ночной?":

О чем ты воешь, ветр ночной?
О чем так сетуешь безумно?..
Что значит странный голос твой,
То глухо жалобный, то шумно?..
Понятным сердцу языком
Твердишь о непонятной муке —
И роешь и взрываешь в нем
Порой неистовые звуки!..

О! страшных песен сих не пой
Про древний хаос, про родимый
Как жадно мир души ночной
Внимает повести любимой!
Из смертной рвется он груди,
Он с беспредельным жаждет слиться...
О! бурь заснувших не буди —
Под ними хаос шевелится!..

⁶⁴ Ibid, I.172-177.

What are you howling about, night wind?
What are you lamenting so insanely?...
What does your strange voice mean,
Now muffled, mournful, now loud?
In a tongue the heart understands
You insist about incomprehensible torment –
And at times you dig and plough up in the heart
Frantic sounds!

Oh, do not sing these fearful songs
About ancient, native chaos!
How avidly the world of night within the soul listens
To the beloved story!
Out of the mortal breast it wants to burst
It thirsts to merge with the infinite...
Oh, do not wake the sleeping storms –
Beneath them, chaos stirs.

Here, Tiutchev's songs “Про древний хаос, про родимый” (“About ancient, native chaos”), potentially referencing the chaos of Ovid’s creation myth, find common ground with Mandelstam’s “Ночного хора дикое начало” (“savage origin of the night chorus”); in the case of the Tiutchev poem, it seems the subject of the poem is projecting his own feelings onto the wind, and the chaos within him wants to burst “out of the mortal breast” to “merge with the infinite.” While he is fascinated by this chaos (“How avidly the world of night within the soul listens / To the beloved story”), he is also fearful of it (“Oh, do not sing these fearful songs”). In relation to Mandelstam’s poem, it seems that in “Концерт на Вокзале,” the entire age has projected its inner chaos on the universe, although perhaps to a point that it is irredeemable – at the funeral of the nineteenth-century, this is the last time our souls will listen to “the beloved story” of Tiutchev’s “О чем ты воешь ветер ночной?...”

Along these lines, the final cadence of Tiutchev's “О чем ты воешь ветер ночной?...” has a certain apocalyptic tonality to it: while Tiutchev warns to not wake the sleeping storms, he does not tell us what will happen if we do. This apocalyptic

tone is present in the last lines of another Tiutchev poem that Mandelstam directly references in the last line of his own “Концерт на Вокзале”:

Я лютеран люблю богослуженье,
Обряд их строгий, важный и простой, —
Сих голых стен, сей храмины пустой
Понятно мне высокое ученье.

Не видите ль? Собравшись в дорогу,
В последний раз вам Вера предстоит:
Ещё она не перешла порогу,
Но дом ее уж пуст и гол стоит, —

Ещё она не перешла порогу,
Ещё за ней не затворилась дверь...
Но час настал, пробил... Молитесь Богу,
В последний раз вы молитесь теперь.

I love the service of the Lutherans,
Their austere, solemn and simple ceremony,-
I understand the lofty lessons
Of these bare walls, this empty temple.

Don't you see? Having prepared for a journey,
For the final time, faith stands before you;
She has not yet crossed the threshold,
But her house already stands empty and bare, -

She has not yet crossed the threshold,
The door has still not closed behind her...
But the hour has come, it has struck...Pray to God,
You are praying now for the last time.

In the case of “Концерт на Вокзале,” instead of “В последний раз вам ера предстоит” (“For the final time, Faith stands before you”) or “В последний раз вы молитесь теперь” (“You are praying now for the last time”), Mandelstam prospectively alters Tiutchev’s verse to reflect the apocalyptic register of the death of the age of music: “В последний раз нам музыка звучит” (“For the last time, the music sounds for us”). Thus, in addition to taking an image and a poem title from Tiutchev and making them his own, here, Mandelstam introduces another instance of advancing his poetics through the use of subtext, presenting the theme of the departed

spirit of the nineteenth century through the guise of a modified verse by Tiutchev, replacing the departure of faith with the departure of music.

Ultimately, “Концерт на Вокзале” stands as a perfect example of how subtexts can function both retrospectively and prospectively in a poem, satisfying a connection to past poets and traditions, as well as taking such ideas and rotating them, exposing new sides to light, whether it be a contrasting theme, an alternate definition, or a point of mythological departure. Thus, when Mandelstam includes references to Aphrodite, Elysium or chaos, he is not only referencing Tiutchev, but going all the way back to Ovid and Hesiod; in this respect, subtexts are continually gaining new meaning and placement in the contexts in Mandelstam’s poetics. Mandelstam, in Livshits’ sense, is not searching exclusively for “new words” but “new aspects” in the words of other poets, as future poets will continue to do with Mandelstam’s own work – the tradition of poetry is one of simultaneity, exploring the caverns of the past, while carving new passages, as well. Just as Mandelstam is coveting new directions for his retrospective references, he is doing so in a way that allows for and encourages future generations to do the same to Mandelstam. In this sense, poetry is a tradition of spelunking as much as it is a tradition of cultivation, and “Концерт на Вокзале» is the realization of this notion of poetics.

IV

A Hayloft

In 1922, Mandelstam wrote a pair of poems, since labeled by critics as the “Hayloft” poems:

I

Я не знаю, с каких пор
Эта песенка началась,--
Не по ней ли шуршит вор,
Комариный звенит князь?

Я хотел бы ни о чем
Еще раз поговорить,
Прошуршать спичкой, плечом
Растолкать ночь - разбудить;

Приподнять, как душный стог,
Воздух, что шапкой томит.
Перетряхнуть мешок,
В котором тмин зашит,

Чтобы розовой крови связь,
Этих сухоньких трав звон,
Уворованная нашлась
Через век, сеновал, сон.

I

I do not know how long ago
This little song began, -
Does a thief not rustle to it,
Does a mosquito prince not ring to it?

I would like to speak
About nothing once again,
To make a rustling noise striking a match, to nudge night
With a shoulder to wake it;

To lift the air a bit, like a stifling haystack,
Tiring me with its cap.
To shake out the sack,
In which caraway seeds are sewn,

So the bond of rose-colored blood,
The ringing of these dry grasses,
Could be found stolen
Across an age, a hayloft, a dream.

II

Я по лесенке приставной
Лез на включенный сеновал,—
Я дышал звёзд млечных трухой,
Колтуном пространства дышал.

И подумал: зачем будить
Удлиненных звучаний рой,
В этой вечной склоке ловить
Эолийский чудесный строй?

Звёзд в ковше медведицы семь.
Добрых чувств на земле пять.
Набухает, звенит темь
И растёт и звенит опять.

Распряжённый огромный воз
Поперёк вселенной торчит.
Сеновала древний хаос
Защекочет, запорошит...

Не своей чешуёй шуршим,
Против шерсти мира поём.
Лиру строим, словно спешим
Обрасти косматым руном.

Из гнезда упавших щеглов
Косари приносят назад,—
Из горящих вырвусь рядов
И вернусь в родной звукоряд.

Чтобы розовой крови связь
И травы сухорукий звон
Распростились; одна — скрепясь,
А другая — в заумный сон.

II

I leaned a short ladder
Against a disheveled hayloft and climbed, -
I breathed the haydust of milky stars,
I breathed the matted hair of space.

And I thought: why wake
The swarm of elongated sounds,
Why, in this eternal squabble, try to trap
A miraculous Aeolian harmony?

There are seven stars in the Great Bear's dipper.
There are five good senses on earth.
Darkness swells and rings
And grows and rings again.

The huge unharnessed cart
Sticks out across the universe.
The ancient chaos of the hayloft
Will start to tickle and give off powder like snow...

We rustle scales that are not our own
We're singing against the fur of the world.
We string the lyre, as if hurrying
To grow a shaggy fleece that covers us.

Haymakers bring back goldfinches
That have fallen from their nests, -
I will break away from these burning rows,
And I will return to my own sequence of sounds.

So the bond of rose-colored blood
And the dry-handed ringing of the grass
Will break and say farewell, one growing firmer
While the other sets out for a transsense dream.⁶⁵

The plot and subject matter of the twin poems is fairly similar, with a hayloft serving as a point of departure for meditations on poetic creation, as well as the bond between the poet and his poetry. This bond, as we will examine, extends into both the past and the future. Where the poems differ, however, as Kiril Taranovsky notes, is in the different “solutions to the dilemma”⁶⁶ they present in their final stanzas: while the first poem hopes for the “bond of rose-colored blood, / The ringing of dry grasses” to be found intact “across an age, a hayloft, a dream,” the second poem wishes for the bond to break and for its respective parts to go their separate ways. In consideration of Taranovsky’s observation, it is worth examining each poem individually in an attempt to elucidate how Mandelstam comes upon these “solutions” and how they differ, and further, what their implications are for the scope of Mandelstam’s poetics.

⁶⁵ “заумный сон” refers to the Futurists’ invented language of zaum’ - beyond the intellect. It’s usually translated as “trans-sense,” but Paul Schmidt, who translated Khlebnikov, coined “beyonsense.” Khlebnikov believed that beyonsense language was “the universal language of the future” and that “It alone will be able to unite all people. Rational languages have separated them.” Velimir Khlebnikov, “Our Fundamentals,” in *Collected Works of Velimir Khlebnikov*, Vol. 1, trans. Paul Schmidt (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 385.

⁶⁶ Taranovsky, *Essays*, 28.

The first of the two poems, “Я не знаю, с каких пор...” (“I do not know...”) immediately initiates a subtextual dialogue with Afanasy Fet, who wrote a poem with a similar scenario in 1857, “На стоге сена ночью южной” (“Upon a haystack one southern night”). Here is the poem’s first stanza:

На стоге сена ночью южной
Лицом ко тверди я лежал,
И хор светил, живой и дружный,
Кругом раскинувшись, дрожал.

Upon a haystack one southern night
I lay with my face towards the firmament,
While a choir of heavenly bodies, living and harmonious,
That had spread out all around, trembled.

The rest of the poem goes on to describe the narrator confronting the night “face to face,” eventually sinking irretrievably down into the “midnight’s abyss” with “mind fading and in a tumble.” However, it is clear within the first stanza of the poem that the night and the firmament the narrator observes are harmonious: “a choir of heavenly bodies, living and harmonious / That had spread out all around, trembled.”

Similar to the juxtaposition in “Концерт на Вокзале” between the subtextual state of cosmic harmony in Lermontov’s “Выхожу я на дорогу” and Mandelstam’s decidedly dissonant firmament, in the “Hayloft” poems, Taranovsky believes Mandelstam is once again alluding to another poem that depicts a state of cosmic harmony in Fet only to refute it. Specifically, Taranovsky states: “To Fet’s cosmic harmony, Mandelstam opposes...Tiutchevan chaos.”⁶⁷ While this claim may be accurate, he never fully elaborates on what chaos actually means in the Tiutchevan sense. Before continuing to examine the “Hayloft” poems, I will attempt to fill in that gap with my own interpretation of the theme in Tiutchev’s poetics.

⁶⁷ Taranovsky, *Essays*, 23.

Considering Tiutchev's body of work, Taranovsky's terminology ("Tiutchevan chaos") initially appears to be quite problematic, as Tiutchev often presents themes or symbols in one poem only to reverse their apparent meaning or associations in another. As Richard Gregg claims, Tiutchev's work is far from consistent, and is full of "contradictions," with the poet often jumping back and forth between a harmonious, meaningful nature ("Не то, что мните вы, природа...") and a nature that is frightening or beyond man's comprehension ("День и ночь," "Природа – сфинкс...").⁶⁸ Further, such contradictions are not mutually exclusive in a given poem, as different sentiments can exist within the same poem ("Как океан объемлет шар земной..."), as well. In this respect, Tiutchev's work, in itself, may appear chaotic, with many thematic symbols or concepts existing in a state of constant oscillation between two or even more potential meanings. This is not to say that Tiutchev is being intentionally ambivalent, but that he recognizes certain themes as complex and deserving of constant examination and reevaluation over time: nature, in Tiutchev's mind, was not static, and as a result, it changed over the course of his poetics. For example, within the opposition between "day" and "night" either member can take on a positive or a negative evaluation:

Амбивалентность ряда категорий – структурное свойство тютчевской художественной системы, которое может в разных планах, в пределах одного текста или только в совокупности их. Так, в оппозиции 'день-ночь' оба члена могут получать и положительную, и отрицательную оценку. Особенно важно отметить, что реакция 'я' на хаос может быть или отрицательной, или амбивалентной.⁶⁹

The ambivalence of a number of categories is the structural character of the Tiutchevan artistic system which may manifest itself in different schemes, within the bounds of one text or only in their aggregate. Thus, in the opposition between "day" and "night," both members may receive both a positive and a negative evaluation. It is particularly important to note that the reaction of the "I" to chaos may be either negative or ambivalent.

