

Durham E-Theses

Mandelstam's Egipetskaya marka: its relationship to his other prose and to his poetry from 1912 to 1933

Daphne M. West

How to cite:

West, Daphne M. (1978) Mandelstam's Egipetskaya marka: its relationship to his other prose and to his poetry from 1912 to 1933. Doctoral thesis, Durham University.

Use policy

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a <https://etheses.durham.ac.uk/id/eprint/7909/> is made to the metadata record in Durham E-Theses
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full Durham E-Theses policy](#) for further details.

Mandelstam's Egipetskaya marka:
its relationship to his other prose
and to his poetry from 1912 to 1933

by

Daphne M. West
Trevelyan College

The copyright of this thesis rests with the author.
No quotation from it should be published without
his prior written consent and information derived
from it should be acknowledged.

A thesis presented for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the University of Durham, 1978

Abstract

Mandelstam's reputation as a poet is now firmly established, but his critical and 'creative' prose (i.e. that which is based on autobiographical experience, rather than literary or historical subjects) has received little attention. The purpose of this thesis is to assess the nature of Mandelstam's creative prose which deserves more than the superficial approach thus far devoted to it.

Egipetskaya marka is chosen as the focal point of this discussion since its position in Mandelstam's oeuvre is rather special. It was the only creative work to emerge during the years 1925-1930, when the pressures of material and physical conditions, combined with Mandelstam's sense of isolation in the new Soviet society, had the effect of 'drying up' his poetic voice. Egipetskaya marka reflects Mandelstam's state of mind during the 'silence'. In essence it is an attempt to define his position in the new society. Since he considered himself to be primarily a poet this definition involves a concern with artistic and especially with poetic creativity. An appreciation of Egipetskaya marka can therefore assist in the understanding of Mandelstam's work in general. The often very indirect allusions to creativity in Egipetskaya marka are concerned overwhelmingly with the nineteenth century. Mandelstam considered the influence of this period to be pernicious to human life and artistic creation alike, and his persistent allusions to it in Egipetskaya marka reveal how deeply disturbed he was at the direction in which Soviet society was moving.

Egipetskaya marka is analysed in terms of characters, geographical and historical settings, central themes and structure, and this analysis is conducted with constant reference to Mandelstam's poetry and other prose. This comparative approach is doubly beneficial, for it highlights certain thematic and stylistic features in the other work and facilitates an appreciation of the difficult and intriguing product of the 'silence'.

Acknowledgements

I express my gratitude to Dr. Jennifer Baines for her constructive criticism and careful attention to my manuscript and also for her constant encouragement during the preparation of this thesis.

My thanks go to Helen Whittington and to Tony Edwards of the Department of Russian Studies, University of Bristol, for their interest and friendship during my period of study in the South West.

I am most grateful to Gillian Hunter for typing the manuscript and to Pat Taylor, Heather Summers and Felicity O'Dell for their help with Inter-Library Loans.

Finally, I thank my husband, Ian, whose help and encouragement have been invaluable.

A Note on Abbreviations and Transliteration

References are given within the text of the thesis to the following:

O.E. Mandelstam, Sobranie sochineniy v tryokh tomakh, (volume I, 2nd edition, New York, 1967; volume II, 2nd edition, New York, 1971; volume III, New York, 1969) referred to as I, II, III respectively.

O.E. Mandelstam, Stikhotvoreniya (Leningrad, 1973) referred to as Sov. ed.

N.Ya. Mandelstam, Vospominaniya (New York, 1970) and Vtoraya kniga (Paris, 1972) referred to as N.Ya. I and N.Ya. II respectively.

All other references are to be found at the end of the thesis in the Notes.

The transliteration system used is that recommended by the Slavonic and East European Review (Rules for Style and Presentation of MSS, University of London, 1975, pp. 13-14), although 'y' has not been used before the soft vowel e either initially or when it follows another vowel. Certain proper names are excepted and the accepted usage employed, e.g. Mandelstam, Gogol, Dostoevsky. Proper names from Egipetskaya marka are transliterated according to the above system, with the exception of Krzyżanowski. This name is clearly intended to strike the reader as specifically Polish (see Chapter Two) and is therefore spelt according to Polish usage. Titles of prose works and poems have been transliterated, but first lines of poems appear in Russian, since these are often rather long. Quotations are transliterated only where they involve no more than a few words.

List of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
A Note on Abbreviations and Transliteration	iii
Introduction	1
<u>Chapter One: Egipetskaya marka in the Context of Mandelstam's</u>	
Other Work: General Principles and Influences	6
(i) <u>Mandelstam's situation in the twenties</u>	6
(ii) <u>The nature of Mandelstam's critical</u> <u>prose and of his poetry</u>	8
(iii) <u>The nature of Mandelstam's creative prose</u>	19
(a) Early pieces	19
(b) 'Kholodnoe leto' and 'Sukharyovka'	21
(c) 'Men'sheviki v Gruzii', 'Vozvrashchenie' and 'Batum'	22
(d) <u>Shum vremeni</u> and 'Feodosiya'	24
(e) 'Kiev'	28
(f) 'Chetvyortaya proza' and <u>Puteshestvie v Armeniyu</u>	29
(iv) <u>The influence of the work undertaken</u> <u>immediately prior to and during the</u> <u>poetic silence</u>	32
(a) Children's poetry	33
(b) Reviews and articles	35
(c) Translations	36
(v) <u>The influence on Egipetskaya marka of</u> <u>Mandelstam's views on the nineteenth</u> <u>century</u>	41
<u>Chapter Two: Characters and Characterisation in <u>Egipetskaya</u></u> <u>marka</u>	47
(i) <u>Parnok</u>	48
(ii) <u>The crowd</u>	66
(iii) <u>The mosquito</u>	67

(iv) <u>The Jewish characters</u>	68
(v) <u>The Lutherans</u>	71
(vi) <u>Krzyżanowski; the cabby</u>	72
(vii) <u>Krzyżanowski and the personification of abstract concepts</u>	75
(viii) <u>Mervis and Shapiro</u>	77
(ix) <u>Relationships between the characters</u>	80
 <u>Chapter Three: The Geographical Setting of <u>Egipetskaya marka</u></u>	85
(i) <u>Petersburg's influence on Mandelstam</u>	85
(ii) <u>The construction of Petersburg and its influence on historical events</u>	86
(iii) <u>The end of Petersburg</u>	90
(a) Images of disease and death	90
(b) The image of fire	96
(c) The image of dying woman	98
(d) The image of woman from the classical world	99
(iv) <u>Petersburg and other cities</u>	100
(a) Paris	100
(b) Jerusalem	102
(v) <u>Mandelstam's alienation from Petersburg</u>	106
(vi) <u>The guilt of Petersburg</u>	109
 <u>Chapter Four: The Historical Setting of <u>Egipetskaya marka</u></u>	112
(i) <u>Mandelstam's method of viewing historical events</u>	112
(ii) <u>The nature of the revolutionary events alluded to in <u>Egipetskaya marka</u> and their historical implications</u>	114
(a) 1905 and 1917	114
(b) 1830 and 1917	116

(iii) <u>Treatment of the revolutionary setting</u> <u>in Egipetskaya marka: the political</u> <u>scene</u>	118
(iv) <u>Treatment of the revolutionary setting</u> <u>in Egipetskaya marka: everyday</u> <u>conditions</u>	124
(a) The concept of revolution in everyday terms	124
(b) Disruption of living conditions: transport and food supply	126
(c) Disruption of law and order	128
<u>Chapter Five: The Treatment of Art Themes in Egipetskaya marka</u>	131
(i) <u>Background to the treatment of art forms</u>	131
(a) Title	132
(b) Epigraph	137
(c) Literary influences	139
(ii) <u>Art forms</u>	140
(a) Poetry	140
The distortion of poetry	141
The disappearance of poetry and its replacement by prose	144
(b) Music	157
(c) Painting	165
(d) Literature	169
Nineteenth-century literature and <u>littérateurs</u>	169
Twentieth-century literature and <u>littérateurs</u>	171
(e) Dance	175
(f) Theatre	179
<u>Chapter Six: The Structure of Egipetskaya marka</u>	183
1. <u>Fragmentation</u>	184
(i) <u>Fragmentary tendencies in Mandelstam's</u> <u>poetry and other prose</u>	185
(ii) <u>Fragmentation in Egipetskaya marka</u>	187

(a) Layout	191
(b) Plot construction	192
(c) Chapter division	195
(d) Narrators	197
(e) Temporal and spatial displacement	199
(f) Transfer of epithet	201
2. <u>Contrast</u>	202
(i) <u>Contrast in individual phrases in Egipetskaya marka</u>	204
Simile and metaphor	206
(ii) <u>Contrast sustained in individual sections</u>	208
(iii) <u>Contrast expressed in the mixing of disparate styles</u>	212
(a) Balanced style	212
(b) Folk-tale style	214
(iv) <u>Contrasting sentence structures</u>	216
(a) Sentence structures in fragmentary passages	220
(b) Contrasting structures within individual sections	221
(c) Contrasting structures between sections	223
3. <u>Obrashchaemost'</u>	224
(i) <u>Obrashchaemost' in the 'Marginalia'</u>	226
(ii) <u>Obrashchaemost' between individual sections</u>	228
(iii) <u>Continuity effected by leitmotifs</u>	230
(iv) <u>Continuity effected by 'formulae'</u>	234
(v) <u>Linguistic continuity</u>	236
(vi) <u>Associative and phonetic preparation</u>	240
4. <u>Conclusions on the structure of Egipetskaya marka</u>	243

Conclusion	246
Notes	252
Bibliography of works cited in text	267
Bibliography of works not included in American edition	273
Appendix	278
Notes on the translation	318

Introduction

Mandelstam's reputation as a poet is now firmly established: during the last five years it has become more and more frequent to hear him spoken of as one of Russia's greatest twentieth-century poets. A more or less complete collection of his work is available in the three-volume American edition¹, and although the Soviet edition² provides an incomplete selection of his poetry, it includes some interesting notes. The greatest single contribution in bringing Mandelstam's work to the attention of Western readers has undoubtedly been made by Mandelstam's widow, Nadezhda Yakovlevna Mandelstam. Her two volumes of memoirs³, available in English translation, not only highlight the courage of both husband and wife during the terrible years of Stalin's regime, but also provide valuable insights into Mandelstam's work.

Three full-length critical studies in English of Mandelstam's poetry have been published: Clarence Brown's Mandelstam⁴, Jennifer Baines' Mandelstam: the Later Poetry⁵, and Steven Broyde's Osip Mandelstam and his Age⁶. The first deals with Mandelstam's work up to the early twenties, and gives useful information as to Mandelstam's early life, his early poetic inclinations, and to the background behind certain poems, but its translations and interpretations of Mandelstam's poetry are at times lacking in imagination. The second book deals with Mandelstam's poetry written during the years of his greatest harassment - the poetry before and during his exile in Voronezh. Dr. Baines' book gives many valuable autobiographical details as background to the later poetry, and has the particular advantage of reference to Mandelstam's rough drafts in support of interpretations of certain poems. The third book, again concerned largely with his poetry, covers only the early period of Mandelstam's work, and from the specific viewpoint of war and revolution. This work tends to rely too heavily on literary background in its interpretations of the poetry. Details of the several translations of Mandelstam's poetry are given in the bibliography, but none of these can be recommended unreservedly. Some err in grammatical points, and some give an accurate translation but fail to capture the sound or the atmosphere of the poetry.

Mandelstam's prose has received far less attention than his verse, and the only works devoted entirely to his prose are translations with critical introductions. One such is concerned with Mandelstam's critical articles and essays, ably translated by Sydney Monas⁷, with a comprehensive introduction which is at times misleading (thus for example his suggestion that Mandelstam possessed a 'true devotion to the craft of translating'⁸). In the same edition Professor Monas translates two of Mandelstam's prose pieces which do not belong to the critical genre, Puteshestvie v Armeniyu and 'Chetvyortaya proza'. Of Mandelstam's remaining prose works, the semi-autobiographical Shum vremeni and Egipetskaya marka, there is only one translation, that by Professor Brown⁹, with an introduction which deals largely with biographical and literary background. Indeed, the most perceptive study of Mandelstam's prose remains an article published in 1929 by N.Ya. Berkovsky¹⁰. This deals with the stylistic aspects of Shum vremeni and Egipetskaya marka. Berkovsky is one of the few critics to have maintained that Mandelstam's prose deserves to be appreciated in its own right: 'Она не лазейка для комментаторов стиховых невянниц, но искусство справедливо-автономное.'¹¹ Many critics deny Mandelstam's prose any lasting importance, considering it to be far inferior to his poetry. Nadezhda Yakovlevna Mandelstam herself implies that the prose's chief value is as a commentary to the poetry (N.Ya. I, p. 281). Some critics who speak most favourably of his poetry are singularly uncomplimentary and unimaginative when it comes to his prose: 'В прозе своей Мандельштам как будто теряется ...'¹². A similarly unimaginative appreciation of Mandelstam's prose is offered by Yu.B. Margolin, who insists that his prose, unlike his poetry, has no value outside its own era¹³. Although one cannot but agree that Mandelstam was first and foremost a poet, such interpretations betray a superficial approach which cannot reveal the true value of the prose. Mandelstam's prose requires above all else an imaginative approach on the part of the reader, for Mandelstam was a metaphorical thinker, and nowhere more so than in his prose, as Lidiya Ginzburg has pointed out¹⁴. Thus the highly metaphorical critical prose demands close and detailed reading, in order to appreciate the many perceptive insights which it contains into Mandelstam's own work and into the work of others. The semi-autobiographical prose is yet more densely metaphorical, however. It

is intricate, involved, with a tendency to fragmentation, and therefore requires careful and sustained attention. It is not autobiographical in the strict sense of the word (Mandelstam clearly states his antipathy to autobiographical writing in Shum vremeni, II, p. 99), but it does contain many hints as to Mandelstam's personal situation and inclinations, and these require a sympathetic appreciation of the poet's circumstances at the time of writing. As several critics have pointed out, Mandelstam's prose is distinctly that of a poet¹⁵. D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky summarises this paradox most succinctly in a review from 1926: 'Это проза поэта. Но поэтического в ней только густая насыщенность каждого слова содержанием'¹⁶. Such depth and richness of content are the features by which Mandelstam's prose is chiefly characterised, and they are the features which demand most of the reader.

Of the two most personal works, Shum vremeni and Egipetskaya marka, Shum vremeni has received the more favourable attention over the years. Mirsky's criticism of this work is especially complimentary: 'Не будет преувеличением сказать, что Шум времени одна из трех четырех самых значительных книг последнего времени'¹⁷. Shum vremeni is certainly the more accessible of the two works in that it is less fragmentary. (It is interesting to note in this context that Mirsky found the latter part of Shum vremeni, 'Feodosiya', less satisfactory precisely because of its more fragmentary form¹⁸.)

Criticisms of Egipetskaya marka, both in the Soviet Union and in the West, have tended to be superficial and even arbitrary:

... повесть Египетская марка ... о духовном кризисе интеллигента ...¹⁹

In the Egyptian Stamp, Mandelstam portrays an intellectual out of key with the new system, who outwardly submits to it, but secretly maintains contempt for it.²⁰

The aim of this thesis is to demonstrate through a detailed appreciation of Egipetskaya marka that Mandelstam's prose deserves more than this superficial approach. Egipetskaya marka is important since, on a general level, it shows Mandelstam's concern with the fate of the individual, and the importance of this is by no means restricted to his own age. His anxieties on this score proved to be particularly well-founded in the years immediately after his death,

but this is without doubt a concern which should continue to be voiced. The work is important on a personal level, since it came at the time when Mandelstam was most adversely affected by the situation in which he found himself. Lastly, it is important in that its themes (which reveal personal preferences and opinions) and remarkable style, fascinating in themselves, can highlight themes and techniques used in his poetry and other prose.

The first chapter of this thesis sets out to place Egipetskaya marka in the context of Mandelstam's other prose and his poetry, since Egipetskaya marka's position is a very special one due to the date of its composition. An attempt is made in this chapter to suggest some of the differences between the various types of prose, and between the prose and the poetry. The intention of this discussion is to indicate basic tendencies and general relationships within Mandelstam's oeuvre, and not specific correspondences in imagery which are dealt with in subsequent chapters. In the remaining chapters Egipetskaya marka is analysed in terms of its characters, its geographical and historical settings, its central themes, and its structure. This variety of viewpoints highlights the 'multivalent' quality of the images used in Egipetskaya marka, which can have different forces in different contexts.

Since Mandelstam's work of different periods and genres is very much interrelated in terms of themes, imagery and certain stylistic techniques, the consideration of Egipetskaya marka from the above viewpoints has been conducted with constant reference to Mandelstam's other work. In his Razgovor o Dante Mandelstam speaks of the extreme importance of rough drafts in the consideration of a poet's work (II, 383). In the absence of these in the case of Egipetskaya marka, a comparative approach is essential. Nadezhda Yakovlevna Mandelstam does mention first drafts of Egipetskaya marka (N.Ya. I, 183), but efforts to trace these in the Soviet Union have so far been fruitless. Mandelstam's awareness of the improbability of rough drafts surviving ('... весьма прощительный факт недомедленных черновиков ...' - II, p. 383) is one reason why he is so insistent in the Razgovor o Dante as to the way in which an artist's work should be considered. One should view it not as a phenomenon which sprang ready-made from the pen, but as the product of a dynamic process. Such a process can be indicated by the various stages of the rough drafts. Where drafts are not available

the reader should be constantly aware of all the different forces which lie behind its composition - topical events, customs, environment, biographical details, the artist's own work, and the works of other artists (the latter being the so-called 'subtexts', whose relevance will be considered in Chapter One.) It is such an approach which this thesis endeavours to adopt.

Egipetskaya marka is viewed in the way described above in relation to all his other prose, and to his poetry from 1912-1933, for these are the dates between which Mandelstam's prose was chiefly written, the later date being the year of his last major prose work, Razgovor o Dante. (Reference is occasionally made to poems outside these dates, where this is felt to be of particular relevance.) Finally, the Appendix gives a translation of Egipetskaya marka based on the 1928 Priboy publication²¹, which differs in several places from the American edition's version of the work. The aim here is to offer an alternative to Professor Brown's translation (which errs in certain details), and also to attempt to convey something of the atmosphere and of the fascinating style created by Mandelstam.

Chapter One

Egipetskaya marka in the Context of Mandelstam's Other Work:

General Principles and Influences

(i) Mandelstam's situation in the twenties

During the twenties, which Nadezhda Yakovlevna has described as the worst period of his life (N.Ya. I, p. 180), Mandelstam experienced great difficulties in terms of physical and material conditions, which in turn affected his creative work. As the decade progressed these difficulties grew ever more serious. Egipetskaya marka occupies a distinctive position in the context of Mandelstam's work as a whole since it was written in the winter of 1927-1928, that is during the period from 1925-1930 when he was no longer able to write poetry. The seriousness of such a situation cannot be underestimated: for Mandelstam poetry was a vital part of life, an activity characterised by the confidence of the poet in the value of his composition. Later on, in the thirties, even arrest and exile could not still his poetic voice, a fact which demonstrates the gravity of his position during the period when Egipetskaya marka was written.

In the early twenties it became clear that Mandelstam was disturbed at the direction taken by the society which had emerged from the October revolution, an event which, like many of his fellow artists, he had initially welcomed. His disenchantment is reflected in his verse, where the scene depicted during these years reveals his anxiety. Thus images of disease and injury figure in the depictions of the natural setting. Space suffers from the unpleasant condition of plica ('Я по лесенке приставной', I, no. 132), and the very backbone of the epoch is broken ('Vek', I, no. 135). Images of threat are present: a mosquito drones ominously in the background ('Я не знаю, с каких пор', I, no. 131), and a snake lurks in the grass ('Vek', I, no. 135). Mandelstam's awareness that he was out of step with this new society is revealed in the characterisation of himself as the 'stale stepson' of the age ('Как растёт хлебов опара', I, no. 130). His critical articles also betray his apprehension, and he discusses a society which crushes the individual ('Гуманизм и современность', II, pp. 352-354). At the same time this article demonstrates through the image of the 'golden currency' of human values (II, p. 354) that Mandelstam had

not yet completely lost faith in the possibility of a change for the better. He was still confident in the value of his own ability to sound a warning: '... у него еще были иллюзии, что можно ... как мы шутили, "дать большевикам добрый совет" ...' (N.Ya. II, p. 213).

Mandelstam's advice, however, did not meet with contemporary demands for bold compositions of a strongly affirmative nature, and it became increasingly difficult for him to earn a living by publishing his own work. In 1923 Mandelstam's position worsened when a ban was suddenly placed on the publishing of his original verse. In order to survive he was now obliged to undertake translating work which, generally speaking, he found profoundly distasteful and which did much to hasten the onset of his poetic silence. His situation bore a striking resemblance to that so aptly characterised by Zamyatin in his article 'Ya boyus':

Писатель, который не может стать юрким, должен ходить на службу с портфелем, если он хочет жить ... и перед писателем - выбор: или стать Брежко-Брежковским - или замолчать.²²

When Nadezhda Yakovlevna (who had never been strong) fell ill with tuberculosis in 1925, the necessity to obtain a great deal of translating work became acute, for medicines and trips to the Crimea were the order of the day. In the same year Mandelstam suffered his first bout of angina pectoris. Material and physical circumstances therefore served only to compound the pernicious effect on his creative life of Mandelstam's sense of isolation in the new society. The result of these pressures was a period of confusion, in which Mandelstam lost his sense of poetic 'rightness' which he had first declared essential in his article 'Utro akmeizma': 'Сознание своей правоты нам дороже всего в поэзии ...' (II, p. 321). Without this sense, the composition of poetry was impossible.

It is not surprising that Nadezhda Yakovlevna should not be fond of Egipetskaya marka, which dates from the time when Mandelstam's confidence was at its lowest ebb. She describes it as a 'hybrid', as the 'price' which Mandelstam paid for his attempt to come to terms with the age, and considers the feature which distinguishes it most obviously from Mandelstam's other prose - its barely perceptible plot - to be a concession to the demands of that age (N.Ya. II, pp. 212-213). Her dislike of the work no doubt stems also from the fact that Egipetskaya marka did not restore Mandelstam to a state of poetic

confidence - no new burst of poetry was forthcoming after this prose work (N.Ya. II, p. 213).

And yet Egipetskaya marka is the most complete picture which exists of Mandelstam's attitudes and state of mind in the period of silence. His only other work of the time, his translations, children's verse, and half a dozen or so critical articles and reviews, evidently had some influence on Egipetskaya marka (see below, section (iv)), but they give only a partial impression of the period. The same is true of Mandelstam's many letters to his wife, which he wrote when she was recuperating in the Crimea. These letters, apart from an occasional, graphic allusion to the adverse effects of translation (III, pp. 221, 246), are full of Mandelstam's concern for his wife's health and welfare, and of reassurances (quite unfounded) as to their financial situation. Egipetskaya marka, on the other hand, is a creative composition, the only serious creative composition from the period of poetic silence, and it has a discernible aim. Although it deals ostensibly with one Parnok, with his vain attempts to retrieve his lost possessions and to avert a catastrophe threatened by the wrath of a violent and powerful mob, and although it provides a retrospective picture of the period between the two revolutions of 1917, in essence the work represents a statement of Mandelstam's confusion and of his search to resolve that confusion by defining his position in the new society. Since Mandelstam considered himself to be primarily a poet, it is as such that he examines his position in Egipetskaya marka. Thus it is that at the core of the work lies a concern which, however indirectly expressed, is highly characteristic of Mandelstam's work as a whole: a concern with artistic and particularly with poetic creativity. Egipetskaya marka, then, is a work of some value in that it gives an appraisal of the poet's condition during the poetic silence, hints at the nature of that condition in the past and future, and gives at the same time much insight into Mandelstam's opinions on various art forms.

(ii) The nature of Mandelstam's critical prose and of his poetry

In order to set Egipetskaya marka into the context of Mandelstam's poetry and other prose, it is necessary first to define the nature of and the impulses behind the two different genres of Mandelstam's prose and his poetry. His prose work falls more or less into two categories:

the first, his critical articles and essays, and the second, that which may be called his 'creative' prose, and which has as its base not a literary or historical subject, but autobiographical experience. Mandelstam's poetry, according to Nadezhda Yakovlevna, fulfilled a different function in his life, and sprang from a different, deeper source than did the 'creative' prose, and he rarely composed both simultaneously (N.Ya. II, p. 211). The creative prose was a medium which allowed Mandelstam to use more obviously personal material, and one in which he tended to consider certain vexed personal problems which had no place in his poetry. Such prose was for Mandelstam often a means of 'clearing the way' for poetry (N.Ya. II, p. 213), a means of coming to grips with a situation which hindered the composition of poetry. In the twenties Mandelstam was no longer able, after all, to take advantage of the traditional Petersburg habit of going away to Finland to sort out problems which could not be sorted out at home (Shum vremeni, II, p. 62).

