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**A COAT OF MANY COLORS: OSIP MANDELSTAM
AND HIS MYTHOLOGIES OF SELF-PRESENTATION**

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Chapter I'

THE CHARISMA OF POETRY AND THE POETRY OF CHARISMA

Nomen Est Omen

And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you." *Gen. 40:8*

A man's name is one of the main constituents of his person and perhaps a part of his psyche. S. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*

But how can I tear myself away from you, my dear Egypt of things?
Osip Mandelstam, *The Egyptian Stamp*.

Now it is a matter of coincidence that Mandelstam whose first name happened to be Osip was a namesake of the Biblical interpreter and dreamer. But once his parents made up their minds to name their first-born Joseph, the Egyptian career of Israel's most beloved son became an easily available exemplar for Mandelstam--one of the measures of his life's progress. To use Joseph in this way became especially tempting after Mandelstam had decided to pursue the vocation of lyric poet--in a way, a born dreamer and interpreter of dreams--one that was valued highly in the "Egypt" of his time but still remained to be properly conferred on a man of Jewish origin.[1] To spin this much meaning out of something so random and insignificant as a poet's first name may look more than a trifle archaic, but a more or less vague hope that a famous namesake can influence one's life is deeply imbedded in Western culture, the majority of whose members still have Christian names, that is, live under the guidance and protection, however attenuated by modernity, of a particular holy woman or man.[2] In Russian culture (and Mandelstam's mother was quite

¹ This is the first chapter of *A Coat of Many*

at home in it[3]) this tradition remained relatively strong. Russians of Mandelstam's time were more likely to celebrate the day of the namesake saint (imianiny) than their own date of birth, not to mention the custom of naming the person after the saint on whose day the person was born.[4] Moreover, in the age of Nietzsche, Frazer and Freud, a revival of the archaic possessed the imprimatur of ultimate modernity, and it was cultivated assiduously in Mandelstam's own milieu. One need not look further than *Anno Domini*, a collection of poetry by Anna Akhmatova, to be convinced that a contemporary poet did not treat his or her Christian name as an anachronism whose purpose would have been better served by a unique license plate number a' la Zamiatin's *We*. [5] By the same token, the name Joseph was simply too suggestive for Mandelstam, as it is for us, to be ignored completely. There will be more than one occasion to return to the question of what Mandelstam himself made of it. But the fact that some time in January, 1891, Emile and Flora Mandelstam decided to call their first child Joseph--a decision, neither magical nor prophetic and yet bearing the traces of a belief in both magic and prophecy--prompts an appeal to the Old Testament legend for an elucidation of a few premises on which the present study is based. "According to the Book of Genesis, when the Pharaoh's butler and Baker offended their master they were thrown into jail to await the disposition of their fate. There they met another prisoner, Joseph, a Hebrew slave of Captain Potiphar, who had been condemned for trying to rape the wife of Paharaoh's officer. Of course, he was innocent, and while it was true that he fled her chambers leaving his garment in her hands, he did so not as a bungling rapist but as a loyal employee who would rather suffer the wrath of a scorned woman than yield to the amorous embraces of his master's wife. Be that as it may, one day Joseph noticed that his two cellmates looked especially vexed. They were troubled, he learned, by the dreams that each had dreamed the previous night. Expecting the worst, they were shaken and puzzled by the complex symbolism of their dreams. But, worst of all, since under the circumstances a reputable interpreter could not be promptly engaged, they were afraid that they would not be able to take advantage of the knowledge that the nocturnal signs both promised and concealed. This was the area where Joseph could help. But, first, he had to persuade the dreamers to divulge those enigmatic symbols that God, or demons, had conveyed to them in the privacy of their sleep. Like other unusual signs, both public and private, dreams had to be treated with the utmost seriousness, as something directly relevant to the fate of an individual, family, country or tribe. A record left by a higher power, they constituted means of gaining insight into the workings of individual or collective fate, and as such, they could benefit the dreamer just as much as the dreamer's enemy. It was therefore more prudent to remain ignorant about the meaning of the dream rather than to rely on a chance interpreter who might use your omen to his own advantage. Why else would the two prisoners be so reluctant to tell Joseph their dreams? Then, as to-day, dream interpretation must have called for a trusted and reputable private specialist whose practice depended on loyalty and discretion, qualities which, in their turn, were supported by the diviner's social ties and, if indirectly, the amount of his fee. In no respect did Joseph fit this description.

However, he managed to reassure his cellmates by saying in effect that they had no need for a professional when they had the good luck of sharing a jail with him. For he was a born dreamer and interpreter of dreams, one whose know-how came from God and therefore did not depend on the three conditions of professionalism: training, experience and payment. "Interpretations belong to God," he insisted, implying that he himself had been ordained to play the role of God's hermetic messenger.[6] Had they still been enjoying the perquisites of

courtiers, the Butler and the Baker would probably have shrugged off the arrogant claim of this most humble and unlicensed soothsayer, but the sudden loss of station, indeed of all social and psychological support, must have made them too vulnerable to decline any solution no matter how improbable. Besides, was there not something special about this Hebrew who had inexplicably escaped execution despite the gravity of his alleged crime and, equally inexplicably, had been placed in charge of prison affairs by the warden (Gen., 39:21-23)? Their own predicament, too, was unusual, at least in their eyes, and as such it might have seemed well suited to the oddness of Joseph. Still, the Baker remained reticent and would tell Joseph his dream only after he had heard the favorable interpretation of the Butler's nocturnal omens. This change of heart suggests that he tended to attribute to Joseph's talent a power to shape as well as disclose one's fate, in other words a modicum of extraordinary, virtually demonic power. What made Joseph appear even stranger was the fact that his plea for a reward followed rather than preceded the rendering of service and took the form of a request for a favor unconstrained by any contractual bond. The ensuing events proved Joseph's interpretations correct, as later on they would corroborate his understanding of the dream dreamt by the Pharaoh who was so impressed by Joseph's gift ("the spirit of God") that he made him his highest viceroy. This is one way of retelling part of the Joseph legend, a story about a miserable slave who became the most powerful man in Egypt, second only to the Pharaoh, through the grace of God.

A more analytical retelling might be based on Max Weber's conceptions of charismatic authority.[7] Unlike traditional authority and that of the rational-legal type, which exist in a relatively stable social milieu, charismatic authority depends on the beliefs of groups seized by "enthusiasm, despair or hope." [8] Often, this authority becomes vested in an individual who believes himself, and is believed to be, endowed with "supernatural, superhuman or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities." [9] Ultimately, these extraordinary "gifts" signify the charismatic individual's intimate contact with what he and society perceive as "sacred" [10] or "central" to its universe; in its turn, proximity to fate endows such a leader with an exceptional ability to order or disorder the core of forces that "make sense" of the world, whether in the area of politics, high art, religion, popular culture, or science. [11] In this respect, what distinguishes a charismatic figure, or group, or institution from its ordinary counterpart in society is not a matter of a particular program -- the program merely conducts the current of authority -- but the difference in intensity of expression between the feebly electrified "periphery" of a culture and the always steaming awesome powerhouse of its "center." [12]

For a charismatic figure to emerge it is necessary that the claim to possession of the gift be recognized by others. [13] In fact, what distinguishes the sociological notion of charismatic authority from the notion of charisma, including its Biblical, Pauline usage, [14] is the indispensable symbiosis between the leader and his following, which transforms charisma into a relational, mediating entity primarily, and not simply a divine gift held by a specific figure. Given the extraordinary nature of charisma, recognition of a charismatic person by a group occurs outside the daily round of life, [15] and in this respect the type of proof that a charismatic figure offers must be perceived, apart from the requirement of effectiveness, as something magical, irrational, unpredictable, in short, extraordinary. "Originally," Weber wrote, it was "always a miracle." [16] Perhaps the central paradox of the workings of charismatic authority involves the disparity between the holder's total

dependence on this recognition (hence the instability of charismatic authority[17]) and the absolute obedience his power commands as long as his possession of the gift is acknowledged.[18] What this means is that proof and obedience, although interdependent, are largely dissociated in the followers' minds. On the one hand, a disciple believes that he submits to the leader out of a sense of "inner compulsion," not in exchange for miracles or mundane rewards, and failure in devotion is considered to be a "dereliction of duty." Christ's miracles and His refusal to make faith in Him contingent on them provides a good illustration of this side of the paradox. On the other hand, the leader's failure to pass the test of repeated proof can transform all the vertical bonds within his following into last year's snow.

Confronted with a situation of disorientation and acute distress, Joseph laid claim to the possession of a special grace which, in the words of the Bible, "gave him favor in the eyes" of Potiphar and his wife, the Butler, the Baker, and even the Pharaoh, and which allowed him, in those same eyes, to transform uncertainty into order. And even though the people in distress who, like the Pharaoh, have exhausted or, like his two servants, have had no access to the traditional and rational solutions were naturally inclined to "recognize" the signs of God's favor in Joseph, they did so only after he had furnished them with the sine qua non of charisma--the two-fold "proof" of his divine hermeneutic skill. First, the events predicted by him did indeed come to pass according to his interpretation, which prompted his promotion by the Pharaoh and gave Joseph the opportunity to preside over the prevention of disorder. This was unusual but not enough to distinguish a charismatic divine from the kind of a wise man who would have undertaken these tasks as a way of earning a living. It is only in combination with Joseph's strangeness and the disinterested nature of his performance that his work begins to radiate the aura of a truly extraordinary gift.

This second, less evident aspect of proof involved both the absence of remuneration and Joseph's unusual freedom from the customary bonds of family and tribe. His seeming indifference to personal gain and virtual independence from ordinary human obligations made Joseph's aptitude for dream-interpretation, although it was not altogether unusual, appear brilliant and unalloyed. This is not to say that Joseph expected no rewards for his insights (he did); rather, the rewards had to be as extraordinary as the intensity with which his gift was displayed, that is, most unlike the fee that a professional would charge. Nor did he undertake his interpretations in the hope of enriching his family, though it eventually benefited from his generosity. Even more important, prior to his elevation by the Pharaoh Joseph had no regular standing in Egyptian society, and his spectacular performances, if anything, must have made him even more of a stranger to it[19]. This lack of social face, or to put it differently, this empty space in place of a fixed identity made Joseph into an excellent projection screen for the anxieties and desires of his not always hospitable hosts. The nearly tragic incident with the wife of Captain Potiphar gives us some idea of how good a screen one could make out of Joseph's many-colored coat. Among its many different patches, a butler, a baker, a pharaoh, his captain and his captain's wife, and finally, Joseph's own brothers had little trouble finding those colors that matched the tint and glow of their own nightmares and dreams.

The Siamese Twins

For us, who are not initiated into the simple mystery of the exorcist's soul--into his power over the word which transforms word into deed--this may be laughable only because we have forgotten the soul of the people and, perhaps, the true soul in general.

A. Blok, "The Poetry of Spells and Incantations"

Sometimes I think
I am a Dutch cock
or I am the king of Pskov.
And sometimes
I like best of all
my own name
Vladimir Maiakovskii.

VI. Maiakovskii, *Vladimir Maiakovskii: A Tragedy*

Mandelstam's career was, of course, different from that of his ancient namesake, and yet, the story of Joseph provides more than one illuminating analogy to what might be called the phenomenon of Mandelstam, namely, the totality of his and his art's life in the imagination of his readers. Mandelstam was and, judging by the posthumous reception, still is a charismatic poet, just as Joseph was a charismatic diviner, and not merely an anonymous vehicle for interpreting dreams. His "gift" was not limited to his verbal art but permeated the whole of what his readers and, I assume he himself, perceived as his personality (*lichnost'*). As if to belie the opinion of the early Formalist criticism that art must be judged apart from the artist's life, Mandelstam's poetry, like that of his more illustrious contemporaries, was and is difficult to separate from the legendary (in the value-neutral sense) biographical aura that has surrounded it; indeed, difficult to separate even from the way he looked as he recited his verse:

Mandelstam's face was not striking at first glance. Thin, with slight, irregular features, he reminded one in his whole aspect of the people in Chagall's paintings. But then he began to read, in a sing-song way and slightly rocking to the rhythm of the verse. Blok and I were sitting side by side. Suddenly he touched my sleeve softly and with his eyes pointed toward the face of Osip Emil'evich. I have never seen a human face so transformed by inspiration and self-abandonment. Mandelstam's homely, unassuming face had become the face of a visionary and prophet. Aleksandr Aleksandrovich [Blok] was also astonished by this.[20]

Blok's silent assent speaks volumes about the impression that Mandelstam's "gift" could make on his audience. Himself a foremost visionary of his time, he made the following "Joseph-like" note in his diary after attending Mandelstam's recital:

. . . Clearly an artiste. His poetry emerges out of dreams--of a very special kind that abide wholly within the realm of art.[21]

It should be pointed out that for Blok the "realm of art" was among the variety of realms of religious experience.[22]

To cut such an awe-inspiring figure at moments of poetic "possession" meant to be seen as someone who was in close proximity to the culture's "center," its core where it was possible to glimpse the inner workings of fate open only to visionaries and prophets.[23] At least since Nikolai Gogol's masterful performances at the Aksakovs',[24] public recitals in Russia have constituted an important moment in the author's interaction with his reader in Russia. In this century, poets have benefited from this institution enormously, as witnessed by the mesmerizing artistry of Blok, the breath-taking antics of the Futurists, especially Maiakovskii spell-binding recitals,[25] and the "shamanistic" se'ances of Osip Mandelstam.[26] To the extent that the word of such a poet was perceived as having transcendent attributes (and Mandelstam, for one, did not flinch at referring to the poetic word as Logos[27]), the poet's capacity to make himself transparent to the word contributed greatly to the affirmation of his charismatic aura. People who attended these performances could palpably experience the presence of the spirit possessing the poet, hear the poet's oracle and feel in close proximity to the sacred, which in ordinary life remains concealed behind the "veil" of the daily grind.[28] At moments of a particularly profound despair or enthusiasm, a poet's reading may even be experienced as a sort of a tremendum mysteriosum, a sensation on a continuum with the Biblical "fear of God." Consider, for example the impression that Mandelstam's reading made on his friend Nikolai Khardzhiev, a literary scholar and an art historian, who attended the poet's recital in November, 1932. Khardzhiev's testimony is especially significant as it comes from a private letter to Boris Eikhenbaum, a colleague and a scholar of great sophistication (emphasis is mine):

Mandelstam is the only consolation. He is a poet of genius, of valor, a heroic man. A gray-bearded patriarch, Mandelstam presided as shaman for two and a half hours. He recited every poem that he had written (in the past two years) in chronological order! They were such terrifying exorcisms that many people took fright. Even Pasternak was afraid--he lisped: "I envy your freedom. For me you are a new Khlebnikov. And just as alien to me as he is. I need a non-freedom.

