The Faces (and Spaces) of Exile: A Parallel Case Study of the Late Works of Joseph Brodsky, Anna Akhmatova, and Karel Kryl

by
Miroslava N. Nikolova
B. A., Russian and Pscyhology, Bowdoin College, 2013
M.A., Slavic Studies, Brown University, 2017

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Slavic Studies at Brown University

Providence, Rhode Island
May 2020

This dissertation by Miroslava N. Nikolova is accepted in its present form

by the Department of Slavic Studies as satisfying the

dissertation requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Date_____ _____

Vladimir Golstein, Advisor

Recommended to the Graduate Council

Date_____ _____

Masako Fidler, Reader

Date_____ _____

Fabrizio Fenghi, Reader

Date_____ _____

Andrew Campbell, Dean of the Graduate School

CURRICULUM VITAE

Miroslava graduated from the American College of Sofia (Bulgaria) in 2009 and completed her Bachelor of Arts degree in Russian and Psychology with *cum laude* honors at Bowdoin College in 2009. She then completed her Master of Arts degree in Slavic Studies at Brown University in 2017. Miroslava is a co-author of the article "Socialist Wallpaper: The Culture of Everyday Life and the Committee of the Bulgarian Women's Movement, 1968-1990" published in *Social Politics* in 2015. Miroslava was a finalist in the Brown University Graduate School's *Research Matters* series in 2019. She has four years of Russian and Czech language teaching experience at various levels at Brown.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the patient and dedicated guidance of my advisor, Prof. Vladimir Golstein, as well as the committee members, Prof. Masako Fidler and Prof. Fabrizio Fenghi. Prof. Golstein's seminar on the poetry of the Russian Silver Age was a formative moment in the creation of this work. I am especially indebted to Prof. Fidler for her help with the translations from Czech as well as her support of my pursuit of the study of the Czech language. I am further grateful to each and every faculty member of the Department of Slavic Studies at Brown University for their mentorship during the last six years. Finally, I would like to thank my families in Bulgaria and Maine for being an integral part of this academic journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Shortly before formally accepting the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1987, the former Soviet writer Joseph Brodsky attended a conference in Vienna on the topic of literature in exile. By then the poet had been living in exile for almost two decades, splitting his time between the United States and sojourns in Europe, between teaching at US universities and writing. As Brodsky started his speech at the Vienna conference, he asked his audience to pause for a moment in order to acknowledge those who had not been able to attend. "As we gather here, in this attractive and well-lit room, on this cold December evening, to discuss the plight of the writer in exile, let us pause for a minute and imagine some of those who, quite naturally, didn't make it to this room" (Brodsky "The Condition We Call Exile"). Brodsky went on to enumerate the types of people, journeys, and fates that comprise the diverse mosaic of the exilic condition. Turkish gastarbeiters in West Germany, Vietnamese refugees on boats in high seas, Mexicans crawling through the deserts of California, Ethiopians fleeing persecution on foot… The poet acknowledged the immense privilege of the condition of writers in exile before he delivered the rest of his essay on the challenges, privileges, and responsibilities of these same writers.

Brodsky's words still ring powerfully true today. Exile has continued to be a defining plight for large groups of people across the world. It seems that little has changed since that evening in December in 1987 when the poet delivered his speech in Vienna. Despite the high hopes for new beginnings, peace, and collaboration across nations, the 21st century has not

brought relief or any solutions to the humanitarian crises of displacement plaguing various parts of the world. If anything, such crises seem to have deepened. According to information provided by the United Nations Refugee Agency, there were 70.8 million people in the world who had been forcibly displaced from their homes by the end of 2018 ("Refugee Statistics"). This, according to the agency, is the highest number of displaced people on record (ibid.). Moreover, according to the statistics, one person becomes displaced on average every two seconds (ibid.). It was with this in mind, along with Brodsky's belief expressed in the Vienna speech that literature can provide a coping mechanism and help make such circumstances more bearable, that this dissertation came into being. The questions that spurred the dissertation's creation relate to the types of exile faced by writers, the exploration of its different faces as well as the kinds of places and spaces that figure prominently in the works of exiled writers. How does the poetic voice of an exiled artist cope with the loss of place? What kind of spaces does this voice construct on the poetic stage? Are there any discernible trends and patterns that can be observed?

As Edward Said reminds readers in one of his seminal essays, "Reflections on Exile", the exilic condition is ubiquitous in the modern age and far from a romanticized or privileged state for one to experience. Said draws a differentiating line, which plays a substantial role for the purposes of this analysis, between reading literature of exile and interacting closely with writers in exile: "To see a poet in exile - as opposed to reading the poetry of exile - is to see exile's antinomies embodied and endured with a unique intensity" ("Reflections on Exile" 174). This renders one of the foundational points of departure for the dissertation - questions of exile on both a biographical plane and that of artistic depictions of space and place in the works of Joseph Brodsky, Anna Akhmatova, and Karel Kryl. While a biographical interpretive lens in the

analysis of the topoi delineated in the poems of the three writers would be overly simplistic, it provides a dimension that is key to the overall structure of the analysis. Each of the three writers experienced a unique variation of the exilic condition and each approached the construction of space in their works differently. The focal question of this analysis, therefore, touches on the ways in which the poetic voices of the three authors living in various states of exile coped with the loss of place by way of creating space on the poetic stage of their works. What kind of places were constructed in the poetic pieces of Brodsky, Akhmatova, and Kryl? Were there any tendencies or affinities for particular types of topoi and locales? Did the poetic voices try to fully inhabit and claim the spaces of the poems or did they try to escape them?

Exile and place thus share an inextricable and complex connection both on a conceptual and philosophical level and as a lived condition. As Said states simply, being an exile is tantamount to being "always out of place" (180). That perhaps captures the most essential features of the condition itself - a displacement of a kind or an irretrievable loss of place. Furthermore, the scholar distinguishes between the nuances of various related terms and labels such as emigres, expatriates, and refugees. As Said points out, the idea of an exile brings a connotation of solitude and a certain level of spirituality that is almost intrinsic to the condition itself (181). Moreover, the loss of place an exile experiences - unlike an expatriate, for instance - is beyond the exile's choice. One is either born into the condition or forced into it. Said further outlines the defining aspects of expatriates (who live in a different country by choice), refugees (a distinctly 20th-century phenomenon) as well as emigres (a category of a more ambiguous and broader definition scope since anyone living in a foreign place regardless of agency fits in it).

Said's methodical and thorough distinction between the categories of displacement overall serves as a useful frame of reference for this analysis.

While Said's contemplations on exile are not as exhaustively and systematically developed as some of his other theoretical frames (in fact, the essay's title accurately captures their nature -- reflections, rather than a fully developed theory of any kind), they render a productive starting point for this analysis. In fact, the contemplations of the author are encompassing all fundamental pieces of this work: both exile as a complicated state that escapes simple objectification or romanticization and the underpinning and implicit notion that space and its loss is crucial to exile. It is precisely this loss of space, displacement, and the impossibility of a potential return to the lost topos, that lies at the heart of the personal and artistic development of the authors studied in this work.

In the first chapter, the investigative focus will be concentrated on the life and works of the Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky himself. Long considered a figure of exile and displacement, Brodsky's own perception of his life circumstances might have differed from the image of the struggling exiled artist. Space and place in Brodsky's oeuvre both in the early years of his artistic development as well as following his expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1972 will be examined by way of close reading of several texts. A tendency to depict wide open spaces, horizons and vast liminal topoi such as the ocean will be traced in these poems. Moreover, a pattern of centrifugal motion (moving away from a gravitational center) will be investigated in Brodsky's works. In the second chapter, the analytic spotlight will be shifted to one of Brodsky's early mentors, the Silver Age poet Anna Akhmatova. While Akhmatova is rarely considered an exiled writer, a case will be made that she did experience a different kind of exile, an internal one. In

some ways, this sense of limitations and restrictions could be seen on the poetic level in the frequent appearance of small, circumscribing and claustrophobic spaces in her works.

The third chapter grapples with the complex artistic interaction and potential influence between Brodsky and Akhmatova, an early mentor, whose artistic influence Brodsky denied. Nonetheless, the presence of palpable opposing spatial predilections and aesthetic sensibilities in the pieces of the two writers proves fertile ground for the investigation of a possible (to use Harold Bloom's terminology) tessera-like interaction between them. Finally, the fourth chapter of this dissertation aims to provide a broader Slavic contextual background with a focus on the eternal exile Karel Kryl, a Czechoslovak protest singer and songwriter who spent most of his life living in exile in Munich. The exploration of Kryl's treatment of space and place in various songs aligns with the general purpose of this dissertation to investigate the diversity of exilic conditions and their potential reflections on an artistic and textual level.

Nevertheless, in order to engage with these questions in a well informed and analytic manner, a detour through the philosophy and theoretical frameworks on space and place needs to be undertaken first.

HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT ON SPACE AND PLACE

Before we formally begin the critical exploration of space, place as well as the varying spatial and kinetic poetics of the three aforementioned Slavic authors, we shall take a moment to distinguish a lexical nuance and clarify some of the terms that will be used. The treatise of the French philosopher Michel Certeau *The Practice of Everyday Lif*e will be crucial as it renders a framework that will mold the specific lexical and semiotic definitions that will be incorporated into this dissertation. In his investigative work that touches on a range of philosophical subjects

with regards to everyday life from space and place to urban locales and storytelling, Certeau makes a useful differentiation between the terms space and place at the outset. This differentiation will be of particular use to the analysis of Russian and Czech texts presented later on in the dissertation. According to the French thinker, place is a mere configuration or arrangement between fixed and concrete elements. It inherently suggests stability, localizations, and anchoring. On the other hand, space is seen as a more fluid concept - in concordance with Foucault's conceptualization of space - a conglomeration of "vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables" (Certeau 117). Intersections, interactions and moving elements through porous thresholds and boundaries are fundamental to the understanding of the broader category of space as envisioned by Certeau. As Certeau elaborates further, space is an effect of the interaction of various mobile pieces.

This conceptualization and differentiation between elements like space and place resonate further with the philosophical treatise of the American phenomenologist Edward Casey. In his book *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*, Casey outlines a distinction between the two terms that reverberates with Certeau's line of thought. In Casey's conceptual framework, space is "something delimited and open-ended" (Casey 77). Casey further elaborates on the differences between place (which is bound and localized, marked by boundaries and limits) as opposed to an infinite and encompassing space. The scholar then goes on to trace the transformations of the history of space from a natural and scientific concept dating back to the Ancient Greeks to a more religious and theological term marked by an inextricable divine element as frequently embodied by God in Christian theology. Casey's philosophical and historical investigation of the

changing and evolving positions in Continental thought occupied by space and place is perhaps the most encompassing one.

Moreover, in a previous book on the topic published several years prior to *The Fate of Place*, Casey - who up until that point had written mostly on philosophical questions regarding phenomenology and cognitive processes such as perception and imagination - touched on yet another crucial aspect of the matter of place - its loss. The first few chapters in the book *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* Casey touches on questions of implacement, displacement, and even how place could be measured with precision. The philosopher touches on the history of navigation and exploration as well as the challenges voyagers faced with regards to determining the position of a ship or an expedition in the still uncharted parts of the world or in the disorienting vastness of oceans. The historical overview, moreover, goes as far back as Ancient Greece and the disagreements between the Atomists and their ideas emphasizing the presence of the void (non-place) to more contemporary ontological and epistemological arguments that place heavier emphasis on time[1], rather than space; perhaps the only exception here is Heidegger who renders a substantial springing board for Casey's own analysis.

Casey's starting point in his detailed analytic journey encapsulates questions of belonging and location that are a point of departure for this dissertation as well. As the philosopher points out, the ontology of human existence is so intimately connected to place that its loss evokes panic and emotional turmoil. Feelings of homesickness, nostalgia, disorientation, and even panic

[1] " 'Time will tell': so we say, and so we believe, in the modern era. This era, extending from Galileo and Descartes to Husserl and Heidegger, belongs to time, the time when Time came into its own [...] lives are grasped and ordered in terms of time. Scheduled and overscheduled, we look to the clock or the calendar for guidance and solace, even judgment!" (Casey "Implacement" 6-7)

are imminent. This is captured on a lexical plane in various languages such as Greek where the word *atopos* (that literally translates to "no place") denotes meanings of bizarreness and strangeness. This is evident also in cited examples by Casey of forced relocations such as that experienced by the Navajo people in Arizona. Studies that traced the overall well-being of the displaced people found increased rates of depression, alcoholism, and suicide among them (Casey 35). The tragedy of displacement bears a dual nature for the Navajo people, as the philosopher points out: on the one hand, they lose their home topoi (elements of their settlements such as a home-dwelling as well as communal structures of significance that serve as gathering places for ceremonies and customs). Additionally, the people lose a whole region and a land that was inextricably linked to their self-perception. Such lasting negative ramifications of displacement are not entirely dissimilar to the ones experienced by exiles like Brodsky, Kryl, and, even, perhaps Akhmatova.

The philosopher further draws a demarcating line between concepts such as implacement and displacement, each of which is crucial for this analysis and exploration of the topological aspects of the Slavic poetic context in the 20th century. Implacement is viewed by the American thinker as a process, usually cultural, that is ongoing and dynamic with a certain element of experimentality (Casey). To a certain degree, implacement is an appropriating process - cultures acquire control and defining power of their natural settings, creating settlements and naming them. Systems of navigation are developed to help voyagers orient themselves in the vast natural void of the ocean, methods of mapping spring up to systematize the human's strive to know its surroundings. This process of implacement is, in certain ways, reminiscent of the creation of space on the poetic stage: the lyrical I acquires control and structures its surroundings by way of

creating space and delineating concrete places. An echo of this idea could also be seen in one of Brodsky's late poems "Robinsonade" (Appendix I, 8) that will be analyzed later on.

Displacement, on the other hand, is the removal of a person or a culture and distancing from one's specific place. While Casey does not explicitly touch on the issue of exile, the chapter on displacement reverberates with it and provides a useful theoretical prism, through which exile can be conceptualized. Another notable line of thought presented by Casey is the suggestion that even place itself can be a fluid concept - that which occurs between a larger space, or a landscape and the body of the perceiving subject. This, too, is crucial to the poetic analysis of space and place in Slavic poetry, especially as the concrete topoi that will be explored are actively created and negotiated by the poetic voices of each piece.

More specifically, the chapters of this dissertation aim to explore the ways in which concrete poetic places contribute to a broader overall spatial aesthetic that varies significantly between poets in exile of the 20th-century Slavic context. On the basis of thorough analysis of concrete places constructed in the poems of the three writers, a poetic and aesthetic conclusion about how the authors create space will be formed. The crux of each chapter will be the detailed primary analysis of the kinds of physical places - houses, rooms, tanks, forests, islands, hotels, mountains, fields, oceans, sky horizons, etc. - that are predominant in the oeuvre of each of the three authors. Once the physical topoi constructed by the poetic voices have been presented and examined, the analytic focus will be turned to the more mechanical and formal aspects of the poems - prosody (meters, rhyming schemes), poetic structure, trope choices, parallelisms, syntaxis, lexical and morphological choices. Based on these two general branches of analysis, a more abstract spatial argument will emerge.

Michel Foucault posited in his essay on utopias and heterotopias from 1967 that, while the 19th century was concerned with matters of time and history, the 20th-century's anxiety is predominantly bound to questions of space and place. Foucault further developed his own history of space, anchoring its starting point in the Middle Ages (unlike Casey whose treatise went all the way back to the times of Ancient Greece) and the medieval categorizations of space such as sacred, profane, open, closed and protected, supercelestial and terrestrial. The groundbreaking discovery of Galileo Galilei that the Earth revolves around the Sun rather than the other way around, is thus seen by the French thinker as revolutionary due to its implicit suggestion that "an infinite and infinitely open space" exists in which all pre-existing spatial notions and systematic categorizations dissolved (Foucault 1). Space thus became an extension, rather than a static localization and a fluid and dynamic notion that necessitates descriptions of its elements and building blocks rather than a single unified location (Foucault).

Additionally, Foucault's contemplations on heterotopias might render a useful theoretical grounding and philosophical dimension against which to construct and explore concepts such as exile that are an inextricable part of the artistic trajectories of the poets that will be analyzed in this dissertation. The French philosopher develops his ideas on heterotopia along five different and parallel principles or axes that describe this type of ambivalent space. The overarching definition of a heterotopia is an arrangement that is real (as opposed to a utopia, for example, that is an arrangement without a real manifestation) and constructed by society (or a group or a culture) that bears elements of otherness. Heterotopias can be found on the fringe of a society (rather than at its center), carrying an element of "contra" and overturning certain social expectations or agreed-upon orders. Foucault suggests spaces like cemeteries, brothels, theater

stages, gardens, and colonies fit the concept of a heterotopia. Among the other principles governing the idea of a heterotopia is the notion that heterotopias frequently juxtapose contradictory spaces, their fragmentary nature, link to heterochronisms and time in general (as each heterotopia is bound to and representative of a particular moment of time) as well as its representative, yet illusory nature (Foucault).

Thus, Foucault's complex ideas are relevant and indispensary to this analysis in a two-fold manner. First, Foucault's acknowledgement that space is a dynamic and changeable concept that cannot be pinned down to a singular localization or static definition is an underlying principle of the understanding of poetic space and its variations in the poetry of various authors in the Slavic contexts in this dissertation. A ramification of this idea will be investigated a bit later in this introduction with regard to the philosophical frameworks of other European and American thinkers of the 20th century. Moreover, Foucault's idea of heterotopia and its guiding principles are particularly relevant to not only the idea of exile but to the process of poetic creation of space and place. The topological setting of a poem fits the philosopher's description of a heterotopia as a constructed "other" space despite its immaterial and poetic dimensions. Even though a poem does not yield a palpable physical stage in the same way a theatrical production might, the poetic topos is not too different from the reflection of a landscape in a mirror (considered by the philosopher a prime example of heterotopia). Additionally, the poetic stage is actively constructed by the poet in the same way a heterotopia is built by a society, community or a culture, a space that is a product of creative intent and planning.

Furthermore, the state of exile that all three of the artists that will be the subject of this dissertation experienced is tantamount to a lived heterotopia. The Russian poet Joseph Brodsky

and the Czechoslovak singer-songwriter and radio host Karel Kryl both spent decades of their adult lives living in foreign countries. Brodsky was given the choice to desert the Soviet Union in 1972 and, after a few sojourns in several different places, permanently moved to the United States. Karel Kryl chose rather spontaneously to stay in West Germany after a musical tour in 1969, thus embarking on a life of voluntary exile for over two decades. Both artists found themselves in new settings and cultures that bore elements of their respective homelands, but each - especially Brodsky - experienced substantial culture shock and adaptation process to their adoptive land. For the individual artists, the new homes and social and cultural institutions they encountered, resonated with the idea of a heterotopia - a place that resembles one's society, but also carries strong elements of otherness and estrangement.

Even writers like Anna Akhmatova, who was never physically expelled from the Soviet Union but rather remained suspended in a state of inner exile, could be argued to have experienced a heterotopia of a kind. The poetess's denouncement and dismissal from the official state-sanctioned literary stage of the Soviet Union meant that she had to carve out new niches for herself and adapt them to her needs. In the case of Akhmatova, along with other persecuted writers of the time, that meant turning her home into a residence, working and creative space as well as a place to receive a multitude of visitors, including young poetic figures like Brodsky and his friends.

Finally, the analysis in the following chapters would not be possible without a brief overview of the philosophical treatises on space and place that are especially applicable to the context of literature and literary studies. Authors such as Gaston Bachelard and Henri Lefebvre become indispensable with regards to that aspect of the critical investigation. Adding to the

overview of French critical thought, the philosophical meditations of the thinker Gaston Bachelard are particularly suitable and productive to the exploration of space and place in this dissertation. Bachelard crafted his *Poetics of Space* toward the end of his prolific philosophical and teaching career in 1957. Of humble countryside origins, the French scholar gradually established himself as a respected philosopher of science and authored over thirteen volumes on the subject with a focus on physics and critique of scientific reason. As Etienne Gilson mentions in his foreword to the Beacon Press translated edition of the *Poetics of Space*, however, Bachelard shifted his analytic attention to a different kind of line of philosophical thought. After an unexpected (and as deemed by Gilson "unorthodox") publication entitled *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, the philosopher seemed to have become more interested in the philosophy of artistic and poetic creation, rather than precise or more rational and rigidly defined science.

Bachelard's conceptualization of the ontology and phenomenology of space has been applied to various fields and concrete critical projects - from literary studies to computer science to education and liberal arts research. The breadth and applicability of the ideas across disciplines make them useful for this particular analysis of poetic space in the works of Anna Akhmatova, Joseph Brodsky, and Karel Kryl as well. While the theoretical skeleton of Bachelard's treatise, which touches on the ontological and phenomenological aspects of a poetic image, as well as its perception by the philosopher as a dynamic and new entity rather than a token of a past philosophy or aesthetic[2], remains more tangential to the focus of this analysis, Bachelard's specific interpretations and formulations on concrete spatial poetic images will be of

[2] Bachelard relies substantially on the idea of reverberation propounded by the phenomenologist Eugene Minkowski who emphasized the temporal aspect of existence over the spatial one (as suggested by Gilson) and focused on an image's property of reverberation as a central characteristic of poetry. Reverberation (or the sonority, resonance of an image inside a subject's mind and perception) is a concept that Bachelard espouses and develops further as well.

substantial weight in the primary poetic analysis of the texts. For instance, Bachelard provides a thorough and detailed analysis and conceptualization of images such as corners, shells, cabinets, cellars, and attics. These specific elements will be encountered in the poems analyzed in this chapter.

Of particular relevance with regards to Akhmatova's centripetal poetics of space, for instance, are Bachelard's ideas on the house. Using Baudelaire's poetry as a springing board, Bachelard crafts a critical analysis of the frequent image of a house (especially in a winter setting) as a mechanism to create a certain dialectic. The world beyond the walls of the house, especially when engulfed and almost negated by a white snowy cover, becomes a non-subject (a non-house), a concentrated image of the universe surrounding the house and a contrast to everything the house represents (Bachelard). Bachelard further elaborates that due to the uniform representation of the external world, the inner space of the house tends to be marked by a level of details that is multiplied and experienced more intensely. The contrast between the intimate interior world and a more dynamic and threatening external one (Bachelard specifically focuses on images of houses set in hostile weather conditions and landscapes dominated by snow, storms, or rain in the oeuvre of writers such as Baudelaire, Thoreau, Rilke, and Spyridaki) creates a palpable contrast. Such dialectics and binary categories, despite Bachelard's own refusal to adhere to them, could be seen as generators of potent tension that serves as a creative poetic force and organizing principle that drives the poem forward.

Another building block of Bachelard's analysis that would provide a set of potential analytic lenses for this dissertation regarding Akhmatova, Brodsky and, especially, Kryl with his ambiguous and destabilized notions of space, is the chapter "The Dialectics of Outside and

Inside". The first section of the chapter lays out the theoretical and philosophical background with regards to the dialectic categories. As Bachelard points out at the start of his meditations, the dichotomy inside-outside instantly "confers spatiality upon thought' (212). The French philosopher seems distrustful of such clear demarcations that render a sharp and simple contrast between the two categories (in and out). Bachelard further explores the problems with such geometric simplification as well as the issues of asymmetry that are inherent to a conceptualization of the here/inside category as concrete while the there/outside one as vast and all-encompassing. Bachelard then analyses concrete examples of poetry by Jean Pellerin, Christian Senechal, Henri Michaux and others.

Bachelard's nuanced and intricate critical approach to the dialectics of in and out advocates for a destabilized approach that blurs the boundaries between clear-cut binaries. While, as the author himself explicitly describes, Bachelard shows a predilection to avoiding formulaic conclusions, he nevertheless distills one of his most central arguments in a rather aphoristic-like statement: " [...] we could conclude the following formula: man is half-open being" (Bachelard 222). The philosopher overthrows any short cuts and geometric simplicities in such dialectics, leaving behind the idea that poetry should be circumscribed by rigid demarcations and binaries. This line of thought seems to be prevalent in other chapters of the treatise by Bachelard, such as "House". This transcendance of categorizations and binding, absolutist geometric demarcations (here-there, in-out, the being-the universe) will prove to be especially applicable to the artistic oeuvre of figures like Joseph Brodsky (who shows a tendency to go beyond restraining physical spaces that are characterized by their geometric limitations) as well as the Czechoslovak singer-songwriter Karel Kryl.

Bachelard's elaborations on the distinguishing features between the philosophy of science and the philosophy of art and poetry provide further philosophical grounding for the third chapter of this dissertation that explores the complex nuances and potential influences between the poetic aesthetics of Akhmatova and Brodsky. As the philosopher establishes, "whereas philosophical reflection applied to scientific thinking elaborated over a long period of time requires any new idea to become integrated in a body of tested ideas, even though this body of ideas be subjected to profound change by the new idea [...], the philosophy of poetry must acknowledge that the poetic act has no past, at least no recent past, in which its preparation and appearance could be followed" (Bachelard *Poetics of Space* xi).

Perhaps the most encompassing and thorough critical exploration of space and its scholastic analyses throughout the centuries can be found in the introduction to Henri Lefebvre's work *The Production of Space*. The French philosopher's opening words to his own book provide an overview of the historical scientific and philosophical approaches to space as well as an attempt to craft a new analytic framework, a "science of space" (Lefebvre 7). The French philosopher - whose theoretical orientation was mostly grounded in Marxist thought - voices an opinion that most attempts in both scientific and philosophical fields have failed to provide an adequate theory of space that is not simply descriptive or fragmentary and incomplete in its scope. As he posits, " as for the above-mentioned sections and fragments, they range from the ill-defined to the undefined - and thence, for that matter, to the undefinable" Lefebvre conceptualizes the history of the theory on space as one that originated in the philosophical realm and was then revised by mathematicians in a very specialized way that cannot be applied to other contexts.

One of Lefebvre's main analytic goals, therefore, was to create a more unified and exhaustive theory of space - in all of its scientific, mathematical, social and technical variations. Lefebvre's theoretical mission was further firmly and inextricably grounded in Marxism, which plays a substantial role in his arguments. While the political, ideological and Marxist veins of Lefebvre's theory remain impertinent to the purposes of this literary analysis, the French philosopher's overarching argument is one that will be implicitly but consistently applied to the poetic critique of Akhmatova, Brodsky, and Kryl's pieces. Moreover, despite the undeniable bond between Lefebvre's theory and the specific mechanisms propounded by Marxism with regards to production, the main thesis of the philosopher is still applicable to other analyses, such as literary ones, for instance. The French thinker succeeds in the goal that he sets out in the introduction of his treatise to create a more unified, inclusive, and universally applicable theory of space.

Of primary concern for the purposes of this dissertation will be Lefebvre's distilled main argument that "every social space is the outcome of a process with many aspects and many contributing currents, signifying and non-signifying, perceived and directly experienced, practical and theoretical" (Lefebvre 110). In other words, social spaces - and other more abstract spaces - are a result of a creative process, therefore rendering a product of a kind. This overarching argument is further ramified into a theoretical triad of concepts: spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces (33). All of these terms will be transposed on the poetic plane in the topological analysis of spaces and places in the poems of the three writers. Lefebvre's idea that a space is an active and fluid construct is an underlying foundation

to this analysis that focuses on the ways in which poetic places are crafted by the poetic voices of writers in exile.

Each chapter will touch on both the biographical circumstances of the writers as well as an overview of the existing critical literature on topics of exile and space in their specific works. The chapters will then focus primarily on literary analysis of concrete physical topoi created by the poetical voices as well as the movement of the poetic voices through these spaces. This analysis will be on the level of textual content as well as form. Thus, this analysis will strive to create a systematic overview of the varied types of spatiality that emerge as a persistent poetic thread in the pieces of Joseph Brodsky, Anna Akhmatova, and Karel Kryl.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bachelard, Gaston. *Poetics of Space*. Penguin Classics: United Kingdom 2014. Print.

Casey, Edward. *Getting Back Into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World (Studies in Continental Thought)*. Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN 2009. Print.

Casey, Edward. "Part II: From Place to Space. Interlude." *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA 2014. Electronic.

Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press: Berkeley, CA 2011. Print.

Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* October 1984. Trans. Jay Miskowiec. Electronic.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Blackwell Publishing: Oxford, UK 1974. Print.

"Refugee Statistics." *UN Refugees*. *unrefugees.org*. 2019. Electronic.

Said, Edward. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA 2000. Print.

CHAPTER I

Space, Place, and Centrifugality in the Works of Joseph Brodsky

> "[Time] is the only thing in the world. It's much more interesting than space, for instance. Because space is a thing, whereas time is an idea about things, about the Thing."[1]

Time and questions of temporality, transience and legacy occupy a substantial place in the poetic oeuvre of Joseph Brodsky. Noted both by scholars and the writer himself, temporal matters render a focal point of interest and fascination for the exiled poet; these themes and motifs are especially palpable in the more metaphysical poems of Brodsky such as "Elegy for John Donne". As the scholar David McFadyen elaborates in the introduction to his study of Brodsky as an inheritor of a baroque aesthetic sensibility, "Enormous changes take place in his corpus as it undergoes the constant search for ontological reference points. The power of self-determination in the poet's work is constantly at odds with his views on the inevitable passage of time..." (*Joseph Brodsky and the Baroque* 5). In other words, McFadyen views Brodsky's poetic conceptualization of time as a robust and unforgiving metaphysical force as central to the tension that generates the development of the writer's trajectory.

While temporal conflicts and metaphysical threads are undoubtedly central to Brodsky's poetic register, another element, that of space, remains less studied though just as ubiquitous as time with regards to Brodsky's oeuvre. As Brodsky himself suggests in an interview with David Burch and Eva Chin published in Cynthia Haven's collection of interviews with him, he

[1] Brodsky *Conversations* 59.

considered space a much less interesting concept, merely a physical entity, "a thing" (59). Despite such commentary, however, space and place comprise key elements in the poetry of the exiled writer. The purpose of this chapter is thus two-fold: on the one hand, it aims to examine in more depth the critical reception of Brodsky, especially with regards to his status as a poet of and in exile. While many scholars have liberally applied the categorical label of exile and have frequently defined Brodsky and his poetic output by it, few have actually focused on and investigated exactly what exile might mean in the case of the Nobel laureate (or how exile could - if at all - translate into his poetry). On the other hand, the analytical focus of this chapter remains anchored on spatiality, which will be explored by way of close critical reading of several pieces by Brodsky.

The poems that will be investigated run the gamut with regards to their positioning within the poetic trajectory of the writer. The first poems incorporated into this chapter are from Brodsky's earliest years while he was still in Leningrad; they are then followed by a non-chronological analysis of poems from the following decades, up until the very final year of the poet's life. Some of the poems are well-known and regarded by the general public and critics alike and others are uncollected and less prominent pieces. Some encompass longer poetic forms, while others are poetic miniatures. Poetic space and the vectors of motion through it are explored both on the level of concrete poetic images and places found in the poems (e.g., cities, islands, forests), as well as in the plane of the perspective of the lyrical I and its positioning within the poetic microcosm (e.g., above and beyond the poetic stage vs. within its crevice).

While Brodsky's biography is an important piece of the overall analytic puzzle and adds a circumstantial and historical dimension that is necessary to the understanding of the author's poetic and prosaic works (after all, many of his poems are inspired by places that were of personal

significance to him), only a brief summary of it will be included in this chapter. Iosif Aleksandrovich Brodsky was born in 1940 in Leningrad to a family of a photojournalist (and a naval officer during the Second World War) and a translator. The young future poet and Nobel Prize laureate changed schools several times and failed to complete his secondary education. After the eighth grade, Brodsky first worked in a factory and later joined a geological expedition and traveled to various places within the USSR such as Yakutia and parts of Kazakhstan. He was a self-taught poet and writer and started writing verse in his adolescence.

In the early 1960's, Brodsky's name was already well known among the informal literary and poetic circles of Leningrad. The poet had partaken in poetry tournaments and, by way of his peer and fellow poet Yevgeny Rein, he had already met figures such as Anna Akhmatova and had become part of her regular visitors alongside other young talents like Anatoly Naiman and Dmitry Bobyshev. Akhmatova recognized the talent of the young poet and was very supportive of his poetic endeavors (Naiman). Furthermore, the young Brodsky had found his muse in the figure of the artist Marina Basmanova (ibid.). Gradually, however, the attention of the state was drawn to the young poetic talent who had juggled various professional duties without remaining dedicated to one for long. After a series of unfortunate coincidences and events in the poet's life, including a deep disappointment in his personal life (due to Basmanova's affair with Dmitry Bobyshev; although Basmanova would later give birth to Brodsky's son before ending their relationship for good), public denouncement for social parasitism, mandatory stays at a mental health hospital, two arrests, a sentence that exiled him to the north for a year and a half (to the village of Norenskaya[2]),

[2] Although, as Keith Gessen by way of Lev Loseff, points out, Brodsky's sojourn and labor in Norenskaya were a far cry from a gulag sentence. If anything, the poet enjoyed his time there and frequently received visitors.

and several trials, Brodsky was given three weeks in order to permanently leave the Soviet Union in 1972 and to renounce his Soviet citizenship.

Even the initial stages of the poet's permanent exile, however, were marked by auspicious circumstances for his professional trajectory (Gessen, "The Gift"). Brodsky went to Vienna where he was able to meet with W.H. Auden with the help of his friend Carl Proffer (founder of the Ardis publishing house) who also helped him settle in Michigan after the poet moved to the States (Gessen). In the States, Brodsky lived in Michigan and later in New York and continued to write in Russian as well as in his adoptive English (ibid.). Teaching at institutions like the University of Michigan and Mount Holyoke college, working for Ardis, writing and editing were a few of his primary occupations while in exile. Brodsky was able to establish himself as a renowned and respected writer in the West (even though none of his work was published in the Soviet Union after 1972, something that he was acutely aware of) and he received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1987. Brodsky died in 1996; he had never been able to revisit his native Russia, although there might have been tentative projects to help him return incognito to St. Petersburg in the 1990's (Gessen, Naiman).

Even the exiled writer acknowledged that his condition and life circumstances could not be compared to that of millions of voiceless and faceless refugees and exiles who faced greater dangers than him and his fellow emigre writers.[3] "Whatever the proper name for these people, whatever their motives, origins, and destinations, whatever their impact on the societies which they abandon and to which they come may amount to—one thing is absolutely clear: they make it very difficult to talk about the plight of the writer in exile with a straight face," astutely pointed out

[3] The writer eloquently expressed that sentiment in his remarks ("The Condition We Call Exile") at the conference of Literature in Exile in 1987 in Vienna, a few days before he accepted the Nobel Prize in Stockholm.

Brodsky. However, his status as that of a persecuted and exiled artist remained an integral part of both the public and critical perception of him and his poetry. As Anatoly Naiman observed in an article for the *London Review of Books*, "there was in Russia a strong tendency to oversimplify his life, to reduce it to an outline, and at the same time to mythologise it [...] Thus Brodsky became the man who was arrested, was exiled to the North, and was then sent abroad" (Naiman).

Brodsky certainly did not consider himself a poet of exile and that remained a constant throughout his life post-1972. During an interview given to the Ghent Quarter in 1975, for example, Jane Ellen Glasser asked the poet whether the "darkness, [...] anguish, [...] pain suffered in silence" in his poetic works was the pain of a soul in exile or a symptom of a broader, more existential human condition. The poet was laconic in his response, noting it was "the latter" (*Joseph Brodsky Conversations*, Cynthia L. Haven 44). He maintained a similarly detached attitude throughout the interview, noting that nothing really "drove" him to start writing poetry, but that he "just liked to do it - writing - and when you're doing that for two, three, four years, you're carrying on partly because of your desire to do it, partly because of your inertia" (Glasser in Haven 41). While Brodsky did not consider poetry and writing a special calling or vocation for himself, he also expressed skepticism regarding the possibility of teaching someone how to write. His belief was that while one can be taught the technical approaches and tricks to poetry, one cannot simply be taught how to write poetry as part of the process was "some kind of divine intervention" (138).

As Anatoly Naiman recalls in his article "Memories of Brodsky", Brodsky had always possessed an assertive nature. Naiman propounds that his fellow Akhmatova orphan had changed little while in exile (both internal, within the USSR, and in the States); if anything, fame and recognition had rendered the Petersburg poet less vocal and had softened him up a bit. In his

earlier years, in Naiman's view, Brodsky had to prove himself. The scholar and diplomat Isaiah Berlin echoed Naiman's thought that Brodsky had changed little in exile; Berlin's view (as recalled by Naiman) was that Brodsky's "Akhmatova's period" was perhaps the most formative part of his professional trajectory, a sentiment that Brodsky might not have agreed with, as shall be shown later in this dissertation. Naiman recalls the loud and dominant manner in which his friend read out his poems in his youth. As Naiman elaborates, "it was the same when he was reciting, or more often roaring out his poems: he wanted first and foremost to overwhelm whoever was listening, to carry people away" ("Memories of Brodsky"). Naiman further suggests that Brodsky's primary method of achieving this was sound and the melodic, euphonic qualities of his poems. Nevertheless, such a tendency to "carry away" one's audience could perhaps be discovered and traced on the plane of spatiality as well. Brodsky did not utilize only the aural characteristics and features of his pieces, he actively constructed poetic stages and spaces that were expansive and overwhelming.

Brodsky's take on the situation in the Soviet Union and whether he would have liked to return is another relevant biographical piece of this analytic puzzle, especially with regards to the parallels or lack thereof between art and life. While it could be posited that the centrifugal impetus in the poet's works is a direct reflection of his own life circumstances, such claims might prove to be an oversimplification that fails to capture the more substantial and artistic aspects of spatiality and motion tendencies in Brodsky's poetry. Brodsky himself never completely jettisoned the idea of return to Leningrad - this makes for an especially convincing argument, even on a purely biographical and circumstantial level, that Brodsky's poetic tendencies in his pieces (and the frequent motif of an impossibility of return of the poetic figure that will be seen and discussed later

on in more detail) were independent of the autobiographical circumstances the artist himself was going through.

An interview from 1978 for the *Iowa Review*, for instance, touched on a variety of artistic and personal questions. One of the questions Brodsky was asked was whether he would like to return to Russia[4] some day, to which the poet gave an affirmative response. Moreover, Brodsky stressed the importance of having his poetry published in the Soviet Union as a condition to his return - "I would go there on one condition [...] that all my work would have to be published. Then I would like to return there and live the same life as I did. If something like that happens… if I am going back… I would like to bring some kind of change within this business of poetry" (Haven 51). Brodsky was not completely against the idea of going back. Furthermore, he showed a deep and genuine concern with his artistic legacy in his motherland, expressing an interest in not only going back, but also having the privilege of being a published author. While he then stated that such a prospect (of change in the poetic scene and tradition in the Soviet Union) seems impossible, he still sounded certain in his expressed interest to go back to his native land.

This in and of itself hints at the lack of direct parallels between the poet's own ontological and biographic situation and the way space unravels in his poetic pieces. Even if one were to engage in a more superfluous investigation of the imprints of an artist's life on specific poems written at its key moments, one could not find direct parallels. Brodsky was indeed always moving away from the repressive center, be it during his exile sojourn in Siberia or when he fled the country altogether. Nevertheless, this in and of itself could not render a sufficient explanation for his centrifugal poetic tendencies. Unlike many of the poetic voices in Brodsky's artistic trajectory

[4] It is worth noting here, however, that the question asked about Russia, rather than the Soviet Union. That could have had an imprint on the poet's answer.

(which shall be investigated in further detail later on in this chapter), the poet himself never dismissed the possibility of a return to his city and land. Perhaps the overall centrifugal impetus of Brodsky as well as his affinity of expansive and expanding spaces and places could be seen as a natural continuation of his evolving poetic methods and aesthetics, rather than as a token of his life circumstances.

It would be worth taking a look at the scholastic treatment and interpretative frames that have been constructed with regards to Brodsky and spatiality and exile in his oeuvre. Perhaps the most exhaustive and in-depth study of exile in Brodsky's poetic oeuvre with regards to exile, legacy and poetic transformations and refractions of artistic predecessors in the poet's work is David Bethea's investigation in *Joseph Brodsky and the Creation of Exile*. As Bethea reminds his readers, Brodsky himself would have been adamant that direct causality and parallels cannot be drawn between an artist's biographical circumstances and his or her works[5]. Bethea himself disagrees with the notion that Brodsky's exile was the sole creative force behind his works. Bethea's study is thorough and compelling, thus deserving a more thorough look at some of its conclusions and their corollaries regarding the dynamic dialog between Brodsky, his status as an exile and his artistic output.

One of Bethea's central arguments rests on the suppositions (or, rather, proposition) that Brodsky emerged as a full poet only through his complex and triangular reading and reimagining of the works of other poets such as Donne and Auden, among many others. Furthermore, Bethea's discussion of the nature of Brodsky's exile sheds additional light to its nuances and complexities - "Brodsky, it should be noted, was always exiled within his homeland, between the "Soviet" state

[5] "Brodsky himself would take bitter issue with any outside attempt to place a causal conjunction ("because of", "as a result of") between the facts of his life and, as he puts it in an English phrase that owes its birth to the Russian (*izgiby stilia*), his 'twists of language' (Less, 3)" (Bethea 8)

and “Russian” culture; his ‘generation of 1956’ had no living memory, except through aging cultural relics like Anna Akhmatova and Nadezhda Mandelshtam” (Bethea 40). As Bethea points out, Brodsky’s exilic condition does not fit the standard mold that might have been shaped by forebearing figures such as Dante or Ovid. Bethea’s view of Brodsky’s exile as well as of the poet’s conscious artistic and existential choice to carve out and create his own exilic condition renders a springing board for this analysis. In the scholar’s interpretation of exile in Brodsky’s artistic trajectory, an emphasis is placed on its triangular nature - Brodsky’s poetic works bring together echoes from Western (Anglo-American, as represented by Donne, Auden or Eliot, though also long-standing classical and hellenic) traditions into an active dialog with elements from Russian poetry and through the active negotiation of these two planes, the poet enters a third literary space and creates his own vision of exile and estrangement.

In this way, Brodsky acquires the role of an interlocutor who helps bring together and spark a fluid interaction through time and space between various poetic traditions, while, at the same time, crafting his own Brodskian concept of what exile looks like within his own poetic world. Bethea brings forth the poem “December in Florence” as one such case of “remarkable intertextual” (Bethea 69) triangulation and shows the way in which it fuses the poetic traditions of Dante as well as Akhmatova (and her allusions to Mandelshtam) and Brodsky himself. This particular poem, published in the first collection of Brodsky after his own exile to the United States, showcases the ability of the “wandering Jew” (as Bethea refers to Brodsky) to mediate various artistic traditions and voices while crafting his own unique artistic style and concept of the exilic condition. This particular poem is rich in its spatial fabric as well and shall be analyzed in more detail through a prism of places and spaces later on in this chapter.

Finally, another particularly useful for the purposes of this chapter aspect of Bethea's rich and illuminating study is that of critical frameworks and philosophical theories on exile and the poet. Bethea draws attention to an important though frequently overlooked aspect of literary and scholastic analysis of any author and his or her condition through a critical prism: trying to fit an author like Brodsky into a theoretical framework of exile, even a nuanced and complex one such as that of Julia Kristeva, for instance, would only result in an oversimplification and the creation of generalizations of the author and his or her condition (*Creation of Exile*). The complex nature of both Brodsky's own exilic condition as well as its potential reflection in the writer's poetic sensibility should be kept in mind throughout the spatial analysis of this chapter. This investigation crafts one potential interpretative framework of spatiality through which Brodsky's works could be read, while also exploring possible variations and interactions of this framework in the pieces of Brodsky's early mentor Anna Akhmatova.

Another monograph on Brodsky's oeuvre that touches on the specific themes of exile and nomadism in the poet's life and professional development is that of David MacFadyen. The scholar first redefines the baroque aesthetic and makes an exhaustive argument on why certain parallels and similarities can be traced between the baroque aesthetic and late Soviet and even post-Soviet culture. Interestingly enough, MacFadyen also posits that the exilic condition itself did not have as potent and significant of an imprint on Brodsky's poetic output as other scholars (at least in his view) might have suggested. In the final chapters of the book, MacFadyen suggests that the prevalent presence of Venice in Brodsky's late poems served as a counterpoint and counter-figure to that of St. Petersburg, hinting at the possibility of a return to a long-lost city. In fact, MacFadyen argues that both bilingualism and the creation of new cosmopolitan spaces in the

poet's work suggest that he successfully coped with the condition of exile, rather than that they were a pure consequence of it or a sign that he would be suspended in a state of continuous wandering. MacFadyen sees Brodsky as someone who could "claim some kind of membership or knowledge of another land, culture, and, therefore, language" (190).

While exile is ingrained as a key word in the titles of various other scholarly articles, books, and interviews on Brodsky, few of them actually touch on the condition in the in-depth and multifaceted manner of Bethea's study. For instance, a thorough interview with Brodsky published in *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* in 1974 by Anne-Marie Brumm never broaches the specific subject of exile, despite its title "The Muse in Exile: Conversations with the Russian Poet, Joseph Brodsky". Such approaches have been echoed by other scholars who have delved into investigations of Brodsky's artistic evolution and his exilic condition. Alternatively, a substantial number of secondary texts grappling with exile in Brodsky's oeuvre focus almost exclusively and in a tunnel-vision-like manner on the linguistic exile of the artistic figure.

David Patterson, for instance, makes a case for the potent role of Brodsky in transforming his own condition of exile by utilizing language as a tool; in other words, it is through infusing new meanings into the word and into the language that the poet captures the broader human conditions of exile, displacement and homelessness. The poet of exile is further a poet in exile - metaphysically as well as linguistically - his soul is in an abstract place of "somewhere", his words are too late, describing a movement away from a place that has been lost. Patterson suggests that Brodsky's attempt to capture exile and bind words with new meanings is an attempt to recover the lost sacred entity that language is to the poet. Such an interpretation would, in fact, resonate with Brodsky's own views on the writer in exile, especially as seen in the essay (first delivered as a

speech in Vienna, shortly prior to the moment when the poet was scheduled to accept his Nobel Prize in 1987) "The Condition We Call Exile."

Another category of scholarly investigations on Brodsky's oeuvre that indirectly but significantly touch on the exilic aspect of his biography provide a broader and more comparative frame of analysis by way of incorporating other relevant authors into the analysis. Galya Diment's article on bilingualism in the works of Nabokov and Brodsky[6], for example, renders a comprehensive overview of the reasons and ways in which each author's preference for English as a language of expression developed after they left their native country. Diment's central argument posits that such a choice is indeed anything, but illogical. It is precisely through the use of a language other than one's own that one can achieve the distance from their homelands that is necessary for the artistic process.

Yet another comparative study focusing on language, exile and the poetic figure is that by Shamil Khairov, which binds together the poetic works of Brodsky and Czeslaw Milosz. Khairov's particular focus lies on the linguistic claims made by the poets regarding their native languages as a reflection of the national psyche and in juxtaposition to Western languages such as English. Khairov suggests that each poet viewed his native language as a vessel holding the collective memories and national psyche of its respective peoples. Khairov specifically focuses on the angles through which each exiled artistic figure approached the subject. The scholar propounds that the personal attitudes of the authors taint their views of language, evoking as an example Milosz's affinity towards his native language, history and culture he nurtured and preserved even when in

[6] Brodsky and Nabokov have been grouped together for analytical purposes before as well despite their vastly different artistic output and personal trajectories. Scholars such as David Bethea have, for instance, explored specific motifs and images such as that of a cocoon, while others such as Natalia Jorg (refer to Wanner and his book detailed review) have looked at their broader tendencies and affinities for postcolonial and postmodern consciousness.

exile. Unlike Milosz, Brodsky - in Khairov's investigative work - showed a stronger tendency towards a "cosmopolitanism and rejection of history"(746). While exile figures prominently in this analysis, it only plays a role of an auxiliary circumstance that perhaps helped shape the overall attitude and perspective of each poet. Language itself is also seen as a separate entity, a larger and more collective concept, rather than an individual tool belonging to each writer. Even such exhaustive and informative studies do not hone their focus on concrete elements or imagery as related to exile such as space or place in the poet's works.

Furthermore, there has certainly been a palpable resurgence of interest in Brodsky's life (in an almost entirely biographically-oriented manner) in recent years, both among scholars in the United States and in Russia. A number of essays and interview collections have been published that trace the events of the life of Brodsky in a variety of chosen media. For instance, a recent publication of the poet's biography by Maxim Gureev and the AST Publishing House in Moscow takes the form of an epic narrative of a kind that intertwines interviews with Brodsky's close people, biographical facts and information as well as a creative reimagining of key moments in the poet's life (such as his trial that is depicted as a Greek tragedy, complete with a chorus that performs a Euripides' *Medea*). Even in the richly woven fabric of that biography, however, only a small section of the epic episodes actually focus on his exile or how it might have affected him and his poetry. The majority of chapters/episodes in Gureev's biography focus on the poet's life pre-1972. Alexander Bobrov's compilation of essays *Iosif Brodskij: vechny skitalec also brings* attention to the life of the poet as well as his complex professional and personal relationships and interactions with various other figures such as Akhmatova or even Dovlatov[7]. Bobrov's essays

[7] It is worth here digressing briefly and overviewing other similar collections that add to the multivariagated puzzle of Brodsky's biographies (as seen, recalled and re-envisioned by his contemporaries, artists and scholars alike). Polukhina's thorough collection of interviews with various friends and acquaintances of the exiled poet (a second

follow a more conventional format than Gureev's reenvisioning of Brodsky's life, but nevertheless render an encompassing biographical overview. However, exile as such or the way it might have directly impacted Brodsky is not explicitly woven into any of the chapters.

Perhaps the only critical investigation that focuses exclusively on spaces and places in Brodsky's work is that of Yana Meerzon ("The Ideal City"). Meerzon's article published in the journal *Modern Drama* in 2007 explores the various ways in which Brodsky's construction of space in one of his few dramatic pieces (the play *Marbles*) reimagines the concept of the ideal city. The exiled poet and playwright achieves that by way of distancing his dramatic work from the purely Platonic conceptualization of it and rather imagining and building the space as Foucauldian heterotopia - a hybrid and undetermined space that blurs the boundaries between past and present, state and individual, belonging and homelessness. Meerzon's analysis takes a fluid approach that is not too different from how Brodsky's own lyrical voices operate in his poems - first she zooms into the dichotomies of time and space as seen in the stage directions and setting of the play. Meerzon further zooms out on the larger geographic picture delineated by the poet in his play -- the panopticon prison is, after all, surrounded by an artistic vision of Rome.

Finally, Meerzon presents takes a panoramic critical angle to explore how space in Brodsky's place (and the way it extends out and incorporates the play's audience) could relate to the poet's vision of exile and confinement as well as more metaphysical concepts such as freedom.

---

enriched edition of which was published in 2008) is especially compelling and interesting due to its broad scope of perspectives on Joseph Brodsky's life and art (the artistic and analytic aspect was added to the more recent second edition of the book itself). The second edition includes interviews with prominent poets such as Bella Akhmadulina, Naiman and Rein, Elena Shvartz and others. Shvartz's interview is of particular interest since while she does not enthusiastically praise Brodsky (and, in fact, suggests that his overall poetic sensibility is rather cold and rational, thus atypical for a Russian poet of his caliber), she notes his poetry has given her a different awareness of the architectural properties of a poem. Shvartz posits that Brodsky's poems remind her of a carefully constructed building (Polukhina 263).

Meerzon sees the prisoners in the panopticon as carriers of this motif of exile despite their relative proximity to the city. Rome in Marbles, on the other hand, seems to bear many elements of Brodsky's own native St. Petersburg as Meerzon convincingly suggests in her analysis. This critical study, unique in its scope and focus on Brodsky's drama, is of a very different generic affinity than the analysis of Brodsky's poems that will follow. Nevertheless, Meerzon's article provides a potent and useful point of departure for this analysis of Brodsky's poems especially with regards to the concrete topoi and spaces the poetic voice constructs in them. As seen above, while the volume and scope of scholastic and critical investigations of Brodsky's oeuvre are significant, few actually focus on the specific spaces and places constructed on the poetic stage in Brodsky's works.

Brodsky's overall centrifugal poetics of exile and spatiality, however, are palpable and well pronounced even in his earliest pieces. It is worth taking an investigative detour into a few of Brodsky's pieces written while he was still in the Soviet Union and before the possibility of exile or an expulsion of one's homeland might have left an imprint on his oeuvre. One of the earliest poems by Brodsky that propelled the young poet to a visible position among the Petersburg intellectual and poetic circles was the poem "Pilgrims" (Appendix I, 234). "Pilgrims" was written in 1958, well before the young poet had fallen out of favor with the state and while he was still traversing the Soviet Union with the geological expedition. The poem itself is concise and written in one poetic whole marked by a mix of dactylic and trochaic tetrameters. The rhyming scheme consists of alternating combinations of ABAB and CCDD and the prosodic pace remains uninterrupted by enjambments. The poem further encapsulates several different structural parallelisms that add to its regular and stable rhythm.