For the purposes of this discussion, the critical articles will be treated together with the poetry, since they bear more relation to the poetry than to the 'creative' prose. Like the poetry, the concern of the critical articles is directly with artistic and especially with poetic creativity. As in the case of the poetry there is a break in the critical oeuvre also. During the period of silence Mandelstam's articles are concerned not with his most cherished forms of artistic creativity, but with his least favourite topics of translation and the cinema, and with the theatre (towards which his feelings were perhaps less negative, see below Chapter Five, section (ii)(f)). The pressures which left Mandelstam unable to create poetry did in addition prevent him from discussing the nature and purpose of poetry in articles and essays.

Although the critical articles, full of interesting and perceptive comments on the art of different epochs, elucidate Mandelstam's views on a variety of subjects, they are united by one theme, as is the poetry - namely with the value and fate of artistic composition. The drastic change in Mandelstam's creative life in the twenties necessarily had its effect on such a theme, and it is of value in determining the basic import of Egipetskaya marka, and its significance in relation to Mandelstam's other work, to examine the changes and developments in Mandelstam's treatment of the themes of creativity in

the poetry and prose of the period under discussion.

Mandelstam's concern with artistic creativity in the poetry and critical articles has two aspects. He is concerned both with the work created, the poet's role in its creation, and with the relation of the work created to the art of other epochs and countries.

In the first case, it is apparent from his early pieces that Mandelstam delights in the created work. He considered that a sense of joy and freedom was inherent in it. This is demonstrated in the fragments 'Pushkin i Skryabin', where Mandelstam defines the basis of art as the 'free and joyful imitation' of Christ who has already redeemed the world (II, p. 315). Such an imitation of Christ the poet achieves through his poetry. In the Gospel according to St. John the 'Word' is Christ (1. 14), but in Mandelstam's lexicon the 'Word' ('slovo') is poetry itself, the embodiment of joyfulness: 'Слово - чистое веселье / Исцеленье от тоски!' (I, no. 75). The poet is confident in the value of such work, and his confidence is apparent in the affirmative way in which sounds are described: 'Чудесный звук, на долгий срок' (I, no. 90). His confidence is that of the craftsman, the builder, who creates order and form from shapeless material ('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 321, and 'Notre Dame', I, no. 39). The poet's mission in establishing such order is to conquer the hostile emptiness of space and time ('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 323, and I, nos. 108, 117).

The second aspect of Mandelstam's concern with artistic creativity - the relationship between art of different epochs - is revealed in the fact that at every stage in Mandelstam's life his work is saturated with allusions to and associations with art. Mandelstam demands a sensitivity towards these allusions, a 'poetic preparation' on the part of the reader, an awareness of that cultural wealth which he himself sensed so acutely. He did indeed consider this awareness to be a prerequisite in the very composition of poetry: '... поэзия, освобожденная от всякой культуры, перестанет вовсе быть поэзией ...' ('Literaturnaya Moskva', II, p. 329). Mandelstam's insistence in alluding to the art of different epochs and countries is closely connected with his view on the intimate relationship existing between works of art. In his opinion, the art and particularly the poetry of any one epoch does not exist in isolation: 'Так в поэзии разрушаются грани национального, и стихия одного языка перекликается с другой через головы пространства и времени ...' ('Zametki o Shen'e', II, p. 300).

Culture is therefore distinguished essentially by its continuity. The emphasis is on such continuity in Nadezhda Yakovlevna's discussion of Mandelstam's concept of culture as the underlying idea which defines the structure of history, giving it form, as the artist gives form to raw material: 'Убеждение, что культура преемственна ...' (N.Ya. I, p. 268). Here Nadezhda Yakovlevna explains the nature of that culture with which Mandelstam felt a particular correspondence and which displayed in his eyes a remarkable continuity:

Древние связи Крыма и Закавказья, особенно Армении, с Грецией и Римом казались ему залогом общности с мировой, вернее, европейской, культуры.

These lands embodied what Mandelstam termed a 'Hellenistic' culture ('O prirode slova', II, p. 253). In his introduction to Osip Mandelstam: Selected Essays, Sydney Monas has aptly described this concept as follows:

For Mandelstam, 'Hellenic' means 'human'. Perhaps it would be better to call it a kind of creative, procreative projection of the human onto the emptiness of the world ...²³

In evidence once more is Mandelstam's fundamental concern with the imposing of order upon phenomena thus causing them to be less inimical. The vital additional detail here is that this process has as its focal point the individual human being. The Hellenistic culture was characterised above all by its respect for the human being, for the home, and therefore it created an atmosphere of domestic warmth; indeed Mandelstam defines Hellenism in terms of domestic utensils: 'Эллинизм - это сознательное окружение человека утварью, вместо безразличных предметов ...' ('O prirode slova', II, p. 253). The relationship between writers from the ancient and modern worlds and between their works is also a matter of such a warm, domestic nature: 'И для Анненского поэзия была домашним делом, и Еврипид был домашний писатель, сплошная цитата и кавычки' ('O prirode slova', II, p. 253). It is important to note that this was the only kind of warm domesticity which Mandelstam ever experienced, either in childhood or in later years. He reveals the lack of such a setting in his childhood in Shum vremeni by the constant use of the epithet 'domashniy', which is rarely applied to anything so conventionally domestic as the 'utensils' of his definition of Hellenism. It is the contrast between 'domashniy' and the nouns defined which highlights the lack of the domesticity craved by Mandelstam: 'domashniy inostranets' (II, p. 62), 'domashnim forumom' (II, p. 76), 'domashnego Bismarka' (II, p. 85),

'domashnyuyu duru' (II, p. 94), 'domashnikh lirikov' (II, p. 96),
'domashnimi vospominaniyami' (II, p. 99).

Through his beloved Hellenism, then, Mandelstam demonstrates in 'O prirode slova' the idea of the continuity of culture. In the same article he illustrates it further in the example of Acmeism, which he was to describe towards the end of his life as 'toska' for world culture (N.Ya. I, p. 264). In the article Mandelstam asserts that Acmeism's greatest achievement lay in the appearance of the new 'taste' which it had inspired; this new taste in turn pointed to those works of art which were of particular relevance to the early years of the twentieth century:

Благодаря тому, что в России, в начале столетия, возник
новый вкус, такие громады, как Рабле, Шекспир, Расин, снялись
с места и двинулись к нам в гости.

('O prirode slova', II, p. 257).

This is an example of what in 'Slovo i kul'tura' Mandelstam refers to as 'redkostnye predchuvstviya' (II, p. 224), that is, the sensitivity of an artist to the work of an artistic predecessor, the correspondence between their work. Such 'predchuvstviya' form part of that heritage which is destined for the 'tainstvennyy adresat' of 'O sobesednike' (II, p. 235). Mandelstam's confidence in being such a 'recipient', his affinity with his artistic predecessors, is emphasised in 'O prirode slova' by the familiar, 'domestic' way in which he describes them: 'двинулись к нам в гости'. The correspondences between artists were not arbitrary. The work of Rabelais, Racine and Shakespeare is related to that of the Acmeists by means of a concept which Mandelstam sees them to share, a concept demanded on a practical level by society itself -- one of moral strength to contrast with the 'nichегоchestvo' of the Symbolists: '... новый вкус, мужественная воля к поэзии и поэтике, в центре которой стоит человек ...' ('O prirode slova', II, p. 257). An example of such firmness appears in Mandelstam's own verse in a poem from 1914: 'Пусть имена цветущих городов' (I, no. 66), in which he makes it quite clear that respect for the individual is the rule by which society must be guided.

A poem reflecting the strength demanded of it by the condition of society will be a source of strength for the contemporary reader, but one which is in addition composed in the light of 'redkostnye predchuvstviya' is further equipped to reach the reader of any age. Just as a sailor's final message eventually drifts in a bottle to its

'tainstvennyy adresat', so does the poetry of Baratynsky 'come home' to Mandelstam, and that of François Villon reach him with a 'zhivuyu prelest' ('O sobesednike', II, pp. 234-235). In 'O prirode slova' it is evident that the poet's heightened sensitivity towards his cultural heritage plays an essential part in ensuring the survival of the poem: the frail boat of the poem is enriched and protected, in the case of Acmeism, by the fact that the Acmeist 'wind' has revealed once more the works of Rabelais, Shakespeare and Racine (II, p. 248). There can be little doubt that Mandelstam himself found in his cultural awareness a source of great strength: 'Все для жизни припасено, ничего не забыто в этой ладье' ('O prirode slova', II, p. 259). This was to be particularly so in the years of exile in Voronezh, and the correspondence in this respect between Mandelstam and Goethe is unmistakable, as can be seen from Mandelstam's 'Yunost' Gete':

Пусть образы их (i.e. прекрасных искусств) запечатлеются
в моем сознании: я сумею их сберечь для тихого,
сосредоточенного наслаждения. (III, p. 78)

Mandelstam prized a continuous culture in which affinities existed between the works of artists from different epochs. Thus it is that the nature of the artistic allusions which Mandelstam makes in his poetry and prose can play a most important part in both a fuller understanding of his work and also in an appreciation of his attitudes and state of mind at the time of composition. It is surely such an interpretive approach to these allusions, or 'subtexts' as they have been called, which can be of most benefit, and not simply their discovery, the importance of which Kiril Taranovsky has emphasised at some length in his recent Essays on Mandelstam: 'To reveal all his literary subtexts is the fundamental problem which stands before the investigators of his poetry'.²⁴ Apart from the fact that literature was not the only art form of which Mandelstam was aware, a contrast between this approach to his work and that poetic sensitivity which Mandelstam himself described is quite apparent: 'Ты схватываешь на лету, ты чувствителен к намекам ...' (Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 367). 'Subtext' is perhaps not a word of which Mandelstam would have entirely approved. The relationship of the artistic heritage to Mandelstam's own work was, rather, a matter of 'hints' and 'associations' (II, p. 367), an activity characterised by its freedom and spontaneity.

These qualities were indeed the chief principles of artistic

creativity as revealed in the poetry and critical articles before the period of silence. The recession of these principles and the approach of anxiety can be discerned in the work before the poetic silence in the reflections of Mandelstam's condition as a poet. In the Tristia collection, the theme of the 'lost' poetic word begins to appear in the poetry of 1920: 'Я слово позабыл, что я хотел сказать' (I, no. 113). By 1922, two elements characteristic of Mandelstam's discussion of poetic composition - the air which the poet breathes, and the vital sound of poetry which he must grasp - are depicted as being overtaken by disease and erosion:

Я дышал звезд млечных трухой
Колтуном пространства дышал. (I, no. 132)

Жизнь себя перемогает,
Понемногу тает звук. (I, no. 129)

A change in the role of the poet is observed: it is no longer that of the craftsman delighting in his work - the confident 'zvuk' is replaced by the hollow and ominous 'zvon' (I, nos. 131, 132) - but that of one carrying out a difficult and dangerous task. In the sixth and seventh stanzas of 'Grifel'naya oda' (I, no. 137) the elements and process of poetic composition are depicted in images indicative of violence:

Твои ли, память, голоса
Учительствуют, ночь ломая,
Бросая грифели лесам,
Из птичьих клювов вырывая?..
Меняю шум на пенье стрел,
Меняю строй на стрепет гневный. (I, no. 137)

In the article 'Slovo i kul'tura' the poet's mission is likened to that of Joshua, son of Nun, who led his people to the promised land. The aim here is still, as it was in 'Вот дароносица, как солнце золотое' (I, no. 117), to halt the flow of time, but now the hostile nature of time renders the poetic task as perilous as that of Joshua's conquest of Canaan:

Но есть нечто более голодное: время. Время хочет пожрать
государство ... Кто поднимет слово и покажет его времени,
как священник евхаристию - будет вторым Иисусом Навином.

('Slovo i kul'tura', II, pp. 225-226)

Like Joshua the poet is nevertheless quite convinced of the urgency and necessity of his task, whatever pain it may cause him:

Узловатых дней колена
Нужно флейтою связать. (I, no. 135)

Какая боль -- искать потерянное слово...
И с известью в крови, для племени чужого
Ночные травы собирать.

(I, no. 140)

This representation of the dangers inherent in the poet's task gives way in the final poems written before the poetic silence to the statement that the onset of the silence is at hand. This is especially true of the poem 'Я буду метаться по табору улицы темной' (I, no. 144). This poem of 1925 has quite a significant position, since with it Mandelstam closed the last volume of poetry ever to be brought out in his lifetime. The basis of the poem is Mandelstam's sense of duality, of discordance, a sense which existed on two counts. There was the duality occasioned by his awareness of being a poet out of step with the times, and that caused by his awareness of the falsity of his relationship with Ol'ga Vaksel', a relationship which almost wrecked his marriage (N.Ya. II, pp. 235-246). The poem is set against a background of falsity - the 'kolyuchaya nepravda' of the last stanza. The second stanza points clearly to the struggle which Mandelstam was experiencing in the creative process:

Я только запомнил каштановых прядей осечки,
Придымленных горечью, нет - с муравьиной кислинкой;
От них на губах остается янтарная сухость.

(I, no. 144)

A stray lock of Ol'ga's hair is caught in the sunlight; the association of ideas of the sun's heat, the coppery colour of the hair, the fact that it has fallen out of place, lead to a picture of a gun which has misfired. This image is carried into the second line in the smoke from the gunshot which symbolises his guilt and grief. The dryness and bitterness on his lips are evidently the effect of having kissed her hair: this is the dryness and bitterness of amber which represents the difficulty Mandelstam was encountering in composing poetry. For Mandelstam the lips and mouth were essential instruments in the poetic process. In his poems to Akhmatova he concentrated upon her pronunciation, the movement of her face and lips (I, nos. 97, 185). He describes his own poetry, in which so much physical movement was involved (N.Ya. I, pp. 192-197), as 'shevelen'e etikh губ' (I, no. 129). In the 1925 poem his lips are touched with a sensation of feverish dryness. This is in accordance with the feverish movement implied by the verb 'metat'sya' in the first stanza, and is also a culmination of the allusions to the deterioration in the poet's physical condition in the poetry of the early twenties (in 'Холодок щекочет темя' I, no. 129, for example, where the poet's blood runs thin). Moreover the sensation

of dryness becomes unpleasantly tangible, for it is equated with formic acid. This is a substance derived from the sting of the ant and used as a preserving fluid - thus there is perhaps through this image an allusion to the state of inertia which Mandelstam felt to be encroaching onto his poetic life.

The poem preceding 'Я буду метаться по табору улицы темной' also clearly betokens the onset of the poetic silence. The setting of this poem - 'Сегодня ночью, не солгу' (I, no. 143) is once more hostile. The atmosphere is one of a distinctly supernatural 'uncleanness', in which the image of salt plays a prominent part. In the first stanza it is present in one of its traditional roles (compare I, pp. 471-472) - that of warding off evil spirits. Yet it does not seem to be fulfilling this function, for a frightening metamorphosis takes place and things are no longer what they seem. Thus in the third stanza even those traditional symbols of hospitality, salt and bread, assume threatening forms: there is a knife in the salt cellar and the loaf is transformed into a hedgehog. The sharpness implied by the images of the knife and the hedgehog aligns the atmosphere very closely with the 'kolyuchaya nepravda' of no. 144. In 'Сегодня ночью, не солгу', however, the poetic silence is indicated in the sense of the second aspect of Mandelstam's concern with an artistic work, namely its relationship to the art of other epochs and countries. The key line in this respect is 'Того, что было, не вернешь' for it demonstrates how close the period of silence was: this line contradicts those cherished tenets which characterise Mandelstam's treatment of the mutual relationship of works of art. In the poem Tristia and in the article 'Slovo i kul'tura' Mandelstam speaks with confidence of repetition in life and art: 'Всё было встарь, всё повторится снова' (I, no. 104), '... глубокая радость повторения' (II, p. 225). In the 1925 poem, however, the idea of repetition is negated: 'Того, что было, не вернешь' (I, no. 143).

In addition to such allusions to illness, inertia, and a break in continuity, Mandelstam's articles of the early twenties begin to speak of the advent of a frighteningly monumental social structure. This structure stands in sharp contrast to Hellenism since it disregards the individual and threatens the Hellenistic concept of 'home' ('Gumanizm i sovremennost', II, pp. 352-354). Mandelstam likens this new 'social architecture' to the monolithic civilisations of Babylon,

Assyria and Egypt ('Gumanizm i sovremennost', II, p. 352) which crushed the individual. Related by its monumental nature to these ancient civilisations and to the 'social architecture' is an influence which Mandelstam names 'Buddhism'. This is mentioned in 'Pushkin i Skryabin' (II, p. 314) and it is most fully discussed in 'Devyatnadsatyy vek'. In the latter it is described as a force which leads to stagnation in artistic and mental activity (II, pp. 280-282). The approach of such monumental forces menaces the poet's ability to continue the culture which he prizes.

The period of silence was the culmination of Mandelstam's lack of confidence in various spheres. As his confidence in the nature of his position in society began to ebb, so too did his confidence in his role as a poet, in his task of continuing the 'blazhennoe nasledstvo' (I, no. 67) of his artistic predecessors.

In October 1930 Mandelstam's poetic voice was restored and his confidence was once more intact. In the 'Novye stikhi' which began to appear artistic creation is once more an important theme and Mandelstam's personal situation is reflected in these poems as being quite inseparable from his calling as a poet. In the 'Convict' or 'Wolf' cycle of the 'Novye stikhi' (N.Ya. I, pp. 201-202)²⁵ there are many images relating to the labour camps of Siberia and it is clear that Mandelstam, completely recovered from his confusion, now fully and even eagerly accepts his situation with all its dangers, confident that his poetry will be preserved and valued. In the poem 'Сохрани мою речь навсегда за привкус несчастья и дыма' (I, no. 235) Mandelstam goes so far as to equate his work with that of a convict. It is composed not of fragile notions, but of solid material, the back-breaking toil and unending endurance which are part of a convict's life: 'За смолу кругового терпенья, за совестный деготь труда'. It is humbling to note that once Mandelstam's confidence had been restored, the approach of danger merely served to strengthen it - in the Voronezh poems he was to claim that no-one and nothing could halt the movement of his poetic lips (I, no. 307).

In some of the poems of the second book of the 'Novye stikhi',²⁶ Mandelstam turned his attention directly again to the process of composition. In the 'Vosmistishiya' (I, nos. 275-285) he depicts a poem taking shape in terms of wind filling a sail: the breath of

inspiration gives shape to his formless mutterings, just as the wind gives shape to a sail which is then characterised by its grace and movement (I, nos. 275, 276). He also describes poetry as existing before it is composed: 'Быть может, прежде губ уже родился шопот' (I, no. 281) a continuation of the idea of potential which goes to form poetry, first expressed in the image of the builder's stone in 'Utro akmeizma': 'Камень как бы возглаждал иного бытия. Он сам обнаружил скрытую в нем потенциально способность динамики...' (II, p. 322).

There is a renewed delight in the work of others in the verse which followed the silence. In the poems of 1931-1933 painters, musicians and - of course - mainly poets, are prominent (I, nos. 259-264, 266-269). Here again, the manner in which Mandelstam addresses these artists has a comfortingly domestic tone: 'Сядь Державин, развалился .../Дай Языкову бутылку/И подвинь ему бокал ...' (I, no. 262). Although delighting in the work of others, Mandelstam clearly felt that there was a certain contradiction in his fascination with non-Russian poetry. In the poem 'K nemetskoy rechi' (I, no. 266) the image of the moth flying towards a flame conveys this contradiction and at the same time the inevitability of Mandelstam's attraction to 'alien' languages. The 'Ariosto' poems (I, nos. 267-269), written in the spring of 1933 (Mandelstam had been reading Italian poetry in the suitably 'Mediterranean' setting of Stary Krym) reflect his longing for Italy and his disquiet with his lack of loyalty to his own language:

Язык бессмысленный, язык солено-сладкий
И звуков стакнутых прелестные двойчатки,
Боюсь раскрыть ножом двухстворчатый жемчуг. (I, no. 267)

Significantly, this uneasiness is resolved in a prose work, the Razgovor o Dante, the last, longest and most imaginative of Mandelstam's critical essays. The work celebrates Mandelstam's deep admiration for and sympathy with Dante, whom he considered, perhaps mistakenly, to be a 'raznochinets' like himself. At the same time, however, the Razgovor o Dante provides considerable insight into Mandelstam's own poetic method. It is here that the resolution of Mandelstam's disquiet lies: the work of the Italian poet is not simply a form of treacherous pleasure, but a source of fruitful communication between two artists of different epochs. When Mandelstam describes the Purgatorio in terms of walking and breathing (II, p. 367), or Italian phonetics in terms of the movement of the lips and facial muscles

(II, pp. 400, 401), he is examining and affirming his own poetic method. The 'interlocutor' with whom the 'razgovor' was held was in all probability Andrey Bely (N.Ya. I, p. 162), whose death in January 1934 was to inspire the last group of poems before the Voronezh exile. Here the death of a fellow artist leads Mandelstam to think of his own death, and the poems are not only a requiem for Bely, but 'moy rekviem' also²⁷.

The poetry and the critical articles, then, are concerned with artistic creation, and where they deal with Mandelstam himself, it is in terms of his calling as a poet, as part of a cultural heritage. In these works the decline towards the poetic silence and the recovery from that silence can clearly be traced.

(iii) The nature of Mandelstam's creative prose

The emphasis in the creative prose is rather different, for this work is more directly autobiographical, and includes material of a far more trivial nature in its depiction of the natural scene. However, a concern with artistic creativity is still very much characteristic here, although it is expressed far less directly than in the verse and the critical articles.

It is interesting to note that the creative prose is spread over a far shorter period than either the critical articles or the verse. It covers only eleven years, from 1922-1933. It is significant that Mandelstam should have chosen prose as the vehicle for his creative work at this time. As Nadezhda Yakovlevna explains, this was a period when there was a distinct preference for prose, when it was considered to be much superior to poetry (N.Ya. II, pp. 211, 386). Thus the decision to write in prose was very much in the spirit of the times, and was perhaps an effort to communicate more directly with an age so antipathetic to verse.

(a) Early pieces

The creative prose may be divided into two sections: the short autobiographical reminiscences, 'Batum', 'Sukharyovka', 'Kholodnoe leto', 'Men'sheviki v Gruzii', 'Vozvrashchenie' and 'Kiev'; and the longer prose works, Shum vremeni, Egipetskaya marka, 'Chetvyortaya proza', and Puteshestvie v Armeniyu. A chronological survey of the

reminiscences and the longer prose works will assist in determining the general trends in Mandelstam's creative prose.

Chronologically, Egipetskaya marka appeared roughly at the mid-point of Mandelstam's period of creative prose writing. Of the works written in the first part of that period two have not survived, but their existence is recorded in Nadezhda Yakovlevna's memoirs. The first, 'Shuba', was printed in a Kharkov newspaper in 1922, but both the newspaper and the first and second (expanded) versions of the story have been lost (N.Ya. II, p. 214). Nadezhda Yakovlevna describes the moth-eaten coat which inspired this sketch (N.Ya. II, p. 87), and Professor Brown refers to it as a 'memoir of the literary life in Petersburg',²⁸. Perhaps there is an echo of this first story in Shum vremeni, in the section 'V ne po chinu barstvennoy shube' (II, pp. 102-108), where Mandelstam depicts 'literary spite', and attributes to the fur coat a social status in which a 'raznochinets' such as he had no part.

Mandelstam's second piece of creative prose to be lost was an unfinished work. It was connected with a beautiful and much coveted carpet which the Mandelstams acquired while living in Moscow, but which Mandelstam returned to the carpet sellers. Nadezhda Yakovlevna indicates the impulses behind the ensuing attempted prose piece: 'Ковер исчез из нашей жизни, а Мандельштам, тоскуя, начал что-то царапать на бумаге. Это был рассказ о ковре в московской трущобе' (N.Ya. II, p. 215). It would seem from this information that the prose was inspired not only by the gap left in Mandelstam's life by the disappearance of the carpet, but also by the contrast of the gorgeous carpet and the slums inhabited by the carpet sellers. At the same time, Mandelstam was evidently aware of the contrast between the carpet as a museum piece, huge and cumbersome, and their way of life. Their nomadic wanderings had temporarily halted in 1922, but Mandelstam perhaps sensed that their stay in Herzen House, headquarters of the Writers Union, was not to be of long duration. The episode of the carpet and the unfinished prose piece evidently came back to him when he was writing the passage in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu concerned with the Persian miniature: 'Обгорелые кочерьяжки рукописей похрустывают, как сухумский табак' (II, p. 167). Thus the first two prose pieces have both perhaps left traces in Mandelstam's later prose and both seem to have arisen from an awareness of contrast: the

first from the contrast between Mandelstam's own shabby fur coat and the high social status normally associated with the fur coat; and the second from the total inappropriateness of a beautiful work of art in the conditions of the twenties.