⁶⁸ Gregg, *Evolution of a Poet*, 24.

⁶⁹ Evgenii Toddes, "Mandel'shtam i Tiutchev," *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*, XVII, 1974, 62.

Thus, the initial issue of examining “Tiutchevean chaos” is trying to find a common thread of the theme that runs throughout Tiutchev’s poetry, and having found it, attempting to discern its connection to Mandelstam’s work. Toddes’ last mention of chaos, in particular, is relevant to our discussion. While Toddes claims that the “I” reacts negatively or ambivalently to chaos, citing the poem “О чем ты воешь ветр ночной? ...” (“What are you howling about, night wind?”) as an example, there are other poems in which chaos appears to be a generative force, and one that the “I” of the poem reacts positively to, as well. We will now examine such poems in greater detail.

Tiutchev’s “Сон на море” (“A Dream at Sea”) offers a good starting point for such an endeavor:

И море, и буря качали наш челн;
Я, сонный, был предан всей прихоти волн.
Две беспредельности были во мне,
И мной своевольно играли оне.
Вкруг меня, как кимвалы, звучали скалы,
Окликались ветры и пели валы.
Я в хаосе звуков лежал оглушен,
Но над хаосом звуков носился мой сон.
Болезненно-яркий, волшеббно-немой,
Он веял легко над гремящею тьмой.
В лучах огневицы развил он свой мир —
Земля зеленела, светился эфир,
Сады-лабиринфы, чертоги, столпы,
И сонмы кипели безмолвной толпы.
Я много узнал мне неведомых лиц,
Зрел тварей волшебных, таинственных птиц,
По высям творенья, как бог, я шагал,
И мир подо мною недвижим сиял.
Но все грезы насквозь, как волшебника вой,
Мне слышался грохот пучины морской,
И в тихую область видений и снов
Врывалась пена ревущих валов.

Both the sea and the storm rocked our skiff;
I was sleepy and subject to every whim of the waves.
Two infinities were within me,
And they played with me as they pleased.
Around me, like cymbals, the cliffs resounded,

The winds called out and the waves sang.
 In a chaos of sounds, I lay deafened,
 But above the chaos of sounds floated my dream.
 Painfully vivid,, magically mute,
 It lightly drifted above the thundering darkness.
 In the rays of a delirium it unfolded its world –
 The earth shone green, the ether gleamed,
 Labyrinthine gardens, palaces, pillars,
 And multitudes of silent crowds seethed.
 I recognized many faces unknown to me,
 I saw magical creatures and mysterious birds,
 I strode like God⁷⁰ along the summits of creation,
 And the unmoving world shone beneath me.
 But through all these dreams, I heard the crash of the ocean deep
 Like some sorcerer's howl,
 And into the quiet realm of visions and dreams
 Burst forth the foam of the roaring waves.

The poem mentions chaos directly in the lines “Я в хаосе звуков лежал оглушен, / Но над хаосом звуков носился мой сон.” (“I lay deafened in a chaos of sounds, / But above the chaos of sounds wafted my dream), and continues to follow the dream as it drifts “above the thundering darkness” and “unfolds its world” in successive lines. In this case, sleep and dreams, as they often do in other Tiutchev poems, serve as backdrops for creation or the creative process, and moreover, for the release of the treacherous consciousness that can cause one to “realize a dissonance” with the universal order. Here, the dream that “unfold[s] its world,” generating a world of creation and fertility, of green gardens and crowds, arises from chaos; in this case, the force of chaos seems to be a positive one. In addition, the dreamer even strides like God along the summits of creation (with this line, the reader should recall the associations between chaos and creation in relation to Hesiod and Ovid, whose cosmogonies are entirely dependent on the presence of chaos). In this case, Tiutchev seems to be stressing chaos’ role as a creative force, in that it can produce a dream of

⁷⁰ “The notes in F.I. Tiutchev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (St. Petersburg: Marks, 1913), p. 382, confirm the capitalization of *Bog* (l. 7), thus making the correct translation ‘God’ rather than ‘a god.’ Soviet editions print the word with a small *b* for ideological reasons, a practice that creates particular ambiguity in this poem.” Pratt, *Russian Metaphysical*, 116.

fertility, rather than a “fearful song” of destruction or confusion. In this respect, while Fet’s cosmic order seems to manifest itself in the sky overhead, the order of Tiutchev’s poem is governed by a dream chaos produced; as Pratt notes of Tiutchev’s chaotic tendencies and themes: “Cosmic order exists even within an individual chaotic force.”⁷¹ Here, we seem to find an initial connection between “Tiutchevan chaos” and Mandelstam: despite its connotations of confusion and disorder, in the “Hayloft” poems, chaos serves as a force of creation, a force that allows for the poet to reflect on the poetic process, the “ancient chaos.” As chaos generates Tiutchev’s fruitful dream in “Сон на море,” chaos leads to fruitful meditations from the poet in Mandelstam’s “Hayloft” poems.

Further, at the end of “Сон на море,” when the abyss of the ocean roars through his dreams (“and into the quiet realm of visions and dreams / surged the foam of the roaring waves”), the poet is confronted by a different type of chaos, a chaos rooted in physical imagery, in the natural world. Thus, the poet is encircled by chaos above and below, although they are two distinct forms, one rooted in dreams and the other in the physical world. This dual existence of chaos embodies the ambiguities in Tiutchev’s themes – they appear, at one moment, to mean one thing, but another a moment later. In consideration of this chaotic experience, it is worth returning to Pratt:

Nature is sublime not only in her humanly unfathomable immensity and unassailable might, but also in the chaos, or as Schiller expressed it, in the *confusion* of her manifestations in general. Chaos is our principal intuition of the sublime because we can perceive masses that are too great for our sensory perceptions only as chaos.⁷²

⁷¹ Ibid, 52.

⁷² Ibid, 53.

In relating this idea to “Сон на море,” the chaos that ends up encircling the dreamer can be viewed as positive, leading to an overwhelming of the senses, and even an “intuition of the sublime.” This theme of interpreting the sublime as chaos and an ensuing overload of sensory perception will prove relevant to our discussion of other poems. For example, in the poem “Святая ночь на небосклон взошла...” (“Holy night has risen into the firmament...”), man confronts and surrenders his thought to an ominous, chaotic abyss swirling with “the alien, the unsolved, [and] the nocturnal,” although it, perhaps unexpectedly, allows him to have a transcendental experience and to recognize his “native legacy” in the process:

Святая ночь на небосклон взошла –
И день отрадней, день любезней,
Как золотой покров она свила -
Покров, накинутый над бездной.
И, как виденье, внешний мир ушел...
И человек, как сирота бездомный,
Стоит теперь и немощен и гол,
Лицом к лицу пред пропастью темной.

На самого себя покинут он –
Упразднен ум и мысль осиротела –
В душе своей, как в бездне, погружен,
И нет извне опоры ни предела...
И чудится давно минувшим сном
Ему теперь все светлое, живое...
И в чуждом неразгаданном ночном
Он узнает наследье родовое.

Holy night has risen into the firmament –
And has rolled up the comforting day, the kind day,
Like a golden cover –
A cover thrown over the abyss.⁷³
And, like a vision, the external world has departed...
And man, like an orphan without a home,
Now stands feeble and naked,
Face to face with the dark abyss.

⁷³ “Весь стройный мираж Петербурга был только сон, блистательный покров, накинутый над бездной...” (“All the elegant mirage of Petersburg was merely a dream, a brilliant covering thrown over the abyss”). Mandelstam (Brown), *Noise of Time*, 79.

Abandoned to himself alone –
His mind is emptied, his thought orphaned –
He's plunged into his own soul like into an abyss,
And there is no support or limit from the outside...
And everything that is bright and alive
Seems to him like a dream long since past...
And in the alien, the unsolved, the nocturnal,
He recognizes his native legacy.

In this case, chaos, as in “Сон на море,” instills a certain degree of fear, although it functions as a generative force. While man has trepidation in confronting the abyss, he is fascinated with its chaotic quality, and through it, he is able to have a sublime experience, recognizing his entire inherited legacy in a single moment.

What's more is that in order to have such an experience, the man must stand face to face with the abyss, abandoning his own self in the process and allowing his thought to be emptied; in such a state, he cannot help standing “feeble and naked.” Returning to the idea of man's consciousness interfering with the universal order of nature in “Певучесть есть в морских волнах...” (“There is melody in the waves of the sea...”), the only way of accessing the sublime is to submit his consciousness to the gaping abyss.

However, as mentioned above, chaos, manifested in the abyss, is not a destructive force. In this respect, although there is no support or limit from the outside world for the man, the poem ends on the word “родовое” (“native”), which contains the root “род,” meaning “race or clan.” Thus, while the mind is emptied, the viewer is able to access a sense of communality within the chaos, within the abyss. In this case, such a result is the opposite of forcibly attempting to trap an Aeolian harmony from the night in “Я по лесенке приставной”; when one exerts their consciousness so deliberately, it compromises the natural order and poetic thought. One must surrender themselves to the chaos to find a bond of blood, ringing grasses, lineage. Thus, we

encounter a second aspect of Tiutchevean chaos in relation to Mandelstam: in addition to its connotations of creation, chaos offers a point of communality for man, an opportunity to find a relation not only to himself, but to his own heritage. Todd's initial claim that the reaction of the 'I' to chaos in Tiutchev's poetry is negative or ambivalent falls decidedly short in this instance.

In relation to the natural order, in particular, the poem "Не то, что мните вы, природа..." ("Nature is not what you think...") also illuminates this notion of adopting a proper perspective in order to fully experience and enjoy nature, namely, to find the "soul within her." As opposed to the man in "Святая ночь на небосклон вошла..." who surrenders his thought to the abyss, "Не то, что мните вы, природа..." details the experiences of those who do not adopt the proper point of view towards nature; for them, the waves have no life, the forests do not speak, and night's stars are decidedly mute. In the poem, Tiutchev presents nature as the Absolute, reminiscent of chaos and the abyss' dominance in "Святая ночь на небосклон вошла..." although, just as man finds commonality with the abyss in that poem, Tiutchev suggests a potential partnership between man and nature in "Не то, что мните вы, природа...": if man adopts the proper attitude, he will merge with nature to enjoy its soul, its freedom, its love, and its speech. If not, if the poet tries to trap an artificial Aeolian harmony from the night, nature will continue to exist in and of itself, and man's consciousness will continue to bring about a dissonance with the world. In relation to Mandelstam's "Hayloft" poems, a humble perspective towards nature appears to be pivotal not only in relation to Tiutchev, but to the poetic process in general.

Furthermore, the poem “Тени сизые смешались...” (“Gray-blue shadows mingled”) consummates this theme:

Тени сизые смешались,
Цвет поблекнул, звук уснул —
Жизнь, движенье разрешились
В сумрак зыбкий, в дальний гул...
Мотылька полет незримый
Слышен в воздухе ночном...
Час тоски невыразимой!..
Всё во мне, и я во всем!..

Сумрак тихий, сумрак сонный,
Лейся в глубь моей души,
Тихий, томный, благовонный,
Все залей и утиши.
Чувства — мглой самозабвенья
Переполни через край!..
Дай вкусить уничтоженья,
С миром дремлющим смешай!