The form of the piece amplifies and contributes to the fast-paced and smooth flow through space constructed by the poetic voice in it as he describes the path of the pilgrims. Even the title of the work hints at the centrality of motion and movement within the poem. While Brodsky was several years away from his own exile (and, perhaps, even the inkling of one), his poetic sensibility already incorporated an externally-focused motive force that pushed the poetic voice and characters away from anything gravitational or restraining. This drive is palpable in the very beginning of the piece and it is further imagined and reimagined by the persistent use of structural and parallelism in the first few verses. Each line opens with the preposition of motion *мимо* which denotes a passing movement, a vector of motion that goes by and around objects and places without pausing. The first-syllable stress of the preposition also contributes to the strong rhythmic and prosodic tempo established in the poem. This creates an atmosphere of ethereality and fluidity, potent motion onwards, especially when considered in proximity to the connotations of the title and the idea of pilgrimage.

Other than the opening structural parallelism, the first few lines comprise an inventory-like list of places that are passed by by the pilgrims. A mix of topoi ensues from horse arenas to cemeteries to bars and bazaars and markets. The grouping principle of these topoi seems to be based on both their grammatical declensions in the genitive plural form as well as their euphonic and prosodic qualities. Furthermore, the sentence structure of the first few verses unravels in an inverse manner - it is only after the locative clause comprising all places that have been passed through and by, that the subject of the sentence and the main lyrical characters (the pilgrims) are introduced. Perhaps this poetic decision further emphasizes the substantial role played by place, space and motion as both a thematic nuance as well as a structural and organizational principle of

the poem. The list of concrete topoi is then followed by more abstract categories and a slightly rearranged order based on word and sound play: the nomads pass by the world, grief, Mecca and even Rome. Even in these opening lines of the poem, the poetic focus and vector of motion seems to be directed outwards and upwards: from concrete and everyday, zooming out to more general and abstract locales. While the poetic focus is then brought down and grounded again to zoom in on the pilgrims "walking on the earth", the main characters are described as a moving phenomenon that is "ablaze by the blue sun". The poetic voice retains its centrifugal and celestial-oriented affinity and directionality throughout the verses.

The pilgrims themselves are described as crippled, scantily clad and hungry hunchbacks, whose worn out appearance suggests that they have traversed a long distance during their journey. Despite their physical depravitations, however, their eyes are depicted as "full of the sunset", while their hearts - "filled with the dawn". The metaphysical aspect of the poem as seen in the presence of celestial bodies, phenomena and spatiality is present and palpable even in Brodsky's early pieces. The spatiality of the poem develops and grows outward further - deserts are singing behind the moving pilgrims, lightning bolts flash above them. Once again Brodsky's poetic voice preserves its centrifugal push and expands upwards and away from a restraining center or core. The stars are rising above the pilgrims in motion and birds warn them in a sort of incantation that the world will remain the same. The combination of various fluid motions - from the moving nomadic protagonists, to the flashes of lightning, rising stars and a string of sunsets and sunrises - sets a certain rhythm and cadence to the poem that ultimately parallels the metaphysical message conveyed by it. The world will remain the same through various stages of cyclicity that are mirrored in the poem, its spatiality and directionality.

The inextricable link between physical space and metaphysical ideas is clearly delineated in the following verses as well. For instance, part of the bird prophecy presented in a song-like incantation full of refrains and structural parallelisms is the thought that the world will remain the same - "perhaps, maybe, conquerable/ but always endless."[8] Regardless of the long and distant journey of the pilgrims - which is tacitly implied by their physical appearance earlier in the piece - the world itself will remain unconquerable. A sense of existential brooding that is simultaneously a necessary condition of life ("only the road and an illusion remain") and a futile attempt at grasping the metaphysical truths of being emerges in the poem and is constructed precisely through the construction of space and the motion of the poetic voice through its dimensions. The ending of the work returns to a broader and more macro scale of the landscape description in it. Once the illusions of everyday human existence and its impermanence have been fully exposed and dismissed, the poetic voice summarizes the remaining axioms. The semantic and poetic final part of the poem is demarcated by an ellipsis in the beginning of the line. What is left to the pilgrims is the road ahead of them, an illusion, and the existence of the earth and the sunrises and sunsets above it. The preposition of space *nad* (above) features prominently in the closing lines of the poem.

The two lines: "and being above the earth to sunsets/ And being above the earth to sunrises" render an interesting grammatical and semantic puzzle. While the predicate in the two clauses is clear (the verb to be, in its infinitive form), the subject remains less so. The use of the dative plural forms of sunrises and sunsets suggests that the solar phenomena are anchored in the role of an indirect object rather than an active agent or subject within the verse. Precisely who will

[8] "может быть постижимым,/ но все таки бесконечным"

continue to exist above the earth and near the sunrises and sunsets remains an unanswered question. Nevertheless, the cyclicity of nature and the eternal world - metaphysical and physical alike - is once again underscored by the plural forms of sunrise and sunset and their recurrence. Furthermore, the use of the infinitive of the verb 'to be', whether it is in the imperative mood or not, carries connotations of a prayer or a wish. The spatiality constructed in these final lines, however, is complemented and completed with the inclusion of the image of sunrises and sunsets above the earth. The spatial frame of the poetic stage develops fully and expands between the sky and the earth. The last two verses of the poetic piece bring back the focus to the earth. Each verse further carries infinitive forms - the ground will be fertilized and ploughed by soldiers and sanctioned by the poets.

The untitled miniature "Veter ostavil les"[9] (1964) is another example of a very early spatially-saturated and dynamic poem that follows the outward-bound trajectory of motion typical of Brodsky's aesthetic sensibility. The poem consists of two quatrains, each further comprising stable anapestic trimeters and a set AABB rhyming scheme. The sentence structure is simple and distilled both in its syntactic and morphological qualities. Despite the relatively fixed word order, however, the prosodic changes and variations, add a sense of fluidity and dynamicity to the poem. The opening line of the piece presents a scene in which an anthropomorphic image of the wind has

[9] Rough translation by M. Nikolova:
The wind left the forest,
flying up in the skies,
pushing the cloud away
in the white of the sky.

And, chilled as death,
the grove remains alone,
without a will to follow,
without distinctive signs.

left the forest. The stress on the first syllable of the word for wind (veter) renders a strong and rhythmic beginning of the poem. The first quatrain - while short in length in its full lexical range of twelve words - only contains verbs of motion that ascribe to it a certain mobility and drive. The verb 'to leave' (ostavil) is followed by a description of the direction of the wind who has "flown to the skies."

The verb of motion incorporated into the second line is a prefixed one, further emphasizing the significance of the directionality. *Vzletel* denotes a clear and potent motion upwards and further suggests that such motion might have been sudden and unexpected and perhaps rather fast-paced and quick. The addition of destination ("to the skies") that renders the rest of the poetic line additionally underscores the importance of this outwardly driven motion. The remaining part of the first stanza - and by default, half of the miniature poetic piece - continues the grammatical and syntactical thread and finalizes the sentence. The last two lines of the quatrain contain the second half of the complex sentence that is the stanza itself. The third line opens with a past active participle that is formed on the basis of a prefixed verb of motion that hints at amplified directionality. The verb *ottalknut'* which renders the foundation of the participle suggests a springing away, an active motion away from a center or a point that only restrains it (and that usually is associated with negative connotations). The prefix ot- especially underlines that. The whole verb itself as well suggests a pushing away, a point of origin that then sends the object or the force away from itself. In the particular case of the first stanza of Brodsky's poem, the participle refers to the wind, the subject of the sentence-quatrain, who has pushed away the clouds into the whiteness of the ceiling in its quest upwards toward the skies.

As the miniature poem progresses, the upward-driven motion of the wind is complemented and amplified by the downward path of the clouds that are pushed away by it. As if the Newtonian Laws of Motion apply to Brodsky's poetic space, each action (vector of motion in one direction) seems to have an equal reaction. The wind is the subject of the sentence-quatrain and thus remains the central object and focus of it. Even an early miniature poem like "Veter ostavil les" bears some of the hallmark Brodskian tendencies with regard to the kind of spaces and motions the poet tends to construct. The spatiality of this poem is entirely predicated on the horizon of the sky, leaving everything else behind as depicted in the second quatrain. The centrifugal motion and drive of the wind is so powerful that it is able to move away natural bodies like the clouds.

The spatial focus of the poem nevertheless returns to the lower dimension of the topos in the second quatrain. The forest is said to be standing still and alone, "as the cool death." A sharp contrast is established even on a purely lexical, grammatical and syntactic level, in comparison with the first quatrain. The word order and sentence structure of this stanza become slightly more varied. The opening line starts with a conjunction that links it to the preceding poetic structural unit. It is then followed by an embedded clause and a simile binding the grove that has been abandoned by the wind to the death. The verbs comprising the second quatrain also contrast to the verbs of motion and sense of fluidity established in the first stanza. In fact, there is only one verb incorporated in this quatrain - the verb to "stand".

Finally, the last two lines consist of parallel structures listing the elements missing in the forest. The forest is said to be standing alone without a "drive after" (referring to the wind and its trajectory) or any particular signs. The choice of the phrase "особых примет" (distinguishing features) further hints at the ordinary nature of the forest that is frozen still in time and space.

There is a clear association between motion in general and motion focused upwards in particular and prominence or significance. The wind is the positive and stronger force in the poem, while the forest remains passive, cold like death and listless. The direct contrast between the two natural phenomena-protagonists and its associated vectors of motion and physical places once again align with Brodsky's overall tendency to craft centrifugal poetic voices that occupy wide open and opening spaces. Furthermore, the fact that such elements are present in pieces by Brodsky that predate his exile to the United States suggest that his overall centrifugal sensibility does not stem from biographical or historical circumstances as discussed earlier. While Brodsky's first trial did take place in 1964, the miniature poem was written in January which makes it likely that it was created before exile had become a conceivable part of the poet's life. Thus, it is precisely an early element of his poetic aesthetics, a natural component of it, rather than a direct reflection of any external events (although such events and his two periods of exile certainly and perhaps inevitably left an imprint on his work).

A well-known and regarded poem composed by Brodsky in March 1972 (right around the time of his permanent expulsion from the Soviet Union) provides a glimpse into the poetic and aesthetic treatment of spatiality as related to themes of exile at a crucial liminal temporal threshold of the artist's own life trajectory. The poem "Letters to the Roman Friend (From Martial)" (Appendix I, 235) encapsulates eighteen stanzas, split into groups of two, rich in intertextual and historical references as well as allusions to Roman history. While the extent to which the degree of interconnectedness with the Roman poet Martial tends to be disputed by scholars[10], the themes and

[10] For instance, David Bethea and Lev Loseff engage in a polemic regarding the accuracy of leaving the subscript "From Martial" in the translations and reprints of the poem as suggested by Vladimir Gubaylovsky in the article *Optika vremeni* from 2010. Loseff, however, cites archival research and investigation of Brodsky's archives and drafts of poems in the Russian National Library as evidence that Brodsky kept the subtitle. While there are certain echoes of Martial in the poem, neither Bethea, nor Loseff consider it a free or loose translation of the Roman poet.

motifs of exile as well the spatial refractions of broader existential questions are palpable and visible throughout the stanzas. The poem takes the form of a series of letters (or, rather, excerpts of such which comprise the individual quatrains), which the poetic voice is sending to his friend named Postum (Postumus[11]). Both quotidian minutiae details and questions as well as much more universal ontological queries are interspersed in the epistolary poem, carefully constructed and juxtaposed alongside a particular physical topos.

While the poem's opening quatrain focuses on the natural description of the ocean and the impending fall, hints and nuances of spatiality and liminality are brought to the forefront right away. The poetic voice describes the waves on a windy day as "overlapping"(s *perehlestom*). The word *perehlest* itself, however, carries connotations of an extremity or borderline, a motif later echoed by the beginning of the second stanza and the depiction of a comforting maiden who only does that to a "certain boundary/limit". One cannot reach further - not by one's elbows, nor knees. Real beauty, claims the poetic voice, is found outside the body - once again positioning several of its poetic characters and associations with exile and freedom somewhere farther away from a center - on the ledge, at the liminal space of a border region. The general directionality of the voice moving away is preserved and visible in this piece by Brodsky as well. Even within the first two quatrains of the letters there are several hints and nuances of a liminal threshold space. Questions

[11] The chosen name of the addressee of the letters is of particular interest as Postumus was a title in the Roman Empire bestowed on children who were born after their fathers were deceased ("Postumus (praenomen)"). Nevertheless, the title Postumus usually followed the name of the child or the father. The poetic character in Brodsky's poem lacks an antecedent name, thus suggesting a lack of connection between generations or lack of belonging. Perhaps the friend who is a recipient of the letters is also a long-lost son of the lyrical voice himself. Alternatively, Postumus could be an allusion to the figure of Agrippa Postumus, a grandchild and successor to the Roman Emperor Augustus who was ultimately banished into exile due to his rebellious and brash nature ("Agrippa Postumus" *Livius*). Another potential interpretation could be that it is the letter correspondence between the two figures that will bridge the distance between the spaces of the capital city and the place of the poetic voice's exile that otherwise have minimal overlap.

of exile or expulsion are not explicitly mentioned until much later within the poetic work[12] Nevertheless, a spatial boundary emerges within the first few verses of the poem and is further paralleled by the temporal boundary as embodied by the autumnal season and change of colors mentioned by the lyrical voice.

The third stanza makes this spatial distinction and dichotomy even more clearly demarcated - the lyrical voice is sending his friend books and asks about life in the capital. It becomes apparent that the voice himself can be found outside of the central city, on the periphery of the Roman-inspired poetic space. Even without explicit references and mentions of exile, perhaps only save for the hint of Martial's own exiled lifestyle, it is implicitly understood that the poetic voice is inhabiting a space away from the central city and close to the water.. The voice further describes himself as sitting in his own garden, or possibly a cemetery (given the meditative description of some deceased figures[13]), surrounded by the buzzing of insects, rather than urban hustle and bustle ("of the strong and weak of this world").

Perhaps the most saturated stanza from a spatial perspective is the seventh one. The aphoristic lines "If you had to be born in the Empire,/ it's better to live in a distant province by the sea" render a distilled version of the spatial solution to exile prevalent in Brodsky's overall poetic aesthetic. Once the poetic voice faces a repressive regime or a restraining force, his natural instinct is to move away and transcend the limitations of the oppressive figure and forces. The impersonal dative case construction used in the beginning of this sentiment further underlines the lack of

[12] The poetic voice explicitly addresses the fact that he is in exile only in the seventh stanza, almost halfway through the poem. Moreover, it is not until the third quatrain that the idea of exile is implicitly brought and alluded through the mention of the destination of the letters - the capital city.

[13] The verses in this stanza are a direct allusion or free translation of Martial's works, as suggested by scholars such as Loseff and as further argued and investigated by Gubaylovsky who sees more parallels between the Brodskian poem and the way it is constructed and some of Martial's poetic ruminations on life (Gubaylovsky, "Optika vremeni").

agency and constraining influence of an Empire or an authoritarian and controlling element. If it so has happened that one was born in an empire, the best resolution that still preserves some small degree of agency is for the person to live in the quiet periphery by the sea. The specific mention of a sea conjures connotations of a possibility of an escape or at least a potentiality of new lands and places located somewhere beyond the horizon. The lyrical voice further reveals that he would stay as far away as possible from Caesar and his blood-thirsty whims.

The impetus to move away, in a centrifugal fashion, and to gain distance from the pull of the repressive core is evident on a morphological level as well - there is a certain frequency of prefixed nouns, participial adjectives and nouns, especially these with prefixes that indicate a motion "away" (*ras-*, *raz-*) or "through" (*pere-*). The waves are overlapping (*s perehlestom*), soon nature will delight the lyrical voice with a set of changes (*peremeny*) and the maiden is soothing only to a certain limit (*predel*). Later on in the poem the voice talks about waiting out (*perezhdat'*) the rain and stormy times with his beloved Hetera. Furthermore, a certain frequency of words containing the prefixes *ros-* and *raz-* amplify the overall centrifugal ambience of the poetic work, especially in the last two quatrains of the poem.

The penultimate stanza, for instance, delineates the picture of an abandoned room (perhaps that of the lyrical voice or that of his friend Postum). The door is said to be wide ajar (*raspahnutaya*) and the bed and chair - abandoned. This is followed by a description of the natural scenery - the rustle of the sea behind the trees, the sound of wind on the peninsula and the philosopher Pliny the Senior sitting on a parched (*rassohsheysia*) bench. Earlier on in the poem the lyrical subject writes to his friend that he is on the way back from the mountains with flowers in tow. He will find (*razyschu*) a large jug for them. Despite the relative dearth of specific prefixed

verbs of motion that might indicate directionality or contribute to the overall poetic picture of exile the lyrical voice constructs, the abundance of prefixed adjectives and nouns echo the artistic impetus to move away, unravel in all directions and transcend any restraining conditions imposed by an external force of any kind.

The poem from 1978, "Tsushima Screen" (Appendix I, 238) provides another case study of that phenomenon with a couple of unexpected variations on the theme from the years following the poet's exile and could render a productive comparative frame for the analysis of "Letters to the Roman Friend." This poem opens up with the image of a blue sun, a double iteration of the motif of openness and vastness of perspective. The sun is associated with the skies; its color, too, in this particular case seems to reflect either the azure of the sky or that of the water beneath it. The sun is merging with the pale horizon it is surrounded by. Perhaps the blue shade of the solar disc is also meant to conjure connotations of the winter season mentioned later on in the piece. The sun is delineated as a "perilous" one, closely keeping an eye on the lyrical subject and his companion in travel as they sail around the world. This suggests a certain atmosphere of distrust (further amplified by the sun's "slant eyes") and potentiality for impending danger or even disaster as hinted at by the mention of capsizing in the icy waters of the straits of Epiphany. The choice of moniker and the mention of Epiphany open up several interpretative planes that are charged with varied meanings that relate to both space and motifs of exile.

On the one hand, Epiphany as a potential name of a strait or straits evokes associations with the early exploratory trips of sailors and discoverers as well as their claiming and naming of new territory. Straits of Epiphany could be a symbolic rendition of the name, although as a possible name it is not dissimilar to topoi like Cape Good Hope, for instance. This could be consistent with

the biographical and historical context of the poem if one were to take them into consideration -- Brodsky was a couple of years into his own exile, perhaps still feeling uprooted and unanchored. While the straits in the poem are not directly named or unambiguously labeled as Epiphany (we have the form of the genitive of possession, rather than a proper name), the name certainly bears an interpretative significance. Epiphany together with the mention of February could also redirect the allusive prism to the Russian Orthodox celebration of Epiphany which traditionally takes place on January 19. Epiphany celebrates the baptism of Jesus Christ and its honoring in the Russian Orthodox tradition involves bathing in the frigid waters of rivers as there is a belief that the water is holy on this day and possesses healing properties.

Another ruminative poem that features and intertwines various topoi and vectors of motion is the uncollected "Lines for the Winter Recess [Washington, D.C.]" (Appendix I, 249) that was written in 1992 and published in *The New Yorker* in 1994. The thirty-one-verse poem is written in free verse and is not apportioned into stanzas or verse paragraphs. The opening line starts with the image of an egg on a marble cup that cracks and reveals its "evening yolk", evoking associations with a sunset that emerges from a cloud cover. The line is marked by an enjambment and an irregular trochaic metric pattern (consisting of mono and disyllabic words with consistent stress on the first syllable). The second line, also interrupted by an enjambment, juxtaposes the crack in the egg to a mention of an infinite avenue. Nevertheless, the enjambment divides the epithet from its noun, thus for a brief moment separating "the infinite" as an abstract metaphysical category in of itself at the end of the second verse. The avenue is said to be engulfing geometric figures that stand to represent the hustle and bustle of the evening rush hour.

The lyrical voice delineates the cars and other vehicles as rhomboids and squares, which hints at a certain height and distance of his vantage point and perspective. Once again, the minutiae details of everyday life pale in contrast to the larger and more permanent universal force, a contrast in scale that the poetic voice is aware of and sensitive to. The sheer scale of the avenue is said to "gobble up" the figures of the cars marked by a "preglacial appetite, unseemly in geometry", further underscoring the tension between the two planes (that of the everyday, intransient and the broader, higher and more metaphysical one that has withstood time and will outlast the material human realm).

Despite the lack of independently demarcated quatrains or other types of stanzas, the fifth line of the poem depicts a new scene and starts with a new sentence rather than a continuation of an enjambment. The motif of winter or that of coldness is continued by the mention of a snowbound airfield, once again also invoking associations with the sky and more open horizons. The field is said to be surrounding and overtaking the river that is slowly running through it. The river does not bring the sweetness or comfort of either "milk nor honey" and seems to be reluctant to merge with the ocean. The lines containing the description of the river shorten in length considerably rendering a certain visual representation to the slowing tempo of not only the river, but also the overall landscape. This further amplifies the sense of coldness, almost as if the landscape is paralyzed by the cold and slowing down to a gradual freeze.

The lyrical voice then goes on to ascribe an evaluative label to the depicted scene as the "good old days". There is a sense of both comfort and something that has been irretrievably lost inherent to such an evaluation that contains a tinge of nostalgia (or perhaps an ironic commentary on such nostalgia). The poem then focuses on concrete representations that serve as allegories of

broader metaphysical topics and tensions. Cars are likened to rhomboids and other geometric figures engulfed by the vastness of the avenue; suburbia is compared to a sky of stars that is expanding. The stocks go up like Dorian columns. Once again, the lyrical I of the poem shows an affinity and tendency to move upwards and to rise above the repetitive coldness of everyday life.

Stephanie Sandler's study of the poem with regards to a much later piece written by the author, "On the Talks in Kabul" (that echoes certain motifs and elements of "Lines") hones in on the richness of images and physical descriptions in "Lines" that later seems to weaken and give way under Brodsky's fatigued later poetic style. The scholar makes a compelling argument that the poems written by the exile writer in the 1990's tend to grow more convoluted and to lose the creative energy of the poet's earlier works. She attributes such tendencies at least partially to the writer's declining health and perhaps the loss of his admiration for his earlier muse, Maria Basmanova (that coincided with Brodsky's marriage to Maria Sozzani). Sandler evokes other studies on the topic as well (by Gerlad Smith who has a more positive take on it and sees in the changing poetic aesthetic a potent self-negation impulse). Her arguments resonate to an extent with David Bethea's view of Brodsky's style as that of "poetics of subtraction"[14] -- eventually discarding the physical confines of the body due to the overbearing existential fatigue. While there is palpable - and perhaps inevitable - difference with regards to the poet's late poetic output, the spatial and topological aspect of it at least seems to have been sheltered by it and to have preserved its strive upward.

One such example is the poem "Robinsonade" (Appendix I, 241) , one of Brodsky's later and uncollected works from 1994. Robinsonade delineates another refraction of the theme of exile

[14] Bethea draws on Brodsky's interest in the ideas of the Russian critic Mikhail Epstein and the concept of subtraction. Bethea sees a strong reflection of that in Brodsky's own poetry and the poetic voice's tendencies to gradually shed his physical and bodily confines and be reduced to his language (*Brodsky and the Creation of Exile* 266).

in a distilled and palpable way as is instantly suggested in its title. Resonating with the spirit of the poem's title, the locale of the work is set on an island domesticated by its only resident and shipwreck survivor of twenty years (there is an undeniable biographic imprint here). An expansive and transcendental poetic space emerges from the very opening line: "a brand-new heaven over outlandish earth". While the earth itself carries connotations of alienation and liminality, the overlaying heaven brings more positive potentiality. The newness and hinted growth set in the first line are further echoed by the image of squalling newborns that follows them. Moreover, a mention of a blinding "surplus of azure innocent of a sail" a few lines later consolidates the growingly outward and centrifugal thrust of the poem. The only elements scattered throughout the horizon are outriggers with their rowers that "betray the mystery of motion" but they are not depicted as a threatening or limiting presence. Neither is the direction of motion indicated. The landscape of exile that emerges in Brodsky's late poem is open and inviting.

The lyrical subject posits that he has "sufficiently domesticated" the inadvertent place of his residence. A parenthetical addition comes next voicing the subject's uncertainty whether he is on an island or a continent infusing the work with an autobiographical note. However, the = growth of the image of the island into a continent further contributes to the centrifugal tone and directionality of the work. The spatial imagery is moving freely outward and skyward. The recurring usage of bird figures and allusions adds to the sense of growing horizons. While the lyrical subject identifies himself as a victim and incorporates various motifs of death and decay into his poetic narrative, he draws a portrait of exile that is ontologically affirming and constructive. The spatial scaffolding of the poem as well as the direction of the subject's voice are constantly expanding and in-flux.

It is precisely the expansion of poetic space and dimensions that allows the vast horizons of the sky and the ocean to merge. The two elemental spaces become indistinguishable from one another as do other images and motifs. Life and death follow suit as reflected by the juxtaposition of the figures of the newborns and the old men, the promising new skyline and the outriggers that are likened to a fish's skeleton gnawed to the bone. Beginnings and endings become one as the lyrical voice suggests toward the end of the poem. The sand imprints left by humans fuse with the temporal imprints of Friday under the influence of the elements. A sense of a gradual expansion outward and eventual unification arises from the exilic poetic landscape, rather than one of alienation, isolation or oppression.

The potentiality that is built up from the beginning of the unpublished piece is also brought to a realization by means of this centrifugal motion and merging. The closing lines mark, as the lyrical subject suggests, the beginning (or possibly ending) of *ecriture*. The artistic process of writing comes into being precisely in this exilic space of constantly growing horizons. What originated as a centrifugal spatial focus eventually generates and feeds into the artistic/writing impetus. The lyrical subject has fully acquired and accepted the role of a writer in exile. The closing of the poem consolidates the outward directionality further by shifting the focus once again to the ocean. It is the vast space surrounding the island that acquires a position of an arbiter of the writer's *ecriture*.

While a look at the original text of the poem in Russian provides a slightly different spatial setting, the overall centrifugal and expansive qualities of the poetic piece stay relatively stable. The opening line of the poem sets a rather fairy-tale like tone with the incorporation of the archaic phraseological expression "za tridevyat'yu zemel' " The line then verbatim translates into "a new

in a land far away". The image of the sky couples with the invocation of the faraway land and grounds the spatiality of the poem in a distant, though implicitly vast and open locale. Just as in the translation, the lines that follow delineate newborns and old men, their depictions incorporating bird imagery. The focus briefly turns inwards as the old men try to bury their faces under their armpits as a bird would do, but the poetic voice itself remains more encompassing and expanding in an outwards directionality.

The next image of space is of particular interest in the Russian original. What is translated as the surplus of azure in the English version of the poem is described as an ultramarine shade in the original. While azure might evoke an image of the sky, a horizon above (especially given the poem's opening line), or the combination of the sea and the sky above it, ultramarine suggests that poetic voice might be referring to the endless blue hue of the ocean. In either case, however, the spatial focus is anchored in an open and expansive space and does not shrink or move inwards. The closing line of the poem reinforces the centrality and role as a frame of reference of the ocean, which is described as a vantage point for the creation of ecriture or the artistic process.

Even when vast ocean horizons and islands do not feature in Brodsky's late poetry, his poetic thrust remains moving upwards and outwards as evident in some of his uncollected poem as well, such as, for instance, "Swiss Blue". This piece, composed in English by the poet, was first published in *The Times Literary Supplement* in June 1990. The poem, comprising four octaves of steadily varied syllabic lengths, paints a detailed picture of the Swiss landscape and concentrates the thematic focus on the figure of Mr. Matthews, a businessman who grapples with questions of transience and impermanence of life and his work. From the very outset of the piece a tension between the restrictive landlocked topos of the Swiss territory and the upwards-moving mountains

that transcend these constraints is established: “the place is so landlocked that it’s getting mountainous”. The gaze and general motion of the poetic voice follows an upward vector from the beginning despite the connotations of boundaries and limitations associated with the descriptor landlocked. Perhaps the rising and formation of the mighty mountain chain is a reaction to its restrained and contained locale. Furthermore, the motion of mountain formation is in flux, as suggested by the use of the present continuous tense of “to get” (“the place is getting”), hinting at a dynamic process that is unraveling as the lyrical voice speaks and that will continue to develop as implied by the specific usage of tense.

The following verse continues to string together images associated with an upward motion and heights - glaciers and summits are said to be “ski[ing] ‘cross air”. The poetic gaze remains affixed in the skies - there is a mention of aircraft (the Swiss airline Corsair) as well as of a UFO as an epithet to describe the physical appearance of the poetic protagonist, Mr. Matthews, and the glasses he is wearing. What starts out as a landlocked poetic terrain has quickly risen, expanding and enlarging the poetic stage upwards. Even the elemental forces of nature are subject to the poet’s overall affinity of moving upwards and rising above any physical constraints. Overall, the first stanza contains an abundance of topoi associated with such a vector of motion and that bind it to the physical locale and setting that is central to the poem (as also suggested by the title of the piece). With the exception of the final three verses of the stanza that are entirely focused on the introduction and portrayal of Mr. Matthews, each line incorporates imagery that invoke associations with the sky, rising upwards and remaining in that space. The lyrical voice carefully crafts his poetic stage by moving farther up and transcending the limitations of the first line and the landlocked geolocale e in it. The gradual shortening of the syllabic lengths of the verses mirrors

that process on a more formal plane, almost echoing the vertical rise and construction of the mountains.

The stage construction process pauses briefly in the second stanza of the poem as the lyrical voice shifts the attention to the character of Mr. Matthews, presumably in Switzerland on a business trip, and to his ruminations on the country and the scenery. A tranquil lake Geneva opens up the second stanza, in two end-stop, stable verses, as the lake's "tranquility and harmony" are described. The following verses are interspersed with several enjambments as Mr. Matthews ponders the purpose of his trip and his work, which spills into a more existential poetic contemplation later on in the stanzas. This second stanza is more grounded and stripped of concrete topoi other than the lake and a mention of Germany as a source of the language and weather in Switzerland. Mr. Matthews lacks definiteness and decisiveness as a poetic subject. In the first stanza, he is portrayed as someone who has yet to figure out whether his trip is "for business or for pleasure". In the second stanza he is bewildered and pondering "if it truly rains,/ or if he simply misspelled the epithet / for the vista". A certain atmosphere of restriction and enclosure is created by the mention of a windowpane and the vista. This, coupled with the lack of exterior, upwards and expansive topoi and spaces in the second stanza, hints at Mr. Matthews' grounding in a different and smaller, more trivial and less metaphysical plane. The poetic subject - indecisive, impermanent and confused - stands in continuously increasing contrast against the poetic stage of the Swiss mountains carefully constructed by the lyrical voice. Mr. Matthews might be hinging his appetite to the windowpane as he is taking in the scenery (presumably) outside, thus remaining encased and limited in his positioning within the upward-growing poetic landscape. The

transient human will not be able to transcend his condition or to grasp any of the metaphysical and existential truths embodied by the mountains.

The third stanza incorporates once again an act of moving up, as it describes the creation of the refinery that generates the business of Mr. Matthews (who is shown as ascribing more importance and agency to himself than he has perhaps warranted). The third stanza comprises enjambments from its first verse: "Farmland has always been scarce; so finally/ the natives rose and rolled up their quilt." Despite the lack of land, the natives are described as an active force that is rising upwards. Meanwhile, a snapshot of Mr. Matthews sees him in his force, "minding his money" in the restrictive interior space of a vault. The third stanza thus establishes a new source of tension and of contrasting spatial associations that generate it. While the Swiss landscape and its people are bound to a transcendental, higher space and a centrifugal trajectory, Mr. Matthews appears to become more restrained and grows smaller against the expansive Swiss backdrop. The project of the self-important businessman to overcome his condition or to establish a more lasting legacy that would withstand the forces of time could be a futile and frustrating one as suggested by an allusion to the ever-suffering Laocoon.

This is further corroborated in the fourth and final stanza of the poem: while the poetic voice ruminates that one longs for "infinity/ with double intensity" in a place like Switzerland, Mr. Matthews shrinks further, eventually becoming the size of "small, shrill [...] quail eggs". The background of the poem, the mountainous Swiss landscape is stable and neutral ("the more neutral you are, the less you are finicky") and remains defined by an upwards vector of motion and a wider scale and horizon ("Hence the spires,/ perspectives"). Meanwhile, Mr. Matthews and his

business aspirations grow increasingly smaller, incapable of embracing the perspective or of finding a way to break away from the confines of the vault.

"Swiss Blue" from 1990 (Appendix I, 242) incorporates Brodsky's most frequent and recurring themes and motifs - the struggle of the transient human life against the force of time. These motifs are intertwined in the poetic fabric alongside a typical topographical dichotomy that establishes a contrast between the permanent natural and chronic forces and high up topoi in direct opposition to the impermanent Mr. Matthews and his vocation that "peter out" into small eggs. The choice of verb is of particular interest in this line as the etymology of it (the Greek meaning of "rock, stone") sharply contrasts to the meaning of the verb itself. While other poems by Brodsky that will be discussed later in this chapter (such as "December in Florence", for instance) have unraveled the centrifugal affinity of the poet through the perspective of his lyrical voices, "Swiss Blue" encapsulates the majority of these standard Brodskian themes and their spatial associations on the plane of poetics subjects. The mountains themselves render an active poetic character along with Mr. Matthews and his futile quest. The tension generated between these figures (natural and human, actively in motion and constantly shrinking) creates the impetus that moves the poem further and delivers the metaphysical rumination of the poem.

Even the metric form of "Swiss Blues" parallels the gradual unraveling of Mr. Matthews and his inability to withstand the potent forces of time[15] by way of syllabic compression. Each stanza starts out with a well-defined heptameter marked by end stops, but it gradually dwindles to a complete tetrasyllabic dimeter in the last verse marked by enjambments along the way. The shortening of lines sets a rhythm within the poem - starting out with full, completed thoughts that

[15] Although it could also be seen as a mirror of the mountainous formation that takes place simultaneously.

coincide with the length of the verse (stable end stop lines) and then breaking up into shorter lines and a more staccato-like pace of line alternation. The opening line of the poem, for instance, set in a complete heptameter, is followed by a substantially shorter verse in tetrameter. While the first couple of lines remain in a whole and fully completed form (in other words, coinciding with the full length of the poetic line), they are soon interspersed by enjambments that appear toward the midpoint of the first stanza and recur at increasing frequencies in the following stanzas. The gradual destabilization and shortening of the poetic form amplifies the destabilization of the trivial and human and stands in contrast to the physical landscape of the country, its vast scale and perspective. The rhyming scheme of the piece remains a loose ABBA CDCD or ABBA CDDDC throughout the poetic piece. This poem is also marked by Brodsky's impartiality to alliterations ("rose and rolled up…", "spices, spies", "small, shrill, spotted"), assonances, and word plays for the sake of consistent rhyming schemes.

Another uncollected poem from the 1990's , entitled "A Photograph" (Appendix I, 243), encapsulates a poetic imprint of a fleeting memory of St. Petersburg, or, at least, the poetic voice's recollection of it. Spatiality occupies a central place in this piece that is sparked into poetic existence by a photograph. Unlike other poems by Brodsky, this one is centered around a concrete physical place (an apartment) in a concrete urban topos. The first half of the poem zooms in and narrows the descriptive focus gradually, starting with a general description of the city, the faraway lands that provide it with electricity and then turning to the specific apartment the poetic voice recounts. This delineative motion from the general to the concrete, from the broad, wide outside to a smaller and more circumscribed interior space departs - at least at first glance - from the usual depiction of spatiality in Brodsky's works.

Nevertheless, even when the voice focuses on particular physical spaces and details of them, he still links them to other locales far away and more abstract and metaphysical concepts. For instance, the clothes in the apartment are described as "cumbersome, betraying/ the proximity of the Arctic." Brodsky's hallmark turn from the minute, physical and corporeal to the metaphysical is evident in the description of spaces as well. The money bills of three rubles evoke images of miners and aviators. The pots in the kitchen that seem confident in the "certainty of a tomorrow" turn into a "Martian army" and motorcars are said to be "rolling toward the future" Thus, the overall tone of the poem reverses to one that is focused on going outwards and upwards, transcending the world of the physical and corporeal in the second half of the piece, by binding a lot of these concrete, everyday and relatively insignificant objects to broader and more metaphysical themes. The physical setting of the communal apartment is a fleeting memory, surpassing the confines of the present as well as its future, dissolving into a metaphysical realm that is occupied by singing birds of paradise mentioned in the closing line of the piece.

The frequent and recurring use of bird imagery in the late period of Brodsky's poems remains conspicuous. Birds figure prominently in the opening line of another poem, "Reveille" (Appendix I, 247) which first appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* in February 1996 and which was later included in the *So Forth* collection published in 1998. This poem consists of ten quatrains and begins with the image of birds, followed by a metonymy of "hired hands" rolling up their sleeves. "Reveille" is a tongue-in-cheek piece comprised of rhymes and word play variations that are consistent with other poems written in English by Brodsky. While this poem reflects Brodsky's penchant for ironic and facetious intertwining of rhymes, repetitions, alliterations as well as a general preference of form over content, it also touches on motifs and themes typical of

his poetry - time and impermanence and binds them to the specific physical places comprising the poetic stage. The poem conjures themes and lasting metaphysical truths and legacies through the vehicle of concrete objects such as the rocks in its closing line. While the poetic voice focuses on such particular physical details, it does not linger on them for a long time. The motion of the poetic voice is aimed once again upwards and outwards, in accordance with the overall poetic thrust of Brodsky's oeuvre.

The first quatrain is framed by a stable AABB rhyming scheme and incomplete trochaic tetrameters along with several short alliterations interspersed throughout the verses. The quatrain strings together in a rather staccato manner the images of the birds, the hands and a brick "malodorous dorm" with the boys inside waking up "awash in sperm". This is followed by the second quatrain that turns the poetic gaze upwards to the clouds in the sky. The whole second quatrain is concentrated on that image and in the topos above the earth. The poetic voice playfully describes the cloud's grouping as one that resembles a "cumulative thought", a play of words hinting at an anthropomorphized image of the cumulonimbus cloud type. Once again, the poetic focus has lifted from the metonymies and the concreteness of the world beneath to the sky and its clouds hovering above. The general poetic impetus is moving upwards and opening outwards in its quest to transcend the everyday, impermanent and trivial by physically transcending the concrete world first.

This third quatrain of the poem is then followed by another quatrain that opens up with the image of the sun. The solar body is delineated as "showing its badge" to the world beneath. The sun acquires characteristics of a police officer governing and hovering over the "guilty world." The commandeering grip of potent forces of life such as the sun, the azure horizon above are

indisputable as the poetic voice facetiously describes them waking up and rising “unless ordered otherwise”. The perspective distancing continues throughout the next quatrain as well. The lyrical voice shifts the poetic lense to what he describes as “elsewhere in the galaxy”. While life on earth is of importance to its inhabitants and their press, the comets are less concerned with it. The facetious tone and perfectly constructed rhyming scheme does not fully mask or undermine the more metaphysical undertones of the poem.

Spatial topoi as well as their poetic construction and consequent deconstruction figure prominently and significantly in another late poem that bears a facetious and satirical tone in the *So Forth* collection, “A Tale.” The poem-tale, written in 1995, renders a satirical description of a war between an unknown Emperor (perhaps an allusion to the United States as hinted by the mentions of a Treasury) and his nameless and faceless enemy that results in the complete effacement of earth. The satirical tone of the work is intertwined with philosophical cliches, various aphorisms, such as “Art equals History”, and some more graphic evocations of an enema that further underline the grotesque and futile nature of human and political folly. The poem comprises three separate parts, each of which is further broken up into eight quatrains of pentameters alternating with trimeters and tetrameters, bound by a steady ABAB rhyming scheme. While this particular poem does not touch directly on themes or even motifs of exile, the topic of the human greed and desire for conquest and destruction is tightly linked to spatial topoi. The way the poetic spaces are treated in each part of the poem is different and the overall poetic directionality of spatial construction unravels in three different ways.

The first part of the tale sets the stage and introduces the characters. While the line starts with a strong and penetrative motion inwards (“In walks the Emperor”), the poetic scale and

perspective are immediately turned upward and outwards by the end of the quatrain. The description of the ruler ready for war and looking like Mars is followed by the description of his staff and their numerous medals. The perspective shifts from the here and now to the constellations of the Milky Way, an image evoked by the stars and ornate medals on the soldiers' uniforms. The Emperor immediately delves into issuing orders and there is no confusion or hesitation about his aim - to destroy the enemy (who is said to be, "powerful, mean, and brash"). The generals are further described as rising in response to their ruler, another motion in an upwards-directed vector. Further markers of motion include the Emperor's command "Forward!" and a mention of an air force. The image of a never setting sun is used as a marker of greatness for the Emperor's land. The last quatrain of this portion of the poem ends with a description of the roaring army that sets out on its conquest (a turbine goes off and the metal clangs) as roses shrivel and close up their petals.

There is a palpable and inextricable spatial association integrated within the Emperor-Enemy dichotomy that is established from the start of the poem. The images of the Emperor and his army are constructed in a way that tightly binds them to spaces, dimensions and celestial bodies such as the stars and the sun. These associations - while quite general and conventional - still hint at the importance of space as well as the general centrifugal directionality of the poetic voice. That trend remains consistent in Brodsky's poetry even in later pieces like this one that do not explicitly deal with themes of artistic or existential exile. The Emperor's army is moving forwards and outwards, in an expansive and conquering manner. From the very start of the piece, the position of power and supremacy are further underscored by an association with celestial objects and natural forces like thunder. Additionally, the enemy occupies a space that needs to be

obliterated. Destroying the physical space the rival inhabits is synonymous with the enemy's ontological destruction and a victory that will bring the Emperor historical legacy.

Another spatial aspect the poem "A Tale" (Appendix I, 239) acquires is the inherent connection between human folly and political ambition and its desire to destroy and control the physical world and places around it. Not only are the spatial categories and binaries linked to the dichotomy of us - them, powerful empire - weak enemy, but so is the ultimate goal of the Emperor. In addition to destroying the enemy, the emperor wants his army to "turn the good old horizon vertical, save its sail" (Part II). The ultimate prowess of the Emperor will be showcased only when his army acquires demiurgic power over the poetic space. Not only is the enemy's territory going to be effaced, but the geographical dimensions of the horizon need to be altered if the Emperor wants to achieve his historical legacy. The centrality of the role of space and place in this Brodsky poem is visible from its very start and runs steadily through all of the poetic parts.

The second part of the poem reveals a dynamic spatial picture. As the army draws closer to its target, the earth is in the fluid process of deconstruction and destruction: "The sky is falling, the earth is gaping,/ the ocean simply boils." The physical inversion of boundaries and frames of reference is violent and chaotic, but a natural part of the army's conquest. The motion of the conquest, however, unravels in an almost self-contained, but collapsing vector of directionality: the falling sky is engulfed by the gaping earth while the ocean is boiling nearby. There is a strong downward motion, but then the poetic vector moves outwards and away from the center of gravity and into the boiling water of the oceans. The image of boiling and bubbling water further conjure an association with an upward type of motion and driving force. The vantage points and frames of reference of space are folding into each other in the process of the chaotic war. It is through this

destruction of the physical coordinates of space and place that the Emperor and his army will be victorious.

Consistent with the early quatrains of the poem, this part does contain an underlying political theme and satirical tone. There are a couple of direct mentions of an H-bomb test, pushing a button and an earthquake in the description of the army's fury. On syntactic and lexical level, the quatrains remain short and staccato-like, uninterrupted by enjambments or other irregularities. The sentence structure abides by a conventional and rather predictable subject-predicate word order that is concise, comprising laconic sentences that further amplify the intensity of the impending war and perhaps even match the march of the soldiers. The quatrains continue to incorporate direct speech by the Emperor and his generals that mostly consists of proverbs and cliches. The physical and spatial elements remain palpable, however, and tied to the overall goal of the Emperor. In order to make history, he claims, "a territory/ first has to come to grief". Additionally, the Emperor issues clear orders "with his eyes on/ the most minute detail" for his soldiers to altogether flip the horizon. Human ambition and political folly, while satirized in this poem as evident by its tongue-in-cheek tone, find clear expression in the spatial dimensions of the poetic stage of the piece.

The result of this misplaced and grandiose political and territorial ambition is a world that becomes "topsy-turvy". It is only then, after the obliteration of the physical realm as he knows it, that the Emperor realizes his decision might have been rushed and dictated by hubris; nevertheless, the ruler ultimately sees his actions as justifiable (" 'That was nervy, but, in the context, just.' ") The poem carries a potent sociopolitical and satirical commentary on the superficial, rushed and frequently ego-centered nature of politics and the serious consequences they can trigger. The

events that unravel in the poem resemble and echo several key moments of the Cold War that still remain an active peril in the 1980's. Nevertheless, it is the post-explosion, post-annihilation world depicted in the poem that is deemed a masterpiece by the Emperor's generals and the lyrical voice itself. Spatiality and its physical boundaries and parameters are inextricably linked to the themes of the work.

The spatial side of the Emperor's conquest contains one more dimension worth exploring with respect to the concrete role of physical space in the broader ideological agenda of the poetic ruler. That becomes more palpable in the third and last portion of the piece. The second part of the poem culminates in the explosive collapse of the world, leaving the aftermath unclear. The beginning of the third part renders a resolution of sorts, almost painting a cinematographic-like continuation of the scene of destruction and desolation. The demolition itself, however, embodies a strong creative impulse and potential as the lyrical voice and lyrical subjects explicate in the third part of the poem.

The obliteration of the world and enemy seems successful - the opening line of the first quatrain within the third part depicts an eerily quiet and vacant scene: "Now there is nothing around to argue/ over: no pros or cons." There is no sound or a sign of the enemy either. It is the poetic voice, rather than a line of direct speech or a thought expressed by the Emperor, that then describes the destroyed world as a "pure space" that has been freed from "mountains,/ plains, and their bric-a-brac." There is perhaps a subtle sense of ontological and metaphysical freedom and purity in a space that is devoid of noise in the form of geographical and physical places and objects. Once again, space is a key element of the victory of the Emperor. The enemy and the old

world have been destroyed and a new order can be built by the victors. The spatial poetic stage has been cleared and has been readied for the construction of a new project.

The official celebration and consummation of the victory follows with the singing of the anthem and raising of the flags. Once again the motion and directionality of the poem are oriented upwards and outwards. There is a clear link between that motion and the victorious and dominant nature of the Emperor. It is precisely the winner of the battle who conquers the space, acquires the rights to claim it as well as to build it anew as he sees fit and he can raise flying pendants to demarcate the new territory as his own. The ruler then orders a monument of his horse to be built with an inscription that would read " 'Tight was the enemy's precious anus." The physical conquest and destruction as well as creation and modification of the world is a central element of the poem and of the agenda of the Emperor. [16]

In a conventional Brodskian aesthetic, the last few quatrains of the poetic triptych return to more abstract, distant and even celestial spatial dimensions. Despite the victory of the Emperor and his imperial forces that are associated with a never-setting sun, the chronotope of the last quatrains encapsulates the time of sunset. The desolate landscape cools down and the world is described as "motionless". Despite the explosive reconfiguration of the horizon and its axes brought about by the military prowess of the Emperor's army, the stars remain a fixture on the horizon. The vast, open, and expansive scale of the world is preserved and the eye "travels rather far". Once again,

[16] Perhaps the Emperor's obsession with the complete destruction of the enemy and the creation of new monuments is an intentional strategy on the part of the poet to accurately reflect the general Soviet and Stalinist ideology that advocated for the full destruction of the world in order to build the new order. As Katerina Clark explores in more depth in the chapter "Socialist Realism and the Sacralizing of Space" (*The Landscape of Stalinism*), every architectural subject and token was meant to channel and express a socialist myth. The potent focus on building and constructing a new physical world was a crucial element to the Soviet project and can be traced back to Marxist philosophy and its model of base and superstructure. It was the Soviet apparatus' belief that the Revolution had served its purpose as a base, but a new superstructure had to be then created.

Brodsky's lyrical voice returns to a wide open space, marked only by the stars in the sky that remain distant. The celestial elements are the only pieces that remain untouched by the force and folly of humans, embodying in themselves permanent and stable metaphysical undertones. Even with the complete destruction of the world and its coordinates, the egocentric political folly of the Emperor has not succeeded entirely. The world remains an unbounded and unconquerable space despite the destruction of its micro topoi and markers - mountains, hills, and enemy territories. It is precisely the poetic voice, a narrative perspective detached from that of the storyline, that once again returns its gaze towards the skies and strata above.

"A Tale" renders a more unusual, yet rather consistent, case study with regards to the exploration of space, place and vectors of motion and directionality in Brodsky's poetry. Written shortly before the poet's death, this piece is representative of the more socially-infused, tongue-in-cheek and rather cynical style of his late poems. Nevertheless, even this more sociopolitically and satirically oriented work preserves a hint of the abstract and metaphysical aesthetics of Brodsky. While the theme of exile is not explicitly incorporated into it, it still remains subtly relevant and intertwined within the poetic fabric, given the theme of conquest of new lands and creation of new worlds. Furthermore, Brodsky's poetic tendencies to expand, explode and overcome spatial confines are preserved. The ambition of the Emperor is to completely reinvent the world after inverting and destroying it. While the question of the extent to which the blindly ambitious (and highly satirized) character of the Emperor succeeds remains open and unclear, the ending of the poem still affirms the poetic affinity towards open spaces like the horizon and its stars as well as in their permanence as phenomena.

Brodsky's overall poetic and aesthetic centrifugal affinity can be seen in poems of a different thematic category and less socially-oriented than "A Tale". The analysis in this chapter would not be complete without at least a brief look at several urban poems by Brodsky -- dedicated to or describing in detail urban Italian spaces. The second installation of the "Venetian Stanzas" (Appendix I, 246) from 1982, for instance, provides a fitting case study with regards to how the poetic voice uses its agency to construct citiscapes and intertwine them with various themes and motifs. This poem unravels through a pulsating and constantly shifting poetic perspective. Various Venetian spaces are depicted in the stanzas, but the overall directionality of movement through them remains centrifugal. The poetic gaze permeates every corner of the city, zooms in on details, but eventually the motive force turns upwards and outwards in an encompassing manner. The poem opens with the decorative element of a "sleep-crumpled cloud" which is said to "unfurl(s) mealy mizzens". A sense of invigoration and growth is further consolidated by the lines that follow: cheeks acquire a glow, jewelry catches on fire, the rays of the morning sun "invade arcades". While a variety of spatial images are strung in a staccato-like manner, the movement is consistent in its outward or upward directionality.

Even a sequestered sleeping beauty who is said to be shunning the world does not evade the expanding spatiality. The walls surrounding her render a permeable separating layer rather than an insulated and isolating cocoon. While the physical motion of the woman's breathing is likened to a shrinking quail, the entire space and even the windows surrounding her move in synchronicity with it: "the window's sentient gauze gets fluttered by both exhaling and inhaling". Furthermore, the mirror in the room is described as an exit for the objects who are "ailing […] from their […] dead end". This is a particularly striking (and unusual) association with the image of a mirror

which is usually envisioned as a trap that captures and reflects[17], rather than a crevice that provides a way out. That line is then followed by another fluid image - that of light prying an eye open - as well as opening shutters that bring in a mix of smells ("parting shutters assault your nostrils with coffee, rags and cinnamon, semen").

The fifth stanza marks a substantial departure from the city itself onto the azure – an expansive external space that leaves the world "in the rearguard". The azure horizon overtakes the poetic perspective, "falling headlong forward" as it does so. The juxtaposition of the chaotic mechanical parts and niches that make up the city (fifth and sixth stanzas) and the "idle turquoise" generates a sense of scale and further consolidates Brodsky's centrifugal tendencies. The poetic subject proclaims the hustling and bustling world he has just delineated in detail simply a "merry minority in one's eye", quickly entering a more metaphysical and existential space as he does so. The buzzing multitude of boats and other vessels that populate the canal city remains merely a frame of reference for the unfolding horizon. The direction of the poetic focus continues to move upwards which is accentuated in the final two stanzas as well. There is an image of rising figures from the waters of the canals and a mention of a blinding lagoon in the closing in the poetic work.

An echo of such poetic spatiality and general movement of the poetic focus as the physical stage and all of its topoi are being constructed and depicted can be traced to much earlier poems of Brodsky that describe Italian urban spaces as well. The poem "December in Florence" (1976), for instance, provides one such example and a useful case study for comparison since the urban locale

[17] As scholars such as Kirsten Lodge ("Mirrors in Russian Decadent and Symbolist Prose") have pointed out, symbolist and decadent authors showed a strong affinity for the figure of the mirror. While mirrors were frequently conceptualized as demonic objects with potential to trap and distort, they also embodied associations with a liminal space that encloses various dichotomies such as life and death, life and art, etc.

of choice is another Italian city.[18] The poem (Appendix I, 237) was written by Brodsky several years after his own exile from the Soviet Union and perhaps carries a refraction of his own experiences. The epigraph of the poem is an excerpt from an Akhmatova poem, "Dante" (1936), which is intricately linked to both the theme of an impossible return of the poet as well as that of the poetic legacy after an artist's death. The intertextuality of the epigraph and the poem itself render an additional dimension through which the themes of exile - both artistic and ontological - legacy and the impossibility of returning to a city from one's past unravel.