(b) 'Kholodnoe leto' and 'Sukharyovka'

1923 was Mandelstam's most prolific year in terms of creative prose composition: four of the short autobiographical pieces and Shum vremeni were written in the summer of that year. The four short pieces all have as their basis Mandelstam's experience of a certain place at a certain time - two deal with Moscow in 1923, two with Batum in 1920. The impulse behind all four would seem to be the contrasts and comparisons arising between these different times and places. The underlying impulse in 'Kholodnoe leto' and 'Sukharyovka', both published in 'Ogonyok' in July 1923, is the contrast of an actual and a desired location. The first of these depicts the very cold summer of 1923; again the fur coat is in evidence, in a rather hostile comparison with a harpooned fish (II, p. 132), as Mandelstam pondered how he and his wife were to keep warm in the approaching winter, for their finances could not meet the purchase of such 'dorogie shuby'. The second piece gives an energetic characterisation of the Sukharyovka market in Moscow; the sight of this 'bazaar' brings to Mandelstam's mind bazaars which he had seen not too many years previously in the Crimea and Georgia. Both pieces have positive aspects in the depiction of Moscow - Mandelstam's affectionate description of the city in terms of sparrows, his characterisation of it as 'web-footed' in 'Kholodnoe leto' (II, p. 130), the intense activity, the 'zhivaya rech'' of Sukharyovka. On the other hand, they both have threatening details. In 'Kholodnoe leto' Mandelstam speaks of a 'smertnaya skuka' (II, p. 132) which is dominant in Moscow and which is revealed in the city's architecture in a senseless desire for sheer size. There is an ominous picture of life on Tverskoy Boulevard, site of Herzen House - a strange beekeeper sits on a tree, endeavouring to coax a swarm of bees into a straw bag. The hostility of this scene is established by the fact that the beekeeper is specifically from Tverskoy Boulevard and by the close proximity - and consequent association - of the bees with the '... темной куче народа, сгрудившейся под деревом ...' (II, p. 131). This picture of the bees, beekeeper and the dark mass of people

perhaps suggests the degree of control exercised over un-thinking people by those in charge of Herzen House. Mandelstam's dislike for such institutions is further demonstrated in the related image of the honeycomb, used in the description of the Vospitatel'nyy Dom which is evidently of the same order as Herzen House (II, p. 131; for a discussion of the negative impact of bee imagery, see Chapter Two, section (i)). The unpleasant features of the Sukharyovka market - its potential for violence (II, p. 133) and the depressing monotony of its tradespeople (II, p. 134) - betray a longing for a different area. This longing is revealed quite directly in 'Sukharyovka':

Я видел тифлисский майдан и черные базары Баку.
Разгоряченные, лукавые, но в подвижной и страстной
выразительности всегда человеческие лица грузинских ...

(II, p. 134)

In Moscow Mandelstam is reminded of certain features of the Crimea and Georgia, which were both part of his 'beloved south' - the area which he considered to be the home of history and of Christendom (N.Ya. II, p. 524). And yet the Moscow features bear no comparison with the idealised ones of the south. The rather frightening bazaar of 'Sukharyovka' and the cold climate of 'Kholodnoe leto' contrast with both the climate of the south and the warm nature of its people. The rare 'southern' details which appear in the latter prose work ('nastoyashchiy ital'yanskiy dvor', 'grechanka krasoty neopisuemoy', II, p. 130) have a negative aspect because of their close proximity to the 'zanoza v lazuri' - this is the ominous image of the aeroplane, a feature very much characteristic of his poetry of the same period (compare I, nos. 133, 139).

(c) 'Men'sheviki v Gruzii', 'Vozvrashchenie', 'Batum'

One month after the appearance of these prose pieces, with their latent longing for the south, 'Men'sheviki v Gruzii' was printed in Ogonyok. Here the setting of the piece, that of the 'Rodina Ifigenii' (II, p. 197), provides the link with the two Moscow pieces. This sketch and the unfinished 'Vozvrashchenie', which was perhaps the first version of 'Men'sheviki v Gruzii', are the first in which Mandelstam adopts a retrospective attitude: they give a view of his experiences in the south during the Civil War period. Mandelstam treats his arrest by the Mensheviks in Batum on the suspicion of being a Bolshevik agent, and also alludes to his earlier spell in prison in the Crimea. The treatment is laconic, with an

almost comic emphasis on the ridiculous protocol established at that time:

Все равно. У нас такой порядок. Каждый едет туда, откуда он приехал.

('Men'sheviki v Gruzii', II, p. 198)

... забегали, закудахтали, залопотали люди неприятной наружности.

('Vozvrashchenie', III, p. 22)

Elements of threat lurk close beneath the surface, particularly in the latter, which is a description of the officials at whose mercy Mandelstam found himself. The nightmarish characters described bring to mind those of Tatyana's dream in Pushkin's Evgeny Onegin²⁹, and also those to appear later in Mandelstam's fateful poem 'Мы живем, под собою не чуя страны' (I, no. 286, st. 5, 6). This was indeed a nightmarish time in Batum, and the precarious position of one arrested during this period of arbitrary violence is conveyed in the comparison with a henhouse (II, p. 198) of the place to which the detainees were taken. The unnerving autobiographical experiences which Mandelstam depicts do not affect his basic attraction to the 'yuzhnyy kray', although he is deeply disturbed by the lack of respect being shown towards it. This is true also of the 1922 sketch 'Batum', where one senses - through the welter of detail concerned with the dubious speculation practised there by foreigners - Mandelstam's respect for the indigenous traditions. He speaks of the 'blagoobrazie i kul'tura' of the Batumian trading houses, of the social nature of their trade: '... в привычках торгующего Востока чувствуешь уважение к человеку ...' (III, p. 15). 'Batum' differs from 'Men'sheviki v Gruzii' and 'Vozvrashchenie' in not being retrospective: the Mandelstams had been in Batum at the end of 1921, and the sketch characterising the city appeared in Sovetskiy yug in January 1922. The impulse behind the retrospective sketches, in which Mandelstam chose to depict some of the most traumatic experiences of his southern wanderings, was perhaps his general uneasiness in 1923. Perhaps he feared that he could see in Moscow life a reflection of those practices - the ridiculous bureaucracy and arbitrary justice - which he had witnessed during the Civil War. This uneasiness is concerned not only with general circumstances; there is also a reflection in these sketches of Mandelstam's uneasiness in relation to the position of art. For example, in

'Kholodnoe leto' he depicts the Moscow architecture as a
'... накопление размеров, лишенных величия ... опарой этажей' (II, pp. 131-132); in this obsession with size, irrespective of form, is an embodiment in artistic terms of the 'Buddhist' tendencies which Mandelstam had anxiously described as prevailing in the structure of society in the article 'Gumanizm i sovremennost': '... монументальность форм надвигающейся социальной архитектуры' (II, p. 352). In 'Buddhist' Moscow, as Mandelstam was later to christen it on his return there from Armenia (I, no. 237), trading, which achieved an almost artistic status because of its 'blagoobrazie i kul'tura' in the 'Mediterranean' world, is transformed into vicious activity. At the same time, however, it is clear that Mandelstam is uneasy about the situation of the south itself. The true home of culture suffers from the violence of modern man, in a more directly hostile way than does the Moscow scene: 'Родина Ифигении изнемогла под солдатской пятой' ('Men'sheviki v Gruzii', II, p. 197). The culture which it can offer is ignored in favour of thoroughly artificial pastimes:

Есть в Батуме и поэты, изысканней которых трудно себе представить. Город постоянно подвергается налетам заезжих шарлатанов - 'профессоров' и 'лекторов'.

('Batum', III, p. 18)

Mandelstam's creative prose up to this point did not meet entirely with editorial approval. For instance, a phrase in 'Sukharyovka' in which Mandelstam compared the trampling of the earth to the trampling of 'one's own mother' was deleted as offensive to the Soviet citizen (N.Ya. II, pp. 215-216). When the 'Batum' piece was reprinted in 'Pravda' in February 1922 it was cut by almost half (see III, p. 352), being purged of all offensive references to Batum's speculative practices and to the thoroughly colonial spirit which Mandelstam saw to be dominant in it.

(d) Shum vremeni and 'Feodosiya'

The bulk of Shum vremeni was written when the Mandelstams were taking a holiday in the Crimea, which they managed to do by staying at the TSEKUBU rest-home in Gaspra. This work differed radically from the expectations of Lezhnev, the editor who had commissioned the work and it was rejected:

Страшная канитель была с "Шумом времени" ... Лежнев
... прочитав, почувствовал самое горькое разочарование
... история петербургского мальчика показалась ему
пресной.

(N.Ya. II, p. 380)

Finally published in 1925 by Georgy Blok, Shum vremeni develops the technique of retrospection seen in embryo in the earlier sketches. Here Mandelstam considers the present in terms of past experience. The impulse behind this work (as is amply explained by Nadezhda Yakovlevna) is the search for the answer central to his poetry at that time: '... откуда взялась отчужденность от текущего времени' (N.Ya II, p. 482). The work provides fascinating glimpses into the world of Mandelstam's childhood, into the various influences on his early life: the conflicting Judaic and Russian backgrounds, his first encounter with representatives of revolution, and his reaction to them. In terms of art, the work firmly establishes Mandelstam's love for music ('Muzyka v Pavlovske', 'Khaos iudeyskiy', 'Kontserty Gofmana i Kubelika') and the chapter 'Knizhnyy shkap' (II, pp. 56-61) gives his amazingly pertinent childhood views of literature. Quite delightful is Mandelstam's characterisation of Turgenev, although it does strike the disturbing note of Mandelstam's early presentiments of a changing society and a difficult life:

Тургенев был весь разрешенный и открытый с Баден-Баденом
... и ленивыми разговорами. Но я знал, что такой
спокойной жизни, как у Тургенева, уже нет и нигде не
бывает.

(II, p. 59)

The 'heavy' Dostoevsky, on the other hand, was strictly not for a young boy: 'На Достоевском лежал запрет, вроде надгробной плиты ...' (II, p. 59). Perhaps there is an indication here of the reasons for Mandelstam's cautious approach to Dostoevsky in later years (N.Ya. II, p. 319) and, more importantly, perhaps an implication that the 'heavy', rather dangerous, world of Dostoevsky was nearer to life than the tranquil society of Turgenev.

The composition of Shum vremeni falls into two parts, which were interrupted by the composition of some poetry. In the second part, the chapter 'V ne po chinu barstvennoy shube' and the section 'Feodosiya' have a distinctly more threatening atmosphere. In the former (while depicting his one time teacher V.V. Gippius) Mandelstam refers in a manner unusually direct for his creative prose to the pernicious effect which his sense of isolation has upon his creative condition:

И, все же, лишь масками чужих голосов украшены пустые
стены моего жилища. Вспоминать - идти одному обратно
по руслу высохшей реки!

(II, p. 104)

There are clear reflections of the 1923 poetry dealing with creativity in this chapter. The poet is emphatically alone here, the sources of his inspiration gone. This is stressed by the image of the dried up riverbed, which contrasts strikingly with the bubbling spring of inspiration in 'Grifel'naya oda' (I, no. 137) which, however elusive ('obratno') to the poet's grasp, was at least animate³⁰. The image of the 'masks' of others' voices brings to mind the poem 'Nashedshiy podkovu' (I, no. 136), where the living poetic sound is shown to have been replaced by a form which appeals not to the poetic ear (an instrument most necessary in the process of composition and one which demonstrates the poet's heightened sensitivity to inspiration - see 'Слух чуткий парус натягает' I, no. 15), but to the vision:

Человеческие губы,

которым больше нечего сказать,

Сохраняют форму последнего сказанного слова ...

(I, no. 136)

In 'V ne po chinu barstvennoy shube' the full seriousness of Mandelstam's condition is demonstrated in that although no audible forms of inspiration exist, the poet is equipped to deal only with these, for his vision grows dim: 'Ослепнуть. Осязать и узнавать слухом. Печальный удел!' (II, p. 103).

In 'Feodosiya' the threatening emphasis is expressed not in terms of Mandelstam's creative life, but in more directly hostile, everyday terms. This section deals again with Mandelstam's experience of the unstable Feodosiya of the Civil War period, and these experiences again contrast with the southern setting, whose innate worth Mandelstam emphasises: 'Город был древнее, лучше и чище всего, что в нем происходило' (II, p. 120). In this section Mandelstam's basic concern is with the nature of relationships between people at that time. Some of the portraits given bear reflections of Mandelstam's affection for people who helped him during this frightening time (the Harbour Master who took him in when he had nowhere else to go; the old lady from whom he rented a room; and Colonel Tsygalsky who, according to Nadezhda Yakovlevna, was an exceptionally kind man who rescued Mandelstam from one of Wrangel's prisons in the Crimea - N.Ya. II, pp. 483-484). However, the overall

picture is a chilling one. The chapter 'Barmy zakona' (II, pp. 119-121) opens with a depiction of insect-like people partaking of ferriferous Crimean water in a bath-house. The threatening impact of this scene is made clear when Mandelstam goes on to describe the effect which the possibility of committing murder has on certain people - it refreshes them just like a bath of mineral salts (II, p. 120). The Harbour Master is ingratiating and unspontaneous, prepared to leave the land over which he presides so regally, should it be to his advantage (II, pp. 111-115); the old lady is superstitious, bird-like, and her similarly bird-like house is obviously at risk in the dark, plague-ridden setting (II, pp. 116-118). Both Colonel Tsygalsky and Mazesa da Vinci are totally out of place in such violent times. Tsygalsky has an inappropriately academic approach to things military and Mandelstam suggests that this rather Chekhovian character would have a tendency to philosophise at times of crisis (II, pp. 120-121). Mazesa da Vinci is completely unaffected by Wrangel's occupation, but pursues his banal existence unmolested (II, p. 124). Whereas Tsygalsky approaches other people as though he were a nursemaid (II, p. 120), Mazesa da Vinci has a more frightening attitude to others: '... выбрал в городе жертву ... действуя, как тарантул ...' (II, p. 124). 'Feodosiya' may appear to be an 'appendage',³¹ which has little connection with the rest of Shum vremeni, but its concern is still that of Mandelstam's relationship with the times. On this occasion the question is approached through a past more recent, and more vicious, than that of the earlier parts of Shum vremeni, through a depiction of people who were, like Mandelstam, out of place in society, and through a consideration of artificiality in relationships.

Themes connected with artistic creation are revealed only indirectly in 'Feodosiya'. The cultural activities there assume a negative air because of the nature of the artists - the Harbour Master, the Chief of Police, the director of the Azov bank (II, p. 113)³². The implication here is that these men, whose professions, one feels, were not particularly attractive to Mandelstam, are simply dilettantes, not truly committed to the artistic task. The account of Feodosiya's enchantment with Voloshin compounds this negative impression. Mandelstam and Voloshin were not on good terms: Voloshin had accused Mandelstam of stealing his deluxe illustrated volume of Dante, and had written a letter denouncing Mandelstam to the Feodosiyan port authorities thus exposing him to: '... смертельной опасности в безумных

городах, охваченных страстью к человекоубийству ...' (N.Ya. II, pp. 99). In 'Feodosiya' Mandelstam conveys his dislike of this man (whom Nadezhda Yakovlevna describes scathingly as living out his life in a fashionable resort, surrounded by female admirers - N.Ya. II, pp. 99-101) in his depiction of Voloshin's eccentric dress (II, pp. 113-114) and in the sarcasm and bathos of the characterisation of Voloshin's effect upon the inhabitants: '... город охватывало как бы античное умиление, и купцы выбегали из лавок' (II, p. 114). This is a comment on the artificiality of artistic life in Feodosiya, whose true cultural wealth is ignored in favour of artistic preoccupations which are either superficial or, as in the case of Mazesa da Vinci, distorted to the point of being grotesque. Mazesa's chosen surname contrasts with his way of life and his art. His low aspirations in life surely point to a correspondence with Gogol's Akakiy Akakevich: '... мечтал купить белые туфли на резиновой подошве ...' (II, p. 124). His art is quite introverted: he paints only self portraits and studies of the Adam's apple (II, p. 125) and the depiction of his 'bookcase' (the means by which character may be judged, *Shum vremeni*, II, p. 99), shows the barrenness and the lack of depth in his artistic life: '... испанская библия, словарь Макарова, "Соборяне" Лескова, энтомология Фабра и путеводитель Бедекера по Парижу' (II, p. 124). In the chapter 'Starukhina ptitsa' the comment on creativity is merely implied in that images of salt and stars - prominent in the depiction of literary spite in 'V ne po chinu barstvennoy shube' (II, p. 103) and also in the poem '1 yanvarya 1924' (I, no. 140), where Mandelstam portrays his search for a place in society - are repeated in a distinctly hostile setting: 'Крупной солью сыпались на двор зимние звезды ... посоленной звездами, - физически ясным становилось ощущение спустившейся на мир чумы ...' (II, pp. 117-118).

(e) 'Kiev'

The last prose piece to appear before *Egipetskaya marka* was the sketch 'Kiev' published in a Kiev newspaper in May 1926, when the Mandelstams were returning from Yalta to Tsarskoe Selo via Kiev and Moscow. Although evidently inspired by his contemporary contact with Kiev, it does include a certain amount of retrospection of the frightening and violent year of 1919 'Они еще помнят ... панические дни ...' (III, p. 5). As in the sketch 'Batum', (III, p. 16), Mandelstam discusses questions of topical interest, such as the struggle

for living space. He attributes to this all the characteristics of a complex novelistic intrigue (III, p. 6). This is perhaps a further comment on the artificiality prevalent in life's most ordinary situations, for Mandelstam considered novels to be an artificial art form. Whereas poetry was a means of coming to terms with life, the novel provided a form of escape: '... а Мандельштам сказал, что тюремщики больше всех нуждаются в романах' (N.Ya. II, p. 386). (For Mandelstam's views on the nineteenth-century novel, see below, Chapter Five, section ii (a)). Mandelstam's anxiety as to the condition of art is conveyed more directly in the situation of the craftsmen of Kiev, the partner in the saw-mill and the cobbler. The unhappy condition of the former, occasioned by economic circumstances (III, p. 9), is revealed not only in his tears (which witness his complete identification with the trade, being tears of resin), but also in the unhealthy condition of the sawdust: 'Эта балка больна - чахоточная ...' (III, p. 8). The 'zhizneradostnost'' of the Kievan cobbler (III, p. 5) delights Mandelstam, but an ominous shadow is cast over this delight in the contrast between the craftsman's work and the atmosphere in which he plies his trade: 'Погромный липовый пух в нервическом майском воздухе ... Уличный сапожник работает под липами жизнерадостно и ритмично ...' (III, p. 5). A similarly anxious atmosphere is created in the contrast between the 'zhiznelyubie' of the Kiev people and their language, and their helplessness. Mandelstam characterises them as 'malen'kie lyudi', such as traditionally came to grief in the work of Gogol and Dostoevsky: 'Необычайно по-прежнему жизнелюбие маленьких людей и глубока их беспомощность' (III, p. 10).

Such then is the nature of Mandelstam's creative prose before Egipetskaya marka: basically autobiographical, with an undercurrent of anxiety often connected with artistic concerns. Egipetskaya marka is closely related to the creative prose written before the period of silence; like the sketches and Shum vremeni, it adopts a retrospective approach in the consideration of present problems, and its concern with artistic creativity which, as will be seen in Chapter Five, is fundamental to the work is treated in an indirect manner reminiscent of that of the earlier creative prose.

(f) 'Chetvyortaya proza' and Puteshestvie v Armeniyu

The two prose works composed after the period of silence are

distinguished by the fact that they are far less ambiguous in their treatment of the problems of creativity, particularly when it is a question of Mandelstam condemning those who bend their art to the system's demands. This is especially true of 'Chetvyortaya proza'. This work represents Mandelstam's release from the frustrations of the twenties, which had culminated in what the Mandelstams knew as the 'Dreyfus' affair³³. In 1928 Mandelstam, through no fault of his own, had appeared as translator on the title page of a translation of Thyl Eulenspiegel, earlier translations of which he had in fact only revised. Although Mandelstam made every attempt to rectify the situation (as can be seen from his letter to Vechernyaya Moskva, II, p. 477), Gornfel'd, one of the original translators, nonetheless denounced Mandelstam as a thief. The vicious campaign which then ensued was ended only by the intervention of Bukharin. 'Chetvyortaya proza' is a bitter outburst against the 'literary' men who so mistreated him; he names them directly and firmly dissociates himself from them. The artists and their work are depicted in most graphic and unambiguous terms. Isay Benediktovich Mandelstam and his translations of Anatole France are characterised as insipid 'potage' (II, p. 178), and his acquaintances are of a similarly flavourless nature ('... grenki v bul'one ...', II, p. 178). The product of the 'writers' of 'Chetvyortaya proza' is no more than a host of denunciations - on toilet paper (II, p. 180). The writing of this piece had the effect of ridding Mandelstam of his confusion; he had now stated exactly what his position was, and fully accepted that he should stand apart from those who complied with the demands of the age.

Mandelstam's trip to Armenia, which came at the end of the 'Dreyfus' affair, and which was arranged by Bukharin (N.Ya. II, p. 594) established firmly his recovery from the poetic silence, and led to the cycle of poems 'Armenia' and to the prose Puteshestvie v Armeniyu. The prose piece is by no means a traditional travelogue; it is a work rich in associations with artistic creation, and also with Mandelstam's newer interest in biology. Against a background of characterisations of people and places encountered in Armenia Mandelstam introduces a variety of topics: botany, Impressionist painting, chess, memory, all of which ultimately play some part in his view of the process of creativity. The piece celebrates

Mandelstam's admiration for Armenia, for its language and its people - all factors which contributed to the return of his poetic voice. Puteshestvie v Armeniyu makes clear the precise lessons which Armenia had taught him, and which had helped to restore his confidence: '... все это говорило мне: ты бодрствуешь, не бойся своего времени, не лукавь' (II, p. 143). It is evident in the work that Mandelstam was aware of the return of his 'poetic rightness', but at the same time there are many unambiguous references to places and to people of a less congenial nature to the poet than Armenia: it was precisely the return of his confidence that enabled him to speak of these things so openly. In the section 'Zamoskvorech'e' he depicts the tradespeople of 'Buddhist' Moscow, whose dark, restricted and mercenary life epitomises the 'poshlost' of Gogol's world. These people, who show no signs of friendliness or recognition, live their lives strictly according to the principles of a grim association of consumers and their insipid lifelessness is conveyed in the image of a melon - an image which brings to mind Gogol's tale of the two Ivans, whose triviality was also symbolised by a melon:

Нигде и никогда я не чувствовал с такой силой арбузную
пустоту России ...

(II, p. 146)

Прекрасный человек Иван Иванович! Он очень любит
дыни.³⁴

The manners of the Moscow tradespeople seem to be a more hostile development of the 'nichtozhestvo i odnoobrazie' of the Sukharyovka market traders (II, p. 134). Both groups of people are absorbed in their trades to the point of resembling their wares physically (II, p. 134, II, p. 146) - all else is excluded from their lives. The insipid indifference of Moscow stands in evident contrast to the 'zhiznennoe napolnenie' of the Armenians (II, p. 143), and emphasises Mandelstam's longing to return to that land. He was however quite sure that this would never happen (N.Ya. II, p. 473), as he says in his poetry: 'Я тебя никогда не увижу/Близорукое армянское небо ...' (I, no. 214).

Mandelstam's full appreciation of the danger of his position is revealed graphically in the ominous closing lines of the work. Here he tells the very dangerous tale of one Arshak, whose life was in the hands of a despotic Assyrian, king Shapukh. A parallel is implied between the 'odin dobavochnyy den'' granted to Arshak (II, p. 176) and

Mandelstam's time in Armenia, a period of respite and poetic inspiration: '... полный слышанья, вкуса и обонянья ...' (II, p. 176), but quite uncharacteristic of his life henceforward.