And, Khardzhiev continued, when some of those who did not "take fright" challenged the poet publicly, he answered them with the haughtiness of a captive emperor--or a captive poet.[29]

It should be pointed out that both the correspondent and the addressee had known and admired Mandelstam for many years[30] and therefore nothing could be further from

Khardzhiev's mind than advertising Mandelstam's success in a friendly missive. All the more striking then the choice of qualities attributed to Mandelstam: a genius (possessed by a spirit), a heroic man (superhuman), a patriarch (in line with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph), a shaman (a sorcerer and master of metempsychosis), an exorcist (capable of casting out demons), a terror- and fear-inspiring figure (*tremendum mysteriosum*), a captive emperor (of Rome among the Huns?), and only lastly, to sum up all of these extraordinary powers--a poet.[31] Equally revealing was Pasternak's proclaiming Mandelstam to be the "second" Velemir Khlebnikov (1885-1922),[32] that mysterious genius of Russian modernism who enjoyed the reputation of a "fool in Christ,"[33] a holy man, indeed a Christ figure, even among the allegedly cold-blooded and no-nonsense Formalists. Viktor Shklovskii, for one, a writer not famous for his Christian piety, could compare Khlebnikov's death to the Crucifixion and his readers to the Sanhedrin and the Roman Guard, while Jakobson could take this comparison as a starting point for his seminal essay "On a Generation That Squandered Its Poets" (1931).

Forgive us for yourself and for others whom we will kill. The state is not responsible for the destruction of people. When Christ lived and spoke it did not understand His Aramaic, and it has never understood simple human speech. The Roman Soldiers who pierced Christ's hands are no more to blame than the nails. Nevertheless, it is very painful for those whom they crucify.[34]

It is well known that Khlebnikov was not persecuted by the state, but died of a gangrene-like disease while being cared for by his friend, the artist Pavel Miturich.[35]

Accordingly, and in a way similar to the Joseph legend, Mandelstam's exalted standing, his famous *hauteur*,[36] has coexisted with, indeed has drawn sustenance from, his reputation as a bungler and pariah, a reputation that his own writings often seconded. Thus, he could count himself among the stars of the most luminous constellation of Russian poetry, next to Derzhavin and Lermontov, as he did in the 1923 "Slate Ode," while complaining of profound inadequacy in a bitterly ironic "Pindaric fragment," "He Who Found a Horseshoe," where he likened himself to the lucky charm "fragment" of a once magnificent racing steed. To follow Mandelstam's characterization of his fictional alter ego Parnok in "The Egyptian Stamp" (1928), his lot was that of a "mosquito prince," "a prince of bad luck, a Collegial Assessor from the city of Thebes"[37]--the rank of the humiliated proud misfits from the Petersburg-Thebes of Gogol and Dostoevskii.

There is a famous oft-repeated line of Marina Tsvetaeva, a sort of paraphrase of Pangloss's optimistic motto, which helps to grasp Mandelstam's ambiguous self-image--this fusion of princely hubris with the humility of an insignificant and annoying insect. "In this most Christian of worlds, poets are Yids!"[38] When Tsvetaeva fired off this shot at the philistines in 1924, many poets, including Mandelstam, could have testified that she was speaking for their generation. Her pungent ethnic metaphor implied, first, that in contemporary society one could do better than be a Jew; second, that those who shared her calling were treated as and had the fate of the culture's proverbial outcasts; and third, as a designation for a figure of recognized symbolic power, that the true center of modern culture was with the opposites of those "most Christian" -- the antipodal "Yids." As chance would have it, Mandelstam fit

Tsvetaeva's bill doubly: figuratively, as a poet and, literally, as Jew, known to some of his contemporaries as zinaidin zhidenok (Zinaida's [Gippius] little Yid").[39] But, then, seen from the stage where the poet's drama was unfolding, what ranked low on the philistine scale of values took the pride of place in the sacred realm. The poet's audience was assigned a less enviable function. Confronted with Tsvetaeva's heavy-handed irony, a sympathetic reader was in effect forced to recognize (or to pretend to recognize) in the poet an innocent and sacred victim and to cast himself in the role of a low-brow Jew-hating philistine, thereby acknowledging twice and at his own expense the extraordinary moral and sacred power of poets. Mandelstam's lines from a 1924 poem--a distant echo of Byron's "I was born for opposition"--carried a similar ring:

[Russian text no. 1 here]

No, never have I ever been anybody's contemporary,
Such honor doesn't suit me well.
Oh how disgusted I am with that namesake,
It was not I, it was another one.

And yet it was he himself who

[Russian text no. 2 here]

. . . together with the century lifted the pained eyelids--
Two sleepy big apples. . .
And it was to him that

[Russian text no. 3 here]

The clamorous rivers [of time] were narrating
The course of the febrile wrangles of men. . . [40]

Further, Tsvetaeva's words point to one of the most important contemporary assumptions concerning poetry. In addition to the usual indifference, Russian society extended to the poets a measure of serious consideration with all the profound ambiguity that such consideration implied. Mandelstam's retort to his wife about the death by firing squad in 1921 of his friend Nikolai Gumilev has become proverbial: "Fool, it is a good thing that we live in a country where people are shot for their verse." [41] For it is on the one hand degradation and persecution, whether real or imagined, and reverence and veneration on the other, which have defined the two extremes that conjoin to form the "fate of the poet"--a term with obvious supernatural implications used by the pre- and post-Revolutionary Russian critics writing on the inside or the outside. [42] There is little surprising in this dualism, for few things seal one's bond with the sacred better than a little spilled blood or its mimetic counterparts. [43] As a medium of sacralization, this blood might have taken the form of cranberry juice, as it did in Aleksandr Blok's self-mocking Puppet Theatre or some less apparently ironic imitation such as ink, as in Maiakovskii's poem addressed to the suicide Esenin, [44] or the real stuff that flowed abundantly during the "literalist" years of World War I, the revolution, civil war, and the construction of the new Soviet state. Even when wars, revolutions, or the secret police, failed to oblige, one could put a bullet through one's heart, as Maiakovski did in 1930, timing his suicide to coincide with the week of Easter. [45]

Analyzing Maiakovskii's testament, Roman Jakobson summed up the function of a created biography-fate in the poet's oeuvre:

The letter with its several literary motifs and with Maiakovskii's own death in it is so closely interrelated with his poetry that it can be understood only in the context of his poetry.[46]

That an artist aestheticizes everything, including the sacred, is a matter of common sense, especially in post-Nietzschean modernism, but for a charismatic poet, a fact of life, one as serious as death, takes on the aura of the sacred as soon as it becomes a "literary fact." [47] When, in the words of Mandelstam's 1922 poem, "The Age":

[Russian text no. 4 here]

Blood the builder gushes
Through the throat out of the earth's things,

the poet's own could be used to "glue together" the broken "vertebrae of the two centuries." [48]; "For a poet then, this assumption of seriousness "in this most Christian of the worlds" amounted to the necessity of cultivating the double identity of a pariah-king. "My poor Joseph," Nadezhda Mandelstam wrote, echoing Mandelstam's own poetry, "he remembered that in his veins there coursed the blood of shepherds, patriarchs and kings." [49] Unique and mysterious people, these, who can seemingly stand apart from the mainstream of their culture and yet be perceived by others and perceive themselves as extraordinary beings, in a way, the culture's closest progeny -- by blood and image.

The Holy As Paradigm

If a man experiences this feeling, becomes infected with the state of the soul which the author has experienced, and feels his unity with other people, then the object causing this state is art; where this infection does not take place there is no art. L. Tolstoy, "What Is Art

The sight of a mathematician who produces without effort the square of some ten-digit number fills us with a certain wonderment. But too often do we fail to see that a poet raises a phenomenon to the tenth power, and the modest appearance of a work of art frequently deceives us with respect to the monstrously condensed reality which it possesses. O. Mandelstam, "The Morning of Acmeism" (1913)

In his classic study, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Emile Durkheim concluded that the sacred, in one important sense, represented a projection of the collective interest of society onto the superhuman sphere.[50] From there, after gaining the higher

sanction and becoming a sacred principle, this will of the collective body for survival (according to Durkheim) or its will for self-representation (according to Geertz[51]) could command universal assent even though an individual's interest and instinct may, and often do, run counter to it. "The worshipper," wrote the French sociologist, "believes himself to be held to certain manners of acting which are imposed upon him by the nature of the sacred principle with which he feels he is in communion." [52] To spell out this conceptualization, if at the risk of simplification, what Durkheim called the "sacred principle" represented a sort of archetypal paradigm--a formulaic, concentrated model of social being which differed from other forms of group consciousness or activity by the higher degree of symbolic intensity (the presence of "mana," or the like) that members of a given community ascribed to it.[53]

It might be recalled that in his elaboration of Weber's sociology of charismatic authority, Edward Shils, too, put a special emphasis on intensity as a fundamental attribute of the "charismatic center," and it is less than surprising that a charismatic poet Osip Mandelstam, a junior contemporary of Durkheim and Weber, began one of his earliest essays on the nature of poetry by stressing the "monstrously condensed reality of the poetic word"--this pure paradigm encompassing the infinity of its variants.[54] That another contemporary, Sigmund Freud, made intensity a fundamental notion of his essentially paradigmatic economy of the human psyche and society (the Oedipus complex) suggests that we are dealing here with a case of historical congeniality.[55] Apparently, in turn-of-the-century Europe, the notion of intensity in association with the paradigmatic (or, as in Mandelstam, the "condensed reality" of a mathematical formula [56]) denoted a phenomenon commanding the sort of reverence and respect afforded hidden springs of tremendous power. What the students of society and individual psyche were attempting to analyze was what the poet Mandelstam and a number of his colleagues attempted to appropriate and display in ample measure. But this shared fascination with the intensely paradigmatic provides only one reason why the "demystifiers" and the "mystagogues" seem so well suited for each other. Not only the object of their concern, the power of the extraordinary over the routine of life, but the very choice of the object was in harmony with the growing interest that an increasingly "rationalized" European society took in the demons of unreason slipping through the "positive," scientific net.[57]

In order to make this "sociology" relevant to our down-scale, narrow topic, we must approach the phenomenon of modern Russian literature as something that is sacredly paradigmatic in relation to the society's round of life: its symbolic microcosm with the major authors as its stellar centers, or simply, the stars.[58] In this respect, literature, as a whole, would represent a specific product (symbolic, intense) of a common social interest, defined not by separate individuals or social groups,[59] but by what, as a minimum, amounts to a *sine qua non* of a social body, its never-ending performance in which it represents itself to itself.[60] Literature, then, as a potential locus of the sacred, should have been treated "seriously," perhaps, even with reverence by the Russians, and indeed it has been and still is. Khardzhiev's letter to Eikhenbaum is a telling example of this phenomenon, telling enough for us for us to pause here for a moment in order to consider it briefly against the background of another example of the literary-social paradigm.

It is a fact universally acknowledged that the famous poets of modern Russia, Mandelstam among them, have had (and still do) a personal following among their readers, a

following bordering on a cult. No doubt a complex phenomenon, it involves, among other things, a strong tendency toward identification with the poet on the part of the reader, both individually and en masse. This tendency is implied in the very idea of intensity, which denotes a relation of quantity between or among the qualitatively similar entities, and without this underlying similitude the notion of intensity will not make any sense. The interdependence between the two is most evident in the following characterization of Aleksandr Blok which comes from a highly specialized scholarly study of his manner of recitation by S. N. Bernshtein, a pioneer of Saussurian structuralism in Russia[61] (italics are mine):

Generations shall cherish the emotional memory of the poet now gone. But we, his contemporaries "born in muted years," we are linked to him with an especially intimate link. And for us, who recognize in his poetic legacy the features our own aesthetically metamorphosed sense of the world, the untimely passing away of the poet appears profoundly symbolic: together with him, under the pressure of the catastrophic events of recent years, there passes away our spiritual uni-verse, and we, survivors of our own age, we are condemned to becoming our own historians. . .

By fixing the image of Aleksandr Blok, we, historians of our own time, already passing epoch, epigones of the pre-revolutionary attitudes, strive to mirror for the ages to come our own image and to pass on over the heads of the living to the distant descendants our ardor no longer comprehensible for the contemporaries who have managed to submit their psychological make-up to the demands of the current moment.[62]

This statement, with which Bernshtein introduced his study, treats as self-evident that while the reader and the poet share their experience of the age, only the poet, a privileged child of the age, can serve as a symbolic medium of communion with the epoch. Thus, in order to transfix his age for posterity, indeed to assure his own cultural survival, Bernstein, a reader peripheral to the Blok cult, turned to the center of it, the acknowledged profound symbol of his generation, its paradigm, the poet Blok.

A similar pattern of identification can be observed in Khardzhiev's letter. In the enthusiastic and terrifying Stalinist 1932, the third year of the "total mobilization," most intellectuals (no matter how loyal) must have experienced a sense of constraint running the gamut from minor discomforts to the state of "captivity." [63] As readers, Khardzhiev and Eikhenbaum no doubt shared this sense with Mandelstam, but his experience was recognized as ultimately intense: he, the symbolic, central figure of the culture, implicitly likened to the cultivated Rome seized by the barbarians, behaved as a "captive emperor, or poet," while they, by implication, paid him court, being peripheral to him but still in his orbit. For the duration of the recital at least, he was the center of their universe, and as a result, every intense sensation, even fear (of which every soul had plenty in those days) appeared as something generated by the poet himself. No doubt, some of the poems were politically risqué, and the very sight of this alleged relic of the past commanding an actual stage in the

present must have appeared extraordinary. Other factors contributed too: Mandelstam's rather unusual appearance (a "patriarch" to Khradzhiev, he looked like a "dervish" to Lidiia Ginzburg[64]), his frequent reliance on verbal formulae akin and kin to spells and exorcisms as well as his "shamanistic"[65] way of reciting poetry. All of this, in combination or separately, would have sufficed for tuning the mind of the audience--stressed as it was by the uncertainties of the Staling revolution--to the awe-inspiring wavelength. For these people expected to experience fear as well as awe, admiration, elation, and other strong sensations in the presence of a poet with Mandelstam's reputation who, among other things, too, expected to serve as an emotional catalyst for their "catharsis." Such is the paradox of charisma, particularly, of that type which one recent sociologist of religion qualified as a sort of a begger's charisma, a charisma of reversal characteristic of millenarian movements and sects.[66] The example of Maiakovskii's last and failed recital--a devastating fiasco precisely because he tried so hard--shows that an audience with a different set of expectations, cannot be moved even by one who had the reputation of Russia's foremost Orpheus.[67] By contrast, those who came to hear Mandelstam were prepared to be captivated by him for "two and a half hours." And since both poets were more than amply endowed with what is called "talent," the question of the relative merit of their poetry should not even begin to arise. Such are the vicissitudes of a charismatic mission--the paradox of being able to prove one's possession of the gift only to those who are thoroughly inclined to believe in it.

Apparently, Mandelstam and his audience shared not only a culture but a specific set of expectations that the poet was able to personify; and one can be fairly certain that Mandelstam appeared to those who gathered to hear him (and, no doubt, to himself) as a symbol of the community of his admirers while they perceived themselves as attenuated variants of the poet-paradigm. Each harbored a smouldering spark from the poet's charismatic fire. And as long as they could see the fire in the poet, they affirmed the presence of the spark in their own selves -- the periphery and the center exchanging signals of mutual recognition. As to the fire, its source lay elsewhere, in some other exemplars, ingrained in the collective memory of the culture, whose identities the poet willingly assumed. Properly speaking, these deeply etched images, including the archetypal poet-healer,[68] poet-magician, poet-shaman, in short, the omnipotent poet, had been conjured up in a dream long before Mandelstam could put them to use in his poetry.