Gray-blue shadows mingled,
Color faded, sound fell asleep –
Life and movement were resolved
In unsteady twilight, in a distant hum...
A moth’s invisible flight
Is audible in the night air...
The hour of inexpressible anguish!
Everything is in me, and I am in everything!...

Quiet twilight, sleeping twilight,
Pour into the depth of my soul.
Quiet, languid, fragrant,
Fill it all and calm it.
Feelings – with a haze of self-abandonment
Overflow over the edge!..
Give me a taste of annihilation,
Mix me with the slumbering world!

The lines “with a haze of self-abandonment” and “give me a taste of annihilation” are reminiscent of “Святая ночь на небосклон возшла...” and the themes present themselves here as prerequisites for commingling with the “slumbering world” where we began in “Сон на море.” For everything to be in “me,” and “I” to be in everything, the right perspective must be adopted, and it must be one that faces chaos, no matter how imposing or threatening it may be. Chaos, for

Tiutchev, presents itself again and again as a force of creation, although one cannot experience its generative quality without fully recognizing it, without fully confronting it – one must abandon their own subjective consciousness to fully enjoy the benefits of chaos. When one is “uncomfortably awake” as Pratt puts it,⁷⁴ they are conscious of their own individuality, but at the same time, their tormenting isolation; in contrast, when they give themselves over to sleep and the unconscious, the chaotic, they become one with the universe and their own heritage, they enjoy their bond of rose-colored blood: “annihilation must be understood as a positive occurrence, as attainment of unity between man and nature, the dissolution of the personal in the general.”⁷⁵

Even if we are afraid of it, we must tear back the cover of the abyss:

День и Ночь

На мир таинственный духов,
Над этой бездной безымянной,
Покров наброшен златотканый
Высокой волею богов.
День — сей блистательный покров
День, земнородных оживленье,
Души болящей исцеленье,
Друг человеков и богов!

Но меркнет день — настала ночь;
Пришла — и, с мира рокового
Ткань благодатную покрова
Сорвав, отбрасывает прочь...
И бездна нам обнажена
С своими страхами и мглами,
И нет преград меж ей и нами —
Вот отчего нам ночь страшна!

Day and Night

Over the mysterious world of spirits,
Across this nameless abyss,
A gold-threaded cover has been draped

⁷⁴ Ibid, 159.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 160.

By the exalted will of the gods.
This brilliant cover is day;
Day - the revival of the earth-born,
The aching soul's healing,
The friend of men and gods!

But day is fading – night has come;
She has arrived – and, from the fatal world
She tears away the blessed fabric of the cover,
And casts it aside...
And the abyss is bare to us
With its terrors and mists,
And there are no barriers between her and us –
That is why we are afraid of night!

This poem finds common ground with Mandelstam's second "Hayloft" poem, where night appears to swell on its own accord, regardless of the poet's musings:

И подумал: зачем будить
Удлиненных звучаний рой,
В этой вечной склоке ловить
Эолийский чудесный строй?

Звёзд в ковше медведицы семь.
Добрых чувств на земле пять.
Набухает, звенит темь
И растёт и звенит опять.

Распряжённый огромный воз
Поперёк вселенной торчит.
Сеновала древний хаос
Защекочет, запорошит...

And I thought: why wake
The swarm of elongated sounds,
Why, in this eternal squabble, try to trap
A miraculous Aeolian harmony?

There are seven stars in the Great Bear's dipper.
There are five good senses on earth.
Darkness swells and rings
And grows and rings again.

The huge unharnessed cart
Sticks out across the universe.
The ancient chaos of the hayloft
Will start to tickle and give off powder like snow...

The abyss, the chaos, *will* expose itself, no matter the meditations of the poet, and in response, the issue of the poem, as with Tjutchev's various poems about confronting

chaos and nature, develops into a matter of how we face such forces. While this seems a perilous task, if we do face them with the right perspective, we will benefit and flourish. This is the sense I get from Taranovsky's term "Tiutchevan chaos," at least in relation to Mandelstam's "Hayloft" poems.

* * *

Equipped with such an understanding, we will now turn to the "Hayloft" poems themselves to see how Tiutchev functions in both "Я не знаю, с каких пор" and "Я по лесенке приставной."

In relation to the annihilation or emptying of thought in favor of experience, the first "Hayloft" poem begins with a declaration of ignorance: "Я не знаю, с каких пор / Эта песенка началась,--" ("I do not know how long ago / This little song began, -"). While Mandelstam does not know how long the song has been ringing out, or its origins, he is still willing to confront it, much like the man confronting the chaotic abyss in Tiutchev's "Святая ночь на небосклон возшла". In the context of the remainder of the poem, this theme is important, in that, while Mandelstam is perhaps unaware of the motivation behind poetic creation, or where it will lead his own poetry, he is still prepared to confront the scene, to nudge night with a shoulder, in an attempt to illumine an answer.

Taranovsky also offers a subtextual origin for the "mosquito prince" of the first stanza, noting its derivation from an ode from Derzhavin entitled "Похвала комару." In Derzhavin's poem, as Stephen Broyde proves, the mosquito can be seen as an "inspirer to poetic creation,"⁷⁶ and as a result, the mosquito reference in "Я не

⁷⁶ Broyde, *Mandelstam and His Age*, 161.

знаю с каких пор” revisits this link between the mosquito, the poet, and poetic creation.

While this subtextual bridge connecting Derzhavin’s mosquito to Mandelstam’s theme of poetic creation in the first “Hayloft” poem is essential to our interpretation of the poem, it is worth considering how the behavior of an actual mosquito, celestial or not, contributes to the theme of poetic creation, as well. For example, a mosquito receives its sustenance from feeding on the blood of another. In essence, it forms a bond of blood with its host, much like a poet using a subtextual reference, such as Fet’s poem, the reference to Derzhavin, or the numerous allusions to Tiutchev we have been examining all along: the poet, the mosquito, the thief, is feeding on the past to exist, to flourish in the present. This theme is extremely important not only in the context of both “Hayloft” poems, but also Mandelstam’s poetics in general.

Furthermore, the image of a mosquito can also be related to a “thief,” in that it essentially steals the blood of another to continue to live. All poetry, in a sense, is stealing, as one may use the themes or even titles of poems of another (“Silentium” comes to mind) to enhance one’s own poetry, rippling the poetic traditions of the past in the process. However, this stealing is not merely a malicious act, but one, in many cases, of admiration; Mandelstam is “stealing” the poetry of others to engage with it and to prospectively advance it for future generations to experience.

The image of Mandelstam’s desire to light a match in the second stanza introduces a tension in the poem, as lighting a match in a haystack, clearly, does not seem like a good idea. However, the notion of a match as a source of illumination is

important thematically, in that, to a certain degree, when one examines a poem, they are essentially holding a match to it, trying to illumine the various subtexts or thematic points that run throughout the text. It is not by coincidence that the next line introduces the theme of night, an extremely important theme for Tiutchev. Night is often a time associated with creation (recall “Видение”), and in consideration of Mandelstam’s “Hayloft” poems and their dealing with the issue of poetic creation, the Tiutchevan setting seems appropriate in the context. This is not the first time Mandelstam has associated night with a time of creation, as his poem “Раковина” deals with similar themes.

In the poem, the shell (the poet) is speaking to the world of night, a world that, as he admits, perhaps does not need him: “Быть может, я тебе не нужен, / Ночь” (“Perhaps I am not necessary to you, / Night”). However, he is still confident that the night will embrace him, the shell, covering him with its robe, and binding with him inseparably: “Ты на песок с ней рядом ляжешь, / Оденешь ризою своей, / Ты неразрывно с нею свяжешь...”

In this regard, the theme of poetic creation here, as in the “Hayloft” poems, does not originate solely in the poet, as the poet remains useless unless the night fills him with “шепотами пены” (“whispers of foam”)⁷⁷. At the same time, however, the night cannot express itself without the shell; thus, the poet-shell becomes an instrument for the creative force of night. In other words, the poet is not responsible for creating his poems, but for receiving and transmitting them from night.

⁷⁷ The reader will recall the associations with chaos and creation from Mandelstam’s “Silentium” in regards to Aphrodite’s birth.

“Раковина” is strongly reminiscent of Tiutchev, as well, connecting semantically through “пена” to “Сон на Море” (“И в тихую область видений и снов / Врывалась пена ревущих валов”), as well as the thematic confrontation of man and the natural world and creative chaos in “Святая ночь на небосклон вошла...”; the poet in “Раковина” is willing to confront night, to form a partnership with the creative force, just as Tiutchev’s man confronts the abyss to discover his “native legacy.”

Furthermore, in addition to night appearing as a creative force in both the “Hayloft” poems and in “Раковина,” both “Hayloft” poems also mention the “розовой крови связь” (“bond of rose-colored blood”), which contains the same root as the verb “свяжешь” from “Раковина,” employed in the line: “Ты неразрывно с нею свяжешь” (“You will bind to it inseparably”). In both poems, the poet is bound to their respective creative force: in the “Hayloft” poems, the poet is bound to blood, the creative force of the mosquito, just as the poet is bound to creative night in “Раковина.” In this respect, however, returning to the idea of a mosquito or a thief stealing from other poets, it appears that Mandelstam’s role as a poet is decidedly more active in the “Hayloft” poems as opposed to the passive seashell in “Раковина.” This would make sense, as the “Hayloft” poems were written at a later time in Mandelstam’s career, as opposed to the young poet of Камень. As opposed to the poet of “Раковина,” who is entirely passive in the face of night, in Mandelstam’s first “Hayloft” poem, he takes positive action against the night, attempting to awaken it with a nudge from his shoulder. In other words, in many Tiutchev poems, where night functions or appears on its own accord, thickening on the waters, or even in

“Раковина,” where the poet awaits to be filled with the night’s whispers of foam, here, Mandelstam is trying to take poetic creation into his own hands, to stir up creative force on his own. Again, Mandelstam is not merely acknowledging retrospective gestures to Tiutchev, or even to himself as a younger, burgeoning poet, but prospectively advancing the themes in his poetics.

Kiril Taranovsky goes into depth about the subtextual origins of the sack of caraway seeds of the third stanza of “Я не знаю с каких пор...” but as with the mosquito of the first stanza, even without its subtextual connections, one can extrapolate meaning from the image itself. Shaking a sack of seeds, like nudging night with a shoulder, is a positive action, and in that respect, the two seem to relate on the grounds of poetic creation; considering seeds are characterized by potential growth and creation, the connection seems appropriate. However, seeds also exist as retrospective reminders in that they come from fully-grown and matured flowers or trees. Thus, shaking the sack of caraway seeds could be interpreted as a realization of Mandelstam’s poetics in general: he is using seeds from poetry’s past, subtextual seeds gathered from Tiutchev, Derzhavin, Fet, etc., to plant and cultivate his own garden of prospective poetics. Additionally, Mandelstam himself will eventually produce his own seeds to pass on for future generations to collect and fertilize in their own work.

Carrying this notion of passing on seeds of his poetry for future generations, Mandelstam’s image of a blood bond in the final stanza of “Я не знаю с каких пор...” is relevant. Taranovsky, among other critics, has noted the ambiguity associated with the blood image, in that it could possibly refer to “the bond of his

blood with life in general” or “the bond of blood with blood, that is, the bond of one person's blood with the blood of other people.”⁷⁸ In my own reading, I tend to envision the blood in accordance with the retrospective and prospective function of the caraway seeds, as a metaphor for the blood that unites man with his past, as well as the blood he will pass on to the future. In this respect, one cannot help but relate this bond of blood back to the image of the mosquito, who is, in essence, a thief of blood. In this regard, when Mandelstam makes subtextual references to other poets, including Tiutchev, he is acknowledging a bond of blood with them that transcends time: in referencing them, he is creating a simultaneous bond with the other poet. The ringing of the dry grasses in the next line also reaffirms a connection between the mosquito and the blood bond, as the line “the ringing of these dry grasses” exists as an appositive for the image of the blood bond, equating the two, while their “ringing” connects to the ring of the mosquito in the first stanza.