Puteshestvie v Armeniyu obviously in no way met the literary requirements of the day. It did not celebrate the enthusiastic building of Socialism, as was the practice at that time for writers visiting various parts of the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it gives a singularly hostile appraisal of the contemporary scene: it attacks Bezymensky (II, p. 158), gives an uncomplimentary description of the tradespeople of Moscow, makes derogatory remarks about 'progress' (II, p. 154), about Darwin's evolutionary theories of variability and adaptability - the survival of those who could adapt most readily to the environment (II, p. 162), and it censures that increasingly popular practice of public repentance (II, p. 154). Above all, the final lines on the Assyrian aroused profound disapproval; Tsezar' Vol'pe, the editor of Zvezda, who allowed it to be published, was dismissed (N.Ya. II, p. 461) and an article appeared in Pravda denouncing the work (N.Ya. II, pp. 472-473).

(iv) The influence of work undertaken immediately prior to and during the poetic silence

The characteristics observed above in both Mandelstam's prose and his poetry are, as will be seen repeatedly in specific correspondences in imagery, related to Egipetskaya marka. There are, however, vital influences acting upon the general formation of Egipetskaya marka in the only other work of the period under discussion which remains to be considered, that is in the work undertaken during the poetic silence in order to earn a living. An examination of this sets the place of Egipetskaya marka in the context of Mandelstam's other work more sharply in focus.

Mandelstam's attempts to earn money during the early twenties and the period of silence took various forms: children's poetry, translation work and reviews. The necessity to carry out this work was, as has been seen, partly responsible for Mandelstam's inability to write poetry at that time and it is not surprising that he should have reacted against it. Such reaction is apparent in the various comments which he manages to make in these works on the contemporary scene;

these comments are generally made indirectly, and the medium through which they are made, a specific image, an allusion to the poetry or novels of other writers and eras, often recurs in Egipetskaya marka. The translations, children's verse and reviews will be discussed not in chronological order but in the order in which they most affected the composition of Egipetskaya marka.

(a) Children's poetry

The connection of the children's verse with Egipetskaya marka is perhaps the least striking, although there are coincidences in imagery between the two works which will be noted below. For the present it should be observed that it is surely more than coincidence that the vast majority of subjects described in the children's poetry between 1924-1926 should be precisely those which form the world of Egipetskaya marka. The primus, laundry, telephone, boot-blacks, floor-cleaners, galoshes, kitchen, photographs, violinists, kalach, piano and trams, so cleverly and wittily described in the children's verse all assume a place in the ominous setting of Egipetskaya marka. The poem 'Vse v tramvae' (II, no. 457 3X), one of those not included for publication, is a veritable microcosm of the prose work, featuring a tram, a dressmaker, a purse, ink, quills, a floor-cleaner, a boot-black, a fly, a piano. The children's verse itself, however, is not devoid of images of a potentially hostile force. The kitchen to Mandelstam normally represented the centre of the domestic scene, and it was a room of which he was particularly fond: it could give a sense of comfort and stability (see for example, his letters: III, pp. 202 and 240, and the poem 'Мы с тобой на кухне посидим' I, no. 224, where the comforts of the kitchen contrast with their unsettled existence). In the children's verse, however, the kitchen has rather frightening attributes:

И варится стирка
В котле великане,
Как белые рыбы
В воде океане ...

(I, no. 415)

Here the image of the gigantic cauldron and the fish simile have a distinctly hostile ring, for Mandelstam was chary of vastness (in flowers, for example - Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 150; in buildings - 'Kholodno'e leto', II, p. 131), and the fish is not part of his positive lexicon ('Lamark' I, no. 254, which demonstrates his aversion to the cold-blooded species). Moreover, the themes of the

children's verse are not, generally speaking, cheerful: a telephone weeps, alone and not needed; a tram gets lost in a confusing city which has a totally uncaring, impervious attitude to such a plight, and towards the individual:

Не слышал ли ты о Клике,
О трамвае молодом?
Дом ответил очень зло:
- Много здесь таких прошлю.

(I, no. 406)

In this poem a sense of pity is aroused for Klik, with his injured eye (line 75), his tiredness and confusion. (The theme of the poem, that of the lost tram, although evidently more banal in Mandelstam's work, inevitably brings to mind Gumilev's depiction of the revolution in nightmare terms in the poem 'Zabludivshiysya tramvay').³⁵ A similar pathos is evident in 'Shary' (I, no. 407), where the green balloon, a slow-witted 'foundling', contrasts with his confident and colourful brothers. As in the case of the first poem of 'Primus' (I, no. 396), where hens contrast with arrogant peahens, the situation depicted is very much one of an underdog whom others will not accept: 'Мы вам не товарищи: подумаешь! кудах!' (I, no. 396). Perhaps Mandelstam was hinting at his own situation here, the situation which he was to depict in Egipetskaya marka through the character of the underdog Parnok.

Mandelstam's children's poetry does involve the traditional device of personification, which was very much frowned upon at that time, considered to be harmful and 'unrealistic' (see Mandelstam's sarcastic comments in 'Detskaya literatura', III, pp. 50-51). However, Mandelstam's use of the device does not involve those appealing animals (for example, the bear), traditional in children's literature. Instead he personifies objects from the modern technical world - the car, the telephone, the tram, electricity; but there is something unusually cold about this technical world - all is perfectly clean and in good order: seven of the poems deal with cleaning (I, nos. 398, 399, 406, 408, 409, 410, 415). It is not surprising that, in this world of cold sterility, the identification of objects with the animal world rarely involves warm-blooded mammals, but as in 'Dva tramvaya Klik i Tram' (I, no. 406) and 'Kukhnya' (I, no. 415) invertebrates and cold-blooded creatures (the cockroach³⁶, the worm, the grass snake, the burbot), creatures which Mandelstam generally considered with aversion. It is interesting to note that Mandelstam does equate a tram with a traditionally attractive rabbit, but that this identification occurs in

the poetry Marshak did not think fit to be submitted for publication (II, no. 457 9XI, and II, p. 675). The only occasion upon which Mandelstam actually personifies a creature is in the poem 'Mukha' (I, no. 414), where the picture of a fly drowning in milk is rather unpleasant.

The general atmosphere of the children's poetry is, then, not particularly attractive, but it is this atmosphere, which, in addition to certain specific images, anticipates Egipetskaya marka.

(b) Reviews and articles

The reviews and articles undertaken during the period of silence deal with translation, theatre and cinema; here Mandelstam speaks scathingly of critics, translators and directors alike. He depicts the epoch and the art which it produces as being governed by strictly mercenary considerations: '... в эпоху ... когда режиссерствовал паек ...' ('Berezil', III, p. 103). At times a reflection of his own situation can be detected in his criticism of others: '... утомление поэта сложными отношениями современности' ('Zhyul' Romen', II, p. 362).

The feature most strikingly frequent in this work is Mandelstam's preoccupation with Gogol and Dostoevsky. It can be seen from Mandelstam's letters that he was reading Gogol at this time (III, p. 236); his attention was also being focused on Gogol and Dostoevsky through the work of the actor Yakhontov, whom Mandelstam evidently admired ('Yakhontov', III, pp. 111-114).

He sees specific correspondences in the artistic sphere between Gogol and the 1920's; for example in the article 'Berezil' he notes a correspondence between Gogol's work and Soviet comedy (III, p. 105). The influence of Gogol is revealed more generally in these articles, however, in Mandelstam's appreciation of a society which exhibits tendencies increasingly reminiscent of a Gogolian world, with all its grossness and triviality. On two occasions Mandelstam refers to the conclusion of Gogol's story about the two Ivans, at the point where Gogol abruptly breaks off his tale, stressing the futility of the lives which he has been depicting: 'Скучно на этом свете, господа'³⁷. In the article 'Kukla s millionami', this phrase is clearly recognizable, despite its topical adaptations, with its emphatic opening position: 'Скучно жить в трудовой республике, граждане и господа!' (III, p. 115). In 'Zhak rodilsya i umer', the figures of

the two Ivans are fused with that of Chichikov: 'Чепез "Жака" просвечивает какая-то мерзкая чичиковская рожа ... "Что, брат, скучно жить в России?" ...' (III, p. 60).

The references to Dostoevsky which occur in 'Kukla s millionami' are less numerous, but of a more threatening nature - in accordance with Mandelstam's unease with regard to Dostoevsky's work. He makes mention not only of the highly unsavoury Svidrigaylov, but also characterises the film which he is criticising as the second part of Dostoevsky's Bobok. If Dostoevsky's work with its questions of licence and will in general disturbed Mandelstam then this short work must have been exceptionally perturbing, for in places it is horribly relevant to Mandelstam's own situation:

Со мной что-то странное происходит. И характер меняется, и голова болит. Я начинаю видеть и слышать какие-то странные вещи. Не то чтобы голоса, а так, как будто кто подле: 'Бобок, бобок, бобок'.³⁸

Dostoevsky's comments on literature's demands for a 'cudgel not Voltaire', and on people's blindness as to their own imperfections, must also have struck Mandelstam as uncomfortably apt, at a time when he and his work were so unpopular³⁹.

As revealed in the articles written during the period of silence, the influence of Gogol and Dostoevsky coincided with Mandelstam's appreciation of the danger of his position. This influence is reflected in two ways in Egipetskaya marka: firstly, it gives a generally hostile background to the treatment of the theme of artistic creation, and secondly, it creates an atmosphere of apprehension in the delineation of character and geographical setting. As in the case of the children's poetry, there is in these articles and reviews a marked potential hostility and, again, the manner in which it is revealed can be traced in Egipetskaya marka.

(c) Translations

The atmosphere of the translations to be discussed is one of extreme disquiet. These translations fall into two categories: those undertaken with a strictly financial end in view, and those which brought financial return and permitted Mandelstam to reflect the contemporary scene in verse. Those in the former category did not always win the approbation of the critics at the time (see, for example, M.A. Gershenzon's article on Mandelstam's translation of Max Bartel's 'Zavoyuyem mir!'⁴⁰), nor do they appear in the Soviet

edition of his work. Mandelstam's translations from the Old French, from Vazha-Pshavela and from Barbier belong to the second category, and are almost all included in the Soviet edition: a recognition, perhaps, of the fact that both original material and translation are of an infinitely greater quality than the work which is passed over in both the Soviet and American editions.

The translations in the second category appeared mainly before the onset of the silence itself. Even if his affairs were worsening at that time, he was nevertheless able to express his views in some kind of poetic form. Nadezhda Yakovlevna says of the poems from the Old French ('Synov'ya Aymona' I, no. 461, 'Zhizn' svyatogo Alekseya' I, no. 462, 'Aliskans' I, no. 463), that Mandelstam was here talking of himself and of his future (N.Ya. II, p. 133), of his acceptance of poverty and of his resolve never to flee from danger (N.Ya. I, p. 258). 'Gogotur i Apshina', Mandelstam's translation of the Georgian epic, is similarly concerned with themes of steadfastness and abstention from luxury. Here Mandelstam's reasons for choosing a life of poverty can be seen in the picture of the pernicious effect of living amongst the favoured ones: the hero can no longer breathe and his lips are sealed - a condition quite incompatible with the composition of poetry:

Царь, в долине мне не дышится...
На уста печать наложена,
И недугом тело схвачено.

(I, no. 466)

It is interesting to note here that Mandelstam tried to ignore this work once it was completed (N.Ya. says he was 'frightened' of it - N.Ya. I, p. 258), as though aware of how necessary it would be for him to hold fast to those vows taken in the translated poems.

The Barbier translations are of by far the most relevance to Egipetskaya marka. (In quoting Mandelstam's translations of Barbier the Soviet edition has been preferred, since the American edition gives an incomplete selection of the translations; for example 'Irlandskie kholmy' is missing, as is a line from the important poem 'Sobach'ya skloka'). Through these Mandelstam speaks not so much of the future which lay before him as of the society which so disturbed him, the society characterised by greed, violence and crude ambition. Barbier, as Mandelstam stresses in his article on the poet, was the poet of the 1830 revolution ('Ogyust Barb'e', III, p. 46). Barbier's poetry, in Mandelstam's view, grew from the contrast which he felt

between the greatness of the 'Trois Glorieuses' and the nature of the society which grew from this upheaval. In his poetry Barbier depicts the revolution as a powerful natural element, which is followed by a debasement of all the values it had once embodied: courage and comradeship are replaced by cowardly egotism, and the idolisation of Napoleon has bred corruption and fear. Mandelstam perceived many similarities between that revolution and its aftermath and the revolution and post-revolutionary society which he himself experienced.

The differences between the original and the translation are significant in the assessment of the influence of the Barbier poems. Mandelstam often created a more hostile picture than that of the original poem, especially where he is depicting the chilling absence of respect for the individual to which Barbier alludes, and which Mandelstam sensed so acutely in the twenties. He introduces the following grim imagery which is absent in the original: 'mnogolyudnyy sor' ('Myatezh', Sov. ed., no. 282), 'skot lyudskoy' ('Irlandskie kholmy', Sov. ed., no. 285), 'lyudskoe testo mesit' ('Dzhin', Sov. ed., no. 281). Mandelstam returns to such imagery in a gruesome depiction of the preparations for the First World War in his review of Jules Romain's 'Cromedeyre-le-Veil', where the emphasis on the lack of respect for the individual is relentlessly graphic: '... на пороге европейской войны ... когда человеческое мясо готовилось впрок для бойни ...' (II, p. 359).

Another prominent tendency in the Barbier translations is a certain russification of the French original: Mandelstam introduces the image of vodka into Barbier's 'Le gin' (Sov. ed., no. 281) and a specifically Russian breed of horse ('bityug') into 'Napoleonovskaya Frantsiya' (Sov. ed., no. 279) his translation (also known as 'Kobylya') of a section of 'L'Idole'. A more telling example of this tendency is in Mandelstam's transformation of the latter poem's simple 'mais un jour de bataille'⁴¹, to 'И в поле, где война цветет, как море рпечи ...' (Sov. ed., no. 279) which inevitably brings to mind the complex of imagery in the Slovo o polku Igoreve associating battle with the cultivation of the land. The introduction of this imagery into 'Kobylya' perhaps indicates that Mandelstam saw in the disturbingly inhuman social structure depicted in the Barbier poems, and in his own twentieth-century interpretation of these poems, the approach of an inimical Eastern influence - a reflection of that

force with which Igor had to contend. Certain images not present in the original reflect Mandelstam's concern with his own creative condition. In 'Dzhin' (Sov. ed., no. 281), Barbier's 'Jamais typhus, jamais peste sur terre'⁴² becomes '... лихорадка, влияя в уши звон...'; this is surely an allusion to the sense of physical deterioration, and to the hostile, mosquito-like sound which are shown in Mandelstam's poetry of the early twenties to be impeding poetic composition.

The Barbier poems evidently made a great impression on Mandelstam, and reflections of his work on them are to be found in the poetry and in the creative prose of the twenties. Images of the revolution in France are prominent in 'Язык бульжника мне голубя понятней' (I, no. 138), a poem which reflects Barbier's 'Le Lion', one of the Iambes which Mandelstam did not translate⁴³. In 'Язык бульжника мне голубя понятней' Mandelstam describes Barbier's muzzled lion holding out a splinter in its paw (a reflection of Apion the Egyptian's legend of Androcles and the lion). The image of the splinter seems to represent in Mandelstam's work of 1923 all the hostility of the situation in which he found himself. In the poem no. 138 it represents the wounded idealism of Herzen (N.Ya. I, p. 178), that is the threatening situation initially inspired by but now in evident contradiction to Herzen's ideals. The splinter image recurs in 'Как тельце маленькое крыльшком' (I, no. 139), where it appears in connection with an anguished plea for recognition. The suppliant here, as in the case of the lion of I, no. 138, can evidently arouse no reaction in his fellows. Whereas in I, no. 138 Mandelstam depicts the hostility of conditions from the point of view of perverted ideals, in I, no. 139 it seems to be a question rather of the environment in which the poet finds himself: idleness and hollowness of sound are the order of the day here, and the suppliant is constantly aware that the azure sky is now the home of the mosquito-like aeroplane. In 'Kholodnoe leto' the splinter is emphatically related to the aeroplane (II, p. 130), which is a contemporary feature of great potential hostility, as insistently and threateningly present as the splinter in the lion's paw in the absence of Androcles. Apart from the splinter reference in 'Kholodnoe leto' there is also a more direct allusion to Barbier in this work. Mandelstam contrasts the July heat of Barbier's revolution with the cold climate of Moscow (II, p. 130) in a way which implies that the cities of Paris and Moscow are connected, even

if not climatically. In 'Sukharyovka' two images which Mandelstam had introduced into the Barbier translations appear. Firstly, the chilling notion of human 'testo', present in Mandelstam's version of the poem 'Le Gin' (Sov. ed., no. 281), is developed in the prose piece (II, p. 134). Secondly, the image of the 'prickly broom of fear', introduced into the translation of 'L'Emeute' (Sov. ed., no. 282), is present in 'Sukharyovka' also: the correspondence between the poem and the final paragraph of the prose piece is striking, its clear allusion to the events of 1830 brings the cities of Moscow and Paris together once more:

Страх бьет без промаху ...
... Еще одна минута -
И каждый добежит до своего закута.
Попрытались, и вдруг колючая метла
Весь многолюдный сор на улице смела. (Sov. ed., no. 282)

... и все прячется ... площадь пустеет с тою истерической
поспешностью, с какой пустели бревенчатые мосты, когда по
ним проходила колючая метла страха.

(II, p. 136)

Detailed correspondences between the Barbier translation and Egipetskaya marka are numerous: in the central theme of the prose work, its historical and geographical settings and its characters, the influence of the French poet is in evidence, and it will be indicated in the chapters dealing with those subjects. The essential point in connection with the Barbier poems is Mandelstam's interest in the 1830 revolution. In his attempt to 'define his relationship' (N.Ya. I, p. 181) to the society which had grown from the revolution of 1917, Mandelstam wrote Egipetskaya marka, ostensibly set in the period between the two revolutions of 1917. In effect, however, he reaches back in this work to the nineteenth century, to the period from 1830-1848, when Europe experienced a whole wave of revolutions. It is not simply the Barbier 'subtext' which leads to this conclusion but, most strikingly, the fact that the works of art, other than musical, to which Mandelstam refers in Egipetskaya marka are almost exclusively from the latter half of the nineteenth century, that is from the period of the revolutions onwards. He refers to the Barbizon school of painting (II, pp. 21-22), to the Italian singer Bosio (II, pp. 7, 8, 35-36), to the ballet Giselle (II, pp. 28-29), to Flaubert (II, p. 34), to Bourget and Ohnet (II, p. 35), and to Tolstoy (II, pp. 29, 34, 41). Unlike the influences of Gogol, Dostoevsky, Pushkin and Bely, these references are not confined to the literary

sphere, and their function is not so much to create an atmosphere of apprehension as to point to those factors which inspired such apprehension.

(v) The influence on Egipetskaya marka of Mandelstam's views on the nineteenth century

A consideration of the views expressed by Mandelstam at various times on the nineteenth century sheds much light on the nature and causes of the apprehension which it aroused in him.

Mandelstam was aware of certain processes which took place more or less simultaneously in the nineteenth century and which he sees as influencing one another, affecting life in society, the concept of culture, and art in all its forms. In this matter of the simultaneous change in social and cultural life Mandelstam must surely have been struck by the fact that the onset of the nineteenth-century revolutions - that turning point in social history - coincided with a turning point in the history of poetry itself, with the act of supreme disrespect against the artistic world, the fatal wounding of Pushkin in his duel with D'Anthès in 1837. The shattering impact of this tragedy in regard to poetry is touched upon in Shum vremeni: poetry could never be the same again: 'Ведь после тридцать седьмого года и кровь и стихи журчали иначе' (II, p. 59). For Mandelstam the circumstances of Pushkin's death were as disturbing as the more vicious manifestations of the society which emerged from the 1830 revolution, and it is not surprising that, with these two historical landmarks as its characteristics, the nineteenth century should appear in Mandelstam's work in a highly unfavourable light.

The development of the railway was one nineteenth-century phenomenon closely associated with the European revolutions ('Ogyust Barb'e', III, p. 45) and it therefore acquired characteristics of those revolutions, and in particular of the revolution of 1830 which led to: '... настоящей буржуазной монархии Луи-Филиппа, к королю финансистов и биржевиков ...' (III, p. 45). Mandelstam consistently associates the railway with the bourgeois before and after Egipetskaya marka. In 'Chetvyortaya proza' the train is seen to provide a natural and necessary environment for the preservation of the bourgeoisie: 'Надо сохранить буржуазию в ее невинном облике ... баюкать на пульмановых рессорах, заворачивать в конверты белоснежного

железнодорожного сна' (II, p. 178). The railway, then, with its basically bourgeois nature and its strong ties with the financial world, was primarily a means of communication which could, presumably, further man's associations with other people and their cultures. Mandelstam, however, saw that the reverse was true: the bourgeoisie, equipped with its railway, degraded and destroyed true civilisation. Mandelstam is particularly hard on the French bourgeoisie in this respect. In the report of his conversation with Nguyen Ai Quoc (II, p. 206) and in the sketch 'Men'sheviki v Gruzii' (II, p. 197) Mandelstam points to the contrast between the insensitive and brutal intervention of the French colonialists and the ancient, delicate cultures of Indo China, and between superficial civilisation and the ancient heritage of Georgia. The insensitivity of the bourgeoisie is epitomized in Mandelstam's overtly hostile description of Emile Vandervelde (who was in fact a Belgian):

- Вы цивилизовали этот уголок Азии (как характерно сказалось здесь поверхностное невежество французского буржуа и презрение к старой, вековой культуре).

(II, p. 196)

The victory of finance over culture is expressed somewhat laconically in the piece 'Batum'. Here Mandelstam's sarcastic observation that the 'proezzhie kommersanti' found no obstacles in acquiring accommodation: 'Очевидно, лира побеждает законы пространства' (III, p. 16), brings to mind and contrasts with one of Mandelstam's early Acmeist tenets; to vanquish space had, after all, been the prime task of the Acmeist ('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 323), but when bourgeois businessmen invaded a long established culture it was no longer poetry but money which vanquished space.

At home in Russia the attitude towards culture also deteriorated rapidly in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when a very low value was ascribed to 'brain' ('Zhak rodilsya i umer', III, p. 59). That key to the epoch, the fantastically popular Nadson, was blind to the wealth of the Mediterranean culture which Mandelstam valued so greatly, and a journey to the home of that culture would in no way have affected Nadson's poetry: '... покажи ему средиземное море, и он все будет петь свой идеал и страдающее поколение, - разве что прибавит чайку и гребень волны' (Shum vremeni, II, p. 59).

The second half of the nineteenth century also saw the advent of

Darwin's Origin of the Species, with its theory of evolution which was so distasteful to Mandelstam. Only after the composition of Egipetskaya marka did Mandelstam discuss the theory and the mechanics of evolution in biological terms (when his interest in matters biological had been stimulated by his friendship with B.S. Kuzin).

In the years leading up to the writing of Egipetskaya marka he was concerned primarily with the idea of evolution and its effect on art forms. In 'O prirode slova' Mandelstam shows it to be completely at odds with that sense of unity and continuity which he so valued in art: its effect on both scholarship and literature was disastrous:

'... усыпляющая научную мысль легким и доступным эволюционизмом ...

Для литературы эволюционная теория особенно опасна ...' ('O prirode slova', II, pp. 242-243). Mandelstam considered that modes of thought

such as that of evolution numbed the world's cultural awareness because of their lack of discernment. This is expressed in both the critical articles and the poetry. In the former numbness is emphasised in the omnivorously predatory nature exhibited by this

kind of thought: 'Ничего, кроме зрения, пустого и хищного, с одинаковой жадностью пожирающего любой предмет, любую эпоху'

('Devyatnadstatyy vek', II, p. 276). Here the stultifying effect of nineteenth-century thought is expressed in the image of eating, which is used also in 'O prirode slova', where it is made all the more hostile in being defined specifically as 'omnivorousness':

'... какая-то ленивая всеядность, огромная тяжелая жвачка ...

интерес ко всему ...' (II, p. 243). Gone are images of hearing which Mandelstam associated with the sensitivity of artistic creation, and instead there is an attitude to art characterised by its ignorance and by its deathbound, barren nature. The inability to hear and the effect of this on the approach to culture are perhaps most clearly expressed in the rough drafts to the Razgovor o Dante, where the culprit is named as the nineteenth century:

... литературного времени, которое мы перестали слышать
... культуropоклонства, захлестнувшего в прошлом
столетии университетскую и школьную Европу ... сплошь и
рядом придающего форму законченного невежество тому,
что могло бы быть живым ...