The opening line of the poem depicts a scene not dissimilar to the ones constructed in the first verses of the "Venetian Stanzas". The doors in Florence are breathing in air and letting out steam. An instant scene of motion, fluidity and permeability emerges from this first verse. The first subject that appears as an active agent in the stanzas is that of a threshold marker - a door. The poetic voice is anchored in the space of the city, while the spirit of the artist (as implied, Dante) has departed, unable to return to the urban topos, remaining only an allusive element of the poetic fabric. The atmosphere of constant motion and fluidity permeates every verse and is further amplified by the frequent use of enjambments in all stanzas that create an irregular, but dynamic rhythm. The poetic voice even addresses the artist (Dante) directly ("but, you shall not return there/ where people walk above the Arno") although he quickly returns to the description of the urban space and more general metaphysical themes, rather than the specific plight of the departed writer.

[18] Bethea's reading of "December in Florence" (*Brodsky and the Creation of Exile* 63-72) is particularly rich in its thorough analysis of the intertextual connections between the Brodsky poem and Dante's works and, in particular, *Divine Comedy* (Bethea's interpretation of the initial urban depiction draws parallel with a hell-ish like landscape and directly alludes to the great Italian poet). Beyond some of the biographical similarities shared by the two authors, there are technical and poetic parallels between "December" and Dante's verses in the Comedy. Furthermore, Bethea's idea of triangulation with regards to this specific poem draws in the epigraph (borrowed by Akhmatova's poem "Dante") and the echoes of Mandelstam that are interspersed throughout the Brodskian and Akhmatova texts. Bethea suggests that Dante's exile depicted in the poem is mediated by Mandelshtam, which is in turn mediated by Brodsky's own condition.

The city of Florence acquires characteristics of a forest and the poetic scene almost becomes fairy-tale-like. Even the breathing movement of the city doors bears a resemblance to a breathing dragon or another magical creature. The doors slam and beast-like creatures emerge from the buildings. The motion of the poetic voice remains fluid, constant and multidirectional - from the back and forth for the breathing doors, to the impossibility of a return of the artist, to the emerging beasts and finally the moving away of the gaze from the human inhabitants of the city: "at a certain age you move away your gaze from/ the person and you lift the gates." The continuous motion of opening and closing unravels in the following stanza as well, rendering a connective link between the stanzas.

As a contrast to the first stanza, the second poetic unit is focused more on inward-oriented types of motions. The eye is swallowing and inhaling, sinking into darkness. The reason for the exile of the artistic figure is revealed - one cannot live around a volcano (a potent entryway that is associated with explosions and a projectile motion upwards) without showing a fist, although opening it remains impossible even as the figure is dying. There is a sense of threading on the edge of constant danger, perhaps a poetic embodiment of repressive regimes or forces. A volcano encapsulates an unrestrained, though perhaps sometimes dormant, natural force that could be unpredictable in its explosivity and potentiality for upwards motion. The persistent alternation of elements associated with outwards and inwards, upwards and downwards-focused vectors - as seen in the contrasting juxtapositions of the eye that swallows and submerges and the volcano that is ready to erupt - permeate the rest of the poem as well, creating a hurried and staccato-like narrative poetic rhythm.

The mention of exile is followed by a return to the cyclicity and repetitiveness of everyday life in Florence. The poetic perspective shifts from a meditation on philosophical and existential questions of life's impermanence to a purely physical description (frequently by way of descriptive metonymies and details) of the city surrounded by blue hills. The hustle and bustle of daily life are reflected by the statues of historical figures that speckle the city landscape. This is then briefly followed by another meditative take on the human condition; the lyrical voice posits that a person turns into a "sound of the quill on paper","the loop of a ring", "wedge of a letter", "commas and periods." Every figure of the descriptive poetic mosaic in this stanza reflects an element, a minute detail of the existence and work of a writer and an artist - from the quil to the mentions of paper in various forms to letters and punctuation marks. The poetic voice likens the fate and unraveling of the exiled artist to a writing process that folds in on itself. A face engulfed by darkness is laughing like a "crumpled paper". The image of the crumpled piece of paper further echoes and parallels the snippet of a closed fist from an earlier stanza. The vector of descriptive and poetic motion here seems inverted: it is rather self-contained and circular, moving in an unexpected and ambivalent trajectory for Brodsky's aesthetic. Despite the escape from the city, the fate of the writer seems futile and transient.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most revealing part of this particular poem with regards to spatiality and exile in Brodsky's work can be found in the last stanza. After various physical urban and natural descriptions as well as metaphysical ruminations on the impermanence of existence, the poetic voice returns to the dynamic and living figure of the city. This is bound to the central theme of impossible returns to places of exile. The city has become encapsulated into a transparent case. Even the rays of the sun fail to permeate Florence through the sturdy glass of its windows

(another metonymy of the urban landscape) that render a protective bubble or fence of a kind. A rather unusual for Brodsky's aesthetic sensibility atmosphere of encapsulation and claustrophobia predominates this final stanza. The city is anchored inside an impermeable membrane or a glass case that freezes and encircles it. Everything within the urban microcosm remains the same through the years - the river continues to flow under the bridges, the impersonal and faceless crowd continues to chatter at the tram corner.

Although the overall spatial aesthetic depicted in "December in Florence" might appear to be unusual and even antithetic to Brodsky's usual treatment of space, such interpretative conclusion does not seem to hold up once the positioning of the figure of Dante within the poetic set up is taken into consideration. While the city itself does remain enclosed in a cocoon of a kind and distanced from the world around it (impenetrable even to a celestial body like the sun) it only remains this way after the exile of the poet. In other words, while the overall poetic directionality and spatiality is a little more centripetal than what might be typically delineated in Brodsky's poems, the linkage between space and the theme of exile remain consistent. The central figure of the exiled artist is no longer within the cocoon of the city, but rather occupies a space somewhere above and beyond it. Once again the theme of exile is associated with spaces that are beyond the palpable world and urban landscape that might have tried to hold them back. It is this intricate bond between a centrifugal force and the state of exile that demarcates Brodsky's poetic aesthetic with regards to space and place, rather than the more centripetally-oriented descriptions of life within the urban bubble.

Moreover, while the fluid and variegated city description comprises mostly smaller, encapsulated and clearly bound spaces, the poetic perspective itself remains omnipresent and

anchored up and above it. The eighth stanza of the poetic piece, for instance, is presented through a vantage point at a higher altitude. The description of the concrete locales and physical ornaments such as the bridges and the buildings of the city stem from a bird-view-like perspective. The buildings are likened to eggs in the lowly lying nest of the sky. An externally affixed poetic perspective, suspended in an abstract space above (perhaps not too far from Dante's figure has vanished into exile) is describing the city's inanimate and animate residents and cyclical processes. Perhaps the most visually striking and conspicuous image comes from the motions of a police officer regulating traffic. The poetic voice describes the hand motion vectors resembling the shape of the letter "zh" and further suggests that the movement never goes downward or upwards, only sideways ("the police officer at the crossroads/ waves his arms, as the letter 'zh', not lower nor/ higher"[19]). In addition to creating a very potent and visually saturated image linking humans with the greater logos as represented by the letter, the poetic voice further suggests the smallness of the scale of human day-to-day life.

The set up of the poetic stage in "December in Florence" continues to be consistent with Brodsky's overall aesthetic and spatial orientation despite some outward and perhaps even misleading indications otherwise. The central figure - in this case that of the expelled Dante perhaps an autobiographical refraction of Brodsky himself - remains suspended in a space above and beyond the limits of the city. Furthermore, the omniscient poetic perspective and voice are a stable presence that is firmly anchored in a dimension above and beyond, depicting a poetic scene from a bird-view-like point of view. While the actual descriptions of the Italian city might comprise some more inward-moving and centripetally-oriented nuances and vectors (the city is

[19] This, however, seems to be a nuance that has been deliberately omitted by Brodsky himself in the translation included in the full collected volume of all his works: "a traffic policeman briskly/ throws his hand in the air like a letter X". That particular translation was done for the *New York Review of Books*.

after all a living and breathing organism that is in a constant state of motion), the association between spaces up and above and motions striving upwards remains inextricably bound to the figure of the poet.

Furthermore, the city that remains affixed, almost to the point of mummification, within the bubble renders an urban space of a constantly repeated and repeating past, rather than that of a space carries a liberating and non-cyclical future that unravels forwards and outwards. The repetitiveness of daily existence as well as the micro scale of detailed physical depictions of city life suggest that the urban glassy cocoon has encapsulated in itself a cycle of ennui and insignificance. The artistic figure - be it that of Dante, Brodsky himself or a broader embodiment of the human condition into a singular poetic character - has been expulsed by a repressive force and propelled into the space above and beyond the enclosed Florence. In this sense, "December in Florence" aligns in concordance with the overall Brodskian treatment of exile, space and motion and finds a fitting place in Brodsky's larger poetic oeuvre.

A similarly upward-striving poetic gaze occupies a central place in the poem "Tornfallet" (1990/1993) depicting a landscape that lacks tokens of personal significance to the author and concrete markers related to his exilic condition (the poem is set in Sweden). Nevertheless, this later poetic piece (Appendix I, 240) is rich in its spatiality and the associative links it creates between spaces and metaphysical themes and motifs. The lyrical subject in "Tornfallet" opens the poetic narrative with the image of a meadow, but his eyes are firmly fixed upwards, reflecting the clouds. The poem itself hints at the death of the subject while intertwining positive and negative ontological markers; memories of a happy wedding, a young singing woman holding a clove wreath are anchored close to images of a growing shadow, a mention of a lake that resembles a

broken mirror and a hair on a pillow that conjure parallels with a coffin once the subject states that he is lying on the ground dying. The closing line of the poem renders a more somber interpretative angle. Fragments of nature (clouds, lake, a pine tree as the sole wedding witness, clovers and stars) are interspersed throughout the work and create a contrasting poetic background to the mortal subject.

Despite the existential fatigue and futility permeating this piece, the general upward and outward drive of the lyrical focus remains stable and omnipresent. The poetic perspective does not recede back to the earth, but rather shifts upwards again. The poem opens up with the reflection of clouds and closes with the lyrical subject's gaze fixed on Venus and the stars. The spatial plane of the horizon above once more pulls the poetic voice toward itself. Moreover, it provides the lyrical subject with a space of potentiality where he could be reunited with his beloved ("here is Venus/ no one between us"). While the poem itself does not directly touch on motifs of exile in its most conventional definition (though death in and of itself is a form of exile), the elements of the foreign locale as well as the theme of separation are nevertheless present. Once again, as in previous Brodsky poems, the poetic voice shows a tendency to move in a centrifugal manner – striving away from constraints or focal points and moving upwards, transcending the subject's physical condition and confinement.

Overall, while the definitive demarcation of Brodsky as a poet in and of exile can render ground for prolific scholarly debates and varied opinions, one aspect of the poet's oeuvre that appears to be clear and persistent is the centrifugal spatial aesthetic of Brodsky's pieces. The poetic stages constructed by the lyrical voices tend to be expansive and expanding, moving outwards and upwards, as if striving to transcend any limitations of both the exilic condition and

the general restraints of metaphysical concepts such as time. This spatial tendency is particularly palpable in Brodsky's later pieces that followed his expulsion from the Soviet Union, but it is certainly visible and traceable even in the poet's early works. This spatial approach and the affinity for wide and open topoi stand in sharp contrast with the spatial aesthetic sensibility of one of Brodsky's early mentors, Anna Akhmatova.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

"Agrippa Postumus." *Livius.org.* 2019. Electronic.

Bethea, David. *Brodsky and the Creation of Exile*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey 1994. Print.

Boym, Svetlana. "Estrangement as a Lifestyle: Shklovsky and Brodsky." *Poetics Today 1996 17 (4)*: 511-530. Electronic.

Bobrov, Alexander. *Iosif Brodskij: vechny skitalec.* Algoritm: Moskva 2014. Print.

Brodsky, Joseph. *Collected Poems in English*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, New York 202. Print.

_____. "December in Florence." 130-132.

_____. "Lines for the Winter Recess." 488.

_____. "A Photograph." 444.

_____. "Reveille." 446.

_____. "Robinsonade." 493.

_____. "Swiss Blue." 486-487.

_____. "A Tale." 438-441.

_____. "Tornfallet." 417.

_____. "Tsushima Screen." 270.

_____. "Venetian Stanzas II." 306-308.

Brodsky, Joseph. “The Condition We Call Exile.” *The New York Review of Books* 1988. Electronic.

Brodsky, Joseph. *Pis’ma rimskomu drugu*. Azbuka-klasika 2001: Sankt Peterburg. Print.

_____. “Piligrimy.”20-21.

_____. “Veter ostavil les.” 78.

Diment, Galya. “English as a Sanctuary: Nabokov’s and Brodsky’s Autobiographical Writings.” *The Slavic and East European Journal 1993 37(3): 346-361.* Electronic.

Doan, Ivan (trans.). “Pilgrims.” *RuVerses. Joseph Brodsky*. Electronic.

Dobrenko, E. A., and Eric Naiman. *The Landscape of Stalinism: the Art and Ideology of Soviet Space*. Washington University Press: Seattle, Washington 2003. Print.

Gessen, Keith. “The Gift. Joseph Brodsky and the Fortunes of Misfortune.” *The New Yorker* 2011 May. Electronic.

Gubaylovsky, Vladimir. “Optika vremeni.” *Druzhba Narodov 2010 5*. Electronic.

Gureev, Maxim. *Iosif Brodskii. Zhit’ mezhdu dvumia ostravami*. ACT: Moscow. 2017. Print.

Haven, Cynthia, and Richard Avedon. *Joseph Brodsky: Conversations*. University Press of Mississippi. 2003. Print.

Khairov, Shamil. “Writers’ Linguistic Observations and Creating Myths About Languages: Czeslaw Milosz and Joseph Brodsky in Search of the ‘Slavonic Genius of Language.” The *Modern Language Review 2014 109 (3): 726-748*. Electronic.

Kline, George. “Variations on the Theme of Exile.” *Brodsky’s Poetics and Aesthetics*. Ed. Polukhina and Lev Loseff. St. Martin’s Press: New York 1990. 56-88. Print.

Lodge, Kirsten. “Mirrors in Russian Symbolist and Decadent Prose: Valery Briusov and Dmitry Merezhkovsky.” *Studies in 20th & 21st Century Literature* 2010 34 (2). Electronic.

MacFadyen, David. *Brodsky and the Baroque*. McGill-Queen’s University Press. 199. Electronic.

Meerzon, Yana. “The Ideal City: Heterotopia or Panopticon? On Joseph Brodsky’s Play Marbles and its Fictional Scapes.” *Modern Drama* 2007 50 (2): 184-207. Electronic.

Naiman, Anatoly. “Memories of Brodsky.” *London Review of Books* 1999 21 (10): 28-29. Electronic.

Patterson, David. “From Exile to Affirmation: the Poetry of Joseph Brodsky.” *Studies in 20th Century Literature 1993* (17): 365-383. Electronic.

Polukhina, Valentina. *Joseph Brodsky: a Poet for our Time*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, United Kingdom 2009. Print.

“Postumus (praenomen).” *Wikipedia*. 2019. Electronic.

Sandler, Stephanie. “The Poetry of Decline.” *Russian Review* 2002 61 (2): 204-207. Electronic.

Wanner, Adrian. *“Schreiben im Exil—Exil im Schreiben: Zur narrative Vermittlung von Exilerfahrungen bei Vladimir Nabokov and Iosif Brodskij* by Natalia Jörg*.” Slavic Review 2013 72 (1): 195-196.* Electronic.

CHAPTER II

Claustrophobia and Centripetality in the Late Poetry of Anna Akhmatova

"Do not go outside, go back into yourself, the heart of the creature lives in the truth."

- Saint Augustine

The analytic focus of this chapter will be cast on and limited to several of Akhmatova's poems and one poetic cycle written and published after the official denouncement by the Soviet government and Zhdanov in 1946 (in the last two decades of the poet's life). Despite the relative dearth of poetic output Akhmatova produced in that particular period, especially in comparison to her earlier years, the entirety of her late oeuvre proves to be a substantial poetic ground that is prolific for literary investigations of motifs of space and place. Exploring more closely each poem written after August 1946 would indubitably surpass the scope of this dissertation chapter. Thus, only the lyrical cycle *Sweetbriar in Blossom* (1946-1964) and a few of the individual poems written by the Leningrad poet during the years of the Soviet Thaw (primarily in the 1950's) will be investigated. *Sweetbriar in Blossom* is a particularly suitable work for the purposes of this analysis given the timeframe it spans in its prolonged creation. Akhmatova composed the earliest poems in 1946, shortly after the meeting the then-British diplomat working in Moscow, Isaiah Berlin. The meeting with Berlin was fateful for the poet as shall be elucidated later in this chapter and it likely served as a catalyst for Akhmatova's official denouncement by the Soviet State. The

later poems of the *Sweet briar* cycle, on the other hand, were created well over a decade later, in the mid-1950's and even early 1960's.

In addition, by virtue of its generic belonging, the *Sweetbriar* cycle fully showcases different approaches and poetic devices utilized by Akhmatova. The poems incorporated into it encompass a variety of meter and rhyming schemes as well as poetic structures. The poems that constitute the building blocks of the larger cycle range in their length, syllabic and metric characteristics. Furthermore, the *Sweetbriar* pieces comprise poetic fabric that is rich in concretely delineated topoi and locations, tied not only to themes of estrangement and exile, but also to the issues of impossible love, meetings and separations, typical of Akhmatova's early oeuvre. Finally, the analysis of the topoi prominent in the *Sweetbriar* cycle will be complemented by an investigative look at the development of spatiality in individual poems written through the end of the 1950's. The poems included in this chapter are the ones that specifically and explicitly incorporate and depict physical spaces, man-made (houses, rooms, basements) and natural locales (forests, marshes, lakes) alike.

Furthermore, while a purely biographical interpretive lens would severely limit the understanding of the motifs of exile and their spatial reflections in Akhmatova's poetry as well as their aesthetic and poetic significance, a detour into the historical and personal circumstances that left an imprint on the poet's life is necessary. This is due to the unusual nature of Akhmatova's exilic condition. Unlike the traditional figures of exiled writers and artists, Akhmatova never actually left the Soviet Union, with the exception of a couple of brief visits abroad in the 1960's. The exilic condition of the Leningrad poetess was not marked by physical separation from or irreversible loss of her motherland. Nevertheless, Akhmatova was still prevented from publishing

and removed from the literary sphere by the Soviet State. Throughout her life, she witnessed major political upheavals and wars which were then followed by Stalin's purges that reverberated on a personal plane for her.

Additionally, the event that renders one of the final catalysts of Akhmatova's permanent denouncement by the Soviet authorities - namely her meeting with the British then-diplomat Isaiah Berlin - is also the creative impulse and source of poetic inspiration for the *Sweetbriar in Blossom* cycle (Driver, *Anna Akhmatova*). The meeting with Berlin proved to be not only a turning point in Akhmatova's delicate relationship with the Soviet state, but also a potent inspiration that found multiple embodiments in her later poetry. Understanding better the exact nature of Akhmatova's life in the Soviet Union after August 1946 is thus central to the process of ascribing a status of an internal exile to her. The exilic nuances of Akhmatova's life were vastly different from these of Joseph Brodsky, for instance, and perhaps that factored - though not in any way solely - into the concrete poetic reflections and motifs of exile in her works.

While Akhmatova's critical reception by scholars is not one inextricably associated with a state of exile[1], the poet's changing status in her native Leningrad through the years as well as her social isolation and repression are noted in some critical frameworks on her work. Scholarly

[1] In fact, most critical interpretations touch on Akhmatova's silencing by the Soviet State in 1946 and use it as a relative boundary to demarcate two different periods in her writing. Most scholars - both Akhmatova's contemporaries like Eikhenbaum and Vinogradov as well as late 20th century academics like Sam Driver - conceptualize Akhmatova's early period as one that is close to the aesthetic principles of the traditional Russian poetic cannon (as embodied by the style and writing of figures like Pushkin). On the other hand, Akhmatova's later pieces, and especially those from 1946 onwards, are frequently placed in a modernist-infused mold. Some scholars like Harrington have recently voiced disagreement, however, and expressed alternative views. Harrington's reading of Akhmatova suggests that the Leningrad poet's early pieces were aligned with a modernist and more epistemologically pronounced poetic sensibility, while her later works were distinctively postmodernist and ontological. Overall, very few scholars have considered Akhmatova's pieces, especially in the years following 1946, as works of a poet in internal exile. The only mentions of Akhmatova's status as that of an exile can be found in Muchnic's work that will be discussed later (and the scholar used the term is by way of Isaiah Berlin) and an article by Michael Sarnowski ("Exile, Escape, and Reprieve: Poetry of Displacement" 2014) that only briefly touches on Akhmatova and likens her relationship with the Soviet State to that between Dostoevsky and the tsarist regime the previous century.

discussions of Akhmatova's alienation and estrangement are abundant both with regards to the poet's early years (during the Revolution, the years of Civil War and upheaval and early years of the Stalin Terror) and in the later years (during World War II and the years following Akhmatova's official denunciation). How scholars approach these themes and whether they consider Akhmatova a figure of exile or estrangement even indirectly varies greatly. In the literary, biographical and critical account of Akhmatova's life, the scholar Samuel Driver, for instance, emphasizes the agency inherent in her alienated condition that might be traced back to as early as the 1920's. As Driver suggests, the poet chose to retreat from the public literary life following the Bolshevik Revolution and she remained largely silent in its aftermath ("Literary Biography" *Anna Akhmatova* 15-37). There were a couple of events and public engagements she did attend, such as the reading of excerpts from *Anno Domini* at the House of Writers in 1921. Overall, however, Akhmatova was not publishing actively during this turbulent period, which also coincided with her then-husband Gumilev's execution by the Soviet State on charges of being a counter-revolutionary figure. Akhmatova's adamance about her decision to not leave the country found poetic embodiment in at least one of her poems from that period ("A Voice Called on to Me"[2], 1917). It was also in this period that the Petersburg poet turned to scholarship and translation work, something that she was actively involved in after her official denunciation several decades later (Driver). These early days of self-imposed withdrawal and isolation, however, were not synonymous with exile or displacement. In fact, the poet clearly showed that

[2] The lyrical subject in the poem describes the voice that entices her to leave her war-torn country and start a new life abroad. The poem ends with an active gesture of the heroine: she puts her hands over her ears to drown out the voice. She asserts her resolve to stay in her motherland even that would mean enduring more suffering. Despite its soothing promises, the voice and its words are characterized by the heroine as unworthy (*nedostoyny*).

she rejected the thought of external exile or escape from the USSR even during the trials, tribulations and tragedies of its early years.

Driver's account of Akhmatova's personal and poetic life trajectory suggests that the poet consciously rejected offers to have her work published by Party-approved channels in the initial years of the Soviet Union.[3] While Akhmatova remained silent and reluctant to engage with the volatile public literary scene, she continued to exert a palpable presence in it. As Driver propounds, the two divisive critical encampments at the time - Formalists and Party, or Soviet-aligned critics - frequently focused on Akhmatova's work. Akhmatova's and Mayakovsky's poetic styles and oeuvres were used as a way to conceptualize the two opposing literary worldviews and aesthetic sensibilities by the critics. Nevertheless, even the Soviet critics themselves were divisive and ambivalent in their appraisal of Akhmatova's poetry. Some, like Boris Arvatov, G. Lelevich[4] and P. Vinogradskaya, dismissed it completely. Others, like Al. Kollontai, N. Osinsky and even Boris Eikhenbaum (at first at least), were willing to acknowledge its poetic and, at times, even social merits (Haight "1914-1924" *Anna Akhmatova*). The heated debate even spilled into the pages of publications such as the newspaper *Molodaya Gvardiya* when it published opposing views held by figures as the prominent revolutionary and Soviet diplomat Aleksandra Kollontai (who wrote an article praising Akhmatova's poetry, declaring that the poetess was not "after all as foreign to us as we might think"[5]) and the literary critic Boris

[3] Driver, Samuel. "The Great Experiment." *Anna Akhmatova: Poet and Prophet*. 164-189.
[4] Who was the first one to talk about Akhmatova being a hybrid between a harlot and a nun, a label and description that later on became part of the official denouncement by the Soviet State and Zhdanov (Haight).
[5] In fact, Kollontai's elaborate essay was a response to a question from a young woman whether Akhmatova was compatible with the working, fighting Communist women.Kollontai makes a strong argument that Akhmatova is on the side of the emerging communist ideology, sympathetic to the struggle of young women, rather than a remnant of the bourgeois aesthetic.

Arvatov who denounced Akhmatova's poetry as a despondent remnant of bourgeoisie socio-esthetic principles in a response to Kollontai[6].

Perhaps one of the first critics and scholars to explicitly demarcate Akhmatova's condition as exilic was, in fact, Isaiah Berlin himself. Despite his limited interactions with the Leningrad poet, he proved to be a crucial figure in her personal and artistic trajectory in the post-War years. The specifics and ramifications of the two encounters between them shall be discussed in depth later in this chapter. It is Berlin who first recounts in his memoirs *Personal Impressions*, published in 1980, the situation of the Russian intelligentsia in the Soviet Union. Berlin provides his Western readers with a systematic recapitulation of the history of poetic and literary development in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The British critic considers the vigorous literary and artistic development in the first two decades of the 20th century akin to a "genuine renaissance, different in kind from the artistic scene in other countries" (Berlin 158). It was this renaissance that gave rise to figures like Berlin's close friend Boris Pasternak (whom Berlin admired greatly as a poet and a writer) and Akhmatova. Berlin's perception of the situation Akhmatova and Pasternak were in during the years following Stalin's Great Terror and the ubiquitous destruction of World War II is that of artists in exile. The British critic describes the precarious situation of the two in the 1940's as one precisely of inner exile[7]. While both writers still had a significant number of devoted readers who idolized them, they suspected the Soviet

[6] Arvatov based and further justified his condemnation in a quantitative and methodical way - he cited the frequency of words and phrases such as death (25), grief (7), and mourning (7) in Akhmatova's poetic collection *Rosary*. Arvator also established that the most frequently recurring color is black, thus confirming his overall appraisal of Akhmatova's work as decadent, pessimistic and despondent. The critic moreover reprimanded Kollontai for her emphasis of the individual and subjective female I in the struggle for women's rights, rather than its class or social aspects.

[7] More precisely, Berlin identifies Mandelstam as an "inner emigre". While he is extensively indirectly quoting Clarence Brown's book and ideas, this particular configuration and label for Mandelstam appears to be Berlin's own rather than an excerpt from the book.

State was watching them closely. Furthermore, prominent literary figures and close friends of theirs such as Mandelstam and Tsvetaeva had already perished directly or indirectly due to the attitude of the regime towards the poets (Berlin).

Moreover, as pointed out later by scholars like Helena Muchnic ("Three Inner Emigres…"), Berlin had talked about the condition of inner exile even earlier, in an essay penned by him on Mandelstam in 1965. This essay, a review published in the New York Review of Books of Clarence Brown's edited volume of translated prose by Mandelshtam, provides Berlin with an opportunity to reflect on Mandelstam's significance as well as to review Brown's introduction and translation. Berlin conceptualizes Mandelstam's poetic output and overall tone as that of peace and tranquility that comprise a universe of their own, detached and separate from the turbulent state of the external world. Berlin's formulation is an apt description for Mandelstam's condition and it could be applied to figures such as Akhmatova, though not without acknowledging the differences between the situations of the two poets. Mandelstam was actively and persistently persecuted, arrested twice by the Soviet state and was sent into internal exile on more than one occasion (Berlin). Akhmatova, on the other hand, was neither actively persecuted, nor forced into exile or any kind of forceful relocation. Nevertheless, she was publicly denounced in the 1940's and she was prevented from writing and publishing for a substantial period of her life.[8]

[8] It is worth noting that demarcating Akhmatova as a figure of internal exile could be controversial in certain regards. Scholars like Reeder have outlined in detail various aspects of Akhmatova's biography that suggest the Leningrad poet enjoyed certain privileges due to her status as a well-regarded writer and figure of cultural importance. For instance, Akhmatova had been evacuated from her city during the Siege of Leningrad. Upon Akhmatova's return to Leningrad, several of her personal friends and acquaintances, such as Olga Berggolts' husband Georgy Makogonenko, used their connections to ensure Akhmatova had comfortable and well furnished living quarters. Moreover, the poet was enjoying an active intellectual and cultural life, complete with publishing contracts and public readings of her works, in the years leading up to her official denouncement (Reeder). Nevertheless, Akhmatova's ultimate denouncement and removal from the official literary stage in the Soviet Union renders her as a displaced artistic figure. Therefore, she is a suitable internal exile poet for the literary exploration purposes of this analysis.

One of the most significant turning points for Akhmatova - both on a personal and artistic plane, especially with regards to her reception by authorities - was perhaps the visit of the English critic and scholar who later became a diplomat to the Soviet Union, Isaiah Berlin. Furthermore, it was precisely this meeting that had generated the creative impulse that resulted in the poetic cycle *Sweetbriar in Blossom*, which will be analyzed in depth later on in this chapter. Berlin had been born in Riga in 1909, but his family had lived in several cities before finally emigrating to the United Kingdom due to the sociopolitical and historical circumstances at the time (Dalos *The Guest from the Future*). A native speaker of Russian, Berlin lived in St. Petersburg (at the time renamed to Petrograd) for three years between the ages of seven and ten (Dalos). Berlin was well versed in Russian literature and later on in life enjoyed a prolific career at Oxford University as a professor of Social and Political theory who published and lectured on a range of topics on political and literary theory. Before World War II, the young scholar had worked in the United States as a correspondent for the Ministry of Information in New York and earned the praise and approval of the British Embassy in Washington, DC (Dalos).

After the end of the war, Berlin was appointed the First Secretary of the British Embassy in the Soviet Union (Dalos). As Berlin himself noted rather humbly, he was deemed suitable for the role due to his fluency in Russian and "of some use in filling a gap until the New Year when someone less amateur would be free to come" (Berlin 156). He was thirty-five years old at the time, enthusiastic about returning to and working in his homeland. As evident in Berlin's

---

Moreover, scholars like Tomas Venclova have detailed the ambiguous and compound nature of Akhmatova's state after the official state denouncement. Venclova knew Akhmatova personally in the final years of her life (during the Thaw) and delineates in depth the complexities of inner exile state; the Leningrad poet was still able to work on translation projects and even meet delegations from abroad (as was the case with a group of students from the United Kingdom in 1954, a carefully crafted PR strategy of the Soviet state). However, Akhmatova remained circumscribed in what she was able to say or write even during the years of the Soviet Thaw.

epistolary archives and autobiography, the diplomat became actively involved in the rich cultural life of the Soviet Union. He frequented plays, exhibitions, ballet and operatic performances. In September 1945, he visited Leningrad partially to revisit the city of his childhood and partially enticed by Leningrad's rich and deeply rooted literary culture. He had already met influential figures such as Boris Pasternak in Moscow on request by Pasternak's sisters in the United Kingdom to bring a pair of boots to their brother. In addition, Berlin had been introduced to various intellectual figures as part of diplomatic functions he had attended. Nevertheless, his meeting with Anna Akhmatova that left a substantial poetic trace in her oeuvre was brought on by a fortuitous set of circumstances (Dalos).

It is reported that Berlin and his colleague Brenda Tripp had engaged in conversation with a stranger they saw reading poetry in the inner room of the Writers' Bookshop on Nevsky Prospekt in November 1945 (Dalos). The person in question was, in fact, V. N. Orlov who was in the process of preparing a collection of Akhmatova's for publication. Berlin inquired about the fate of writers in Leningrad in general and, after Orlov spoke about Zoschenko and Akhmatova, Berlin asked whether Akhmatova was still alive. As Dalos points out, the fact that a knowledgeable critic and scholar of Russian literature had such limited knowledge on the situation of Akhmatova points to the impenetrable information boundary between the Soviet Union and the West even before the official start of the Cold War (Dalos 18). Orlov explained Akhmatova was alive and lived not too far from their meeting place. He asked Berlin if the diplomat was interested in meeting her and, much to Berlin's surprise, quickly arranged for a meeting later that day (Dalos).

Nevertheless, the much anticipated whirlwind visit was paused and eventually cut short by an inopportune interruption. An acquaintance of Berlin from Oxford, Randolph Churchill (the son of Winston Churchill), had found out that the diplomat was in Leningrad and had gone about looking for him (Dalos). He did eventually find Berlin at the Fountain House (Akhmatova's residence) and called out to him by his first name. The precise identity and importance of the interrupting Churchill notwithstanding, this incident drew unnecessary attention to the fact that a foreigner was visiting Anna Akhmatova. As Dalos suggests in his account, Akhmatova was already fearing that she might be closely observed by the secret services, underscoring further her potentially exilic condition. Berlin was fully aware of the situation and chose to leave, later calling to apologize and to reschedule the meeting. Berlin returned at nine o'clock in the evening that same day for another visit (Dalos).

This visit proved to be a long-lasting and substantial one, lasting until the morning hours of the following day (Dalos). According to Berlin's autobiography, the first couple of hours of the visit had been marked by the presence of an uninvited and oblivious guest - a young student in Assyriology who had many questions for Berlin. Akhmatova had remained mostly silent and uninterested during that time. Once the student had left at about midnight, the tone of conversation changed entirely. Berlin recollected later that, at first, Akhmatova had questions about personal acquaintances and friends, poets, composers and socialites, who had emigrated to the United Kingdom and how their fate had developed (Berlin *Personal Impressions*). It is suggested by scholars such as Dalos that here Berlin played a key role in helping Akhmatova live through her pre-revolutionary years and to piece together what had happened to some of the people who had exited her life.

Akhmatova further read some of her poems, including parts of the then-unfinished *Poem Without a Hero*, and discussed her life and personal relationships not without emotion (Berlin). She was on the verge of tears when she talked about Nikolay Gumilev and when she described the irrational jealousy of Shileyko although she made no mention of Garshin. The Leningrad poetess was placing a lot of trust on her guest. The visit was then complemented (rather than interrupted) by an appearance of Akhmatova's son at about three o'clock in the morning. Berlin was impressed by the intelligent Lev who recounted in detail the hardships of being a prisoner in a work camp. Berlin reported that Akhmatova and her son seemed to have a genuine and close connection and that Lev appeared to be happy and optimistic about life after the War (Berlin). The British diplomat even included a note on how impressed he was with Lev - without explicitly naming him - and likening him to the undergraduate students at Oxford in a memo to the British Services (Dalos).

However, Berlin's opportunity to visit in person Anna Akhmatova was not fated to be his only chance to do so. Berlin visited Moscow in the summer of 1956 accompanied by his new wife (Dalos). The couple stayed with various British and American diplomats and spent several weeks in the Soviet capital (Dalos). Prior to attempting any direct contact with Akhmatova, Berlin first talked to Boris Pasternak and mentioned his intentions (ibid). Pasternak, however, was rather cautious in his response and advised him not to pursue the plan, citing safety concerns (ibid). As described by Dalos, Berlin recalled that Pasternak had told him Akhmatova did indeed want to see him, but was worried about the consequences of another such visit on her son's life (ibid.) Lev had just been released from imprisonment once again and Akhmatova was weary of meeting foreigners and especially Berlin. Instead, a phone call was arranged as an alternative, a resolution

that baffled Berlin since Akhmatova had suggested that her calls were listened to by the secret services. Nevertheless, there was a certain belief that if such conversations were not hidden from them, that would not render them dangerous or compromising (Dalos).

The phone call that became known as the "non-meeting" was rather succinct (Dalos). Akhmatova inquired mostly about Berlin's new family situation - when exactly he had gotten married and who his wife was (ibid.). While the reasoning about potential consequences on Lev Gumilev's life was widely accepted as the reason for Akhmatova's reluctance to see her British guest, Dalos also surmises that perhaps Akhmatova's hurt pride might have factored in as well. Pasternak had warned Akhmatova that Berlin was visiting and had interest in talking to her. Dalos further cites Lydia Chukovskaya's chronicles on Akhmatova and a moment she recorded there. Akhmatova had confided in Chukovskaya that she had been on the phone with Berlin and rather cryptically had expressed her frustration at Berlin's attempt to reach her (*The Akhmatova Journals*). Chukovskaya felt that the situation had been extraordinarily difficult for Akhmatova and that she had suffered quite a bit due to her own choice. The non-meeting left a deep and lasting imprint on Akhmatova's works (Dalos).

Berlin's initial visit as well as the non-meeting over a decade later were likely captured and carefully transformed by Akhmatova into an especially detailed poetic tapestry in the lyrical cycle *Blooming Briar* among many other poems through the sixties. While the dissonance between the long, intimate initial meeting that had lasted close to twelve hours and Akhmatova's reluctance to engage with Berlin again in the 1950's was the result of complex historical and personal factors, the poetic output that was produced under its influence was clear and prolific. Dalos has suggested that such a visit, even though it was a first and one-of-its-kind event could

have rendered a potent beginning of a love story for the poetic imagination of Akhmatova. Akhmatova, usually reserved and unwilling to discuss at length her personal life, had undoubtedly disclosed a significant amount of very personal information to her guest, creating an instant and strong intimate bond between the two of them (Dalos). Furthermore, the challenges posed by the circumstances that made more meetings unlikely strengthened the romantic impulse and its creative potentiality (ibid.).

The meetings had not gone unnoticed by the Soviet state apparatus, however (Dalos). A KGB general at the time, O. D. Kalugin, wrote a formal note about the case, classifying the event as a case of possible spying (Dalos and Koroleva). In the memo, Kalugin outlined the details that had been provided by informants on the ground (Koroleva). According to the document, Berlin had shown increased interest in Akhmatova and even confessed feelings for her. Following the "episode" (Koroleva 245), several agents started following and observing the poet closely. As Kalugin elaborates, Akhmatova's entire circle of close friends - figures such as Pasternak and Berggolts - were suspected of harboring strong anti-Soviet sentiments. Most of them were also under active investigation at the time (Koroleva).

The interactions between Akhmatova and Berlin are thus believed to have precipitated the poet's official denunciation by the Soviet State, an event that in and of itself is of a substantial role. According to scholars such as Reeder, for instance, this particular denunciation marked a first of its kind. Previously agents of the Soviet state had not openly criticized and directly discredited artistic and intellectual figures. Rather, the Soviet government had used institutions such as the Writers' Union as its executive tool for these purposes (Reeder). Reeder further points out to previous campaigns against writers such as the one against Zamyatin and Pilnyak in 1929

that were relatively short-lived. That campaign had only lasted a couple of months. More of Zhdanov's discreditations were put forward in the following years (Reeder). Composers such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich (who had been criticized before the War, but had also written patriotic pieces of emotional significance during it) were denounced publicly two years later, in 1948. The musicians were accused of creating formalist and abstract pieces. The film director Sergey Eisenstein, who had produced several dramatic films essential to the Soviet cinematographic canon, was not spared Stalin's discontent and a late-night meeting after his portrayal of Ivan the Terrible raised suspicions as a possible allusion to Stalin himself (Reeder).

As Reeder outlines, the official decrying of Akhmatova was also the beginning of a chain reaction of critical articles of her work that ignored Akhmatova's patriotic pieces and sometimes even contained factual errors that served to further vilify the poetess. Such publications included, for instance, the article by Tamara Trifonova published in 1948 on the pages of Leningradskaya pravda (Reeder). Trifonova had mistakenly dated one of Akhmatova's pre-war poems to 1942, assuming the poetess had remained indolent, pensive and indifferent in her melancholy to the tragic events of the siege of Leningrad (ibid). Following the decree and speech by Zhdanov, several articles were published in the main magazines and newspapers in Leningrad that echoed variations of what Zhdanov had said and added more to the increasing criticism of Akhmatova's oeuvre (ibid). The aspects of Akhmatova's pieces that were emphasised - to the point of exaggeration and distortion - were their anti-nationalism, decadence and apolitical motifs (Reeder).

This was evident in an article by I. V. Sergeyevsky in 1946 who denounced comparisons between Akhmatova and Dante as the German author had been very involved in his country

politically (Reeder). Akhmatova had also completely missed the didactic value of the suffering brought on by the war as well as the agency of the Russian people that had not been fully taken away from them (Reeder 296). Vs. Vishnevsky, the editor of the *Znamya* journal, had even proposed the expulsion of figures like Akhmatova and Zoschenko from the Soviet Union (Reeder). Even Boris Eikhenbaum, who had previously written a thorough critical investigation of Akhmatova's early poetry (as we have already seen in this chapter), aligned his further opinions with the official stance of Zhdanov. Eikhenbaum even dismissed his own work of Akhmatova as naive and an unwitting error which he had consequently fully realized and corrected (Reeder). The former formalist critic had written a generally positive and enthusiastic critical analysis in 1923 of Akhmatova's early poetry (*Anna Akhmatova. Opyt analiza*). In those years, the Soviet literary scholar had spoken of Akhmatova's "expressive energy as her poetic dominant" (Eikhenbaum 63) and poetics of articulation. Eikhenbaum's analysis is thorough and systematic, focusing in detail on the prosodic, metric, acoustic, grammatical and syntactic characteristics of Akhmatova's pieces[9].

The text of the actual state resolution that marked what could be considered as the formal beginning of Akhmatova's poetic exile is rather unremarkable. *Resolution No. 247 from August 14, 1946* is a several-page document that mostly focuses on the violations of two literary journals (*Zvezda* and *Leningrad*) and the specific ramifications, punishments and consequences to be executed from that point forward with regards to their publication and editorial boards. Zoschenko's work is criticised in greater length and depth than Akhmatova's. The criticism for

[9] While Eikhenbaum's early account had been done in an impartial and academic style, led by his belief that a good critic should only raise questions rather than make prophecies, Eikhenbaum's account was tinted positively. The formalist critic had concluded that the "stylistic paradoxes, give the poetry of Akhmatova a special sharpness and clarity [...]". He further suggested that destroying the poetic distance between a lyrical voice and the autobiography of a poet had strengthen the poetic stage of Akhmatova, rather than destroyed it (Eikhenbaum 132).

Akhmatova is rather succinct and limited to her decadent and indulgent poetic tone. Akhmatova's poetry is officially labeled as a vestige of bourgeois aesthetic and "salon poetry". The other crimes committed by the Leningrad poet are that as an artist she had been apolitical and decadent, pessimistic and devoid of meaning (*Resolution*).

The resolution then goes on to decry the agents responsible for such offenses (several other writers are criticised and briefly mentioned as well) - the editors of the journals as well as the Writers' Union who let such anti-Soviet and degrading literature be published. The resolution does use an unusual argument that relates to the topos of the offenses - Leningrad is described as a revolutionary center and forward-thinking city. It is suggested that might render the offense even more grave (*Resolution*). While the actual text of the resolution might not seem particularly detrimental, its consequences - immediate and delayed alike - for the artistic trajectories and personal lives of both Zoschenko and Akhmatova were substantial.

On a pragmatic and quotidian scale, for example, Akhmatova was instantly, though only temporarily [10], denied any coupons for food and means of sustenance. As the scholar E. Mishanenkova notes in her compiled edition of snippets of the Russian poet's life, as a member of the Writers' Union, Akhmatova had been regularly allocated a wage-coupon of a 500-ruble value, a 200-ruble monthly voucher for taxi service as well as the right to an additional room in her living quarters (Mishanenkova 154). In the month following the official denouncement by Zhdanov, Akhmatova's monthly allowance coupons were withheld (Mishanenkova). As Mishanenkova points out, Akhmatova had not proactively requested her allowance and was ready to remain in a state of proud starvation (ibid). Her former husband, however, used his wage

[10] This is a nuance that has been sometimes overlooked by some scholars in their monographs on the life and work of Akhmatova. While the poet was denied food and rations, she was eventually able to have that right restored.

coupons as well as those of other relatives to aid Akhmatova and help provide for her (ibid). Other intellectuals and friends of the poet also came to her help. Mishanenkova suggests that there could have been an element of collective guilt among their midst for not defending Akhmatova more rigorously. Figures such as the poet Olga Bergholz and the actress Faina Ranevskaya would visit Akhmatova regularly. Pasternak had also reportedly been very concerned about Akhmatova's fate and sympathetic to her plight. Nevertheless, the Writers' Union eventually rescinded its decision and provided Akhmatova's former in-laws with vouchers for products (Mishenenkova).

Additionally, an official report calling for Akhmatova's apprehension was issued in June 1950 by the Minister of Soviet Safety Abakumov ("Anna Akhmatova: v nemilosti" *Repin.info*). The document titled "On the Necessity of the Arrest of the Poet Anna Akhmatova", no. 6826/A, was presented to Stalin himself ("Anna Akhmatova: v nemilosti"). In the detailed note, Abakumov delineates the Petersburg poet as an "active enemy of the Soviet government" (ibid). Abakumov quotes extensively excerpts from Punin's alleged confession to terrorist intent against the Soviet State which Akhmatova reportedly shared (ibid.). The confessions allegedly extracted from Punin and Gumilev (both father and son) are saturated with traditional and patos-filled Soviet rhetoric rendering them rather inauthentic. Such official statements for the investigation were likely fabricated by the Soviet agents or, at the very least, significantly misreported and embellished. Nevertheless, Abakumov relies on the excerpts as the substantiating arguments for his ultimate conclusion that Akhmatova needs to be under arrest (ibid.).

The Minister of State Safety further incorporates evidence from an unnamed Petersburg source who quoted Akhmatova's condescending stance on the Central Committee's

denouncement of her work: “Poor things, they don’t know anything or they have forgotten. All of this has already been, all these words have already been said and retold and repeated from year to year… Nothing new has been stated now, that is clear to everyone. For Zoshchenko, it is a surprise, for me it simply is but a repetition of moralizing lectures and damnations that I have heard before” (“Anna Akhmatova: v nemilosti”). Drawing on this evidence, Abakumov calls for Akhmatova’s arrest as a dangerous and active figure with terrorist potential. Stalin, however, did not approve the request and reportedly issued a resolution to “continue developing [the case]” (ibid.).

Keeping in mind these biographical and historical circumstances constitutes a key to the broader and more nuanced understanding of space and exile in Akhmatova’s poetic work. Exile is a complex condition that does not abide by rigid definitions or nomenclature labels, especially in the case of the Leningrad poet, and so are its reflections in the poetic spaces constructed by Akhmatova. Scholars such as Helena Muchnic have noted, “Anna Akhmatova writes about herself, and if her poetry gives us a picture of her country and her epoch, it is through herself that they are seen - an undistorted image, because her vision is clear” (Muchnic 17). Muchnic further underscores the concrete, sensory and empirical artistic approach of Akhmatova to her poetic pieces, especially when delineating distant topoi such as Venice, for instance.[11] The biographical and autobiographical elements in the poet’s oeuvre are present and visible. Nevertheless, in abstaining from a purely biographically-infused and, by proxy, rather superficial interpretative reading of Akhmatova’s tendency to depict restrictive and enclosing spaces, we can engage with her works in a more meaningful manner. The fact that Akhmatova was in a condition of a unique

[11] In fact, Muchnic further provides a comparison between Akhmatova’s poetics when it comes to Venice and the poetics of another inner exile poet, Osip Mandelstam in her article.

internal exile cannot fully and entirely account for her tendency to construct shrinking and restrictive spaces. Nevertheless, an awareness and deeper knowledge of both the broader socio-historical context and Akhmatova's concrete circumstances within it, is a necessary point of departure in the analysis of her poetry. Thus, Akhmatova's life remains a key starting point of any literary analysis of her poetry, but certainly not the predominant analytical lens.

Akhmatova's poetic cycle *Sweetbriar in Blossom* renders a relevant case study with regards to the concrete development of poetic space and motion through it alongside the personal themes of disillusionment and separation from a loved one that remain a stable characteristic of Akhmatova's oeuvre. The cycle comprises sixteen poetic pieces of various lengths and rhythmic characteristics, which the poet composed between 1946 and 1964. The role of the addressee of these poems has been generally ascribed to Isaiah Berlin (as we have discussed earlier in the chapter). Indeed, the creation of the earliest poems coincide with the aftermath of Akhmatova's first meeting with the British scholar and diplomat; furthermore, the later poetic blocks within the cycle were written around the time of the second "non-meeting" over the phone in 1964. Akhmatova has captured the complexity of her unfulfilled, yet impactful, relationship with Berlin in a number of other pieces, but the generic specification of the lyrical cycle makes *Sweetbriar* an especially significant poetic whole dedicated to him. In this particular case, the biographical reflections interwoven into the poetic tapestry cannot be overlooked or disregarded in its analysis. An awareness of the personal and historical circumstances that predated and, most likely, inspired the creation of this cycle add another plane of interpretative understanding and a more crystalized background against which the motifs of space and exile can be investigated.

The generic specifications of a cycle - written over a prolonged period of time as is the case here - further make *Sweetbriar in Blossom* a suitable ground for a developmental analysis of artistic motifs. The specific period of its creation spans the years from the immediate aftermath of Akhmatova's public denunciation to the years of the Thaw and the gradual loosening of some of the most draconian restrictions of the regime. This cycle could thus make for a suitable litmus test on the development of space and directionality in Akhmatova's work from the perspective of poetic creation under changing conditions of internal exile. While Akhmatova's early poetic pieces as well as her war and post-war works will not be discussed in depth in this chapter, they could serve as a starting point and a larger comparative frame. What is more interesting, however, is how precisely Akhmatova's lyrical style, the composition of her poems as well as the development of themes, motifs and concrete images that embody spaces and spatiality changed in the second half of her artistic career. Perhaps the externally imposed condition of censorship and ostracization found expression in the fabric of her poetry. While there is a multitude of critical analyses, categorizations and interpretations of Akhmatova's development as a poet, few have looked at the idea of internal exile and how that might be incorporated into her poems as we have discussed previously in this chapter. Thus, the *Sweetbriar in Blossom* cycle (Appendix II, 250-257) is of particular interest both in the chronology and duration of its creation, but also in of itself, as a genre and a poetic work: an amalgam, a comprehensive collection of various poetic pieces brought together into an artistic whole.

While the overall content and register of the cycle revert to Akhmatova's earlier poetry, which is predominantly personal and lyrical (rather than her more socially-focused works such as *Requiem*), themes of exile and alienation are still ubiquitous within it. The poems are integrated in

a predetermined order by the poetess, carefully numbered and marked by her; this order, however, does not align with the chronology of poetic creation or that of the events depicted in the cycle. The earliest poems were composed preceding Akhmatova's official denouncement by the Soviet State in August 1946, but following the meeting with Berlin in the fall of 1945; the later poems span the years of the Soviet Thaw in the 1950's and almost up until her death in 1966. The cycle has a subtitle that flags the poems within it as artifacts taken from a notebook that had been burned ("from the burned notebook"). This suggests a certain element of surreptitiousness and transgression, even though the poems do not overtly engage with socio-political themes themselves. Moreover, the image of fire as well as the motif of destruction, cleansing and rebirth by fire, recur frequently throughout the cycle as well shall see.

Even on a purely visual and graphic level, the early pieces in the cycle that were composed in the immediate aftermath of the official Soviet denouncement and the beginning of the period of conditional, internal exile for Akhmatova, are easily discernible. These poems are characterized by their generally shorter form consisting of substantially fewer verses and shorter metric specifications. Not only are the four poems from that period ("2. An Appearance", "3. In a Dream", "4. Hiding by the gate…", and "5. At a dear price…") ostensibly shorter, but they were also not cleaved into individualized stanzas. These poems thus remain rather miniature, but indivisible poetic nuclei that encapsulate a potent reflection of the year of significant change in Akhmatova's life. Some of the poetic miniatures have titles, while others remain untitled. Some of them bear inscriptions and epigraphs, while others lack such elements. Within the cycle that is generally asynchronous and non-chronological in its composition, the poems from 1946 are tightly bound together, thus forming an individual thematic and rhythmic cluster that stands out

from the remaining building pieces of the cycle. It is thus worth utilizing these early poems as a point of departure in the analysis of the concrete spaces and vectors of motion associated with exile in Akhmatova's oeuvre written during the time of her internal exile.

The second poem "An Appearance" (*Nayavu*) is an eight-line single-stanza piece, which opens up with an abjuration of time and space. The first two lines of the poem depict wide, open, abstract spaces (time, space, the white night) and generate a sense of a boundless and engulfing despair. Nevertheless, after renouncing both time and space, the lyrical subject says she looked through the white night, thus taming the void by establishing some agency over it and demarcating her presence and awareness of it. She further narrows the focus to the inside of her lover's home and the glass vase of daffodils. The Russian name of the flower is derived from its Latin name - Narcissus. This depicts an image of an increasingly circumscribed and restrained subjectivity as the story of Narcissus enamored with his own reflection is evoked. The overall chronotope of this poem further comprises a shift from the expansive, liminal spatial realms of the night and the concrete, enclosed space of the interior of the home. After the poetic subject rejects space in the opening line, she subjugates the space around her to her voice, gradually narrowing the boundaries of the scene she is delineating. The description of her lover's home ends with the image of a mirror and a reflection that further encloses and restrains the created image within itself. The self-sustained and enclosed image that is reflected in a mirror is perhaps the most fitting end to the gradually recoiling and shrinking spaces she has depicted.