The final desire of the poem, namely, that this bond be found stolen, consummates the various themes of the poem. Essentially, the poet is expressing the wish that his poetry will live on after his death, stolen as subtexts by the mosquito thieves of future generations, just as he stole the subtexts of Tiutchev to advance his own poetics. Further, the line “Через век, сеновал, сон” suggests that such a bond to future poets will extend beyond the bounds of time (“век”), tangible space (“сеновал”), and intangible, psychological space (“сон”). Other poets and poetic heroes have been linked with a similar hope (Ovid, Dante),⁷⁹ and by concluding the

⁷⁸ Taranovsky, *Essays*, 39.

⁷⁹ “Let that day come then, when it wishes to,
which only has my body in its power,
and put an end to my uncertain years;

поем “Я не знаю с каких пор...” the way he does, Mandelstam adds his name to the tradition.

* * *

The second “Hayloft” poem, “Я по лесенке приставной...” begins with a declarative statement, localizing the speaker: “Я по лесенке приставной /Лез на включенный сеновал” (“I leaned a short ladder / Against a disheveled hayloft and climbed”). This is similar to how Tiutchev begins his poem “Видение” (“There is a certain hour, at night”), and, as with Tiutchev’s poem, the scope of Mandelstam’s poem immediately expands: as the silence of “Видение” circumvents the whole world and the perspective shifts to the heavens and the origins of the universe through the living chariot of creation, here, the haystack expands to the celestial realm: “I breathed the haydust of milky stars, / I breathed the matted hair of space.” By zooming out to such proportions, as we will find out, Mandelstam is able to pose questions of the entire process of poetic creation from a standpoint beyond “the eternal squabble” of attempts to trap an Aeolian harmony.

Elena and Marina Glazov point out the subtextual ramifications of the poem’s ladder:

«Приставная лесенка» одухотворенной человеческой мысли (лестница Иакова, платонизм), ведущая вверх, на сеновал «сухих» целительных трав многолетнего

no matter, for in spirit I will be
borne up to soar beyond the distant stars
immortal in the name I leave behind;
wherever Roman governance extends
over the subject nations of the world,
my words will be upon the people’s lips,
and if there is truth in poets’ prophesies,
then in my fame forever I will live.

Ovid (Martin), *Metamorphoses*, XV, 1099-1112.

For if, at the first taste, your words molest,
they will, when they have been digested, end
as living nourishment.

Dante (Mandelbaum), *Paradiso*, XVII, 17.130 – 132.

«сбора», служит поэту путем в его упорном труде «разъединения» и «скрепления» старых и новых поэтических форм.⁸⁰

The “leaned ladder” of inspired human thought (Jacob’s ladder, Platonism), which leads upward, to the hayloft of “dry” healing grasses of the years-long “harvest,” serves the poet as a means in his persistent labor of “disuniting” and “binding” old and new poetic forms.

In particular, the influence of Plato is important in regards to the idea of poetic creation that is pervasive in both “Hayloft” poems: in the Symposium,⁸¹ Plato’s Socrates cites the priestess Diotima as defining a “lover” as someone who loves and love as a desire for something that one does not have. For a “lover” to achieve the purest form of love, they must progress from rung to rung on a ladder of love, beginning with the basest form of love, the love of a beautiful body, until they reach the platonic “Form” of beauty, or the essence of beauty itself. This same method of progression, namely from a base reality (a shadow on a cave wall, for example) of whatever is sought to the “Form” of the thing itself, can be applied to other forms of knowledge, as well.⁸² In short, as one progresses further along the ladder, they get closer and closer to the true essence of the thing, just as each step explains the relative reality of the past. In relation to Mandelstam, his use of subtexts constantly relates him to the past, while still allowing him to pursue the essence, the “Form” of his own poetic expression: he cannot advance further up the ladder without acknowledging the past, the subtextual rungs of other poets that came before him. Perhaps Mandelstam, in this case, is aspiring to discover the “Form” of poetic creation itself?

⁸⁰ Elena and Marina Glazov, Podskazano Dantom: O poetike i poesii Mandel’shtama (Kiev: Dukh i litera, 2011), 302.

⁸¹ Plato, Symposium, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodroof (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 1989), 210a-211b.

⁸² Examples of other such progressions in Plato include his metaphor of the sun (Plato, The Republic, VI, 507b-509c) and his allegory of the cave (Ibid, VII, 514a-520a).

The second stanza of “Я по лесенке приставной...” relates to the first “Hayloft” poem in the fact that it appears to be musing about poetic creation. In this case, however, the mood is decidedly more skeptical: instead of wishing to nudge and awaken the creative force of Tiutchev’s night, here, the poet seems to question whether or not poetry is even viable:

И подумал: зачем будить
Удлиненных звучаний рой,
В этой вечной склоке ловить
Эолийский чудесный строй?

And I thought: why wake
The swarm of elongated sounds,
Why, in this eternal squabble, try to trap
A miraculous Aeolian harmony?

Unlike in “Я не знаю...” where the poet aspires to actively *engage* poetic creation, here, the approach is tentative and interrogative; while the second stanza of “Я не знаю с каких пор...” is clearly kinetic in its ambition, here, the tone is only marked with potential.

Furthermore, in the next stanza, this questioning of the necessity of poetry is juxtaposed against a pair of calmly delivered truths: “Звёзд в ковше медведицы семь. / Добрых чувств на земле пять” (“There are seven stars in the Great Bear’s dipper. / There are five good senses on earth”). In other words, what’s the point of trying to extract poetry from the world when simple truths can explain it all? However, the force of night, previously determined to be a force of creation, swells without consideration of the poet: “Набухает, звенит темь / И растёт и звенит опять” (“Darkness swells and rings / And grows and rings again”). To examine this line a little more in depth: as detailed earlier, Mandelstam’s night, or at least the night of his first “Hayloft” poem, through its associations with Tiutchev and his own poem,

“Раковина,” can be identified as a force with ties to creation, and specifically, poetic creation. Thus, when the darkness swells and rings unprompted by the poet, Mandelstam seems to suggest that the force of poetic creation “grows and rings” on its own, regardless of his efforts to harness it. However, the line has other connections to be examined, as well. For example, the verb “звенить” connects the “ringing” darkness to the ringing of the mosquito prince of the first “Hayloft” poem, as well as its line “the ringing of these dry grasses.” As examined previously, the mosquito prince and the ringing of the grass are both related to the blood bond between Mandelstam and the poets, the rungs of the ladder, who have come before him, and in this sense, the ringing of the night is again reinforced as an image of poetic creation.

Once again, however, in “Я по лесенке приставной...” this poetic symbol has arisen on its own accord without motivation from the poet, suggesting that, to a certain degree, creative force, like the night in “Раковина,” will arise irrespective of the poet’s own will. While Mandelstam appeared to be confident in his ability to stir poetic creation from the night in the first “Hayloft” poem, here, he appears to have lost such agency, or at least, the desire to perform such a feat. This discrepancy between the two poems is reminiscent of Tjutchev, whose themes and associations were in constant flux, requiring constant reevaluation over his poetic career. Just as nature is constantly changing, so too is the perspective of the poet.

Furthermore, in general, there seems to be much more at stake with poetic creation in “Я по лесенке приставной...” as opposed to “Я не знаю с каких пор...” For example, in the former, the poet creates in an “eternal squabble” with the “ancient chaos” of the universe. This ancient chaos, as discussed in the “Концерт на Вокзале”

chapter, harkens back to Ovid and Hesiod, as well as Tiutchev. In addition, echoes of the living chariot of creation rolling openly through the heavens in “Видение” reverberate with the image of Mandelstam’s unharnessed cart that “sticks out” across the heavens. In relation to “Tiutchevean chaos,” Mandelstam must confront the ancient chaos that generated Hesiod’s and Ovid’s universe to generate his own poem.

Building on this heightened sense of poetic creation, the next stanza introduces a shift from first person singular to first person plural, perhaps suggesting the theme of poetic creation in relation to a collective of poets. Thus, one could extrapolate the stanza as a statement of Mandelstam’s own approach to poetry:

Не своей чешуёй шуршим,
Против шерсти мира поём.
Лиру строим, словно спешим
Обрасти косматым руном.

We rustle scales that are not our own
We’re singing against the fur of the world.
We string the lyre, as if hurrying
To grow a shaggy fleece that covers us.

In this stanza, the verb “шуршить” relates to the first “Hayloft” poem and its rustling match, as well as the rustling thief, “stealing” the poetic themes of others to adapt them to their own poetics as subtexts. In this sense, as poets continually look to the past in order to cultivate their poetics of the present, they are effectively “singing” (crafting verse) against the “fur of the world,” the present age. Another possible interpretation is that poets “rustle” the scales of their audience, allowing them to hear the “whispers of foam” from the night readers would not be exposed to otherwise; poets, predisposed to form inseparable bonds with creative forces, sing against the “fur of the world,” the world of non-poets.

However, this communal poetic statement is short-lived, as the next stanza announces a conscientious separation on the part of the poet from these “burning rows” with the return of the first person singular; just as the poet is breaking away from the apocalyptic age of the present, returning to his own sequence of sounds, he is returning to the first-person. Furthermore, just as he began the poem by zooming out to celestial proportions after climbing the hayloft ladder, here, Mandelstam zooms back in to his own poetic expression, his own intimate “sequence of sounds.” It is through this zooming back in, through this return to “I” that the alternate solution to the dilemma of poetic creation is offered by Mandelstam: while, in the first “Hayloft” poem, life and poetic creation are equated in the hope that they will be found and preserved in a legacy of future poets, in “Я по лесенке приставной...” the potential for the separation between life, the bond of blood, and poetic creation, the “dry-handed ringing of the grass” is foreseen: as one becomes resolute, the other acquires a new expression and a new form in a “transsense dream.” However, this second solution turned out to be unrealizable for Mandelstam, as the “bond of the rose-colored blood” and the “ringing of the grass” is preserved in his post 1922-poetry; he could not separate himself from the rungs of the ladder he had ascended.

V

A Pool

Having examined a pair of twin-poems from Mandelstam's later poetry, we will now turn back to Камень, where we began, to examine another set of twin-poems, in hopes of illuminating a final connection between Mandelstam's earlier and later poetry, and how the undercurrent of Tiutchev is consistent between them:

I

Из омота злого и вязкого
Я вырос, тростинкой шурша,
И страстно, и томно, и ласково
Запретную жизнью дыша.

И никну, никем не замеченный,
В холодный и топкий приют,
Приветственным шелестом встреченный
Коротких осенних минут.

Я счастлив жестокой обидою,
И в жизни похожей на сон,
Я каждому тайно завидую
И в каждого тайно влюблен.

I

I grew out of an evil and miry pool
Rustling like a reed,
And passionately, languidly, and affectionately,
Breathing a forbidden life.

And I droop, noticed by no one,
Into the cold and marshy refuge,
Met by the welcoming rustle
Of short autumn minutes.

I am happy with this cruel insult
And in a life resembling a dream,
I secretly envy everybody
And I am secretly in love with everyone.

II

В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно,
И томное окно белеет.
А сердце - отчего так медленно оно
И так упорно тяжелеет?

То - всею тяжестью оно идет ко дну,
Соскучившись по милом иле;
То - как соломинка, минуя глубину,
Наверх всплывает без усилий.

С притворной нежностью у изголовья стой
И сам себя всю жизнь баюкай;
Как небылицей, своей томись тоской
И ласков будь с надменной скукой.

II

In the enormous pool it is transparent and dark,
And a languid window becomes white..
But the heart – why is it so slowly
And so stubbornly growing heavy?

Now – with all its heaviness, it sinks to the bottom,
Having grown homesick for the dear silt;
Now – like a little piece of straw, bypassing the deep,
It floats up to the top without effort.

Stand, with a feigned tenderness, at the headboard
And lull yourself your entire life;
Languish in your grief as if it were a fable
And be gentle with the haughty boredom.

Written in 1910, these two poems are considered another set of twin-poems from Mandelstam. As the same pool is at the center of the poems thematically, I shall refer to the works as the “Pool” poems. Omry Ronen and Kiril Taranovsky have both suggested that these poems, and in particular, the pool and mud imagery, evoke a sense of the “Judaic chaos”⁸³ Mandelstam faced throughout his life (and wrote about in Noise of Time⁸⁴). While their analyses are convincing, what both critics do not

⁸³ “The atmosphere of the Jewish way of life cherished by Mandel’shtam’s grandparents from Riga, and, in his own family, particularly preserved by his father.” Taranovsky, Essays, 52.