[Russian text no. 5 here]

Perhaps, whispering was born even before the lips,
 And leaves once swirled in a woodlessness,
 And those to whom we dedicate our work
 Have had, before our work, their features formed.
 (1933)[69]

With this in mind we might imagine the poet's audience and his sympathetic readers as people who are dreaming the poet's interpretation of their own old and powerful dreams. For it was only through a combined effort of both party (conscious or unconscious) that a community of literary worship could begin to arise.

Mandelstam was by no means unaware of the mechanism of this reciprocal arrangement, nor of the culture's need for repeated re-enactment of its own sacred "dreams"--

foremost among them the "dream" about death and resurrection. In the later poetry this awareness is expressed with a virtually analytical precision. Consider, for example, a few lines, including an Evangelical closure, from a poem on the death of Andrei Belyi, focused on the moving atmosphere of a Russian literary funeral:

[Russian text no. 6 here]

. . . Furcoats heaved. And shoulders rubbed.
Blood, sweat--vermillion of health was seething.
A dream wrapped in a dream; inside it, you were dreaming
Of moving forward, if for half an inch
.....
I feel I am hanging from my eyelashes,
And so ripening, and so all-stretching,
Till I break off and drop, I ree"nact all roles
Of that one and only we know even unto this day.[70]

As Mandelstam himself put it in his essay on Blok, culture required a cult,[71] and a cult he had in mind was one practiced by the community of authors and readers--in Russia a significant "community of worship" among the educated people and one that knows how to make itself heard.

Far from being esoteric the point of view that this approach requires has been common currency for nearly a century and a half, beginning (if we are looking for a focused tradition) with the exaltation of Pushkin by Gogol in 1834 when Russia's archetypal poet was still a robust thirty-five. The following is but a small portion of this extraordinary document which later on would serve as a model for the adulation of its author, Nikolai Gogol (emphasis is mine):[72]

Pushkin constitutes an extraordinary and, perhaps, unique manifestation of the Russian spirit: this is a Russian man in his [mature] development which he will, perhaps, achieve in two hundred years. In him the Russian nature, the Russian soul, Russian language, Russian character found a reflection of such purity, such unalloyed purity, that only a landscape can achieve when reflected on the convex surface of a magnifying glass.[73]

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, the authority of authorship became so great that it was not, to use one example, uncommon for an educated Russian to seek moral and spiritual advice from a writer even in a personal encounter, as one would from a Russian Orthodox "holy man," or more precisely, "holy old man (starets).[74] One might see in this phenomenon a manifestation of what one historian defined as a general tendency of Eastern Christianity toward the "dispersal of the holy" outside the confines of the established Church,[75] but a tendency very much encouraged and magnified by the tremendous pressures experienced by Russian society in the decades following the emancipation of the enserfed peasants.

In fact in some instances, speaking both literally and figuratively, the institution of secular authorship and starchestvo existed in a sort of a symbiotic relationship with writers, themselves venerated as spiritual leaders and healers, going on pilgrimages to the retreats

famous for their holy sages. Konstantin Leont'ev ended his life a monk at the Optina Hermitage, and Dostoevsky, fascinated by the institution, visited Optina often and presented a vivid description of it at the beginning of *The Brothers Karamazov*.^[76] Another writer, Nikolai Leskov responded to the society's interest in the ascetic "holy men" by producing a cycle of exemplary novellas about secular "righteous men" (*pravedniki*) and, later, by pungently retelling the lives of the early saints, those distant cousins of the Russian *startsy*.^[77] Tolstoy, too, is known to have visited the Optina Hermitage, where he extolled the merits of his adaptation of the New Testament, referring to it--some say immodestly--as "my own gospel."^[78] The radical left promoted a *startets* from its own ranks: a vastly influential figure, Nikolai Chernyshevskii. Although he was temperamentally unsuited for the role of the personal guru in the manner of a Dostoevsky or Tolstoy, he was nevertheless considered to be a veritable prophet or, as a contemporary revolutionist put it, the greatest man born since St. Paul and Jesus Christ.^[79] In exile for most of his productive life, this Symeon Stylites of Russian socialism helped to shape the personalities of many educated young men and women, among them Lenin,^[80] for generations. The focus of this momentous accomplishment was *What Is to Be Done*, a novel of exemplary personalities whose extraordinary appeal among contemporary youth was apparently unrelated to the novel's flaws in craftsmanship (that is to say, in comparison with the "classical" Russian novel). Obviously, on the readership's scale of values, the questions of artistic merit could not outweigh the holy attributes of the symbolic Chernyshevsky: a suffering author mirrored in his protagonists and the gospel of social justice and individual fulfillment that he and they preached. What appears to one generation or group as aesthetic ineptitude might appear to another as a "lofty spareness of form" or "freedom from self-indulgent embellishment," as the anti-aesthetic aesthetics of the post 1881 Tolstoy demonstrate most amply. The type of proof offered by a charismatic *littérateur* might change. But that change itself does not necessarily affect the intensity of the literary charisma.

The reasons why literature in Russia has come to occupy what Shils would call a central position in the elite culture is a subject for a separate study, but some of the more important aspects of this process need to be sketched out here if for no other reason than to give historical depth to the career of the poet Mandelstam. The process received its, perhaps, most decisive impetus from a historical coincidence: the famous parting of ways, the alienation of the elite from the state in the wake of the Decembrist Rebellion (1825),^[81] was taking place against the background of a great creative outburst in imaginative literature dominated at the time by the European Romanticism which tended to privilege both alienation and the aesthetic sphere. This constellation of circumstances contributed greatly to the transformation of Russian literature into a social institution that the "society" could claim in its entirety, for it did not owe it to anyone but itself.^[82] In the Durkheimian sense especially, the leading spokesmen of the educated society seized upon literature as an "encyclopaedia of Russian life," to use the famous phrase with which Vissarion Belinskii defined Eugene Onegin. However, apart from being a convenient ethno-social compendium, for the generations after Pushkin it served as the *Encyclope'die*--a revered secular *Summa* and a collection of exemplary paradigms of its place and time.^[83] Exacerbated by the general backwardness of the essentially peasant country and the inflexibility of the ancien régime, the rift between educated society and the state never healed. With time it became a three-way split, alienating one from the other: the educated upper and middle classes, the "people," meaning the lower strata of rural and urban life, and the increasingly decrepit but

still powerful autocracy. It was under these conditions that the lone "voluntary" and open institution of Russia continued to soak up and imitate some of those functions that other Western countries entrusted to the Church, political parties, schools, universities, and, of course, the press. Represented by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Turgenev, Chernyshevskii, Chekhov, to name the most famous, Russian literature appeared capable of holding the totality of Russian experience in its embrace. And it must appear as matter of course that Russian literature, a "paradigm" of Russian culture, had developed along the way its own pantheon of "holy men," consisting of authors and their protagonists and not unrelated to the traditional veneration of saints. Against this background, the decision Tolstoy made in 1881 to abandon "literature" in favor of propagating a new form of ethical spirituality by means of "unembellished" verbal structures would have had to be invented had it not taken place. In a way, Tolstoy's last three decades may be seen as an apotheosis of the seriousness of Russian literature and at the same time as its last global and unqualified success.

The expansion of the professions and of industry in the latter half of the nineteenth century and, after the Revolution of 1905, the dramatic easing of censorship, legalization of political parties and other voluntary associations as well as the high standards of public education for the middle and upper classes--all contributed to the rapidly growing differentiation of educated Russian society.[84] Especially those residing in either of the two capitals could enjoy the best of what the cosmopolitan pre-War Europe had to offer an educated man or woman living on a modest income, or even no income at all, as did Osip Mandelstam. When in 1910 Tolstoy escaped from his estate and shortly afterwards, like his Anna, died at a railroad station (for him a symbol of unwelcome modernity), his readers were aware that they might have lost, perhaps, the last Russian author with a "total" grasp.[85] The age of differentiation has commenced and, with it, the nagging questions about the special, all-embracing position of Russian letters.[86] "We used to be `prophets,'" Blok spoke wistfully about bygone days in his "On the Present State of Russian Symbolism" (1910) and contrasted that higher calling with the current, trivial "request to be `poets.'"[87] It might appear that charisma was flowing out of Russian poetry. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. There cannot be a better environment for the dispersal of charisma than the time when old convictions, while undermined, continue to exist side by side with new uncertainties.

Virtually in the same breath, Blok insisted that the "motherland" and society, or as he put it, "the people," found in poetry their highly focused paradigm. The "soul" of the Russian people and the "soul" of Russia were projected onto the microcosm of the poet's soul,[88] and in this sense, a poet could, of course, be seen as a holy man, his intense holiness derived from the dispersed holy of the native land and the people. Needless to say, not every one agreed. But when in the late 1910, Dmitrii Merezhkovskii ventured to express his doubts concerning Blok's claims on this privilege, Blok was ready with an unequivocal response which forced Merezhkovskii to withdraw his objections and offer an apology. "Motherland is akin to her son--man," Blok wrote in what he intended as an open letter to Merezhkovskii:

When she is healthy and at rest, her entire body becomes as sensitive as a healthy human body; not a single point is anesthetized; everything breathes, sees; she answers every blow by raising her head in anger; to every caress she responds tenderly and passionately. Her organs

of feelings are multifarious and their range is very great. Who, then, plays the role of the organs of this being, so like us and so dear?

The role of these organs is played and must be played by all people. As to us, writers, who are free from all but human obligations, we must play the role of the subtlest and most important organs of her feelings. We are not her blind instincts--we are her heartaches, her thoughts, ideas, the impulses of her will.[89]

In Place of a Biography

Do not forget me, torment me, but do
Give me a name, do give me a name:
It will be easier for me, you understand me,
In this pregnant and profound blue.
O. Mandelstam (1923)

It was against this ambiguous background of exalted expectations for poetry and poets and the fear that the time of great literature was passing away[90] that Mandelstam's first selection of poems appeared in a major journal--the August, 1910, issue of the Petersburg Apollon. Half a century or so later, typescript, amateur collections of his poetry, much of it heroically preserved by his widow, were furtively passed from hand to hand in Moscow and Leningrad while in the United States Boris Filippov and Gleb Struve were launching a multivolume edition of his writings. The major landmarks of these fifty or so years included: two great wars and an assortment of smaller ones; two major revolutions from below (February and October, 1917), one (the Stalin revolution) from above with its total mobilization, colossal construction, famine and the catastrophic proliferation of the Gulag, and eventually, after Stalin's death, the still incomplete "de-stalinization." The full brunt of these events fell on the shoulders of Mandelstam's generation, men and women born during the last decade of what in retrospect might appear as an innocent and civil age. Most of them were crushed by the colossal weight of the new, in Akhmatova's chilling definition, "not calendar but real twentieth century" and have disappeared into the anonymity of its "mass" graves.

But there were others, admittedly few, who, however glorious or inglorious their lives and deaths, managed to preserve their names or, better, managed to have their names closely associated with the image of their epoch.

[Russian text no. 7 here]

Some
stamp a lion on their coins,
Others--
a head;
Different copper, gold and bronze pancakes
Lie in the earth with equal honor.
The age, trying to crack them, has imprinted them with its
teeth.
Time is filing me down like a coin,
And I am no longer sufficient unto myself,
Not sufficient, not enough--and I am looking for
a comparison...

Mandelstam wrote these lines late in 1923, around the time he began working on his autobiography, and only halfway through the show that was his epoch. The part he had seen impressed him enough to turn it into it a vehicle for the poetic narrative of his own "personal" drama. Hence the title of his recollections: not a "story of my life" but *The Noise of Time*, sparely and emphatically. What there remained for Mandelstam to hear and see before his death in a concentration camp somewhere in the Far East in 1938 loomed larger still and was making, as it continued to move, a louder and crasser sound. "We live," goes one of his ambiguous descriptions of the epoch offered in 1922, "in the shadow of an unfinished temple dedicated to a deity yet unknown."^[91] And one does indeed have to strain one's eyes to keep the poet's personal biography in view, so thoroughly has it blended with the pall cast by the blessedly unfinished house of worship. Like the fact of his first name, the facts of his life were accidental--in themselves ordinary, if not trivial--and only retouched by the narrative of his readers' historical memory and the narrative patterns of his own art did they amount to what we, speaking casually, call a biography while having in mind something far more purposeful--a poet's "fate." That story, specifically, the childhood years, is well told by Mandelstam himself in his autobiographical *The Noise of Time* (1925) and admirably amplified and contextualized in the critical biography by Clarence Brown.^[92] What I would like to offer here is not so much an outline of Mandelstam's childhood and youth (with a small addendum on his life in the late 1920's) as a discussion of the typology that went into the composition of what by now is a well-known story. Events pertaining to the rest of Mandelstam's life will be invoked in subsequent chapters as we move from poem to poem.

Mandelstam was Jewish, went to the Tenishev School, and grew up in St. Petersburg. Now, to be born a Jew, as Mandelstam was, might not have meant much, if he and his age had not decided to dwell on it, however gingerly the one and however obsessively the other. Boris Pasternak, also a Jew and a poet of the same generation, did not make much of his ethnic origins, and in his case, too, the age seems to have chosen to let sleeping dogs lie.^[93] Nor was there anything extraordinary or unique about Mandelstam's family. Middle class, moderately well-off and settled in St. Petersburg, his parents tried and succeeded in giving their three boys (Osip was the oldest) a good education. All three graduated from one of St. Petersburg's more "progressive" schools, the Tenishev, where children of different social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds were more or less harmoniously mixed in pursuit of physical health, knowledge and civic virtue. The progressive aristocratic parents of another famous Russian author and Tenishev graduate, Vladimir Nabokov, would not have settled for

less. Nor would a Karaiti Jew, B. N. Sinani. This physician, who sat in council with the members of the terrorist section of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party sent his son Boris to the Tenishev school, where he and Osip Mandelstam were to strike an important and memorable friendship.

In Mandelstam's later reconstruction of his childhood, composed in the early 1920's, his family (more precisely, his parents, for about his siblings there was not a word) appeared as something fragile and insubstantial, a pair of interlopers pretending to belong to the St. Petersburg of the Russian Orthodox feast days and military parades. For what might have looked from the outside as a solid leather merchant's household--music lessons, French governesses, the dacha, instruction in the Talmud, private school for the boys--turned out to be a slap dash affair tossed about on Russia's uncertain seas overwhelmed by the "noise of time" whistling and clapping in the rigging. However true or false, this family portrait matched nicely with Mandelstam's metaphor of the deceptively decorous Imperial capital: a magnificent covering of pomp and circumstance thrown over the twitching body of the snorting and expiring Imperial "beast." [94] That the family was Jewish and lived in a country where the majority of their coreligionists were banished from central Russia by law [95] might or might not have been relevant as a feature of the family's life experience. In either case, the state's antisemitism made narrative sense, for it possessed all the satisfying attributes of "poetic justice" one might find in ethically balanced plot lines. For no matter how grotesquely and paradoxically, the family did mirror the state: as they tried to assimilate, unevenly and with hesitation, into the larger Russian life, the Mandelstams unwittingly recapitulated the ambiguous career of the "Petersburg Russia" as she attempted to "assimilate" into the community of Europe's better pedigreed states. Not unlike this "assimilated" European country, the assimilated Mandelstams were neither quite Jewish nor quite Russian -- two slate pads waiting to be erased and re-inscribed.