By likening the mirror to the clear surface of water, the lyrical voice further fortifies the allusion to the Ancient Greek tale of Narcissus and his tragic end. A sense of inescapability and hopelessness is intensified. Narcissus's only escape from his vain and restrained existence is

death. The end of the short poem suspends both time and space as well as the lyrical subject and her lover in a locus of helplessness. The narrowed spatiality that folds in and closes into itself is further amplified by a repetition of the opening damnation ("Damned be time, damned be space") in the penultimate line of the piece. This creates a mirroring effect that echoes the image of the mirror on the textual and structural level of the verse. The Narcissus-like lover is trapped between his image and its reflection. The repetition of the opening line is followed by the closing line, in which the lyrical voice laments that even her lover could not help her.

Every image that the lyrical heroine constructs is well contained within itself and its own boundaries, affixed and circumscribed in its being: the flowers are anchored in the vase, the lover's image is reflected and bound by the mirror and the lyrical voice has traversed the white night and seen everything within it. What starts off as a wide open space full of potentiality and without clear boundaries is quickly tamed, circumscribed and bound to palpable borders. Furthermore, while there is no explicit reference to the kind of setting the poem takes place in, it is clear that the focus of poetic description moves inward and in a centripetal fashion: from the general description of time, space, ambiguous and abstract nighttime (time, space, the white night) to the concrete physical interior of a home. Even without clearly demarcated constraining and restrictive spaces, this poem aligns with the general aesthetic of the motifs of exile in Akhmatova's work.

Additionally, the syntax and the general lexical skeleton of the poem mirror the centripetal and self-contained spatial physicality. The eight-line single-stanza piece contains a slightly more varied rhyming scheme than a lot of Akhmatova's poems, partially due to the framing effect created by the first and last two lines. The rhyming scheme is, thus, AABCBCAA. Additionally,

all but two lines start with a conjunction and the two exceptions both begin with a personal pronoun. All of the conjunctions used within the piece, save for the very last one ("but"), are additive ("and"), carefully weaving and binding the poem together into a self-contained poetic unit within the cycle. The contrast-establishing "but" at the very end of the piece renders a change of syntactic direction, but does not alter the overall structure of the poem. The sense of a more constraining and border-demarcated space is reflected on the textual and syntactic level as well.

The poem itself is carefully constructed and put together and does not leave any possibility for a more open structure that would escape or deviate from the carefully crafted rhyming scheme. Even though this poem does not touch on socio-political themes (if anything the petite piece constitutes a kind of reversal to Akhmatova's early period aesthetic sensibilities), it still fits well within the general Akhmatova canon. This poem, as many other pieces of the Petersburg poet, shows a centripetal tendency of closing off and circumscribing, rather than expanding or transcending. This centripetal directionality is clear not only on the level of physical topi delineated in it, but also on the syntactic level of the poetic skeleton. The repetition of conjunctions, mirroring of rhyming and imagery as well as the overall framing of the piece closes it in and renders it into a self-contained individual poetic cluster within a larger whole.

The fourth poem in the cycle abides by more regular poetic and rhythmic schemes, thus departing slightly from the aesthetic and poetic characteristics of the second one. This poetic miniature is untitled and a bit longer in the number of verses it contains. While the poem is not divided into separate stanzas, the eight lines form conspicuous semantic and prosodic quatrains even without special demarcations. The rhyming scheme is a regular and alternating ABABCDCD. In terms of spatial development and the motion of the poetic gaze, the poem

unravels in an expected manner. While the opening image of the poem is anchored high in the horizon of the sky and delineates the image of the moon, it is quickly lowered and brought closer to the ground. The moon disc is described as sly and untrustworthy, hiding by the gate.

The turn of the gaze upwards at the beginning of the piece is redirected to a more restricted topos. That is achieved gradually since the gaze stops at the gate, a symbolic threshold, first. The past active participle of the verb "to hide", together with the prefix "*pri*" further narrows the perspective and poetic stage for this poem, amplifying the tense and ominous general ambience. The poetic voice then goes on to lament how she is gradually losing her artistic legacy. It is a checkered time for her, a sentiment that is perhaps a biographical reflection. The sly moon becomes a witness to a turning point in the heroine's life as a figure of creative agency when she realizes that she would lose any recognition after she is gone. The poetic subject's posthumous legacy is endangered and on the point of obliteration from the collective memory and consciousness. This is further conveyed by the image of books becoming stale and moldy on the shelf.

Written in January 1946, this poem is the earliest one among the small nucleus of four pieces within the larger *Sweetbriar* cycle composed in 1946. The fourth, untitled poem, while touching on a theme of obliteration and gradual erosion of legacy, actually predates Zhdanov's official denouncement of the poetess. This renders the poem an especially astute and perceptive meditation on the fleeting nature of fame and on the transience of a writer's legacy and influence. While Akhmatova's official denouncement was not an unexpected turn of events, the incorporation of such moment in the lyrical cycle complements well the theme of separation, endings and hopelessness. The poetic voice describes how a collective "they" (most likely the

readers or people of Russia, perhaps imagined with a nuance of a Romantic-inspired mob, *tolpa*) will forget her. This is done by way of an impersonal and statement that is completely devoid of further pronouns and further underscores the sense of hopelessness the lyrical voice feels. The imagery of books rotting in a cabinet continues to narrow in the boundaries of the physical space of the poem. The lyrical voice further laments that neither streets, nor her poetic lines will be bound to her legacy or named after her. While the other three poems of the 1946 nucleus within the cycle are predominantly personal in their themes, this piece diverges from that tendency and touches on the issue of creative agency, role and legacy of the poet. The poetic voice is clearly and explicitly lamenting the oblivion that is brought about not only by romantic heartbreak, but also by suppression and gradual erasure of an artist from the collective memory.

This poem reflects, more so than any of the previous pieces, the socio-historical context of its creation. Anchored toward the end of the group of poems from 1946 that are saturated with lyrical and individual motifs of heartbreak and lovers' plight, it shifts the semantic focus into a broader artistic context. Forgetting transcends the realm of romantic oblivion, the theme of poetic legacy in the process of annihilation is introduced. The moon shining above acquires rather imposing and ominous characteristics. It resembles a symbol of an omnipresent force that comprises a binding and repressive element, rather than liberating associations with the wide horizon of the sky or as a guiding beacon of light in a dark sky. The juxtaposition of imagery of the moon in the sky and the gates creates a contrast that begins a process of encasing and inward, centripetal motion. Moreover, the moon and the gates demarcate the limitations of the poetic space and stage. The space grows smaller and becomes more enclosed by each new spatial marker the poetic voice introduces. The image of decaying books in the cabinet further amplifies the

centripetal tendency in the depiction of physical space in the poem. Within the eight verses of this particular piece, the focus has gone from the broad horizon of the sky through a gate by which the moon is hiding to a closed shelf of books. The world of the lyrical subject shrinks and folds inwards as she realizes she would be soon left in oblivion. The closing line of the poem emphasizes this centripetality of poetic motion by binding together the contrasting images of streets and poetic lines; none of them will bear the poetess' name. The poet's legacy will be erased both from the collective memory and from her own oeuvre.

Another miniature incorporated within the poetic cycle is the immediately following, fifth poetic unit that has been left untitled, similarly to the fourth one. The fifth poem was written in August 1946 at the Fountain House and comprises only four lines. While being the shortest one in the cycle (save for the very last, sixteenth piece), the fifth poetic block is not fragmentary, but rather a whole unit in and of itself. Once again, the rhyming scheme of choice creates a framing device that cleaves a poetic niche within the cycle and separates this self-contained unit from its neighbors. This particular rhyming scheme is ABBA. The miniature work itself constitutes a brief observation made by the poetic voice, addressed most likely to the evasive figure of her lover. The voice describes how she found out that he (the mysterious figure of her unnamed grave) still remembers and is waiting.

Whether the addressee of this brief rumination is living or deceased remains unclear. The lyrical I only vaguely mentions that the realization he still remembers has come at a high price. There is potentiality and a hint that the invoked addressee might be displaced or in search of a place: "Maybe you will find a place, too". The poetic voice uses the Russian word *mesto*, which clearly indicates a place that is presupposed to be inhabited or taken up by something, a place that

has a clear purpose, rather than a more vague and universal space (*prostranstvo*, etc.). The usage of the genitive case in the last line of this poem is of special investigative interest as it contains the only mention of a concrete physical space in the piece - a grave. The hyphen between the second person singular nominative pronoun ("you", demarcating the addressee) and the image of the unnamed grave in the genitive case suggests a linkage and belonging between the addressee and the lyrical voice's grave. The addressee might be a ghost from the poetic voice's past or simply a displaced memory of a painful past. The only physical marker to which this abstract "you" is connected to is a grave. Even without an ostensive focus on space and place in this example, the poem still highlights its centrality. Furthermore, the specific type of space that is delineated in it - the grave - aligns with the generally more claustrophobic, encased and restrictive spatial representations in the works of Akhmatova.

The eleventh building block of the poetic cycle is entitled "In the Broken Mirror" once again incorporating the image of a mirror into the poems. Nevertheless, the mirror remains limited to the title of this poem composed in 1956. The poem itself comprises twenty lines that are not formally demarcated or spatially split into individual stanzas. Nevertheless, the rhyming scheme utilized in the poem once again serves as a tool to distinguish semantic stanzas and micro units within the larger poetic body. The predominant rhyming scheme is ABAB, interrupted only once by the introduction of a quatrain set of lines abiding by the CDDC scheme. Most of the lines start either with the conjunction "and" or a pronoun, thus creating a regularity and a binding frame within the poetic scaffolding. The wholeness of this particular poem is notable when considering its locus in the cycle. It is the last poem that is not separated into individual stanzas. The lack of such spatial boundaries creates a sense of density and urgency, potency and a rapidity

of the growing tension that will ultimately result in heartbreak and loss. This intensification is complemented by the images, figures and tropes used in the poem as well.

The opening line is direct and bold: “Incorrigible words/ I listened to on that starry night”. The poem opens with an emphasis of the grammatical direct object, rather than the lyrical subject, her mood or the ambience of the evening she is describing. The image of the broken mirror from the title is amplified by the adjective “incorrigible” hinting at an inevitable end from the very beginning of the poem. The chronotope and image of the starry night is followed by the image of a flaming abyss. The head of the lyrical heroine is spinning as if she is facing a void. The initial physical spaces incorporated into the piece are wide and limitless, rather than restricted or bound in any concrete way. The vastness of the implied starry sky as well as the flaming void make the lyrical subject feel lost, weak, and unable to clearly tell what is going on as another romantic disenchantment is about to unravel.

Nevertheless the unbound spaces that are engulfing the heroine are immediately juxtaposed to demarcated, concrete and much smaller physical realms. Death is wailing by the door (an instant threshold and boundary marker), the dark garden hoots like an owl and the city that has lost all of its strength is transformed into Troy. The way the lyrical subject depicts the city further aligns with the generally narrowing and centripetal spatial directionality. While the city might not be as clearly and explicitly outlined as the home, the boundaries of which are signaled by the image of a door, this city in particular is linked to Troy. The allusion to the ancient legend of Troy as a besieged city that withstood its fate for many years until its destruction from within delineates a more circumscribed and encased space. The Trojan Horse, the agent that brought about the definitive destruction of Troy, is also associated with an

unexpected threat emerging from within. Even as Akhmatova's lyrical subject in this specific poem is constructing vast and open spaces, many of the physical locales that follow them as the poem develops bring the spatial dimensions of it inwards, closing and enclosing the spaces the subject creates.

The final two lines of the poem embody the anticlimactic and counterintuitively tranquil end of the relationship described by the lyrical subject. While the initial development of the work builds an amplifying tension, the poetic ending is rather placid and subdued. After the more abstract description of the present of the lyrical heroine's lover, the lyrical subject negates memory and the act of remembering altogether. She does not want to remember the present that was bestowed to her by her lover. The last two lines, however, take an unanticipated turn as the image of a meeting that never was is anthropomorphized and said to be crying behind the corner. The entire physical space of the poem is brought to the concrete final moment and to the restricted space of a corner. What begins as a description of a starry night, a sense of feeling lost above an abyss that is ablaze is now quietly grounded and contained within a corner[12]. The ending of the relationship, the wrong gift, the plight of the lyrical subject are almost distilled in the closing image of the unrealized meeting and the space of a corner.

Spatiality occupies a fluctuating place in Akhmatova's lyrical cycle *Sweetbriar in Blossom*. While there is an overarching tendency to a centripetal spatial directionality, spaces that become smaller and encased, images of wide open and expansive topi also have a palpable presence in the poems. There is, perhaps, a rather subtle, but omnipresent parallel between motifs of meeting one's beloved, being in love and being engulfed by a turbulent love affair and more

[12] As seen earlier in the Introduction section of this dissertation, corners can be potent topoi and generators of immense creative potential as suggested by the French philosopher Bachelard. In this particular case, however, the corner seems to encapsulate the final topos of the poem, its endpoint rather than beginning.

expansive spaces such as skies, oceans and even an ominous, flaming void. Most of the pieces that touch on the topic of separation, endings and an irreparably damaged connection, however, seem to incorporate enclosed spaces, boundaries as well as a sense of restraint, imprisonment and claustrophobia. The poems in the first half of the cycle are anchored in predominantly abstract general spaces and concrete places. The lyrical heroine is in a state of turmoil and confusion due to the incredible and extraordinary nature of the meeting with her lover. The two developing moods of this particular romance swing between a sense of impending doom and fiery destruction (also reflected by the burned notebooks and poems the lyrical voice invokes several times) and a sense of failed and unrealized potentiality that generates a tension that builds up and moves the lyrical cycle in its development.

Perhaps the most palpable presence of open and opening horizons and expansive, limitless space can be traced in the seventh piece of the cycle. This unit of the poetic whole is titled "Another Songlet" and it was composed in the summer of 1957 in Komarovo. The title of the poem binds it directly to the preceding piece which is entitled "First Songlet". The earlier poem - written in December 1956 in an unknown location - remains suspended in an undefined chronotope. There are, furthermore, no direct indicators as to when the "First Songlet" poem might be set. The initial songlet focuses entirely on the failed potentiality of the love between the lyrical subject and her addressee. In fact, that particular piece does bear a rather fragmentary and list-like overall quality. A secretive non-meeting (perhaps inspired by the poet's own second non-meeting with Berlin), unspoken words, speechless words and parallel glances emphasise the impossibility of the physical realization of the connection between the lovers. Although the poem could also be read as an ironic rejection of an affair that did happen. The only concrete mention of

a clear geographic location is Podmoskva (the region outside the boundaries of the city of Moscow) and that is embedded in the phrase “briar of Podmoskva”.

It is precisely the briar, however, that becomes a connective link to the following songlet. In this case, the briar has been incorporated in the epigraph of the “Another Songlet”. The briar flags the two poetic pieces with special semantic significance as it is also incorporated in the title of the overall cycle. No other poems mention the thicket. Furthermore, the epigraph of the second songlet, a clearly defined quatrain in itself, contains another reference to the preceding songlet. This epigraph is of further interest as it is the only epigraph in the cycle that is not a quote or an excerpt by another writer. Moreover, even though one other poem (the fourteenth one in the cycle) bears an epigraph by Akhmatova, it is clearly signaled and labeled as such rather than left without an attributed source as is the case in this poem. In this particular epigraph, which is reminiscent of an extended but unrealized ending of the previous piece, the lyrical subject promises to plant a briar in memory of the meeting that never took place. The figure of the briar indicates the centrality of these poems to the overall cycle which bears the same name. While the first songlet has an overall fragmentary and lamenting character, the second short piece renders a more concrete and detailed expression of how exactly the lyrical heroine encountered her beloved. The overall tone and mood of this poem is more affirmative and uplifting.

In the seventh building block of the poetic cycle, the heroine recounts how ecstatic she was when she met her lover. This poem is grounded in a more clear, while still ambiguous chronotope from its opening line: “How everything was aglow and singing there”. The relative adverb of space ‘there’ is defined and expounded fully only at the very end of the poem when the lyrical heroine names the edge of the world as the space of the fateful meeting. The place is

referenced a couple of other times during the development of the poem, but it is not explicitly demarcated or named until the closing line. The spatial half of the chronotope thus comprises a framing effect in this particular work encapsulating and clearly marking and separating the meeting between the two lovers as an individual whole within the fabric of the cycle. This whole is of further significance due to its overall emotional expressivity in addition to the introduction of the more open locus of the end of the world. While most other pieces bring an ambience of resignation, heartache and an impending ending, this one describes in a clearly depicted and bound poetic space the joy of the new love.

The space itself - "the boundary of the world" - renders a peculiar and complex paradox; it carries connotations of vast openness and horizons, on the one hand, while also marking the boundaries between separate realms - that of the world itself and the space beyond it. This duality of the liminal space - an intersection of the unbounded and circumscribed - stands out among the other open spaces incorporated into the first half of the cycle. While the images of the sky, stars and a vast void recur several times in the cycle, the border of the world and its inherent liminality are unique to the seventh poem. The Russian word *predel* conjures associations with wide and open spaces. The semantics of the word also include a mathematical meaning that denotes a maximum value, sometimes even a tendency towards infinity. Adding the prefix *bez* (meaning without) and an adjectival suffix turns the word into a frequently used adjective meaning unconditional and unbounded.

The location of the *predel*, moreover, is a poetic and hypothetical spatial construct that lacks a concrete referent. There is no corresponding concrete physical image or particular place that is associated with the *predel*. The edge of the world could be localized somewhere at the end

of the horizon where the vanishing point leads to the merging of ocean (or land) and sky. Perhaps, the boundary of the world could be found at the intersection of the sky and the space beyond it - somewhere high up in the sky, beyond the boundary of what is visible. Each of these instances evokes images of widely open and freeing spaces. There is no singular or concrete representation of the limit of the world, which opens up the phrase chosen by the lyrical voice to various possible interpretations. The chosen figure of speech further underscores the ecstatic and overwhelming emotions of the meeting between the two lovers. This meeting, while remaining suspended in a nebulous space, has a clearly defined locus that is also tied to an emotional valence.

Nevertheless, the aspect of the boundary, the *predel*, that is ingrained in the term etymologically is a division of space, a separation of a kind. This boundary and liminality between the palpable world and the metaphysical and transcendental space that lies beyond or above it further emphasizes the emotional intensity of the love of the heroine. The space of the meeting remains somewhat mysterious, despite its detailed description, aglow and singing. The lyrical subject is engulfed and enchanted by the emotion. The description of the topos of the lovers' reunion bears resemblance to a magical realm, perhaps one of these alternate worlds that are sometimes discovered by heroines in them. The lyrical subject asserts that she does not want to leave that space and moment. She wants to remain suspended "there" close to her lover, surrounded by the glow of the miracle of their meeting.

The fourth line of the poem, a short verse in trochaic trimeter captures precisely that sentiment. The line is followed by a slightly longer verse that expresses the unwillingness of the lyrical subject to return "anywhere from there". The entire fourth line consists solely of two

spatial adverbs and further hints at the importance of the topos to this particular poetic piece. This verse is potent and saturated in its spatial nuances, an effect in part achieved by the specificity of the Russian language. Both adverbs of space indicate directionality and implicit motion in them as well, something that would be difficult to succinctly convey in one English word. The first adverb roughly translates to “nowhere”, “to nowhere”, or “whither nowhere”. It is similar to the English adverb whither, but it is in its negated form. This adverb represents a clear rejection of any path or potential destinations other than the current location of the lyrical subject. This current topos is encapsulated by the second adverb of the verse, “from there”. The prefixed spatial adverb *ottuda* is exemplary of the nuances of space and motion (*ot-* indicate a direction away from a center or frame of reference) that are encoded in just one word. The combination of the two adjectives and their separation as an independent verse indicates the significance of the unwillingness of the heroine to leave the fateful meeting. She actively chooses to remain suspended in the moment and to stay in that place, even if the specific location, the “there”, has not yet been fully and explicitly defined.

In the verses following this line of spatial adverbs, the heroine describes in more detail the potency of her feelings. She is wholeheartedly surrendering to her happiness by choosing to remain in the present and rejecting the other dialectic pole she is faced with - responsibility, duty. The heroine actively chooses happiness and this choice evokes a bittersweet sensation. The overall tone of the poem is bordering an atypically passionate and ecstatic rhetoric for Akhmatova. Even the early poems of the Leningrad writer that were predominantly oriented towards the lyrical realm of the personal and interpersonal, love and disillusionment, abandonment and heartbreak are not as overtly passionate and dominated by expressive

emotionality. Akhmatova's style of restraint and economy of expression is a steadfast constant in her aesthetic trajectory, rather than a changing variable. The seventh poem preserves the succinctness of expression that is Akhmatova's hallmark, but at a much stronger emotional valency. This sets "Another Songlet" apart from the rest of the *Sweetbriar* cycle and Akhmatova's general ouvre, necessitating further and more detailed critical exploration of the songlet and its significance for the cycle as well as for the depiction of spatiality.

This poem contains clear autobiographical allusions to Akhmatova's own meeting with Berlin - "I spoke to him, to whom I should not have/ I spoke for a long time". These two lines indicate a plausible reference to the first meeting between the two intellectual figures that was retrospectively transformed into a poetic space of its own dimensions. Adding a biographical perspective to the critical investigation to the poem renders an useful interpretative layer. The creative and artistic process has turned the fateful meeting between Akhmatova and Berlin into a parallel realm that is contained in itself while simultaneously becoming part of the poetic whole of the *Sweetbriar* cycle. The well documented, night-long meeting of November 1945 between the Leningrad poet and the British diplomat took place in Akhmatova's residence at the time. The poetess herself was in a way 'discovered' and actively sought out by her guest; she allowed him to enter her most intimate residential space and opened to him. Akhmatova did not have to look for him or go to a distant location to meet him. Nevertheless, in the creative space of the poem, the meeting is set in an abstract, faraway place, suggesting an implicit agency on the part of the lyrical voice herself. She must have chosen to go there. Furthermore, the heroine states clearly that she does not want to "come back" from that liminal place that is saturated with so many emotions.

This seventh building block of the cycle was written in 1957, over a decade after the initial lengthy encounter between Akhmatova and Berlin and almost a year after their brief phone conversation. In many ways, it is a poetic retrospective, a glimpse into how Akhmatova chose to remember, but to also reinvent and reimagine the moment of 1945. The recollection and poetic creation which comprise the seventh poem bear a significance on a personal and poetic plane for Akhmatova. The stifling and overwhelming effect of love and passion are vividly described by the lyrical heroine as is the need for reciprocity and a response from her beloved. The final two lines of the poem turn directly to the heroine's addressee, reminding him that the two of them are simply two souls at the edge of the world. This is perhaps the most positive and love-affirming poetic piece of the cycle. There is no depiction of an impending end, no presence of menacing figures or presentiments that frequently recur in the other poems of the cycle. No eschatological forces at play, no images of permeating fire and flames, just the glowing miracle of the meeting between the lovers. This overall expressive and positive rhetoric, ecstatic and burning depiction of the potentiality of love (rather than its disenchanting end) finds reflection on the spatial plane as well. The space of this piece is anchored in the rather open and freeing image of the *predel*; there is a sense of expanding horizons and of moving outwards and upwards, rather than closing in or withdrawing. In this piece, Akhmatova seems to briefly diverge from her usual aesthetic and preference for withering, shrinking and enclosing spaces and concrete places. She lets her poetic subject indulge in the hopes a new love brings and anchors her in large, open and abstract spaces that free the subject from the constraints of the physical world. In the brief duration of this particular poem within the cycle, Akhmatova's poetics are centrifugal, rather than centripetal.

Perhaps it is the hope brought about by love that could liberate the lyrical voice from her inner exile and entrapment in restrained spaces.

The pieces following the seventh poem ground the physical spaces that serve as a backdrop to the development of the love story to more concrete and restrained spaces once again. Alongside with that, the optimistic feeling about the potentiality of the love and the passion gradually subsides and is replaced by an ambience of estrangement, abandonment and impossibility resonating better with the first couple of poems of the cycle. The eighth building block of the *Sweetbriar* cycle marks a shift in its general poetics and poetic trajectory. Even on a purely formal level, the eighth poem, entitled "A Dream" and composed in August 1956 demarcates a change. The poem is split into four carefully constructed and measured out quatrains abiding by a consistent ABAB rhyming scheme. The poem does include a clearly marked and attributed epigraph, a quote by the symbolist Aleksandr Blok. The epigraph itself is a line extracted from the famous and ominous poem "The Steps of the Captain" and comprises a question asked to a deceased character named Anna. This line as well as the allusion it carries constitutes a premonitious compass for Akhmatova's own poem and a hint of self-referential indulgence.

In the opening line of the eighth piece, the lyrical voice wonders precisely whether or not her own dream had been a premonitious one. A sense of doom builds up as the heroine describes the rise of the glowing Mars among the other stars in the sky. The star-planet changes color to an ominous crimson shade. While the introductory quatrain of the poem is situated in the vast and expansive space of the night sky, somewhere up and above the horizon, it is distanced from any positive or liberating connotations. It is clear right away that something is amiss as the elements

of the sky that are delineated by the lyrical subject hint at a threat and an imminent conflict and bloodshed. There are no comforting nuances associated with this sky and its stars. Furthermore, the description of the sky precedes the description of the dream itself, emphasizing the sky's presence in poetic reality and its role as an indicator that something is indeed awry. The descriptive poetic focus then shifts to the dream of the heroine and to the concrete details and micro embodiments of the ubiquitous presence of her beloved one.

The figure of the man addressed by the lyrical I and his future arrival are felt by her everywhere - in the sounds of bells in the city, the sound of Bach's music, the scent of the sweetbriar that is blossoming in vain. The entire second quatrain of the poem focuses on a description of the ways in which the arrival of her future guest permeates the environment. The last verse in that quatrain, however, brings this list to an end and permanently grounds the poetic perspective in the space of the dark, ploughed ground. This quatrain reads like a catalog of elements that touch on a few physical senses associated with death and a burial. Bach's Chaconne, for instance, mentioned explicitly in the piece, is a mournful part of a suite thought to have been dedicated to his first wife who passed away while Bach was on a trip (Helgeson). This verse, saturated in sound, is followed shortly thereafter by another line that carries the sound of the bells further deepening the associations with death. The two lines are moreover connected by their rhyming endings. The final snapshot in the quatrain - that of the ploughed black soil reminiscent of a plot prepared for a grave - renders a sharp contrast to the image of the sky delineated in the beginning of the poem. The lyrical heroine is now encased between the crimson Mars above her and the dark ground, the lower physical confine or boundary of the space within her dream (the metadiegetic space).

The sense of escape and expansion, the magnetic pull of the figure of the heroine's beloved and their passionate love's potential from the earlier, seventh poem in the cycle are fully replaced by a poetic retreat and a confinement. Once again the poetic voice converges with poetics of centripetal spatiality. The spatiality of the eighth poem is more grounded, the poetic perspective quickly brought down and focused on the raw, ploughed black soil. The Russian word for "ploughed" (that modifies the noun ground, soil) used by Akhmatova further amplifies that feeling with its prefix *ras*, suggesting a rupture, a break,a tear in the wholeness of the ground. Such rupture only opens up the ground to another deeper dimension, unearthly and deadly. The vivid end of the second stanza is followed by the arrival of a personified fall who approaches the lyrical subject, but suddenly changes her mind and hides. Even the anthropomorphised figure of the season withdraws, perhaps in horror of what is to come and befall the lyrical subject.

The temporal setting of the poem, autumn, is liminal and in-flux in its essence - positioned between the summer and the fall, symbolizing endings and preparations for the winter cold. The heroine further finds herself in an undetermined and ominous time that has brought unsettling news to her. The lyrical heroine laments that August has brought her such news on a terrible anniversary (likely that of her official denouncement by the Soviet State as represented by Zhdanov a decade earlier). She further wonders how she could pay off the royal present and with whom she could celebrate - a description that conveys a state of profound alienation and estrangement. While there is no explicit mention of exile or exile-related motifs here, the heroine is alone and isolated, something that is conveyed subtly and implicitly. Such kind of isolation could be tantamount to a condition of internal exile and displacement. This moment of isolation is further paralleled by the increasingly contracting and dwindling spaces. The night sky and even

its guiding stars offer no consolation or words of hope as they do earlier in the poetic cycle. There is a lack of directionality and purpose as the heroine laments she has nowhere to go and no one to confide to the news of the visit.

The overall pessimistic and increasingly hopeless, restraining poetics stand in sharp contrast to the preceding poem in the cycle. The glimpse of passion and positive potentiality of love delineated in the succinct, but expressive seventh poem ("Another Songlet") seems to remain a unique and isolated case within the cycle. The seventh poetic piece brings a few instances of open and expanding spaces and an impulse to run away to the most liminal parts of the world to be reunited with the heroine's beloved. There are connotations of openness and vastness, saturated with the warmth and ecstasy of a possible connection between the two lovers. The relative *there* is full of hope and a viable destination for the lyrical subject. The general motion of both the heroine and her poetic narrative line is outwards (centrifugal), away from a restrictive center and toward her beloved in the liminal spaces of the world.

Nevertheless, this is inverted through the withdrawing and retreating spatiality of the eighth poem as well as most of the consequent pieces within the cycle. A centripetal force now grows stronger and pulls everything in the heroine's dream downwards, towards the soil that is ready for a grave. The heroine that was on the very edge of the world in the previous poetic unit is now encased between the menacing sky and her sinister dream. Even the fall, a natural element that progresses of its own accord and is rarely subjugated to other forces, chooses to hide and retreat. The only haven and escape for the lyrical subject thus remains her poetry as she continues to write down her verse in the burned notebook. The downward and inward progression of the spaces (from the sky above to the ground below), specific imagery (from more abstract such as

Mars and distant like the stars to the concrete notebook) and the general atmosphere of this eighth poem dissolves and gradually eliminates the potentiality of a phoenix-like rise from the ashes and centrifugal poetic sensibility.

While the poems in the immediate aftermath of the eighth piece do not always place substantial emphasis on depictions of space, the overall tendency to move downwards to retreat is preserved. It is a thread that runs through the rest of the cycle and binds it into a whole, intricately woven poetic tapestry of various threads that capture the passion and disillusionment of the lyrical heroine as well as the impossibility of the connection between her and her visitor. The ninth poem of the cycle, for instance, is a shorter single-stanza poetic work comprised of nine verses marked by varying rhyme schemes, such as the somewhat irregular ABBBA in the first half and CDCD in the second. The lyrical heroine describes a walk on a road at night and her feeling as if she is treading on the bottom of the sea. The image of the sweetbriar recurs once more - its scent is so palpable that it transforms into words - and it is followed by the subdued, yet powerful declaration by the lyrical subject that she is ready to meet her fate. The lyrical voice encapsulates that idea in the trope of the “ninth wave” (or sleeper wave), a popular artistic motif. Even with scarce usage of space in this poem the lyrical perspective still moves in a downward manner, from the road to the bottom of the sea. If the figure of the sea or its depths have evoked any allusions to wider and more open spaces, they are quickly overtaken and buried by the figurative sleeper wave of the heroine’s fate.

The tenth poem presents another subtle contrast of note. While the preceding poems are written in combinations of complete and incomplete iambic tetrameters and pentameters, the tenth poem that bears no title unravels in a combination of full iambic hexameters and incomplete

pentameters. The hexameters hint at a more classical, perhaps eighteenth century ode-inspired poetic scaffolding. Nevertheless, the syllabic difference of one and a half syllables creates a tension that moves the poem further rhythmically and does not fully align it with classical forms. The poem is further not divided into stanzas, but the regular ABAB rhyming scheme marks off various semantic quatrains within its whole. This poem itself is directly addressed to the lyrical subject's beloved and recounts events, suitably accommodated by the length of the verses.

In the tenth, unnamed poem, the lyrical heroine first negates her image constructed by her lover and addressee. She dismisses that image ("you made me up/ such people don't exist in this world"), negating the possibility of such a person's ontology. Her lover is incessantly tormented by a ghost, perhaps a ghost that bears her image. The second semantic quatrain then depicts the meeting between the two lovers. Unlike the passionate "wonder" of their meeting from an earlier poem in the cycle, this reimagining of the encounter between the lovers is done in a minor and subdued key. This poetic description - of the destruction left by the War, the fresh graves, the mourning and darkness - is a dialectic opposite of the way the encounter between the lovers unravels earlier, in "Another Songlet". The topos of this encounter is clearly anchored in the city of Leningrad as indicated by the basin of the Neva that lies in the darkness. The lyrical heroine then describes how she called onto her lover who came to her as if guided by stars. This marks a sharp contrast to the earlier poetic reconstruction of the fateful November 1945 meeting between Akhmatova and Berlin.

In this poetic rendition of the encounter, the heroine positions herself as the center of the textual universe. This choice of a vantage point and the depiction of space around her aligns with the general centripetal poetic thrust following the sixth and seventh poems of the cycle. While this

poem does not lack spaces such as the sky, stars, the imposing in its scale Neva, the heroine herself remains grounded in her own, "destroyed for eternity" home. Her visitor comes to her, in the middle of the damaged Leningrad, by the wall "encircled by a mute night". As the lover arrives to the home, a flock of executed poems flies away from it. This further deepens the general ambience of destruction and alienation. The lyrical heroine is left presumably alone in her home, surrounded by the city, the city wall, the mute night. The multiple layers encasing the lyrical voice remain stable as even the subject's verses abandon her. The lyrical heroine further casts doubt on her own actions and agency. In her retelling of the story, she says she did not understand herself what she was doing when she called on to her lover.

Another interesting interaction that takes place on the spatial plane in *Sweetbriar* cycle is that between the realms of the personal and the artistic that intersect here once again. There is a strong inversion and opposition between the two planes in the life of the lyrical heroine. In the tenth poem, the flock of executed poems escapes from the subject's home as her lover is about to arrive. This is in contrast to the earlier, eighth poem ("A Dream") in which the heroine returns to her poetry and her notebook while contemplating her beloved; in the earlier poem, however, the beloved and his arrival remain suspended in the realm of the dream, a metadiegetic, in-between space, rather than materialize in the poetic reality. The constant tension between the two - love and art - fuels a spatial conflict as well; the forces that move them closer to or further away from the heroine are in opposition. The figure of the lover remains associated with the wider horizons of the sky, a place farther away from the referential *here*; he is by the edge of the world, near the stars.

The spatiality of the tenth poem, however, remains consistent with Akhmatova's overall poetic tendency of withdrawal and retreat. The lyrical heroine constructs this poetic block by centering the entire perspective on herself as the main vantage point. This framing aligns fully with the composition of other poems in the *Sweetbriar* cycle and even with the specific poetic perspective utilized in each and every one of them. The poems in the cycle are always presented by a dominant lyrical voice narrating from her own, first-person perspective. The poetic pieces are personal, intimate and built on the scaffolding of that first-person narrative and point of view. The tenth poem is no exception - the heroine, in her destroyed home, remains at the center of the poetic stage and its spatiality. She narrates the entire poem and the motion and directions she describes are presented from her angle and place of perception. She calls on to her lover who then goes to visit her. A sense of enclosure and withdrawal is conveyed through the image of the encased home, but also through the description of the muted night encircling the wall (of either the Neva embankment or the city of Leningrad itself). Furthermore, any other open and outward spaces are bound exclusively to the figure of her lover - he arrives treading on the tragic fall, he is lead by the stars, and he remains associated with spaces of abstraction, potentiality and vastness.

The element of the fall - whose anthropomorphised image is hiding in the tenth poem - recurs in the twelfth poetic block of the cycle as well. The twelfth poem, composed in 1956 in Komarovo, is untitled, but bears an epigraph (an excerpt by a poem dedicated to the fall by Anensky[13]). This *Sweetbriar* poem is of particular interest not only to the spatial motifs in the overall cycle, but also with regards to the theme of exile and estrangement in general. The twelfth piece comprises four quatrains of complete and uncomplete amphibrachic tetrameter. The longer

[13] In particular, "You are Once Again With Me."

metric form chosen for the prosodic scaffolding of this poem renders it a bit more placid due to the fewer accented syllables. This corresponds to the overall mood in the opening quatrain. The lyrical subject depicts two contrasting spaces - that of the leisurely south that is associated with the garden of Eden and that which is set to serve as the frame of reference in the poem, the north. Furthermore, the time of the year in the north is once again the autumnal season.

The lyrical heroine firmly anchors herself in the topos of the north, during the time of the fall, a season of transition and of impending endings. Furthermore, she emphasises the importance of her locus in two different ways. On the one hand, the lyrical subject uses the adverb of place norther(ly), rather than the noun north itself or an adjective to demarcate that specific geographic direction. On the other hand, the lyrical voice uses the modifier *very (ochen)* binding the words in an unusual phrase from a syntactic and lexical point of view. She dismisses the notion of other people enjoying the warmth and languor of the south and actively chooses the fall as her friend and companion. The second quatrain then outlines the subject's feelings of alienation and adds in a layer of references and allusions to the culture of Suomi. The home of the heroine is described as foreign and dream-like. The lyrical subject describes feeling as if she had perished already, further hinting at the powerful isolation she is experiencing.

The third quatrain of the poem develops the spatial depiction of the natural settings that ensconce the heroine. The opening line conjures the image of low-lying conifers through which the lyrical subject is walking. The lexical choice of the modifying adjective *prizemistye* is of special note as the meaning it carries (short, low-lying) is conveyed in a specific way. The conifers in this case are described as *prizemystie*, a word that is composed of the prefix *pri* and a root that signifies earth, ground. A sense of grounding and anchoring is thus elicited by the choice

of this particular adjective. Furthermore, the prefix *pri*, when used with verbs with motion, indicates a direction towards the speaker of the point of reference. Thus, the phrase *prizemystie* invokes a sense of directionality; the conifer trees are are not simply short, it is almost as if they are being pulled to the center of the ground, once again in a centripetal manner. That is one aspect of the description of the forest that resonates in accordance with the general poetic tendency of Akhmatova toward centripetal depictions and a movement towards a central, focal point in her poetic descriptions.

Moreover, the lyrical heroine is walking through the low-lying trees, further highlighting the sense of ensconcement and narrowness created by the imagery. While the poem has started with an image of the faraway heavenly south, the heroine definitively places herself in the locus of the north and in the conifer forest that parallels her inner sense of confinement and isolation. The natural settings drawn by the lyrical subject are completed by a description of the moon and sky above, while the spatial focus remains on the ground nonetheless. The moon is described only briefly as a fragmentary shard that is glowing. The celestial body is further reminiscent of the edge of a Finnish serrated knife, a trope that intensifies the dream-like and premonitious ambience of the poem. The Finnish line of allusions and motifs continues throughout the poem as well as the heroine also includes a glimpse of the Sami people glancing secretly at their "deserted" mirrors.

While physical spatiality does not feature more prominently in the other poems of the cycle, it still occupies a significant place in them. Furthermore, regardless of the year of creation or the specific themes and motifs conveyed in the pieces, the poetic portrayal of space remains fairly stable and in concordance with the centripetal and reductive tendencies visible in

Akhmatova's works in general. For instance, the thirteenth poem of the cycle that has no assigned name constitutes a relevant case with regards to spatiality. The poem itself ("In vain you…") marks a subtle thematic and semantic change within the cycle. While the addressee's identity remains nebulous and unclear, he seems to acquire the characteristics of a controlling demon or a dictator (perhaps a poetic transformation of Stalin himself?) rather than a lover.

The poem consists of five quatrains set in a prosodic mold of iambic and trochaic pentameter and an ABAB rhyming scheme. In the first stanza, the heroine turns directly to her addressee who is delineated as sweeping away her glory and greatness from beneath her feet. Nevertheless, the lyrical subject states that even such action cannot extinguish her inner artistic impetus. The lyrical voice further states that if she does give up, it would only be a pretense. The dialectic tension between the two figures in this poem is different from that between the disillusioned lovers described earlier in the cycle. The thirteenth poem seems to be addressed to someone else and to touch on a different set of themes and motifs. This particular piece, written in 1958, could embody a poetic closure and a direct dialog with Stalin in the years after his death and personality cult denouncement of the Thaw years. This is hinted perhaps even more strongly by the mention of eternal Rus'.

Regardless of the possible shift of thematic content of the poem, the spatial layout described in it appears to remain consistent with the other poems in the cycle. The central, third stanza of the poem paints an especially explicit spatial picture. The lyrical voice describes an anthropomorphised image of Death standing at the threshold by the door. If the locus of the lyrical voice has been unclear up until that moment, it is now crystallized and becomes affixed at the center of a home or an apartment. The space of the outside world is visible only behind the

figure of the Death. The lyrical voice describes the path lying behind it as a road she has crawled through, in blood and pain. This suggests the subject has been able to find a haven in the enclosure of the home or the current space she is located in. The subject further talks about the darkness, fear and ennui of the deserted space lurking outside. The heroine has traversed through her difficult past to reach the cocoon of the apartment or home in which she has found relative safety. Even though the lyrical voice remains grounded in her space with no mention of potential transcendence of her condition, the description of her past suggests another instance of a centripetal motion and an enclosure. This enclosure, however, has brought on safety and a respite from the difficult and horror-filled years. Furthermore, the poem ends with an affirmative statement and the heroine stating that she can cope with her own life as she bids farewell to her addressee.

As elucidated earlier, the poetic cycle *Sweetbriar in Blossom* thus presents an interesting and encompassing case study of the changing poetics of the Leningrad artist after her official denouncement by the Soviet State in 1946. The cycle's breadth, variety and depth - poetic, stylistic, textual as well as chronological and sociocultural - provides fertile ground for investigation, especially with regards to the concrete topoi and spaces constructed by the poetic voice. The centripetal tendency of Akhmatova is palpable and well pronounced in the cycle. There are very few places where the lyrical voice seems to stray and diverge from the centripetal paradigm, only to then return again to it shortly thereafter. It is only the brief glimpse and promise of a potent new romance seen in the seventh poem that remains associated with a more centrifugal spatiality and poetic vector of motion, but that is soon replaced by more somber themes and motifs of disenchantment and oblivion and a return to restrained, claustrophobic spaces. While all

of this is evident and well developed within the cycle, taking a look at Akhmatova's individual poems written around the time (a bit before and after) the fateful August of 1946, could provide a useful comparative frame.

Akhmatova's poems immediately preceding the public denunciation by Zhdanov, for instance, could serve as a suitable starting point for such critical explorations. While the development of restrictive, smaller spaces and a centripetal poetic perspective are pronounced in the years after 1946, nuances of them appeared in Akhmatova's oeuvre even earlier, which is notable. The untitled poetic miniature ("The ice thickens on the window") written in 1945, for instance, distills and presents precisely this kind of centripetal spatiality. While the poem itself (Appendix II, 257) is rather succinct and miniature in its composition of only two quatrains of alternating iambic trimeter and tetrameter, it creates a potent sense of imprisonment and claustrophobia. The opening verse of the poem paints a vivid picture of the coldness and encasement as the ice grows on the windows. The poetic voice uses a prefixed verb (*narastat'*) in its imperfective form, which amplifies both the strength and unstoppable continuity of this icing process. The ice is growing thick on the window, further encasing the lyrical heroine in her home. This imagery is followed by the anthropomorphised image of a clock, a figure that is typical of Akhmatova's artistic sensibility and featured prominently in some of her earlier poems. Clocks and time render a threatening force in Akhmatova's earlier and more lyrical pieces which breaks apart lovers and poses a danger to the heroine. Nonetheless, in this poem, the clock commands the anguished heroine to not be afraid. The lyrical subject, however, explicitly states that she is afraid to hear that someone might be coming her way and that she fears the dead as well.

The construction of space in this relatively small first quatrain is direct and potent. The lyrical subject is instantly depicted at the center of a confining space that continues to shrink around her as the ice on the windows thickens. The thickening and growth of the ice further entraps the heroine inside her home, fully separating her from the external world. The home of the lyrical subject becomes a tomb-like space. Additionally, there is a palpable though invisible presence of a threat as the subject describes why she is constantly afraid. In the second quatrain of the poem, the liminal and fluid threshold image of the door acquires divine and protective qualities as the lyrical subject likens it to an idol. She pleads with the door to not let in trouble or danger.

The door embodies a protective mechanism, suggesting that the heroine's encasement at the home could at least render protection from past and future threats. The hint of safety in the shrinking space in the second stanza and the sense of confinement suggested by the image of the ice in the first generate a certain spatial and emotive contrast and tension. Thus, an ambivalence of space is created in this poem, which ultimately however reconsolidates the centripetal poetics of the Leningrad artist. While the images echo - or perhaps herald - Akhmatova's overall tendency toward reductive spatiality and centripetal motion vectors, they also hint at the potentiality of such tendencies to serve as protective mechanisms for survival.

The threats to the lyrical heroine are unequivocally anchored in the external realm, the spaces surrounding her home. She describes a bestial howl behind the wall and the possibility of someone hiding in her garden. The concrete mention of the wall in the poem adds another boundary and layer of encasement around the heroine who is paralyzed and affixed to her location. Even without explicitly stating where she is, she fully describes most of the specific

dimensions and boundaries of a home: the wall, the window, the door, and the garden. What is perhaps more unusual about this poem is that the general motion orientation in it is on a horizontal, rather than vertical plane; the lyrical voice constructs an in-out, exterior-interior contrast, rather than opposing images affixed to a vertical axis. The interior further bears at least some associations with and undertones of safety. The lyrical subject pleads out loud that the door not let in danger. The liminal protective door gains divine powers and status in the unsafe world of the heroine. The door thus becomes a mediator of not only space, but also of fate.

Overall, Akhmatova's poetic output from the late 1950's echoes the general ambience of the Thaw. The voices of her lyrical heroines grow stronger and more assertive. Their statements become more optimistic and affirming. Even the motif of resurrection and rising from the ashes appears (something that was also hinted at in the *Sweetbriar* cycle as well). However, the general spatial orientation and motion as well as the semantic associations they bring remain fairly stable. Of concrete interest in this category is the untitled poem from 1957 "They'll forget?" (Appendix II, 257-8). This particular poem is also succinct and concise in its form. While it is not formally split into stanzas, there are two clear semantic quatrains further flagged as such by the cross-rhyme scheme of ABAB and CDCD. The meter of choice in this miniature poem is the amphibrach and the verses consist of alternating complete and uncomplete trimeters. The prosody of this poem is stable and naturally flowing at an uninterrupted pace and without enjambments. The ambience of the poem itself is more affirming and positive.

The heroine opens the piece with the assertive and tinted with incredulity question: "They will forget? Bemusing." The first verse of the poem contains no declarative sentences, only a question and exclamatory skepticism. The lyrical subject indicates her disbelief at the thought that

her poetry would be erased from the collective memory. The opening line is direct and bold, rare for Akhmatova's oeuvre. Posing questions or making exclamatory statements is not a poetic strategy characteristic of the acmeist representative and can be seen only in rare instances in Akhmatova's earliest, usually addressing her beloved one with a rhetorical question. This instantly sets a different tone that hints at a greater agency that could perhaps overcome the spatial confinement of the poem. The lyrical voice delineates her recurring past and the multiple attempts to censor her poetic work that were made - she was to be forgotten hundreds of times, she lied in a grave hundreds of times. The subject then states that she might still be in one. The grave is a confining and reductive topos and described as such, rather than a realm that could liberate the spirit. The lyrical voice does not suggest raising from the grave, but instead she moves on to a description of her muse in the second semantic stanza of the poem.

The muse is presented as someone who is gradually losing her sense of sight and hearing. She is further disappearing in the ground, surrounded by kernels and seeds. The general poetic sensibility in the first part of the poem is still consistent with Akhmatova's poetics of centripetality and reduction. The description of the debilitated muse is a powerful image, a reversed process of growth. Instead of sprouting from a kernel and moving upwards, growing and thriving, the muse shrinks into the ground and the seeds surrounding her. Both the lyrical heroine and her muse remain buried in the ground despite the assertive opening verse. However, starting in the penultimate line of the poem a new element is introduced. The final line starts with the conjunction chtoby ("in order to") that directly links the ending of the poem as a sequential clause to the earlier lines describing the plight of the muse. The muse might have lost some of her sensorial abilities, but she would be able to rise from the ashes as a phoenix. In fact, the causality

is directly expressed through the conjunction - the muse will dissolve and perish in the ground, by the seeds, in order to then rise as a phoenix. The very last line of the poem echoes that sentiment and renders a suitable ending to the first line with the image of a blue horizon. Akhmatova's 1957 poetic miniature marks a palpable difference in the way spaces are depicted by the heroine. Nevertheless, the centrifugal element in this piece remains grounded in an abstract and distant future, an aftermath of a resurrection that is neither certain, nor promised.

Thus, this poem does not depart completely from Akhmatova's general tendency toward shrinking and closing spaces, encasement and withdrawal. Even though there is a glimpse of a different, more upward-oriented vertical directionality (or, at least, the potentiality of such directionality), the hope remains associated solely with the muse. It is precisely the artistic prowess and creative alter ego of the Leningrad poet that has the potential to be freed from repression and oblivion. The lyrical voice acknowledges that she might be able to rise above the persecution and external erasure only by virtue of her poetry. It is the muse, not the heroine herself, who will carry through the legacy of the poetic work. The ending of the poem shifts the focus from the ground to the blue horizon of the sky, an image that stands out in conspicuous contrast to previous poems.

Nonetheless, while the spatial dimension becomes more open and an impetus toward the horizon and a motion upwards emerge, this tendency is not entirely reflected by the language in the poem. The last two lines that delineate the image of the phoenix rising from the ashes are indicative of that. The preposition of choice in the depiction of the sky is "in" (*v*) and it is followed by the prepositional case flagging location, rather than directionality. The verb itself *vosstat'* (to rise) indicates clear motion - a motion upwards - as does the phrase in the previous

line - from ashes. Nevertheless, the actual linguistic and grammatical shell of the image of the sky itself remains grounded in a mold of localized and stationary position, rather than a fluid destination. The spaces painted earlier in the poem - the grave and the ground are also bound to the prepositional case or the grammatical expression of an affixed position. This is then complemented by another use of the prepositional case in the last verse. Even though the 1957 poetic miniature suggests a stronger voice and agency on the part of the lyrical subject, this change is not fully realized on a linguistic and grammatical plane.

Another poem written a couple of months later that year, “Everyone, even the uninvited” (Appendix II, 258), continues the thread of restrictive spatiality. While the poem does not echo the motif of rising from the dead or overcoming oblivion expressed in “They’ll forget?”, it still is presented through the lens of a poetic subject who retains a degree of agency. This makes the voice of the lyrical subject stronger and more assertive, aligning it with the general tone of the other poems composed by Akhmatova in the post-Stalinist period. This poetic work is again constructed in the form of one twelve-verse stanza, that can, however, be conditionally split into three semantic quatrain nuclei. The meter of poetic choice is an anapest arrangement executed in complete and incomplete tetrameters. The rhyming scheme remains in a stable ABAB frame.

The poem opens with a clear spatial distinction that sets a location contrast between the central lyrical subject and a group of unidentified *others*. Everyone has gone to Italy, even those who were not invited (a detail that highlights the scale of the exodus); everyone is sending a farewell greeting from the road. The two spaces single the heroine out and place her in the poetic center as she further weaves the poem. A clarification about her own locus follows - the heroine has stayed in the space behind the mirror. The location of the heroine is of particular interest as

this is perhaps the first time in which the lyrical voice is anchored in a space that is as abstract and transcendental as it is concrete. The realm behind the mirror bears a rather fairy-tale quality and the Alice-in-Wonderland-like concept of alternative worlds that refract reality. The addition of the possessive pronoun *my* further emphasizes the inextricable connection between the heroine and the space she inhabits. Furthermore, the choice of verb *ostatsia* (to remain, stay) is reflexive and does not suggest that the choice was imposed on the heroine externally. On the contrary, the first four lines of the poem delineate a picture of active choice and agency on the part of the lyrical subject.

The second semantic quatrain is built on a negating principle - the lyrical subject describes everything she will not be able to see or do in the concrete loci of Italy. She will not walk under holy and sinful frescoes and neither will she steal secretive glances at Leonardo's works. The lyrical focus shifts from the image of the others in the beginning of the poem to a hypothetical realm that will not be realized. Nevertheless, the first two stanzas remain anchored in the space of distant Italy, while the lyrical heroine remains grounded behind the mirror. The increasing agency of the heroine, however, is evident right away - she states that she does not have an interest in traveling. The lyrical heroine hints at her agency and active choice to not follow her fellow people and artists in external exile several times. She has chosen to stay behind, she would not accompany anyone and she does not have a will to travel. The voice further hints at the fact that she is not unfamiliar with that road - the paths leading to Leonardo's masterpieces and holy frescoes of Rome and Padua are familiar to her. However, she makes the bold claim that being absent everywhere has started suiting her in the last fourteen years. The heroine exerts her choice

to stay put in her motherland and cope with the losses even if that means living in a condition of estrangement and repression.