(III, pp. 181-182)

Time and again Mandelstam returns to the fact that the omnivorousness of the nineteenth-century approach was fatal. In the stanza of the poem 'Vek', given in the Soviet edition as the last stanza in the

original manuscript of 1922 (Sov. ed., no. 118), a deathly 'bezrazlich'e' is depicted. The art which emerged under an insensitive, ignorant approach is as barren as the influence which inspired it - as the analytical French novel and the nineteenth-century 'poeziya nebytiya' demonstrate. Europe had lost true poetry, its appreciation of the 'Word', and had instead acquired a civilisation whose infertility Mandelstam proclaims in 'O prirode slova': 'Европа без филологии даже не Америка; это цивилизованная Сахара ...' (II, p. 250). The barrenness and stultification epitomised in the phrase 'poeziya nebytiya' is revealed in this poetry's isolation, its strict confinement to its own era - in contravention of Mandelstam's cherished principles demonstrated in 'O sobesednike'. A good example of this is to be found again in Mandelstam's somewhat sarcastic evaluation of Nadson: '... непонятный ее звук, потому что мы-то не понимаем и не слышим, как понимали и слышали они' (Shum vremeni, II, p. 60). The sarcasm here lies in the fact that Nadson's poetry demands of the 'chitatel' v potomstve' (II, p. 235) an affinity with the poet's own age, a requirement of which true poetry has no need, since it can reach and inspire its 'tainstvennyy adresat' ('O sobesednike', II, p. 235) in a far more spontaneous fashion. The qualification of nineteenth-century poetry as the poetry of 'non-being' is of further significance in that it is reminiscent of the phrase 'chad nebytiya' which occurs in Mandelstam's poem from 1917: 'Среди священников левитом молодым' (I, no. 100). The fall of Jerusalem, which is the subject of this poem, was the result of Israel's breaking her covenant with Yahweh. The 'poeziya nebytiya' is the result of a similar sin, for as Israel turned away from Yahweh, the nineteenth century, in its omnivorousness and insensitivity, turned away from Christianity to the monolithic cultures of the Buddhist world: 'Деятнадцатый век был проводником буддийского влияния в европейской культуре. Он был носителем чужого, враждебного и могущественного начала ...' ('Devyatnadstatyy vek', II, p. 280). The feature considered most important by Mandelstam in distinguishing this 'Buddhist' culture from his beloved Hellenistic culture, was that the former, in its monumentality, crushed man. This was a tendency which Mandelstam had evidently perceived in the nineteenth century through the medium of the Barbier poems, with his own emphasis on the moulding of a faceless, helpless human mass. Hellenistic culture, on the other hand, was based on respect for man the individual,

and the art associated with it was therefore - since it accorded with true art's requirements for 'любовь и уважение к собеседнику' ('O sobesednike', II, p. 240) - fruitful and alive.

Surrounded by artists whose work was geared strictly to the age in which they lived, Mandelstam was struck by the resemblance of that age to the nineteenth century. His attitude towards the nineteenth century and its art provides the background to Egipetskaya marka - the replacement of a true culture by an apparently more advanced, but in reality, superficial and deathbound civilisation, an insensitive acceptance of all art, expressed in terms of omnivorousness, characterised by an inability to hear, and at the basis of this society and art - a fundamental disregard for the individual.

Egipetskaya marka marks the low point in Mandelstam's oeuvre in terms of the society and of the art it depicts. It shows that, because of the absence of respect for the individual, ordinary communications have broken down. Mandelstam, who valued communication even in the most ordinary spheres of social relations, as a means of enhancing life ('... приветливости, которая все-таки украшает жизнь', Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 146) was soon made aware that such communication no longer existed for the man of the new system. Nadezhda Yakovlevna describes Mandelstam's first realisation of this fact:

С нами в купе ехали, быть может, хозяйственники или работники партийного аппарата, во всяком случае люди нового типа ... Мандельштам ... сразу заметил, что они не разговаривают и только время от времени цитируют статью или газету. 'Им не о чем говорить', - сказал он ...

(N.Ya. II, pp. 88-89)

The society depicted in Egipetskaya marka is characterised by such non-communication: there is no place for human considerations here. Hence, as will be seen more fully in the sections dealing with settings and characters, the world of Egipetskaya marka is a very frightening one.

A breakdown in this sphere was sufficiently disturbing, but Mandelstam was also extremely agitated by the breakdown which he perceived in the world of art. In Egipetskaya marka this is conveyed in the allusions to aspects of art which he believed to be confined to their own age, and also in the various ways in which

he characterises different art forms in the work. Here Mandelstam frequently emphasises the pernicious effect of the frightening and hostile society forming the background to creativity (this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five).

Breakdown and non-communication in the world of art, in all its different forms, represent the vital overall statement of Egipetskaya marka. In this the work closes a stage in Mandelstam's appreciation of the history of creativity, for it depicts the advent of that catastrophe whose imminence he had first indicated in 1915: art as Mandelstam conceived of it no longer existed: '... весь ход новейшей истории, которая со страшной силой повернула от христианства к буддизму и теософии ... искусства больше нет ...' ('Pushkin i Skryabin', II, p. 314). Thus Egipetskaya marka is indeed the product of the extreme low point in Mandelstam's confidence not only in his own work, but in the general condition of art. This statement of his uneasiness and foreboding did not clear the way for poetry. It did, however, reveal much of value in respect of Mandelstam's own situation and of his views on various subjects - from the revolution of 1917 to theories of prose composition. It assisted in defining Mandelstam's position in society, although the resultant definition was not encouraging, identifying Mandelstam to a degree with the underdog Parnok. However, the act of defining himself thus, and of stating the hostile nature of society, was a step on the way to 'Chetvyortaya proza'. Here a specific catalyst, the 'Dreyfus' affair, was to work upon his general foreboding to produce a new confidence. Mandelstam was now sure that the position of underdog was the only one which an artist of integrity could adopt, given the conditions of society at that time.

Chapter Two

Characters and Characterisation in Egipetskaya marka

Социальные различия и классовые противоположности бледнеют перед разделением ныне людей на друзей и врагов слова.

('Slovo i kul'tura', II, p. 223)

Such was Mandelstam's assessment of the contemporary scene in 1921: the attitude towards the 'Word', to poetry, was the only valid measure by which a man's character could be gauged. The opening words of this quotation, with their distinctly topical flavour, evidently suggested an element of social criticism to the censor, and the pale 'Vse drugie razlichiya' (II, p. 625) were substituted. Mandelstam's intention in mentioning such 'social' and 'class' differences however is rather a sarcastic dismissal of the standards of the day and an affirmation of the power and lasting value of poetry. The distinction between enemies and lovers of the 'Word' remained a principle of prime importance to him. It is very much a sign of the times in which Egipetskaya marka was written that it should abound with characters hostile to the Word. Indeed, the characters are for the main part far removed from any thoughts connected with art. Their main instinct is that of self-preservation and the consideration of others - a principle which the poet must respect ('O sobesednike', II, p. 233) - is a habit long forgotten.

More than any other work by Mandelstam Egipetskaya marka gives the impression of being saturated with characters. It is a teeming world reminiscent of Gogol's creations. For a relatively short work it does have a large number of characters, and these are apparently multiplied by the diverse methods of characterisation which Mandelstam employs and also by the personification of abstract concepts such as Time, Memory and Fear. The author is ever present, either in directly autobiographical references or through association with the central character, Parnok. For it is the characters who carry much of the autobiographical background of the work, since several of them, as will be seen, are reflections of people whom Mandelstam knew personally.

(i) Parnok

Parnok is by far the most complex character in the work and is distinguished from the others in belonging neither to the camp of the vicious and mercenary (Krzyżanowski, Mervis, the barber, the dentist, the laundress, the crowd), nor to those unwilling to (or incapable of) making any kind of protest (Bruni, Shapiro). Parnok is timid, but he is also possessed of altruistic bursts of courage.

Parnok's central importance to the work is indicated at once by the fact that it is his nickname (II, p. 19) which provides the title of the work. The nickname implies all the danger and instability inherent in Parnok's situation as a little man in a vicious society, for an Egyptian stamp was one which could very easily be destroyed:

Дело в том, что египетские марки начала века ... во избежание вторичного их использования, печатались на особой бумаге, покрытой растворимым составом, так что, при попытке смыть штемпель или даже при отпаривании с конверта сходил и весь рисунок марки.⁴⁴

In the characterisation of Parnok Mandelstam employs almost every device used in his previous and subsequent prose works: Parnok is defined by his food, his clothes, his speech, the way he walks, the street in which he lives. (Only characterisation by reference to drawing is not apparent in Parnok's characterisation: this did not begin to appear until the 'Zapisnye knizhki' to the Puteshestvie v Armeniyu (III, p. 151), when the complex of drawing imagery was so strong in the poetry - I, nos. 201, 205, 206). Mandelstam's descriptions of Parnok are never purely for the sake of description: they always point to some essential feature of his character. This accords with Mandelstam's praise of Darwin's literary style for precisely this approach: 'Он никогда не описывает, - он только характеризует ...' ('Literaturnyy stil' Darvina', III, p. 173). In the 'Zapisnye knizhki', Mandelstam implies that the physical appearance of a character can be taken as a symbolic representation of his nature - although this should never be explained to the person involved: 'Впрочем, никогда не растолковывайте человеку символику его физического облика. Этой бестактности не прощают даже лучшему другу' (III, p. 157). This follows a paragraph in which Mandelstam takes a clear delight in the 'symbolic' representation of one Anatoliy Kakavadze. He constantly interprets characters by their physical appearance - not only in Egipetskaya marka and the 'Zapisnye knizhki',

but in his prose works in general (for example the description of Yuliy Matveich in Shum vremeni II, pp. 83-85, and of Professor Khachatur'yan in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu II, p. 139).

Parnok is a curious compound of different influences, mythological and literary, in which the works of Gogol and Dostoevsky play a prominent part. There are three main tendencies in Parnok's character: the self-effacing 'little man', the eccentric Petersburg snob, and the altruistic, irresponsible music-lover. Although these tendencies contrast so sharply, there are several occasions on which the three are interrelated. In all three there are certain resemblances between author and hero, but it is the third which provides the closest point of contact. Nadezhda Yakovlevna has described Mandelstam's own impetuous courage in attempting to rescue others (N.Ya. I, pp. 120-123), which identifies him with the Parnok who makes an altruistic attempt to save a victim from the crowd (II, pp. 16-22). In Egipetskaya marka itself the author reveals the potential for such courage in his childhood concern for the vulnerable Shapiro (II, p. 12).

None of the major characters is Russian (a fact which must to the Russian ear contribute to the air of vagueness and confusion which pervades the work), and Parnok is no exception. It seems reasonable to assume that, like Mandelstam himself, he is Jewish. In the last chapter of the work it can be seen that author and hero have a common ancestor in Aunt Johanna (Parnok, p. 37; Mandelstam, p. 39) and that Biron, Duke of Courland, played a part in the history of both (Parnok, II, p. 37), for he brought the first Mandelstam to Russia as court jeweller (N.Ya. II, p. 577). Parnok, however, also shares Mandelstam's other ancestry - that of literary predecessors, and most notably Dostoevsky's Golyadkin and Pushkin's Evgeny of Mednyy vsadnik, as indicated in Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 37).

The name Parnok is of great importance in considering the character. Mandelstam was acquainted with a certain Valentin Yakovlevich Parnakh, who was a member of the 'Tsekh poetov' from February 1913. R.D. Timenchik has pointed to the relationship between Valentin Parnakh and the Parnok of Egipetskaya marka in his article 'Zametki ob akmeizme', where he notes that Parnakh was the author of a poem entitled 'Arab', and of a collection 'Samum' - both of which are referred to, in close proximity, in Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 30)⁴⁵.

Parnakh's sister changed her name to the less obviously Jewish, if somewhat bizarre, Parnok. The amended version evidently appealed to Mandelstam, for it is this name which appears in his letters: 'Шупа живет у моего приятеля Парнока' (III, p. 202). Bearing in mind Mandelstam's tendency for association, and particularly phonetic association, it seems that Omry Ronen is quite right in supposing 'Parnok' to be a metonym for 'parnokopytnyy'⁴⁶. The name accords with a tone established at the outset: the world of Egipetskaya marka is not human, but populated by vicious birds of prey and loathsome insects, as will be seen in the discussion of the crowd. Parnok's patent leather shoes, so obviously out of place in a society where even the crudest kind of footwear was difficult to obtain, betray at once his inappropriateness in the setting of Egipetskaya marka and his timid ovine tendencies: '... топтал по непросохшим тротуарам овечьими копытцами' (II, p. 10). While such animal attributes hint at the monstrous satyr-like nature of the tailor Mervis (II, p. 33), the fact that Parnok is identified specifically with the sheep is significant. In Mandelstam's prose the sheep is separated from the goat after the biblical manner (Matthew 25. 32), and the goat is invariably hostile (for example, 'Slovo i kul'tura', II, p. 223). In Mandelstam's poetry the sheep is usually associated with dependence (I, no. 79) and intuitive warmth (I, no. 127) - qualities which would be respected neither by the city nor by its inhabitants as they are depicted in Egipetskaya marka. Parnok's hooves are perhaps of further significance in that they demonstrate a regression to the animal state and (in evolutionary terms) an adaptation to his environment, making him able to maintain his balance in the slippery, melting snow and ice of early spring. The name Parnok, thus linked with the unassertive sheep, reveals the submissive nature of the little man, so prominent a feature in the works of Gogol and Dostoevsky. Indeed, the derivation of the name is distinctly reminiscent of Gogol, for Mandelstam has reduced Parnok to one essential detail - his shoes - just as, for example, Gogol embodied the whole character of the tailor Petrovich in the image of his big toe with its unsightly toe nail (Shinel'). The technique of reduction to a caricatural detail had been used earlier in Mandelstam's work, in Shum vremeni. Here Sergey Ivanych was reduced to the image of a cigarette, and cigarette smoke pervaded his flat and characterised the nature of his ideas (II, pp. 79-82). Parnok's shoes also have a two-fold purpose in characterisation: they define his

sheep-like nature and relate him to a character who appeared briefly in the sketch 'Kiev'. This relationship highlights the side of Parnok's character which is nurtured by the pretensions of Petersburg society:

'Они еще помнят последнего киевского сноба, который ходил ... в лаковых туфлях-лодочках и с клетчатым пледом ...' (III, p. 5). The movements of the 'little sheep hooves' are, however, related completely to the unassertive side of his nature - they are timid, hurried and nervously impulsive: 'выбегал', 'топотал' (II, p. 10); 'забежал' (II, p. 18); 'помчался', 'забежал', 'бросился', 'бежал, пристукивая ... овечьими копытцами' (II, p. 19). Parnok bears a singular resemblance to one of Egipetskaya marka's Jewish protagonists in the unnatural manner in which he moves. He shares with Genrikh Yakovlevich a childish nature and toy-like movements:

А Генрих Яковлевич с легкостью болонки бегал ... (II, p. 30)

И Парнок кубарем скитался ... (II, p. 18)

Movement was of great importance to Mandelstam. Nadezhda Yakovlevna describes how it invariably accompanied composition for him (N.Ya. I, p. 192) and Mandelstam refers to it in both prose and poetry in the definition of certain characteristics. When the movements are precise, definite and relaxed, the character is possessed of certainty and confidence; when they are not, they betray difficulty and nervous uncertainty. This is certainly not an innovation in characterisation. Both Tolstoy and Dostoevsky make use of it: Anna Karenina's essential grace is revealed in the lightness and swiftness of her step, in contrast to Karenin's ungainliness, and Ivan Karamazov's tortured contemplations are shown in his gait. In Shum vremeni the movements of both Mandelstam's grandmother (II, p. 68) and the unfortunate 'web-footed' Yuliy Matveich (II, p. 85) are conveyed in the verb 'semenit'. In the case of the former it reveals timidity in trying to please her guests and in the latter it implies all the difficulty which existed in communicating with Yuliy Matveich, especially when it came to borrowing money from him. Such movements resemble those of Parnok and also those of certain literary heroes who shared his uncertainty. Mandelstam himself uses the verb to describe the movements of Akakiy Akakevich: '... чиновничек в ветхой шинелишке семенит по тротуару ...' ('Yakhontov', III, p. 112). Similarly Golyadkin in Dostoevsky's Dvoynik walks with mincing steps⁴⁷, as does the much preoccupied Nikolay Ableukhov in Bely's Peterburg: 'bystrekhon'ko zasemenil'⁴⁸. Movements such as those of Hamlet in Mandelstam's

Vosmishishiya (I, no. 281) come in marked contrast to those of people who walk and work with conviction: for example Beethoven (I, no. 72), the biologist Kuzin (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 148), and above all Dante: 'Шар, сопряженный с дыханием и насыщенный мыслью, Дант понимает как начало просодии' (Razgovor o Dante II, p. 367). The reduction of Parnok to the grotesque level of a sheep's hooves is rather more drastic, and also more banal - both features typical of Egipetskaya marka as a whole. The device does serve, however, to identify Parnok firmly with the camp of the pedestrians, as opposed to Krzyżanowski with his luxurious carriage and the inimical cabbies (see below also, p. 73). The dichotomy between pedestrian and rider is one noted also by Gogol in his Nevskiy Prospekt, where once more it is the little man, Piskaryov, who is the pedestrian:

Тому судьба дала прекраснейших лошадей, и он равнодушно
катается на них ... тогда как другое, которого сердце
горит лошадиною страстью, идет пешком.⁴⁹

It is no doubt of some significance that the central character of Egipetskaya marka, written at a time when Mandelstam no longer possessed that 'conviction' he deemed necessary for the composition of poetry, should move with all the uncertainty and timidity of Russian literature's 'little man'.

Just as Parnok's footwear is of importance in assessing his character, so are his coat and his shirt, of which the cruel world deprives him; the link with Shinel' is evident here. In both Gogol and Mandelstam the coat is a feminine entity, and both Akakiy Akakevich and Parnok display a marked lack of confidence in their dealings with the opposite sex. A direct statement of this is heralded in Egipetskaya marka by the information that the coat, which to most young men would be a 'podruga', is to Parnok a 'miloy sestroy'. It is the earthly 'shell' into which the defenceless little man might shrink. The morning coat is a fitting accompaniment for the patent leather shoes, for it is designed specifically for a dandy, and Parnok's consolation on being deprived of it is that of a dandyish snob: that the tailor's talent did not extend to the creation of such finery.

In Parnok's lack of success with ladies, the self-effacing little man and the Petersburg snob are drawn closely together; indeed the habits of the snob provide another protective shell for Parnok. Like Dostoevsky's Underground Man⁵⁰, Parnok expects events to run along

those lines he has envisaged in his imagination. But the ladies cannot appreciate such an imagination. The only language they can understand is a 'wild, grandiloquent, birdy language' (II, p. 11, used also by the last Kievan snob, III, p. 5) which accords with the picture of society in Egipetskaya marka as being far from human. This language, used by Parnok in his letters, is fashioned by the cold and military character of Petersburg:

... пространство между Миллионной, Адмиралтейством и
Летним садом им заново отшлифовано и приведено в полную
боевую готовность, как бриллиантовый карат.

(II, p. 13)

There is an additional, pathetic note of humour here, for Parnok composed such epistles against the background of the revolutionary machinations of 1917. His concept of things military, and his application of such imagery in letters, indicates his hopeless dislocation from the actual events. Mandelstam's condemnation of such artificial language and relationships is stressed by the fact that Parnok uses 'English laid paper with watermarks' (II, p. 13) - as incongruous a possession as Parnok's patent leather shoes in the Petersburg of Mandelstam's experience. Such paper appears on several occasions in Mandelstam's works, and in each instance its associations are hostile. In 'Chetvyortaya proza' the grandiose contract he signs with the Beelzebub of the State Publishing House is on Whatman paper (II, p. 190), and in the 'Razgovor o Dante' those incapable of understanding Dante imagine that his compositions assumed their final form immediately on the finest quality paper (II, p. 384, see also 'O perevodakh' II, p. 434, and 'Zhak rodilsya i umer', III, p. 58). The poetry states openly the purpose to which such elegant paper is put:

На полицейской бумаге верже ...
... канцелярские птички
Пишут и пишут свои рапортчики.

(I, no. 219)

Through references to clothes and language Mandelstam demonstrates that Parnok is vulnerable to the 'Petersburg' disease which although apparently no more dangerous than influenza, has the most malicious effects (II, p. 13). Its victims never reach maturity and they are as corrupt as those chosen few to whom special favours were granted by the Writers' Union and similar institutions - here Mandelstam gives hint of the invective he was to launch against such favoured ones in 'Chetvyortaya proza' and the poem 'Квартира тиха,

как бумара' (I, no. 272). Mandelstam would deposit these superficial dilettantes in Sestroretsk, which had already been shown in Shum vremeni to be a suitable locale for such gatherings (II, p. 94, where it is the home of the fickle Natasha). There they carry out their hostile activities: heating the samovar with pine cones, those 'gothic' structures of which Mandelstam was so fond (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 150), and talking to two singularly unattractive entities - the man who sells crabs (the hostile associations of which are discussed in Chapter Three, section (v)) and the postmen who carry letters which have already been seen to be totally artificial. Parnok, then, has been subjected to the influence of Petersburg high society. This is reflected in the curious notion of time possessed by those who, like Parnok, live on the Kamennostrovskiy prospekt. For them time is reckoned in dynasties, not years. This grandiose interpretation recalls Mandelstam's childhood impressions of the concerts at Pavlosk, where the conductors seemed to belong to dynasties (Shum vremeni, II, p. 45). Although nurtured by Petersburg life Parnok, like Mandelstam, is unsuited to its grandiose pretensions. Mandelstam was not a legitimate member of the concert audience in his childhood (II, p. 70) and similarly Parnok has no straightforward relationship with the worlds of history and music: 'Дикая парабола соединяла Парнока с парадными анфиладами истории и музыки' (II, p. 11). The artificial conventions of society here, as in the case of the 'ptichiy yazyk' (II, p. 11) belong to the 'wild' animal world of Egipetskaya marka, a world from which Parnok was likely to be ejected at any moment. Parnok is spurned by every section and generation of society and there is a constant emphasis on the 'wildness' of that society, whether it be pre-revolutionary or post-revolutionary. This indicates that there is one particular human characteristic which corrupts, no matter how high the ideals - namely the animal instinct to survive and prosper at the expense of others. Parnok's fate of rejection is inherited from Dostoevsky's heroes: Makar Devushkin, Golyadkin and the Underground Man are all tortured by an awareness that failure and humiliation are close at hand, and the lowest point of their careers is marked by an unceremonious expulsion. Shades of Dostoevsky are present in Parnok's inability to correct his position. He cannot put an end to his 'lap-dog' submission to the shabby 'feline' belles of Petersburg, nor can he tackle Krzyżanowski without being decently clad (II, p. 37) - just as Dostoevsky's Underground Man cannot imagine his

purposeful collision with the officer until he has enhanced his coat. In a brilliantly laconical remark on the intentions to recover the coat, Mandelstam conveys all Parnok's essential characteristics:

Тут промелькнули в мозгу его горячие образы романов
Бальзака и Стендаля: молодые люди, завоевывающие Париж
и носовым платком обмахивающие туфли у входа в особняки,
- и он отправился отбивать визитку.

(II, p. 8)

Here is Parnok's romantic imagination, constantly susceptible to literary influence, here is his Golyadkin-like tendency to fortify himself against humiliation by literary or historical reminiscences⁵¹. Here too the imagination of the Petersburg snob contrasts humorously with the sheer bathos of the return to the most prominent feature of the little man - his shoes. There is similar bathos in the second evocation of Balzac's hero, Lucien de Rubempré, who seems to be associated with Aphrodite. His crude rustic dress and his horror of concierges (another feature shared with Parnok, (II, p. 10)) are cured by shaving lather: 'Однажды он брился в счастливый для себя день и будущее родилось из мыльной пены' (II, p. 9). Parnok's visit to the barber is perhaps inspired by this literary reminiscence with the hope that his lack of clothing will be similarly rectified. It is most significant that the French heroes should be associated with such 'hygienic' processes, since they introduce a theme which recurs constantly in the work. Parnok's schoolfellows (with whom he was as unpopular as he was with the concierges) had christened him 'Egyptian Stamp', a name which implies the possibility of destroying Parnok by some sort of washing or cleaning process. It is evident from Shum vremeni that Mandelstam considered the overly hygienic and sterile to be of the order of Dostoevsky's Crystal Palace, too artificially perfect to be connected with life. Thus life and hygiene are contrasted: '... в самую выкипяченную русскую школу ворвется жизнь ...' (Shum vremeni, II, p. 86). Similarly, references to cleaning and washing in Egipetskaya marka are hostile. Parnok and his little hooves, brought to mind in the image of the French heroes cleaning their shoes, can be no match for the wiles of Mervis, who inevitably retains the coat. The loss of Parnok's shirt is similarly inevitable, and it is fitting that he should lose it while it is undergoing the washing process at the laundry. Parnok, however, seems drawn to challenge each example of cleaning which threatens his existence. He plunges ever deeper into the steam of the laundry, as he does into the barber's basin.