⁸⁴ For a full explication of the theme, see the chapter entitled “Judaic Chaos” from Noise of Time (Mandelstam (Brown), Noise of Time, 88.)

mention is how the poems can also be seen as precursors to another set of twin-poems from Mandelstam, the “Hayloft” poems.

The connections exist semantically, through word choice, and thematically, with themes of the poet musing on his place in the world and of poetic creation. For example, one immediate link between the first Pool poem, “Из омута злого и вязкого,” and the Hayloft poems is the use of the verb “шуршать” (“to rustle”). The verb appears in the first Pond poem in the lines “Я вырос, тростинкой шурша” (Literally: “I grew, rustling like a reed”) and a similar movement is suggested later, “Приветственным шелестом встреченный / Коротких осенних минут” (“Met by the welcoming rustle /Of short autumn minutes”). In the Hayloft poems, the verb first appears in the lines from “Я не знаю с каких пор”: “Не по ней ли шуршит вор, ” (“Does a thief not rustle to it”), and “Прошуршать спичкой, плечом / Растолкать ночь - разбудить” (“To make a rustling noise striking a match, to nudge night / With a shoulder to wake it”). The verb is also used in “Я по лесенке приставной” with the line “Не своей чешуёй шуршим,” (“We rustle scales that are not our own”). Keeping in mind the verb’s connotations with creation or the desire to create in the Hayloft poems (stirring the creative night, stirring the scales of other poets), the theme seems to originate here, emerging with the poet from an “evil, miry pool.” In the Pool poems, the poet who eventually climbs the Hayloft, the poet who struggles with the authenticity of poetic creation, is born in a rustle, and he struggles with many of the same issues. Thus, when Mandelstam eventually employs the same verb in the Hayloft poems, he not only gestures a connection to the Pool poems, but in doing so, he shows that he is still grappling with similar themes twelve years later.

In addition to these connections between the poems, the Pool poems and the Hayloft poems also relate in how they interact with Tiutchevan themes and subtexts. For example, the verb шуршать from “Из омута злого и вязкого” is used in conjunction with the reed image, which is a subtextual reference to Tiutchev’s poem “Певучесть есть в морских волнах”: “И ропщет мыслящий тростник?” (“And why does the thinking reed grumble?”)

The reed reference does not originate with Tiutchev, however, as Tiutchev took the image from Blaise Pascal’s *roseau pensant*, described as follows:

Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature, but he is a thinking reed. The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him. A vapor, a drop of water suffices to kill him. But, if the universe were to crush him, man would still be more noble than that which killed him, because he knows that he dies and the advantage which the universe has over him, the universe knows nothing of this...All our dignity then, consists in thought. By it we must elevate ourselves, and not by space and time which we cannot fill. Let us endeavour then, to think well; this is the principle of morality.⁸⁵

For Pascal, the ability of the human "reed" to think is the highest asset. In the context of Tiutchev’s poem, however, it is clear that Tiutchev has taken the retrospective theme of Pascal and questioned it:

Невозмутимый строй во всем,
Созвучье полное в природе, —
Лишь в нашей призрачной свободе
Разлад мы с нею сознаем.

There is an imperturbable order in everything,
A complete accord in nature, -
Only in our illusory freedom
Do we realize a dissonance with it.

Man, in Tiutchev’s sense, appears to be feeble precisely *because* he can think: the order of nature crumbles when his subjective, not to mention illusory, consciousness is exercised. Thinking, as Gregory Freidin succinctly puts, is “the fatal liability, the

⁸⁵ Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* trans. W.F. Trotter, [http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/pascal/pensees-b.html#SECTION VI, 347](http://oregonstate.edu/instruct/phl302/texts/pascal/pensees-b.html#SECTION_VI_347).

cause of human alienation from the harmony of nature.”⁸⁶ The reed image that gives birth to the protagonist of Mandelstam’s poem comes from Tiutchev’s lines:

Откуда, как разлад возник?
И отчего же в общем хоре
Душа не то поет, что море,
И ропщет мыслящий тростник?

Whence, how did this dissonance arise?
And why, in the general chorus
Does the soul not sing the same thing as the sea,
And why does the thinking reed grumble?

In this regard, we see yet another approach from Mandelstam to retrospectively engage with Tiutchev: in his Pool poems, he has taken an image from Tiutchev and made it the subject of a poem; he is answering the question of why the reed grumbles by becoming the reed himself. Furthermore, “Певучесть есть в морских волнах” also associates its “unsteady reeds” of the first stanza with a “музыкальные шорох” (“musical rustle”), relating to the similar rustling movement between the Pool poems and the Hayloft poems. Tiutchev’s poem exists as a point of commonality between them, and it goes to show how Mandelstam was still wrestling with Tiutchev’s themes over time as he grew as a poet.

To further reinforce this connection between Mandelstam and Tiutchev, Mandelstam, as Taranovsky points out, references Tiutchev in his unfinished essay “Pushkin and Scriabin”:

Что-то случилось с музыкой, какой-то ветер сломал с налету музыкальные камыши, сухие и звонкие. Мы требуем хора, нам наскучил ропот мыслящего тростника...

Something has happened to music, some kind of wind has broken the dry and clear musical reeds with a sudden gust. We demand a chorus, the grumbling of the thinking reed bores us...⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Gregory Freidin, *A Coat of Many Colors*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 51.

⁸⁷ Osip Mandel’shtam, “Pushkin i Skriabin,” quoted in Taranovsky, *Essays*, 53.

This quote is riddled with vestiges of Tiutchev's "Певучесть есть в морских волнах," including the use of "ропот" ("grumbling") in correlation to the reed, the same grumbling that Tiutchev warns severs it from nature's "general chorus," but it also contains echoes of the Hayloft poems and their "ringing of *dry* grasses."

In relation to Tiutchev's poem, in both this quotation and in his Pool poems, Mandelstam directly questions Pascal's notion of man's capacity to think, much as Tiutchev did before him. Furthermore, as in Tiutchev's poem, where there is a tension between the order of nature and man's dissonance with it, in the Pool poems, Mandelstam seems to be struggling to find his balance, strained by the pull of two worlds: the "forbidden life" outside of the pool, and the refuge of his familiar, rooted silt. In this sense, the pull between the two worlds relates to another of Mandelstam's poems, "Silentium," which he wrote in the same year as the Pool poems. In that poem, as the reader will recall, the poet wishes to abandon the current world he lives in for a primordial state of cosmic harmony (perhaps, even, the "forbidden life" of "Из омута злого и вязкого" is the same world Mandelstam commands Aphrodite to avoid by remaining as foam in "Silentium"). Of course, in mentioning Mandelstam's "Silentium," one must also consider Tiutchev's version of "Silentium!" in which, again, a poet is tugged between two worlds: the world of poetic speech and expression, where any thought he speaks is a lie, and the world of an inner self, a world of "mysterious and enchanting thoughts." In all the poems, the poet is unstable in the world he lives in, strained by the pull of two opposing forces.

Of course, this undercurrent of instability in all of these instances is also apparent in Mandelstam's Hayloft poems, when the poet is pulled between trying to

trap an artificial “miraculous Aeolian harmony” from the night, from the natural order, with his own subjective effort, although the night and the darkness swells and rings on its own. Furthermore, instability also manifests itself with the different endings of the Hayloft poems, where, in the first, his blood bond to other poets is preserved to be found stolen by later generations, while, in the second, the bond is broken between life and poetic creation. Thus, it appears the poet’s tension apparent in the Hayloft poems has its origin in the tension of the Pool poems, and by extension, in Tiutchev.

* * *

Additionally, while Mandelstam’s Pool poems thematically reinforce Tiutchev’s reversal of Pascal’s thinking reed, there is a clear contrast between the harmonious and melodious waves of Tiutchev’s “Певучесть есть в морских волнах” and the “evil and miry pool” that serves as the backdrop of Mandelstam’s twin poems. In this sense, although the poems connect through their associations with bodies of water, Mandelstam’s water is decidedly more sinister, at least initially. However, as the Pool poems continue, it becomes more and more apparent that Mandelstam’s position in relation to the pool is ambivalent: he is tempted out of it to breathe the “forbidden life,” although he droops back into his “cold and marshy refuge” just after, and even though the pool is “transparent and dark,” it is also a “languid window” that is becoming white. Mandelstam’s pool is both centrifugal, pushing the reed from its roots into a “forbidden life,” and centripetal, drawing the poet back in with its “dear silt.” It is worth examining this ambivalence in closer

detail to elucidate connections to the Hayloft poems, as well as undercurrents of Tiutchev between the sets of poems.

For example, the notion of ambivalence is conveyed by constant instances of attraction and repulsion that run throughout the Pool poems. Pulled in two directions, the poet seems to be consumed with anguish: his desire to breathe in a “forbidden life” seems irreconcilable with the clinging “silt” of his familiar pool. One could suggest that this anguish manifests itself as a larger commentary on poetry and the poet’s role in creation: while he may wish to carve out his own standing in the history of poetry, he cannot abandon his poetic influences, like Tiutchev, that root him, as it were, in poetic tradition. The theme, and the anguish, of poetic creation revisited in the Hayloft poems seems to have its origin here: in those poems, the poet questions his ability, and the value, of expressing himself, contrasting the inauthenticity of trying to trap an Aeolian harmony against a creative night, a creative darkness that swells on its own. Furthermore, uncertain as to how to cope with such anguish, in the Hayloft poems, the poet is forced to offer opposing solutions to the dilemma, one that is held together by attraction (between the bond of blood and the ringing of the dry grasses) and one that is characterized by repulsion in the breaking of the same bond.

Returning to forces of repulsion and attraction in Mandelstam’s Pool poems, the anguish of ambivalence in “Из омыта злого и вязкого” pervades the entire poem: after breathing the “forbidden life” in the first stanza, the poet immediately droops back down into a “cold and marshy refuge.” This phrasing, in itself, is polemic: while the adjectives “cold” and “marshy” suggest a negative semantic register, “refuge” has positive connotations. Furthermore, the poet is “happy with the cruel insult,” a

strange, oxymoronic reaction to the pool. Even the mention of autumn at the end of the second stanza suggests a season of oscillation between summer and winter, a period of transition from a season of life to a season of death.

Tiutchev's "Певучесть есть в морских волнах" contains a similar line in which attraction and repulsion are both present: "there is a harmony in the elemental clashes." What separates this line from Mandelstam's Pool poems, however, is that Tiutchev's "harmony" originates in nature, without man's consciousness; in "Из омута злого и вязкого," the ambivalent attraction and repulsion is not harmonious, as it arises from the thinking reed itself, rather than from nature. In other words, in Tiutchev's poem, while nature is harmonious even in its elemental clashes, mankind does not fit in with it, and Mandelstam's reed embodies this estrangement in both Pool poems. This dissonance arises in the Hayloft poems, as well: although man may think he is free from nature and able to create poetry on a whim, he really is not, and his subjective existence clashes with the "ancient chaos" of the hayloft, the primordial state of cosmic harmony Mandelstam alludes to in his "Silentium."

The line "And in a life resembling a dream" also conveys a sense of ambivalence in the tension between reality and dreams it alludes to, but the line also has important connotations in regards to Tiutchev and the Hayloft poems. Dreams, of course, are extremely important thematically for Tiutchev, as detailed in other chapters; dreams in Tiutchev's work are times for creation and for unconsciousness to thrive, and by extension, for the abandonment of the consciousness that brings about dissonance with the natural order detailed in "Певучесть есть в морских волнах." The line is also reminiscent of Tiutchev's "Сон на море," in which the poet's dream

overwhelms both the poet himself and the world around him. In relation to the Hayloft poems, it is worth noting that both poems (“Я не знаю с каких пор” and “Я по лесенке приставной”) end on the same word, “сон” (“dream”), which, as mentioned before, can also mean sleep in Russian.