To the extent that the school reflected the interests and concerns of the capital city (public gatherings were often held in its capacious assembly hall [96]), Mandelstam found himself in a milieu where literature and politics formed the main preoccupations and were often hard to separate. There must have been other, we can imagine, romantic concerns, but about them he chose to say nothing. Russia--she was the elected bride, at least by retrospective intention. And it was in order to appeal to her that boys like Mandelstam read the *The Erfurt Program*, tempered their character and intellect according to the still risqué Herzen, and composed mystico-symbolic verse. "Metal shavings from the Obukhov Plant and the latest issue of *The Balance* both sitting under his desk, were the two items that defined the compass of his interests before he graduated from the Tenishev School. [97] The first was emblematic of the boy's politics (in substance vaguely Marxist, and in temperament heroically Socialist-Revolutionary [98]) and invoked one of St. Petersburg's more radical factories. There on March 2, 1907, the sixteen-year-old Mandelstam made a propaganda speech on the occasion of plaster falling from the ceiling of the State Duma--an innocent event, as it later turned out, which only resembled a possible plot of the sinister autocratic Government. [99] The other, "the most civilized journal" in Russia, in the words of one historian, [100] served since 1904 as the central organ for the expression of the Russian Symbolists' refined sensibility and profound sense.

It goes without saying that for those who, like Mandelstam, marched into impressionable adolescence in step with the decomposition of the old state and were propelled into their youth by the explosion of the 1905 revolution, a combination of these two interests may indeed have been a matter of course. Literature, the Russian tradition taught one to expect, would prophesy the cause which, according to the ideology of Russian populism, would be acted upon by the heroic martyrs.[101] Boris Savinkov, the mastermind of a series of political assassinations was also a rather fashionable author of modernist novels, published under the pen name Ropshin. Known to the S.R. underground as "the Poet," Ivan Kaliaev executed two of Savinkov's assassination plots, one leading to the death of the Minister of the Interior Pleve and the other, in which Kaliaev threw the bomb, the Grand Duke Sergei Aleksandrovich in 1905, and he, too, had cultivated a taste for modern literature. According to Savinkov, he particularly admired Blok, Briusov and Bal'mont who seem to have been integral to his political activity:

For those who knew him (Kaliaev) intimately, his love for art and love for the revolution were illuminated by the same flame-- unconscious, timid but profound and powerful religious feeling. He came to terrorism following his own, original route, seeing in it not only the best form of political struggle but also a moral, perhaps, religious sacrifice.[102]

In those heady days, one could travel in the opposite direction, too, as did Mandelstam's future mentor, the major Symbolist guru Viacheslav Ivanov, who proudly declared his membership in a group called the Mystical Anarchists.[103] How well Mandelstam understood this tradition and how powerfully it affected him! In the Chapter entitled "The Bookcase," he comes across the portrait of the poet Semen Nadson (1862-1887), the rage of his parents' generation, which provides him with a pretext for developing, albeit in the ironic mode, the singularly important charismatic theme. This passage, with its complex elaboration of the metaphor of "burning" is worth citing here at length.

The 1880's in Vilno as mother recalled them. It was everywhere the same: sixteen-year-old girls tried to read John Stuart Mill and at the public recitals one could see luminous personalities who--with a certain dense admixture of pedal, a fainting away on the piano passage, and blank features--played the latest thing of the leonine Anton. But what actually happened is that the intelligentsia with Buckle and Rubinstein and led by the luminous personalities--who in their beatific idiocy completely lost the way--resolutely turned to the practice of self-immolation. Like high tar-coated torches the adherents of the People's Will Party burned for all the people to see, with Sofia Perovskaia and Zheliabov, and all of them, all of provincial Russia and all of the students smouldered in sympathy: not one single green leaf was to be left.

Semen Afanasievich Vengerov, a relative of mine on my mother's side (the family in Vilno and school memories), understood nothing of Russian literature and studied Pushkin as a professional task, but

"one thing" he understood. His "one thing" was: the heroic character of Russian literature. He was a fine one with his heroic character when he would drag slowly along Zagorodnyi Prospekt from his apartment to the card catalogue, hanging on the elbow of his aging wife and smirking into his dense ant beard.[104]

All this was written by the man who admired Skriabin's "The Poem of Fire," tracing its sensibility to the self-immolation of the Russian Old Believers martyring themselves for Christ.[105]

Upon their graduation from the Tenishev School in the summer of 1907, Boris Sinani and Osip Mandelstam, both age sixteen, travelled to the village of Raivola, Finland, where, at a conspiratorial retreat, they applied for membership in the B. O., the Fighting (i.e., terrorist) Organization of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. For whatever reason (most likely their age), the boys' petition to join the ranks of those who "burned up" was rejected.[106] Soon afterwards Boris Sinani died, and Mandelstam set out on his first tour of Europe, which he spent largely in Paris, enjoying cafe life, composing, making friends among compatriots, attending the Sorbonne, and translating French poetry.[107] In Paris, he attended a memorial meeting for one of the founders of the S.-R. Party and a leader of the Fighting Organization, Gersh Gershuni, who "burned up" from lung cancer in a Zurich hospital on March 17, 1908. Mikhail Karpovich, who befriended Mandelstam in Paris recalled this occasion: . . . Gershuni died in Paris [sic] in the spring of 1908 and the S.-R.'s arranged a gathering in his memory. Mandelstam expressed the strongest desire to go there with me, but I don't think politics had anything to do with it. It was of course the personality and the fate of Gershuni that attracted him. The principle speaker was B. V. Savinkov. The moment he began to speak, Mandelstam sat bolt upright, got up from his seat, and listened to the whole speech standing in the aisle. He listened to it in a kind of trance, his mouth half open and his eyes half closed and his whole body leaning over so far backwards that I was even afraid he might fall. I must confess that he made a rather comic sight.[108]

The posture described by Karpovich strongly recalls Mandelstam's "trances" during his recitals.[109] "In the summer of 1908, having postponed his decision to enroll at Heidelberg, he returned to St. Petersburg to remain there till the summer of the following year. These ten or so months when the young man gave himself up to the intellectual and artistic life of the capital were decisive for Mandelstam's subsequent career as a poet. Perhaps most important, he was introduced to Viacheslav Ivanov and began visiting his "Tower," the literary salon in St. Petersburg and, in more ways than one, a true academy for the ple'iade of Mandelstam's generation.[110]

Among poets of Ivanov's stature, who were admittedly few, not one could rival him in erudition, authority and energy--the qualities which this man, who had studied with Mommsen (Roman History) and Saussure (Sanskrit),[111] combined to produce the most comprehensive "charismatic" program for poets and poetry in modern Russia.[112] Bringing together a post-Nietzschean mystical Christianity and the achievements of contemporary scholarship in philology, anthropology and comparative mythology[113] and integrating them into the populist ideology of the Russian intelligentsia (the sanctifying "seriousness" of the popular and archaic imagination)[114] and into the religious sensibility of his

contemporaries,[115] Ivanov was able to produce such a satisfying aesthetico-religious-political synthesis that a young man like Mandelstam could not but be stunned and seduced. Not only could most of the contradictions of contemporary Russian life find their resolution in Ivanov's all-embracing catholicity, but, most important, they could accomodate splendidly (too splendidly, perhaps) the wildest ambition of a young poet--to assume the role of a condensed representation of all that the society considered to be, in Durkheimian sense, serious and sacred. This calls for an illustration.

A letter Mandelstam wrote from Paris to V. V. Gippius (pen name Bestuzhev), a Symbolist poet and his Tenishev teacher of Russian literature, contains an intellectual self-portrait of Mandelstam a year before he came to know personally the author of *Guiding Stars* and, later, *Cor ardens*. The portion of this letter that I would like to cite here conveys succinctly what it meant for a young man to drift in the cross-currents of different, often conflicting ideological trends competing in the relative freedom of the post-1905 Russia. This is a sixteen-year-old Mandelstam, over-exposed to the grand solutions of the grand riddle of life and completely unsure about the type into which to cast his own Self at the moment. The letter was dated April 19, 1908.

I have always seen in you a representative of some dear and at the same time hostile principle, and, I have to add, it is precisely the ambiguity of this principle that constituted its charm.

Now I understand that this principle is nothing other than religious culture--whether Christian or not I do not know--but religious in any case.

Brought up in a nonreligious milieu (the family and school), I have long yearned for religion hopelessly and platonically--but with an ever-increasing self-awareness. My first religious experience goes back to my juvenile infatuation with the Marxist dogma and is inseparable from this infatuation.

But the bond linking religion and social issues was broken for me already in my childhood.

At the age of fifteen, I went through the purifying flame of Ibsen and, although I did not adhere to the religion of the will [Nietzsche?], I have taken the position of religious individualism [Lev Shestov] and against collectivism. . . .

Tolstoy and Hauptmann, the two greatest apostles of love of mankind, have been assimilated ardently but abstractly, as was the "philosophy of norm" [Neo-Kantianism: Cohen, Windelbandt]

My religious consciousness has never transcended Knut Hamsun and the worship of "Pan," that is, an unrealized [nesoznannyi] God, and to this day it constitutes my religion (O, do not worry, this is not "maeonism," and in general I have nothing in common with Minskii).

I have no definite feelings toward society, God and man--but because of this I,"love life, faith and love all the greater. . . ."[116]",

”

Whoever could put that kind of a house in order could not fail to gain a number of very interesting disciples among the young people who would continue to absorb and systematize what society's common sense could not assimilate or hold in abeyance. A little over a year later (June, 1909), after he had met Ivanov and been taken into the fold, Mandelstam appended the following declaration to a very brief note to the "very respected and dear Viacheslav Ivanovich:

Your seeds have fallen deep into my soul, and I take fright as I look at their enormous shoots. enormous shoots.

I cherish the hope of meeting you somewhere this summer.

Almost spoiled by you,

but straightened out,

Osip Mandelstam[117],

The relief from contradictions provided by Ivanov may not have been complete[118] but the friendship between the young man and his mentor lasted for years[119] and, what is more significant, the conceptual vocabulary that Ivanov imparted to Mandelstam was never entirely abandoned.[120]

A young poet torn between Nietzschean individualism and the deep populist yearning for a "catholic" or "symphonic" union (*sobornoe edinenie*) with the people, could breathe a sigh of relief after finding a comfortable footing in Ivanov's elaborate construct. So, too, could the poet who now found himself perplexed by the limitations of action and the questionable effectiveness of boundless thought, limitations of ethics as a form of religion and limitations of the available "institutional" religions as means of satisfying a deep spiritual need. For Ivanov, a lone poet, if he were a true "hermitage" poet (*keleinyi* poet), served as "the organ of popular [*narodnyi*] consciousness,"[121] and his poetry was efficacious, active, a true deed, like "a prayer of Brahmin." [122] One who felt dissatisfied with institutionalized religion but found atheism or agnosticism equally wanting (as did Mandelstam, together with many of his contemporaries), could also find relief in Ivanov's views. For the "given" of the contemporary religious experience of Christianity was, according to Ivanov, historically incomplete, waiting to be reunited with its other, suppressed but original half--the religion of Dionysus.[123] And it was the task of the "hermitage" poet to assume the heavy burden of reawakening this dormant truth in the mind of the people by invoking in his art the magic of symbol and myth.[124]

What a "hermitage" poet was to the thronging crowd, symbol was to myth, and myth was to the sacred collective consciousness of the people [*narod, der Volk*]. [125] Each member in this chain of relations differed from its preceding link by a higher degree of intensity and all contributed to the charismatic mana possessed by a poet--the *theurgos*, the

author, the creator--who has focused onto himself all of their intensity. Further, the theories of Viacheslav the Magnificent (as his admirers referred to him on occasion) provided a powerful antidote to the creeping toxins of "differentiation" that threatened to deprive Russian Literature and Poetry of their capital "L" and "P." The acknowledged crisis of the sacred permeating modern Russian society, including the realm of letters, needed only a minute grafting of Hegelian dialectics to be convincingly transformed into the prelude to an imminent and total sacralization. This was an operation that Ivanov performed with consummate skill.

Finally, Ivanov's teaching, however esoteric his work may seem to us, did not wonder far beyond the humanistic curriculum of a contemporary European university, which made the course work of a student like Mandelstam a relevant and rich source of material for poetry as well as a current and satisfying view of the world.[126] In life style, too, university learning and modernism made a happy alliance in Viacheslav Ivanov, for a student privileged enough to attend the famous nighttime vigils at the "Tower" stood a good chance of running into one of his instructors at the University of St. Petersburg.[127]

It would, of course, be misleading to limit Mandelstam's intellectual background to Viacheslav Ivanov alone. In the presence of Aleksandr Blok, Mikhail Kuzmin, Andrei Belyi, Innokentii Anneskii, Valerii Briusov, Zinaida Gippius, and, of course, the proto-Futurist movement, the literary life of the two capitals was too rich for one to be loyal to a single guru. Moreover, Ivanov's authority in the 1910s began to ebb. The question to what extent Ivanov shaped, or as scholars used to say, influenced Mandelstam may be an open question but one hardly argue that there was another body of literary texts associated with a single figure which was more heterogeneous and more inclusive of the contemporary ideological vocabulary than Ivanov's writings. For awhile and within the limited space of Petersburg's cultural elite, Ivanov represented a modernist "encyclopaedia of Russian life," and what better mentor could one find to learn the craft from and later (or even simultaneously) to individuate from and to attack.

For Mandelstam's generation, a period of apprenticeship was followed by a period of individuation which coincided with what has become known in the history of Russian literature as the "crisis of Symbolism." This series of critical debates concerning the nature of the Russian Symbolist movement culminated in the famous four-partite exchange, with Ivanov, Blok, and Belyi insisting on a sacred theurgist mission of the movement and Briusov, in a recent about-face, denying that anything but aesthetics had or would ever matter for a true Symbolist.[128] Putting the specifics of the agenda aside, the debate represented a clash not so much of scenarios for the future or the past of Symbolism as of discourses, and in this respect, there can be little doubt that the vocabulary of Viacheslav Ivanov had triumphed. Blok, the foremost poet at the time, acknowledged this in his talk, "On the Contemporary State of Russian Symbolism," delivered a week after Ivanov's statements. It was not a polite exaggeration when Blok referred to his own, for him crucially important address, as a Baedeker to the world that Viacheslav Ivanov had just mapped out in his "Testaments of Symbolism." The relations between the two poets soon soured, but for years to come Blok continued to indicate that his address was one of the two most significant essays that he had ever written.[129] He reprinted it without any changes as a separate brochure eleven years later.