The lexical choices in the poem that delineate the abstract space of abroad as well as, later on, the resignation of the subject to her condition embody a centripetal motion. The more abstract and metaphysical connotations of the *zazerkal'e* aside, this trope indicates a motion closer to an object and hiding behind it, rather than moving away from a center. The noun itself is composed of the prepositional prefix *za* denoting the topos of behind, in the back of a space. The noun further evokes a sense of in-betweenness and entrapment in the space behind the mirror or the wall right behind it. Furthermore, the lyrical subject continues her description of the imagined space of exile and escape in Italy by negating the possibility of seeing frescoes and art by prominent figures such as Leonardo. She does this by way of the preposition under and by imagining herself as walking underneath the ceilings of frescoes and paintings. Even in this hypothetical and liberating context, the lyrical subject is surrounded and encased by external elements. In the potent final verses, the heroine uses an idiomatic way of voicing her conclusion - being absent everywhere has "come to her face"; the Russian idiom of her choice signifies something that fits and suits one well. The idiom is constructed by a preposition that indicates motion toward its referent followed by the dative case ("*mne k licu*").

This centripetality is corroborated by another instance of physical confinement of the poetic voice in the late period of Akhmatova's works as seen in the short piece from 1959 "An Inscription on a Book" (Appendix II, 258). Similarly to "The ice thickens on the windows…", "An Inscription on a Book" is a poem that comprises only two quatrains, each with stable alternating rhyming and metric schemes. The prosodic composition is a steady variation of

complete and incomplete iambic pentameters; the rhyming scheme is uninterrupted ABAB. The beginning and ending of the poem are demarcated by the use of two prepositional anaphoras that further create a structural symmetry on a stylistic, syntactic and grammatical plane. The anaphora in the first two lines brings forward the image of ruins and a landslide as the locus of the lyrical voice. The voice of the poetic subject originates exactly from the space beneath the surface, where it has been buried under the remnants of both man-made and natural objects. The choice of preposition is of particular note here - *iz-pod* is a complex particle composed of two locative prepositions. Moreover, the complex preposition *iz-pod* always indicates an emerging vector of motion - either upwards or outwards. While the lyrical subject herself seems trapped in the space beneath ruins and under the mass of a rockslide, her voice is able to break away and emerge from those spaces. There is a certain tension created by the contrasting vectors of motions here (the upwards one of the voice that emanates from under the landslide and the location of the lyrical subject).

"An Inscription on a Book" can be linked thematically and stylistically to other poems written by Akhmatova during the Thaw years such as "They'll forget?" that was discussed earlier in this chapter. The voice of the lyrical heroine is growing stronger and the poem itself ends with a hint of hope and an assertion of the lasting legacy of the poetic voice. Nevertheless, as in "They'll forget?", the heroine herself is positioned in a restrictive and reductive space that almost paralyzes and stifles her. The images of the ruins and landslide are complemented by the introduction of an underground, a cellar with vaults that further limit the perspective and almost evoke allusions to a prison or a dungeon. On a lexical and syntactical level, the recurring usage of the preposition *pod* (under) and several of its derivative forms (such as *iz-pod* or the noun *podval*

that signifies the underground or cellar) further strengthens the feeling of inescapability and claustrophobia. Some of the images the heroine describes further bear resemblance to elements of hell: a space deep underneath that is ablaze and from which the lyrical voice is screaming. The locus of the voice is precisely deep down, buried under oblivion and fallen remnants of a previous culture. The lyrical subject is caught in a realm that is as claustrophobic and encasing as many of the spaces depicted in her earlier poems. In fact, "Inscription on a Book" suggests that the only way to transcend the confines of that particular status quo would be a transformation into something metaphysical - a soundless winter.

The centripetal directionality of Akhmatova's spatial imagery is evident in this poem from its onset. A sense of confinement, entrapment and asphyxiation are characteristic of the places described by her subject (who is screaming and burning beneath them). While the poetic heroine expresses a wish to transcend her spatial and temporal confinement by way of turning into a silent winter there is still a mention of closing doors. Even as the lyrical subject might be in the process of transcending her condition, she would still close the gates of eternity. The overall poetic focus remains recoiled and entombed, despite the attempt to break free and move upwards or outwards. It is precisely through this shrinking and collapsing of the physical spaces around the heroine that an atmosphere of isolation and exile emerges in this poem as well. Spatiality is a potent element, perhaps even more so than in earlier pieces, in this particular work. Each verse of the first quatrain incorporates a topos that is encasing and burying the heroine. Overall, the stanza contains four or five individual yet interconnected topoi: the ruins, the landslide, the boiling lime, and the vaults of the underground. Despite the more assertive ending that hints at a hope of transcendence and a lasting poetic legacy ("They will, nevertheless, hear my voice/ They will, nevertheless, once

again believe it"), the spatiality of the poem remains in the restrictive and asphyxiating physical mold consistent with Akhmatova's earlier poetic work.

That is reflected by the poetess's later poems as well. The years of the Soviet Thaw undoubtedly left an imprint on Akhmatova's rare, but increasing in quantity and poetic agency of the lyrical heroine published work throughout the 1950's and early 1960's. Nevertheless, even what seems to be at a first glance transformed spatiality in one of Akhmatova's latest poems does not diverge completely from the spatial poetic mold of the Leningrad artist. The poem "We went out of our minds…" (Appendix II, 258-9) from 1959 embodies an interesting case study of spatiality in the overall trajectory of Akhmatova's oeuvre. This is one of Akhmatova's last poems, written at the end of the 1950's and as the Soviet Thaw was well underway. The poem comprises six individually demarcated quatrains, each of amphibrachic trimeter and incomplete tetrameter and a consistent AABB rhyming scheme that reflects the prosodic structure as well. "We went out of our minds" describes a meeting between two lovers in an unknown and mystical topos. The lyrical heroine describes the meeting-parting as a holy minute. Temporal and spatial markers interact and intertwine as the couple moves through ethereal cities. The lovers are shrouded by an enigmatic fog and the overall register of the poetic piece aligns more with the symbolist aesthetic rather than the concrete and grounded acmeist sensibility[14]. The poem remains suspended in the realm of memories, or, perhaps as it is hinted at in the final line, dream recollections of past events.

Overall, the esoteric setting of the poem, likely inspired and drawing concrete imagery from Akhmatova's sojourn in Tashkent while in evacuation during the war, seems to infuse

[14] There are topoi like a "foggy song", "ominous ditches" and "the Snake constellation".

Akhmatova's poetic trajectory with a new spatial orientation and aesthetic nuance. This time the lyrical heroine is not anchored inside a home and does not seem to be circumscribed by a physical boundary. Temporal markers feature more prominently than their spatial counterparts - the opening line of the poem sets the temporal setting of the fateful meeting as a concrete night the lyrical heroine remembers. The rest of the first quatrain is marked by a synesthetic and oxymoronic description of the meeting between the lovers. The darkness illuminated the couple and the only spatial tokens in the first quatrain are the canals (typical of Central Asian locales) that rumble in their own indecipherable way. The flowers bring a scent of Asia as well, further adding to the physical and geographic location of the poetic work.

The second quatrain, on the other hand, opens with a spatial description that consolidates the parameters of this poem's chronotope. The lovers are said to have gone through a foreign city, through all of its sounds and under the stars of the Serpens constellation. This marks an unexpected turn in Akhmatova's poetic spatiality. While the majority of her previous works are set in concrete interiors with heroines trapped and constrained by them, this piece creates a different and more open poetic stage (under the stars). Furthermore, the subjects are walking through a city unbound by any obstacles or physical barriers. The poetic stage differs substantially from Akhmatova's topoi in previous works, even though the theme - of impossible love and separation, maybe even a non-meeting between the two subjects - is consistent with Akhmatova's poetic catalog. The topos is delineated in detail in the second quatrain - the two figures are moving through the city, through a foggy song, through the midnight heat and under the stars. This spatial description paints a wide open space. The only concretely physical markers scattered throughout - the city and, earlier in the first stanza, the canals - add perspective and depth to the

spatial description rather than concrete physical boundaries. This ambience of widening spaces and a centrifugal, rather than centripetal motion of the poetic vector is further strengthened by the mention that the two subjects are alone under the stars.

The third quatrain continues to build on the spatial delineation and set of the poem. However, the certainty and the precise geographic location of the mysterious city are destabilized. The lyrical heroine is unsure what city she and her lover are traversing. It could be Istanbul or Baghdad, though certainly not Warsaw or Leningrad. This uncertainty of topos creates a feeling of estrangement and loss - the two figures have lost their hometowns. They are wandering in a dream-like realm and in an unknown - though thoroughly and concretely outlined - space. This departure from Akhmatova's poetics could be seen as a natural development of her artistic trajectory toward the end of her career and life or even a reflection of the Soviet Thaw. Nevertheless, after the description of the foreign space, the lyrical voice adds that the disparity between the city and her beloved Petersburg (and Warsaw) is as suffocating as the air of orphanhood. Despite the wider and more open spaces as well as a lack of concrete boundaries that encase the subject, she still feels as if she is stifled due to the strangeness of her topos. The space creates a sense of exile and alienation even without being physically restrictive. This is also where the overall tone of the poem anchors the poem back into the matrix of earlier Akhmatova poems despite the different kind of spatiality created by the lyrical voice.

The remaining parts of the poem finalize the description of the mystical setting and the sounds surrounding the two lovers who are hesitant to look at each other. The lyrical subject describes one more concrete, physical aspect of the topos of the poem: the no- man's land, on which she is walking alongside her beloved. Later on, the poetic narrator also mentions the sail of

the moon that rises and sails above the meeting-separation of the lovers. The overall chronotope and register of the piece are reminiscent of the symbolic, rather than acmeist aesthetic - there is a secretive fog, sounds circling around and dancing in the dark and an invisible hand beating on drums. The poem ends in the realm of the subconscious and the past as the lyrical subject designates the recollection of the fateful and holy meeting as a dream. The spatiality of the poem remains marked by an unusual for Akhmatova's poetic register of open and opening spaces.

Nevertheless, the motif of exile and estrangement is powerfully palpable and creates a suffocating environment for the lyrical subject. This is visibly highlighted in the foreignness of the city the lyrical subject and her beloved are situated in as well as the description of the no-man's land on which the two of them are walking. Even in the later poetic trajectory of the Leningrad poet, spatiality and exile remain grounded in a stifling mold that encases and restrains the heroine rather than liberates her. Despite the lack of perception of Akhmatova as an exiled poet or association between her and the exilic poetic canon, the works of the Leningrad poet and Brodsky's mentor feature prominent spatial elements that consistently reflect a sense of centripetality, claustrophobia, and encasement.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akhmatova, Anna. "Vse stikhy." *Russkaya poezia rupoem.ru*. Electronic.

"Anna Ahmatova v nemilosti u vlastey" *Repin.info*. Electronic. repin.info/neizvestnye-znamenitosti/anna-ahmatova-v-nemilosti-u-vlastey

Arvatov, Boris. "Grazhd. Akhmatova i Tov. Kollontai." *Litres*. Electronic. https://www.litres.ru/boris-arvatov/grazhd-ahmatova-i-tov-kollontay/chitat-onlayn/page-4/

Berlin, Isaiah. "A Great Russian Writer." *The New York Review of Books*. New York: Dec. 1965. Electronic. https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1965/12/23/a-great-russian-writer/

Berlin, Isaiah. *Personal Impressions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1980. Print.

Chukovskaya, Lydia. *The Akhmatova Journals: Volume II*. Northwestern University Press: Chicago, IL 2002. Print.

Dalos, Gyorgy. *The Guest from the Future: Anna Akhmatova and Isaiah Berlin*. Murray, 1999. Print.

Driver, Sam N. *Anna Akhmatova*. Twayne Publishers, Inc.: New York, NY 1972. Print.

Eikhenbaum, Boris. Anna Akhmatova. *Opyt analiza*. Peterburg: 1923. Print.

Feinstein, Elaine. *Anna of All the Russias*. Alfred Knopf: New York, NY 2006. Print.

Haight, Amanda. *Anna Akhmatova: A Poetic Pilgrimage*. Oxford University Press: New York and London 1976. Print.

Harrington, Alexandra. "Reading Between the Lines: '... a ia molchu' Akhmatova's Silent-Speaking Elegy." *The Modern Language Review* July 2007: 793-809. Electronic.

Helgeson, Mariah. “The Story Behind Bach’s Monumental Chaconne.” *On Being*. Electronic. https://onbeing.org/blog/the-story-behind-bachs-monumental-chaconne/

Kollontai, Aleksandra. “Pis’ma k trudyascheysya molodezhi.” *Anna Akhmatova Pro et Contra*. Sankt Peterburg: 2001. 437-453. Print.

Koroleva, N.V. Anna Akhmatova “Dushi vysokaya svoboda…” *Tvorcheskiy put’ poeta*. Moskva 2016. Print.

Muchnic, Helen. “Three Inner Emigres: Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelshtam, Nikolai Zabolotsky.” *The Russian Reviews*. 1967. 13-25. Electronic.

Reeder, Roberta. *Anna Akhmatova. The Poet and the Prophet*. Picador USA: New York, NY 1995. Print.

Sarnowski, Michael. “Exile, Escape, and Reprieve: Poetry of Displacement from the Russian Revolution through World War II.” *From Russia with Love* 2014. 47-53. Electronic.

Venclova, Tomas. “Anna Akhmatova.” *Magnetic North. Conversations with Tomas Venclova*. Ed. by Ellen Hinsley. University of Rochester Press: Rochester, NY 2017. 193-207. Print.

Vinogradov, V. *Anna Akhmatova: o simvolike, o poezii*. Leningrad: 1925. Print.

Ya - Anna Akhmatova. Istoria moei zhizni. Ed. E. Mishanenkova. AST: Moscow 2014. Print.

CHAPTER III

Complex Interactions and Antitheses: The Mechanisms of Influence between Brodsky and Akhmatova

"... and suddenly all the pieces fell into place"[1]

"Everyone who places side by side these two names [Joseph Brodsky and Anna Akhmatova] undoubtedly realizes the impossibility of such poetic juxtaposition (merging, relation). The crux of the matter is not that one would not find elements characteristic of Akhmatova's poetics in Brodsky's pieces - one can find anything one desires in Brodsky's oeuvre with its oceanic eclecticism - but rather that everything that is crucial to and characteristic of Brodsky's works is, on principle, uncharacteristic of Akhmatova's."[2] Lev Loseff's introductory words to the article "About Akhmatova's Love of the People" succinctly capture one side of the scholarly debate as well as the primary challenges related to the question about the parallels or any potential poetic influences between Brodsky and his early mentor Akhmatova. In his article, the scholar goes on to quote Brodsky in his well known and widely documented remarks that Akhmatova's influence was primarily a spiritual, personal, and humanistic one, rather than any direct literary mentorship.

Loseff then enumerates the stylistic and prosodic differences between the two Petersrburg writers - while Akhmatova favors short, fragmentary verses, Brodsky shows a tendency to

[1] Brodsky *Conversations with Joseph Brodsky*
[2] Losev "O lyubvi"

express himself exhaustively (Loseff). Moreover, while the Silver Age poetess rarely uses any metaphors or tropes (and when she does, she favors simpler ones), the Nobel laureate shows a predilection to complex, multidimensional, and metaphysical metaphors (ibid.). Akhmatova gravitates towards simple syntaxis and predictable rhyming schemes, while Brodsky, on the contrary, experiments boldly and extravagantly with each. Loseff's catalog goes on.

Loseff's treatise, however, goes beyond the conspicuous and immediate technical differences between the two writers to explore more in-depth both Akhmatova's and Brodsky's belonging to a certain aesthetic and even ethical poetic tradition. The point of departure for Loseff's analysis is Brodsky's early poem "Narod" ("People") which was regarded very highly by Akhmatova. Nevertheless, other critics and even Brodsky himself tended to dismiss it as not only an early and underdeveloped poetic piece, but also a potential attempt to conform to Soviet literary guidelines as a means of poetic self-preservation (Losseff elaborates on the concept of *parovozik*, lit. a steam engine, as a decoy or a politically correct piece published by the author as a strategy to ensure that other, less politically correct, works by them will be published later on). The scholar then outlines the lessons Brodsky explicitly thought he learned from Akhmatova and the belonging of both poets to a greater tradition; Loseff, in particular, sees that tradition as a medium for vox populi, going back to classical authors like Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, and transcending any Soviet attempts to redefine and conceptualize the idea of the people (*narod*) as an ideological element.

Loseff's overarching argument is that despite its poetic shortcomings (especially compared to Brodsky's mature oeuvre), this early poem by Brodsky highlights and anchors him in the same aesthetic and poetic tradition line as Akhmatova: "I reckon that here we encounter a

trait that sets apart the moral and aesthetic level of Akhmatova and Brodsky from that of the average intellectual Soviet morals, the level of those of whom Pasternak wrote: 'they did not realize that the tragedy of the middle taste is worse than that tragedy of no taste at all"[3] It is precisely the "greatness of the [poetic] design", as Brodsky has formulated and Milosz elaborated on, that sets apart this seemingly rudimentary or ironic poem by the young poet. This resonates well with Akhmatova's own reading of the piece and praise of its evident genius. What sets apart Loseff's analytic investigation of this particular poem is precisely its nuanced and thorough engagement with the poem and its context and place within a greater and more universal poetic tradition. Furthermore, unlike many scholastic analyses that solely concentrate their investigative focus on overt similarities or differences, this one looks at the broader literary context as well as the less obvious intricacies of Brodsky's poem. Moreover, the juxtaposition of Akhmatova and Brodsky is not simply one of a cause-effect or of direct parallels between the two poets, but rather one of complex interconnections and loci within the same line of aesthetic and poetic tradition[4].

---

[3] *"Я полагаю, что здесь мы натыкаемся на черту, отделяющую моральный и эстетический уровень Ахматовой и Бродского от уровня среднеинтеллигентской советской морали, уровня тех, о ком Пастернак писал: '... они не знали, что бедствие среднего вкуса хуже бедствия безвкусицы' (Пастернак, 474)."*

[4] This line of argument becomes especially interesting when one explores it in the context of Brodsky's own perception as an individual poet, rather than a representative of any collective. Brodsky has voiced such sentiments in several of his prose pieces and perhaps most notably (due to the large audience) in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech. In its very opening, the exiled writer shares his discomfort of being in such a position as a person who has preferred "the private condition" his whole life (Brodsky). Nevertheless, Brodsky also acknowledges the shadows of various Russian poets that are inevitably present as he "deem[s] [himself] their sum total, though invariably inferior to any one of them individually" (acceptance speech). Whether that particular line is a reflection of Brodsky's humility as he accepted the award (although, as the poet's friends and acquaintances have suggested, humility was not always characteristic of him) or a broader sense of belonging to a rich literary canon of Russian poets he might have felt remains unknown. Nevertheless, there is a certain tension that is generated between the fluctuating perceptions of the poet as an individual who was not directly affected or influenced by fellow writers and a sense of belonging and even a tinge of indebtedness to the greater tradition and matrix of poetic perspectives. This tension and ambivalence seems to be captured well by Loseff's argument who anchors Brodsky as part of a greater whole alongside Akhmatova.

All of the aforementioned reasons are key in the selection of Loseff's article as an introductory seguey to this chapter. As shall be discussed later on, the overall quantity of scholarly research that explores Akhmatova and Brodsky side by side is limited. Additionally, it is frequently circumscribed to either purely biographical remarks or studies of poetic contrasts and similarities that overlook more nuanced interactions and interconnections between the two figures. Despite the importance of Akhmatova in Brodsky's personal and professional development (as has been explored in detail in earlier chapters), the existing corpus of analytic secondary literature does not quite capture its significance. As Loseff succinctly and accurately states in the opening paragraph of his article, this is perhaps due to the very marked differences of poetic style found in the two figures, which is further compounded by Brodsky's own insistence that Akhmatova's influence on him was personal and spiritual (even Christian), rather than literary. The biographical details and nuances of the relationship between the two Petersburg writers will certainly be investigated in more depth in this chapter. This biographical aspect does render a frame, which is not insignificant to the understanding of the poets, their interactions, and perhaps some of the parallels in their poetics and aesthetics.

Nevertheless, the primary focus of this chapter will be on the possible complementary aesthetics of the two poets with regards to the way in which each constructs spaces and places in their poems. Using Harold Bloom's Tessera mode of poetic influence as a theoretical foundation for the chapter, the focus will shift to a few concrete poems by the two authors that showcase the complementary or antithetic nature of the spatial poetics and poetic interactions between the writers. Furthermore, in line with Loseff's general argument that both Akhmatova and Brodsky belong to a differentiated and higher level of poetic development while still being representatives

of an enduring literary Russian tradition that goes back to Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, this analysis will examine the development of their poetics and aesthetics as a parallel case study process, rather than comparative analysis.

Harold Bloom's theory on poetic history and poetic influence and the anxieties that are inherent to such influence provides us with a useful theoretical foundation for the purposes of this parallel case study as well as a conceptual tool to explore the echoes and differences between the two poets in a more nuanced way.. In the introduction to his treatise, Bloom outlines a vision of a corrective theory he is about to propound. Bloom aims to remedy the standard interpretations and theories on how poets influence each other and to create a new critical and more practical approach to poetic analysis. Bloom equates poetic history to poetic influence and suggests that poetic influence - as much as it may be denied by various artists such as Stevens or even Brodsky himself - is an inevitable and necessary part of any artistic development trajectory. Bloom further elaborates that poetic influence and its investigations cannot be diminished to "source-study, to the history of ideas, to the patterning of images" (7). Rather, the scholar argues, "poetic influence [...] is necessarily the study of the life-cycle of the poet-as-poet" (7).

Using Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* and its revisionistic and antithetical character as well as the Freudian concept of coping mechanisms such as substitution and sublimation, Bloom then constructs his own critical mold that emphasizes the necessity of rebelling against or revising the poetic aesthetics of precursors in the poet's creation of a new artistic sensibility.[5] He

[5] Interestingly, Bloom takes an explicit and distancing stance on formalist criticism (as well as on archetypal criticism and contemporary European criticism), underlining the antithetic nature of his proposed theory which seems to be lacking within other directions of critical thought. Bloom considers formalism in a state of "impasse" (12) and the archetype-based critique "barren [and] moralizing" (12). However, Bloom's proposed six modes of influence and revisionism do draw on some archetypal elements in their qualities, directionalities, nomenclature, and modes of development.

envisions the tension and complex interactions between two poetic figures - a precursor and his or her emerging ephebe - crucial not only for the understanding of poetry, but also in its development as a literary genre. Six different modes of influence Bloom envisions are further delineated as "revisionary ratios" that comprise the basis of his theory. In short, these six ratios are labeled Clinamen (a term borrowed from Lucretius, denoting an atomic deviation), Tessera (a term used in mosaic-making), Kenosis (a theological term employed by St. Paul), Daemonization (used in Neo-Platonism), Askesis (term of pre-Socratic shamanism), and Apophrades (a Greek name referring to the days when dead souls return to the houses they inhabited). Bloom's suggested models are varied in the dynamic interactions and complex influence mechanisms they outline. Some such as Clinamen focus solely on the two figures of the precursor and the later poet and the way in which the later poet "swerves" or performs a corrective digression from the aesthetic and/or thematic sensibilities of the precursor after a certain point. Others, like Daemonization, for instance, craft a more complex relationship between the two poets as well as a power that is present in the precursor's work but that in and of itself is located beyond their figure and that the later poet embraces in his or her own work.

Perhaps the most productive and relevant to this investigation of spatial images in the works of Akhmatova and Brodsky model is the Tessera one. Bloom envisions it as a model of completion and antithesis, where the works by the two poets render pieces that complete a whole poetic mosaic, a larger vessel. Drawing on Lacan who posited that desires are only a metonymy of a greater life force, Bloom extrapolates this line of thinking to his own argument. If desire is a metonymy, perhaps so is its antithesis - anxiety. Furthermore, Bloom considers both the precursor artist and the ephebe part of a greater poetic whole, pieces to a larger poetic aesthetic.

Focusing extensively on various psychoanalytic frameworks such as the Freudian concept of family romance, personality theory (and the three key ingredients in it - the poetic id, to which poetry generally belongs, superego and ego) as well as rejections of anxiety by Nietzsche and Goethe, Bloom suggests that the nuanced relationship between an earlier and later poet is that of completion. As Bloom elaborates, "the quester [ephebe/later poet], who finds all space filled with his precursor's visions, resorts to the language of taboo, so as to clear a mental space for himself. It is this language of taboo, this antithetical use of the precursor's primal words, that must serve as the basis for an antithetical criticism" (66). The ephebe completes the rather "truncated" poetic aesthetic[6] of his or her predecessor by way of establishing a revisionist aesthetic of his or her own.

This mode of poetic influence could be most productive to the investigation of spatiality and exile aesthetics in Akhmatova and Brodsky. While, as we shall see in the following passages, Brodsky rejected any poetic or artistic influence by Akhmatova, her presence in Brodsky's early poetic years could not be underestimated or dismissed as altogether insignificant. Moreover, common acquaintances of both poets such as Anatoly Naiman have suggested that the artistic relationship between the two 20th-century figures was similar to the

[6] Bloom explicitly states at several points in his treatise that his conceptualization of "poetic influence" is not simplistic or paramount to "the transmission of ideas and images from earlier to later poets. This is indeed just 'something that happens,' and whether such transmission causes anxiety in the later poets is merely a matter of temperament and circumstances." (71) Bloom suggests his theory is more complex and nuanced than that. He further provides examples of poets who, he believes, fit the different molds of influence he delineates such as Stevens and Whitman as an example of Tessera. Nevertheless, Bloom is a bit less precise in terms of defining exactly what poetic elements and sensibilities of the poets' oeuvre constitute the poetic influence mechanism and its various building blocks. Thus, I have assumed, for the purposes of this study, that the idea of poetic influence is predicated upon similarities or differences in the way in which each poet - both a precursor and an ephebe - constructs his or her own poetic sensibility and aesthetic identity. While simple parallels between images and ideas that occur in both poets would be an overly simplistic interpretation, I do believe that an indepth look at how elements such as images of space, movement of the poetic descriptive focus, metonymies and metaphors, recurring figures and motifs, stylistic and prosodic aspects of poems and poets are crucial to tracing and understanding better how two poets such as Akhmatova and Brodsky might have exerted influence on each other.

one between Gavrila Derzhavin and Alexander Pushkin[7]. Furthermore, in line with Bloom's overall argument that his theoretic framework not only helps us understand poetry better, but also develop a more practical critical approach to reading the genre, I would like to use the idea of Tessera as a critical prism through which to conceptualize Akhmatova and Brodsky's varying, yet somewhat interrelated and resonant-with-each-other aesthetics with regards to constructing space and places in their poetic output.

First, however, a brief biographical and historical detour would be necessary to outline the specific details of the friendship and mentorship between Anna Akhmatova and Joseph Brodsky. The first encounter and official introduction between the two poets took place on August 7, 1961, quite some time before Brodsky's rise to international fame. The concrete first meeting between the two is well documented both by scholars and contemporaries of Brodsky as well as by the exiled poet himself who frequently spoke with palpable respect about Akhmatova even decades later in the States. There is almost no discord between the various accounts of how the two figures met. Young Brodsky was introduced to Akhmatova by their mutual friend Evgeny Rein in the village of Komarovo, the home of Akhmatova's so-called "kiosk" (*budka*). As Lev Loseff elaborates in his monograph on Brodsky, Akhmatova had gotten accustomed to receiving young poets and poetic enthusiasts, a phenomenon that had not abated even during the years of the Stalinist regime when such encounters carried significant hazards and potential consequences to the visitors. The years of the Thaw had further intensified the stream of visitors that came with "flowers and notebooks" to the poetess and her residence in Komarovo, although

[7]"What Derzhavin was to Pushkin, Anna Akhmatova was to Brodsky: the mentor who anointed him as the next great Russian poet." (Naiman)

she also kept on meeting with people while she was briefly residing in Moscow and Leningrad as well (ibid.).

As writers such as Yakovlenko have suggested, Akhmatova was seen in many ways as a "vagrant queen" or a wandering hostess who tried to fill the vacuum left by her own family with young disciples and an active intellectual life (Yakovenko in Loseff). The poetess frequently referred to the group of the four young artists - Naiman, Bobyshev, Brodsky, and Rein - as her "magical choir" (ibid.). Yakovenko goes further and describes the younger visitors as a pleiad who was a constant companion to the Silver Age mastodont, thus further highlighting the importance of these informal meetings that undoubtedly left an impression and lasting imprint on the developing poets. As Yakovenko suggests, Brodsky himself viewed the group as a special one as well - he would jocularly say that Rein was Pushkin, Delvig - Bobyshev, Naiman - Vyazensky (ibid). Himself Brodsky would ascribe the status of Baratynsky due to his own melancholic nature and poetic sensibility at the time. Akhmatova, for her part, viewed her quartet of perennial visitors as the harbingers of a new Silver Age for the Russian poetic tradition (Yakovenko). The specific interactions and more general relationship between the poetess and the young writers are more complex than a simple mentorship or even direct poetic influence. Both the Petersburg poetess and Brodsky himself, even at a young age and an early stage of his artistic trajectory, felt its unique and special qualities. As Brodsky would later recount in one of several interviews with Volkov, each figure of the "Magical Choir" felt that they inherited part of Akhmatova's legacy that they would continue to carry within their own poetic consciousness.[8]

[8] Brodsky recalls the overall disagreement of Akhmatova's orphans after her death. Arseniy Tarkovsky's statement on the death of the Silver Age poetess that suggested that her death marked the end of a poetic tradition elicited disagreement among Brodsky and his peers. "We disagreed," recalls the poet "nothing ended and nothing will end while we exist. Aren't we the Magic Choir? Not because we remember her poems or we write them ourselves, but rather because she became a part of us, of our souls. I'd further add that, while I don't really believe in an afterlife,

While the direct interactions and meetings that followed the fateful original introduction were abundant, the actual correspondence in writing between the two poets remained scarce, at best. Perhaps, this reflects the circumstances of their acquantainship more than its actual nature, but, in any case, the epistolary layer renders another historical source and perspective on the friendship between the two. It is thus a significant archival source that is worth exploring in this chapter. The number of letters preserved in archives and written by Akhmatova to young Brodsky is a total of three. As the contemporary Russian writer and publicist Yakov Gordin notes in the preface to the full text of the letters published both online and in print in his book *Pereklichka vo mrake*, "the epistolary layer does not always render the most significant dialogic layer between contemporary poets."[9] While the letters are brief and do not reveal plentitude of information, however, they still provide a small and useful glimpse into Akhmatova's own perception of her relationship with Brodsky and her own formulation of it. Unlike accounts by mutual friends and colleagues of her direct meetings with Brodsky, Akhmatova's letters are a direct look and a first-person account of the friendship.

The first letter the Silver Age poet addressed to the emerging Petersburg talent is dated from August 1964. Akhmatova opens the letter directly invoking his name. "Joseph - from the infinite conversations I have with you day and night, you need to know what happened and what did not happen" (Akhmatova). The poetess then proceeds to share a few verses of a poem as part of the "this happened" category and a single verse from a poem that "did not happen" (web source). Akhmatova wishes Brodsky health, perhaps a reflection of her own deteriorating physical

still sometimes I feel like she is looking upon us from somewhere, she looks at us from above, as she did in life. Not looking upon us as much as protecting us." (Yakovenko in Loseff)

[9] *"Эпистолярный слой не всегда является наиболее значительным слоем диалогов поэтов-современников." (https://biography.wikireading.ru/272822)*

condition at the time, and that renders the closing part of the laconic letter. Perhaps the key phrase here is the opening sentence, hinting at the poetess' constant inner dialog with the young artist. Despite the physical distance (at that time Brodsky was in internal exile in Norenskaya), Akhmatova has not ceased to think about Brodsky. This is corroborated further in another one of the three preserved letters to Brodsky written by her, where she suggests that she has written drafts of many letters that she never actually sent his way[10]. This hints at the importance of the young poet in Akhmatova's late years since at the time she was receiving various guests and visitors as has been explored previously in this dissertation. Moreover, Akhmatova's praising words of Brodsky's poems as well as her overall warm tone show that she held the young poet in high regard and a central place of significance.

Another letter by Akhmatova that is of interest here is one written in February 1965 to the exiled young poet. At the time Brodsky had just written his "Verses on the Death of T.S. Eliot" and Akhmatova had apparently read it as hinted by her reference to it. Akhmatova opened her own letter with a mention of a "misfortune" that had befallen her -- she had read a poem by Leon Felipe (a Spanish poet who was at the time in voluntary exile in Mexico) and was fascinated by it. As she narrates not without emotion, "I am dying of dark envy. [...] I'm so envious of each word, each intonation. What a poet! And what a translator! I have not seen anyone like them yet. Sympathize with me" (). As an immediate juxtaposition, Akhmatova then turns to Brodsky's poetic work, "[it is] perhaps no worse, but somehow I am not envious. On the contrary - the thought that such verses exist brings me light" (Gordin). The contrasting opinions expressed by Akhmatova could attest to her view of Brodsky's poetry as poetic oeuvre that is in its own

[10] "Joseph, dear! Since the number of unsent letters I have written to You has somehow unnoticeably reached the triple digits, I decided to write a real, i.e., extant letter (in an envelope with a post stamp and address), even unnerving myself a bit" (Akhmatova in Gordin, trans. Miroslava Nikolova)

category that could rival even Felipe's poetic genius (or perhaps the Petersburg was polite to add her thoughts on Brodsky's piece after her approbation of Felipe). Even just the juxtaposition between the two poets, especially given how early Brodsky was in his own artistic development, is clearly indicative of the way Akhmatova thought of the young artist as one of great caliber.

This adulating regard is clearly expressed in each of the three preserved letters written by Akhmatova. The poetess not only praised Brodsky's pieces (alongside his epistolary writing side and even occasional drawings he must have included in his letters and telegrams), but also frequently inquired about his health and general well-being during his exile in the Arkhangelsk region. Moreover, she would often add short descriptions of her own daily life, suggesting she felt close enough to the young poet to share more mundane details of her life. In her last letter, Akhmatova describes in detail the ominous stormy weather and French landscapes that she saw on the way back from her trip to the United Kingdom. Additionally, she opens the letter with the endearing address "Joseph, dear!" another sign of the closeness the Silver Age poet must have felt towards the young poetic talent.

Despite their dearth, Akhmatova's three letters to Joseph Brodsky render a unique first-person-narrated glimpse into the way the poetess viewed and treated the young exile. While there have been many secondary accounts of her close associates or other young poets in the circle such as Naiman (that shall be explored in more detail later on in this chapter), these letters are the sole direct glimpse into Akhmatova's own world, her attitude and regard towards Brodsky. While short and laconic, even perhaps unremarkable at first glance, the epistolary correspondence can tell a lot, in Akhmatova's own voice no less, about the way she perceived and interacted with Brodsky. The three letters preserved in Brodsky's archive and collected and

published by Gorodin further corroborate unanimously the secondary accounts of Naiman and Chukovskaia as well as the scholars that later on briefly touched on the relationship between the two Petersburg poets in their analyses. Thus, the letters serve as a productive and suitable starting point to the exploration of the relationship between Akhmatova and Brodsky as well as their own artistic views on the other. While Brodsky has spoken about Akhmatova on numerous occasions that will be looked at in more depth later on in this chapter, Akhmatova's thoughts on her young disciple (or frequent visitor) have not been documented as thoroughly. Thus, a few secondary accounts by mutual acquaintances such as Naiman will be investigated as well, before this analysis orients itself towards the aesthetic and literary treatments of space in the poetry of the two Petersburg writers.

Anatoly Naiman, a writer close to Brodsky and an inextricable part of the Akhmatova orphans group has various records of his memories and recollections. His perspective provides an interesting and useful additional angle through which one could gain more information and first-person witness accounts regarding the artistic relationship between the young soon-to-be-exiled poet and the senior Silver Age figure. Naiman's perspective complements the multiple accounts both Brodsky and Akhmatova gave about each other. Interestingly, Naiman goes as far as to define and equate the particular dynamic and relationship between the two Russian poetic figures as that between Derzhavin and Pushkin: "What Derzhavin was to Pushkin, Anna Akhmatova was to Brodsky [...] the mentor who anointed him as the next great Russian poet"([11]). In his book of recollections and memoiristic reflections on Akhmatova, Naiman mentions that she always thought of them as a group and an entity. She even suggested they were

[11] "Memories of Brodsky."

only missing a female poet to complete the poetic crew. Nevertheless, Naiman fully admits in various accounts - and often not without a trace of jealousy - that Akhmatova held Brodsky in special regard and fondness.

Akhmatova's perception of the young Petersburg poet is thus one that has been unanimously described as very positive and lauded by various scholars and contemporaries of the two poets. As Volkov suggested in an interview with Igor Vibarov for the Russian newspaper *Rossiyskaya gazeta* in 2015, Akhmatova was happy that she found a "kindred spirit" (*rodstvennaya dusha*) in Brodsky. Volkov's suggestion that Akhmatova regarded Brodsky as an ingenious creative figure with a lot of potential unmatched by his peers and colleagues is corroborated in other accounts such as the one by Natalia Roskina. Echoing Volkov, Roskina suggests that Brodsky was the only young poet that was "suitable for [her] soul."[12] As Roskina elaborates further, Akhmatova rarely read out loud verses other than her own, but she made a notable exception for Brodsky's pieces. Akhmatova even incorporated one of Brodsky's poetic lines as an epigraph of her poem "The Last Rose" ("*Poslednyaya roza*"). This further underscores the unique proximity and admiration she felt for the young poet. Overall, the idea of a kindred spirit or someone who resonates with one's soul is a more unusual and productive one, especially within the parameters of this investigative study and especially as it seems to have been reciprocated by Brodsky (more on his perception of Akhmatova will be discussed in depth later on in this chapter).

As Volkov elaborated further in that particular interview (and to a lesser extent in his book), Akhmatova tended to "flirt" with the rest of the young poets and even had a more peculiar

[12] "...был единственный поэт из молодых, кто был ей действительно по душе." (in Fokin *Akhmatova bez gliantsa*)

relationship with Bobyshev and Naiman; however, Brodsky was the artist that she kept in highest regard. The Silver Age figure felt that it was precisely Brodsky who inhabited a special threshold in his growing poetic trajectory. Furthermore,Volkov suggested that Brodsky acquired and developed his "life-building" ability (*zhiznestroitel'stvo*; or an artist's ability to intentionally craft a certain persona and image influenced by the circumstances and sociopolitical landscape of the times in order to position himself in the best possible way) from Akhmatova. Volkov's ideas provide a new interpretative horizon with regards to the artistic and biographical nuances of influence between the two poets.

Volkov goes on to elaborate that Brodsky did not shy away from being associated with an image of a political martyr and a persecuted and banished genius[13]. In fact, the poet might have been especially appreciative of such associations and proactively constructed and projected that particular image of himself. Volkov further describes how the artist would frequently respond to questions about who was to blame for his exile, trials and tribulations by saying his ordeals were sent by God.

Brodsky himself frequently talked about Akhmatova during interviews even after his exile and long after the Silver Age poet's passing. The poetess's adulation of the young dissident (dissident here is used in a relative sense) is matched by the admiration - on a very human scale that goes beyond the professional, artistic or poetic - expressed by Brodsky when he recounted stories about her. The majority of Brodsky's direct, first-person accounts tend to focus mostly on the personal realm, avoiding any claims of poetic influence or thorough poetic analyses of any

[13] "I can say with precision, and I will not discover any America here, that despite the complexity of the story with Joseph Aleksandrovich's arrest, the court trials, sojourn in exile in the countryside of Norensk and his life there - all of that did happen, but all of that has been mythologized to an extreme. In a certain way, that worked for him [Brodsky] well and he was not at all against such development of his life's storyline" (Volkov in Virabov)

kind. Nevertheless, it is worth exploring these first-person narratives as a key piece of the puzzle related to the complex interaction and potential influence - poetic or personal - between the two poets.

A suitable point of elaboration for this particular building block of the relationship and interactions between the two poets is the interview about Anna Akhmatova and her influence that Brodsky gave to Natalia Rubenstein, later released by the to the Russian Services of BBC in 2015 on the occasion of Brodsky's 75th anniversary. This interview is also of particular interest due to Brodsky's less categorical statements on a lack of poetic influence from Akhmatova on his poetic trajectory and oeuvre. The interview is thorough and unravels with a chronological first-person account of how the two poets met. Brodsky recalls the initial meeting between two as rather unremarkable. As other sources and interviews have hinted, the young poet (who was 21 or 22 years old at the time of their introduction) did not fully grasp and appreciate the extent of Akhkmatova's significance until a couple of months later.

As Brodsky himself states, " it [the trips/visits to Komarova to see Akhmatova] had the nature of day trip outside the city, not so much a meeting with a great poet" (Brodsky). It was a few months into the acquaintanceship that Brodsky felt a moment of spiritual overturn (called by the Japanese, as Brodsky points out, *satori* or revelation) while he was on the train on the way back from Komarovo. When asked by Rubinstein whether he remembered the verse that triggered this realization, Brodsky responds affirmatively, quoting it: "As a river, the harsh epoch reversed me"[14] That marked the beginning of an entirely different mode of communicating and

[14] "Меня, как реку, суровая эпоха повернула"

relations to the Silver Age poetess. Brodsky describes it as a dialogue between two souls or spirits, rather than a simple conversation between bodies and organs of perception (ibid.).

Moreover, Brodsky shows a very positive and touched reaction when the interviewer reads Isaiah Berlin's account of a conversation with Akhmatova, in which she spoke of her high regard for Brodsky's poetry. The poetess further discussed how she felt she "raised" (ibid.) the poet. Despite Brodsky's usual dismissals of any notions of poetic influence from Akhmatova, he responds very positively to Rubinstein's direct quoting of the passage. In fact, Brodsky states his surprise at hearing these words, since he had not heard them before[15] and wholeheartedly and directly agrees that Akhmatova raised him and his peers. The exile praises Akhmatova's intelligence and awareness of various literary and poetic traditions beyond the Russian one. As with previous interviews, Brodsky also speaks highly of the humanistic value of their friendship and the lessons in forgiveness and humanity he and his young fellows learned from Akhmatova.

Nevertheless, perhaps the most intriguing part of the interview with specific relevance to this analysis is Brodsky's unfaltering response to Rubinstein's question whether he feels a poetic influence by Akhmatova on his own work. In this particular interview the poet answers without seeming hesitation and responds positively. He further elaborates that what the Silver Age teaches any and every poet (and, especially, as he will later posit, male poets) is restraint of tone. "It is hard for one to acquire this [poetic] quality oneself when one is lacking knowledge of that poet [Akhmatova] It is very difficult for one to reach this, to think of this on one's own. Men poets have a tendency to impose themselves on the audience, to impose themselves on the reader " (Brodsky). Diverging from his usual laconic negative response to any questions touching on

[15] "Я сталкиваюсь с этой фразой впервые, это ужасно приятно слышать. В одном ее поведении, выражении лица, повороте головы - во всем этом содержался совершенно невероятный урок"

the matter of poetic influence, Brodsky certainly reveals a more affirmative attitude and a willingness to admit poetic lessons or qualities that not only he, but also other poets, could attribute to Akhmatova's influence.

Additionally, Brodsky clearly states in the interview that the beginning of his poetic career started precisely with Akhmatova's words, as a response to one of his poems ("The Elegy about John Donne"). Up until that moment, the poet considered himself as a poet by virtue of his youth and impassioned nature, rather than any poetic talent. However, when Akhmatova read and reacted to his poem, that particular moment - in the words of Brodsky himself - marked the beginning of his professional artistic development. This once again suggests that the friendship between the two artistic figures was not limited to simply an interaction between the generations and a sense of mutual respect on a human level, but rather bore at least some faint traces of poetic influence or perhaps even an echo of an apprenticeship. Brodsky's professional and artistic respect for Akhmatova can be seen in his concluding words in the interview, when he states that Akhmatova "conducted herself as a man poet" since she "a woman, in this case Akhmatova, simply speaks, does not scream or exploit the lyrical" (BBC).

Interestingly enough, this idea of Akhmatova's "manly" accomplishments - especially with regards to the creation and continuation of the Russian poetic and linguistic tradition - is also propounded by close acquaintances of hers such as Lidia Chukovskaia as underlined by an article by the American critic Sapir. The article itself, a fitting and complementary companion to Loseff's nuanced investigation of influence and interaction between Akhmatova and Brodsky, raises several relevant points. The main suggestion of the article is that the interactive dialog between Akhmatova and Brodsky was founded on a significant similarity between the two

writers - their similar views on the importance of the word and language in general in the preservation of the Russian literary tradition. This is further reflected (according to Sapir) in their perception of the duty of the poet -- as a representative and a speaker of the people, a protector of their cultural and literary values and principles.

Sapir suggests that the two poets, Akhmatova and Brodsky, were inextricably linked to each other by their poetic principles and always created and wrote in an invisible dialogue (or overlap, Sapir uses the Russian word *pereklichka*) which continued even after Akhmatova's death. The critic then looks specifically at two poems by the authors, "Manliness" ("Muzhestvo") by Akhmatova and Brodsky's "On the Centenary of Anna Akhmatova" that reveal the parallels and similarities between the two poets especially on the semantic plane. Sapir views "Manliness" as the most comprehensive and all-encompassing of Akhmatova's poems that fully develops and showcases her poetic voice; the scholar finds a similar parallel in Brodsky's dedicated poem as well. The poem was written in 1942 while the Petersburg poet was living in evacuation during World War II (and the nefarious Siege of Leningrad that lasted almost three years resulting in tragic loss of life) in Tashkent. Encapsulating the legacies of various other acmeists such as Mandelshtam, the poem renders an impassioned defense of the Russian language and literary tradition in the face of destruction and censorship; preserving the language, continuing the literary tradition that has faced persecution and execution is the ultimate act of bravery, a sentiment that is viewed in concordance by both the poetic voice and the scholar analyzing the piece.[16]

[16] Although a potential counter argument to Sapir's primary analysis would be to anchor the poem itself into the broader Akhmatova oeuvre from that period to perhaps expand our understanding of the poem's rhetoric. One could posit that the general heroic tone of voice that is rather unusual for Akhmatova's pieces (even the more socially-oriented ones such as *Requiem*) is a divergence from her usual poetic and aesthetic style, rather than an example of a holistic poetic philosophy. Other pieces written by the poetess during that time while the poet lived in

To a certain extent, Sapir then conceptualizes Brodsky's poem (written in 1989, but most likely inspired by a visit to Akhmatova's grave decades earlier as the scholar suggests) as an echo and a variation of Akhmatova's "Manliness". Brodsky focuses on the accomplishment and act of bravery of the poetess in his poetic recollection and homage to her. As Sapir elaborates, Brodsky's poem is not one about death, but rather about legacy and a monument to the bravery of an artist long gone. While Sapir does not explicitly focus on the title, dedication to the poem or its genre as an *In memoriam* piece - a work that pays homage, marks what would have been Akhmatova's centenary - it is also worth critical consideration in this vein of analysis regarding interactions or dialogs between the poets. Juxtaposing and analyzing the two well chosen pieces side by side does indeed open up new venues of interpretation and showcases the undeniable poetic, aesthetic and personal parallels and resonances between the two figures. Nonetheless, Sapir's analysis could perhaps be expanded to further include poems that are not so directly linked to each other thematically. Could similar dialogues and intersections be found in other poems by Brodsky, not necessarily written with Akhmatova in mind? This would be one of the key questions this chapter will look into.

Before the analytic focus is shifted to the specifics of space and its resonances in particular poems by the poets, however, there are still aspects of Brodsky's perception regarding Akhmatova that need to be investigated further. Brodsky did indirectly broach the subject of the aesthetic and poetic virtues of Akhmatova's writing in a book review of a volume of her translated works published in the New York Review of Books in 1972. By way of critiquing the translation efforts of Stanley Kunitz and Max Hayward and their volume *Poems of Akhmatova*,

---

evacuation during the War and following her return to the devastated Leningrad after its end (although, as has been noted in previous chapters, the poetess herself had a privileged status and did not suffer losses, hardships or displacement) echo this style and tone of poetic voice.

the poet in exile reveals more about his own appraisal of Akhmatova's work. Precisely because of this, the book review is worth exploring in more depth in this chapter. Brodsky talks at length about the challenges of poetic translation between Russian and English in the beginning of the article. Notably, Brodsky opted to write the article itself in Russian and have it translated by someone else, perhaps due to the fact that he was in the very beginning of his decades in exile and had not ventured out in writing in English yet. "To translate poetry," writes Brodsky, "one has to possess some art, at the very least the art of stylistic re-embodiment" (NYRB). Translation is an art, but not an entirely original creation as the new exile reminds his readers in the article. Brodsky propounds an overall positive evaluation of both the tandem translation effort of a scholar (with a deep knowledge of the Russian language) and a poet (who has an intimate understanding of poetic technique and meanings) in general and that of Kunitz and Hayward, in particular. Brodsky views their translated volume favorably, although he chooses to focus attention on some of the technical issues and shortcomings of particular poems in the NYRB piece.

While Brodsky might have, previously and consequently, claimed that he was not deeply familiar with the oeuvre of Akhmatova or that her poetic aesthetics were not of substantial significance to him, he shows a breadth and depth of understanding of Akhmatova's poetry in the review of the translated volume. Brodsky outlines two aspects of Akhmatova's pieces, with regards to both poetic form and manner, that render his early mentor a traditional poet. The first is Akhmatova's choice of traditional, carefully planned out and executed, prosody with stable rhyming schemes and metric characteristics. The second is the acmeist artist's hallmark restraint and lines that end with subdued decrescendos and falling intonations. Brodsky who mostly

avoided such conventional forms and manners in his own poetry seems to view Akhmatova's technique positively - he states she was a "traditional poet, in the highest sense of the word" (Brodsky NYRB). Brodsky further comments in more depth on Akhmatova's deep psychologism in the portrayal of her lyrical subjects, something that has emerged from the influence of Russian psychological prose. Here the Russian exile and critic brings forward an example of how Mandelshtam responded that he was a contemporary of Akhmatova when he was asked about his style of poetry. While Brodsky himself retains critical distance and neutrality from Akhmatova's oeuvre, his critique of Kunitz and Hayward's translation suggests otherwise. Later on, during his discussion of particular shortcomings of translations of poems such as "Imitation from the Armenian" (written by Akhmatova in 1931), Brodsky directly states: "This poem is written in a special "Akhmatova stanza" which in its musical density has nothing equal to it in Russian poetry" (Brodsky). Thus, Brodsky seems to vocalize his very high regard of Akhmatova not only as a human and a Christian role model, but also as a poet of great merit, a sentiment the exiled poet later does not reiterate directly.

Returning to the scholastic side of the complex interaction and influence between the two poets, scholars like Aleksandrova and Loseff focus on the evident differences in the poetic sensibilities of the two figures while others have ventured into different and more quantitative investigations of the parallels and common motifs in the poetry of the two Russians. Critics like Valentina Polukhina, for instance, have developed through articles on the poetic, syntactic and thematic differences between the two writers, using as a point of departure the idea that other scholars like Kublanovsky and Niva have hinted at similarities in the laconic and succinct expression of the two poets. Polukhina's analysis in the article "Akhmatova and Brodsky (on the

problem of attraction and repulsion)" ("*Akhmatova i Brodskii (k probleme prityazhenii i ottalkivanii)*") renders a suitable starting point for the more concrete poetic and spatial exploration in this chapter. Polukhina's critical take specifically concentrates on the Venetian stanzas of Akhmatova's earlier period and Brodsky's poem from 1985 "Venice".

In order to better understand the analytic approach of Polukhina as well as the concrete content and parallels between the two poets she highlights, it is worth taking a detour to explore in more depth her article that was originally published in 1989. In the article's introduction, the scholar suggests that critics have predominantly focused on the similarities between Brodsky and his early mentor up until that point. Polukhina cites two other scholars and the succinct and acmeist poetic sensibility of expression found in the Petersburg poets they shed critical light on. The scholar then goes on to highlight Akhmatova's own perception of the artistic differences between her pieces and those of the young Brodsky to further emphasize the differences between the two.

Polukhina then propounds a case study of a kind that specifically analyses poems about Venice by the authors. Brodsky's "Venice", as Polukhina elaborates, is one of few pieces that does allude directly to the Silver Age poetess. Polukhina's analysis is thorough and explores the similarities in trope use (the opening lines of both poems feature double metonymies) as well as the differences in the kinds of tropes and figures each poet picks. This is further complemented by a prosodic and lexical analysis that looks in depth into the rhyming schemes, lexical and syntactical word frequencies in each (although it remains unclear exactly how the scholar quantifies and measures them to achieve precise percentages such as the 46.5% nouns used by Brodsky in his Venetian piece with a an emphasis on abstract nouns that are thrice as much as

they are in Akhmatova's counterpart). Perhaps one of the most relevant and suitable aspects of Polukhina's analysis that is a useful frame of reference and departure for this chapter is her exploration of the spatial ways in which the city of Venice and its poetic image is constructed by the two Petersburg artists.