Despite the fact that the dentist is introduced by the ominous raven-bootblacks (another cleaning process - II, p. 15) Parnok nevertheless immerses himself in that hostile element, and when impelled to leave to undertake a desperate rescue attempt, he sees his potential enemies as brush salesmen (II, p. 17). Defeat in this, as in all else, is sure, and its imminence is heralded by the ominous dance of the floor cleaners (II, p. 22). Even that uncanny Petersburg phenomenon, the white night, seems ready at any moment to destroy the surroundings, for it too is associated with a washing process (II, p. 29). The laundress, the barber and the dentist, associated with cleaning are magnificent portraits of those forces which reduce Parnok to the state of a helpless victim, and all three belong to Egipetskaya marka's non-human kingdom. At the barber's Parnok undergoes the cruel treatment which had been inflicted upon Gogol's 'Madman', and Parnok's entreaty for mercy recalls that in Gogol's story: 'Матюшка, спаси твоего бедного сына! ... ему нет места на свете!',⁵². The shame and humiliation visited upon Parnok here correspond with that experienced by Mandelstam himself later in the work (II, p. 39). It is surely significant that such torments should be inflicted upon Parnok not in the 'sumasshedshiy dom', as in the case of Gogol's character, but during the everyday practice of a visit to the barber. Parnok is very much the sacrificial victim of this terrifying society. In the depiction of his sacrifice can be seen a distortion of the demands for heroism and sacrifice in the poet (see Chapter One, section (ii)). The victim of Egipetskaya marka, however, is no impressively heroic figure. At the hands of the barber, who is as inimical here as he is elsewhere in Mandelstam's poetry and prose (I, no. 267, 'Sukharyovka' II, p. 133), Parnok is reduced to the state of a timorous rabbit, bending his head to the 'executioner's block' as sacramental oil is poured on his head.

The dentist is no more attractive a figure than the barber. Once again this is thoroughly in keeping with Mandelstam's other work. In Shum vremeni the groans of dental patients are singled out as part of a rather unattractive picture of the Riga coast (II, p. 69). In Egipetskaya marka the dentists' association with aeroplanes (II, p. 15), insects ('khobot' II, p. 16), and snakes (II, p. 18) render him thoroughly unsavoury. The most impressive picture, however, is that of the laundress. She is evidently in league with Krzyżanowski (both

are Polish) and amidst her twittering, bird-like laundry girls she ensures that her business is in harmony with those in power - a feature all too common in the society of Mandelstam's own experience. This is not the first instance of Mandelstam's dislike of the laundry trade. It appears with great insistence in 'Nachal'nik porta' ('Feodosiya', II, p. 111) in the description of a character noted for the unpleasantly artificial way in which he deals with others. The starch of the laundry is to him a sign of his superiority, of the 'joyful subordination' which he prizes in a well-ordered hierarchy similar to that so fervently supported by the laundress of Egipetskaya marka. Subjected to the laundress' heavy irons, Parnok's shirt has acquired characteristics which no longer make it suitable for such a timid figure: '... наглотавшаяся булавок, вся в тонкую полоску цвета спелой черешни' (II, p. 16). It has a potentially inimical sharpness and a colour which has been seen by Nadezhda Yakovlevna to point to Krzyżanowski's political affiliations, since the shirt belongs to him eventually (N.Ya. II, p. 590). The cherry is, however, associated in Mandelstam's work with parting - just as Parnok is to be parted from his shirt. The cherry appears in such contexts in the poem 'Что поют часы-кузнечик' (I, no. 98), where death and the frailty of life are featured, and in 'Я буду метаться по табору улицы темной' (I, no. 144), where it reflects his parting from Ol'ga Vaksel'.

Thus Parnok is in constant contact with hostile elements as he searches for his lost possessions. This searching is an activity he shares with several literary ancestors: Akakiy and the ghost strive to recover the stolen overcoat; Evgeny searches the Petersburg floods for his lost love; the hero of Zapiski iz podpol'ya dashes after friends who do not want him, in an attempt to restore his injured pride; Golyadkin is permanently on the move to restore what his double has taken from him. Mandelstam himself was involved in such a search in the poem '1 yanvarya 1924' (I, no. 140), where his frantic drive round Moscow seems to be an attempt to determine his place in society. Parnok, Akakiy and Golyadkin however share a fault which makes their searches futile: they are incapable of choosing the right moment or the right manner to approach their enemies: '... господин Голядкин почти всегда как-то некстати опадал и терялся в те мгновенья, в которые случалось ему абординовать кого-нибудь ...',⁵³. Just as Akakiy Akakevich visits Petrovich and the 'znachitel'noe litso' at the

most inopportune moments, so Parnok is totally ineffectual in trying to gain help. The jeweller could not possibly be expected to have a telephone (II, p. 18), the mirror-shop would not wish to endanger its reputation by association with Parnok, and Krzyżanowski would certainly not leave his lady friend (II, p. 19). These are very much the actions of Parnok the little man, who has no social sensitivity. This, however, is not necessarily an adverse comment on his character, for it would be no compliment to be seen to fit in with Egipetskaya marka's society. Moreover no less a person than Dante shares Parnok's gaucherie: 'Дант не умеет себя вести ... Внутреннее беспокойство и тяжелая, смутная неловкость, сопровождающая на каждом шагу неуверенного в себе ...' (Razgovor o Dante II, p. 372). Parnok is characterised as the direct victim of the more worldly members of Egipetskaya marka. His inability to survive is communicated in many ways, among which are the rather subtle means of the food he eats and the various aromas which pervade the atmosphere. Such aromas are present at times of crisis, accompanying the theft of the coat (II, p. 6), the loss of the shirt (II, p. 15) and Parnok's attempt to calm himself after the terrible appearance of the mosquito (II, p. 38). Parnok's marked preference for tea and coffee is an ironic reminder that such valuable commodities were almost impossible to obtain in the twenties (N.Ya. II, p. 30). Coffee disappears as the coat and shirt disappear, with the approach of the supremely hostile night (II, p. 22), and tea exists for Parnok only in its resemblance to verbal forms in which he takes refuge when danger threatens. This 'domestic dictionary' reveals that Parnok is essentially a home-loving creature and in this love of the domestic scene the characters of Parnok and Mandelstam are drawn together. Both are preoccupied with the same domestic objects; both have dealings with Viennese chairs (II, pp. 5, 6), and the oil-stove which 'nods' to Parnok (II, p. 25) is reflected immediately in an autobiographical reminiscence (II, p. 25-26). In a city where the home was gradually being destroyed such a character was obviously entirely out of place, and was as subject to destruction by 'night' as were domestic luxuries such as coffee. The coffee and tea which, aptly, appear only in aromatic form belong to a complex of food imagery by which several of the characters in Egipetskaya marka are defined. Krzyżanowski has the suitably ostentatious preference for a duchesse pear (II, p. 32) and Mervis enjoys a life of plenty - butter, radishes, honey (II, pp. 8-9, see also below, p. 77). Parnok's timidity and

vulnerability are evident in the fact that he is likened to a canary and has an appropriately unpretentious diet of which, in Egipetskaya marka, he is not able to partake: '... не пил чаю с сухариками ...' (II, p. 36). The image of stale food is also used to convey Parnok's isolation from society. This again links him with Mandelstam, who had used the image of staleness to indicate his sense of dislocation from society:

Рарнок: ... в домах, сложенных из черствых плитках каменного шоколада ...

(II, p. 37)

Mandelstam: И свое находит место
Черствый пасынок веков -
Усыхающий довесок
Прежде вынутых хлебов. (I, no. 130)

The chocolate image, used with such joyful affirmation in 'Вы, с квадратными окошками невысокие дома' (I, no. 142), has suffered that process of disintegration which has attacked both city and inhabitants: the state of house and tenant are now synonymous. The food which is of the most interest, however, is that evil brew which Petersburg consumes. All the city's vileness is conveyed in the image of the soup of crushed flies, which signifies Mandelstam's deepest loathing. A similar example is present in the poem 'Я с дымящей лучиной вхожу' (I, no. 231): 'А она из ребячьих пупков / Подает мне горячий отвар'. In 'Feodosiya', however, the image appears in a context which is strikingly relevant to the situation of Parnok:

... если хлебнуть этого варева притушенной жизни ...
– физически ясным становилось ощущение спустившейся на
мир чумы ... с моровой язвой, притушенными огнями ...
и страшной тишиной в домах маленьких людей.

(II, p. 118)

Here are all the things which threaten Parnok the little man: darkness, disease and death.

The depiction of Parnok as an eccentric Petersburg snob allowed Mandelstam to air his grievances about the customs to which he had been subjected in his youth (for example, the 'kul't krasavits' - N.Ya. II, p. 491 - which he attacks in Egipetskaya marka, II, p. 37). At the same time, the plight of the little man, rejected and menaced by society, was obviously a point of close identification between author and hero and it is one which is frequently reflected in the third aspect of Parnok's character, that of the irresponsible music lover.

The love of music is obviously a common factor between Mandelstam and Parnok. Mandelstam's love of music, discussed in articles such as Artur Lur'e's 'Cheshuya v nevide',⁵⁴ is evident in the poetry (I, nos. 46, 55, 72, 96, 125, 213, 281) and in the prose (in 'Pushkin i Skryabin', in the musical imagery of Razgovor o Dante, and particularly in Shum vremeni, where he discusses his intuitive feelings for music - II, p. 70). It is the association with music which makes Parnok something of a stock character in Mandelstam's prose, for shades of Parnok are discernible in both 'Chetvyortaya proza' and in the plans for 'Fagot', a story which Mandelstam had thought out but which was either never completed or simply not published (see 'Zayavka na neprinyatuyu povest' "Fagot"', II, p. 497 and the close of Mandelstam's letter to Korobovaya: 'Вторая повесть в Звезде будет' II, p. 494). The last chapter of 'Chetvyortaya proza' closes with the picture of an organ-grinder: 'Ходит немец-шарманщик с шубертовским лееркастеном, такой неудачник, такой шаромыжник ... Ich bin arm. Я беден' (II, p. 192). This is surely a reflection of the passage in Egipetskaya marka describing the theft of Parnok's coat: '-Спит! ... Шаромыжник, на него электрической лампочки жалко! Последние зернышки кофе исчезли в кратере мельницы-шарманки' (II, p. 6). Here the same phonetic association between 'sharamyzhnik' and 'sharmanka' can be observed in the depiction of the 'neudachnik'. Schubert's music is also a common element in the two passages. In the second his music is alluded to in the association of the barrel-organ with a coffee-grinder ('mel'nitsa' is a word which Mandelstam often uses when he is alluding to Schubert's song cycle Die schöne Müllerin - I, nos. 96, 144, 314; the association of Schubert with the barrel-organ is doubtless connected with the last of the songs from Die Winterreise, 'Der Leiermann'). The main character of 'Fagot' was also to have been a musician, connected primarily with the music of Schubert ('Zayavka na neprinyatuyu povest' "Fagot"', II, p. 497). It is not revealed whether he too was to have been an underdog such as Parnok and the organ-grinder of 'Chetvyortaya proza', who is forced to 'sponge' upon others in order to survive. A forerunner of Parnok, the timid musician, is to be found in Shum vremeni. Here Mandelstam conveys the fact that there is a certain threat inherent in the love of music: '... шел петербуржец лихорадочной мелкой плотвой в мраморную прорубь вестибюля, исчезая в горящем ледяном доме ...' (II, p. 71). It is made clear from the very opening of Egipetskaya marka that a love of music

is totally out of place: the very first words hint at the funeral of the singer Angiolino Bosio, in their reference to a Catholic church (Bosio was buried in St. Petersburg's Catholic cemetery, after her death from pneumonia in April 1859). One of the domestic treasures shown to be at risk in the first chapter is the grand piano, which bears a clear resemblance to Parnok's most striking feature:

'... роля Миньон, как черный лакированный метеор ...' (II, p. 5).

(The name of the grand piano here brings to mind Goethe's Mignon and her lament for the southern lands ('Kennst du das Land'⁵⁵) and hence, again, Schubert's music, for Mandelstam was prone to associate the two German artists (see, for example, his references to the 'Erlkönig' of Goethe and Schubert in I, no. 96⁵⁶). In accordance with the general tone of Egipetskaya marka the piano is depicted as being a member of the animal world. Initially the animal image is sympathetic. It is a domestic pet which must be tended carefully, for like Bosio (and Mignon) it is susceptible to the cold (II, p. 24). As the fearful metamorphosis to which the world of Egipetskaya marka is subject is revealed, the piano's relationship to the animal world becomes more hostile. In the final chapter, the pianos are seen to be thronging together in a leaderless herd at a depot (II, p. 40). Kokorev's warehouses now possess the musical instruments and the fact that the herd of pianos is leaderless is necessarily ominous. Parnok's love of music is evident in the first chapter from his identification with Bosio (II, p. 7) and it is reiterated at frequent intervals. His baldness has been acquired at Scriabin concerts (II, p. 13), his love for music is pathetic (II, p. 30), and there is no-one to whom his concert-loving soul can be entrusted (II, p. 26). The information that Parnok belongs to a raspberry paradise of 'double-basses and drones' is of no comfort (II, p. 26). The visit to Malinov (evidently derived from 'malina'), linked by dint of its musical reference to Parnok:

'... кареты ползли все дальше, вихляя как контрабасы' (II, p. 39)

shows that the 'raspberry paradise' is a vain illusion and no more welcoming than the hostile Petersburg. The 'paradise' nature of Malinov is suspect, for the drone image is negative (see below, p. 65) as are the instruments, which produce no music. Parnok seems to have more direct relationships with the classical world; his love of music associates him with Pan, Greek god of pastures, flocks and woods, celebrated for his fondness of music. The physical resemblance to Pan is evident in Parnok's 'sheep's hooves', and their preoccupations are

also similar. Parnok's attention is captured by a pine branch frozen in ice, - like a Greek girl in an open grave - a reflection, perhaps, of Pan's involvement with Pitys which resulted in her assuming the form of a pine tree⁵⁷. The image of the pine branch indicates, in addition to this connection with Pan, Parnok's essentially light-hearted nature: 'С детства он прикреплялся душой ко всему ненужному, превращая в события трамвайный лепет жизни ...' (II, p. 11) It is the branch that destroys the geometric perfection of the ice which captures his attention; he loves the logs which are light and hollow - and therefore which would not be a great deal of use in construction. Such a preference is reminiscent of Dostoevsky's Zapiski iz podpol'ya, where the hero condemns examples of perfection such as the Crystal Palace, and the formula '2 times 2 = 4'. This is an attitude maintained with some insistence by Mandelstam in his work after Egipetskaya marka:

Но не разбойничать нельзя.

(I, no. 255)

Мой труд, в чем бы он ни выражался, воспринимается как озорство, как беззаконие, как случайность ... для меня в бублике ценна дырка ... Бублик можно слопать, а дырка останется. Настоящий труд это - брюссельское кружево, в нем главное - то, на чем держится узор: воздух, проколы, прогулы.

('Chetvyortaya proza', II, p. 191)

The wood image recurs several times (II, pp. 6, 7, 10, 11, 20, 35, 39), a constant reminder of Parnok's 'frivolous' attitude. The wood does have attributes which normally have negative connotations in Mandelstam's work. The adjectives 'zvonkiy' and 'pustoy' are applied to it and it is associated with a frozen fish. But it is precisely the very ordinary, non-poetic nature of the wood which Mandelstam is seeking to emphasise here. It is its ordinariness which renders it valuable to Parnok; for him it is an 'event'. 'Sobytie' is a word which Mandelstam usually associates with artistic creation: '.. стихи Сологуба продолжают жить после того, как они написаны, как события, а не только как знаки переживания' ('O sobesednike', II, p. 240). There are hints that Parnok is an artist - he is concerned with 'sobytiya', he wants to write (II, p. 10), he uses the instruments of writing (II, p. 7). However there is no evidence that he achieves any of his ambitions in this sphere ('Emu khotelos' ... on zapomnil ...', II, p. 10). Indeed in the passage where the Kamennostrovskiy prospekt is identified with Parnok the adjective 'bezrobotnyy' is used (II, p. 14 - 'bezzabotnyy is a misprint) and this suggests Mandelstam's own condition at the time - he could neither create nor would his creations have been acceptable.

Parnok and Mandelstam are brought still more closely together in that the stuff of Parnok's hypothetical compositions resembles that of Mandelstam's own work. In 'O sobesednike' Mandelstam makes it clear that the poet's attention should be primarily with 'zhivym brat'yam'. This is Parnok's attitude exactly: the basis of his 'events' is the 'tramvaynyy lepet zhizni' (II, p. 11), a phrase whose significance becomes apparent in considering its relationship to Mandelstam's other work. 'Lepet' is usually connected with the creation of poetry, and it appears in this way in the 'Vosmistishiya' (I, no. 283), and also in the article 'Armiya poetov': '... начнется лепет, начнется речь, начнется жизнь' (II, p. 215). The adjective 'tramvaynyy' also had strongly affirmative associations for Mandelstam - the tram was after all the most likely form of transport to be used by the pedestrian. The adjective is concerned with that human warmth for which Mandelstam is seen to be searching in 'Кому зима, арак и пуня голубоглазый' (I, no. 127) and it appears in this context in 'Вы, с квадратными окошками невысокие дома' (I, no. 142), where he speaks of the 'bestolkovoe ... tramvaynoe teplo'. In both poems the adjective 'bestolkovyy' is applied to warmth. Like Parnok's love for the wood such warmth is spontaneous and not motivated by any kind of self-interest. Trams are part of life's normal pattern, and their absence can create a threatening atmosphere: in 'Chetvyortaya proza' the night is 'tramless' (II, p. 179; see also below Chapter Four, section (iv)(b)). Thus the 'tramvaynyy lepet' is admirable material for poor Parnok's imagination to interpret, and there are examples in Egipetskaya marka of such interpretations. There is the bathos with which the heroes of Balzac and Stendhal are treated (see above, p. 55). Parnok takes what the world considers to be worthy of the title 'event' and reduces it to his own beloved 'tramvaynyy lepet'. For Parnok the movement of the swing-bridge reveals the approach of an abyss: time is controlled by such deceptively banal levers (II, p. 36). He identifies the funeral of Anatole France with the repair of tram poles (II, p. 18). Just as Parnok's physical appearance is reduced to one feature - his shoes, so his whole mode of thought is epitomized in the image of the tram. In both thought and appearance he is identified with the street in which he lives - the Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt, which is as irresponsible as Parnok himself. It also shares his dandy-like tendencies: '... eto legkomyslennyy krasavets' (II, p. 14). It is interesting to note that no. 21 Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt was the home of the Imperial Alexander

Lyceum, which contained the Pushkin museum⁵⁸. The Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt, adjoining the Litseyskaya, was therefore an area with which Mandelstam was very much concerned. By considering another aspect of the pine-branch image the impression is strengthened that the choice of this street as Parnok's home was guided by more than chance. Parnok is captivated by the branch's likeness to a Greek girl in an open grave; Pushkin too was enamoured of a Greek girl, a certain Calypso Polikhroni, to whom he dedicated a number of drawings, notes and the poem 'Grechanke' (1822). Parnok is possessed by the vain ambition to join the ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Greek section. Such an ambition inevitably brings to mind Pushkin, who felt some sympathy for the Greeks in their uprising against the Turkish oppressors in 1821, and even held a post in the Foreign Ministry until being dismissed for his unseemly conduct. It is tempting to see in Parnok not only reflections of Mandelstam's own circumstances, but a descendant of Pushkin, much distorted and caricatured in accordance with the spirit of Egipetskaya marka. Parnok and Pushkin are strikingly similar in one respect - their obvious complete unsuitability for the diplomatic sphere. As Pushkin took refuge (and revenge) in his verse, rebelling against the post he had been given, so Parnok retreats to his imagination, creating 'sobytiya' to compensate for his frustrated diplomatic ambitions. The plight of Mandelstam himself is visible here; frequently his memory and his imagination were his only means of escape. In the 1920 poem 'Feodosiya' (I, no. 111) he anticipates the restrictions he was to meet: 'Но трудно плыть, а звезды всюду те же'. Thus Parnok is found to take comfort in his exploration of a map (II, p. 7), his nearest substitute for travel. There is a great deal of Parnok in this description - the 'grandiose' journeys he plans, the diplomatic functioning he attributes to the earth - but there are also features which bring to mind the author. The interpretation of the map is so close to one made in a poem by Mandelstam in 1914 that the suspicion arises as to whether or not Mandelstam is parodying his earlier work:

И полуостровов воздушны изваянья; / Немного женственны
заливов очертанья / ... Пята Испании ...

(I, no. 68)

... сравнивая воздушные очертания арийской Европы с
тупым сапогом Африки ...

(II, p. 7)

Parnok's vision of the hemispheres as nutritional pills embodying a condensed form of that distance and space of which he was so starved

recall a quality attributed to the stone (I, nos. 34, 138), to works of art, and in particular to poetry: '... скромная внешность произведения искусства нередко обманывает нас относительно чудовищно-уплотненной реальности, которой оно обладает' ('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 320). Parnok's pathetic attachment to his map contrasts vividly with a character who had no need of 'nutritional pills', for his travels had been so vast that he himself embodied time and space: 'Одиссей возвратился, пространством и временем полный' (I, no. 92). Parnok's dependence on his imaginative powers is evident in his attitude to light: he is under the illusion that as a boy he had crept into a conference hall and switched on the lights. The pain which this brightness causes brings to mind a line from 'Кому зима, арак и пунш голубоглазый' (I, no. 127): 'А белый, белый снег до боли очи ест' and from Puteshestvie v Armeniyu: 'Яркие до хирургической боли ...' (II, p. 150). This light is as hostile as such pain implies. The imagery used to describe Parnok's light confirms this and makes it clear that this is far more than simply an illustration of Parnok's delusions of grandeur: 'Все гроздя лампочек и пачки свеч с хрустальными сосульками вспыхнули сразу мертвым пчельником' (II, p. 11). The image of the apiary has various connections, both within Egipetskaya marka and with the work surrounding it. The bee has positive associations at some stages in Mandelstam's work: in 'Возьми на радость из моих ладоней' (I, no. 116) it is associated with the creation of poetry, and Dante's composition is compared to the work of bees at a hive (II, p. 377). However, the sketch 'Kholodnoe leto' written in 1923, reflects Mandelstam's growing disillusionment. Here the beehive has negative associations; the beekeeper is from the hostile Tverskoy Boulevard, and the Vospitatelnyy dom itself is a honeycomb which lacks any meaningful form (II, p. 131). It is not stated where Parnok's 'conference hall' is, but it is not beyond the realms of possibility that his insolent act should have been directed against an institution such as that depicted by the bee imagery of 'Kholodnoe leto'. In Egipetskaya marka the apiary is part of an important complex of insect imagery; the crowd forms a grotesque hive, swarming round its queen, the hapless victim (II, p. 17). Parnok too has associations with the hive, being identified with the drone (II, p. 26), that member of the hive which is driven out by the workers once its function of fertilizing the queen has been fulfilled.

(ii) The crowd

There is a definite emphasis on hierarchically organised colonies in Egipetskaya marka. The action carried out on the victim by the crowd is described in terms of soldier ants disposing of an alien member (II, p. 22). Parnok's position as a drone is obviously as hazardous as that of the victim of the ant colony, and this, in addition to his fear of attracting the attention of the crowd (II, p. 19), suggests that Krzyżanowski's confusion of Parnok and the victim (II, p. 29) is designed to indicate more than just Krzyżanowski's flippantly superior attitude. The danger to which Parnok and his double, the victim, are subject is made clear in the concentration on the inhuman nature of the crowd. The threat inherent in the crowd phenomenon was evidently all too clear to Mandelstam. He was aware that they could be dangerously aggressive in their excitability (I, no. 192), and that this aggression rendered them liable to destroy even their heroes (Shum vremeni, II, p. 72). In Shum vremeni Mandelstam feels the need to state that the crowd is human: 'Мрачные толпы народа ... все эти людские толпы ...' (II, pp. 53-54). The inimical character of the crowd in Egipetskaya marka is not confined to comparisons with insects which have a developed social hierarchy; it is also identified with the cockroach, that primitive creature which has never evolved since it can survive whatever the environment: 'kishevshie tarakan'ey tolпой' (II, p. 19). The crowd in Bely's Peterburg had been depicted in a strikingly similar way: 'Не было на Невском людей, но ползучая, голосащая многоножка была там ... Совсем сколопендра!' ⁵⁹. The 'predrevolyutsionnaya trevoga' (see below, p. 89) evidently induces this kind of metamorphosis. In Egipetskaya marka the crowd is seen to have developed a hybrid nature: they have 'dog' ears. They are loathsome in every way; their dress contrasts vividly with Parnok's aspirations to a morning coat - they are shabbily clad and their coats are strewn with dandruff. In their movement they exhibit all the repulsiveness and threat of a predatory insect. They swarm, infesting that very scene which Mandelstam had described so positively in 'Вы, с квадратными окошками невысокие дома' (I, no. 142, stanza 3), '... налетевшая человечья саранча вычернила берега Фонтанки ...' (II, p. 20). The crowd does not lose its inhuman attributes in the work after Egipetskaya marka (e.g. I, nos. 218, 220), and it is evident even in Mandelstam's letters: '... здесь не люди, а рыбы страшные ...' (III, p. 261).