An incident involving Valerii Briusov and Nikolai Gumilev, who at the time considered himself to be in Briusov's orbit, is even more instructive. Believing that he had the younger generation on his side,[130] Briusov must have been quite surprised to receive an endorsement of Blok's speech from his disciple Nikolai Gumilev. The future theoretician and founder of Acmeism, who was busy preparing a revolt against the diktat of Ivanov,[131] saw in Blok's variations on the theme from the "Testament" of the Magnificent Viacheslav a form in which he could accept Ivanov's central notion of art as theurgy, if not through symbol, then myth.[132] And even if the style that the Acmeists, particularly Gumilev and Mandelstam, would later advocate was relatively sober and better "balanced" between this and the other mysterious world, the two were never prepared to give up the global claims for poetry which bore a recognizable imprint of Ivanov's old program. In fact, not only the Acmeists but Futurists, too, defined themselves in opposition to the "theurgist" Symbolism, while keeping the substantial portion of the lofty vocabulary intact.[133] It is this type of indirect acknowledgement that speaks volumes about the importance of Ivanov's writings for the contemporary discourse on poetry. The "ideas came from Viacheslav Ivanov himself," Mandelstam was prepared to acknowledge in the early 1920's, defining the properly Acmeist and indirectly the Futurist achievement as the introduction into Russian poetry of a new "taste." [134]

Mandelstam was not present at the debates around the Crisis of Symbolism, although he followed them with great interest. During the fall and winter of 1909-10 he was studying Romance languages and philosophy at Heidelberg. One more year would pass before he established himself as a student at the University of St. Petersburg. The activities and landmarks during this intervening year included the first publication in the *Apollon*, literary politics around the journal,[135] the "Academy of Verse," the Poets' Guild,[136] meetings at the St. Petersburg Religious-Philosophical Society,[137] and further (albeit unsuccessful) attempts to publish his poetry in *Russkaia mysl'*. [138] And baptism. Whatever else Mandelstam's baptism might have meant, it assured him of matriculating at the University of St. Petersburg. [139] Enigmatically, he was baptized not as a Russian Orthodox, which, perhaps, might have carried the stigma of capitulation before the religious intolerance of the state, nor as a Roman Catholic, however much he felt fascinated by its Mediaeval glory, but as a member of the Finnish Methodist Church. [140] Given the position of the Methodists in the religiously intolerant Russian Empire, they were an unlikely choice for someone in search of a fictitious Baptismal certificate, which suggests that Mandelstam's baptism was more of a conversion than a pro forma ceremony for a Russian Jew seeking to enroll at the University of St. Petersburg. Be that as it may, Methodism never surfaced in his art, unless one wishes to locate it in the poet's abundant enthusiasm,[141] whereas both Roman Catholicism and Russian Orthodoxy played a significant role in the "narrative" of his life.

With the publication of his poetry in *Apollon*, the "mute" years of Mandelstam's life come to an end, and whatever we know about his life henceforth becomes completely inseparable from his prose and poetry.

Issue no. 9 of *Apollon*, which I received today, contains five poems by a young lyric poet Joseph [sic] Emilievich Mandelstam whose acquaintance I made in Hanko" [Finland] in July of the current year. . . . Mandelstam is very young: he is 20 or 21. He graduated from the

Tenishev School and subsequently went to Heidelberg University (as a Jew, he could not enter the University of St. Petersburg), where for half a year he studied Romance languages. At the Tennishev, he was either an S.-R. or an S.-D., and even made an inflammatory speech before the workers of his district Now he is ashamed of his previous revolutionary activity and considers it his calling to pursue the career of a lyric poet.[142]

So wrote an older friend of Mandelstam, Sergei Pavlovich Kablukov, when he made an entry in his diary on August 18, 1910, which might as well be considered to be, if we paraphrase Clarence Brown, the birthday of Mandelstam the poet. At least for the purposes of the present study, there was no other Mandelstam. It is for this reason that in order to understand his place in modern Russian culture, I shall focus on his identity as a "Russian poet," more specifically, on the narrative of self-presentation--the way he shaped his Self in his gesture and art.

Such an approach is justified even when it involves the second half of the 1920's when Mandelstam's Muse fell silent or, to be precisem, when he ceased to compose poetry. For these were not altogether "mute" years. Both his autobiographical prose, *The Noise of Time* (1925) and his novella "The Egyptian Stamp" (1928) were an event in modern Russian prose, even if they were marked by self-mockery on the part of the once loftily charismatic poet. For Mandelstam, as for other poets of his generation, this period, roughly between 1924 and 1929, was a time of changing landmarks. The perplexing Russian society of the New Economic Policy (NEP) period, with its conflicting value systems, the difficulty of earning a living by literary free-lancing, and finally, the appearance of a new generation of readers and writers with different expectations and tastes, greatly attenuated the "centrality" of poetry. To add insult to injury, Mandelstam, whose earnings from writing had never amounted to a reliable income, had to undertake money-making literary projects (editing and translating) in order to earn a living, it would seem, for the first time in his life. The charisma of poetry, as it had taken shape over the preceding century was, needless to say, inimical to that kind of enterprising activity. According to the memoirs of the poet's widow to whom we owe, as it were, the canonical view of Mandelstam, these were not, to say the least, the most glorious years of her husband's career.[143]

It was only in the 1930's, with the institution of strict controls over literature, that the state began to provide an economic cushion for the officially recognized but nevertheless free-lance authors. By contrast under the NEP, the relative autonomy of literature from the state went hand in hand with the economic insecurity for writers and poets. Together with the shift of poetry from the center to the periphery of the culture, these not entirely personal reasons could not but affect the choice of style and form, and in *The Egyptian Stamp* in particular, Mandelstam switched from the high gear of an almost mystical identification with the age to the low gear of a historicizing, ironic prose narrative. One could no longer write, as Mikhail Zoshchenko once put it, as though nothing had happened.[144] This was true for lyric poetry as much as prose fiction.[145]

The poet's choice was to disappear from the scene or to start looking for new paths.[146] In *The Egyptian Stamp*, Mandelstam went as far as to jettison those parts of his

former self -- instinctive intelligentsia humanity and no less instinctive attachment to "culture" of ballets and operas at the Mariinskii, the gestures of a bungler and "weakling" -- that might possibly brand him as a "has been" or, in the parlance of the day, a "carryover" from the antedeluvian Tsarist period (perezhitok).[147] It was one such "carryover," a Populist litterateur A. G. Gornfel'd, who in 1928 accused Mandelstam of literary piracy. Apparently through no fault of Mandelstam, Gornfel'd's pre-1917 translation of de Coster appeared under the name of Mandelstam, who had only served as editor (see chapters 7 and 8 as well as the Appendix). As Nadezhda Mandelstam suggested decades later, this ultimately wrongful accusation and the travails Mandelstam went through to clear his name helped him to regain his "sense of his inner certitude" without which he could not function as a poet.[148] Or, we might say, the painful experience allowed him once again to counterpose himself to, and hence to identify with, the entire world -- the fundamental source of strength for a charismatic poet. The rapidly growing polarization of society further amplified Mandelstam's estrangement from the community of writers, raising a personal misfortune to the level of an objective correlative.

Upon his return to Moscow from an extended tour of Armenia in 1930, things slowly began to fall into place. Before long, Mandelstam was able to reestablish in his life a bohemian equilibrium and to resume the lifestyle of a charismatic poet, something that he found difficult to sustain under the materialist NEP. His continuing estrangement from the writers' establishment formed one part of the equilibrium, and it was counterbalanced by the privileged status he was able to enjoy thanks to his friends in high places. His chief patron, Nikolai Bukharin, who admired Mandelstam's art and was still a powerful figure in the Party hierarchy, was able to arrange for the poet a special state pension which, although meager monetarily, entitled him to such pleasantries as free public transportation and, no minor matter in a famine stricken country, food privileges reserved for the very important servants of the state.[149] In addition to this already extraordinary gift, the Mandelstams moved into their own apartment, a true luxury in those very difficult years.[150] Whatever label one might wish to put on that literary skandal that the Mandelstams ironically christened the "Dreyfus Affair,"[151] it prepared him well for the decade to come. The resumption of total mobilization in the Stalin Revolution and the accompanying cult of the supreme leader changed the contradictory and, many thought, complacent pluralism of the NEP years,[152] inaugurating a period in which a poet of cultivated singularity and charismatic tradition could go on producing lyric poetry of high seriousness or perish in a concentration camp, or, as happened to Mandelstam, do both.

There is a 1913 poem by Mandelstam which he originally intended to call "The Palace Square," referring to the square before the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. Knowing what we know now about Mandelstam's life and death, it reads almost like an outline of his future. But if we look at it from the vantage point of 1913, it appears as a thematic variation on the charismatic tradition of Russian poetry and poets. Shaped in the form of a poetic prayer, it consists of only two stanzas. In the first Mandelstam sets up the historical props which in the second will begin to look like the shadows thrown by the praying poet.

[Russian text no. 8 here]

The rabble's asleep! The square's arch is yawning.
The moonlight's spilt all over the bronze door.
Here dreamed the Harlequin about his brilliant glory,
And Alexander here was gored and stomped on by the beast.

The chimes of time and the shadows of the Tsars...
You, Russia, who rest on stone and blood,
To partake of your iron punishment
Even in heaviness, do give me your blessing![153]

There is magic in such "answered prayers," the kind of magic that tradition associates with the poetic word--it heals, it casts a spell, it prophesies. And just as one does not have to believe in Santa Claus in order to expect receiving a coveted item as a Christmas present, one need not believe in the magic of the word in order to continue expecting and sometimes receiving from poets a coveted assurance that they indeed possess the extraordinary gift and would share it with us, if only on rare and special occasions. How was it possible for Mandelstam or, for that matter, any poet of his stature, to attract to himself so much "mana"? A question of this sort requires many different, complementary answers, each focusing on a certain aspect of the culture in which the gift and the proofs of its extraordinary nature are displayed and recognized. The answer offered in this study involves an examination of Mandelstam's mythologies[154] of self-presentation in relation to larger narrative patterns of Russian culture which provided the lexicon and the grammar as well as the outer frame for the poet's oeuvre.

Abbreviations

I have used the following abbreviations in source citations:

IAN -- Izvesyia Akademii nauk SSSR. Seriiia literatury
i iazyka

IJLP -- International Journal of Linguistics and Poetics

KO -- Innokentii Annenskii, *Knigi otrazhenii*

LN -- *Literaturnoe nasledstvo*

NM 1 -- Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Vospominaniia*

NM 2 -- Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Vtoraia kniga*

PiR -- Pechat' i revoliutsia (Leningrad)

RL -- Russian Literature (Amsterdam)

RM -- Russkaia mysl' (Moscow)

SP -- *Sobranie proizvedenii* (Collected Works)

SS -- *Sobranie sochinenii* (Collected Works)

SEEJ -- Slavic and East European Journal

SH -- Slavica Hierosolymitana

TODRL -- Trudy Otdela drevne-russkoi literatury

Instituta russkoi literatury Akedemii nauk SSSR (Pushkinskogo doma)

VRSKhD -- Vestnik russkogo studencheskogo khristianskogo dvizheniia (Le Messenger)

NOTES

[1]V. L'vov-Rogachevskii, *Russko-evreiskaia literatura*, with an intro. by B. Gorev, "Russkaia literatura i evrei," Moscow, 1922, pp. 103-129.

[2]Peter Brown, "The Saint as Exemplar in Late Antiquity," *Representations* 1, no. 2 (1983):19ff.

[3]See the Chapter entitled "Knizhnyi shkaf" (The Bookcase) in Mandelstam's *Shum vremeni* (The Noise of Time), SS 2:56ff. See also C. Brown's (1973) discussion of the poet's father, Emilii Veniaminovich Mandelstam. See further the discussion of the poet's family in NM 2, pp. 568-78.

[4]Cf. Gogol's "The Overcoat," specifically the scene of Akakii's birth and christening.

[5]Cf. also Marina Tsvetaeva's frequent fashioning of herself as Maryna Mnizsek. For name symbolism in Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* and a polemic concerning its significance, see Edmund Wilson, "Legend and Symbol in *Doctor Zhivago*," in his *The Bit Between My Teeth: A Literary Chronicle of 1950-1965* (New York, 1965), pp. 447ff.; Mary F. Rowland and Paul Rowland, *Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago* (Carbondale, 1967), pp. 10ff.; Henry Gifford, *Pasternak: A Critical Study* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 191ff. See also N. Iu. Griakalova, "Fol'klornye traditsii v poezii Anny Akhmatovoi," *Russkaia literatura* 25, no 1 (1982).

[6]In this way, Joseph distinguished himself from the "wise men magicians" (Gen., 41:8) for whom Egypt had been famous all the way into the Renaissance (viz. Hermes Trismegistus). See Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London, 1964), pp. 1-20. By implication, these professional diviners did not attribute their skill to the "spirit of God" (Gen., 41:16 and 38), but to themselves or some minor demons. On the other hand, the whole hermetic thematism of the Joseph legend seems to be related to the Egyptian culture of the occult, since the divinatory motifs are in general underplayed in the Old Testament. Apparently God addressed His chosen people directly, thus obviating the need for divination. See "Divination" in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (New York, 1961).

[7]In Weber's system of classification, charismatic authority represents a form of power related to and distinguished from the other two "ideal types," namely: traditional authority, based on the "eternal yesterday" ("Politics as a Vocation") and the rational-legal type characterized by systematic regularity and professionalism. In preparing this study I have relied on the following editions of Max Weber: H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (New York, 1958), S. N. Eisenstadt, ed., *Max Weber on Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago, 1968). I shall refer to the former as *Essays* and to the latter as *Charisma*. I have also found helpful the exposition of Weber's thought by Reinhardt Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (New York, 1960).

[8]Weber, *Charisma*, p. 49. For a discussion of a symbiosis of the traditional and charismatic types of domination see R. Bendix, "Max Weber's Sociology Today," *International Social Science Journal* 17 (1965):19-20. See also note 11 below.

[9]Weber, *Charisma*, p. 48.

[10]I have in mind Durkheim's distinction between the "sacred" and the "profane" as fundamental to any form of religion and, therefore, to all cultures. Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. from the French by Joseph Ward Swain (New York, 1915), pp. 52-63. "Sacredness," in whatever form, gets attributed to the "central." See Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago, 1975), e.g., p. 263. For a discussion of this

confluence of the Weberian and the Durkheimian frameworks, see S. N. Eisenstadt's *Introduction to Charisma*, pp. xli-xlv.

[11]In developing Weber's thinking, Edward Shils writes: "The need for order and a fascination of disorder persist, and the charismatic propensity is a function of the need for order. The generator or author of order arouses the charismatic responsiveness. Whether it be God's law or natural law or scientific law or positive law or the society as a whole, or even a particular corporate body of institutions like the army, whatever embodies, expresses or symbolizes the essence of an ordered cosmos or any significant sector thereof awakens the disposition of awe and reverence, the charismatic disposition. Men need an order within which they can locate themselves, an order providing coherence, continuity, justice." Edward Shils, "Charisma, Order and Status," in Shils (1975), p. 261. For case studies making use of Shils's theory, see, i.a., Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings and Charisma," in *Culture and its Creators*, eds. J. Ben David and T. N. Clarke (Chicago, 1977), pp. 150-171 (reprinted in Geertz, *Local Knowledge*) and Peter Brown (note 2). A discussion of the contribution to the concept of charisma made by Edward Shils and Clifford Geertz can be found in S. N. Eisenstadt's *Introduction to Charisma*, pp. xxii-xli.

[12]Shils (1975), pp. 3-16 and 257ff.

[13]Weber, *Charisma*, p. 49ff.