Another connection between the two sets of poems and Tiutchev is their dealing with the themes of Tiutchevean chaos. In the Hayloft poems, as examined before, the theme of Tiutchevean chaos lends the poem a sense of creation and fertility, but it also suggests the notion of perspective and the surrendering of one’s thought to the abyss, to the night, to the chaos of poetic tradition to achieve a unified, primal harmony. As examined before, Mandelstam’s “Silentium” is concerned with returning to a state of primal harmony, of primal chaos, where man and nature exist in harmony together, unperturbed by any interference from a thinking reed. In the case of the Pool poems, then, one can also see a certain degree of Tiutchevean chaos in the poem, especially in relation to the thinking reed’s existence; Clare Cavanagh states that “all three lyrics [“I do not know how long ago...” “I leaned a short ladder...” and “Silentium”] are, in turn, small-scale retellings of the Mandelstamian master plot that traces the painful emergence of self and speech from primal chaos.”⁸⁸ Growing out of an evil and miry pool in the Pool poems, the reed’s, and by extension, the poet’s existence appears to be chaotic in itself, pulled in two directions by contrasting forces: he is caught in a state of constant displacement, of constant oscillation, of constant chaos. The poet is paralyzed by his irreconcilable polarities of feeling.

Despite the reed’s displacement, however, Mandelstam’s first poem resolves with a seemingly conciliatory note, albeit a perplexing one: the poet is happy with the

⁸⁸ Cavanagh, *Mandelstam and the Modernist Creation*, 44.

cruel insult of the pool, and even though he secretly envies everybody, he is still in love with them. Recalling Tiutchev's "Певучесть есть в морских волнах," this cadence resounds in contrast to Tiutchev's "protest of the desperate soul." However, in the first publication of "Из омута злого и вязкого," the poem contained an additional stanza (the stanza was later edited out in 1928):

Ни сладости в пытке не ведаю,
Ни смысла я в ней не ищу;
Но близкой последней победою,
Быть может, за всё отомщу.

I do not experience sweetness in torture
Nor do I search for meaning in it,
But with the final victory close at hand,
Perhaps I will have revenge for everything.

This particular stanza again reinforces the ambiguity/ambivalence/oscillation of the poet: at the same time as he "do[es] not experience sweetness in torture," nor "search for meaning in it," he plans to have "revenge for everything" in a "final victory." Just as his position oscillates in the world, his reaction to it is polemical, as well.

Even if this stanza is omitted, however, the ending of the edited "Из омута злого и вязкого" is not as conciliatory as it first appears: suspended between envy and love for the "forbidden" world to which the poet is "passionately, languidly, and affectionately" drawn, his ambivalence traps him in a world that is uncreated, in constant oscillation, and a world that is a complete inversion of the pure and boundless potentiality of Mandelstam's primordial state in "Silentium."

What is worth taking away from the first Pool poem is how it functions in the scheme of Mandelstam's subtextual approaches to engage Tiutchev to prospectively alter his own poems: while we have seen him adopt a poem title of Tiutchev's, modify lines of Tiutchev's verse, and employ Tiutchevean themes in his work, often

challenging them, in this case, Mandelstam is taking a Tjutchevean image and making it the protagonist of his poem(s).

* * *

As with the Hayloft poems, in which Mandelstam reverses the final stanza of “Я не знаю с каких пор” in “Я по лесенке приставной,” “В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно” offers an opposite solution to the predicament in “Из омута злого и вязкого,” reinforcing the ambivalent tension created in the first Pool poem. In “В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно,” As Freidin puts it, Mandelstam “is wearied by the necessity of ‘feigning tenderness’ when what he feels is self-hate or of being ‘gentle’ when confronted with the ‘haughty boredom.’”⁸⁹ Furthermore, what prompted a “cruel insult” in the preceding poem is given tender treatment in this one: the “silt” is “dear” enough to make the reed homesick. However, as with the first Pool poem, the oscillation of the reed is again present here, namely in the fact that there is nothing to prevent the poet from either sinking down to the bottom or floating up to the surface of the pool “without effort.” Again, it seems that Mandelstam was of two minds on the subject of his identity, and in addition to the ambivalence of the last poem, his estrangement from life acquires an even greater intensity in the second Pool poem.

For example, the main theme of “В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно,” namely, the oscillation of the poet’s heart between the bottom and the surface of the pool, again reinforces the pervading sense of instability between the Pool poems. The heart is homesick and yearns to return to the dear silt, but it just as easily finds itself floating to the surface “without effort” like a little piece of straw. The heart image is

⁸⁹ Freidin, *A Coat*, 54.

obviously reminiscent of Mandelstam's "Silentium," as well ("And heart, be ashamed of heart"), and by extension, Tiutchev's original version of the poem ("How can the heart express itself?"). In this regard, the heart in Mandelstam's and Tiutchev's "Silentium" poems is the embodiment of one's inner self and their subjective experience. Furthermore, because every heart is different based on our own experiences, coupled with the notion that we can never truly express ourselves through language, a harmonious state between hearts can never be reached; they cannot be fused with life's sources. While in Tiutchev's poem, the poet simply muses on this irreconcilability, Mandelstam bids all hearts to be ashamed of one another in his own "Silentium," to avoid interaction with one another, as it will compromise his sought after state of harmony. In relation to the Pool poems, the heart again manifests itself as a symbol for the difficulty of expressing oneself, caught between floating up to a "forbidden life" and sinking back down into "dear silt." In this case, the heart's oscillation is the realization of both Tiutchev's and Mandelstam's subject matter in their "Silentium" poems.

Whereas the pool is perhaps more centrifugal in "Из омута злого и вязкого," in that the poet is drawn to breathe the forbidden life and to envy and love the outside world, the *pull* of the pool in the second poem is emphasized. For example, the line "having grown homesick for the dear silt," in particular, is reminiscent of the line "into the cold and marshy refuge," although the former is devoid of negative semantic associations. In this sense, the pool is not nearly as malicious as it is portrayed in the first poem, where it is "evil and miry." Along these lines, although the pool is dark in "В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно," it also serves as a source of light, a

“languid window becom[ing] white.” Furthermore, it is transparent, allowing one to fully examine its character without fear that it is concealing something sinister beneath the surface.

This is not to say that the Pool is decidedly positive in the second Pool poem, as the “languid” window of the pool is reminiscent of the “languid” yearnings that drew the poem to a “forbidden life” in the first Pool poem, again suggesting an ambivalent character to the pool between the two poems. This appears to be the case in the Hayloft poems, as well, as the bond of blood, the bond connecting Mandelstam to the rest of life and its connection to poetic creation, the ringing of dry grasses, is preserved in the first Hayloft poem, although it is broken soon after in the second: Mandelstam’s oscillation between two conflicting worlds, between two different solutions to live one’s life, is a consistent struggle, and a struggle that continually manifests itself in his poetry.

Along these lines, this constant oscillation illustrates how difficult it is for him, or any poet for that matter, to break free from their roots and discover a wholly new point of departure, a “transsense dream,” as it were. And what’s more, what obstructs him here is not the pool itself, but the ambivalence it instills in him with an apparently endless series of ascents and descents. When Mandelstam confronts the abyss, the pool, face to face, through its languid window, he does not enjoy the generative, communal character of chaos as does the man in Tiutchev’s “Святая ночь на небосклон взошла...” precisely because the poet of the Pool poems, as a thinking reed, cannot abandon his consciousness, he cannot empty his thought. Thus, he is

condemned to live in a state of dissonance irreconcilable with the natural order, sinking and floating among the pool's waters.

Within these poems, Mandelstam seems to be suggesting that in becoming a poet, one becomes intensely concentrated on one's self, which then becomes the bane of one's existence: caught in a paralyzing state of self-awareness, all of his actions and interactions are farcical, as he is forced to stand with a "feigned tenderness" to "lull [him]self" for his entire life, to "languish in [his] grief as if it were a fable," and to, worst of all, "be gentle with the haughty boredom." He becomes the embodiment of Tiutchev's grumbling, thinking reed.

In consideration of this, the ambivalence and self-consciousness of the Hayloft poems have clear origins in these Pool poems. While both sets of poems' different endings appear to be contradictory, together they function as a demonstration of Mandelstam's continual sense of displacement in the world, his continual sense of being drawn in two different directions – perhaps, on the one hand, towards the poetry of his past, Tiutchev's poetry on his bookcase, and the desire to find a wholly new point of departure to express his own voice. However, I believe Mandelstam realized such an endeavor was impossible, and as a result, he adopted a poetic style that fused the best of both worlds: while he retrospectively acknowledges Tiutchev through poem titles, semantic and thematic connections, and even direct adaptations of Tiutchevean images, he adapts them, cultivates them to advance his own poetics, his own voice.

II POEMS

A Note on My Translations

Unless otherwise noted, the translations directly under the original Russian are literal translations. These are followed by my creative translations. The poems are arranged chronologically.

The second and fourth stanzas of Tiutchev's "Не то, что мните вы, природа" ("Nature is not what you think") remain matters of speculation, as they were censored before publication and all existing versions of the poem contain lines of dots instead of text. They were most likely censored for containing pantheistic sentiments irreconcilable with the Orthodox canons.⁹⁰

The creative translations of Mandelstam's Pool poems ("Из омута злого и вязкого..." and "В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно...") use words only from my creative translations of Tiutchev (as they exactly appear).

The creative translations of the Hayloft poems, "Я не знаю с каких пор..." and "Я по лесенке приставной..." can be read individually (vertically) or together (horizontally).

⁹⁰ Pratt, Russian Metaphysical, 46.

Fedor Tiutchev

Видение

Есть некий час, в ночи, всемирного молчанья,
И в оный час явлений и чудес
Живая колесница мирозданья
Открыто катится в святилище небес!

Тогда густеет ночь, как хаос на водах,
Беспамятство, как Атлас, давит сушу;
Лишь Музы девственную душу
В пророческих тревожат Боги снах!

A Vision

There is a certain hour at night when all the world is silent,
And in this hour of phenomena and wonders
The living chariot of creation
Openly rolls through the sanctuary of the heavens.

Then, the night thickens, like Chaos upon the waters;
Unconsciousness, like Atlas, stifles the earth;
Only the Muse's virgin soul
Is disturbed by gods in her prophetic dreams.

Vision

(night)

there is an individual
hour, when the world chokes
on a hive of silence.

and in this hour of visions,
of wonders, the living
chariot of creation rolls
right on through,
tracing the crease
of heaven's shrine.

then night thickens
itself, like Chaos' heap
on the shifting depths -
unconsciousness grips the earth's mold,
fills the swales Atlas' palms furrowed.

the gods settle on plucking
only the Muse's
virgin soul - they hear she's the one
with the prophetic dreams.

Как океан объмлет шар земной,
Земная жизнь кругом объята снами;
Настанет ночь — и звучными волнами
 Стихия бьёт о берег свой.

То глас её: он нудит нас и просит. . .
Уж в пристани волшебный ожил чёлн;
Прилив растёт и быстро нас уносит
 В неизмеримость темных волн.

Небесный свод, горящий славой звездной
Таинственно глядит из глубины, —
И мы плывем, пылающею бездной
 Со всех сторон окружены.

As the ocean embraces the earthly sphere,
Earthly life is embraced all around by dreams;
Night will come – and with sonorous waves
 The Element beats against its shore.

This is its voice: it compels us and requests...
Already in the wharf the magic skiff has come alive;
The rising tide grows and swiftly carries us away
 Into the immeasurability of the dark waves.

The heavenly vault, blazing with starry glory,
Mysteriously gazes from the deep
And we sail, the flaring abyss
 Surrounding us on all sides.

As ocean swells and circles earth's full sphere,
So too do dreams encircle earthly living;
The night will come – with waves that chatter, hissing
The Element beats its own pier.

Its voice rings out: compelling us, requesting...
For us, the magic skiff has come alive:
A growing tide conveys us, quickly cresting
Into a dark and untold dive.

The vault of heaven broils with starry glory
And glances mystically from the deep, -
And so we sail, surrounded by the fury
Of the abyss' flaring sweep.