The crowd mentality depicted in Egipetskaya marka, the viciousness of the whole and the cowardliness of the individual, is summarized by Nadezhda Yakovlevna:

... ради пользы дела не только можно, но даже нужно убивать ... Основную массу составляли угрюмые люди, которые сторонились убийц, но не смели им ничего сказать.

(N.Ya. II, pp. 587-588)

It is perhaps the swarming action of the insect-crowd which is its most threatening feature, for this is precisely the action of the 'night' which engulfs Parnok (II, p. 22). It is in this identification between insect and night that the further significance of Parnok's memories of light (see p. 65) is to be found. It is interesting to note that there Mandelstam applied a natural image, that of fruit, to an artificial phenomenon ('Vse grozd'ya lampochek', II, p. 11). Previously the image had been applied to natural phenomena - the human clusters of the concert hall (Shum vremeni, II, p. 72), or, more significantly in this context, those of night itself: '... черный виноград-изабеллу - плотный и тяжелый как гроздь самой ночи' ('Men'sheviki v Gruzii', II, p. 200). In Egipetskaya marka, however, night no longer has any such positive associations, and the image of fruit is present in forms which reveal either artificiality (the light), or that it is subject to disintegration - night is arranged in a pattern of plum-stones (II, p. 23). It engulfs those remnants which, like Parnok, have been reduced to the smallest form in which they can exist. Parnok is a lemon pip (II, p. 22), a singularly apt image when his role as an insolent misfit is considered. Parnok (like Mandelstam himself) is the irritant element - the element which seeks to preserve those values which are being destroyed. The sense of dislocation which pervades the whole of the work is apparent, on a very mundane level, in the unusual combination of coffee and lemon. More important, however, is the state of reduction inherent in Parnok's condition. The image of the lemon pip is of the same order as those of washing which, in conjunction with the title of the work, point to the inevitability of Parnok's destruction.

(iii) The mosquito

The final image to deal with the state of disintegration is that of the mosquito (II, p. 38), an image which draws Parnok and Mandelstam so closely together that it is difficult not to agree with Berkovsky's

observation on the inappropriateness of Mandelstam's dissociation from Parnok (II, p. 24): 'Парнок, с которым автор так неаккуратно размежевывается ...'⁶⁰. The mosquito retains here all those characteristics which it had displayed in Mandelstam's poetry of the twenties: it is royal, lazy, and emits a hostile sound (I, nos. 131, st. 1, 139, st. 2). It has, however, developed certain resemblances to the 'little man', and thus it shares with Mandelstam and with Parnok the lineage of collegiate assessors, the traditional profession of the little men of Petersburg. The insect's persistent apologies ('izvinyayus' occurs three times) strengthen the impression of a timorous being. The city of Petersburg has had as malicious an influence on the mosquito as it had on Parnok, and its dislike of the northern latitudes brings to mind Mandelstam's own feelings about the northern city: 'Он чувствовал себя пришельцем с юга, волею случая закинутым в холод и мрак северных широт' (N.Ya. II, p. 562). Parnok, Mandelstam and the mosquito are part of a disease-ridden, man-exploiting environment; indeed Petersburg is now so thoroughly infected as to cause the mosquito's disease-bearing talents to be redundant. The fate of a subject as threatening as the mosquito had been suggested in 'A nebo budushchim beremennno...' (I, no. 197) in 1923. There the insect/aeroplane could be used or destroyed by the monstrous creatures produced by inimical night. It should not be overlooked in this context that the mosquito reflects other characters apart from Parnok and the author; firstly, it is bow-legged ('raskoryaka' II, p. 38), as is Krzyżanowski ('kolchenogiy' II, p. 19) - presumably as a result of his activities as a cavalry officer. In contradiction to this, the mosquito also declares itself to be a 'plastun' - a Cossack foot soldier. These two details indicate that even one who indulges in hostile activities is subject to destruction. Thus the composite character of the mosquito fuses within itself enemy and victim; both are reduced to the same condition, and there is an unmistakable similarity between the plaint of the mosquito and that of Mandelstam:

... от меня так мало осталось ... (II, p. 38)

И мне уж не хватает меня самого. (I, no. 136)

(iv) The Jewish characters

The character and condition of Parnok has considerable relevance to the situation of Mandelstam himself. There is much too in the

depiction of the Jewish characters in Egipetskaya marka which relates them both to the vulnerable nature of Parnok's condition and to Mandelstam's own background. In Mandelstam's depictions of Jewish settings the atmosphere created is invariably unattractive and unhealthy (Shum vremeni, II, p. 56, pp. 68-69 - the sickly atmosphere, the frightening, oppressive effect on a small boy). This is so in the case of the Jewish subjects in Egipetskaya marka. The description of the jeweller (II, p. 18) is evidently formed largely from Mandelstam's own experience, for there is a great deal here which corresponds to the Jewish scenes of Shum vremeni. Thus the jeweller himself seems to be not unlike Mandelstam's father:

Тот сидел горбатым Спинозой и глядел в свое иудейское
стеклышко на пружинных козявок.

(Egipetskaya marka, II, p. 18)

Где-то поблизости Спиноза разводит в банке своих пауков.

(Shum vremeni, II, p. 67)

The image of the insect nature of the springs over which the jeweller peers corresponds to the spiders of Spinoza, and appears also in 'Что поют часы-кузнечик' (I, no. 98) and in Shum vremeni (II, p. 102). The full pessimism of the jeweller's function in Egipetskaya marka can be judged from the fact that these insects, cicadas (II, p. 19), had been associated with a watchmaker in Annensky's poem 'Stal'naya tsikada', the theme of which is far from cheerful:

Я знал, что она вернется
И будет со мной - Тоска.
Звякнет и запахнется
С дверью часовщика ... 61

The jeweller is beset by debts and has no telephone - a feature in his favour (see below p. 107). His shop has that same sad and sickly atmosphere depicted in Shum vremeni, here conveyed in the striking image of his daughters, whose composition corresponds to the food of which Mandelstam's grandparents were so fond:

Вот дочки у него есть - грустные, как марципаные
кукли ...

(II, p. 18)

Но не понравились мне пряные стариковские лакомства,
их горький миндальный вкус.

(Shum vremeni, II, p. 68)

None of the Jewish subjects in Egipetskaya marka is entirely healthy; the jeweller has haemorrhoids (II, p. 18: an affliction common to Petersburgers - Akakiy Akakevich's complexion was 'haemorrhoidal'⁶²)

and Abrasha Kopelanskiy suffers from angina pectoris (II, p. 39). Aunt Johanna is deformed (II, p. 37), and Geshka Rabinovich too displays unnatural features: like Parnok (II, p. 37) he cannot grow up, although from the day of his birth he has been conditioned to his profession of insurance (II, p. 30). The name Geshka Rabinovich (or Genrikh Yakovlevich as he is also known) reflects the name of a friend from Mandelstam's earlier years in Petersburg's 'Brodyachaya sobaka', namely G.S. Rabinovich⁶³. The details given of Geshka's marriage are strikingly similar to the circumstances of Mandelstam's own marriage: 'Его незаконная связь с какой-то Лизочкой умиляла всех ... их розовой бездетный брак, освященный архиереями из кофейни Филиппова ...' (II, p. 30). Nadezhda Yakovlevna tells of her first meeting with Mandelstam in a 'coffee shop', the 'Junk Shop' in Kiev (N.Ya. II, p. 20), and of their 'marriage' ceremony (N.Ya. II, p. 129). As in the case of Geshka, Mandelstam's marriage aroused a certain benevolent surprise, not to say alarm, amongst those who knew him (N.Ya. II, p. 162). Perhaps there is an example here of self-caricature: the description of Lizochka, a name hallowed in Russian literature to ladies beset by misfortune of one kind or another (Karamzin's Bednaya Liza, Dostoevsky's Zapiski iz podpol'ya, Brat'ya Karamazovy) is certainly reminiscent of the affectionately irreverent way in which Mandelstam refers to his wife in his poetry (I, nos. 202, 226). There is also a reflection of Nadezhda's hopes (and name) in the ominously unfinished sentence: 'Она, конечно, надеялась сумасшедшей надеждой ... что их ... брак ... только начало ...' (II, p. 30). A childish, toylike creature such as Geshka is obviously vulnerable, and the awareness of this vulnerability is emphasised in the constant reference to insurance.

Insurance of a rather more mystical kind is hinted at in the passage depicting the alien Jewish family, where the image of the cockerel destined for slaughter (II, p. 39: 'reznik' - slaughterer of animals in Jewish ritual sacrifice) suggests the traditional Jewish ritual of the scapegoat, a rite which the Russian crowd are only too quick to adopt as their own in Egipetskaya marka. Again, it is evident here how strong a sense Mandelstam had at this time of the danger of his own position, for it is no doubt intended as a sign of threat that Mandelstam should be taken on a journey about which he knows nothing. The poem 'На розвальнях, уложенных соломой' (I, no. 85) is brought to mind here, for it too deals with a vague and frightening

journey, with a victim whose identity is as deliberately unclear as that of the victim of Egipetskaya marka.

Related to Mandelstam and, in their vulnerability, to Parnok, the Jewish subjects create an atmosphere which is neither friendly nor healthy, and their presence brings no reassurance either to Parnok or to Mandelstam. The Jewish efforts to survive (the insurance, the slaughter of the cockerel) are totally unreal in the world of Egipetskaya marka, where only the truly aggressive enemies of Parnok can hope to survive.

(v) The Lutherans

Another group related to Mandelstam is present in Egipetskaya marka, namely the Lutherans. They are concerned not so much with indicating threat to survival, as with creating a hostile atmosphere and they assume the form of ravens, harbingers of woe. The physical resemblance between the Lutherans and the ravens of Egipetskaya marka is unmistakable:

Lutherans: ... топорщились, как кровельное железо,
воскресные пиджаки мужчин ... со старухами
... в суконных юбках, твердых, как жель.
Нужно петь псалмы в петушиной кирке ...

(II, p. 31)

Ravens: ... сухопарые вороны, с голубыми от
старости, жесткими перьями ...

(II, p. 32)

Aunt Vera represents the Lutherans (II, p. 31). In this character Mandelstam gives a brilliant portrait of a stiff and uncompromising spinster, who is reduced to two characteristic details - her thin 'Lutheran lips' and her spinsterish curls, which demonstrate her disapproval of the Mandelstam household (II, p. 31). Just as the ravens have a rigid insensitivity towards the unhappy nature of the tidings which they bear, so too is Aunt Vera mechanically unfeeling in her distribution of sympathy. The stiffness of the Lutherans, epitomised in the raven image, contrasts with the bird imagery applied to Parnok (he is a canary, II, p. 36), and also with the bird-like nature of the laundry-girls (II, p. 15); these twittering females (II, p. 15) bear a distinct resemblance to the bird-like French governesses of Shum vremeni (II, p. 63). These latter groups belong to the set of sparrow images which Mandelstam uses consistently in his work to define an endearing, if impudent, nature. The image of the

sparrow - a town bird (e.g. I, no. 134) - is also applied to people such as the Moscow salesgirls of 'Kholodnoe leto' (II, p. 129). In Egipetskaya marka the sparrow is at as great a risk as it is in the description of the Parisian crowd in 'Язык булыжника мне голубя понятней' (I, no. 138). The sparrows' merry chirping (II, p. 21) is as out of place as Parnok's 'legkomyslie', and it contrasts with the ominous presence of the ravens who bear only ill-tidings (II, p. 32). The contrast effected between the different bird images, ravens versus canary and sparrows, contributes to the creation of the hostile background against which Parnok's activities take place.

(vi) Krzyżanowski; the cabby

Parnok's major enemy is the strutting military officer, Krzyżanowski, to whose influence most seem willing to bend. The dichotomy of the little man and the lady-killing soldier is again inherited from Gogol and Dostoevsky, and the feelings of the little man in the presence of such a socially popular person are perhaps best conveyed in Dvoynik: 'Ближе всех стоял к нему какой-то офицер, высокий и красивый малый, перед которым Голядкин почувствовал себя настоящей букашкой'⁶⁴. Krzyżanowski contrasts with Parnok in every way: as in the case of Pirogov and Piskaryov in Gogol's Nevskiy prospekt, their names reveal these contrasts. Piskaryov's mouse-like squeaking ('pisk' - a squeak) and Parnok's ovine timidity are no match for the complacency of Pirogov, whose name has overtones of gluttony, and Krzyżanowski, whose obviously Polish name bears a distinct threat, since it shares the root of krzyżacki (of the Teutonic order) and krzyżowka (hybrid). The two characters are also contrasted by the bird imagery applied to them (the use of bird imagery in characterisation in this work is so extensive as to bring to mind its use in the tale of Igor). Whereas Parnok is equated with that gentle songster, the canary (II, p. 36), Krzyżanowski belongs as a cavalry officer to those vicious carrion vultures who appear at Bosio's funeral service (II, p. 8). These vultures are evidently related to the repulsive 'lyudi-ptitsi' of 'A nebo budushchim beremmeno ...', (I, no. 197), and there is an obvious contrast between them and the image of the bird of prey which appears in Mandelstam's later works. This latter creature aroused Mandelstam's admiration because of its highly evolved visual acuity and accommodation, and he applied the image of the bird of prey

to those for whom he felt respect (I, no. 236, Puteshestvie v Armeniyu II, p. 139, Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 389). The carrion vulture, on the other hand, epitomises an awful threat which Mandelstam sensed all too clearly.

Krzyżanowski despises a pedestrian such as Parnok, and his strength and superiority in the social hierarchy are stressed by the fact that he drives an impressive drozhky, whose resemblance to a classical chariot brings to mind the figure of Nero, now in command of Petersburg (II, p. 20), who prided himself on his prowess as a charioteer. A similarly classical image is used in Shum vremeni to convey the sense of awe inspired in a humble pedestrian by that accomplice of the higher orders, the cabby: '... а извозчики похожи на сенаторов' (II, p. 62). The essential hostility of the cabby had been demonstrated too in '1 yanvarya 1924' (I, no. 140), and his appearance in Egipetskaya marka is no less negative. He is in his native setting of coldness (compare no. 140, st. 7), and is portrayed as possessing that animal consciousness by which the world of Egipetskaya marka is governed: he has been reduced to the level of a horse, and speaks with an 'ovsyanyy golosom' (II, p. 29), an aptly gluttonous image. The cabby and Krzyżanowski are linked by a more modern form of transport than the carriage, that of the railway. The detail which draws them together in this context is small but significant. The railway belongs firmly to the camp of the aggressive, and its negative impact is stressed by its association with the suicide of Anna Karenina (II, p. 41). As in Tolstoy's novel, a muzhik is close at hand, muttering ominously. This character had appeared to both Vronsky and Anna in dreams during the course of the novel, and this is a feature which Mandelstam repeats in a somewhat distorted way in Egipetskaya marka, no doubt to create the same atmosphere of fateful foreboding. It is precisely the peasant of Anna's dream who reappears in Egipetskaya marka, for Anna stresses that the man spoke French ('Il faut le battre, le fer; le broyer, le pétrir')⁶⁵ and Mandelstam specifies that the muzhik in Egipetskaya marka is French, (II, p. 41). In Anna's dream the railway worker bends over a bag: 'Я хотела бежать, но он нагнулся над мешком и руками что-то копошится там'⁶⁶. In Egipetskaya marka, the cabby, the muzhik and the chinaman who appears in the curious dream which opens the first chapter, all possess some kind of bag:

... со своим бабьим кошельком ... (II, p. 29)

... как дамская сумочка ... (II, p. 41)

... обвешанный дамскими сумочками ... (II, p. 5)

The fact that the bags are all specifically feminine links them with Anna Karenina. This emphasis on the feminine accords with the ill-fated nature of the feminine subjects in Egipetskaya marka: the dead Greek girl (II, p. 10), Bosio (II, pp. 35-36), and El'za Blomquist (II, p. 32).

For Krzyżanowski, who manages to turn all to his own advantage, the railway is a means of escape unavailable to such as Parnok. In his particular talent for self-preservation Krzyżanowski bears considerable resemblance to the Harbour Master of 'Feodosiya', who was also ever ready to make a comfortable exit should things turn against him (II, p. 115). Parnok's inability to survive is symbolised in the hopelessness of his efforts to regain his lost clothing. Like Mandelstam he obviously does not have the instinct of the 'family man' so viciously denounced in Mandelstam's translation of Barbier's 'La Curée', and demonstrated in both the harbour master's and Krzyżanowski's talents in acquiring and retaining property. In any case, the elegant morning coat is far more suited to the foppish Krzyżanowski, for it too has a hostile nature conveyed in the fish imagery applied to it: 'Бизитка, поджав лапы, улеглась в чемодан особенно хорошо, почти не помявшись - шаловливым шевиотовым дельфином ...' (II, p. 42). Similarly negative imagery is applied to the clothing of Mazesa da Vinci from 'Feodosiya': '... с черными шевиотовыми лапами ...' (II, p. 125). Mazesa da Vinci, the Harbour Master and Krzyżanowski are all associated by an exaggerated concern with their appearance; all are successful in their dealings with the laundry (II, pp. 123, 111, 16 respectively) and the Harbour Master and Krzyżanowski find no difficulty in shaving, in contrast with Parnok's all too unpleasant experience at the barber's. Such successful dandyism betrays their artificiality and the insincerity of their relationships with other people, epitomised in the graphic image of the Harbour Master's unusual mode of greeting: 'Эти поцелуи он носил при себе, как коробочку свежих мятных лепешек' (II, p. 112).

The characters in Egipetskaya marka say very little, but the few words contributed by Parnok and Krzyżanowski are thoroughly in keeping with what is learnt about them from other methods of characterisation.

Parnok's short statements are uttered at times of fearful alarm, and the influence of Akakiy Akakevich's linguistic style can clearly be sensed in Parnok's use of words with very little meaning⁶⁷ - for example, his resumé of Mervis' action is punctuated by 'Что же ... может ... может ... уже ... в самом деле ...' (II, pp. 8-9).

Krzyżanowski is simply pompous and pretentious, with no concern for anyone but himself. Mandelstam describes the shopping expedition of Krzyżanowski and his lady friend with some relish (II, p. 32): the lady is ridiculously stereotyped, being reduced to the image of a little pink ear; the 'zavodnaya kukla ofitsera' of 'В Петербурге мы сойдемся снова' (I, no. 118) is inevitably brought to mind here. There is a certain humour in the grandiose feelings aroused in the couple by the idiotic goods which they admire. It is with some pride, therefore, that Mandelstam imparts the information that they never visited Eylers' flower shop on the Ofitsterskaya - a building in which Mandelstam had lived as a boy (II, p. 62)⁶⁸. The speakers in the ballet passage (II, pp. 28-29) are not named, although it seems likely that they are none other than Krzyżanowski and his lady. The statements alternate between those of a romantic imagination: ' - Как вы думаете, где сидела Анна Каренина?' (II, p. 29) and the dogmatic statements of one whose confidence knows no bounds: 'Нет, нет - тут уж вы со мной не спорьте! ... - Нет, что ни говорите ...' (II, pp. 28-29).

(vii) Krzyżanowski and the personification of abstract concepts

Such is the brash, military dandy with whom Parnok must contend. There are, however, smaller details about Krzyżanowski which reveal a yet more menacing character. He is evidently one who rose swiftly to a powerful position (II, p. 16), a singularly common phenomenon of the epoch. At the same time this figure contrasts sharply in its artificiality with those who had fought for a revolution which would bring justice rather than just privilege for themselves. This is a theme of Barbier's 'La Curée', and Mandelstam's translation of this resembles Egipetskaya marka's picture of the perversion of a worthy ideal which had allowed itself to be wooed by such as Krzyżanowski:

- (i) Там не маячила, как в нашем современьи,
Мундиров золотых орда, -
То было в рубище мужских сердец биенье ...

(iv) (Свобода) То дева бурная, бастильская касатка ...
Фригийский растоптал колпак,
С двадцатилетним вдруг бежала капитаном
Под звуки труб в военный мрак.

(Sov. ed., no. 278)

It is interesting to note here that Barbier uses a female image to represent an abstract concept (freedom), a technique which Mandelstam employs on several occasions in Egipetskaya marka. In this context the fact that the lady with whom Krzyżanowski associates seems quite defenceless in the face of his charms is disturbing, for two of the poet's most vital sources, Time and Memory, are personified in feminine images. The contrast between the vulnerable, specifically feminine nature of Time and Memory and the brashly masculine Krzyżanowski is crucial here. Time in Egipetskaya marka is shown in the feminine image to be neither positive (as it was, for example, in 'Возьми на радость из моих ладоней', I, no. 116), nor overtly hostile (as in 'Холодок щекочет темя', I, no. 129). It is weak and insipid, like a cabbage-white butterfly (II, p. 18), an image used on several occasions by Mandelstam to denote inadequacy, the most striking being in the contrast between the strength of the Armenian language and the weakness of those who do not appreciate it: '... как русская бабочка-капустница в библиотеке кактусов ...' (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 143). The sickly Jewish girl of Egipetskaya marka, representative of Time, and, fittingly, a reflection of the jeweller's sickly daughters, is obviously closely related to the personification of Memory: 'Память - это больная девушка-еврейка, убегающая ночью тайком от родителей на Николаевский вокзал: не увезет ли кто?' (II, p. 30). This ineffectual figure is, moreover, associated with Krzyżanowski; one who obviously would not hesitate in abducting young ladies, he leaves for Moscow by train, which implies that he must have used the Nikolaevsk railway station⁶⁹.

The impression that Krzyżanowski, obviously inimical to Parnok, is also an enemy of the Word is strengthened by the beverage of which he partakes during his journey by train: '... он отведал железнодорожного кофия ... из цикория, с легкой прибавкой кладбищенской земли ...' (II, p. 42). The deathly element of which it is compounded accords fully with the menace of the railway and the threat presented to art by a figure such as Krzyżanowski. Once again, the beverage consumed (see p. 59) reveals the essential nature of the character. Krzyżanowski's relationship to the Word and to men alike is inimical. It is implied

in the closing passage of the work that he has received another swift promotion - he is now a 'byvshiy rotmistr', and his new residence in Moscow suggests the precise nature of his new employment: 'Нам сказали, что эта гостиница в первые же дни была забрана для работников Лубянки' (N.Ya. II, p. 590).

(viii) Mervis and Shapiro

Allusions to unsavoury connections are also present in the case of Parnok's other enemy, Mervis: 'По всему было видно, что в голове у Мервиса совсем не портяжное дело, а нечто более важное' (II, p. 8). Mervis' nationality is unclear - the ending '-is' is a Yiddish suffix (for example, 'Margulis'), but it is far more common in the republics of Lithuania and Latvia⁷⁰: it was of course from the capital of the latter that Mandelstam's father came. In spite of the fact that the name 'Mervis' hints at a Latvian or Lithuanian origin, Mandelstam goes to some lengths to stress Mervis' Jewish attributes: his son is called Aron (II, p. 8), his wife's voice is likened to specifically Jewish honey (II, p. 9). Whatever his nationality, Mervis definitely embodies a threat. The emphasis lies heavily on his cunning and mercenary nature; aptly, he lives on the Monetnaya, a street leading off from the Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt. The treachery inherent in Mervis' machinations is made clear in a classical reference which reaffirms the feminine nature of Parnok's coat: 'Мервис похитил ее как сабинянку' (II, p. 6). The success of Mervis' dealings is evident in the plenty by which he is surrounded, he approaches everything as if it were food:

... сделал рукой движение, как бы выковыривающее масло ...

(II, p. 8)

... подул на нее (визитку), как на горячий чай ...