[14]Cor. 12:8-11, Rom. 12. Related and sometimes vitually identical terms in the Bible include: "favor," "grace," "the spirit of God." All are divine gifts. For a more detailed discussion see "Grace" in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2nd ed. (London, 1977). Max Weber's own notion of charisma, as he repeated acknowledged (Weber, *Essays*, p. 246), originated in a discussion of charismatic leadership and organization in the early Christian Church by Rudolph Sohm, *Kirchenrecht*. See Bendix, *Max Weber: an intellectual portrait*, p. 325n.

[15]Shils (1975) p. 258ff. ,

[16]Weber, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

[17]Weber, *Essays*, pp. 248-50.

[18]*Ibid.* ,

[19]On estrangement as a condition of holiness in the late Antique society of the Mediterranean, see Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," in *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, pp. 115-29. The experience was not at all irrelevant to the Russian Orthodox institution of "starchestvo" (*ibid.*, p. 152), as any reader of Dostoevskii would readily recognize. In fact, one of the first Russian Symbolists, Aleksandr Dobroliubov (1876-1944?), a legendary and important figure, became one such "holy man." In the late 1890's, he became a novice at the Solovetskii Monastery and later on founded a sect of "Free Christians" among the Volga peasants known as "Dobroliubovtsy." See A. Belyi, *Nachalo veka* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1933), pp. 363-364, and P. Pertsov, *Literaturnye vospominaniia* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1933), pp. 237-40. Dobroliubov was a major influence in the early career of Briusov and an old friend and spiritual "guide" of Mandelstam's teacher of Russian literature, V. V. Gippius. See E. V. Ivanova, "Valerii Briusov i Aleksandr Dobroliubov," *IAN* 40, no. 3 (1981):255-73, and V. V. Gippius's

autobiographical narrative poem *Lik chelovecheskii* (Petersburg and Berlin, 1922), Canto 3:28ff and 40ff.

[20]This recollection refers to Mandelstam's recital of his poetry in Petrograd, in the winter of 1920. Nadezhda Pavlovich, "Vospominaniia ob Aleksandre Bloke," in *Blokovskii sbornik. Trudy nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi izucheniiu zhizni i tvorchestva A.A. Bloka* Tartu State University (Tartu, 1964), p. 472. Cf. the impressions of Vladimir Veidle (Weidle') who found Mandelstam's manner of recitation "ridiculous." "O poslednikh stikhakh Mandel'shtama," *Vozdushnye puti* 2 (1961):70.

[21]*Blok Sobranie sochinenii* 7, p. 371. Significantly, "Venetian Life," the poem that particularly struck Blok has discernible echoes of the Joseph legend. See Chapter 5.

[22]"O sovremennom sostoianii" reprinted in 1918. Blok's usage of the word artist, which in Russian carries primarily the ambivalent connotation of a performing artist, was a mark of highest praise and appreciation of a poet's talent for conveying the "serious" ineffable. Cf. also: "Thoughtful and careful, he [Blok] called the poem read by Mandelstam 'artistic.'" V. A. Zorgenfrei, "A. A. Blok," *Zapiski mechtatelei* 6 (1922):148. In "Iskusstvo i revoliutsiia" (Art and Revolution, 1918), Blok wrote that history would "destroy the age old lie of civilization [the profane vs, the sacred "culture"] and elevate people to the height of artistic mankind." SS 6:22. See P. Gromov (1966), p. 380. For a different reading of this characterization see NM 2:378 and note 85 in Chapter V.

[23]S. Adrianov, professor of Russian Literature at the University of St. Petersburg, cited Blok's drama, *Roza i krest*, as convincing evidence of Russia's spiritual recovery. See his "Roza i krest' A. Bloka," *Vestnik Evropy* 11 (1913):385. A similar view was expressed by Viacheslav Ivanov (see LN 92, bk. 3, p. 397). See also S. Bernshtein, "Golos Bloka" (1920, 1977), in *Blokovskii sbornik*, vol. 2 (Tartu, 1977).

[24]S. T. Aksakov, *Istoriia moego znakomstva s Gogolem*, in S. Mashinskii, ed., *Gogol' v vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Moscow, 1952), p.119ff.

[25]"Maiakovskii recited [his poem] once again but towards the end, he again slid into the shamanistic incantations [shamanskii zaklinaniia]." From the diary of A. Lazarevskii (June 21, 1915), cited in V. Katanian, *Maiakovskii: Literaturnaia khronika* (1961), p. 72.

[26]Regarding the contemporaries' response to Mandelstam, see note 65.

[27]O. Mandelstam, "Utro akmeizma" (The Morning of Acmeism, 1913). SS 2, p. 321. See also Mandelstam's invocation of glossolalia in "Slovo i kul'tura" (1921), SS 2, p. 227.

[28]A juxtaposition of poetry recitals in Russia with the tradition of magical healing, soothsaying and transcendent communication which relies on trance states will make an instructive study. See Felicitas D. Goodman *Speaking in Tongues; a Cross-Cultural Study of Glossolalia* (Chicago, 1972), and her *Trance, Healing, and Hallucination* (New York, 1974). See also note 65 below.

[29]Quoted in C. Brown, p. 129. For an interpretation of Pasternak's remark see L. Fleishman, *Pasternak v dvadtsatye gody* (Munich, n.d.), p. 327ff. See also Henry Gifford, "Mandelstam and Pasternak: The Antipodes," in *Russian and Slavic Literature*, ed. R. Freeborn, R. R. Miller-Gulland, Ch. A. Ward (Cambridge, England, 1976), pp. 376-86.

[30]L. Ginzburg, "Iz starykh zapisei," in *her O Starom i novom* (Leninrad, 1983), p. 354 ("Poety").

[31]Cf. a similar characterization of another poet, this time during the "bourgeois," NEP period (1926). "She [Akhmatova] has the demeanor of an ex-queen at a bourgeois resort." L. Ginzburg (1983), p. 373. And further, after having been greeted by Akhmatova's slight nod: "Her gesture came out well, it corresponded to that historico-literary need for adulation [blagogovenie] which I experience in relation to her." *Ibid.*

[32]Nadezhda Mandelstam, despite her sober

attitude to Khlebnikov makes a point of telling how Mandelstam, hardly a pragmatist himself, had once taken care of the other-wordly, helpless Khlebnikov by demanding that Nicholas Berdiaev (then the chairman of the Writers' Union) provide a room of "at least six square meters" for "the world's greatest poet before whom all world poetry pales." *NM* 2, p. 107ff. This anecdote may suggest that Pasternak's characterization of Mandelstam in 1932 as the "second Khlebnikov" did not emerge altogether spontaneously but had been cultivated for a long time and had a wider currency.

[33]On the institution of the "fools in Christ," *iurodivye* which commenced in Byzantium with St. Symeon the Holy Fool (7th century) see among the more recent works N. Challis and H. W. Dewey, "The Blessed Fools of Old Russia," *Jahrbuch fu"r Geschichte Osteuropas* 22 (1974):1-11.

[34]Roman Jakobson, "On a Generation that Squandered Its Poets" (1931), in *Major Soviet Writers: Essays in Criticism*, ed. Edward J. Brown (Oxford, 1973), p. 9. Jakobson's essay made a deep impression on Mandelstam, eliciting from him an exclamation: "It is written with a Biblical might!" ("Ona napisana s bibleiskoi moshch'iu!"). See Hugh McLean, "Smert' Vladimira Maiakovskogo" (Rev.), *Slavic Review* 36, no. 1 (1977): 155. Biblical might, indeed, and not in the figurative sense alone. See also Iu. Tynianov, "O Khlebnikove" (1928): "Khlebnikov's biography--a biography of a poet outside the literature of books and magazines, who is happy in his own way, in his own way unhappy, complex, a 'recluse' and an extravert--ended terribly. It [the biography] is associated with his poetic persona." Tynianov (1965), p. 298.

[35]Unpublished memoirs of Pavel Miturich. Among other things, Miturich believed that Khlebnikov was victimized by the Maiakovskii-Brik menage.

[36]"Avtoportret." See also the memoir portraits of Mandelstam in Il'ia Erenburg (1961), Nikolai Chukovskii (1964), Vsevolod Rozhdestvenskii (1958), Sergei Makovskii (1962). For a discussion of the memoir record of Mandelstam's appearance see C. Brown (1973), pp. 49-52.

[37]O. Mandelstam, "The Egyptian Stamp" (1928).

[38]M. Tsvetaeva, *Poema kontsa* (1924, 1926), end of Part 12. See S. Karlinsky *Marina Cvetaeva*, pp. 212- 14.

[39]NM2, p.

[40]SS 1:141 ("Net, nikogda nichei ia ne byl sovremennik") Line four is a periphrasis of Lermontov's: "No I am not Byron, I am another one,/ A chosen who is yet unknown,/ Like him, a wanderer being chased by the world/ But one with a Russian soul." Cf. Byron's "I was born for opposition." The second stanza is based on a complex allusion to Gogol's story "Vii" about an iron demon of retribution with giant eyelids whose gaze brought death to those in his view. The poem is discussed in Chapter VII.

[41]Few people note when citing these goulishly pleasing words that Gumilev's tragic execution--whether he did or did not participate in the so-called Tagantsev conspiracy--had nothing to do with his poetry. On the contrary, his best chance for surviving the summary justice of the Cheka rested on his fame as one of Russia's foremost poets.

[42]This attitude, which goes back to Nikolai Gogol's short essay on Pushkin ("Neskol'ko slov o Pushkine," *Arabeski*), was "codified" in Dostoevskii's "Pushkin Speech." In Mandelstam's time, its proponents included Viacheslav Ivanov (i.a., his "Poet i chern") and the poet who both cultivated it and benefited from it the most, Aleksandr Blok (see, i.a., his "Sud'ba pisatel'ia," "O naznachanii poeta," "Katilina") The Formalist critics began discussing the problem of a "poet's biography" as a "literary fact" following the death of Aleksandr Blok. See Iu. Tynianov, "Litso" (1921), in Tynianov (1977), B. Eikhenbaum, "Sud'ba Bloka" (1921), in *Ob Aleksandre Bloke* (Petrograd, 1921), B. Tomashevskii, "Literatura i biografiia," *Kniga i revoliutsiia* 4 (1923): 6-9. Jakobson's essay on Maiakovskii, "O pokolenii, rastrativshem svoikh poetov," may be seen as a culmination of this discussion in so far as it combines both the "religious" and the "scholarly" aspects of the traditional cult of the poet. More recently, the problem was addressed, i.a., by L. Ginzburg in her study *O lirike* (2nd ed., Leningrad, 1974), specifically, in Chapter III, "Problema lichnosti."

[43]My thinking on this issue has been influenced considerably by R. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore and London, 1977). See especially, Chapter X, "The Gods, the Dead, the Sacred, and Sacrificial Substitution."

[44]Vl. Maiakovskii, "Sergeiu Eseninu" (1926).

[45]L. Fleishman, "O gibeli Maiakovskogo kak 'literaturnom fakte,'" *Slavica Hierosolymitana* 4 (1979):126-30.

[46]"On a Generation That Squandered Its Poets" (1931), p. 9.

[47]Iu. Tynianov, "O literaturnom fakte." Nadezhda Mandelstam recalled that Tynianov had once suggested to her that she "organize" Mandelstam's biography according to the principle he had outlined in "O literaturnom fakte" (NM 2, pp. 368). If such a conversation did indeed

taken place, it must have been on that rare occasion when the sense of humor happened to abandon Nadezhda Mandelstam.

[48]"Vek" (1923), SS 1:145. The poem is discussed in detail detail in Chapter VI.

[49]Her reference is to O. Mandelstam, "Chetvertaia proza."

[50]Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (New York and London, 1915), p. 236ff., 465.

[51]Geertz, "Ideology as a Symbolic System," in *Interpretation of Cultures*.

[52]Durkheim, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 238.

[54]SS 2, p. 320. See the epigraph above.

[55]"In the first place, it is easy to see that the elements by which the wish-fulfilment is expressed are represented with special intensity." S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1965), p. 365. In terms of Freud's energetics, the locus of the greatest repression is locus of the greatest intensity ("damning up" in need of "discharging"). The ultimate, paradigmatic intensity is associated with the Oedipus complex: "the beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge in the Oedipus complex." (*Totem and Taboo* [1913], SE 13, p. 156.) I have added the emphasis to point to the Oedipus as a symbolic nexus, not cause--a caveat in keeping with Freud's own stated intention (see the opening of Chapter Four). It is worth noting that Freud used Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* when composing the last chapter of *Totem and Taboo*. (p. 147).

[56]Cf. Khlebnikov's numerology cum astrology in *Doski sud'by* and N. Gumilev's "Slovo" (1920): "A dlia nizkoi zhizni byli chisla, Kak domashnii pod"iaremnyi skot, Potomu chto vse ottenki smysla umnoe chislo peredaet."

[57]Cf. Max Weber's fear of rationalization of social life in his "Politics as a Vocation."

[58]These metaphors come from Thomas Carlyle's characterization of Voltaire which were used as an epigraph to one of the first modernist declarations in Russia, N. M. Minskii's treatise *In the Light of Conscience* (*Pri svete sovesti*). Comparing a hero to a

star, Carlisle maintained that if egoism were the only driving force of human action and interaction, people "would, by and by, diffuse themselves over space, and constitute a remarkable Chaos, but no habitable solar of stellar system." N. M. Minskii (N. M. Vilenkin), *Pri svete sovesti*, 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1897), p. 130.

[59]Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Symbolic System," in *Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1973), pp. 193-233, especially, pp. 207, 220, 231.

[60]In the interest of avoiding unnecessary confusion, a disclaimer might be in order. I am far from suggesting that literature "reflects" or even "refracts" anything in society, or that it relates to society in the same way as the icing on the surface of the cake relates to its base, or that it is an autonomous, self-generated and self-consuming endeavor. Rather, at least as far as the Mandelstam phenomenon is concerned, I approach literature as one of many significant forms of communal symbolic activity (institutional religion, political ideology are examples of others). Together and more or less mutually defined, they make up a society's symbolic culture, that is to say, its view and sanction of itself. See Geertz, "Art as a Cultural System," in his *Local Knowledge* (New York, 1983), pp. 94-120 (especially, p. 99) and "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," *ibid.*, pp. 121-146. A stimulating discussion of this issue may also be found in Kenneth Burke's *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, in his *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, 3d ed. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1973), pp. 1-137. For a review of approaches to the problem of literature and society, particularly as it relates to Russia, see W. M. Todd III, "Introduction," in W. M. Todd III, ed. *Literature and Society in Imperial Russia: 1800-1914*, pp. 1-5.

[61]S. N. Bernshtein is reputed to have been the first to deliver a paper of Saussure's *Cours*. A. A. Kholodovich, "O 'Kurse obshchei lingvistiki' F. de Sossiura," in F. de Saussure, *Trudy po iazykoznaniiu*, trans. from French and ed., A. A. Kholodovich (Moscow, 1977), p. 28n.