Nevertheless, Polukhina seems to briefly though subtly contradict herself as she describes several nuances of this urban spatiality in Brodsky and Akhmatova. On the one hand, Polukhina suggests that Akhmatova's citiscape is encompassing, as if captured from the balcony of a building in the city. The city description is concrete and exhaustive - starting with the lagunas, the gondolas and moving on to other elements, people on the streets and architectural features. Polukhina astutely observes the concreteness of physical description in Akhmatova's poem. Brodsky, for his part, tends to gravitate towards a more metaphysical and abstracted description including only a few concrete descriptors of the city. However, Polukhina also suggests that Akhmatova's Venice is a lot more circumscribed and restrained, especially in comparison with Brodsky's cityscape. Despite the slight contradiction, the scholar's overall analysis corresponds to the critical argument in this dissertation that Akhmatova's poetics of space tend to be more centripetal and restrained, while Brodsky's - more abstract and centrifugal, transcending any physical boundaries and expanding outwards and upwards.

Overall, Polukhina argues that Akhmatova's influence on Brodsky is anything but simple or direct as evident in the myriad differences in their poetic styles and registers. While her technical - prosodic, syntactic, morphological and lexical - analysis is thorough and presents a convincing perspective on the differences between the two poets, Polukhina does not develop her argument on the specifics of Akhmatova's influence any further. In fact, that seems to remain a

rather underdeveloped and overseen thread of her critical investigation. In certain ways, the scholarly analysis from 1989 could be used as another point of departure and expansion on the intricate interaction and potential influence between the two Petersburg writers.

Using Polukhina's analysis as a point of departure to a certain extent, the analytic part of this chapter will then shift towards specific elements of urban space depictions in the poems of Akhmatova and Brodsky. By way of exploring the concrete spatial embodiments of the urbanscapes delineated by the two poets, side by side, this chapter will explore the complementary and almost antithetical nature of them. Moreover, the topological focus in the primary analysis portion of this chapter will be shifted to a different set of Akhmatova's late period poems; this particular group of works render a suitable thematic counterpart to some of Brodsky's own poetic pieces as they are dedicated to the city of St. Petersburg (or, as it was officially renamed during the communist years, Leningrad). While most of Akhmatova's poems reveal a tendency toward the realm of the personal and intimate, highly emotionally saturated content and psychological nuances and overtones, the poet wrote more than a few verse pieces dedicated to her city and even some dedicated to her motherland replete with urban and natural poetic descriptions[17]. The thematic focus of such poems combined with the general stylistic characteristics of the acmeist movement provides a fertile ground for spatial analyses as the poems are replete with concrete places, topoi and locations even more the already studied in this dissertation poems in the Rosebriar cycle. The prolific presence of urban and spatial descriptions and constructions turn the city poems of Akhmatova into a poetic manifesto of a kind, pulling

[17] There is an especially pronounced tendency in Akhmatova's trajectory to focus on more physical and natural descriptions of the Russian landscape both within Leningrad and beyond specifically in the war years and the immediate post-war time interval.

together a variety of spatial variations and depictions that are consistent with Akhmatova's generally centripetal poetics of space and motion through it.

These particular poems, especially with regards to her late years, are of interest for the purposes of this analysis. The way the poetic voice of the Silver Age delineates the physical spaces, urban topoi and social places within the city could be argued to reveal Akhmatova's full spatial breadth and poetic gamut. Revealing a mature and fully developed aesthetic sensibility, such poems are key for the analysis of space constructed by the poetic voice in Akhmatova's voice and its divergences or perhaps similarities with space and urban landscapes in Brodsky's poems. More concretely, this chapter will concentrate on the poems "Leningrad in March 1941" (1941), "Petersburg in the year 1913" (a poetic recollection and meditation written in 1961 at the tail end of the poetess's oeuvre) as well as "The Summer Garden" (a particularly spatially saturated piece written in 1959; all texts can be found in Appendix III 260-261).

The common thread running between most of these spatial works is their succinctness from a poetic and structural viewpoint, a feature that resonates with Akhmatova's style and register of expression. "Leningrad in March 1941" is a short poem consisting of eight stanzas following the convention for the poetess rhyming scheme of aBaB. Intertwining stanzas of alternating iambic pentameters (complete as well as incomplete) and hexameters, the short piece captures a snippet of the city of Leningrad on a sunny day. While the point of departure of the urban description is the image of a sundial (almost alluding to the earlier poetics of the writer and the early poems in which time acquired threatening characteristics), the rest of the delineation is entirely concentrated on topological aspects and marks. The poetic voice expresses her deep familiarity and love for her home city with all of its defining elements - the river, the

spires, the Menshikov Palace, and the little alleyways. The poetic subject incorporates a couple of personal sentiments as she expresses her familiarity with the city as well as her implicit fondness of the walks and their trajectories that she has learned by heart.

Even though there is no overt motion that is either centripetal or centrifugal, but rather a "zooming out" of a kind, an all-encompassing panoramic look at the city, the poetic landscape that is constructed by the lyrical voice almost seems framed and affixed by the parallel lines and perspectives. Thus, even this urban description of a poem remains consistent with Akhmatova's centripetal poetics of space and motion through it. The second stanza echoes that overall enclosure on a phonetic and morphological level with a euphonic alliteration that almost turns the verse into a self-contained and self-sufficient microcosm within the larger poetic picture and urban landscape. The aforementioned alliteration ("*podniav volnu, prohodit parohod*") also fosters an impression of linearity on a phonetic level by the use of the prefix pro- (as an addendum to the verb of motion 'to go') which indicates a directionality that moves through or along the length of something. This along with the repetition of similar consonants additionally emphasizes the sense of through-ness or of encapsulating the urban space from one end to another.

Furthermore, between the linearity of the steamboat's motion along the river and the evocation of wires and birds sitting on them, parallel boundaries and framing lines emerge in this poem consisting almost entirely of metonymies and snippets of details of the vast city. From the waves of the river to the shining reflection of the sun off of the spires of the numerous churches and castles carrying the long historical legacy of Leningrad, the poem almost reads like a puzzle that comes together to form a fully painted and framed picture of the city. The vertical spires,

horizontal electric wires and the river traversing the entire length of the city create topological axes that affix and scaffold the poetic image of St. Petersburg (Leningrad). Likely, the poetic voice is walking through it and ruminating on the details and urban metonymies surrounding her, thus painting and circumscribing the image that emerges from her delineation. While there is no determinate motion other than the movement of the poetic voice through her city and her poetic gaze up and down its familiar elements, the miniature poem-octet aligns with the overall poetic strategy and aesthetic sensibility of Akhmatova when it comes to questions of spatial nature.

An interesting counterpart for this Petersburg-themed poem is provided by another piece by Akhmatova, written two decades later, but inspired by a recollection of Petersburg from much earlier times. The poem "Petersburg in the Year 1913" marks an interesting albeit subtle deviation from Akhmatova's poetic register. This poem comprises twelve verses of varied prosody that diversify Akhmatova's well-measured-out and carefully regulated iambic poems. The rhyming scheme is a more destabilized aaBccB and the verse footing fluctuates between anapests, iambs and trochees. Such manifold and unexpected technical characteristics create a more tense and chaotic feeling within the poetic description of the city; it also reflects a more mature and complex poetic aesthetic and perhaps even an inkling of a move away from the centripetal directionality of Akhmatova's works.

From the very first verse, the poem acquires a palpable auditory quality - a lot of the verbs weaved into it describe sound and the delineation of Petersburg in that particular year bears an almost ominous musical quality that alludes to a circus. For instance, the first image that emerges from the opening line of the poem carries the sound (or howl, "voet") of a street organ that is coming from behind an outpost or a gate. This is followed by a string of circus-alluding

images -- a bear is led in and a gypsy woman dances to the sound of the organ. A steam locomotive passes through and its sound reverberates over the Neva river. A wind of "malice and will" blows and the lyrical subject describes her voice as one that "silences the oracles". Bearing elements of a fragment, this poem etches out an auditory and menacing urban landscape with an impending sense of doom. The lyrical voice is about to leave the city as she "cannot wait any longer". The suggestion of departure in and of itself is unusual for Akhmatova's lyrical subjects.

This spatiality departure renders "Petersburg in the Year 1913" an even more unusual case study of Akhmatova's late oeuvre precisely due to its motive impetus that pushes the lyrical heroine away from a center and away from her city. The chronological aspect of the piece complements this more unusual aesthetic - the poem is written in the beginning of the Soviet Thaw but is clearly demarcated as a poetic recollection, a fleeting memory from a pre-revolutionary time (predating even World War I). While the spatial aspect of the poem attempts to depict a move away from a restraining center (as suggested by the image of the bound bear and the military outpost), the chronological axis forms a frame that tightly binds the delineated image of the cityscape as frozen and affixed between 1913 (the title) and the year of the poem's creation, 1961. Despite the more destabilized and diversified rhyming and metric qualities, the poem still preserves marks that align her with the rest of Akhmatova's oeuvre. Perhaps the only permanent departure from Akhmatova's usual style remains the rather menacing and ominous description of the city - gripped by fear and an ongoing circus procession. This particular poem by the Silver Age writer comprises a suitable bridge and segue into the poetic imagining and reimagining of the city found in Akhmatova's early disciple, Brodsky.

Of further comparative interest is the poem "Petrograd, 1919" written in the year of its title. While the two city poems are difficult to be juxtaposed and directly compared, each claims to present a poetic image of the city of St. Petersburg (during its different phases as seen in its name changes from St. Petersburg to Petrograd to Leningrad). The poem written in 1919 (please refer to the poetic appendix for its full text, Appendix III 260-261) encapsulates a spatial poetic aesthetic that is consistent with Akhmatova's centripetal sensibility even in her early years of writing. "Petrograd, 1919" consists of a larger stanza of twelve verses of iambic and trochaic pentameters followed by a quatrain; the rhyming scheme is stable AbAb. While the poem itself does not depict the city itself, it touches on the choice of the lyrical heroine to remain in it, rather than to leave it (unlike the situation that unravels in "Petersburg in the Year 1913"). In fact, the lyrical voice in the piece from 1919 laments that she has been abandoned by those close to her because of her choice to stay ("No one wanted to help us/ For we stayed home/ For we, loving our city,/ Not winged freedom,/ We saved for ourselves/ Its palaces, fire, and water.").

Moreover, the subject lists a catalog of everything she and her companion chose to forget as they remained locked in in the capital - "Lakes, the steppe, cities/ Dawns of our great motherland"). "Petrograd, 1919" (1919) renders a stark contrast to "Petersburg in the Year of 1913" (1961) and helps highlight the fluid and varied poetic register of Akhmatova. Both poems incorporate the familiar motif of a blowing wind that is about to bring significant change and both have their poetic grounding in the imagining and reimagining of the city of St. Petersburg. Nevertheless, the poem written in 1961 shows certain departures and variations from Akhmatova's traditional style that could provide a helpful poetic bridge in the complex artistic interaction and possible influence between her works and those of Brodsky.

A relatively early (with respect to the writer's artistic output in exile) piece of Brodsky written within the first few years of his exile depicts a thorough and expansive spatial orientation and motion. Titled "Lullaby of Cape Cod" (Appendix I, 244-245), the poem comprises twelve sections and matches in its overall length and composition the centrifugal poetic tendencies of the Soviet exile. It is one of the first poems written as a descriptor of a specific American topos and only a few short years after Brodsky moved permanently to the United States. The newness of exile and dislocation still fresh, the poem was originally written in Russian and translated into English by Anthony Hecht, ultimately published in 1980 is intricately woven into its fabric of varied verses marked by shifting meters and rhythmic enjambments. This poetic amalgamation is of further note due to not only its descriptions of the new American land and its people (as well as habits and minutiae of daily life), but also because of its explicit treatment of space and time. The poetic voice shows acute awareness of both and directly addresses them (along the reasons and specific processes of his own exile) as part of his lullaby ruminations.

As Ann Kjellberg explicates in the footnote section to the piece, echoes of Akhmatova and other acmeists like Mandelshtam are, of course, abundant as are references to other texts such as the Book of Isaiah. Twice in the second half of the complex poem, the poetic voice broaches the idea of "preserving the word". As Kjellberg posits, that is a direct allusion to a poem by Mandelshtam that was dedicated to Akhmatova; furthermore, as it was discussed earlier in the chapter and within the analysis of A. M. Sapir, the idea of preserving one's peoples' language, the "word" (or, perhaps, Word) of one's literary tradition is viewed by Akhmatova as an act of bravery and accomplishment akin to a soldier's fight on behalf of his or her motherland during a war. This further suggests the inextricably presence and even influence (or reverberation

if not full-scale influence) of the Silver Age poets in Brodsky's own oeuvre that, at first glance at least, bears more difference than resemblances to them. Such presence is not only directly and indirectly indicated by the poetic voice by way of references, allusions or direct extrapolations in the paratext of the poem, but is also subtly present in the physical and spatial descriptions of Cape Cod created by the poetic voice. Of particular interest to the spatial analysis of this chapter will be a couple of the poetic building blocks of the compound poem: parts I, IV, V, and XII in addition to excerpts from other portions of the larger poetic piece.

Space in its most Brodskian centrifugal aesthetic embodiment comprises the very opening line of this twelve-fold poetic work: "The eastern tip of the Empire dives into night". Ever expanding and expansive, the topographical setting of this poem is described in metonymic terms, a faint reverberation of the general metonymic approach utilized by Silver Age poets like Akhmatova albeit developed in an incomparably different way. From the opening verse of the first septet of the poem, the poetic voice describes the locos he inhabits as an Empire, immediately conjuring associations with large-scale and dominating spaces. This is further amplified by the usage of a verb like "dive" and the following image of an ambiguous, but likely all-encompassing night (that serves a hybrid role as a chronotope of the lullaby). Moreover, unlike the geographical descriptions by Akhmatova that are characterized by their role as a rather static background or setting (the city of St. Petersburg and its cardinal elements like Neva and key buildings render a fixed background or poetic foundation, against which further descriptions develop), Brodsky's Cape Cod is a mobile and active stage that is set to "dive" into the night, rather than being enveloped by it. The living and breathing, dynamic entity that is the Cape in this poem by the Soviet exile, possesses a degree of agency that is atypical for a space or even

any concrete place (perhaps other than a door or another threshold) delineated by Akhmatova, for instance.

This, then, makes an especially elucidating example of the nuances of the complex Tessera interaction between the two poets. Brodsky's poetic descriptions of place and space might echo certain elements or general approaches of his early mentor, but they expand and acquire new dimensions. Such dimensions - an act of figurative motion such as the "diving" aspect in the first line -for their part can seem antithetical to Akhmatova's more anchored and immobile urban metonymies. Moreover, as the poetic voice describes later on, the human eye (which is centered as the main perception point in the lullaby) is the sole organ that preserves its elasticity and adaptability. This sentiment echoes in accordance with the overall dynamic nature of the depicted poetic landscapes in the poem. It is precisely through this expansion and contradiction of spatial aesthetics that Brodsky successfully continues and completes the topographic sensibility that Akhmatova propounds. This is further evident in the remaining verses and septest of the long poetic work written early into the poet's own exile and loss of place.

Exile finds embodiments in the persistent emptiness of the space and its concrete places, an element that is especially pronounced in the first septet. Since it is nighttime and the generic belonging of the overall work is hinted as a lullaby in its title, silence pervades the wide landscape delineated by the poetic subject. Cicadas are said to "fall silent over some empty lawn", the dimming light that grazes the tops of buildings and their finials as everything goes dark is likened to a "nearly empty bottle". Emptiness echoes in the street urbanscape that is depicted next as well: "From the empty street's patrol car a refrain". Immediately after, in the

second septet of the poem, the reader encounters a crab crawling onto an empty beach after emerging from the ocean. Even the details of this scene that unravels on a rather miniature scale, especially when compared to its broader setting, however, follows a centrifugal trajectory. The crab moves away from the ocean (that is its natural habitat and gravitational core of a kind) onto the beach.

The poetic further explores and reaches every crevice, building block and element of the larger Cape Cod landscape: from the nightstand in the room and the glass of whiskey on it to a nearby crossroad to street corners to basketball courts[18] to, finally, at the end of the last septet of the first part, a star (described as "a small dot in the dark"). Despite the minutiae everyday details of the townscape as well as the natural landscape on the cape, the poetic subject preserves his orientation upwards and outwards. The centrifugal poetics of Brodsky are palpable in every verse of this stanza, as well as throughout the rest of the poem, as is the sense of adapting to a new place. Unlike Akhmatova's "Petersburg", Cape Cod - while described in a similarly methodical way with a particular focus of the landscape metonymies - is a foreign place. Nevertheless, as the poetic voice hints he is adapting to his novel environment (perhaps precisely by way of keeping a gaze fixed upwards on the sky and more metaphysical topoi). As the subject states, "It's strange to think of surviving, but that's what happened./ Dust settles on furnishings, and a car bends length/ around corners in spite of Euclid…" ("Lullaby"). Meanwhile the darkness of the night

[18] Interestingly enough, the figure of a wandering bird that laid eggs is prominent here ("On the deserted ground/ of a basketball court a vagrant bird has set/ its fragile egg in the steel hoop's raveled net"), almost as a precursor to the image of a bird's egg in "December in Florence" ("In the low December sky/ the gigantic egg laid there by Brunelleschi" referring to the Brunelleschi dome) that will be investigated next. Moreover, the descriptor of the bird in "Lullaby" as a vagrant one further resonates with the overall mobile, porous and dynamic quality of the poem that captures the experience of the new exile.

chronotope deepens further. Brodsky's spatial treatment of this particular piece aligns well with the poet's overall aesthetic of centrifugality.

Moreover, the poetic voice's poetic transformation of Cape Cod is encompassing and explores both the elements of inanimate nature, flora and fauna as well as the human existence and imprint of the towns on the Cape. The descriptions can be strung together as various and non-continuous pieces of a mosaic that add a fragmentary element to the overall landscape and spatial description. This aligns well with Akhmatova's (albet much more laconic, economic and corporeal) urbanscapes of the city of St. Petersburg. The fragmentary nature of the poem continues in the following septets as well, though the different snippets of spatial descriptors are bound together by recurring motifs (such as the figure of the Empire or the mention of the stifling air) and the convergence of space. This confluence is seen in the images of spheres and parallel lines converging together as well as the shifts between depictions of cities and natural landscapes.

Ontological, epistemological, and metaphysical questions of exile and belonging in a vast novel space ("I beheld new heavens, I beheld the earth made new") that - like a sphere - tends to close in on itself despite its boundless horizons continue in the following stanzas as well. The poetic subject states that he has changed "Empires", hinting at the autobiographical nature of this particular piece. The specific word choice further encompasses Brodsky's centrifugal tendencies and expansive geographic grasp. Reverberating in that sentiment, is the lyrical voice's statement that such a change of place, the implicit exilic condition, is "linked with far-flung sight,/ with the long gaze cast across the ocean's tide/", further reiterated in the writing process itself ("which corresponds to the plain, small/ blank page of letter paper on which you write"). There is no

doubt that the description of the Cape Cod locale inherently carries an autobiographical aspect and a sense that exile - despite its fragmentary and disorienting nature - opens up wide new horizons.

Additionally, despite the assertion of the poetic subject in the eighth septet, " 'Time is far greater than space. Space is a thing", that does not seem to be reflected by the poem itself. Even on a purely lexical level, the translation underscores the inevitable significance of space as seen in the amplifier to the comparative form: "far greater than space". Accordingly, the poetic skeleton of the work itself, carefully devised and split into twelve melding parts, does not support such assertion, but rather reflects on a structural level the dynamic spatiality of the poem. Space and place permeate each verse, expanding and then gradually folding into themselves (as, for instance, seen with the constant parallels and comparisons between humans and fish; in fact, most people in the Cape Cod area appear like fish to the poetic subject).

The spatial descriptions of this poem vary and fluctuate between concrete urbanscapes such as the one that comprises most of the fifth septet that provides a birdview-like depiction of the coastal New England settlements. This part, and its opening septet in particular, could be examined as a potential spatial counterpart to Akhmatova's poems explored earlier in this chapter. Like his predecessor, Brodsky's choice of poetic depiction is one that hones in on details and structural elements rather than the whole amalgamation of them that completes a city or a town. Nevertheless, Brodsky's own imprint is left on this description as its execution does not bear many resemblances to Akhmatova's poeticscapes beyond the general focus on metonymies. The coastal New England towns are likened to a school of fish that has been pushed out to shore or washed up after a flood. The concrete details of the settlement's composition are described

using the flag poles and towers of buildings as metonymies of focus. Furthermore, a subtle comparative parallel is drawn with European cities (perhaps even Russian) with the tongue-in-cheek mention that the New England towns do not bear monuments to their "founding fish " much like a place like St. Petersburg might. "A sketch of towers thrust among the stars" evokes a feeling of openness and almost divine-like removal from anything on the earth. Once again the poetic gaze looks upwards in the exploration and adaptation to the new land.

Finally, another concrete urban poem of Brodsky that shall be briefly touched on in this analysis (since it has been investigated in greater detail in one of the previous chapters) is Brodsky's well-known work "December in Florence" (Appendix I, 237), written a year after "Lullaby of Cape Cod", in 1976. This poem is of particular interest to the exploration of poetic influences, parallels and variations between Brodsky and Akhmatova's spatial aesthetics as it carries an epigraph that is an excerpt from Akhmatova's poem dedicated to Dante. In certain ways, Brodsky's lengthy and metaphysical meditation and urban description of Florence could be seen precisely as an extension of the poetic homage paid to the Italian poet started by Akhmatova herself. Brodsky's piece renders prolific ground for the critical analysis of space and place both on its own (in light of Brodsky's generally centrifugal aesthetic as well metaphysical ruminations on questions of time, exile and legacy) and as part of a fluid and interactive response, or perhaps even reverberation, of the poetic tradition embodied by earlier mentor figures like Akhmatova especially given the poem's epigraph.

As noted in the earlier analysis of the poem, this work constructs a dynamic city - one that is living and breathing and an active poetic character in and of itself. Unlike Akhmatova's poetic urbanscapes, Brodsky's Florence (which perhaps could be conceptualized an envisioned

St. Petersburg or a wishful manifestation of the lost Russian city: after all, as Ann Kjellberg elucidates, the mention of six bridges over the Arno river in "December in Florence" could be a direct allusion to the six bridges that span the Neva river in St. Petersburg[19]) is a fluid composite of all of its parts that moves along with them, rather than a static background. In accordance with that, the opening verse of the piece is centered on the image of the doors of the city that "take in air, exhale steam." This almost cinematic image - or, rather, unified multitude of images - amplifies the sense of fluidity and motion in the city. Similarly to Akhmatova, Brodsky directs the gaze of his poetic voice towards concrete elements, building blocks and specific objects of the cities that take on the role of spatial metonymies. It is these metonymies that then piece together the broader city landscape when they are strung together.

In a manner resonating with his early mentor, Brodsky also does not remain impartial to the city description. Nevertheless, the poetic subject is rather removed - there is no first-person perspective - but an all-encompassing poetic gaze. Instead of a particular poetic subject or voice, Brodsky choses to highlight the organs of perception as the prism through which the poem unravels (unlike Akhmatova's direct inclusion of first-person forms and verbs to indicate the lyrical subject is the active story-teller in the piece). It is a pupil that "blinks but gulps/ the memory-numbing pills of opaque streetlamps". Moreover, a couple of stanzas within the poem include a direct invocation and address of a subject in the second person singular form (a you that likely refers to the exiled Dante himself who is presented not only with a detailed description of his lost topos, but also with the impossibility of a return: "you, however, won't/ be back to the shallowed Arno" in the very first stanza and "There are cities one won't see again" in the closing

[19] Kjellberg.

stanza). Whether the poem itself is self-reflective and captures at least a glimpse of Brodsky's own feelings about his exile and an impossibility of a return to Leningrad remains unclear, but the poem undoubtedly bears the marks of an unintended poetic response to Akhmatova's urban poems.

The parallels and contrasts revealed by Akhmatova's Petersburg poems and Brodsky's "December in Florence" reveal the palpable and nuanced influences, or at the very least echoes, of Akhmatova's poetics. "December in Florence" thus serves not only as a useful case study on - as David Bethea has thoroughly examined - the triangulation that Brodsky fosters by way of incorporating both ancient authors and some of his contemporaries in the architectural process of crafting his own pieces, but also reveals to an extent the ways in which Brodsky's spatial poetics not only reform and depart from Akhmatova's centripetal poetics, but also extend and complement them. The complex Tessera interaction that was summarized and explored in more detail in the beginning of this chapter therefore acquires concrete dimensions and agents here. Brodsky's imagining of Florence (and, even, Cape Cod) not only expands on the urban cityscapes that Akhmatova meticulously constructed in her late poems, but also subverts their spatial orientation (Brodsky consistently shows a centrifugal and expansive tendency), develop them further and breathes life into the static metonymies delineated by his earlier mentor. Perhaps one of the most spatially saturated stanzas that reveal both the echoes and marked differences and contrasts between the aesthetic sensibilities of the two poets in their spatial descriptions of cities is the ninth and final one in "December in Florence".

The last stanza of Brodsky's poetic homage to Dante (by way of acknowledging Akhmatova as an intermediary and likely implicitly paying due poetic respect to her along the

way) shifts the overall register of the depiction of Florence from a porous and actively moving one to a closed off entity that does not let sun rays permeate its glassy exterior. Despite the change in the spatial ambience and descriptions (from a dynamic and breathing space to an enclosed one), however, the depiction preserves its main building blocks and elements such as sunlight, reflections on the surface of buildings, concrete architectural points like bridges, and arcades, faintly but unmistakably echoing the poetic urbanscapes of Akhmatova's late years.

Moreover, the inclusion of a rather personal and intimate detail resonates strongly with Akhmatova's poetic style. Toward the end of the final stanza, the poetic subject of Brodsky's "Florence" weaves emotionally significant individual recollections: "There are places where lips touched lips for the first time ever,/ or pen pressed paper with real fervor" ("Florence IX"). These specific verses resemble Akhmatova's tendency to present her poems through the point of view and personally significant ruminations of her poetic heroines; Brodsky's verses resonate with Akhmatova's description of the Summer Garden in her piece included earlier in this chapter. Just as Akhmatova's lyrical subject describes the public garden as a place that remembers her in her youth and integrates her personal history as an essential feature of the space, so does Brodsky's poetic voice interweave memories of personal and artistic significance in the city description.

The two concrete lines in "December in Florence" appear like both an extension of this Akhmatova sensibility and a variation of it with the inevitable inclusion of an allusion towards the poetic formation and birth of the writer ("pen pressed paper with real fervor"). Thus, once again there is a hint at a Tessera-like interaction between the two poets. Brodsky's Florence renders a living and breathing monument to its lost citizen, Dante, in the same way Akhmatova's

Petrograd in “Petrograd, 1919” is said to be a monument to her lyrical heroine and her companion. This potential Tessera-like interaction between the two poets, especially with regards to spatiality, is reflected throughout their artistic trajectories.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry. Second Edition*. Oxford University Press: New York, NY 1997. Print.

Brodsky, Joseph. *Collected Poems in English*. Ed. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York, NY 2002. Print.

_____. Kjellberg, Ann.

Fokin, Pavel. *Akhmatova bez gliantsa*. Amfora: 2007.

Gordin, Yakov. "Dialog poetov. Tri pis'ma Akhmatovoy k Brodskomu." *Tom 2. Tem, kto na tom beregu reki*. Electronic. https://biography.wikireading.ru/272822.

Haven, Cynthia. *Joseph Brodsky. Conversations*. University Press of Mississippi: Jackson, MS 2002. Print.

Loseff, Lev. *Joseph Brodsky: A Literary Life*. Trans. Jane Ann Miller. Yale University Press: New Haven, CT 2012. Print.

Losev, Lev. "O luybvi Akhmatovoy k 'narodu'." *Poltory komanty Iosifa Brodskogo*. Electronic. http://josephbrodsky.blogspot.com/2011/11/blog-post_3276.html

Naiman, Anatoly. "Memories of Brodsky. *London Review of Books.* Vol. 21(10), May 1999. Electronic. https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v21/n10/anatoly-naiman/memories-of-brodsky

Polukhina, Valentina. *Joseph Brodsky: A Poet for our Time*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge 2009. Print.

Rubinstein, Natalia. "Iosif Brodskii: 'Akhmatova uchit sderzhanostti'." *BBC News. Russkaya sluzhba*. 2015. Electronic. https://www.bbc.com/russian/society/2015/05/150523_brodsky_interview

Sapir. A. M. "The Word That Conquers Death" (A. Akhmatova and J. Brodsky: "Two Voices are Exchanging Views"). 2018. Electronic.

Volkov, Solomon. *Conversations with Joseph Brodsky*. Simon and Schuster: New York, NY 2002. Print.

CHAPTER IV

Ambivalence of Space in the Oeuvre of the Czechoslovak Singer-Songwriter in Exile Karel Kryl

> "... the art of song is a triple art, a true compound. And it doesn't make sense to ask which element of a compound is more "important": the voice, or the music, or the words?"[1]

Exile, displacement, and their poetic reflections and embodiments occupy a substantial place in the sociohistoric and artistic fabric of every Slavic culture. In order to gain a broader understanding of how exiled Slavic artists coped with their circumstances and to explore another variation of the exilic condition that extends beyond the Soviet political landscape, the focus of this chapter will be shifted to the 20th-century Czechoslovak context. While Western Slavic cultures, such as the Czech, Slovak, and Polish, provide a plethora of potential exilic candidates and case studies[2], this chapter will look specifically at the art of the somewhat less well-known in the Anglophone world singer-songwriter Karel Kryl (1944-1994). After an unexpected, but willingly taken decision to remain abroad after a musical tour in 1969, Kryl spent over two decades living and working in exile in West Germany. While Kryl's prolific oeuvre of songs, poems, prose, radio programs, and periodical articles is well known to the Czech audience, it

[1] Christopher Ricks. "Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize."

[2] There is a plentitude of Czech and Slovak writers, poets and artists who would make a good case study of exile and its reflections within their works. For instance, writers such as Milan Kundera, Ivan Blatný (perhaps the most well-known of the exiled poets and a member of *Skupina 42*, a circle of modernist writers and artists influenced by cubism and futurism), Pavel Kohout, Jaroslav Vejvoda, Josef Škvorecký, Viola Fischerová, and Antonín Brousek. Other figures and contemporaries of them that are sometimes considered poets of inner exile (Tharp et al.) also include Zbyněk Hejda.

remains shrouded in oblivion among Western scholars as well as the general audience beyond the former Czechoslovakia and West Germany.

In many ways, Karel Kryl renders a suitable counterpart to figures such as Anna Akhmatova and Joseph Brodsky for the purposes of this dissertation. This is not because of his artistic or biographic similitude to them (in fact, comparing or contrasting their written texts in this analysis would be unfair and too ambitious of a task); it is Kryl's position as an eternal, rather than external or internal, exile that makes him particularly useful for the nature and scope of this analysis[3]. The Czechoslovak Bard with the Guitar (as he was frequently referred to) did not shy away from expressing his critical views of both the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia and the democratic government that followed the 1989 Velvet Revolution. Furthermore, one of the constants that permeated Kryl's life, which encompassed various political systems and changing sociocultural landscapes, was precisely the artist's "contra" position. Kryl was vocal in his critique of the communist regime and the invasion of the Warsaw Pact of August 1968 and this propelled him to fame after he released his debut single "Little Brother, Lock the Gate" as a reaction to the event. Nevertheless, the singer-songwriter was also among the earliest critics of the democratic changes and the new government following the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Kryl's criticism of one system was not founded in his ideological grounding in or affiliation with its opposition, but rather it was a product of his own independent views.

[3] In certain ways, Kryl's biography and anchoring as an "eternal" exile could render a parallel to the life of the Russian philosopher Alexander Zinoviev. Zinoviev found himself at odds with life in both the USSR and as a dissident. Nevertheless, unlike Zinoviev, Kryl did not express definitive support for any regime, but rather a perennial disillusionment with the similarly flawed opposing political systems (both the Communist regime and the democratic government in Czechoslovakia in the early 1990's).

Additionally, while Kryl was predominantly focused on the abuses of power of the Communist government, he did not hesitate to criticize society as a whole and especially its frequently indifferent and passive attitude toward the sociopolitical climate. One of Kryl's most prominent prose publications was the collection of essays and commentaries, *A Land of Indifference* (*Země lhostejnost*), published in the 1990's. The essays incorporated into the edition spanned a period of several years (1990-1993) and touched on a variety of genres of social criticism. Kryl wrote overt essay commentaries as well as allegorical and satirical tales that illuminated his frustration and disenchantment with the new political system[4]. It was Kryl who perceptively observed even in the early years of democracy that the very promising new government still seemed to be plagued by familiar problems[5]. It was around this time as well that Kryl left his position at Radio Free Europe, largely due to frustrations with the radio's increasingly one-sided political affiliation and commentaries (Kryl *Rozhovory*). Kryl's critical approach to not only communism, but also the much awaited and hailed democracy, anchors the singer-songwriter in a position of a perennial rebel. While not fully synonymous with "exile", this kind of positioning bears some resemblances to the condition[6]. In turn, this constitutes a

[4] The essay and commentary collection comprises twenty-eight prose pieces that vary in form and content, most of which are marked by either a "By the way…" or "Underscored" title. The overarching aspect that binds them together is the writing's political and social commentary, which frequently voices discontent and criticism; some essays touch on recollections of the author on the state of society in the years before his exile, while others broach questions and topics that are relevant to the post-Velvet-Revolution Czechoslovakia, the new political system, the lack of objective journalism, etc. As the editorial note of the edition underlines, Kryl had lost his radio audience after his parting with Radio Free Europe due to disagreements and this collection renders a substitute venue for the singer-songwriter to express his views (Klimt). Země lhostejnost has generally been received well despite earlier criticism. As an article for the Czech Radio (*Český rozhlas. Vltava*) by Tereza Adamková in 2014 highlights the perceptiveness of Karel Kryl and the important locus he inhabited as a truly independent thinker.

[5] An unpopular opinion that he elaborated on in more detail in his aforementioned essay collection as well as interviews later on documented in Marlen Kryl's collection of interviews, *Rozhovory*.

[6] The case of Kryl as a figure of permanent exile is all the more interesting due to his public perception. While during the years of Communism and repression of free speech and creativity (and the period after the release of his debut album) Kryl was well known and received by the Czechoslovak public (and not so much by the state), his

relevant building block to the analysis of space, place and exile in the 20th-century poetic Slavic contexts.

Furthermore, Karel Kryl was a contemporary of Joseph Brodsky and actively chose to remain in permanent exile around the same time that Brodsky was expelled from the Soviet Union. Thus, Kryl encapsulates another relevant and diverse aspect of exile and the construction of space in 20th-century Slavic poetry and an alternative, but contemporary case study to that of Brodsky's. Kryl's own biographic circumstances may render a contemporary parallel of Brodsky's or, at the very least, another refraction of exile in the poetic context of Eastern and Central Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. Like Brodsky, Kryl also wrote a significant amount of prose and he did not hesitate to criticize the authoritarian Czechoslovak government and the de facto repression of free speech and artistic rights following the Warsaw Pact Invasion of August 1968. Even though Kryl and Brodsky did not have points of contact or convergence, the two artists serve as a good and encompassing example of what exile in the Communist context of late 20th-century Europe could look like.

Before delving further in Kryl's songs and exploring the constructions and reflections of space in them, it is worth taking a brief biographical detour in order to better understand the Czechoslovak context and Kryl's personal circumstances. Karel Kryl was born on April 12, 1944 in the Moravian town of Kroměříž to a family of publishers (Čermák). The family-owned print shop was liquidated by the communist authorities shortly thereafter, in front of the young Kryl and his parents (Čermák). Kryl's father had not ceased publishing books (classical authors such as Nikolai Gogol and Karel Čapek as well as contemporaries as Vítězslav Nezval and František

criticism of democracy brought him more negative public reception. Kryl stated himself that he never requested German citizenship.

Halas) even during the German occupation and despite numerous interrogations by Gestapo (ibid.). The loss of the print shop was significant for the family and prompted them to move to and permanently settle in Nový Jičín (ibid.). As Karel Moudrý, an editor, writer and fellow exile with Kryl decades later in Munich, recalls in his memoirs, "Karel would return a thousand times to the day when, as a young boy, he saw the crowd that descended on the family printshop… taking from the printers with fierce hatred and dumping on the floor manually cut out ancient letters" (Moudrý 17). According to Moudrý's recollections, despite Kryl's young age at the time the memory of the fateful day never left him. Moudrý even ascribes to the event a certain apocalyptic quality.

Kryl learned to play the guitar during his adolescent years and started writing poems as a birthday present to his parents around the same time (Čermák). Nevertheless, it was not until the 1960's and after receiving vocational training and degrees in ceramics and pottery that Kryl dedicated himself completely to music. Kryl's first album *Little Brother, Lock the Gate* (*Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka*) was produced as a response to the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 (ibid.). The songs of the album were critical of the events and brought the artist overnight fame. Kryl was transformed into an instant symbol of the protest song genre and became known as the Poet with the Guitar due to the complexity and elegance of his texts (and, perhaps, the relative simplicity of his melodic lines from the standpoint of melodic composition or instrumental accompaniment). The young artist was invited to and performed at various festivals and concerts both in Czechoslovakia and abroad (ibid.)

It was after one such festival in West Germany that Kryl decided to apply for political asylum there, rather than return to Czechoslovakia - a decision that was not premeditated or

contemplated beforehand (Čermák). During his concerts abroad, the artist had realized that a more repressive and insular sociopolitical period was commencing in Czechoslovakia and that a further musical career would be impossible (ibid). This propelled him to choose life as a (voluntary) exile instead. Soon enough Kryl's songs were officially denounced and banned in his homeland, though many people were able to obtain and listen to his recordings (ibid.) All subsequent albums and singles Kryl created were produced in West Germany. The Czechoslovak government occasionally persecuted people who had been caught in possession of Kryl's works and several attempts were made to send informants to gather intelligence on the artist and his life in Munich (Denčevová).

While the nascent stages of exile were challenging for Kryl, who neither spoke German nor had the financial means to sustain himself for long, the poet gradually established himself in his new homeland; notably, however, Kryl never filed an application for German citizenship (Denčevová). Kryl had a prolific career as a singer-songwriter, writer, essayist and publicist (ibid). Moreover, he hosted his own program *Krylogie* on Radio Free Europe. The bard did return to Czechoslovakia two decades later in order to attend his mother's funeral (ibid). During that visit, he also inadvertently witnessed the Velvet Revolution and the final dissolution of the communist regime. While Kryl never moved back to Czechoslovakia, he remained actively engaged in the political and social world, frequently publishing commentaries and voicing his concerns. Kryl was as critical of democracy and the chaotic and corrupt transition it brought about as he had been of communism (Denčevová). In many ways, Kryl's sociopolitical and civic views always anchored him in a position of exile -- displaced from mainstream thought and generally not aligned with either end of the political spectrum and camps. He remained a liminal

artist and thinker, always in a position of *contra*. Kryl was perceptive and aware of what was going around him even in his later years; as Moudrý suggests in his account of life in exile and alongside his Free Europe friend and colleague Kryl, Kryl knew even after the arrival of democracy and new tastes in music and arts that "a person doesn't change, only the set and costumes do" (Moudrý 69).

As the quarter century mark since the death of Karel Kryl passed earlier in 2019, it is perhaps an opportune time for a more thorough scholastic investigation of the singer-songwriter's prolific literary and musical output. While there has been no shortage of books pertaining to Kryl, his artistic trajectory, political views, and personal circumstances, most of these sources remain biographic, predominantly compilations of direct interviews with the artist or recollections about him of his friends and colleagues[7]. Furthermore, the majority of them are conducted by Czech journalists and in Czech. Journalists such as Miloš Čermák, for instance, have written and compiled several volumes on Kryl's life and more publications seem to emerge each year, most of which now focus more extensively archival documents, family letters and documents from the Czechoslovak communist state after Kryl left the country in 1969. Little has been written in English, especially targeting a broader audience that might not be familiar with the history of Czechoslovakia and its prominent dissidents.

Moreover, the existing electronic scholarly materials on Kryl are restricted to a single bachelors, masters as well as a doctoral thesis at Charles University in Prague and Masaryk University in Brno. Each thesis has thoroughly explored various aspects of Kryl, his musical trajectory, social protest dedication and perception by the public. Nevertheless, a literary analysis

[7] Please refer to the Bibliography page for a more detailed list of such sources.

focusing on the poetic qualities of his pieces is rare or only briefly touched upon in the student works. For instance, Michaela Rihová's bachelors thesis on Kryl and the media response to his songs investigates the artistic trajectory of Kryl - briefly touching on the genre of sung poetry and an interpretation of Kryl's most well-known pieces - and its reception through the years. The study of the varied responses in popular media is thorough (the author looks at the obituaries written about Kryl following his sudden death); the author also touches on the broad thematic categories in Kryl's oeuvre such as political protest, grotesque, and faith. Nevertheless, the thesis does not focus on more individual texts or their significance and place within the broader artistic trajectory of the Czechoslovak exile since this is beyond the thesis's scope.

Lenka Rejzková's masters thesis, on the other hand, provides a more encompassing literary analysis that looks at a few of Kryl's songs alongside the development of the poetry he wrote. The analysis is thorough and firmly anchored in the undoubtedly important sociohistorical context of the time of the creation of the songs by Kryl. Rejzková further acknowledges the importance of literary analysis of the texts and looks at Kryl's songs through a thematic, semantic, syntactic and prosodic analytic lense. As the author writes, "[Kryl] had a more exceptional and prominent place among his colleagues [protest singers] [...] his [Kryl's] texts were, in comparison with others, richer, they were not too simple and direct, neither too complex to be understood by the audience like the texts of the other singers" (Rejzková 93). Rejzková further traces the general themes that emerged in various periods of Kryl's works - from his earliest years to the songs and poems he wrote toward the end. The scope of the thesis, however, once again limits the range of analysis of Kryl's songs included in it or the tracing of a particular theme or motif and its development. Rejzková's thesis -a thorough literary, historical and textual

investigation of Kryl's life and poetic works - remains a unique scholarly project on the Czechoslovak Bard with the Guitar.

Finally, perhaps the most extensive scholarly analysis of Kryl's texts and social and political beliefs is the dissertation of Tatiana Witkowská from Masaryk University in Brno, "The Reception of Karel Kryl and his Works in the Czech Public Discourse after 1989." Witkowská's work focuses not only on the reception of Kryl by the general public following the political changes in 1989, but also on Kryl's artistic trajectory as a conscious or committed artist. Approaching the analysis through a social constructivist perspective as well through an acknowledgement of concepts such as cultural and collective memory, Witkowská constructs an argument about the way the collective conscious shaped and reshaped Kryl's image as an exile, a lone warrior whose fate was predetermined by the historical context. Thus, Witkowska propounds the claim that Kryl's lack of popularity as a poet (as opposed to his lasting legacy as a figure of protest and exile and a vocal opponent to the communist regime) could be directly related to the extent to which he had become associated with the genre of the protest song and the events of August 1968. Witkowská's dissertation renders a compelling study that needs to be complemented by further scholarly works as it highlights the lasting and substantial legacy of Karel Kryl.

Beyond these scholastic analyses of Karel Kryl's works, there is little available with regards to the merits of his textual production and contributions to Czechoslovak poetry or even literature. Even less is available to Western readers and in English, other than a handful of

translated articles marking the 25th anniversary of the singer-songwriter's death[8]. Despite the apparent lack of scholastic or literary critical interest in Kryl's legacy, it remains strong, especially among the general Czech public. It is precisely because of this that the dissertation aims to expand the scholarly and analytic materials available on Kryl's oeuvre. The singer-songwriter and radio host is frequently described in articles as a central figure and a key representative - if not the greatest one - of the protest song genre in the Czechoslovak communist context. Streets have been named after him, awards have been posthumously granted to him, a Polish film has come out about him (Krystyna Krauze's *Bratříček Karel* released in 2016) and his songs have been adapted and sung by controversial right-wing figures[9] and communist party members alike (in addition to Kryl's fans and followers). Kryl remains often praised as the Bard with a Guitar and as a master of the protest song.[10] Thus, one of the main goals of this chapter, in addition to providing a frame of reference and comparison from a Slavic context beyond the Russian (and that of the Soviet Union), is to fill a scholarly vacuum by tracing the development of spatial motifs and representations of concrete topoi in Kryl's songs from his earliest post-debut years to the last album of songs he released before his untimely death in 1994.

Perhaps the first and foremost argument that could be made in support of the reading of a song and an artist's musical oeuvre in general as poetry (or any literary genre for that matter, including epic) would be to trace the performative origins of the poetic genre itself. Poetry and

[8] The most notable sources of such articles tend to be the pages of *Radio Prague* as well as *Prague.eu*, the official tourist page for Prague that features some cultural information as well. This only highlights the lack of awareness in the Anglophone about Kryl and his significant place in Czech cultural memory.
[9] Daniel Landa, a Czech rock singer, composer and a car racer, who has previously stirred controversy with his populist and right-leaning political views founded his Order of Lumen Templi with a night of Kryl cover performances in 2004. The Order has since suspended its activities (*iDnes.cz*).
[10]The Poet with the Guitar ("*básnik s kytarou"*) remains a popular moniker for the artist, especially in periodical publications and chronicles.

music were intertwined and a complex and fluid entity when the lyrical genre first started to emerge and differentiate itself from the epic and the drama. Its very origins were at the intersection of music, performance and poetry: "Lyric as inherited from the Greeks was sung to an audience, so that there is a you as well as an I, 'a speaker, or a singer,' talking to, singing to, another person or persons" (Johnson). Nevertheless, as Culler elaborates in his article on the history of literary genres with a particular focus on the lyric, the lyric was recognized as a separately defined and demarcated branch of literature only during the era of Romanticism (Culler). Culler's views are that despite poetry's constant presence and lasting importance, it had not been discussed or analyzed in much depth even by seminal philosophers like Aristotle (ibid.).

The individualistic nature of the Romantic movement, however, finally propelled the lyric genre to a more frontal position on the literary stage. Hegel's philosophy on the importance of subjective perception and the reflection of reality through the prism of the individual (especially the poet) helped establish the lyric as a separate and independent literary entity (ibid.). The literary and poetic merits of protest songs, specifically, have occupied a central place in various recent discourses among scholars, music critics and fans, further propelled by the bestowing of the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature to Bob Dylan[11]. While Kryl's songs vastly differ from Dylan's musical oeuvre, the discussion evoked by the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016 brought up issues relevant to this dissertation. For the purposes of this analysis, however, Kryl's

[11] Dylan was the first songwriter to win the Nobel Prize for Literature and delayed his acceptance of it. Both the award citation and the following events were widely covered by the media with many celebrities and high-profile public figures such as Barack Obama congratulating the singer-songwriter. Some other writers (such as Irvine Welsh, Simon Armitage, and Jodi Picoult), however, voiced skepticism about the Nobel recognition for song lyrics or whether lyrics can be viewed and categorized as poetry.

songs will be considered and investigated as a textual source and a poetic embodiment of protest, rather than a musical work.

Another significant aspect that lends well Kryl's songs in particular to literary analysis[12] is the richness of their textual fabric and their overall complex composition. Most songs by the Czechoslovak singer-songwriter encapsulate a full and cohesive story; the majority of them contain a plotline as well as a set of characters with clearly demarcated heroes and villains. Moreover, the logical sequencing of the events and landscapes depicted in the songs as well as their textual unity[13] convey the protest messages and themes. Furthermore, Kryl stayed consistent in his usage of rhyme in a stable - almost predictable - pattern throughout his musical oeuvre. All of these features make it plausible and feasible to look at the songs through a textual analytical perspective. In certain ways, it could be argued that Kryl's songs resemble stories told in verse or a sung epic[14], a narrative of protest and personal anguish in verse that is set to music.

With regards to the second fundamental component of this chapter's analysis, the exilic condition, Kryl renders a rather unconventional case study, given the circumstances surrounding his permanent exit from Czechoslovakia. As the singer elaborated in an interview with the journalist Miloš Čermák (who worked extensively with Kryl on several occasions and compiled his conversations with the artist in several books), he left Czechoslovakia on Sept. 9, 1969, thinking he would be gone for two to three weeks. Nevertheless, "it [his sojourn abroad] lasted

[12] The analytic focus here is strictly on the broader 'literary' (as opposed to purely musical), rather than 'poetic.' The cohesiveness of the story, the presence of clearly constructed characters, uninterrupted narrative is by no means a feature of poetry. Nevertheless, it does separate Kryl's songs from other musical pieces and renders them suitable for critical analysis, especially through the lenses of space and motion.
[13] In other words, there are no textual fragments or vignette-like episodes in an individual song, no stringing of seemingly unrelated images or scenes as is sometimes typical of songs.
[14] Perhaps it is not coincidental then that Kryl was referred to as the Poet with the Guitar by some of his contemporaries as shown earlier in this chapter.

for twenty years" (Čermák 65). The singer remembered clearly the details surrounding his decision that took a few days to fully crystallize. While Kryl's decision was not planned in advance, however, it was anything but spontaneous. The singer-songwriter came to a gradual conclusion that the days of the Prague Spring were coming to an end and chose to stay in exile. While Kryl had not been openly censored or persecuted by the state and its institutions that changed soon after the artist remained in West Germany.[15]

Kryl used to call his then-newfound residence Munich "the little "Mníšek [a town on the border between Germany and the Czech republic] under the Alps" ("Mníšek pod Alpou", Moudrý 15), a name that Karel Moudrý considers "not a yearning to remember home, but rather an expression of a comforted gratitude felt by all, or at least the majority of us, towards the Bavarian capital, where we did not find our second homes, but we lived an especially nurtured life and where we would address over the radio our fellow Czech people across the [...] border in Czech" (15). Moudrý further elaborates that Kryl insisted on referring to his time in exile as "years closed", a token that Kryl never grew to like or fully embrace the life abroad (ibid). These aspects of Kryl's exile, or perhaps more suitably, displacement, illustrate the complexity of the exilic condition for Kryl. While the singer-songwriter never returned permanently to Czechoslovakia even after the collapse of the communist government, it seems that he never fully adapted or assimilated to his new country either. This locus of in-between-ness and liminality, not only with regards to Kryl's geographic residences and formal passports, but also

[15]In fact, Kryl's apprehension and violation of the laws for leaving the country was not issued until 1975 when Kryl's father's will was opened and, thus, any property bequeathed to Kryl was acquired by the state (Pavlíčková in Denčevová 84).

with his overall critical view of both communism and democracy, position him in a unique place of exile and displacement with regards to this dissertation.

For all the aforementioned reasons, exploring themes and motifs of exile, space, and place in Kryl's oeuvre from a textual and poetic standpoint renders an especially productive endeavor with varied results. Overall, Kryl's songs became more focused on personal and interpersonal topics such as unrequited love, separation, and the disenchantment with one's beloved after his self-elected exile in 1969. Nevertheless, even his more lyrical and personal pieces did not fully diverge from nor completely jettison subtle commentaries of the political situation in Czechoslovakia. The scope of this chapter would be insufficient to engage with most of the singer-songwriter's pieces through the years. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this analysis, the variations and depictions of space and place will be traced in the early songs of Kryl that brought him fame and recognition as well as among the musical pieces of his later years. The focus will be positioned and anchored on several of Kryl's most popular songs through the years, starting his debut song that brought the artist instant popularity.