Безумие

Там, где с землёю обгорелой
Слился, как дым, небесный свод, —
Там в беззаботности веселой
Безумье жалкое живёт.

Под раскалёнными лучами,
Зарывшись в пламенных песках,
Оно стеклянными очами
Чего-то ищет в облаках.

То вспрянет вдруг и, чутким ухом
Припав к растреснутой земле,
Чему-то внемлет жадным слухом
С довольством тайным на челе.

И мнит, что слышит струй кипенье,
Что слышит ток подземных вод,
И колыбельное их пенье,
И шумный из земли исход!..

Insanity

Where the burnt earth
Is merged, like smoke, with heaven's vault, -
There, in carefree cheer
Pitiful insanity lives.

Underneath scorching rays,
Buried in flaming sands,
Its glassy gaze
Searches for something in the clouds.

Suddenly it will leap up and, with a sensitive ear
Pressing against the cracked earth,
It heeds something with greedy hearing
And secret contentment on its brow.

It thinks it can hear the boiling of streams,
It can hear the current of underground waters,
And the lullaby of their singing,
And their noisy exodus from the earth!...

Insanity

The poor thing lives in a hut
made of burnt earth
with a roof suggesting the bend
of heaven's arc – it all merges
in a pant of smoke escaping
with unbound ecstasy
through a window.

While day with his smoldering streaks
looks down on what's under,
he comes upon a head
burrowed amongst volcanic sands;
its parched gaze of coarse glass
scours for something
in the clouds above.

Then, all of a sudden, it will leap up
and, with an ear as perceptive as heat
pressing against the cracked earth,
it heeds something, its greedy hearing
plundering the earth's secrets
as contentment settles in a furrow
across its scalded brow.

And it thinks it can hear
the subterranean conversations
of boiling currents,
the lullaby of their singing,
and the piercing groan of
a distant rupture -
their exodus from the earth.

Silentium!

Молчи, скрывайся и таи
И чувства и мечты свои -
Пуškai в душевной глубине
Встают и заходят оне
Безмолвно, как звезды в ночи,-
Любуйся ими - и молчи.

Как сердцу высказать себя?
Другому как понять тебя?
Поймёт ли он, чем ты живёшь?
Мысль изречённая есть ложь.
Взрывая, возмутишь ключи,-
Питайся ими - и молчи.

Лишь жить в себе самом умей -
Есть целый мир в душе твоей
Таинственно-волшебных дум;
Их оглушит наружный шум,
Дневные разгонят лучи,-
Внимай их пенью - и молчи!..

Silentium!

Be silent, hide, and conceal
Your feelings and dreams –
Let them, in the depths of your soul
Rise and set
Silently, like stars in the night,
Admire them – and keep silent.

How can the heart express itself?
How can another understand you?
Will he understand how you live?
The spoken thought is a lie.
Stirring them, you will disturb the springs,
Drink from them – and keep silent.

Know how to live in your own self
There is a whole world in your soul
Of mysterious and enchanting thoughts
An external noise will muffle them
The day's light will disperse them
Hear them sing – and keep silent!

Silentium!

Mulch, secrete, vaporize -
I adjust vials, matching severely
Puss I've dusted, shoving globs in ye
For stars in youth writhe - hold on ye
The bezel's molded, cackled a zealotry of phonemes:
Loop the ice immediately – I'm melting!

Cockled ooze veers, scathing - sip?
Do goons crackle pawning tips?
Poems lead on, whence these visions?
Music either chants yesses or lows.
Voice reveals eyes, a vase mutilates a clue's feel, -
Petering might – I'm molten you see!

Unleash and bring this seething moon's sway -
Yes, sealing me with a vest of vines' fray
Taint with a renewed volcanic doom;
These goggled geese are narrowing soon,
Dense venom razes gongs, yet looms he
Finishing my expense to you – immolating!

Problème

С горы скатившись, камень лёг в долине.
Как он упал? Никто не знает ныне —
Сорвался ль он с вершины сам собой
Или низвергнут мыслящей рукой?

Столетье за столетьем пронеслося:
Никто ещё не разрешил вопроса.

A Problem

A stone that rolled down and off the mountain
lies in a valley.
How did it fall? No one knows now —
Did it break off the summit on its own?
Or was it cast down by a thinking hand?

Century after century has passed;
No one has yet resolved the question.

A Problem

a stone
tumbled down
and off its moun-
tain - now
it lies in a val –
how did it fall,
you ask?

now-
adays, no
one knows -
some say
it abandoned
the peak on it-
s own. o-
thers swore they saw
a think-
ing hand
hurl it
down, hoping
to hit an an-
swer.

centur-
y after cen-
tury has come
and gone,
like you,
and still, the quest-
ion qui-
etly sits
unresolved
next to the very stone that breathed it.

Тени сизые смешались,
Цвет поблекнул, звук уснул —
Жизнь, движенье разрешились
В сумрак зыбкий, в дальний гул...
Мотылька полет незримый
Слышен в воздухе ночном...
Час тоски невыразимой!..
Всё во мне, и я во всём!..

Сумрак тихий, сумрак сонный,
Лейся в глубь моей души,
Тихий, томный, благовонный,
Все залей и утиши.
Чувства — мглой самозабвенья
Переполни через край!..
Дай вкусить уничтоженья,
С миром дремлющим смешай!

Gray-blue shadows mingled,
Color faded, sound fell asleep —
Life and movement were resolved
Into unsteady twilight, into a distant hum...
A moth's invisible flight
Is audible in the night air...
The hour of inexpressible anguish!
Everything is in me, and I am in everything!...

Quiet twilight, sleepy twilight,
Pour into the depth of my soul.
Quiet, languid, fragrant,
Flood it all and calm it.
Overflow the feelings with
the haze of self-oblivion!
Give me a taste of annihilation,
Mix me with the slumbering world!

color drowned into a sheet of
smoke-blue shadows bled together
while sound pulled a blanket over himself -
life, movement found resolution
in the distant buzzing of a twilight's twitches.
a moth's wings twitch
collecting what shavings of sound they can
to stir a presence out of the air -
this hour of anguish has no words.
everything is in me, and I am in everything!

quiet twilight, sleepy twilight
tilt too far so you spill yourself
into the bed of my soul -
quiet, relaxed, fragrant twilight
flood it all - i'll be calm.
brink and overflow every sense
with a cooling haze until self forgets it-
self. give me void to taste,
knead me into the folds of the slumbering world!

Не то, что мните вы, природа:
Не слепок, не бездушный лик –
В ней есть душа, в ней есть свобода,
В ней есть любовь, в ней есть
язык...

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.....

Вы зрите лист и цвет на древе:
Иль их садовник приклеил?
Иль зреет плод в родимом чреве
Игрою внешних, чуждых сил? ..

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Они не видят и не слышат,
Живут в сем мире, как впотьмах,
Для них и солнцы, зная, не дышат
И жизни нет в морских волнах.

Лучи к ним в душу не сходили,
Весна в груди их не цвела,
При них леса не говорили
И ночь в звездах нема была!

И языками неземными,
Волнуя реки и леса,
В ночи не совещалась с ними
В беседе дружеской гроза!

Не их вина: пойми, коль может,
Органа жизнь глухонемой!
Увы, души в нём не встревожит
И голос матери самой!

Nature is not what you think:
Not a mold, not a soulless face –
There is a soul within her, there is freedom within her
There is love within her, there is speech within her...

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You behold the leaf and blossom on the tree:
Or did a gardener glue them on?
Or does fruit ripen in its native womb
By the play of external, alien forces?..

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They do not see and they do not hear,
They live in this world as if in the dark,
For them, apparently, the suns do not breathe
And there is no life in the sea's waves.

Beams of light have not come down into their souls,
Spring has not bloomed in their breasts,
Before them, the forests have not spoken
And the starry night has been mute!

And with unearthly voices,
Rousing the rivers and forests,
At night the thunderstorm
Has not conferred with them in friendly conversation!

It is not their fault: if he can,
Let a deaf-mute understand the life of the organ!
Alas, the soul within him will not be stirred
By the voice of his own mother!

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Her voice is one of illumination, filling rustling fields,
Cracks in mountains, and oceans deep, -
She is more than a vestige of God's fingertips,
She breathes light if you look.

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You hear a pool curling around itself:
Instead of merging your soul with her liquid gestures,
You mistake the mingling water for the laughter
Of a group of men who do not dream at night.

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Святая ночь на небосклон взошла –
И день отрадней, день любезней,
Как золотой покров она свила -
Покров, накинутый над бездной.
И, как виденье, внешний мир ушел...
И человек, как сирота бездомный,
Стоит теперь и немощен и гол,
Лицом к лицу пред пропастью темной.

На самого себя покинут он –
Упразднен ум и мысль осиротела –
В душе своей, как в бездне, погружен,
И нет извне опоры ни предела...
И чудится давно минувшим сном
Ему теперь все светлое, живое...
И в чуждом неразгаданном ночном
Он узнает наследье родовое.

Holy night has risen into the firmament –
And has rolled up the comforting day, the kind day,
Like a golden cover –
A cover thrown over the abyss.
And, like a vision, the external world has departed...
And man, like an orphan without a home,
Now stands feeble and naked,
Face to face with the dark abyss.

Abandoned to himself alone –
His mind is emptied, his thought orphaned –
He's plunged into his own soul like into an abyss,
And there is no support or limit from the outside...
And everything that is bright and alive
Seems to him like a dream long since past...
And in the alien, the unsolved, the nocturnal,
He recognizes his native legacy.

holy night has climbed up into the firmament -
she took the day with her, gathering up
the kind and pleasant folds
of its golden shawl –
the shawl that hooded the abyss.

the outer world withdrew like a mirage
a man stumbled too close to,
and the man, now a homeless orphan,
stands naked and helpless, face
to face with the dark rippling of the abyss.

he's abandoned to himself alone,
his mind pours out his ears,
orphaning his thought –
he's sunken into his own soul
as one sinks into an abyss.

the outside world refuses him a crutch,
a limit for this nocturnal quicksand,
all life and light seem an ancient dream...
and in this alien, this unsolved, this
shifting body of night
he realizes his native legacy.

Est in arundineis modulatio musica ripis.

Певучесть есть в морских волнах
Гармония в стихийных спорах,
И стройный мусикийский шорох
Струится в зыбких камышах.

Невозмутимый строй во всём,
Созвучье полное в природе, —
Лишь в нашей призрачной свободе
Разлад мы с нею сознаём.

Откуда, как разлад возник?
И отчего же в общем хоре
Душа не то поёт, что, море,
И ропщет мыслящий тростник?

И от земли до крайних звезд
Всё безответен и поныне
Глас вопиющего в пустыне,
Души отчаянной протест?

Est in arundineis modulatio musica ripis.

There is melody in the waves of the sea,
Harmony in the elemental clashes,
And an ordered, musical rustle
Flows through the unsteady reeds.

There is an imperturbable order in everything,
A complete accord in nature, -
Only in our illusory freedom
Do we realize a dissonance with it.

Whence, how did this dissonance arise?
And why, in the general chorus
Does the soul not sing the same thing as the sea,
And why does the thinking reed grumble?

And why, from the earth to the farthest stars
Is there still no answer
To the voice crying in the wilderness,
The desperate soul's protest?

*There is musical harmony in the
littoral reeds.*

The sea waves
churn with a melody,
a harmony of arguing elements -
a rustle glides through
the doddering reeds
along the seam of a riverbank,
stitching music and order.

A cool-headed order which
lips the pool of agreement
between nature's reaches -
only when we leak
a spectral freedom
do we assume
a dissonance.

Where did this dissonance
come from? How did we let it get
loose? And why, in the common chorus,
does our soul drown out the song
of the sea? And why are you
griping, thinking reed?

And why, from the gravel
ground down among this earth
to the gas grinding the form of stars,
has no one answered that voice crying out
in the desert - that poor soul's
sputtered, parched protest?

Osip Mandelstam

I

Из омута злого и вязкого
Я вырос, тростинкой шурша,
И страстно, и томно, и ласково
Запретною жизнью дыша.