[62]S. N. Bernshtein, "Golos Bloka," prepared for publication by A. Ivich and G. Superfin, *Blokovskii sbornik II. Trudy Vtoroi nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi izucheniiu zhizni i tvorchestva A. A. Bloka* (Tartu, 1972), pp. 454-527 (quotation is from p. 458). Hereafter referred to as "Golos Bloka." The article was to be included in a posthumous collection

of essays on Blok, *Ob Aleksandre Bloke* (Petersburg, 1921), but the collection appeared without it because the accompanying charts and diagrams required better printing facilities than were available at the time. Since then, fragments of the study, as Ivich and Superfin note, have been appearing in the publications of the author and his students.

[63]E. J. Brown, *The Proletarian Episode in Russian Literature: 1928-1932* (New York, 1953).

[64]"Mandelstam's 'holy foolishness' [iurodstvo] is a sacrifice of the every-day appearance of a human being. This means that not a single granule of the effort of his will is spent outside his poetic work . . . Everything has gone into it, and for the realm of every-day life, there has remained an eccentric man with unregulated desires, a 'madman.'" Lidiia Ginzburg, "Iz starykh zapisei," in her *O starom i novom* (Leningrad, 1982), p. 413.

[65]Contemporaries were attuned to Mandelstam's reliance on attributes of verbal magic, qualifying his poetry as "shamanistic," "exorcist," "prayer-like," or "spell-binding" (in the etymological sense). "Osip Mandelstam used to come here [the Petersburg bohemian cabaret "The Wandering Dog"], with his narrow head of an aged youth thrown backward; he used to pronounce the lines of his verse as though he were an apprentice who had learned a mighty spell." Viktor Shklovskii, *Zhili- Byli, Sobranie sochinenii*, 2 vols., vol. 1: *Rasskazy i povesti*

(Moscow, 1973), p. 84. "He sang like a shaman possessed by visions." This is about Mandel'shtam's reading at the "Prival komediantov" in 1917. Elena Tager, "O Mandel'shtame," *Novyi zhurnal* 85 (1965):184. ". . . Mandelstam's nostalgic spells: 'Remain foam, Aphrodite,...'" Benedikt Livshits, *Polutoroglazyi strelets* (New York, 1978). Similar statements may be found in Vladimir Piast, *Vstrechi* (Moscow, 1929), p. 157, and Georgii Ivanov, *Peterburgskie zimy* (New York, 1952), p. 120. Blok's well-known impression of Mandel'shtam's performance in 1918 belongs to the same genre and resembles closely a description of a shamanistic performance. Cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), p. 140ff. See also Andrew Welsh, *Roots of Lyric: Primitive Poetry and Modern Poetics* (Princeton, 1978), Chapters VI and VII; and Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, 1960), especially Chapter V. For a discussion of verbal magic as an element of Mandelstam's poetics see Omry Ronen, "Osip Mandel'shtam: An Ode and an Elegy" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1976), p. 8ff and elsewhere. See also his "An Introduction to Mandel'shtam's Slate Ode and 1 January 1924" (note 25). There was nothing idiosyncratic in this aspect of Mandel'shtam's poetry. Among his contemporaries, Sologub, Bal'mont, Belyi, Blok, not to speak of Gumilev and Khlebnikov took a special interest in the "magic of words." Scholarly interest in the problem, too, was quite intense. For a review of contemporary scholarship on the folk uses of verbal magic see V. P. Petrov, "Zagovory," *Iz istorii russkoi sovetskoi fol'kloristiki*, ed. A. A. Gorelov (Leningrad, 1981), pp. 77-142.

[66]Discussed in Wayne A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians: The Social World of the Apostle Paul* (New Haven, 1983), pp. 172-4 and elsewhere.

[67]Edward J. Brown, *Maiakovsky: A Poet in the Revolution* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 12ff.; V. Katanian, *Maiakovskii: Literaturnaia khronika*, 4th, expanded ed. (Moscow, 1961), p. 417ff. For a report of the meeting see N. V. Reformatskaia, comp., ed. and annot., *Maiakovskii v vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Moscow, 1963).

[68]Robert C. Elliott, *The Power of Satire: Magic, Ritual, Art* (Princeton, 1960), Andrew Welsh, *Rootes of Lyric: Primitive Poetry and Modern Poetics* (Princeton, 1976). ,

[69]"I Shubert na vode, i Motsart v ptich'em game," SS 1:281.

[70]"10 January 1934," SS 1:289 (1934).

[71]"The Badger's Hole" ("Barsuch'ia nora"), SS 2, p. 000

[72]Fanger, *The Creation of Nikolay Gogol*, pp. 69ff. and elsewhere.

[73]N. V. Gogol', "Neskol'ko slov o Pushkine" ("A Few Words about Pushkin"), SS 8, p. 50.

[74]E. A. Shtakenshneider, *Dnevnik i zapiski*, ed. and annot. I. N. Rozanov (Moscow and Leningrad, 1934), pp. 423ff. and elsewhere. A. I. Faresov, "Literator- muchenik," in his *Protiv techenii: N. S. Leskov. Ego zhizn', sochineniia, polemika i vospominaniia o nem* (St. Petersburg, 1904), pp. 405. On "starchestvo," in particular, see, i.a., Nicholas Arsen'ev, *Holy Moscow* (London, 1940), especially, Chapter 9; I. Smolitsch, *Russisches Mo"nchtum:*

Entstehung, Entwicklung und Wesen, 988-1917 (Wu"rzburg, 1953); Victor Lossky, "Les startsy d'Optino," *Contacts* 33 (1961):163-76.

[75]Peter Brown, "Eastern and Western Christendom in Late Antiquity: A Parting of the Ways," in his *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity*, pp. 166-95.

[76]John B. Dunlop, *Starets Amvrosy: Model for Dostoevsky's Starets Zossima* (Belmont, Mass., 1972).

[77]Hugh McLean, *Nikolay Leskov: Man and His Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1977), "The Prolog," pp. 596-610.

[78]Cited in Pavel Florenskii, *Stolp i utverzhdenie istiny* (Moscow, 1914) p. 684n. See also E. V. (Erast Vytorski), *Istoricheskoe opisanie Kozel'skoi Optinoi pustyni, vnov' sostavlennoe* (Troitse-Sergievskaiia Lavra, 1902), p. 128, and Pavel Matveev, "L. N. Tolstoi i N. N. Strakhov v Optinoi pustyni," *Istoricheskii vestnik* (April, 1907):151-57.

[79]Iu. M. Steklov, N. G. Chernyshevskii, 2 vol., vol. 2 (Moscow-Leningrad), p. 216 (kindly suggested by I. Paperno).

[80]N. Valentinov (N. V. Vol'skii), *Encounters with Lenin*, trans. Paul Rosta and Brian Pearce, with a Forward by L. Shapiro (London, 1968), pp. 66-68. Leopold H. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), pp. 97- 103.

[81]Riasanovsky, *The Parting of the Ways*, Raeff, *The Origins of Russian Intelligentsia* (traces alienation to the end of the 18th century). See also Martin Malia, *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism*.

[82]William Mills Todd III, "Institutions of Literature," in his *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin: Ideology, Institutions and Narrative* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976).

[83]Note that Pushkin referred to the authors of the eighteenth century summa as "the sceptical priesthood of the Encyclope'die" (*Entsiklopedii skepticheskii prichet*). Cf. W. M. Todd III, "Eugene Onegin: A Life's Novel," in *Literature and Society in Imperial Russia: 1800-1914*, W. M. Todd III, ed. (Stanford, 1978).

[84]See, i.a., V. R. Leikina-Svirskaia, *Ruskaia intelligentsiia v 1900-1917 gg.* (Moscow, 1981), particularly her discussion of the Union of Unions in Chapter VII ("*Intelligentsiia v revoliutsionnoi bor'be*") where she deals with the issue of exfoliation. See also James C. McClelland, *Autocrats and academics, education, culture, and society in Tsarist Russia* (Chicago, 1979).

[85]"While Tolsoy is alive, walking behind his plough, behind his white little horse along the furrow, the morning is dewy, fresh, unfrighting, the vampires are asleep--and thank God. Tolstoy is coming--this is the sun coming. And if the sun sets, Tolstoy dies, the last genius passes away--what then? May God grant Lev Nikolaevich a long life among us. May he know that all contemporary Russian citizens, without distinction . . . have absorbed with their

mother's milk at least a small measure of his great vital force." A. Blok "The Sun Over Russia: The Eightieth Birthday of Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy" ("Solntse nad Rossiei...", 1908), SS 5, p. 302.

[86]For a contemporary review of opinions concerning the effect of the "differentiation" on Russian literature see Nikolai Shapir, "Uchitel'stvo literatury," *Russkaia mysl'* 34, no. 4 (1913), 4th pagination, pp. 1-37. See also Viach. Ivanov and A. Blok.

[87]"O sovremennom sostoianii russkogo simvolizma" ("On the Present State of Russian Symbolism," 1910), SS 5, p. 433.

[88]Ibid. ,

[89]A. Blok, "Otvét Merezhkovskomu" (1910), SS 5, p. 444.

[90]On the pathos of the Acmeist school as a justification of poetry, see R. Timenchik, "Tekst v tekste u akmeistov," in *Tekst v tekste. Trudy po znakovym sistemam XIV* (Tartu, 1981)

[91]O. Mandelstam, "Gumanizm i sovremennost'" (1922), SS 2, p. 352.

[92]The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, intro., tr., and annot. by Clarence Brown (Princeton, 1967). Clarence Brown, *Mandelstam* (Cambridge, 1973). On Mandelstam's early years see also A. Morozov's publication of the diary of S. P. Kablukov, Mandelstam's older friend. A. Morozov, "Mandel'shtam v zapisiakh dnevnika S. P. Kablukova," *Vestnik Russkogo Khristianskogo Dvizheniia* 129, no. 3 (1979):131-155. Hereafter as Morozov (1979).

[93]Note that the main protagonists in Pasternak's prose are never Jewish. An aspect of Pasternak's attitude may be glimpsed in the name of one Iurii Zhivago's satellites, Gordon, whose name conveniently breaks into two parts *gord* and *on* meaning "he is proud" -- an attribute at the very bottom of the scale of values proffered in Pasternak's famous novel. One is tempted to suspect that Mandelstam, not known for his humility, was a prototype of Gordon. Cf. Pasternak's attitude to Mandelstam's handling of the Gornfel'd affair in "Zamechaniia o perelebenii biografii." On Pasternak's attitude to Jews see also the record of his conversations with Sir Isaiah Berlin after World War II in Berlin's *Personal Impressions*.

[94]O. Mandelstam, *The Noise of Time* and "The Bloody Mysterium of January 9." See also "The Age" (1922), "He Who Found a Horseshoe" (1923).

[95]Exceptions included: skilled craftsmen, professionals with higher education, and merchants whose businesses had a turnover exceeding 100,000 roubles. Mandelstam's father, most likely, belonged either to the first or the third category. See E. V. Vainshtein, *Dieistvuiushchee zakonodatelstvo evreiakh : po svodu zakonov raziasneniiami* (Kiev, 1911). See also G. N. Vetlugin, *Polnaia spravochnaia kniga o pravakh evreev: s raziasneniiami, opredieleniiami i riesheniiami Pravitelstvuiushchago Senata* (Petersburg, 1913); Louis Greenberg, *The Jews in Russia : the struggle for emancipation*, intro. Alfred Levin (New York, 1976); and Salo W. Baron, *The Russian Jews Under Tsars and Soviets* (New York and London, 1975).

[96]Ves' Peterburg na 1909 g. Adresnaia i spravochnaia kniga g. S.-Peterburga (Petersburg, 1909). See also Mandelstam's descriptions of the recitals in the Tenishev Hall in *The Noise of Time*.

[97]*The Noise of Time* ,

[98]For an S.-R., not an incompatible combination (viz. the leader of the party, V. M. Chernov).

[99]Morozov (1979). ,

[100]D. S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature*, p. 435. The Scales (Vesy) ceased publication in 1909 yielding its role, as it were, to the new Apollon.

[101]See S. N. Bulgakov, "Geroizm i podvizhnichestvo" in *Vekhi: Sbornik statei o russkoi intelligentsii*, edit. M. O. Gershenzon, 3d ed. (Moscow, 1909), pp. 23-96. For a recent discussion of the notion see Peter Henry, "Imagery of podvig and podvizhnichestvo in the Works of Garshin and the early Gor'kii," *Slavonic and East European Review* 61, no. 1 (1983):139-159.

[102]B. Savinkov, *Vospominaniia terrorista*, 2nd ed. (Khar'kov, 1926), pp. 103, 97, 34, 36. In a private letter of May, 1905, E. K. Metner, who at the time served as a government censor for Nizhnii Novgorod, declared that "Kaliaev and his kind were right" and that Kaliaev struck him as a man of "very subtle character, Blok-like." N. V. Kotrelev and R. D. Timenchik, comp., *Aleksandr Blok: Novye materialy i issledovaniia, Literaturnoe nasledstvo* vol. 92, bk. 3 (Moscow, 1982), p. 224.

[103]See, i.a., Viacheslav Ivanov's "O nepriiatii mira" (1906), an introduction to Georgii Chulkov's brochure *O misticheskom anarkhizme* (St.Petersburg, 1906).

[104]*The Prose of Osip Mandelstam* (1967), pp. 83- 5.

[105]O. Mandelstam, "Pushkin i Skriabin" (1915). Cf. Viacheslav Ivanov's major two volume collection of poetry *Cor ardens* (1910-12).

[106]*The Noise of Time and MM 1*. B. Kozmin, ed., *Pisateli sovremennoi epokhi. Bio-bibliograficheskii slovar' russkikh pisatelei XX veka*, vol. 1 (1928).

[107]Mandelstam's letter to mother (April 20, 1908), SS 4, 115ff. See also Karpovich (note below). In Paris, Mandelstam met Nikolai Gumilev, a fact, as R. Timenchik has noted, happened to be recorded in Mandelstam's humorous lines "I v Peterburge akmeist mne blizhe, chem romanticheskii Pierro v Parizhe."

[108]Mikhail Karpovich, "Moe znakomstvo s Mandel'shtamom," *Novyi zhurnal* 49 (1957): 258-261. Cited here from C. Brown (1973), p. 34.

[109]Cf. the description of Mandelstam's recital above. ,

[110]Mandelstam was brought to Ivanov's salon, the Tower, on May 16, 1909, by a poet Viktor Gofman where the two attended the 8th and last meeting of the "Academy of Poetry" ("Poeticheskaia akademiia"), a course of lectures on the history of poetry and versification which Ivanov had been delivering before the young poets who gathered at his salon. Since that time he was a frequent visitor at the salon, and especially, during 1911, the last year before the younger poets broke away from Ivanov's tutelage. For a history of Mandelstam's relations with Viacheslav Ivanov see A. A. Morozov, "Pis'ma O. E. Mandelstama V. I. Ivanovu," in Gosudarstvennaia publichnaia biblioteka SSSR imeni V. I. Lenina. Zapiski Otdela rukopisei 34 (Moscow, 1975):258-274. Hereafter as Morozov (1975). For a recent controversy surrounding the question of Ivanov's influence over Mandelstam, see Taranovsky (1976), pp. 83ff., and NM 2, p. 30ff. and elsewhere.

[111]Viacheslav Ivanov, "Avtobiograficheskoe pis'mo," SS 3, pp. 16ff. Ivanov studied with Mommsen (beginning in 1886), it appears, at the same time as did Max Weber.