The title song of Kryl's debut album in 1969 *Little Brother, Lock the Gate* (*Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka*[16]) encapsulates in itself the overall inward and closing directionality of motion and

[16] The fact that Kryl's album was even released is notable as state censorship was soon to establish a ubiquitous presence in Czechoslovakia. The single "Little Brother, Lock the Gates" had already made it to an edition of the Houpačka chart following the self-immolation of Jan Palach in protest to the events of August 1968; the music chart itself was directed by Jiří Černý, a close friend and associate of Kryl's, and featured twelve songs, eight of which were voted by the audience and four added by the director (Klimt). While the producers of Supraphon were at first hesitant to release an album, due to concerns of its political affiliations and content, they eventually relented due to the influence of Kryl's associate Jan Hanuš, a director of a younger company, Panton (Klimt). The album had to be produced and released in an extraordinarily short time frame: two months (ibid). It remains unknown exactly how many copies were sold, but the general estimate is agreed to be about 50,000 (ibid). The first release of 10,000 copies (a cautious move on the side of Panton) was sold in a week. While the album was an instant success, Kryl remained more neutral in his own assessment, noting that, "the songs are children and they are not always nice. Only a few of them are good" (Klimt 106). Finally, even though the album achieved instant acclaim and was largely perceived as a critical reaction and protest of the events of August 1968, it comprised only a few overtly political songs and mostly songs that touched on personal themes and motifs.

its protective function that are prevalent in the song. To an extent, that centripetal directionality of motion and spatial development remains persistent throughout the remaining songs of the album as well; this will be investigated later on in the chapter. "Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka*"* ("Little Brother, Lock the Gate" full lyrics of the songs along with translations by the dissertation's author can be found in Appendix IV) was a direct reaction by Kryl to the Warsaw Pact suppression of the Prague Spring in August 1989. The song comprises a soliloquy form which is addressed to the little brother[17] of the lyrical/musical subject; the song is an attempt to soothe the brother's fears of the soldiers who have just arrived in their tanks. The refrain emphasizes the need to close oneself off and to protect oneself from the impending danger.[18]

In the opening tercet, the lyrical and musical narrator asks the little brother to not cry -- he is, after all, all grown up. The people who have arrived are not boogeymen, continues the voice, but "just soldiers" who have come to the characters in "angular metallic wagons". The linguistic register of the opening lines of the song resembles language used by parents in addressing young children when trying to both placate and soothe the kids' fears, but also to remind them they are strong and brave. The intertwining of the two registers and of their respective realms - that of adults, soldiers, violence and of children, caravans and games -

[17] While, for the purposes of this analysis, the figure of the little brother would be analyzed primarily as that of a younger adult or even a child, it is worth noting that it could be a figurative image that captures the idea of brotherhood between the Slavic people, a trope that was frequently propagated under communist regimes. Thus, it could be that the figure of the brothers is reflective of the bond between brotherly countries; such interpretation aligns with the political nature of the song that focuses on the conflict between two brotherly nations (at least theoretically and ideologically) - Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

[18] The song itself, as Kryl would recall in an interview in 1969, came into being rather quickly and unexpectedly. Kryl recounts walking on the streets of Jičín on the day of the Warsaw Pact Invasion, August 21, 1968. He saw two children, brothers, sitting next to each other with their heads in their hands, talking about "the world of adults that had intruded on their pure children's world" (Kryl *Rozhovory* 26). Kryl could not stop and did not want to interrupt their moment, so he kept walking. In his words, he "kept on going and words started coming to me, sentences, verses… I went on and a melody engulfed me. It was a strange ambience and this song came into being in it, it came into being for two hours. The same day I was singing it on the Jicin square" (*Rozhovory* 26).

achieves a two-fold effect. On the one hand, the song acquires characteristics of an almost-lullaby, a calming tune that is meant to serve as a pacifier and perhaps a protective melody to keep the evil forces at bay. There is a strive to protect the child's innocence and to keep him safe from any dangers. In certain ways the child could be seen as a figure representing the whole collective of Czechoslovakian people. The use of the more qualitatively-saturated adjective *veliký* rather than *velký* is another indication that the little child could be encapsulating deeper historical and political themes and images. *Veliký* is frequently used in political and sociohistorical contexts as it implies greatness in a qualitatively-oriented way rather than a pure factor of years or more experience. The little brother is reminded by the lyrical voice of his own greatness and maturity as an independent person, not just an older or bigger one.

On the other hand, the similes and comparisons of the invading Warsaw Pact's soldiers to a circus-like procession (*maringotka* conjures up such associations right away - colorful, metallic caravans of traveling circuses and fairs) exposes the absurdity of the aggressive actions. This is further amplified by the following tercet and its lines. The lyrical voice and the little brother are looking at each other through "a tear on the eyelid", an interesting metonymy and a twist of a phrase that might have turned into a cliche. The lyrical voice further suggests that the little brother might be alone and out on the "winding roads" in his dress shoes, hinting once again that the brother might be more of a representative figure of a broader collective (a nation or a community) or, at the very least, an adult (educated citizen) rather than a child. There is a clear impulse to move inwards and towards safety. The centripetality of the motion is inextricably associated with a safe haven and a protective cocoon as the impending threat is external.

Nevertheless, this clear directionality inwards - as seen and reemphasized by way of the refrain and its hallmark question, “Little brother, did you lock the gates?”, is destabilized by the presence of the road. This creates an ambiguity as to where exactly both the brother and the lyrical voice are positioned within the lyrical space. Moreover, the narrative voice continues to describe the road lying ahead of them; it is twisting and broken and it will be long and difficult. Night has fallen and it has gotten dark. The lyrical voice pleads with his figurative little brother to not cry or waste his tears. Yet again, a withdrawal of a kind (of tears and of physical effort) is encouraged as a form of preservation and a survival technique. The lyrical voice further suggests that the young child learn the simple song he is humming along in order to persevere and not give up.

The construction of two opposing vectors of motion - one inwards heading toward a safe haven, hiding behind the locked gates, and another one associated with the road ahead with its impossible return backwards - generates tension and ambiguity that are not atypical for Kryl’s overall poetics through the decades. Perhaps, *Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka*, is the initial source of this ambivalence of motion and spatiality that develops and grows with Kryl’s consequent songs that were released while he was abroad. The complex treatment of space as well as the fluid and changing motion through it by the song heroes and villains perhaps reflects Kryl’s own ambivalence toward the events in his country. These spatial and kinetic lines of development develop and mutate further in later songs by the Czechoslovak artist and dissident.

Such duality or ambiguity of contrasting and almost counter-directional forces can be observed on the textual level of the lyrics of the song as well. The last tercet and the final iteration of the refrain both re-establish and reposition the boundaries and directionalities of the

piece. The final tercet touches on the broken road and impossibility to turn back to the origin of their journey, while the final refrain reiterates the title of the song as a command, rather than an uncertain question. There is a sense of urgency and inevitable danger. Nevertheless, the specific direction of motionality or a specific preference for a type of space (enclosed and protective behind the locked door vs. a more open and uncertain topos like that of the path in an uncertain direction) remain unclear. Kryl's song does not gravitate towards a completely centrifugal or purely centripetal type of poetics. On the contrary, it juxtaposes the two, anchoring them in a position of constant interaction and dialog, positioning and repositioning where the locus of safety could be found. Whether safety can be reached via an escape through the long and windy path ahead (even though the characters will be stumbling and the night will be long as the lyrical voice states and repeats several times) or by running back and protecting oneself behind the locked gates (since the metaphorical wolf is craving lamb meat) remains to be determined.

It is precisely this ambiguity and carefully constructed mixing of spatial and topological registers that carries the song forward. The lack of clear resolution hints at the complexity of the political situation as well as the condition of anyone who tries to run away from it. The ambivalence of spatial poetics could be read as a reflection of the ambivalence of spatial belonging of an exiled musician; the exiled artist cannot completely identify with either the domain he has left behind or to integrate into the one that he has eventually arrived at. Exile and escape in the face of an external threat (be it a concrete event such as the Warsaw Pact Invasion of August 21, 1968 or a restrictive regime that reigns for decades) is a complex and, sometimes, contradictory phenomenon. Kryl's poetics of space seem to reflect just that. The intensifying sense of danger is reflected by the increasing blurring of lines and boundaries between the

centripetal (locking the gates) and centrifugal (setting out on a long and difficult road ahead) orientation of the song. What starts off as an attempt to soothe a scared child, a reminder that he is a big and strong boy, escalates to an urgent scream for the little brother to lock the gate.

The ambivalent poetics of space, place and motion in Kryl's early oeuvre find similar reflection both with regards to the types of physical topoi the lyrical voice constructs and the recurring motif of child-like innocence and youth in another song of the singer-songwriter's first album, "The Blind Maiden" ("Nevidomá dívka" 1969). This song comprises quatrains in a stable ABAB rhyming scheme. The opening quatrain depicts a girl with a blindfold; she is said to be sitting in a garden, behind a brick wall and in front of a gazebo. The scene acquires almost fairy-tale like qualities - the girl seems to be inhabiting her own spatial cocoon, completely removed from anything that might be taking place in the realm beyond the garden and the wall. The lyrical voice suggests the time of the year is fall - perhaps hinting that the events of the Prague Spring have already unraveled, as reflected also by the writing on the wall of anniversaries. It is worth noting that anniversaries tend to occupy a substantial place in the Czechoslovak collective consciousness, yet they frequently shifted depending on the predominant sociopolitical narrative during the years of communism .

Once again, space places a crucial role and function in the song. The girl remains protected in her world both by the wall as well as by the blindfold that allows her to continue to innocently play without losing her innocence or seeing the tacitly implied turmoil of the times. The opening quatrain of this song is saturated with topological elements and hints. The young maiden is located in a protected location - a garden and behind a wall - sitting on the fall. The Czech word for fall, however, has an interesting morphological structure: pod-zim

(under/near-the-winter). Even the temporal setting of the piece is defined by its positioning 'under'a specific entity in a manner that perhaps echoes the topological settings of the piece. The maiden is circumscribed by her temporal and topographical positioning which is further amplified by other markers and objects around her. There is an atmosphere of enclosure and circularity: the physical markers and spaces such as the gazebo and the blindfold all present tight boundaries.[19]

This circularity is reflected on a structural level as well. The song's construction is a bit more repetitive than what could be considered typical for Kryl. In addition to the refrain that is repeated after each pair of quatrains, the end of the song is a mirror image of the beginning that almost creates a palindrome of quatrains. The refrain itself encapsulates the lyrical voice's message and a plea to let the blind girl play in the sun, even though she will never see it or the horizon of the sky. The central character of the song, the young girl is denied the ability to access markers of more centripetal and expansive spaces (such as the sky and its celestial residents). The maiden, on the other hand, remains enshrouded in her protective cocoon, playing with the flowers around and sending air kisses to unknown addresses.

Exactly who the young girl might embody remains just as ambivalent as the treatment of space in Kryl's musical oeuvre. Perhaps she represents the innocence and purity of youth and their ideology that should be preserved despite the challenging sociopolitical and historical circumstances. The refrain of the song, after all, pleads with a collective "you" to let the girl be and to let her play uninterrupted. Through a certain interpretative angle, the young maiden could

[19] The image of the wall and the blindfold in this song could allude to real sociohistoric elements and circumscribing topoi such as the Berlin Wall. Alternatively, the setting of the garden and the gazebo with its pastoral quetitude could reflect the Czechoslovak *chata* (home in the countryside) culture that provided an escape and safe haven from the political uncertainties and anxieties during the years of communist rule.

be seen as another refraction of the little brother in the title song of the album. Maybe the little girl embodies a collective image of the Czechoslovak people who need protection or maybe she can even be seen as a reimagined figure of Justice herself (who is traditionally depicted with a blindfold). The fairy-tale-inspired atmosphere and landscape around the gentle young female, however, contrast sharply to Justice's frequent depiction carrying a sword in addition to her scales. Nevertheless, the fact that Kryl's young character is blind preserves substantial significance that is clearly flagged by the title of the song as well.

Yet another elucidating perspective - and this time more critical and stringent - could be that the young girl is representative of the obliviousness of the Czechoslovak people to the gravity of their political situation. While her child-like innocence and purity could be seen as predominantly positive characteristics, they could also hint at a naivete and inability to face the urgent reality of the years scrambled on the wall. A lament on the passivity and oblivion of the submissive people (narod) is a motif that can be encountered in other early pieces by Kryl[20]. As the song closes, however, the lyrical voice still implores his collective audience to let the girl play her make-believe games. The overall directionality remains stable in its centripetality,

[20] "Jeřabiny" ("Rowan berries") is a fitting example of a song that blends both sociopolitical and personal themes and realms in Kryl's oeuvre. The song's focus is on a dead moth, a visual representation of the end of the lyrical voice's romance with an unnamed woman. The voice's personal heartbreak and disenchantment is unraveled against a background of subdued people, "repressed by officers". Even the moth's death acquires political tints as he is described to have been shot in the back. The lyrical voice describes the repressed people as "mute", further indicating subtle criticism of the passivity and meekness of the Czechoslovak people who let themselves be under the oppressive presence of officers. Personal and civic disillusionment are inextricably entangled in this song by Kryl as bats are fluttering above the poetic scene. While Kryl was a lot more openly critical of specific individuals and the collective lack of proactive resistance of the Czechoslovaks in his prose and in the installations of his radio show, he still incorporated (intentionally or not) glimpses of this discontent into his early songs. "Passage revolt" ("Pasážová revolta" 1969) is another example of his debut album that includes very explicit castigation of his people for patiently enduring their condition, rather than revolting against it: "No, we're not on our knees/ We're plowing the ground with our mouths."

tending toward enclosed, circumscribed and protective topoi (as seen even on structural level by the circular sequence of quatrains and refrains within the song), while the physical spaces depicted are predominantly small and interior.

While "The Blind Girl" ("Nevidomá dívka") and "Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka" are the only songs in Kryl's debut album that include figures of children, a song that encapsulates a different, yet somewhat interrelated figure, that of an angel, is also included in the album. The song "Anděl" ("Angel" 1969) delineates the story of the lyrical subject who finds an angel figurine with broken wings. The subject then proceeds to make new wings for the angel who eventually flies away. This song also marks a shift in spatiality in the album as well as a departure from the more overtly socio-political themes present in other singles of the album. The centripetal tendencies are visible from the very first words of the song: "From the demolished church." The Czech adjectival participle used to denote the "demolished, smashed" church stems from a prefixed verb (*rozmlátit/rozmlácet*). The prefix roz- instantly suggests a scattering motion in multiple directions, a breaking apart of sorts. The church has been destroyed with force, yet the angel figurine has been salvaged from it and brought to the home of the lyrical speaker. The subject of the song has brought the angel in a box with pieces of soap and has discovered that the figurine's wings have been broken.

The song's refrain is perhaps one of the most notable parts of the piece due to its changing spatial and kinetic dynamics. As the lyrical voice explicates, he has asked the angel to look into the future and tell him - "between doors" - what is to happen and what will stay and last. The liminal, yet circumvented and bound on all ends, topos "between the doors" is of particular interest. While the aforementioned and analyzed songs in Kryl's debut album show

various directionalities with regards to the motion of the poetic voice through space, "Anděl" presents a novel topos of an in-between nature. It remains unclear and perhaps up to the listeners to decide whether such a space signifies a time of transition from one substantial place to another (perhaps Kyl's own incipient exile) or a trap of a kind that provides a false sense of hope and exegesis.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the first refrain is then followed by a quatrain in which the lyrical voice describes what he and his angel used to do. First in the list of activities he provides is looking at the sky, *obloha,* followed by bird watching. The word chosen by the musical voice to denote the sky is one generally less commonly associated with a religious connotation (unlike the synonym *nebe*). The image of the sky does not figure prominently in Kryl's debut album, so this particular song indeed signifies a departure from the typical Krylian topographical and kinetic aesthetic in his early songs. The lyrical subject engages in debates with his angel about God and about the games of pretend soldiers (yet another reflection of the sociohistorical context despite the lyrical tone of the song). While the nature of the lyrical subject's companion (an angel) requires topoi that are more proximal to the heavens and the birds, this in and of itself could not fully account for the more centrifugal and open spatiality in this specific musical piece.

The storyline comes to an end as the lyrical subject makes new wings for his cherubic friend from a brass shell (another token of war or the Warsaw Pact invasion of 1968), who then flies away and leaves the subject alone. The ultimate motion of the song is oriented away from the enclosed space of the subject's apartment and in an unknown direction. While the general motion and directionality are to be expected to a degree given the presence of an angel figure, they still do not fully resonate with Kryl's tendencies in the album. Perhaps the angel could be

seen as a hint of the possibility of an escape. Maybe the cherubic character is just a reimagining of the characters such as the little girl in "Nevidomá dívka" and the little brother of the title song. It could be, of course, that the angel also embodies the figure of a lost beloved one as well. Interestingly enough, the lyrical subject himself voices hope that he could have another angel (a friend has promised to make a new one of his helmet), nevertheless, the last words of the song are captured by a final reprisal of the refrain. The character remains wondering - between doors - what awaits ahead and will not pass.

The spatial and kinetic dimensions and nuances of other Kryl songs on the album are varied, further contributing to the changing dynamics of space, place and motion through it in the early parts of his artistic trajectory. The threatening evil forces seem to have an almost ubiquitous presence, seen in both claustrophobic and centripetal settings and in more open ones. For instance, the grotesque and threatening song "The Majesty Executioner" ("Veličenstvo Kat" 1969) presents a distorted and ominous picture of a ruler in a world that could render one such example. The spatiality of this song is palpably enclosing and shrinking. Nevertheless, it gradually permeates into other corners of the city, thus destabilizing the consistency of the inward-focused and claustrophobic topological and kinetic tendencies of the song. Furthermore, this piece lacks a conventional refrain, which is instead replaced by a frequent repetition of a couplet at the end of every stanza. Even that repetition, however, is not consistent throughout the song.

The Majesty Kat opens up in an enclosed space - a darkly lit Gothic hall - that resonates with the overall ominous tone of the piece. A scene of a diabolic nature is depicted in a reversal of what would be expected of a description of a mass taking place in a church. Murderers are

asking for blessing; the Devil is a priest and the first of the knights is always Majesty Kat. While the exact role and function of the Majesty - whether he has any real power like a ruler or not - remains unclear, the focus of the song on him suggests he might play a substantial role nevertheless. The Majesty is part of a matrix or regime of dark forces whose main figures - a King, Maestro Executioner and Satan - are delineated throughout the song.

There is a constant sense of impending danger that is emphasized by the recurrence of guillotine imagery either as part of a state emblem or an individual entity hanging over the state's palace. This dread and horror, premonition of death and suffering, permeate every part of the town and gradually spill outside the Gothic hall mentioned in the beginning. While the original topos depicted in the song is an interior space in dimmed lighting, each location that follows is more open and expansive, located beyond the boundaries of the church. Flocks of ravens are said to be nesting in the countryside (or at the margins, boundaries of a location; the word *kraj* has various connotations with regards to its topographical meanings). Furthermore, the following topoi on which the lyrical subject focuses his attention tend to be located outdoors -- outside the prison, at the corner of the street, above the state palace, and by the tanks of the soldiers. The overall motion through space of the evil forces of Majesty Executioner seems to spread away from the center in the Gothic church, gradually and certainly.

The only character who is able to avert this tragic fate is the skeleton moth (Smrtihlav - a composite name containing the nouns denoting "death" and "head") that takes off, further spreading the evils of the regime. Once again, the end of a song is marked by the upward and outward flight of a character; nevertheless, whether there could be an association between the upward motion of the deathly moth with escape or liberation remains unlikely. The choice of

animal is of further interest, given that it is not the ravens mentioned earlier in the piece that fly away, but rather a much smaller and less intimidating insect. Moreover, the chosen verb of motion (*vznášet se*) carries connotations of levitation and floating, as well as an upward-directed and striving motion. As the moth's flight takes place, the lyrical voice describes the state of the world and human relationships left beneath, where - "A son despised his father/ A brother did ill to his brother" and "in the circle of inane heads/ Majesty Kat [continues] to reign".

Spatially and kinetically, "Majesty Kat" encompasses a varied and dynamic range of topoi in addition to the way various forces move through them. On the one hand, the evil represented by Kat and his entourage of devilish figures seems to have a centrifugal motion, spreading away from its nucleus at the Gothic church and permeating every part of the land of Kat. Nevertheless, the evil can be a severely restrictive presence as signified by the barbed wire outside of the church. Furthermore, the last glimpse of Kat's repressive and terror-filled reign is that of a circle of "inane heads" ("*v kruhu tupých hlav*") surrounding their ruler. In many ways, the regime is associated with restrictive spaces (prisons, circles, barbed wire, dark halls, perhaps even concentration camps) and a sense of pending doom (guillotine imagery hovering above). However, the reverberations of Kat and his social order disperse in various directions and all the way through to the marginal/borderland regions. This motion is closer in its nature to a centrifugal tendency, rather than a restrictive direction inwards. A similar trend could be observed in a later song by Kryl, "Cancer" ("Rakovina" from the second album released by Kryl in 1969).

Despite the gradual and dispersive movement of the evil forces, some characters are, nevertheless, still able to rise above the land of suffering and corruption and to reaffirm the

associative connections between an upwards-oriented directionality and a possibility of an escape. The small moth takes flight, floating above the land of horrors and leaving it all beneath. Despite its initial focus on restrictive interiors or on a gradually expansive and outwards-moving and permeating evil, the song ends on a somewhat different note. One miniscule soul is able to escape from the horrors or at the very least move above them. "The Majesty Executioner" is an early example of the complex and nuanced way, in which Kryl treats space and the motion through it. Boundaries between the topoi associated with the horrors of Kat (the Gothic hall, prison, etc.) and the external world become blurry. Both the vector of evil and that of the moth (perhaps embodying a small and ordinary person) which is able to break free show a tendency to move away from a center. Moreover, it is notable that both the villainous characters and forces in this song and the creature running away from them are depicted in detail and given spatial dimensions, unlike in previous songs. "Little Brother, Lock the Gate" focuses entirely on the lyrical subject and his brother as they are torn back and forth between the safety of the locked gates and the road to escape. Kryl's spatial aesthetics in "The Majesty Executioner" run a full gamut of directions, enclosed associations and connotations (freedom vs. repression, etc.) and actual representations. Overall, however, the song shows Kryl's growing affinity for a more centrifugal aesthetic.

The increasingly centrifugal aesthetic of Kryl's early songs can be traced in the piece "Morituri te salutant" (1969) as well, a song consisting of longer musical stanzas though each of the verse lines in them has fewer syllables. There is no set refrain in this song, but the Latin phrase which translates to "those about to die salute you" recurs a few times throughout the song. The opening line of this song makes a strong case study of spatiality with the instant mention of

a road - “the road is dust/ and gravel/ and pressed soil/ and grey smudges.” The short syllabic length of the song verse as well as the staccato-like manner of enumerating the qualities of the road instantly draw attention to the topos of the road and put rhythmic emphasis on it. Furthermore, the mention of smudges (*šmouhy*) suggests some kind of motion of an object or a vehicle that has gone through the road.

This sense of motion, of riding through a dusty road is further enriched by the next few lines: “it paints on your hair, / from the star tracks/ she has a jewel/ fixed by a rock.” The personified image of the road is described in detail by way of interweaving other topoi such as the sky and its stars. Moreover, the rocks on the ground are almost a reflection, an interchangeable unit, with the stars in the skies, at times almost merging the two horizons. Feathers of desire from Pegasus’ wings further intensify the centrifugal aesthetic and overall tone of this song. Despite the short length of the lines and the list-like description of the natural landscape, an atmosphere of upward and outward-oriented motion anchored in a wide-open space is generated.

The poetic linguistic and imagistic register of the first stanza quickly shifts gears, however, as it is replaced by a comparison of the road to a street lady, a harlot. She has a sign in her hands, tinfoil in her waist and her eyes reveal desire when she throws fragile ruby gladiolas to the unknown. A growing almost diabolic sense emerges from the mention of the road being a scourge to the vivid images of the two thin gladiolas. The mention of the specific ruby shade of red, of course, could also be a subdued allusion to the political situation at the time as *rudý,* rather than the more common *červený*, was the color associated with the Soviet Red Army (*Rudá*

armada). Moreover, the ruby shade is also inextricably associated with the color of blood, further underscoring the diabolic ambience of the song.

The second stanza is then followed by what takes on the role of a quasi-refrain, a couplet that recurs a few times throughout the song. Moreover, this couplet appears to be a key to decipher the context and setting of the song -- it is addressed to the Sergeant of the lyrical hero and it informs the superior that the sand is as "white as Daniela's arms". It becomes more evident that the lyrical voice is a soldier, perhaps in a state of delirium, in the final moments of his life. The soldier further narrates that his own eyes have seen the long-bygone second of oblivion, "They will salute/ and we will be initiated/ Morituri te salutant." Perhaps the poetic language of the opening description in the song stems from the delirious perception of the soldier who is about to die.

The vectors of motion in the song reappear in the following verse as the dying trooper recounts how he has traveled farther down the road before and how he discovered a dove's wing writhing on the white sand. Once again, the lyrical voice constructs a vector of centrifugal motion - moving farther down the path and away from the point of departure, a gravitational nucleus of a kind. A swirling and thrashing movement generating circles on the sand is then depicted; the image is then quickly - in a staccato manner - followed by an image of destroyed feathers that are lifted up. The soldier further describes the sounds of a march he hears before the poetic and musical focus return to the image of the road. A "brass bee" flies away from a werewolf, there is a rusty gun, the lyrical subject's brother ("a brass bee/ from the werewolf/ rusty gun/ - my brother"). This is followed by one last repetition of the refrain and the invocation of the Sergeant.

What sets aside "Morituri te salutant" from other songs in Kryl's seminal album in the most palpable way is the overt lack of overtly sociopolitical elements (while, nevertheless, the motifs of war and death are still incorporated in it and present in a metaphysical role). Furthermore, the way space and place (and the motion through them) are constructed is more monolithic and stable than the changing dynamics seen in previous songs. "Morituri te salutant" is a moving tribute from the point of view of a dying fighter, a blurry final recollection of everything that has had significance in his life. All of this unravels on a path, a road that leads to oblivion and under the reflection of the horizon of the sky. This particular song from Kryl's album is almost entirely centrifugal in its spatial and kinetic aesthetics, almost bearing resemblance to the metaphysical poetry of Joseph Brodsky.[21]

Another one of these early and palpably critical and politically-saturated songs of Kryl is "Rakovina" ("Cancer") which comprised the title of the first album the Czechoslovak artist released following his voluntary exile toward the end of 1969. This song occupies a significant liminal position within Kryl's overall artistic and biographical trajectory. While the album itself was released when Kryl had already sought permanent asylum in Germany and when he had started working for Radio Free Europe, the majority of the songs included in it had been written in Czechoslovakia and rendered reflections of the events of the 1968 Prague Spring. "Rakovina"

[21] It is worth digressing here to draw attention to another song that is developed through the first-person narrative of a soldier in the "Little Brother, Lock the Gate" album. The song, "Song of the Unknown Soldier" renders a contrasting take on the theme of soldier's death and legacy. As Jiří Černý himself recalled, its inclusion was debated and not fully embraced by some of the producers who felt its strong foul language would bring down the quality of the otherwise "beautiful" album and its included pieces (Klimt 105). The piece itself is told from the perspective of a dead soldier, whose voice comes from the grave as a hypocritical show of commemoration of his legacy ensues above him. The soldier is angry at the false display of mourning and society's hypocritical attitude toward his death. The song is raw and potent in its honesty and unique in its spatial and kinetic dimensions. The voice of the lyrical subject is emerging from the depths of the earth, of his grave. It is angry and restless and there are no metaphysical or spatial markers of salvation or liberation of his spirit (such as conventional markers like the sky, clouds or heavenly horizons above).

is a particularly interesting piece with regards to its spatiality, which does not occupy an overtly central place in it. Nevertheless, the spatial plane is constructed in a complex and multifaceted way that would be a productive mediating lens for this analysis especially given its chronological positioning within the Kryl oeuvre.

"Rakovina" comprises five individual octets with a stable and consistent ABABCDCD rhyming scheme. The song units are complemented by a refrain that is only repeated twice (and also takes the form of an octet with an ABABCDCD rhyming structure; of particular analytic and rhythmic interest is the contrasting combination of monosyllabic and quatrosyllabic words that create this rhyming pattern). The song opens up in an aural manner and a generally downwards-moving directionality: "the voices of expert witnesses/ and fallen angels rings". The very first words in the line is the third-person plural verbal form "to sound/to ring". This is followed by the screaming of the lips of famous faces from advertisement boards nearby. These aural introductory nuances create a discordant and almost cacophonic and chaotic atmosphere. The shortness of the lines adds to the overall tempo and prosodic qualities of the song.

Additionally, a mixture of registers and contexts is established with the juxtaposition of witness experts (legal jargon) and fallen angels (religious and mystical connotations) alongside the posters and advertisements around them. The presence of implied and dynamic motion despite the lack of explicit mentions of it is amplified by the frequent use of the forms of the genitive plural case. While the first two uses in the lines of the song are in the context of possession, the roaring or screaming of voices comes precisely from the posters in the urbanscape described by the lyrical voice. The use of the preposition 'z' indicates origin, but it also hints at a generally centrifugal motion away from a point of origin. Such motion, however,

presents a contrast to the mention of fallen angels and the implied downward and centripetal vector of motion that is embedded in it. This further adds to the tension and chaos delineated by the narrating voice.

The focus of the octet then shifts to an anthropomorphized image of the spring that is said to be shuffling cards for a "hunched back". There is a red glimmer just as breathing has become "extremely difficult" (emphasis indicated by the use of the prefix *pre*). The overall ambience becomes more oppressive, ominous and suffocating and that spills into the second octet. The figure of the personified spring serves as a connecting link between the two octets. The potent audio-visual landscape is further augmented by the inclusion of colorful elements - even though the season is spring, leaves are turning yellow (a direct reflection of the Prague Spring) and snow is falling on the blossoms. The "Horror" is another personified image, walking with a lute that is out of tune and bearing a wreath of daisies. The picture is completed by faceless monsters, the claw of a bird of prey (a portent metonymy) and a fish mouth that is braying from an altar. The last figure is particularly interesting and oxymoronic given the verb of choice (hýkat - to bray like a donkey). The second octet then merges into the refrain by way of connecting the image of the braying fish with the following part. The fish bray to the lyrical voice that the foolish are now on the noose, the governor has been murdered and the king executed ("Long live the king!"). This refrain is repeated only once more, later on in the song and the distinction between the figures of the governor and the king remains ambiguous.

Space and place remain in the background during most of the third and fourth octets, which delineate the passivity of the "herd of Hamlets" and the sound of ideological brochures and pamphlets (another direct reference to the Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring replete

with potential metonymies). Nevertheless, a glimpse of spatiality emerges again toward the end of the fourth octet alongside the image of birds. Despite the despondent and ominous tone of the song and the association between the Soviet oppressor and a spreading cancer, there is a mention of birds that will suddenly fly up again. Without a clear aim or sense of where they are going, moving blindly ("Poslepu!"). Despite the downward-oriented vectors of motion in the beginning of the song, perhaps a spark of hope or potential route to escape is preserved in the image of the birds that will fly up "higher toward the sun".

Additionally, the last octet of the song that follows the second and final repetition of the refrain brings more topoi and hints of centrifugal, or at the very least unrestrained and free, motion. It is in the last octet that the lyrical voice resolves the tension that has been built up in the song and clearly explicates the culprit behind the ominous scene he has described. As the lyrical voice states, the culprit borders the bones (implying the extent to which it has spread and penetrated every level of society) and is called "Cancer/ and it smells like asters". The choice of aster as a descriptor is two-fold. In addition to referring to the flower's aster, it could suggest the biological microtubule that connects various radiating parts of a dividing cell (something that is perhaps related to a growing and constantly multiplying cancerous mass). These bear suggestions of an expanding negative force that can be overwhelming though this is also followed by the image of a running horse without restraints. The very final verses of the song show music, a disc ("*deska*") "skipping" and moving forward, yet another circumscribing and circular image, a loop that provides no escape and gives off an almost Kafkaesque quality to the song.

"Rakovina" renders a complex and ambivalent case with regards to spatiality and motifs of exile in Kryl's songs. This is partially due to its secondary positioning in the song - most of

the octets are full of audio and visual imagery that is bright and loud, but there is little emphasis on physical spaces, places or the motion between them. Nevertheless, there are several implied vectors of motion that generate a certain tension in the song. From the fallen angels to the claw of the bird (which is most likely about to move downwards and grab onto its prey) there is a general tendency of centrifugality and moving inwards or down. However, this is complimented and contrasted with a hint of an upwards motion that perhaps suggests a destabilization of the downward-oriented and circumscribed landscape depicted in the song.

The post-1989 song "Monology" (title song of one of the last albums Kryl released before his untimely death in 1994) is a fitting example. Despite the song's overtly lyrical thematic appearance, "Monology" is a reflection not only on a lovers' separation, but also on the Czech Republic's split from Slovakia in 1993. In his introduction to the song during an installation of *Krylogie*, Kryl openly acknowledged that and talked about the impossibility of extracting politics entirely from his music. Even though he had promised his audience earlier that he would only focus on personal themes due to his deep-seated disenchantment with various political establishments, Kryl nevertheless stayed consistent with his earlier socio-political sensibility and poetics.

Perhaps the more intriguing and unexpected aspect of "Monology" is not so much its thematic focus, however, as the way in which Kryl's poetic voice constructs and uses spatiality in the song. Earlier pieces by Kryl tend to have a focus on concrete places, confining spaces and a poetic gaze (or vector of motion) that is generally moving inwards and downwards. "Monology", on the other hand, develops its themes and general plotline across different topoi and dimensions. The theme of separation (sociopolitical and intimately personal) is unraveled on

both planes - that of wide open, abstract spaces and vast horizons as well as that of restrictive and claustrophobic, recoiling places. The atmosphere of an impending heartache and parting ways is not bound to or exclusively associated with either type of spatiality. While there are certain dichotomies of space (inside-outside, safe haven-dangerous external world, etc) established in earlier songs by Kryl, this does not seem to be the case in "Monology". Neither the vast horizons above the endless ocean nor the safety of a corner offer solace or liberation in "Monology".

The poetic vector of motion is restrained and downward-moving in the first half of the song, in accordance with Kryl's poetics of space in earlier songs. The very first verb to appear in the lyrics of "Monology" is *padat* (to fall); the opening verse of the first quatrain itself starts with an indication of directionality as flagged by the use of the genitive case alongside the verb and preposition of motion (*do čtverce patia*). The shadow has fallen onto the patio's square, a geometric figure that further conjures associations with a restrained, angular space and circumscribed potentiality. The initial words uttered by the singer demarcate a space and a motion that is inherent to it as suggested by the preposition and case of choice. In fact, the whole first line of the song comprises various markers of space and motion.

Interestingly, the word patio carries a nuance of semantic ambivalence. While the etymology of patio most likely stems from the proto-Romance language Old Occitan, which in turn likely drew on the Latin verb *patere* (to lie open, be wide), it can also denote an inner courtyard as it does in its use in modern-day Spanish[22]. These two nuances combine aesthetics and implications that might appear to be at odds with regards to spaces - that of the open spaces

[22] *Wiktionary* "patio"

of a paved pathway and that of more contained inner courtyards. Nevertheless, there is an overall sense of moving inwards or, at the very least, being suspended in a circumscribed and enclosed space, at least in the initial parts of the song. Additionally, the verb *padat* (to fall) suggests a downward directionality. In other words, the opening words of the song already carry a nuance of centripetal spatiality and directionality. Even connotations with a courtyard or an inner yard ingrained in the word patio could contribute to that. They only generate a slight tension that could provide a propelling spatial force within the song.

Furthermore, even the Czech word for shade, shadow - occupying a key syntactic and possibly semantic role as a subject of that first sentence - is inextricably bound to a spatial connotation. Conventionally, *stín* implies a place that is not reached by light, rather than a separate entity with its own agency. The mention of the shadow is followed by one last instance and marker of position within the opening line. The shadow has fallen in between words. There is an emerging tension between the rather restrained and clearly marked off and bound space of the square and the patio as opposed to the implied liminality and ambiguity inherent to a preposition like *mezi* (between). Even the very first line of the song is already saturated with markers of spatiality and directionality both on a syntactic and lexical plane.

This not only marks the significance of space in general, but also generates a certain level of tension that would provide a potent motive force moving the story forward. The main characters of the song, a couple on the verge of separation, are then introduced in the following, second line as if their complicated relationship is a consequence (at least by way of immediate association) or a reflection of the tension between the spatial imagery; the couple's silence and intermittent conversation highlight the overall atmosphere of resignation and a subdued

imminent ending. The dialog between the two lovers has gradually transformed into a and a lonely monolog and a form of miscommunication and single-voicedness. Even the disappearance of the multiplicity of the voices and planes within a dialog and its reduction to a monolog suggests a narrowing of sorts and a general move inwards towards a disengagement with the surrounding world.

Nevertheless, there is a subtle thread of ambivalence within the very concept, title and recurring theme of monologues in the song. The title of the song, which could be seen as the centerpiece of the album of the same name as well, carries an inherent ambivalence and multiplicity due to the use of the plural that might be in discord with the idea of a monolog as a singular entity and form of communication that does not necessitate another or a target audience. The lyrical subjects, however, are engaging precisely in monologues, a complex form of miscommunication that is later on referred to by the lyrical voice as a “double monolog”. The active forms of communication like dialogs have dissipated and have been replaced not by one, but by various monologues that fail at achieving any successful understanding between the two subjects. This is an unconventional element that generates tension similar to that created by the associations and connotations of a word like patio and the general fluidity and ambivalence of spaces that are constructed later on in the song.

Monologues in this case appear to be both singular, isolated and existing in a vacuum entities and at the same time multiple, occurring synchronously and occupying the same space elements. On some lexical and semantic level, the idea of a plural form of monologue could seem contradictory. The use of the plural form precisely as a title of the musical piece and the album as well as a recurring concept throughout the song marks its significance. Once again Kryl

does not hesitate to destabilize dichotomies, infusing categories and terms with ambivalence, nuance and refusing to abide by binaries or clearly defined and separated categories; this is somewhat similar to how the poetic voice constructs the various types of spaces on the musical stage. While the transformation of a meaningful and productive dialog between the lovers into two lonely and mismatched monologues can be seen as an extended reflection of the reduction and centripetality of space, it could also prove a source of vital tension that generates the resolution of the conflict in the song and helps the artist transcend inflexible and rigid categories, developing them into more fluid, nuanced and complex concepts.

Returning to the text of the opening verses of the song "Monology" that follow the brief introduction of the couple, the reader encounters more spaces that resonate with the overall poetics of the text. The image of a corner provides several potential interpretative trajectories with regards to spatiality in the song, as corners tend to evoke a range of associations. The appearance of a corner follows the mention of the square in the opening line of the song, almost as if it is honing in on one portion of the figure as a metonymy of a kind. A corner could be a place of limitations, isolation or imprisonment, or a situation without a clear resolution, without a possibility for an exit strategy. By virtue of its form, a corner further profoundly limits one's exposure and partially separates one from the surrounding environment. Nevertheless, a corner could embody positive potentiality as expressed in the views of philosophers such as Gaston Bachelard, for instance. Bachelard dedicates a full chapter within his philosophical treatise on the poetics of space specifically to corners, assigning to that particular space a variety of significant functions and roles (Bachelard *Poetics of Space* "Corners").

Bachelard acknowledges that a corner could render an embodiment of isolation, withdrawal and immobility. Nonetheless, he further envisions the space as a germinating point, an origin of a creative ontological process. It is the corner that generates the energy and potentiality from which an entire house or a universe could come into being. It is the corner's quietude and separation from the world that spurs on the creative prowess of a thinker sitting in it. The corner could further bring a sense of comfort and protection, a shelter. It demarcates dialectic oppositions such as inside-outside, full-empty, but it also blurs the boundaries between them (as perhaps is also evident in Kryl's approach to space in the song), extending into each category of these spatial binaries and transcending it. As Bachelard elucidates, "the corner is a sort of half-box, part walls, part door." (156) The corner in the second quatrain of "Monology" appears as a shelter and a final place of rest for the demons of the subject's life. There is a sense of resigned silence and equanimity. This is further intensified by the following line-refrain, "we talk, you and I, yet we don't understand each other."

Spatiality in Kryl's song additionally serves as an underlying structural component that is particularly visible in the beginning of each quatrain. Most of the quatrains start with a focus on a concrete place, rendering a spatial parallelism that is both the point of departure for each textual unit and a unifying thread running through the entirety of the song. The second quatrain, for instance, opens up with a dark landscape, from which the figure of a beggar, a symbol of the subject's life, emerges.

What is of special linguistic - and, more specifically, syntactic and morphological - interest here is the use of the instrumental case alongside the verb of motion. Typically, the Czech language denotes modes of transportation rather than origins, destinations or location with

the use of the instrumental. Destinations, on the other hand, are indicated by the combination of a preposition, most frequently *do* (although sometimes *na* and *k* are used as well), and the genitive case. The fact that the dusky scenery takes the instrumental case marking endows the landscape with a certain level of significance and agency; the instrumental case demarcates the dark scenery as a vehicle or point of passage (through it), rather than a static origin or destination. Furthermore, the word for landscape *krajina* conjures associations with a more liminal space, an edge (*kraj*), that is associated with a potent charge to generate new meanings.

The subsequent refrain of the song continues to construct a poetic stage that is narrowing, receding and confining. The lovers are sitting together at a table ("two by one table" emphasizes that narrowing even on a purely lexical and numeric scale), hunched over a vase of flowers. The circumscribing boundaries of the vase itself almost echo as a response to the images of the square and corner from the opening quatrain. Furthermore, there is a mention of a liquor glass that is full of dragon's saliva, a motif infused with a fairy tale-like symbolism and magic; this motif, however, is enclosed and fully contained within the glass container.

There is a brief departure from the restrained spaces and figures strung together in the preceding textual units with the introduction of the image of a boat between rummage in the second line of the refrain. Nonetheless, even that particular figure does not diverge fully (or, even partially) from the overall atmosphere of an increasingly confining and shrinking spatiality. There is no depiction of the wide horizon above the water or of the scale of the water body that carries the boat. While the boat evokes connotations of open marine horizons, this particular vessel is surrounded and trapped by pieces of rummage without direct access to or contact with them. There is a sense of floating chaotically and without a clear trajectory, a lack of agency.

This scenery is accompanied by what the lyrical voice describes as "lies in a minor key", further reverberating the overall somber tone of imminent separation and dissolution.

Nevertheless, the third quatrain changes the spatial dynamics of the song. From the very start of the line, a location anchored in a more abstract and removed space is delineated: beyond the roar of discotheques and the world of waging wars. This is the first place in the musical piece that marks a departure in Kryl's overall poetics of space, shifting the focus away from the more restrained, concrete and ostensibly demarcated spaces to an open, wider, and abstract horizon. Going *beyond* the world of waging wars hints at an almost otherworldly space that is boundless and unlike any of the outlined topoi earlier in the song. However, even in this new environment, the song subjects remain as estranged and unable to find a way to communicate with each other as before. The two lovers are now standing behind a wall, so close they could touch each other. Still, the process of mutual misunderstanding continues as indicated in the last line of the quatrain. The feelings that once existed between the two figures have now been relegated to an abstract and rather vague and uncertain past of "sometime, somewhere" ("*kdysi, kdesi*").

The poetics of space in Kryl's song briefly return to the more restrained and contracting spatial mode seen earlier. A pile of ungifted and decaying flowers press on old apartment documents and the two lyrical subjects are suffocating in an enveloping smog. The refrain returns to the image of the boat between rummage, but nevertheless presents a different variation of the spaces -- the harbor is far (implying both some distance and a sense of being in the open ocean) and the horizon above the water is dark. This expansion of the spatial perspective and shift to wide open spaces in the closing line of the song, however, does not resolve or ameliorate the conflict and misunderstanding between the lovers. Unlike Kryl's earlier musical pieces that

demarcate a clear dichotomy and contrast of spaces and the ideas and moods they embody (the interior of a house equated to a safe haven, the exterior - a dangerous surrounding), later songs such as “Monology” present more ambivalent spaces. The lyrical subjects remain disillusioned and resigned to their fate and the minor tone of the songs persists across a variety of spaces and places - from abstract, wide open dimensions to concrete and clearly bound places and microspaces.

The ambivalence or, rather, multivalence of spatiality observed and especially palpable in Kryl’s later songs could be a result of a two-fold causal process and it could correspondingly serve a two-fold purpose within the larger structure of the song and the exiled poet’s. On the one hand, the unraveling of the themes in the song across various topoi could suggest an increasing resignation and the emergence of a more mature poetic and topographical aesthetic. The poetic voice has started to embrace his condition across the varied poetic topoi he constructs, a resignation and maturity that sometimes mark the late works of artists. The antagonistic forces and damning life circumstances extend beyond the realm of small, shrinking and claustrophobic topoi. Perhaps with the arrival of the much-awaited democracy that quickly brought disillusionment for artistic and civic figures like Kryl, the poetic voice grasped and assimilated the impending disillusionment on a spatial scale.

Nevertheless, it could also be the case that Kryl - with or without realizing it - is gradually blurring the boundaries between spatial dichotomies and thus generating a new topographic sensibility. By transcending clear-cut and monolithic associations between one type of space and one group of themes and motifs, Kryl establishes a new and more hybrid-like spatial category. Rather than consistently associating closed and restraining topoi with a

repressive force, Kryl carves out various spaces in his songs that also expand and grow outwards. Regardless of the specific themes and register of Kryl's song lyrics - be it a text about the personal realm and lovers drifting apart or a socially-saturated song that depicts the expanding grip of a repressive force - their spatiality transcends rigid dichotomies or strictly defined loci. Perhaps, these blurred lines between a centrifugal and centripetal topological aesthetic only help further imagine and reimagine what spatiality could look like in the context of repressions and exile.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adamková, Tereza. “Karel Kryl: Země lhostejnost.” *Český rozhlas*. 2014. Electronic. https://vltava.rozhlas.cz/karel-kryl-zeme-lhostejnost-5033454

“Alexander Zinoviev. Obituary.” *The Guardian*. 2006. Electronic. https://www.theguardian.com/news/2006/may/19/guardianobituaries.russia

Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. Maria Jolas. Penguin Classics 2014. Print.

Bezr, On. “Písňový odkaz Karla Kryla žije i 15 let po jeho smrti.” *iDnes.cz.* 2009. Electronic. https://www.idnes.cz/kultura/hudba/pisnovy-odkaz-karla-kryla-zije-i-15-let-po-jeho-smrti.A090303_174845_hudba_ob

Čermák, Miloš. *Nanebezvetí Karla Kryla*. Prague: Academia 1997. Print.

Čermák, Miloš. *Pulkačir (Rozhovor Miloše Čermáka s Karlem Krylem)*. Academia: Praha 1993. Print.

Culler, Jonathan. “Lyric, History, and Genre.” *The Lyric Theory Reader. A Critical Anthology*. Ed. Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, MD 2014. Print.

Denčevová, Ivana. *Fenomen Karel Kryl*. RadioServis: Praha 2014. Print.

Johnson, Ralph. *The Idea of the Lyric. Lyric Modes in Ancient and Modern Poetry.* University of California Press: Berkeley 1982. Print.

Klimt, Vojtěch. *Akorát, že mi zabili tátu. Příběh Karla Kryla*. Galen: Praha 2006. Print.

Kryl, Marlen. *Karel Kryl Rozhovory*. Ed. Jaroslava Iskrová. Torst: Praha 2006. Print.

Moudrý, Karel. *Vzpomínky Karla Moudrého na život v exilu, na práci ve Svobodné Evropě a zvláště na Karla Kryla*. Ed. Stáňa Findejsová. Prague: Praha 2010. Print.

"Patio." *Wiktionary*. Electronic.

"Řád Daniela Landy skončil, říká herec Ondřej Vetchý." *iDnes.cz*. 2008. Electronic. https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/rad-daniela-landy-skoncil-rika-herec-ondrej-vetchy.A080803_215949_domaci_dp

Ricks, Christopher. "Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize." *The Threepenny Review* 148 Winter 2017: 20-21. Electronic.

Říhová, Michaela. *Karel Kryl a mediální ohlas jeho písňové tvorby*. Bakalářská práce. Univerzita Karlova. Fakulta sociálních věd. Institut komunikačních studií a žurnalistiky. 2017. Electronic.

Skvorecký, Josef. "At Home and In Exile: Czech Writers in the West." *Books Abroad*. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma, 1976. 308-313. Electronic.

Tharp, Martin et al. "Ivan Blatny: The Strange Story of a Czech Poet in English Exile." *Radio Prague International*. In English. 2004. Electronic. https://www.radio.cz/en/section/books/ivan-blatny-the-strange-story-of-a-czech-poet-in-english-exile

CONCLUSION

As it has been explored in the previous chapters of this dissertation, the exilic condition is ubiquitous and diverse not only as a lived experience but also as an artistic endeavor. The loss of place, whether it is a physical home, a connection to a country or the silencing of one's voice from a cultural stage, leaves a lasting imprint on one's works. Writers like Joseph Brodsky, who was permanently expelled from the Soviet Union in 1972 and never returned to visit, show a centrifugal tendency (one moving away from a core or a gravitation center) in their pieces as well as a predilection for wide, open, and expansive spaces. This tendency is pronounced from early on in Brodsky's works and remains persistent throughout his artistic trajectory. Perhaps the strive of the poetic voice in Brodsky's poems to move outwards and upwards, to transcend the limitations of its surroundings, is an artistic coping mechanism that resulted from the poem's exilic condition. Or, perhaps, it is a natural extension of the writer's aesthetic and poetic sensibilities.

Poets like Anna Akhmatova, on the other hand, who lived in a state of internal exile, removed from the literary scene and the ability to freely publish their work, show a more centripetal tendency (one moving inwards, almost recoiling) and an affinity for shrinking, small, and claustrophobic places. Exploring the spatial motifs in the works by Akhmatova and Brodsky in a parallel case study suggests the presence of an almost complementary spatial aesthetic, one that could be framed by Harold Bloom's idea of Tessera with regards to poetic influence. Brodsky denied any artistic influence from the Silver Age poet (though he spoke highly of her as

a person and a role model), but the treatment of space and place in their poems seems to reflect opposing, but interrelated poetic approaches. Exploring such approaches and potential interactions with regards to an aspect other than space and place could render a starting point for a future study.

Finally, the investigation of space and place in a different Slavic context and the songs of the Czechoslovak exiled protest singer-songwriter Karel Kryl provides another piece to the exilic mosaic and an analytic dimension that helps move beyond simple dichotomies such as in-out or centripetal-centrifugal. Kryl's varied treatment and inclusion of topoi in his songs destabilizes any clear-cut binary categories. This blurring of lines creates an in-depth sense of the complexity of issues of exile and space that perhaps best captures the exilic condition and transcends simple and definitive categorizations. The nuanced and complicated nature of the exilic condition finds a nuanced and varied representation in poetic texts by way of spatial representation. This, perhaps, is the most significant aesthetic thread that emerges as a conclusion from this study.

Appendix I

Joseph Brodsky

Collected Poems, Ed. by Ann Kjellberg

Pilgrims (trans. by Ivan Doan)

"For then my thoughts–from far where I abide–

Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee…"

William Shakespeare

Past altars and stages,
past temples and taverns,
past classy graveyards,
past street market's jabber,
past peace, and past woe,
past Mecca and Rome,
burned by the sun's blue glow,
the earth the pilgrims roam.
They're heavily injured and hunchbacked,
they're hungry and almost naked,
their eyes are full of sunset,
their hearts are full of daybreak.
The deserts are singing behind them,
sheet-lighting breaks out abruptly,
up above the stars are igniting,
and birds are screaming gruffly:
that the world will remain the same,
yes, indeed, the same,
dazzling with snowy game,
with fondness its unlikely name,
the world will remain underhanded,
the world will remain forever,
perhaps it can be comprehended,
it has no limits, however.
Which means it will make no sense
to believe in yourself or Lord.
…And the things that remain are, hence,
the illusion and the road.
All sunsets remain in-service,
all daybreaks are still in splendor.
The soldier will muck earth's surface.
The poet will be its defender.

Letters to a Roman Friend

Trans. by George L. Kline, 1974

I

Now it's windy and the waves are running crisscross.
Soon it will be fall, and nature's face will alter.
Shifts in these bright colors stir me more profoundly,
Postumus, than changes in my lady's wardrobe.

To a certain point a girl can satisfy you -
if you don't go farther than her knees or elbows.
But how much more joyous the unbodied beauty
of an autumn wood: no kisses, no betrayals!

II

Postumus, I'm sending books, I hope you'll like them.
How's Imperial Rome? - A soft bed, hard to sleep on?
How fares Caesar? What's he up to? Still intriguing?
-Still intriguing, probably, and overeating.

In the garden where I sit a torch is burning.
I'm alone - no lady, servant, or acquaintance.
Not the humble of this world, nor yet its mighty -
nothing but the buzzing of an insect chorus.

III

In this graveyard lies a merchant out of Asia.
He was clever, able, yet he passed unnoticed.
He died suddenly, of fever. Not to this end
did he sail here, but to make a profit.

Underneath unpolished quartz there lies beside him
an Imperial legionnaire, renowned in battle.
Target of a thousand thrusts, he lived till eighty.
Rules here, Postumus, are proved by their exceptions.

IV

Birds aren't very bright, my stumus, that's certain;
but there's misery enough even for bird-brains.
If one's fated to be born in Caesar's Empire
let him live aloof, provincial, by the seashore.

One who lives remote from snowstorms, and from Caesar,
Has no need to hurry, flatter, play the coward.
You may say that local governors are vultures.
I, for one, prefer a vulture to a vampire.

IX

Dark green laurels on the verge of trembling.
Doors ajar. The windowpane is dusty.
Idle chairs and the abandoned sofa.
Linen blinded by the sun of noonday.

I'm prepared, hetaera, to wait out this downpour
In your company. But let us have no haggling.
Snatching silver coins from this, my covering body,
is like ripping shingles from the roof above you.