И никну, никем не замеченный,
В холодный и топкий приют,
Приветственным шелестом встреченный
Коротких осенних минут.

Я счастлив жестокой обидою,
И в жизни похожей на сон,
Я каждому тайно завидую
И в каждого тайно влюблен.

I

I grew out of an evil and miry pool
Rustling like a reed,
And passionately, languidly, and affectionately,
Breathing a forbidden life.

And I droop, noticed by no one,
Into the cold and marshy refuge,
Met by the welcoming rustle
Of short autumn minutes.

I am happy with this cruel insult
And in a life resembling a dream,
I secretly envy everybody
And I am secretly in love with everyone.

I

I climbed out of an abandoned, hissing pool
Rustling like a reed,
And with compelling, relaxed, and pleasant lips,
I breathed a mirage of a life.

But I withdrew (no one saw)
Into the cool, ground down vault
Answered by the kind rustle
Of an individual fall hour.

I taste contentment in these piercing lies
And in a life tracing a dream's stitching
I am hoping anguish chokes you all with secrets
And yet I dream of our harmony.

II

В огромном омуте прозрачно и темно,
И томное окно белеет.
А сердце - отчего так медленно оно
И так упорно тяжелеет?

То - всю тяжестью оно идет ко дну,
Соскучившись по милом иле;
То - как соломинка, минуя глубину,
Наверх всплывает без усилий.

С притворной нежностью у изголовья стой
И сам себя всю жизнь баюкай;
Как небылицею, своей томись тоской
И ласков будь с надменной скукой.

II

In the enormous pool it is transparent and dark,
And a languid window becomes white..
But the heart – why is it so slowly
And so stubbornly growing heavy?

Now – with all its heaviness, it sinks to the bottom,
Having grown homesick for the dear silt;
Now – like a little piece of straw, bypassing the deep,
It floats up to the top without effort.

Stand, with a feigned tenderness, at the headboard
And lull yourself your entire life;
Languish in your grief as if it were a fable
And be gentle with the haughty boredom.

II

The pool that reaches is a sheet of dark, dusted glass,
A relaxed window to look through.
But the heart – why is it doddering so severely, like fingertips'
 twitches,
And growing as dense as stars?

Now – it has sunken like an orphan stone
Into the lullaby of the native sands;
Now – like a light reed, it heeds the collecting sweep
Escaping unbound, right on through, to the roof of water.

Shawl life's sleepy head with an alien silence
And live in the churn of quiet chatter;
Drown in your anguish as if gods furrowed it
Do not overfill a sense – settle on plucking visions.

Концерт на Вокзале

Нельзя дышать - и твердь кишит червями,
И ни одна звезда не говорит,
Но, видит бог, есть музыка над нами,
Дрожит вокзал от пенья аонид,
И снова, паровозными свистками
Разорванный, скрипичный воздух слит.

Огромный парк. Вокзала шар стеклянный.
Железный мир опять заморожен.
На звучный пир в элизиум туманный
Торжественно уносится вагон.
Павлиний крик и рокот фортепьянный -
Я опоздал. Мне страшно. Это сон.

И я вхожу в стеклянный лес вокзала,
Скрипичный строй в смятеньи и слезах.
Ночного хора дикое начало,
И запах роз в гниющих парниках,
Где под стеклянным небом ночевала
Родная тень в кочующих толпах.

И мнится мне: весь в музыке и пене
Железный мир так нищенски дрожит,
В стеклянные я упираюсь сени;
Горячий пар зрачки смычков слепит.
Куда же ты? На тризне милой тени
В последний раз нам музыка звучит.

Concert at the Railroad Station

It is impossible to breathe, and the firmament teems with
worms,
And not a single star speaks,
But God knows, there is music above us:
The station trembles from the singing of the Muses
And, once again, having been rent by steam engine whistles,
The violin air is fused.

The enormous park. The glass sphere of the station.
The iron world is again spellbound.
To a sonorous feast in misty Elysium,
The carriage rushes solemnly.
A peacock's cry and a piano's rumble –
I'm late. I'm afraid. This is a dream.

And I am entering the glass forest of the station,
The ranks of violins are confused and in tears.
The savage origin of the night chorus,
And the scent of roses in rotting hotbeds,
Where, under the glass sky,
The native shade spent the night among nomadic crowds.

And I think: covered by music and foam,
The iron world is trembling like a beggar.
I lean against the glass walls;
The hot steam blinds the pupils of the bows.
Where are you going? At the funeral feast of the dear shade,
For the last time, the music sounds for us.

Concert at the Railroad Station

I can't breathe, choking on a bowl of worms gathered
from the sky,
and the sparkling chips of stars keep to themselves.
But lord knows, there is music above us.
The station quivers from the Muses' crooning
and the violin air, severed by steam engine whistles,
melds what's left of itself.

The hulking park. The glass globe of the station.
The world of iron finds itself again attuned to the sweep of
some unseen sorcerer's finger.
The carriage scurries in ceremony, humming like a generator,
to a feast beyond Elysium's mists.
A peacock's shriek and a piano's boom –
I'm late. I'm afraid. This is a dream.

And now I'm walking among the station's prismatic trunks
the violin ranks yelp, confused and in tears.
The night's chorus bleats its untamed origin,
and the roses' scent reeks in the rot of forgotten hotbeds,
still tousled from the native shade spending the night
under the palace of the glass sky, among crowds that wandered.

And I think to myself: smeared with music and foam
The iron world quivers like a beggar pulling
a sleeve over a broken arm.
I have to lean against the glass walls;
the hot steam blisters the bows' pupils.
Where are you going? At the funeral feast for our dear shade,
The music sounds one last time for us.

I

Я не знаю, с каких пор
Эта песенка началась,--
Не по ней ли шуршит вор,
Комариный звенит князь?

Я хотел бы ни о чем
Еще раз поговорить,
Прошуршать спичкой, плечом
Растолкать ночь - разбудить;

Приподнять, как душный стог,
Воздух, что шапкой томит.
Перетряхнуть мешок,
В котором тмин зашит,

Чтобы розовой крови связь,
Этих сухоньких трав звон,
Уворованная нашлась
Через век, сеновал, сон.

I

I do not know how long ago
This little song began, -
Does a thief not rustle to it,
Does a mosquito prince not ring to it?

I would like to speak
About nothing once again,
To make a rustling noise striking a match, to nudge night
With a shoulder to wake it;

To lift the air a bit, like a stifling haystack,
Tiring me with its cap.
To shake out the sack,
In which caraway seeds are sewn,

So the bond of rose-colored blood,
The ringing of these dry grasses,
Could be found stolen
Across an age, a hayloft, a dream.

II

Я по лесенке приставной
Лез на включенный сеновал,—
Я дышал звёзд млечных трухой,
Колтуном пространства дышал.

И подумал: зачем будить
Удлиненных звучаний рой,
В этой вечной склоке ловить
Эолийский чудесный строй?

Звёзд в ковше медведицы семь.
Добрых чувств на земле пять.
Набухает, звенит темь
И растёт и звенит опять.

Распряжённый огромный воз
Поперёк вселенной торчит.
Сеновала древний хаос
Защекочет, запорошит...

Не своей чешуёй шуршим,
Против шерсти мира поём.
Лиру строим, словно спешим
Обрасти косматым руном.

Из гнезда упавших щеглов
Косари приносят назад,—
Из горящих вырвусь рядов
И вернусь в родной звукоряд.

Чтобы розовой крови связь
И травы сухорукий звон
Распростились; одна — скрепясь,
А другая — в заумный сон.

II

I leaned a short ladder
Against a disheveled hayloft and climbed, -
I breathed the haydust of milky stars,
I breathed the matted hair of space.

And I thought: why wake
The swarm of elongated sounds,
Why, in this eternal squabble, try to trap
A miraculous Aeolian harmony?

There are seven stars in the Great Bear's dipper.
There are five good senses on earth.
Darkness swells and rings
And grows and rings again.

The huge unharnessed cart
Sticks out across the universe.
The ancient chaos of the hayloft
Will start to tickle and give off powder like snow...

We rustle scales that are not our own
We're singing against the fur of the world.
We string the lyre, as if hurrying
To grow a shaggy fleece that covers us.

Haymakers bring back goldfinches
That have fallen from their nests, -
I will break away from these burning rows,
And I will return to my own sequence of sounds.

So the bond of rose-colored blood
And the dry-handed ringing of the grass
Will break and say farewell, one growing firmer
While the other sets out for a transsense dream.

I don't know how long ago
the melody of
this little song
started ringing out
I could have sworn I saw a thief
rustling
his bones in the alley

a mosquito's bite
ringing from his flesh
like prince's jewels
as it slurps the melody

I wanted to chat about
nothing again

to rustle through
and to find along a seam of
my pocket a match to strike
against night's shoulder

I wanted to hoist up
the air
a bit, like
a haystack that chokes

I leaned a short ladder against
tousled bristles
of the hayloft
and I climbed -
as I inhaled the haydust of the
milky stars, I inhaled
the matted hair of space

and I thought: why wake
a swarm of stretched out sounds
why, in this unending scuffle, try to trap
a marvelous Aeolian harmony
?

the frame of

the Great Bear's dipper has seven stars
there are five good senses on earth
the darkness
balloons and rings within
itself
before it grows and rings again

the hulking, unharnessed cart
sticks out across the universe's cliff
the ancient chaos of the hayloft
will start to tickle and twitch

tiring me with its cap
I wanted to unstitch

and
to shake

a sewn up sack
until
caraway seeds spill out

so the

rose-colored
knot of

blood,
the ringing
of these scorched grasses,

could be stumbled upon and stolen

across an age
a hayloft

until it cries but
a pant of powder

we rustle
scales that are not our own

we string
singing against the world's fur
together along a lyre, as if in a rush
to cover ourselves with a shaggy fleece

haymakers collect goldfinches
with
calluses softly reminiscent of a
coiled nest

I will break away from
these burning rows,
and I will return to my own sequence
of sounds

so the knot binding rose-colored blood
and the dry-handed ring of these grasses
will say farewell,
one growing firmer while the other
sets out for a transsense

dream.

Conclusion

A Stone

It is my hope that, coupled with my analysis, these creative translations have served to not only illuminate my own unique experience as a reader and translator of Tiutchev and Mandelstam, but to create further connections between the two poets that would not have existed otherwise. For example, in my creative translation of the Hayloft poems, I decided to combine the poems together, as I often found myself confusing the poems in writing my analysis, but I also wanted to create a unique amalgamation of the poems' imagery. Furthermore, my phonetic translation of Tiutchev's "Silentium!" represents another way of engaging the text. In the poem, Tiutchev notes the shortcomings of language and thought's instantaneous corruption when it leaves our lips, and to reflect such a phenomenon, I decided to use a phonetic translation, utterly distorting the meaning of the Russian, but preserving a semblance of the sound, what someone might hear through a thin wall. While we may hear what sounds to be one thing, one language, it can just as easily turn out to be something entirely different. My creative translation of "Видение" ("A Vision") has a different number of lines in each stanza to reflect the different number of syllables between the lines of the original Russian, to reflect both the chaotic imagery and the chaotic form of the poem. In this respect, it could be said that I am performing an action similar to what Mandelstam was just beginning to perform a century ago: in taking the retrospective material of Mandelstam and Tiutchev, I am inevitably constructing both of them into the scaffolding of my own poetics, as well.

My creative translation of Mandelstam's Pool poems could be said to be the culmination of this whole process: I am using words from only my translations of Tiutchev to fit the scheme of Mandelstam's poems. All three of us are dependent on one another, as a building is dependent on each of its stones. However, considering the nature of translation, the architecture I construct as a translator and poet will look entirely different from another's; in this respect, I hope my analysis gives some background as to why the buildings took the shape that they did.

In his first Hayloft poem, "Я не знаю с каких пор..." Mandelstam concludes with the lines:

Чтобы розовой крови связь,
Этих сухоньких трав звон,
Уворованная нашлась
Через век, сеновал, сон.

So the bond of rose-colored blood,
The ringing of these dry grasses,
Could be found stolen
Across an age, a hayloft, a dream.

I can only hope I proved to be an adequate thief.

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