[112]Sociological implications of Ivanov's "mission" will make an interesting dissertation topic. The present study, albeit indirectly, addresses itself to this question only to the extent that it touches on Mandelstam. For a critical appraisal of Ivanov's work, see James West, *Russian Symbolism: A study of Vyacheslav Ivanov and the Russian symbolist aesthetic* (London, 1970). For a brief overview see also S.

Averintsev's Introduction to Viacheslav Ivanov, *Stikhotvoreniia*.

[113]"Religiia Dionisa: Eia proiskhozhdenie i vliianie" ("The Religion of Dionysus: Its Origins and Influence"), *Voprosy zhizni* 6 and 7 (July, 1905):185- 220 and 122-148. For the examples of the uses of Erwin Rohde's *Psyche* see p. 196 and Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, p. 216.

[114]Viach. Ivanov, "The Poet and the People" ("Poet i chern'," 1904), SS 1, p. 713.

[115]"O russkoi idee" ("On the Russian Idea," 1909) SS 3, especially, pp. 331-33. Cf. also A. Belyi in *Vesy nos.* 2 and 3 (1909). Debates around Vekhi and the role of religion and "obshchestvennost'," the god-builders and the god-seekers. Vl. Krankhfel'dt, "Literaturnye otkliki" in *Sovremennyi mir* 8 (1909); V. A. Bazarov, "Bogoiskateli i bogostriteli," in *Vershiny* (1909); D. Filosofov, "Druz'ia ili vragi," *Russkaia Mysl'* 8 (1909); P. B. Struve "Religiia i sotsializm," *ibid.*, N. Minskii (Vilenkin), "Narod i intelligentsiia," *RM* 9 (1909). See also Jutta Scherrer, *Die Petersburger Religio"s-Philosophischen Vereinigungen: Die Entwicklung des religio"sen Selbstversta"ndnisses ihrer Intelligencija-Mitglieder (1901-1917)*, in *Forschungen zur Osteuropa"ischen Geschichte*, Bd. 19 (Berlin, 1973).

[116]For a critique of the "philosophy of [ethical] norm" from a Nietzschean position see, Lev Shestov's Introduction to *Apofeoz bezpochvennosti* (1905), reprinted in 1911. For a contemporary reading of the book see Aleksei Remizov, "Po povodu knigi L. Shestova 'Apofeoz bezpochvennosti,'" *Russkaia mysl'* 7 (July, 1905), 3d pagination, p. 204. Knut Hamsun, *Pan* (1894). Anna Akhmatova recalled the enormous impact Hamsun had on her in 1907-08. Together with Ibsen, he was the vlastitel' dum. See M. L. Mandrykina, "Iz rukopisnogo naslediiia Akhmatovoi," *Neva* 6 (1979):198. See also M. N. Raudar, "Obrazy

severa i severnoi kul'tury v tvorchestve Anny Akhmatovoi," in *Skandinavskii sbornik* 24 (Tallin, 1981):208-224. In his programmatic "O poezii i zaumnom iazyke" (1919), V. Shklovskii chose to draw on Hamsun's authority to legitimize the use of trans-sense language. On Minskii: Mandelstam was referring to N. M. Minskii (Vilenkin), *Pri svete sovesti: Mysli i mechty o tseli zhizni*. 2nd ed., St. Petersburg (1897), one of tamer versions of Russian Nietzscheanism. The central postulates of Minskii's philosophy of life which he called Maeonism (from Plato's me on, nothing), defined "maeons," or those thoughts that are supposed to liberate humanity

from the burden of contradictions, as "concepts that are absolutely opposite to experience and therefore completely negative conceptions. (p. 188ff.) Minskii was a prominent figure in the intellectual life of St. Petersburg (in 1905, he even edited the Bolshevik paper *Novaia zhizn'*). See also his *Religiia budushchego Filosofskie razgovory*, (St. Petersburg, 1905) and a review by Vas. Rozanov, "Odna iz russkikh poetiko- filosofskikh kontseptsii," in *Zolotoe runo* 7-9 (1906). For a response by Minskii see his "Zabvennaia dusha (otvet V. Rozanovu) in his *Na obshchestvennye temy* (St. Petersburg, 1909).

[117]Both letters are published in SS 2. See also A. Morozov (1973). ,

[118]See Mandelstam's letter to Ivanov of 13 August 1909 where the young poet attempted a mild critique of the mentor from a Nietzschean, existentialist position, at that time identified with the names of I. Annenskii and Lev Shestov, and opposed to the well-balanced books of Ivanov's metaphysics. See K. Erberg, "O vozdukhnykh mostakh kritiki," *Apollon* 2 (1909):54-59. See also Morozov (1973), p. 259.

[119]Morozov (1973) and Morozov, (1979).

[120]"As to the ideas," wrote Mandelstam in 1922 concerning the origins of Acmeism, "they came from the very same Viacheslav Ivanov." "O prirode slova."

[121]Viach. Ivanov, "Kop'e Afiny" (1904), SS 1. p. 729ff.

[122]Ibid., p. 730.

[123]Viacheslav Ivanov, "Religiia Dionisa: Eia proiskhozhdenie i vliianie" ("The Religion of Dionysus: Its Origins and Influence"), *Voprosy zhizni* 7 (July, 1905):142-48.

[124]Viach. Ivanov, "The Poet and the People" ("Poet i chern"), SS 1, p. 713. [125]Ibid.

[126]Ivanov's cycle *Roza* was based on Veselovskii's *Poetika rozy*, his programmatic poem "Ozero Nemi" on Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.

[127]On the legendary Tower see, i.a., O. Deshart, "Vvedenie," in Viacheslav Ivanov, *Sobranie sochinenii* 3 vols. (Brussels, 1971-1979), vol. 1. See also Ivanov's diaries in vol. 2, pp. 771-807, V. Piast, *Vstrechi* (Moscow, 1928). For a testimony to Ivanov's great influence on the younger generation see Georgii Adamovich, "Viacheslav Ivanov i Lev Shestov," in his *Odinchestvo i svoboda* (New York, 1955), p. 254. For an opposing view see the not entirely reliable but often verifiable memoirs of Georgii Ivanov, *Peterburgski zimy*

(Paris, 1928), pp. 66-67.

[128]For the record of the debates see Apollon 8 and 9 (1910). Ivanov read his paper at the *Obshchestvo revnitelei khudozhestvennogo slova* on March 26, 1910. Blok delivered his response on April 8. Briusov's "O rechi rabskoi" in Apollon 9 (1910), and Belyi's "Venok ili venets" in the following issue.

[129]See the annotations to the essay in SS 5. See also Bel'kind, "A. Blok i Viacheslav Ivanov," *Blokovskii sbornik II. Trudy Vtoroi nauchnoi konferentsii, posviashchennoi izucheniiu zhizni i tvorchestva A. A. Bloka* (Tartu, 1972).

[130]G. G. Superfin and R. D. Timenchik, "Pis'ma A. A. Akhmatovoi k V. Ia. Briusovu," *Gosudarstvennaia publichnaia biblioteka SSSR imeni V. I. Lenina. Zapiski Otdela rukopisei* 32 (Moscow, 1972): 272-80. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo 92-III: Aleksandr Blok: Novye materialy i issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1983). G. P. Struve. *Neizdannyi Gumilev* (Paris, 1982).

[131]*Literaturnoe nasledstvo 92-iii*, p. 279-80 and 372.

[132]See N. Gumilev on I. Annenskii's "Antichnyi mif v sovremennoi frantsuzskoi poezii," in N. Gumilev, *Sobranie sochinenii*, eds. G. P. Struve and B. A. Filippov, 4 vols., vol. 4: *Rasskazy, ocherki, literaturno-kriticheskie i drugie stat'i, "Zapiski kavalerista"* (Washington, 1968) p. 330. First published in Apollon 1-2 (1914) as "Pis'mo o russkoi poezii."

[133]"We consider the word to be the creator of myth, the word, as it dies, gives birth to myth and the other way around." From *Sadok sudei* (1913), in Vl. Markov, ed., comp. and intro., *Manifesty i programmy russkikh futuristov, Slavische Propyla"en 27* (Munich, 1967), p. 52.

[134]O. Mandelstam, "O prirode slova." Discussed in Chapter 6.

[135]In her correspondence, Anastasiia Nikolaevna Chebotarevskaiia (the wife of Fedor Sologub) reported that Osip Mandelstam, belonging as he did to a "disturbed" generation, publicly predicted the imminent demise of the Symbolists' supremacy at the editorial offices of Apollon. *Literaturnoe Nasledstvo 92-iii*, p. 409-10.

[136]Kablukov's diary, Morozov (1979).

[137]*Ibid.* ,

[138]*Ibid.* ,

[139]*Ibid.* ,

[140]Certificate of baptism in "Mandel'shtam-- khristianin XX veka," *Novoe russkoe slovo* (New York) 10

December 1978. ,

[141]R. A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion with a Special reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries* (Oxford, 1950), pp. 513-549 and 578-92.

[142]Kablukov's diary, Morozov (1979).

[143]"Chuvstvo sobstvennoi pravoty" (the sense of one's own rightness) functions as a crucial ingredient of the Poet's biographical myth in Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs. Understandably, she was highly critical of *The Egyptian Stamp* (1928) where the author-like protagonist was treated with self-mockery, a sentiment quite common among the intellectuals on the eve of the Stalin Revolution. By 1927, Mandelstam had earned himself a reputation of one who was "preoccupied by translations and prose" (Saianov, "K voprosu o sud'bakh akmeizma"), two genres that did not require a pose of haughty self-righteousness.

[144]Cited in M. O. Chudakova, *Poetika Mikhaila Zoshchenko* (Moscow, 1979), p. 25.

[145]A. Lezhnev, "Uzel," *Krasnaia nov' 8* (1926):230. "They [the poets] moved from the foreground of literature into the background and then have disappeared in the wings entirely. In 1921 they were published on a large scale, in 1924 on a small scale, in 1926, they ceased being published at all." See also. I. Rozanov, *Literaturnye otkliki* (Petrograd, 1922): "the center of gravity and the dominant interests have shifted from poetry to prose" (p. 71). B. Eikhenbaum: "The problems of prose are now in the center of literature. The interest in intimate form, and to the poetic speech in general, has completely disappeared." B. Eikhenbaum, "O Shatobriane, o chervontsakh i russkoi literature," *Zhizn' iskusstva 1* (1924):3. Iu. Tynianov in "Promezhutok" (1924): "Three years ago, prose decisively ordered poetry to clear the premises." Tynianov (1977), p. 168. M. Kuzmin voiced a contrary opinion: "Poetry, as history, can have a wheel." M. Kuzmin, "Parnasskie zarosli," *Zavtra. Almanakh 1*, eds. E. Zamiatin, M. Kuzmin, M. Lozinskii (n.p.: Petropolis, 1923):122.

[146]NM 1, pp. 177-188 ("Pereotsenska tsennostei"). See a typical warning in B. O. Ol'khovyi, "O poputnichestve i poputchikakh," *Pechat' i revoliutsiia 6* (1929):9. "Such a poet [i.e., Mandelstam] is no 'fellow-traveller,' not even with the 'right deviation,' but a poet who represents an antipode of fellow-travellism."

[147]Cf. Olesha's *Zavist'* (1927).

[148]NM 1 and 2 on the "plagiarism" affair. See also, Anonymous, "O peresechenii biografii O. Mandel'shtama i B. Pasternaka," *Pamiat' 4*. See also E. B. and E. V. Pasternak, "Boris Pasternak: Iz perepiski s pisateliami," *Literaturnoe nasledstvo 94: Iz istorii russkoi literatury 1920-1930-kh godov* (Moscow, 1983), pp. 678-80. For a brief chronology of the events surrounding the "affair" see the Appendix.

[149]NM 1 on Bukharin's decision to make Mandelstam a personal'nyi pensioner, i.e., a recipient of a special pension which included certain non-monetary but highly valuable privileges such as access to the special food store for high officials and free passage on city transport. See also NM 2, pp. 603ff., and A. Grigor'ev and I. Petrova, "Mandel'shtam na poroge tridsatykh godov," *Russian Literature V-2* (April, 1977):181-92. Thanks to Bukharin, in 1932 (or 1933) Mandelstam was able to sign a contract and receive an advance for a two-volume edition of his works. See NM 2, p. 466.

[150]The Mandelstams moved into the apartment after their return from the Crimea (NM 2, p. 466). For a supplementary record of the Mandelstams' peregrinations between the return from Armenia and the arrest and exile in 1934 see the extremely valuable recollections of B. S. Kuzin, "Ob O. E. Mandel'shtame," in *Vestnik Russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniia* 140, no. III-IV (1983):116.

[151]What makes it especially ironic is that Mandelstam's vituperations in "The Fourth Prose" against A. G. Gornfel'd who accused Mandelstam of literary theft were crudely antisemitic. Consider: "This paralytic d'Anthe's, this uncle Monia from the Basseinaia Street [...] Uncle Gornfel'd, why did you decide to complain in the *Birzhevka*, that is, *The Red Evening Gazette*, in the Soviet year of 1929? You would have done better to weep in the clean Jewish literary waistcoat of Mr. Propper. You would have done better to relate your misfortune to the banker with sciatic nerve, kughel, and the tallith. . . ." SS 2, p. 185. Since it was Mandelstam, not Gornfel'd, who was in the wrong (though not to the extent claimed by Gornfel'd), the passage begins to appear doubly ironic.

[152]S. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution: A political Biography 1888-1938* (New York, 1973) p. 276 (and broadly, Chapter IX). See also R. C. Tucker, "Stalinism as Revolution from Above," in Robert C. Tucker, *Stalinism: Essays in Historical Interpretation* (New York, 1977), and Moshe Lewin, "The Social Background of Stalinism (*ibid.*) ,

[153]"Zasnula chern' . . .," SS 1:163. According to the diary of S. P. Kablukov (Morozov, 1979), this poem, which Mandelstam included in his *Stone* (1916), was removed by the censor. The "Harlequin" was the nickname given by the courtiers to the eccentric son of Catherine II, Emperor Paul I (1796-1801), who was murdered, if not on the orders, then with direct knowledge of his son, the poem's other Tsar, Emperor Alexander I (1801-1825). In presenting him, Mandelstam was relying on the Pushkinian allegory of the Bronze Horseman seen through the prism of Innokentii Annenskii's "Peterburg" (1910): "He [the Horseman] was both terrible and daring, But the steed let him down, The Tsar failed to crush the serpent, And, stepped upon, it became our idol." The "beast," to rely on Mandelstam's usage (e.g., SS 3, p. 130, and "The Age") refers most likely to the steed-Russia, who turned out to be too wild for Alexander's feeble hand. However, the word also echoes the Apocalyptic euphemism for Napoleon, current during Alexander's reign. "Russia that [founded] on stone and blood" echoes of Alexander Herzen's "Petersburg was built on stone and blood" (*On the Developemnt of the Revolutionary Ideas in Russia*, Herzen, SS 3, p. 255).

[154]I am using the term in the sense it was used in R. Barthes, *Mythologies*, selected and trans. by Anette Lavers (New York, 1972), especially, pp. 117- 121.