This roof's sprung a leak, you say? But where's the puddle?
I have never left a wet spot; no, not ever.
Better go and find yourself a proper husband:
he will do it to your sheets and pay the laundry.

VI

Here we've spent - I swear it - more than half our lifetimes.
As a slave - now white-haired - told me near the tavern:
"When we look around us, all we see is ruins."
A barbarian perspective, though a true one.

I'm back from the mountains carrying fresh wildflowers.
I'll get out a jug and fill it with cool water.
What's the latest from that Libya or wherever?
Are we still engaged in all that desert fighting?

VII

Friend, do you remember our Proconsul's sister -
rather skinny, though her calves were heavy?
You had slept with her… Well, she became a priestess-
priestess, Postumus, with gods for her companions.

Come and visit me, and we'll drink wine together.
Plums are ripe and bread is good. You'll bring the gossip.
I shall make your couch up in the star-swept garden
and teach you to name our local constellations.

VIII

Soon, dear Postumus, your friend who loves addition
will pay off his debt, his old debt, to subtraction.
Take my savings, then, from underneath my pillow-
though not much, they'll pay the cost of my interment.

Post on your black mare to the House of Hetaeras
Hard against the wall of our provincial city.
Give each girl the sum for which she once embraced me:
let them mourn me for the same amount of money.

Pontus drones past a black fence of pine trees.
Someone's boat braves gusts out by the promontory.
On the garden bench a book of Pliny rustles.
Thrushes chirp within the hairdo of the cypress.

[March] 1972

December in Florence

Trans. by Brodsky

"He has not returned to his old Florence,
even after having died…"
-Anna Akhmatova

I

The doors take in air, exhale steam; you, however, won't
be back to the shallowed Arno where, like a new kind
of quadruped, idle couples follow the river bend.
Doors bang, beasts hit the slabs. Indeed,
the atmosphere of this city retains a bit
of the dark forest. It
is a beautiful city where at certain age
one simply raises the collar to disengage
from passing humans and dulls the gaze.

II

Sunk in raw twilight, the pupil blinks but gulps
The memory-numbing pills of opaque streetlamps.
Yards off from where the Signoria looms,
The doorway, centuries later, suggests the best cause of
expulsion: one can't exist
By a volcano and show no fist,
Though it won't unclench when its owner dies.
For death is always a second Florence in terms of size
And its architecture of Paradise.

III

Cats check at noon under benches to see if the shadows
are black, while the Old Bridge (new after repair),
Where Cellini is peering at the hills' blue glare,
buzzes with heavy trading in bric-a-brac.
Flotsam is combed by the arching brick.
And the passing beauty's loose golden lock,
as she rummages through the hawkers' herd,
flares up suddenly under the arcade
like an angelic vestige in the kingdom of the dark-haired.

IV

A man gets reduced to pen's rustle on paper, to wedges,
ringlets of letters, and also, due
to the slippery surface, to commas and full stops. True,
often, in some common word, the unwitting pen
strays into drawing - while tackling an
"M" - some eyebrows: ink is more honest than
blood. And a face, with moist words inside
out to dry what has just been said,
smirks like the crumpled paper absorbed by shade.

V

Quays resemble stalled trains. The damp
yellow palazzi are sunk in the earth waist-down.
A shape in an overcoat braves the dank
mouth of a gateway, mounts the decrepit, flat,
worn-out molars toward their red, inflamed
palate with its sure-as-fate
number 16. Voiceless, instilling fright,
a little bell in the end prompts a rasping "Wait!"
Two old crones let you in, each looks like the figure 8.

VI

In a dusty cafe, in the shade of your cap,
eyes pick out frescoes, nymphs, cupids on their way up.
In a cage, making up for the sour terza-rima crop,
a seedy goldfinch juggles his sharp cadenza.
A chance ray of sunlight splattering the palazzo
and the sacristy where lies Lorenzo
pierces thick blinds and titillates the veinous
filthy marble, tubs of snow-white verbena;
and the bird's ablaze within his wire Ravenna.

VII

Taking in air, exhaling steams, the doors
slam shut in Florence. One or two lives one years
for (which is up to that faith of yours) -
some night in the first one you learn that love
doesn't move the stars (or the moon) enough.
for it divides things in two, in half.
like the cash in your dreams. Like your idle fears
of dying. If love were to shift the gears
of the southern stars, they'd run to their virgin spheres.

VIII

The stone nest resounds with a piercing squeal of
brakes. Intersections scare your skull
like crossed bones. In the low December sky
the gigantic egg laid there by Brunelleschi
jerks a tear from an eye experienced in the blessed
domes. A traffic policeman briskly
throws his hand in the air like a letter X.
Loudspeakers bark about rising tax.
Oh, the obstinate leaving that "living" masks!

IX

There are cities one won't see again. The sun
throws its gold at their frozen windows. But all the
same
there is no entry, no proper sum.
There are always six bridges spanning the sluggish
river.
There are places where lips touched lips for the first
time ever,
or pen pressed paper with real fervor.
There are arcades, colonnades, iron idols that blur your
lens.
There the streetcar's multitudes, jostling, dense,
speak in the tongue of a man who's departed thence.

Tsushima Screen

(trans. by J. Brodsky)

The perilous yellow sun follows with its slant eyes
Masts of the shuddered grove steaming up to capsize
In the frozen straits of Epiphany. February has fewer
days than the other months; therefore, it's more cruel
than the rest. Dearest, it's more sound
to wrap up our sailing round
the globe with habitual naval grace,
moving your cot to the fireplace
Where our dreadnought is going under
In great smoke. Only fire can grasp a winter!
Golden unharnessed stallions in the chimney
dye their manes to more corvine shades as they near the finish,
and the dark room fills with the plaintive, incessant chirring
of a naked, lounging grasshopper one cannot cup in fingers.

1978

A Tale
(Written in English)

I
In walks the Emperor, dressed as Mars;
his medals clink and sway.
The General Staff sports so many stars,
it looks like the Milky Way.

The Emperor says, “I guess you guess
what you are here for.”
The generals rise and bark, “Oh yes,
Sire! To start a war.”

“Right,” says the Emperor. “Our enemy
Is powerful, mean, and brash.
But we’ll administer him such an enema
His toilet won’t need a flush.

“Move your artillery! Move your warships!
Where is my gorgeous horse?
Forward! May God, whom our nation worships,
Join our brave air force!”

“Yes!” cry the warriors. “Our job is carnage,
Ruin, destruction, void.
We promise, Sire: we’ll find a Carthage
And we’ll leave it destroyed.”

“Great!” cries the EMperor. “What one conquers
Is up to the scholars’ quills.
And let the Treasury boys go bonkers
Trying to pay the bills.”

The generals thunder: “Well said, Sire.
Our coin is of tolling bells.
May the sun that won’t set over your empire
Rise for nobody else!”

And off roars the turbine, off clangs the metal,
Off they march, hand on hilt,
As many a rose curls its tender petal
Ready to wait and wilt.

II
It’s no Armageddon, it’s not some smarmy
Earthquake or H-bomb test.
No, it’s just the Imperial Army
Trying to do its best.

The sky is falling, the earth is gaping,
The ocean simply boils.
“Life,” says the Emperor, “is just aping
“History never says it’s sorry,”
Join the enlisted men.
“Who needs memento when we’ve got mori?
History must know when.”

“Ah, tell them to turn the good old horizon
Vertical, save its sail,”
Adds the Emperor, with his eyes on
The most minute detail.

“Yest,” cry the generals. “Yest, for heaven’s
Sake. That’s what’s been amiss.
Let’s push the button and see what happens.
This must be a masterpiece.”

And lo, the world turns topsy-turvy,
In other words, goes bust.
“Gosh,” says the Emperor. “That was nervy,
But, in the context, just.”

III
Now there’s nothing around to argue
Over: no pros or cons.
“Hey, enemy!” the Emperor shouts. “Are you there?” -
There’s no response.

Now it’s pure space, devoid of mountains,
plains, and their bric-a-brac.
“Let’s” says the Emperor, “sing our anthem’s
lyrics and raise the flag.”

Up flies the pennant, attended only
by two or three evening bats.
“A victory often makes one lonely,”
the Emperor says, then adds:

“Let’s have a monument, since my stallion,
White as a hyacinth,
Is old and looks, as it were, qutie alien;
And write on the granite plinth:
“ ‘Tight was the enemy’s precious anus.
We, though, stood strong and firm.’
The critics might say that we went bananas.But we’ve got
it all on film.

“Lest her sweet mutants still cry, the mother
May sing them the ancient lay.
The future as such has no purpose, other
Than pushing down Replay.”

At sunset, everything looks quite pretty.

Popular abstract oils.

“War,” he continues, “is like a museum.”
And the Top Brass agree:
“Sire, we’ll paint like that ad nauseam,
Since ARt equals History!

“History never says it’s sorry,
nor does it say, What if.
To enter History, a territory
first has to come to grief.”

Down goes the temperature.
The world lies motionless, like a treaty
without a signature.

The stars start to twinkle, remote and jolly.
The eye travels rather far.
One feels a little bit melancholy.
but there is one’s cigar.

1995

Tornfallet (written in English)

There is a meadow in Sweden
where I lie smitten,
eyes stained with clouds'
white ins and outs.

And about that meadow
roams my widow
plaiting a clover
wreath for her lover.

I took her in marriage
in a granite parish.
The snow lent her whiteness,
a pine was a witness.

She'd swim in the oval
lake whose opal
mirror, framed by bracken,
felt happy, broken.

And at night the stubborn
sun of her auburn
hair shone from my pillow
at post and pillar.

Now in the distance
I hear her descant.
She sings "Blue Swallow,"
but I can't follow.

The evening shadow
robs the meadow
of width and color.
It's getting colder.

As I lie dying
here, I'm eyeing
stars. Here's Venus;
no one between us.

1994

Robinsonade (trans. by Jonathon Aaron)

A brand-new heaven over outlandish earth.
Newborns squall, craving a stork's attention.
Old men hide their heads under a wing, like ostriches
burying their breaks, at that, not in feathers but graying armpits.
One can go blind with this surplus of azure
innocent of a sail. Agile outriggers
look like fish gnawed down past entrail to bone.
The rowers stick out of them, betraying
the mystery of motion. A victim of shipwreck,
in twenty years I've sufficiently domesticated
this island (though perhaps it's a continent),
and the lips move all on their own, as while reading, muttering:
"Tropical vegetation, tropical vegetation."
Most likely it's due to the breeze, particularly
in the second half of the day. That is, when the already glazed
eye no longer distinguishes the print of one's own flat sole
in the sand from Friday's. This is the real beginning
of ecriture. Or its very end. Especially

from the point of view of the whispering evening ocean.

1994

Swiss Blue

(written in English)

The place is so landlocked that it's getting mountainous.
Glaciers and summits ski 'cross air.
The stage, where they give Corsair,
moonlights as an airfield, and Mr. Matthews,
for all his trillby, his UFO
glasses, his bad blood pressure,
never knows whether he comes here for business or for pleasure.

A more accurate guess is of course the lake:
the picture of tranquility and harmony.
The weather and language come from Germany,
and at times Mr. Matthews is forced to rack
his brain to find out if it truly rains,
or if he simply misspelled the epithet
for the vista. It's common to hinge one's appetite
to windowpanes.

Farmland has always been scarce; so finally
the natives rose and rolled up their quilt.
Mr. Matthews thinks it was he who built
the local Laocoon-like refinery,
since topless bathers who crave pure gold
for their torsos still gain some honey
while Mr. Matthews in the vault
minds his money.

The nightclubs reek of cheese, spices, spies,
yet the more neutral you are, the less you are finicky.
In places like this, one craves infinity
with double intensity. Hence the spires,
perspectives. And no matter how much Mr. Matthews begs
his company stay, he cannot stop it,
from petering out into small, shrill, spotted
quail eggs.

[June 1990?]

A Photograph

(trans. by Joseph Brodsky)

We lived in a city tinted the color of frozen vodka.
Electricity arrived from afar, from swamps,
and the apartment, at evening, seemed
smudged with peat and mosquito-bitten.
Clothes were cumbersome, betraying
the proximity of the Arctic. At the corridor's farthest end
the telephone rattled, reluctantly coming back
to its senses after the recently finished war.
The three-ruble note sported coal miners and aviators.
I didn't know that someday all this would be no more.
In the kitchen, enameled pots
were instilling confidence in tomorrow
by turning stubbornly, in a dream, into headgear or
a Martian army. Motorcars also were
rolling toward the future and were mostly black,
gray, and sometimes - the taxis -
even light brown. It's strange and not very pleasant
to think that even metal knows not its fate
and that life has been spent for the sake of an apotheosis
of the Kodak company, with its faith in prints
and jettisoning of the negatives.
Birds of Paradise sing, despite no bouncing branches.

1994

Lullaby of Cape Cod
For A.B. (trans. by Anthony Hecht)

I
The eastern tip of the Empire dives into night;
cicadas fall silent over some empty lawn;
on classic pediments inscriptions dim from the sight
like the nearly empty bottle on the table.
From the empty street's patrol car a refrain
of Ray Charles's keyboard tinkles away like rain.

Crawling to a vacant beach from the vast wet
of ocean, a crab digs into sand laced with sea lather
and sleeps. A giant clock on a brick tower
rattles its scissors. The face is drenched with sweat.
The streetlamps glisten in the stifling weather, formally spaced,
like white shirt buttons open to the waist.

It's stifling. The eye's guided by a blinking stoplight
in its journey to the whiskey across the room
on the nightstand. The heart stops dead a moment, but its dull boom
goes on, and the blood, on pilgrimage gone forth,
Comes back to a crossroad. The body, like an upright,
Rolled-up road map, lifts an eyebrow in the North.

It's strange to think of surviving, but that's what happened.
Dust settles on furnishings, and a car bends length
around corners in spite of Euclid. And the deepened
darkness makes up for the absence of people, of voices,
and so forth, and alters them, by its cumming and strength,
not to deserters, to ones who have taken flight,
but rather to those now disappeared from sight.

It's stifling. And the thick leaves' rasping sound
What seems to be a small dot in the dark
could only be one thing - a star. On the deserted ground
of a basketball court a vagrant bird has set
its fragile egg in the steel hoop's raveled net.
There's a smell of mint now, and of mignonette.

[...]

IV
The change of Empires is intimately tied
to the hum of words, the soft, fricative spray
of spittle in the act of speech, the whole
sum of Lobachevsky's angles, the strange way
that parallels may unwittingly collide
by casual chance someday
as longitudes contrive to meet at the pole.

And the change is linked as well to the chopping of wood,
to the tattered lining of life turned inside out
and thereby changed to a garment dry and good
(to tweed in winter, linen in a heat spell),
and the rain's kernel hardening in its shell.

In general, of all our organs the eye
alone retains its elasticity,
pliant, adaptive as a dream or wish.
For the change of Empires is linked with far-flung sight,
with the long gaze cast across the ocean's tide
(somewhere within us lives a dormant fish),
and the mirror's revelation that the part in your hair
that you meticulously placed on the left side
mysteriously shows up on the right,

linked to weak gums, to heartburn brought about
by a diet unfamiliar and alien,
to the intense blankness, to the pristine white
of the mind, which corresponds to the plain, small
blank of page of letter paper on which you write.
but now the giddy pen
points out resemblances, for after all

is enough all by itself to make you sweat.

The device in your hand is the same old pen and ink
as before, the woodland plants exhibit no change
of leafage, and the same old bombers range
the clouds toward who knows what
Precisely chosen, carefully targeted spot.
And what you really need now is a drink.

V
New England towns seem much as if they were
cast ashore along its coastline, beached by a flood
tide, and shining in darkness mile after mile
with imbricate, speckled scales of shingle and tile,
like schools of sleeping fish hauled in by the vast
nets of a continent that was first discovered
by herring and by cod. But neither cod

nor herring have had any noble statues raised
in their honor, even though the memorial date
could be comfortably omitted. As for the great
flag of the place, it bears no blazon or mark
of the first fish-founder among its parallel bars,
and as Louis Sullivan might perhaps have said,
seen in the dark,
it looks like a sketch of towers thrust among stars.

Stifling. A man on his porch has wound a towel
around his throat. A pitiful, small moth
batters the window screen and bounces off
like a bullet that Nature has zeroed in on itself
from an invisible ambush,
aiming for some improbable bull's-eye
right smack in the middle of July.

Because watches keep ticking, pain washes away
with the years. If time picks up the knack
of panacea, it's because time can't abide being
rushed, or finally turns insomniac.
And walking or swimming, the dreams of one
hemisphere (heads)
swarm with the nightmares, the dark, sinister play
of its opposite (tails), its double, its underside.

Stifling. Great motionless plants. A distant bark.
A nodding head now jerks itself upright
to keep faces and phone numbers from sliding into
the dark
and off the precarious edge of memory.
In genuine tragedy
it's not the fine hero that finally dies, it seems,
but, from constant wear and tear, night after night,
the old stage set itself, giving way at the seams.

VI
Since it's too late by now to say goodbye
and expect from time and space any reply
except an echo that sounds like "Here's your tip,"
pseudo-majestic, cubing every chance
word that escapes the lip,
I write in a sort of trance,
I write these words out blindly, the crivening hand
attempting to outstrip
by a second the "How come?"
that at any moment might escape the lip,
the same lip of the writer,
and sail away into night, there to expand
by geometrical progress, *und so weiter*.

I write from an Empire whose enormous flanks
extend beneath the sea. Having sampled two
oceans as well as continents, I feel that I know
what the globe itself must feel: there's nowhere to
go.
Elsewhere is nothing more than a far-flung strew
Of stars, burning away.

Better to use a telescope to see
a snail self-sealed to the underside of a leaf.
I always used to regard "infinity"
as the art of splitting a liter into three
equal components with a couple of friends
without a drop left over. Not, through a lense,
an aggregate of miles without relief.

Venetian Stanzas II (trans. Jane Ann Miller and Brodsky)

I

A sleep-crumpled cloud unfurls mealy mizzens.
Slapped by the baker, matte cheeks acquire
a glow. And in pawnbrokers' windows
jewelry catches fire.
Flat garbage barges sail. Like lengthy, supple
sticks run by hot-footed schoolboys along iron gates,
the morning rays strum colonnades, red-brick
chimneys, sample
curled seaweed, invade arcades.

II

Dawn takes its time. Cold, naked, pallid marble
thighs of the new Susanna wade waves, being watched
with glee
by new elders whose lenses squint, whirr, and gargle
at this bathing. Two-three
doves, launched from some pilaster, are turning
into gulls at the palaces opposite; that's th tax
here for flights over water - or else that's bed linen
spurning
the ceiling for what it lacks.

III

Dampness creeps into the bedroom where a sleeping
beauty, dodging the world, draws her shoulder blades
in.
That's how quail shrink sometimes at twig-snapping
bootsteps,
how angels react to sin.
The window's sentient gaze gets fluttered by both
exhaling
and inhaling. A pale, silky foam lashes tiff armchairs
and
the mirror - an exit for objects, ailing
locally from their brown dead end.

IV

Light pries your eye - like a shell. Your helix,
in its turn like a shell, gets completely drowned
by the clamor of bells: that's the thirsty cupolas
herding,
waterhole- and reflection-bound.
Parting shutters assault your nostrils with coffee, rags
and
cinnamon, semen; with something transparent, pink.
And the golden St. George tips his lance at the writhing
dragon's maw, as though drawing ink.

V

Leaving all of the world, all its blue, in the rearguard,
the azure - squared to a weightless mass -
breasts the windowpane's gunport, falling headlong
forward,
surrendering to the glass.
A curly-maned cloud pack rushes to catch and strangle
the radiant thief with his blazing hair -
a nor'easster is coming. The town is a crystal jumble
replete with smashed chinaware.

VI

Motorboats, rowboats, gondolas, dinghies, barges -
like odd scattered shoes, unmatched, God-sized -
zealously trample pilasters, sharp spires, bridges'
arcs, the look in one's eyes.
Everything's doubled, save destiny, save the very
H_2O. Yet the idle turquoise on high
renders - like any "pro" vote - this world a merry
minority in one's eye.

VII

That's how some rise from the waters, their smooth
skin stunning
the knobbly shore - while a flower may sway
in the hand - leaving the slipped dress scanning
the dry land from far away.
That's how they wash you in spray, for the immortals'
ardent
perfume of kelp is what marks them from us and scares
pigeons off playing their crazy gambits
on the chessboards of squares.

VIII

I am writing these lines sitting outdoors, in winter,
on a white iron chair, in my shirtsleeves, a little drunk;
the lips move slowly enough to hinder
the vowels of the mother tongue,
and the coffee grows cold. And the blinding lagoon is
lapping
at the shore as the dim human pupil's bright penalty
for its wish to arrest a landscape quite happy
here without me.

1982

Reveille (written in English)

Birds acquaint themselves with leaves.
Hired hands roll up their sleeves.
In a brick malodorous dorm
boys awake awash in sperm.

Clouds of patently absurd
but endearing shapes assert
the resemblance of their lot
to a cumulative thought.

As the sun displays its badge
to the guilty world at large,
cruffy masses have to rise,
unless ordered otherwise.

Now let's see what one can't see
elsewhere in the galaxy:
life on earth, of which its press
makes a lot and comets less.

As a picture doomed to sneak
previews only, it's unique
even though some action must
leave its audience aghast.

Still, the surplus of the blue
up on high supplies a clue
as to why our moral laws
won't receive their due applause.

What we used to blame on gods
now gets chalked up to the odds
of small particles whose sum
makes you miss the older sham.

Yet regardless of the cause,
or effects that make one pause,
one is glad that one has been
caught this morning in between.

Painted by a gentle dawn
one is proud that like one's own
planet now one will not wince
at what one is facing, since

putting up with nothing whose
company we cannot lose
hardens rocks and - rather fast -
hearts as well. But rocks will last.

1996

Lines for the Winter Recess (written in English)

A hard-boiled egg cupped by the marble cold
cracks, showing its evening yolk. The infinite
avenue gobbles up cubes, rhomboids, parallelepipeds
with preglacial appetite, unseemly in geometry.
A snowbound airfield is lapping the neither milk nor honey
of the meandering local river,
sluggish, reluctant to make the ocean.
Gentlemen, these are the good old days.
Your taxicab on the highway still overtakes a hearse.
A wolf lies down eagerly with a lamb or a lame duck, citing
low temperature. Green hues survive
nevertheless in the streetlights. The more one bungles
things overseas, the richer one's cuisine.
And if socks don't shoot up any longer like obelisks
they still bear a resemblance to Doric columns
holding a portico tight, while beggars
murder beggars. Lyrical and myopic,
stars blink in the winter sky like suburbia after hours,
full of prayers, sensitive to a lapse
in gravity, but unconscious of its limits;
in fact, quite expanding. And yet the future
surrounding your tender issue with bathroom tiles
from Onana Republic, or manufactured locally,
is nowhere in sight. These are the good old days
still, with their quaint attractions, with their unfinished business.
Since, frankly, even a single swan
equals 2 in profile, which foils reflection
if not applause. Since your window past midnight gleams
like a chinaman scanning the yellow pages,
stalling dreams - with their routine flat tire,
with red meat courting knives, or a pasture its herbivores.

1992

Appendix II
Anna Akhmatova
Original texts in Russian

Шиповник цветет
Из сожженной тетради

And thou art distant in humanity.
Keats

Вместо праздничного поздравленья
Этот ветер, жесткий и сухой,
Принесет вам только запах тленья,
Привкус дыма и стихотворенья,
Что моей написаны рукой.
1961

1. СОЖЖЕННАЯ ТЕТРАДЬ

Уже красуется на книжной полке
Твоя благополучная сестра,
А над тобою звездных стай осколки
И под тобою угольки костра.
Как ты молила, как ты жить хотела,
Как ты боялась едкого огня!
Но вдруг твое затрепетало тело,
А голос, улетая, клял меня.
И сразу все зашелестели сосны
И отразились в недрах лунных вод.
А вкруг костра священнейшие весны
Уже вели надгробный хоровод.

1961

2. НАЯВУ

И время прочь, и пространство прочь,
Я все разглядела сквозь белую ночь:
И нарцисс в хрустале у тебя на столе,
И сигары синий дымок,
И то зеркало, где, как в чистой воде,
Ты сейчас отразиться мог.
И время прочь, и пространство прочь...

Но и ты мне не можешь помочь.

13 июня 1946

3. ВО СНЕ

Черную и прочную разлуку
Я несу с тобою наравне.
Что ж ты плачешь? Дай мне лучше руку,
Обещай опять прийти во сне.
Мне с тобою как горе с горою...
Мне с тобой на свете встречи нет.
Только б ты полночною порою
Через звезды мне прислал привет.

15 февраля 1946

4

И увидел месяц лукавый,
Притаившийся у ворот,
Как свою посмертную славу
Я меняла на вечер тот.
Теперь меня позабудут,
И книги сгниют в шкафу.
Ахматовской звать не будут
Ни улицу, ни строфу.

27 января 1946, Ленинград

5

Дорогою ценой и нежданной
Я узнала, что помнишь и ждешь.
А быть может, и место найдешь
Ты — могилы моей безымянной.

Август 1946, Фонтанный Дом

6. ПЕРВАЯ ПЕСЕНКА

Таинственной невстречи
Пустынны торжества,
Несказанные речи,
Безмолвные слова.

Нескрещенные взгляды
Не знают, где им лечь.
И только слезы рады,
Что можно долго течь.
Шиповник Подмосковья,
Увы! при чем-то тут...
И это всё любовью
Бессмертной назовут.

5 декабря 1956

7. ДРУГАЯ ПЕСЕНКА

Несказанные речи
Я больше не твержу.
Но в память той невстречи
Шиповник посажу.

Как сияло там и пело
Нашей встречи чудо,
Я вернуться не хотела
Никуда оттуда.
Горькой было мне усладой
Счастье вместо долга,
Говорила с кем не надо,
Говорила долго.
Пусть влюбленных страсти душат,
Требуя ответа,
Мы же, милый, только души
У предела света.

Лето 1957, Комарово

8. СОН

Сладко ль видеть неземные сны?
А. Блок

Был вещим этот сон или не вещим...
Марс воссиял среди небесных звезд,
Он алым стал, искрящимся, зловещим,—
А мне в ту ночь приснился твоей приезд.

Он был во всем... И в баховской Чаконе,
И в розах, что напрасно расцвели,

И в деревенском колокольном звоне
Над чернотой распаханной земли.

И в осени, что подошла вплотную
И вдруг, раздумав, спряталась опять.
О август мой, как мог ты весть такую
Мне в годовщину страшную отдать!

Чем отплачу за царственный подарок?
Куда идти и с кем торжествовать?
И вот пишу, как прежде без помарок,
Мои стихи в сожженную тетрадь.

14 августа 1956, Старки—Москва

9

По той дороге, где Донской
Вел рать великую когда-то,
Где ветер помнит супостата,
Где месяц желтый и рогатый,—
Я шла, как в глубине морской...
Шиповник так благоухал,
Что даже превратился в слово,
И встретить я была готова
Моей судьбы девятый вал.

1956

10

Ты выдумал меня. Такой на свете нет,
Такой на свете быть не может.
Ни врач не исцелит, не утолит поэт,—
Тень призрака тебя и день и ночь тревожит.
Мы встретились с тобой в невероятный год,
Когда уже иссякли мира силы,
Все было в трауре, все никло от невзгод,
И были свежи лишь могилы.
Без фонарей как смоль был черен невский вал,
Глухонемая ночь вокруг стеной стояла...
Так вот когда тебя мой голос вызывал!
Что делала — сама еще не понимала.
И ты пришел ко мне, как бы звездой ведом,
По осени трагической ступая,

В тот навсегда опустошенный дом,
Откуда унеслась стихов казненных стая.

18 августа 1956, Старки

11. В РАЗБИТОМ ЗЕРКАЛЕ

Непоправимые слова
Я слушала в тот вечер звездный,
И закружилась голова,
Как над пылающею бездной.
И гибель выла у дверей,
И ухал черный сад, как филин,
И город, смертно обессилен,
Был Трои в этот час древней.
Тот час был нестерпимо ярок
И, кажется, звенел до слез.
Ты отдал мне не тот подарок,
Который издалека вез.
Казался он пустой забавой
В тот вечер огненный тебе.
А он был мировою славой
И грозным вызовом Судьбе.
И он всех бед моих предтеча,—
Не будем вспоминать о нем!..
Несостоявшаяся встреча
Еще рыдает за углом.

1956

12

Ты опять со мной, подруга осень!
Ин. Анненский

Пусть кто-то еще отдыхает на юге
И нежится в райском саду.
Здесь северно очень — и осень в подруги
Я выбрала в этом году.

Живу, как в чужом, мне приснившемся доме,
Где, может быть, я умерла,
И, кажется, тайно глядится Суоми
В пустые свои зеркала.

Иду между черных приземистых елок,
Там вереск на ветер похож,
И светится месяца тусклый осколок,
Как финский зазубренный нож.

Сюда принесла я блаженную память
Последней невстречи с тобой —
Холодное, чистое, легкое пламя
Победы моей над судьбой.

1956, Комарово

13

Вижу я, лебедь тешится моя.
Пушкин

Ты напрасно мне под ноги мечешь
И величье, и славу, и власть.
Знаешь сам, что не этим излечишь
Песнопения светлую страсть.

Разве этим развеешь обиду?
Или золотом лечат тоску?
Может быть, я и сдамся для виду.
Не притронусь я дулом к виску.

Смерть стоит всё равно у порога,
Ты гони ее или зови.
А за нею темнеет дорога,
По которой ползла я в крови,

А за нею десятилетья
Скуки, страха и той пустоты,
О которой могла бы пропеть я,
Да боюсь, что расплачешься ты.

Что ж, прощай. Я живу не в пустыне.
Ночь со мной и всегдашняя Русь.
Так спаси же меня от гордыни,
В остальном я сама разберусь.

9 апреля 1958, Москва

14

Против воли я твой, царица, берег покинул.
«Энеида», песнь 6

Ромео не было, Эней, конечно, был.
А. Ахматова

Не пугайся,— я еще похожей
Нас теперь изобразить могу.
Призрак ты — иль человек прохожий,
Тень твою зачем-то берегу.

Был недолго ты моим Энеем,—
Я тогда отделалась костром.
Друг о друге мы молчать умеем.
И забыл ты мой проклятый дом.

Ты забыл те, в ужасе и в муке,
Сквозь огонь протянутые руки
И надежды окаянной весть.

Ты не знаешь, что тебе простили...
Создан Рим, плывут стада флотилий,
И победу славословит лесть.

2 августа 1962, Комарово

15. ЧЕРЕЗ МНОГО ЛЕТ

Последнее слово

Men che dramma
Di sangue m'e rimaso, che non tremi
Purg. XXX

Ты стихи мои требуешь прямо...
Как-нибудь проживешь и без них.
Пусть в крови не осталось ни грамма,
Не впитавшего горечи их.

Мы сжигаем несбыточной жизни
Золотые и пышные дни,
И о встрече в небесной отчизне
Нам ночные не шепчут огни.

Но от наших великолепий
Холодочка струится волна.
Словно мы на таинственном склепе
Чьи-то, вздрогнув, прочли имена.

Не придумать разлуки бездонней,
Лучше б сразу тогда — наповал...
И, ты знаешь, что нас разлученней
В этом мире никто не бывал.

1962, Москва

16

И это станет для людей
Как времена Веспасиана,
А было это — только рана
И муки облачко над ней.

Ночь, 18 декабря 1964, Рим

* * *

На стеклах нарастает лед,
Часы твердят: «Не трусь!»
Услышать, что ко мне идет,
И мертвой я боюсь.

Как идола, молю я дверь;
«Не пропускай беду!»
Кто воет за стеной, как зверь,
Кто прячется в саду?

1945, Фонтанный Дом

* * *

Забудут?— вот чем удивили!
Меня забывали сто раз,
Сто раз я лежала в могиле,
Где, может быть, я и сейчас.
А Муза и глохла и слепла,

В земле истлевала зерном,
Чтоб после, как Феникс из пепла,
В эфире восстать голубом.

1957

* * *

Все, кого и не звали, в Италии,-
Шлют с дороги прощальный привет.
Я осталась в моем зазеркалии,
Где ни Рима, ни Падуи нет.
Под святыми и грешными фресками
Не пройду я знакомым путем
И не буду с леонардесками
Переглядываться тайком.
Никому я не буду сопутствовать,
И охоты мне странствовать нет...
Мне к лицу стало всюду отсутствовать
Вот уж скоро четырнадцать лет.

* * *

Надпись на книге

Что отдал - то твое.
Шота Руставели

Из-под каких развалин говорю,
Из-под какого я кричу обвала,
Как в негашеной извести горю
Под сводами зловонного подвала.

Я притворюсь беззвучною зимой
И вечные навек захлопну двери,
И всё-таки узнают голос мой,
И всё-таки ему опять поверят.

* * *

В ту ночь мы сошли друг от друга с ума,
Светила нам только зловещая тьма,
Свое бормотали арыки,

И Азией пахли гвоздики.

И мы проходили сквозь город чужой,
Сквозь дымную песнь и полуночный зной,—
Одни под созвездием Змея,
Взглянуть друг на друга не смея.

То мог быть Стамбул или даже Багдад,
Но, увы! не Варшава, не Ленинград,
И горькое это несходство
Душило, как воздух сиротства.

И чудилось: рядом шагают века,
И в бубен незримая била рука,
И звуки, как тайные знаки,
Пред нами кружились во мраке.

Мы были с тобою в таинственной мгле,
Как будто бы шли по ничейной земле,
Но месяц алмазной фелукой
Вдруг выплыл над встречей-разлукой...

И если вернется та ночь и к тебе
В твоей для меня непонятной судьбе,
Ты знай, что приснилась кому-то
Священная эта минута.

1959

Appendix III

Urban Poetics (Anna Akhmatova)

Ленинград в марте 1941 года

Cardan solaire* на Меньшиковом доме.
Подняв волну, проходит пароход.
О, есть ли что на свете мне знакомей,
Чем шпилей блеск и отблеск этих вод!
Как щелочка, чернеет переулок.
Садятся воробьи на провода.
У наизусть затверженных прогулок
Соленый привкус — тоже не беда.
1941

* Солнечные часы (франц.).

***

Петербург в 1913 году

За заставой воет шарманка,
Водят мишку, пляшет цыганка
На заплеванной мостовой.
Паровозик идет до Скорбящей,
И гудочек его щемящий
Откликается над Невой.
В черном ветре злоба и воля.
Тут уже до Горячего Поля,
Вероятно, рукой подать.
Тут мой голос смолкает вещий,
Тут еще чудеса похлеще,
Но уйдем - мне некогда ждать.
1961

***

Летний сад

Я к розам хочу, в тот единственный сад,
Где лучшая в мире стоит из оград,

Где статуи помнят меня молодой,
А я их под невскою помню водой.

В душистой тиши между царственных лип
Мне мачт корабельных мерещится скрип.

И лебедь, как прежде, плывет сквозь века,
Любуясь красой своего двойника.

И замертво спят сотни тысяч шагов
Врагов и друзей, друзей и врагов.

А шествию теней не видно конца
От вазы гранитной до двери дворца.

Там шепчутся белые ночи мои
О чьей-то высокой и тайной любви.

И все перламутром и яшмой горит,
Но света источник таинственно скрыт.

1959

Appendix IV

Karel Kryl (select texts, trans. by M. Nikolova)

Bratříčku, zavírej vrátka (1969)

Bratříčku, nevzlykej, to nejsou bubáci,
vždyť už jsi velikej, to jsou jen vojáci,
přijeli v hranatých železných maringotkách.

Se slzou na víčku hledíme na sebe,
buď se mnou, bratříčku, bojím se o tebe
na cestách klikatých, bratříčku, v polobotkách.

Prší a venku se setmělo,
tato noc nebude krátká,
beránka vlku se zachtělo,
bratříčku, zavřel jsi vrátka?

Bratříčku, nevzlykej, neplýtvej slzami,
nadávky polykej a šetři silami,
nesmíš mi vyčítat, jestliže nedojdeme.

Nauč se písničku, není tak složitá,
opři se, bratříčku, cesta je rozbitá,
budeme klopýtat, zpátky už nemůžeme.

Prší a venku se setmělo,
tato noc nebude krátká,
beránka vlku se zachtělo,
bratříčku, zavírej vrátka! Zavírej vrátka!

Trans.

Little brother, don't sob, they are no bogeymen,
After all, you are big now, they are just soldiers,
Came here in their square iron wagons,

With a tear on the eye, we look at each other,
Be with me, little brother, I fear for you,
On the winding roads, little brother, in your light shoes.

It is raining and it has gotten dark out,
This night will not be short,
A lamb the wolf craves,
Little brother, did you lock the gate?

Little brother, don't sob, don't waste your tears,
The curses swallow and save your strength,
Don't blame me in case we don't make it.

Learn the song, it is not complex,

Lean on me, little brother, the road is broken,
We will stumble, we can't turn back now.

It is raining and it has gotten dark out,
This night will not be short,
A lamb the wolf craves,
Little brother, lock the gate! Lock the gate!

Nevidomá dívka (1969)
V zahradě za cihlovou zídkou
popsanou v slavných výročích
sedává na podzim na trávě před besídkou
děvčátko s páskou na očích
Pohádku o mluvícím ptáku
nechá si přečíst z notesu
Pak pošle polibek po chmýří na bodláku
na vymyšlenou adresu

Prosím vás nechte ji ach nechte ji
tu nevidomou dívku
prosím vás nechte ji si hrát
Vždyť" možná hraje si
na slunce s nebesy
jež nikdy neuvidí
ač ji bude hřát

Pohádku o mluvícím ptáku
a o třech zlatých jabloních
a taky o lásce již v černých květech máku
přivezou jezdci na koních
Pohádku o kouzelném slůvku
jež vzbudí všechny zakleté
Pohádku o duze jež spává na ostrůvku
na kterém poklad najdete

Prosím vás nechte ji ach nechte ji
tu nevidomou dívku
prosím vás nechte ji si hrát
Vždyť možná hraje si
na slunce s nebesy
jež nikdy neuvidí
ač ji bude hřát

V zahradě za cihlovou zídkou
popsanou v slavných výročích
sedává na podzim na trávě před besídkou
děvčátko s páskou na očích
Rukama dotýká se květů
a neruší ji motýli

Jen tiše hraje si s řetízkem amuletu
jen na chvíli

Prosím vás nechte ji ach nechte ji
tu nevidomou dívku
prosím vás nechte ji si hrát
Vždyť možná hraje si
na slunce s nebesy
jež nikdy neuvidí
ač ji bude hřát.

Trans.

The Blind Girl
In the garden, behind the brick wall,
Written up in anniversaries,
Sitting on the grass in front of a gazebo, in the fall,
A little girl with blindfold.
A tale about talking birds,
She has someone reading from the notebook,
Then she blows the thistle fluff
To a made-up address.

I ask you, please, let her, oh, let her,
This blind little girl
I ask you, please, let her play.
Maybe she is playing
In the sun, under the sky
Even if she can never see it,
It will keep her warm.

A tale about a talking bird,
About three golden apple trees,
Also about love in the dried up poppy flowers
That will be brought by horseback riders.
A tale about a magic word
That will awaken all cursed,
A tale about the rainbow sleeping on an island
Where you will find a treasure.

I ask you, please, let her, oh, let her,
This blind little girl
I ask you, please, let her play.
Maybe she is playing
In the sun, under the sky
Even if she can never see it,
It will keep her warm.

In the garden, behind the brick wall,
Written up in anniversaries,

Sitting on the grass in front of a gazebo, in the fall,
A little girl with blindfold.
Her hands touching the flowers,
The butterflies don't bother her,
Only quietly she is playing with her amulet's chain,
Only for a little while.

I ask you, please, let her, oh, let her,
This blind little girl
I ask you, please, let her play.
Maybe she is playing
In the sun, under the sky
Even if she can never see it,
Let her play.

Veličenstvo Kat (1969)

V ponurém osvětlení
gotického sálu
kupčíci vyděšení
hledí do misálů
a houfec mordýřů
si žádá požehnání
Vždyť prvním z rytířů
je veličenstvo Kat

Kněz - Ďábel co mši slouží
z oprátky má štólu
Pod fialovou komží
láhev vitriolu
Pach síry z hmoždířů
se valí k rudé kápi
prvního z rytířů
Hle - veličenstvo Kat

Na korouhvi státu
je emblém s gilotinou
Z ostnatého drátu
páchne to shnilotinou
V kraji hnízdí hejno krkavčí
Lidu vládne Mistr Popravčí

Král klečí před Satanem
Na žezlo se těší
A lůza pod platanem
Radu Moudrých věší
a zástup kacířů
se raduje a jásá
že prvním z rytířů
je veličenstvo Kat

Na rohu ulice
vrah o morálce káže
Před vraty věznice
se procházejí stráže
Z vojenských pancířů
vstříc černý nápis hlásá
že prvním z rytířů
je veličenstvo Kat

Nad palácem vlády
ční prapor s gilotinou
Děti mají rády
kornouty se zmrzlinou
Soudcové se na ně zlobili
Zmrzlináře dětem zabili

Byl hrozný tento stát
když musel jsi se dívat
jak zakázali psát
a zakázali zpívat
a bylo jim to málo
Poručili dětem
modlit se jak si přálo
veličenstvo Kat

S úšklebkem Ďábel viděl
pro každého podíl
Syn otce nenáviděl
Bratr bratru škodil
Jen motýl Smrtihlav
se nad tou zemí vznáší
kde v kruhu tupých hlav
dlí - veličenstvo KAT.

Trans.

The Royal Executioner (1969)

In the darkly lit
Gothic hall
Horrified merchants
Look at the missal,
A flock of murderers
Is asking for a blessing
First among the knights
Is the Majesty Executioner.

The Prince-Devil serving mass,
Has a scarf (adit) out of a noose,

Under the purple clergy robe,
A bottle of poison.
Scent of sulphur from the mortars
Rolls toward the crimson pestle,
Hood of the first among the knights
Lo and behold - the Majesty Executioner.

The state's banner
Bears an emblem with a guillotine.
From the barbed wire -
A smell of rotten.
Flock of ravens nests in the barbed wire,
The Majesty rules the masses.

The King kneels in front of Satan
Hoping for the scepter
A mob under the sycamore
Hangs the Council of Wisemen.
A herd of heretics
Is joyfully roaring
That first among the knights
Is the Majesty Kat.

On the street corner
A murderer preaches,
In front of the prison's gates
Guards are strolling
On soldier's armor
Black inscription announces
That first among the knights
Is the Majesty Executioner.

Above the state's palace
Sticks out a banner with a guillotine
Children like
Cones with ice cream
Judges are angry at them,
The ice cream vendors were killed.

This state was terrible,
When you had to watch
How they banned writing
And they banned singing,
Yet it was not enough for them
They ordered the children
To pray as wished by
The Majesty Executioner.

With a grin, the Devil saw

Each time
A son resented his father,
A brother killed his brother,
Only the moth Deathhead
Will rise up above this land
Where in the circle of dumb heads
Continues to linger - the Majesty EXECUTIONER.

Anděl (1969)

Z rozmláceného kostela
v krabici s kusem mýdla
přinesl jsem si anděla
Polámali mu křídla
Díval se na mě oddaně
já měl jsem trochu trému
tak vtiskl jsem mu do dlaně
lahvičku od parfému

A proto prosím věř mi
chtěl jsem ho žádat
aby mi mezi dveřmi pomohl hádat
co mě čeká
a nemine
co mě čeká
a nemine

Pak hlídali jsme oblohu
pozorujíce ptáky
debatujíce o Bohu
a hraní na vojáky
Do tváře jsem mu neviděl
pokoušel se ji schovat
To asi ptákům záviděl
že mohou poletovat

A proto prosím věř mi
chtěl jsem ho žádat
aby mi mezi dveřmi
pomohl hádat
co mě čeká
a nemine
co mě čeká
a nemine

Když novinky mi sděloval
u okna do ložnice

já křídla jsem mu ukoval
z mosazné nábojnice
A tak jsem pozbyl anděla
on oknem odletěl mi
však přítel prý mi udělá
nového z mojí helmy

A proto prosím věř mi
chtěl jsem ho žádat
aby mi mezi dveřmi
pomohl hádat
co mě čeká
a nemine
co mě čeká
a nemine.

Trans.

Angel
From the demolished church,
In a box with a piece of soap,
I brought an angel.
With his wings broken,
He gazed at me with devotion.
I had butterflies in my stomach, shaking,
So I pressed to his palm,
A perfume bottle.

So, please, believe me,
I wanted to ask him
To help me tell, between doors,
What awaits me
And will not pass,
What awaits me
And will not pass.

We kept watch at the sky,
Observing the birds,
Debating about God,
About playing soldiers,
His face I couldn’t see,
He tried to hide it,
Perhaps he was jealous of the birds,
Of their many flights.

So, please, believe me,
I wanted to ask him
Between doors,
To help me tell,
What awaits me
And will not pass,
What awaits me
And will not pass.

When he told me the news,
By the bedroom's window,
I hammered wings onto him,
From a brass gun cartridge.
And that's how I lost the angel,
He flew away from me, through the window.
But, a friend will make me
A new one from my helmet.
So, please, believe me,
I wanted to ask him
Between doors,
To help me tell,
What awaits me
And will not pass,
What awaits me
And will not pass.

Monology (1989)

Do čtverce patia stín padá mezi slova,
mlčíme ty i já, pak promluvíme znova,
život je prožitý a v rohu mlčí běsi,
mluvíme já i ty, a nerozumíme si.

Zšeřelou krajinou jde žebrák žití mého,
já myslím na jinou, ty myslíš na jiného,
zraněný pária a pýcha baronesy,
mluvíme ty i já, a nerozumíme si.

R: Dva u jednoho stolu nad vázou s květinami,
dvě písně, lhané v mollu - dvě lodi mezi krami,
a slina z dračí tlamy ve sklínce alkoholu,
tím více jsme tu sami, čím déle jsme tu spolu,
ta da da …

Za řevem diskoték a světa,kde se vraždí,

jsme blízko na dotek, a přece oba za zdí,
myslíce na city, jež byly kdysi kdesi,
mluvíme já i ty, a nerozumíme si.

Za slovy slova jdou a nevydají větu,
pod tlící hromadou nedarovaných květů,
dekretů na byty a dýchaného smogu
mlčíme já i ty v dvojitém monologu.

R: Jen slina z dračí tlamy ve sklínce alkoholu,
tak neskonale sami, tak nekonečně spolu,
dva u jednoho stolu, dvě lodi mezi krami,
je předaleko k molu a temno nad vodami,
ta da da ...

Trans.
Monologues

A shadow falls on the square shape of the patio in-between words;
We're silent, you and I, then we speak again.
Life has been lived, the demons are silent in the corner.
We speak, you and I, yet we don't understand each other.

The beggar of my life, walking on a dark landscape;
I'm thinking of another… you are, too.
An injured pariah and a proud baroness,
We speak, you and I, yet we don't understand each other.

R(efrain): Two at one table, over a vase with flowers,
Two songs, lies in a minor key - two boats between icebergs.
And dragon's spit in the liquor glass,
The more we're alone, the longer we're together.
Ta-da-da…

Beyond the roar of discotheques and a world at war,
We're close enough to touch, yet both behind a wall.
Thinking of feelings that once were,
We speak, you and I, yet we don't understand each other.

Words come and go, yielding no sentences,
Under the weight of decaying ungifted flowers…
Apartment licenses, inhaled smog,
We're silent, you and I, in a dual monologue.

R: Only dragon's spit in the liquor glass,
So very alone, not at last together.
Two at one table, two boats between icebergs.
The harbor is far, it's dark above the waters.
Ta-da-da...

Morituri te salutant
Cesta je prach
a štěrk
a udusaná hlína
a šedé šmouhy
kreslí do vlasů
a z hvězdných drah
má šperk
co kamením se spíná
a pírka touhy
z křídel Pegasů

Cesta je bič
Je zlá
jak pouliční dáma
Má v ruce štítky
v pase staniol
a z očí chtíč jí plá
když háže do neznáma
dvě křehké snítky
rudých gladiol

Seržante písek je bílý
jak paže Daniely
Počkejte chvíli!

Mé oči uviděly
tu strašně dávnou
vteřinu zapomnění
Seržante! Mávnou
a budem zasvěceni
Morituri te salutant
Morituri te salutant

Tou cestou dál
jsem šel
kde na zemi se zmítá
a písek víří
křídlo holubí
a marš mi hrál
zvuk děl
co uklidnění skýtá
a zvedá chmýří

Morituri te salutant
The road is dust
and gravel
and pressed soil
and gray smudges
painting on the hair
and from the stars
[it] has a jewel
fixed with a rock
and feathers of desire
from the wings of Pegasus.

The road is a whip
it is evil
like a street lady
with dog tags in her hand
and tin foil in her waist
lust from her eyes
as she throws into the unknown
Two fragile sprigs
of crimson gladiolas

Sargent, the sand is white
as Daniela's arms,
wait a moment!

My eyes saw
awfully long ago,
this second of oblivion
Sargent! [They] will salute
and we will be initiated
Morituri te salutant
Morituri te salutant

Farther down this road
I went
on the ground was thrashing
and swirling in the sand
a pigeon's wing
a march was playing to me
the sound of cannons
offers reassurance
and raises fluff

které zahubí

Cesta je tér a prach
a udusaná hlína
mosazná včelka
od vlkodlaka
rezavý kvér
- můj brach
a sto let stará špína
a děsně velká
bílá oblaka

Seržante
písek je bílý
jak paže Daniely
Počkejte chvíli!
Mé oči uviděly
tu strašně dávnou
vteřinu zapomnění
Seržante! Mávnou
a budem zasvěceni
Morituri te salutant
Morituri te salutant

that will kill.

The road is tar and dust
and pressed soil
a brass bee
from the werewolf's
rusty rifle
-my brother
and a hundred-year-old dirt
and awfully big
white clouds

Sargent,
the sand is white
like Daniela's arms
wait a moment!
My eyes saw
awfully long ago
that second of oblivion
Sargent! [They are] waving
and we will be initiated
Morituri te salutant
Morituri te salutant

Rakovina
Zní hlasy soudních znalců
a padlých andělů
Řvou ústa slavných starců
z reklamních panelů
a jaro karty míchá
pro záda shrbená
a přetěžko se dýchá
a svítí červená

V tom jaru listy žloutnou
a sněží do květin
A hrůza chodí s loutnou
a s věncem kopretin
Té loutně struny chybí
a stvůra bez tváře
spár dravce - tlama rybí
si hýká z oltáře

že blázni pošetilí
jsou na oprátce
Dnes vládce zavraždili
Ať žije vládce!
Tryznu mu vypravili
a jde se dál
Dnes krále popravili
Ať' žije král!

Jak tóny kravských zvonců
zní stránky pamfletů
Lze dobrati se konců
být stádem Hamletů
Být každý sobě drábem
to mnohé přehluší
Však vápno neseškrábem
když vězí na duši

Je večer V sálech hrají
pár dalších premiér
Jak loni třešně zrají
a štěká teriér
a znovu ptáci vzlétnou
Výš k slunci! Poslepu!

Cancer
The voices of judicial experts ring
And fallen angels
Roaring are the mouths of famous elders
Out of the advertisements
The spring is shuffling cards
For the hunched backs
It is hard to breathe
And the red light is shining

This spring the leaves are turning yellow
And snow falls on the flowers
And the terror is strolling with a lute
And a daisy wreath
The lute is missing strings
And a monster without a face
With claws of a beast and mouth of a fish
Brays from the altar

That the foolish loonies
Are on the noose
Today the ruler was executed
Long live the ruler!
They mourned him
And we go on.
The king was executed today
Long live the king!

Like the sounds of cowbells
Rustle the pages of the leaflet
One may reach the end
Be a herd of Hamlets
Everyone can be one's own policeman
This will drown out many.
But the lime we will not scrape off
When it's stuck in the soul.

It is evening time. In the halls they play
A couple of other premieres
As last year's cherries are ripening
A terrier is barking
Once again birds will fly up
Higher towards the Sun! Blindly!
The summer walks with a flute

To léto chodí s flétnou
a sahá po tepu

Už blázni pošetilí
jsou na oprátce
Dnes vládce zavraždili
Ať žije vládce!
Tryznu mu vypravili
a jde se dál
Dnes krále popravili
Ať žije král!

Je známo čí je vina
To hraní s kostrami
má jméno Rakovina
a voní astrami
Kůň běží bez udidla
Kouř štípe do očí
Hrajem si na pravidla
a deska přeskočí
přeskočí
přeskočí

And keeps a finger on the pulse.

The foolish loonies
Are on the noose.
Today they executed the ruler
Long live the ruler!
They mourned him
And we go on.
They executed the king today.
Long live the king!

It is known whose fault it is.
The play with the skeletons
Goes by the name Cancer
Smells of aster
A horse is running without a bridle
The smoke stings the eyes
We play a game of rules
And the disc is skipping
Skipping
Skipping.