(II, p. 33)

and even his wife's voice resembles richly flowing honey (II, p. 9). Mervis is yet more skilled in the art of cunning than Gogol's Petrovich, but there are resemblances in the situations surrounding the two tailors. Mervis' wife, although not displaying Madame Petrovich's shrewishness, does encourage her husband's schemes. When Akakiy Akakevich first receives Petrovich's tidings that a new coat is the only answer to his problems, his devastated mind can fix on only one thing:

... что ни было в комнате, как и пошло пред ним
путаться. Он видел ясно одного только генерала
с заклеенным бумажкой лицом, находившегося на крыше
Петровиной табакерки.⁷¹

Similarly, when Parnok is deserted by Mervis and his family his attention becomes fixed on the strange 'iconostasis' behind which Mervis has disappeared. Petrovich's snuff-box is pasted with paper under which lies the picture of a general - a figure to take a menacing fleshly form in the figure of the 'znachitel'noe litso' later in the story. The pictures on Mervis's screen, too, have a disturbing relevance to Parnok's condition. The picture of Pushkin's unceremoniously secretive burial (II, p. 9) was evidently one which deeply disturbed Mandelstam: he equated it with the ominous image of the night sun, the turning away from Christianity and art of which Russia was guilty ('Pushkin i Skryabin', II, pp. 313-314). It is doubtless inauspicious that such a picture should be openly displayed by Mervis, who has treated Parnok in such a shameful way. The second picture bears a distinct threat. For Mandelstam the aeroplane, and presumably the aeroplane in its earliest stages (the picture is of Santos-Dumont, the Brazilian airship pioneer), was profoundly hostile, being exposed to and becoming identified with the influence of natural phenomena such as the condor - a carrion bird after the nature of Krzyżanowski. Mervis is of the same order as Krzyżanowski: he is surrounded by 'ptichiy vozdukh' (II, p. 8) and his relations have the movement of carrion vultures:

Krzyżanowski: ... кавалергарды слетятся ... Золотые птички-
стервятники ...

Mervis: ... к нему слетались родственники ...

(II, p. 8)

Finally, the Breughel-like scene of the third picture accords with the grotesquely inhuman nature of the crowd with which Parnok is to contend. The pictorial crowd, like Mervis, is bird-like ('zhuravlinnym marshem') and its members are forerunners of the sinister presences to appear in the poetry after Egipetskaya marka: 'Там живет народец мелкий - / В желудевых шапках все ...' (I, no. 264).

Mervis has two major appearances in the work. The first is concerned with the theft of the coat (II, pp. 6, 8, 9), where he shows himself to be completely unfeeling - he would deprive Parnok even of his illusory comfort of light (II, p. 8, see above, p. 65). In the second, the delivery of the coat to Krzyżanowski, Mandelstam's tone is

more explicitly condemnatory. Mervis is blind - like Petrovich who was blind in one eye - but in a sinister fashion which is horribly reminiscent of the dreadful Viy: '... иногда опущенное веко видит больше, чем глаз ...' (II, p. 33). His blindness is indicative of his cunning, as are his wrinkles, arranged in tiers, an image distasteful to Mandelstam because of its notion of the crowding together of people - hence the derogatory 'skopishche'. Mervis is thoroughly artificial: his porcelain exterior conceals his true convict's hardness. His human resemblances are scarce. He is a satyr, a mask, tainted by dishonesty and disease and he is described as a 'kifared', an allusion to Thamyras, subject of a tragedy by Sophocles which was adapted in Russian translation by Annensky (see below, p. 140). Whereas Thamyras once vied with the Muses, Mervis is in league with evil forces in the practice of his cunning, and because of his connection with such forces he becomes an agent of death. The extent of Mervis' crime can be seen in the striking contrast between his activities and those of Shapiro, a tailor from Mandelstam's childhood. Mervis wraps the coat in a clean linen sheet, true to the tradition of Petrovich⁷². The criminal nature of Mervis' action, however, transforms the linen into a funeral shroud - a terrible distortion of that material which, through his childhood knowledge of Shapiro, had symbolised honesty for Mandelstam:

Есть темная, с детства идущая геральдика нравственных
понятий: шварк раздираемого полотна может означать
честность, и холод мадеполама - святость.

(II, p. 12)

Shapiro is most definitely a Jew, and, unlike Mervis, he respects the principle of honesty which Mandelstam had demonstrated to be of prime significance in the life of a Jew. In both Egipetskaya marka and Shum vremeni honesty is equated with holiness: 'Для еврея честность - это мудрость и почти святость' (Shum vremeni, II, p. 69). There is a strong connection here with the concept of honour ('chest'') which is also shown to be absent in the world of Egipetskaya marka (see below, p. 170). The function of the character of Shapiro is to highlight Mervis' evil nature and thus to create a threatening atmosphere, for it is Mervis and Krzyżanowski who thrive, not Parnok and Shapiro.

The characterisation of Shapiro provides a fine example of

Mandelstam's ability to give a childhood reminiscence with convincingly childlike interpretations; while adding details which have significance to the work as a whole. Like Mandelstam himself Shapiro has Russian as well as Jewish elements (Nikolay/Davydych), and there is much about him which is sympathetic. His poverty is epitomised in the technique of reduction to one detail - he and his family are embodied in the image of three roubles (II, p. 12). There is a certain identification between Mandelstam and Shapiro's children; for both, the prominent feature of early years was evidently childhood illness:

Shapiro: ... и детей, с нарывами в горле ... (II, p. 12)

Mandelstam: Я вернулся в мой город, знакомый до
слез, / До прожилок, до детских
припухлых желез. (I, no. 221)

It is the childhood interpretation of the 'Sands', however, which is of the greatest significance. Like the demented Evgeny, Shapiro, as a 'little man', is subject to cruel aspects of natural phenomena which will inevitably destroy him: 'Пески, где он жил, были Сахарой ... Я боялся, что на Песках поднимется смерч ...' (II, p. 12). An appreciation of this fate reveals the truly ominous nature of the mutterings of the 'terrible stone lady': ' - Мусор на площади ... Самум ... Арабы ...' (II, p. 30). A terrible wind has now actually struck Petersburg, and it has the additionally threatening feature - and one typical of Egipetskaya marka - of being of oriental origin. The use of natural elements in the representation of revolution is by no means an innovation (compare the lexical associations of revolution and natural storms in the poetry of Tyutchev in his work on Napoleon and the poems such as 'Kon' morskoy')⁷³. The Arabian wind, however, is representative rather of a particular aftermath of revolution which Barbier had condemned in his poem 'La popularité', namely that sense of vanity which leads the victors away from altruistic deeds to self-glorification and self-interest - and the infliction of cruelty on others. It is significant that Mandelstam chose to translate that section of the poem which depicts terror as inflicted by a natural element, the sea: 'Кидает с кровью нам, обратно в ил свалившись, / Горсть человеческих голов' ('Ето зyb', Sov. ed., no. 280).

(ix) Relationships between the characters

A section of Barbier's 'La popularité' which Mandelstam did not translate provides a startlingly accurate reflection of the relation-

ships of the characters in Egipetskaya marka. To Krzyżanowski and Mervis, Parnok is expendable, merely 'débris' (compare 'musor' of II, p. 30):

Hélas! nous existons dans un temps de misère,
Un temps à nul autre pareil,
Où la corruption ronge et pourrit sur terre
Tout ce qu'en tire le soleil;
Où dans le coeur humain l'égoïsme déborde,
Où rien de bon n'y fait séjour,
Où partout la vertu montre bientôt la corde,
Où le héros ne l'est qu'un jour.
Un temps où les serments et la foi politique
Ne soulèvent plus que des ris;
Où le sublime autel de la pudeur publique
Jonche le sol de ses débris;
Un vrai siècle de boue, où, plongés que nous sommes
Chacun se vautre et se salit.⁷⁴

The force which governs the characters in Egipetskaya marka, guiding them in their self-interest, is that of Fear, an abstract concept which is again personified. This personification is of a rather different nature from that of Time and Memory (see above, p. 76). In the case of Time and Memory such personification established a contrast between feminine and masculine and thus created an atmosphere of threat, which seemed to have particular reference to artistic creation. Fear, however, is an all-pervading force in Egipetskaya marka, one which rules in some way or another the life of every character. Mandelstam had always been aware of the malicious effects of Fear, and his assessment of its essential nature is to be found at an early stage in the poetry: 'И самый страх есть чувство пустоты' (I, no. 34). This is precisely that state of emptiness, that disease which had overtaken Petersburg (see below pp. 90-93). His growing apprehension of the influence of Fear can be seen in his translation of Barbier's 'L'Emeute', where his 'Страх бьет без промаху' (Sov. ed., no. 282) is yet more ominous than the original: 'La peur frappe partout'⁷⁵. Fear in Egipetskaya marka is the 'cooper' (II, p. 18) which binds the crowd together and precludes the possibility of individuals speaking in defence of the victim. It is Fear which has reduced them to the insect state observed above (see p. 66); like the cockroach they are omnivorous, and their guiding instinct is survival. Mandelstam was to develop this theme in 'Chetvyortaya proza' with a straightforward, acidly humorous tone quite unlike that of Egipetskaya marka. The same sort of fear predominates in the later work, and it

is named: 'zhivotnyy strakh' (II, p. 179). The cowardly are seen to live in terror of being noticed, and medical imagery is used to describe their efforts to remain anonymous, and therefore safe:

Исай Бенедиктович с первых же шагов повел себя так,
будто болезнь заразительна, прилипчива - вроде
скарлатины - так что и его - Исай Бенедиктовича - могут,
чего доброго, расстрелять.

(II, p. 177).

Illness and Fear are related in Egipetskaya marka also; Parnok, the character who has the most to fear, is in the first stages of some kind of sclerosis. The illness is named as sclerosis in an autobiographical reminiscence (II, p. 32) which forms the last of three references to the action of a towel (or rag) stimulating the movement of the blood. The second such reference reveals that it is Parnok's timorous nature which has led to this disease: 'И кроличья кровь под мохнатым полотенцем согревалась мгновенно' (II, p. 13). The first is an indication of the terrifyingly contagious nature of the disease - even Parnok's kitchen is in danger: 'Пыльные тряпки и щетки разогревают ее белую кровь' (II, p. 7). The towel, the rag and the brush are of course associated with those cleaning agents seen above to be concerned with the destruction of Parnok. It will be noticed, however, that the cure is of no lengthy duration ('mgnovenno' can imply 'momentarily' as well as 'instantly') and Parnok lapses into his former state as soon as the danger from the barber is gone. The sclerosis, then, like Mandelstam's poetic silence, is a state of inactivity which is associated with the negative phenomenon of disease and is at the same time - for Parnok at least - a form of protection.

Parnok evidently succumbs to a certain extent to Fear which surrounds him. Fear is embodied in the figure of the lady doctor, Dr. Strashuner, the reference to whom is decidedly vague: 'Где-то практиковала женщина-врач Страшунер' (II, p. 32). That she is the enemy of Parnok can be inferred from the following points. Firstly, she appears immediately after the description of Krzyżanowski's shopping expedition, a final threatening detail in a hostile depiction. Secondly, it must be remembered that Parnok is identified with Dostoevsky's Golyadkin. Golyadkin's fate is decided by Dr. Christian Ivanovich Rutenspitiz, whose truly demonic nature is revealed only when he passes sentence on Golyadkin: '... два огненные глаза ... и зловещую, адскую радость блестя ...'⁷⁶. Dr. Rutenspitiz is evidently of German origin, and has an appropriately threatening name

(die Rute - a stick, spitzen - to sharpen); Strashuner too has a Germanic ending (-er) and is significantly associated with Fear (strakh - Strashuner).

Parnok's confrontation with Fear provides an additional insight into the reasons behind the choice of his name, reasons which are made clear through comparison with Mandelstam's later works. In 'Chetvyortaya proza' Mandelstam firmly dissociates himself from those hypocritical members of society concerned with writing - his 'parnokopytnye druž'ya' (II, p. 180). Such a use of this image suggests that his comment on hooved animals in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu betrays more than an interest in evolution: 'Парнокопытный разум млекопитающих одевает их пальцы закругленным рогом' (II, p. 165). Parnok's hooved condition may well indicate such a 'hooved' mode of thought - one totally confused by the Fear which dominates Egipetskaya marka's society. It is no doubt a sign of Mandelstam's own confusion that his dissociation from the hooved is by no means as categorical in Egipetskaya marka as it was to be in 'Chetvyortaya proza'. In the earlier work he makes a plea rather than a declaration: 'Господи! Не сделай меня похожим на Парнока! Дай мне силы отличить себя от него' (II, p. 24). In Egipetskaya marka he states his awareness of the fact that the 'hooved' mentality prevails, dislocated from that order and incisiveness which alone can render it worthwhile and effective. This is demonstrated in the 'Nurmis' skate imagery, where Parnok's hooves are in evidence once again:

Так коньки, привинченные ... к американским копыцам-
шнуровкам, сращиваются с ними ... и оснащенная обувь
... превращается в великолепные драконьи ошметки,
которым нет названья и цены.

(II, p. 34)

It is quite in keeping with the tone of the work that the Fear which reigns should be embodied in the figure of a woman, for woman is primarily associated with death in Egipetskaya marka (see below, Chapter Three, section (iii)). Fear's final appearance is also in a feminine form, although its femininity is only suggested here (II, p. 41; its gloves would seem to be ladies' apparel). Fear is horrifyingly real, and as it leads him Mandelstam is aware even of the material of its gloves, which share the sinister whiteness of Petersburg's white nights: 'Белая нитяная перчатка. Митенька. Я люблю, я уважаю страх. Чуть было не сказал: "с ним мне не страшно!"'⁷⁷.

Here one senses that Mandelstam is searching for a constructive element in Fear. Such an element exists perhaps in Mandelstam's respect of Fear, in his recognition of its existence - unlike Krzyżanowski and Mervis the truly dangerous, who are not afraid and merely inflict fear upon others. Mandelstam cannot yet dissociate himself firmly from the 'parnokopytnye' because he cannot yet 'look fear in the eyes', a requirement, according to Nadezhda Yakovlevna, of those who would find a source of strength and endurance in the conquering of fear (N.Ya. II, p. 201). The final appearance of Fear in Egipetskaya marka is, therefore, in another vague form. It is not quite personified, for only one detail of its appearance is given. It is thus remarkably similar to the characters themselves, who are never fully described, but merely characterised by one detail or comparison. The faces of the characters, as the face of Fear, are never seen; this is the case with Father Bruni, whose cassock sleeves portray his physical appearance, while a simple comparison serves to define his unassertive nature: 'Он потянул священника за широкий лаэстриновый рукав и повел его, как кораблик' (II, p. 14). There could be no place, indeed, for individuals with faces in a society divided into the categories of crowd and victim:

Сказать, что на нем не было лица? Нет, лицо на нем было, хотя лица в толпе не имеют значения, но живут самостоятельно одни затылки и уши.

(II, p. 17)

The characters of Egipetskaya marka are only partly human, and the particular 'noise' of their society deafens the poet who is no longer able to write poetry. Thus the poet shares the confusion of his hero Parnok, and he can only be aware that Fear exists and directs, leading, as it were, by the hand.

Chapter Three

The Geographical Setting of Egipetskaya marka

(i) Petersburg's influence on Mandelstam

The geographical setting of Egipetskaya marka, Petersburg, is a feature which at once establishes that a relationship exists between this piece of prose and Mandelstam's other work, for it is a city which occurs with some frequency in both his prose and poetry. The city will be referred to throughout this chapter as 'Petersburg'. The new name of Leningrad was as meaningless to Mandelstam as had been the intermediate Petrograd: in his work it is referred to either as Petersburg, or as Petropolis. Mandelstam's preoccupation with Petersburg is entirely in keeping with his biography, for he grew up, received his education and took his first steps into the literary world in Petersburg; although he was born in Warsaw, it was Petersburg he counted as his native city. It was also his home during the greater part of that period when he was stricken by the 'poetic silence' which prevented the creation of original poetry. Egipetskaya marka was written there while Mandelstam was committing the 'sacrilegious' act of living amidst Pushkin's ancient haunts at Tsarskoe Selo (N.Ya. I, p. 33).

The influence of the city, with its wealth of historical and literary associations, on the poet, should not be underestimated. It was the symbol of the strength of Peter the Great, the scene of assassinations and of uprisings - from that of the Decembrists in 1825, to the revolutions of 1905 and 1917. It had been embodied in the works of Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Bely. Furthermore, it was a common factor in the lives of both Pushkin and Mandelstam: for both it had been the scene of boyhood and education. In view of Mandelstam's boundless, even reverential, respect for his poetic predecessor - '... какое-то небывалое, почти грозное отношение ...',⁷⁸ - the fact that Petersburg was Pushkin's city must have played an important part in his attitude towards it.

Biographical, historical, and literary associations, then, form the background to Petersburg's influence on Mandelstam. This influence reveals itself in different ways at different periods of his work; as

times changed, so did Petersburg and the poet's relations with it. Whether repelled or attracted by it, however, Mandelstam was always very much aware of it:

Это был родной город Мандельштама - любимый, насквозь знакомый, но из которого нельзя не бежать ...
Петербург - боль Мандельштама, его стихи и его немота.

(N.Ya. II, p. 113)

Just as in the case of Villon ('Fransua Villon', II, p. 304) and Dante, poetic predecessors for whom Mandelstam had a very special regard, the city was Mandelstam's essential element, and aroused deep, if different, emotions in him:

Городолюбие, городострашие, городоненавистничество - вот материя inferno Для изгнанника свой единственный, запрещенный и безвозвратно утраченный город развеян всюду - он им окружен.

(Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 402)

The nature of the Petersburg of Egipetskaya marka is closely related to that of the city as it is depicted in the poetry and the other prose. This relationship is due to two main themes: the progressive decay of the city, and the poet's growing aversion from it, which results in a final and complete alienation. In order to define the distinctive position of Egipetskaya marka within such a framework of decay and alienation, the setting of the piece will be considered in the context of the poet's work from 1912 to 1933, with reference to the Petersburg of other writers, and to other cities which appear in the poetry and prose of Mandelstam.

(ii) The construction of Petersburg and its influence on historical events

In assessing the character of the city its construction is the first feature which must be considered. With his fascination for the culture of the Mediterranean world, his appreciation of measure and symmetry, Mandelstam was bound to draw some inspiration from the magnificent creations of architects such as Rastrelli and Quarenghi, whose work was everywhere to be seen. Certain of Petersburg's architectural monuments are indeed depicted in the poetry in a way which stresses Mandelstam's high regard for them - he concentrates on the movement, balance and symmetry which they display, on the beauty and wonder of art which contrasts with the emptiness of space:

И храма маленькое тело
Одушевленное стократ ...

(I, no. 61)

Не отрицает ли пространства превосходство
Сей целомудренно построенный ковчег?

(I, no. 48)

The inspiration of beauty such as that embodied in the Admiralty building was not the whim of some demigod, but the 'хищный глазомер простого столяра' (I, no. 48). Such was the craftsmanship which Mandelstam demanded of poetry - that of the architect - so that a poetic whole might be attained by the relationship of word to word, as a building stands by means of the relationship of stone to stone. ('Utro akmeizma', II, pp. 320-323).

The buildings of Petersburg may have been beautiful in themselves, fit to provide a poet with inspiration, but in the context of this particular Russian city there was something unnatural about their presence. This is a point which emerges in works on Petersburg from Pushkin to Bely. In Mednyy vsadnik Pushkin depicts the terrible consequences of imposing the will of man, even if he be Peter the Great, upon the hostile forces of nature; Bely points to the suffering which the enforced construction of the city must have caused:

'... рабочему люду жить трудно; оттуда вонзается Петербург и проспектными стрелами и вагатою каменных великанов'⁷⁹. Dostoevsky's famous phrase from his Zapiski iz podpol'ya is perhaps the most revealing of all that is unnatural and deceptive about the city:

'... сугубое несчастье обитать в Петербурге, самом отвлеченном и умышленном городе на всем земном шаре'⁸⁰. In Mandelstam's early poems, apart from those which celebrate Petersburg's architectural beauties, the city retains those rather unattractive physical features by which it had been characterised in the works of Gogol and Dostoevsky - the yellowness of the buildings, the turbulence of the Neva, the mists, the hard granite lines of the city (I, nos. 42, 45, 86). A fuller evaluation of Petersburg's physical characteristics, and one which is representative of Mandelstam's developing attitude towards the city, is to be found in the prose. In Shum vremeni (1925) the city emerges from the poet's graphic childhood impressions as a scene of military grandeur, whose colossal outlines and cold, secretive stateliness the child's imagination was quick to endow with suitably magnificent military parades (II, p. 50). The very construction of the city foretold its role as the setting for uprisings, for major historical events

- a point which is developed more fully in the earlier 'Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvarya' (1922). Here the plan of the city is seen to be the force which impelled the procession of petitioners to approach the Winter Palace on the fateful 'Bloody Sunday': 'Всеми своими улицами ... Петербург естественно течет в мощный гранитный водоем Дворцовой площади ...' (III, p. 130). The image of the reservoir as the focal point, the inevitable scene of events, recalls and elucidates a poem of 1915, where the passers-by are seen to disappear into a sinister whirlpool:

В черном омуте столицы
Столпник-ангел вознесен.
В темной арке, как пловцы
Исчезают пешеходы ...

(I, no. 189)

Petersburg, then, forms an ideal setting for revolution, indeed it seems to encourage it: a point of obvious importance with regard to Egipetskaya marka, with its retrospective consideration of 1917.

Both Shum vremeni and the article on the 1905 revolution indicate another of the city's features which is even more relevant to Egipetskaya marka, namely the power of Petersburg to influence not only the place of an event, but also its character. Thus Mandelstam's early years and inclinations were governed by the streets of Petersburg (Shum vremeni, II, pp. 49 and 52). Thus too the nature of the outcome of 'Bloody Sunday', which could have occurred only in Petersburg: '... его план, расположение его улиц, дух его архитектуры оставили неизгладимый след на природе исторического события' ('Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvarya', III, p. 130). The inspiration of the city's plan could be called theoretical: the construction of a magnificent capital in defiance of the natural setting. It is this theoretical aspect which imposed itself upon the events of 1905; in the chapter of Shum vremeni entitled 'Sergey Ivanych', Mandelstam conveys the impression that the failure of the uprising was due in part to its strongly theoretical foundations. The 1905 revolution is described as a chimera, which is embodied in the person of Sergey Ivanych, 'tutor' of the revolution, whose revolutionary theorizing proved to be as insubstantial as the cigarette smoke by which he was constantly enveloped (II, pp. 79-82). The choice of the image of the chimera, a combination of a policeman's 'lynx' eyes and a student's beret, is instructive with regard to Egipetskaya marka. This work, as parts of Shum vremeni and 'Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvarya', is a

retrospective view of revolution. This applies to Bely's Peterburg also: published in 1913 but set in 1905, it is as vague a representation of that revolution as Egipetskaya marka is of 1917. Mandelstam, however, valued Peterburg rather for its sense of revolution which was to come, its sense of 'predrevolyutsionnaya trevoga' (II, p. 423). In Peterburg people and events are surrounded by a spectral haze for which the streets of the city are directly responsible: 'Петербургские улицы обладают одним несомненным свойством: превращают в тени прохожих'⁸¹. Such spectral elements find an echo in the chimera of Mandelstam's Shum vremeni; in turn this chimera has disturbing reflections in Egipetskaya marka. Several hybrid forms appear in this work, and they are an indictment of the Petersburg described as they seem to thrive there. In the commercial world there is the felonious tailor Mervis, who amongst other unsavoury characteristics is not unlike a satyr (II, p. 33). Indeed, even Parnok seems to be compounded of different species, with his sheep-like hooves. In the literary world, the hybrid scandal reigns: 'Это не катастрофа, но обезьяна ее, подлое превращение, когда на плечах у человека вырастает собачья голова' (II, p. 27). This chimera-like form is a reflection of the frightening potential (in Mandelstam's view) of Dostoevsky's concepts. 'Scandal' can no longer be compared with tragedy but has assumed a grotesque form which represents the attitude of those who approach Dostoevsky with only a limited understanding (see below, p. 170). This chimera is indeed well-suited to be part of Egipetskaya marka's fear-ridden world.

The construction of the city is abstract and artificial, and has a tendency to foster the spectral and unreal. This abstract nature is presented in Egipetskaya marka in the form of a street plan, a cardboard model - in the description of popular rendez-vous points, for example (II, pp. 9-10). Such a plan does not contradict the abstract nature of the city in being too concrete: it is merely a theoretical formulation, and as such it is subject to alterations. Thus Parnok, as indeed Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov⁸², would take it upon himself to reorganize the lay-out of Petersburg, perhaps correcting the mistakes made by Peter I: 'Он получил обратно все улицы и площади Петербурга - в виде сырых корректурных гранок, верстал проспекты, брошюровал сады' (II, p. 36). The powerful hold which Petersburg had over its inhabitants and the events which took place in it, an uncanny,

almost supernatural ability, is also conveyed in part by this naming of specific locations. There are almost sixty references to actual streets, squares and monuments in Egipetskaya marka. This is not a random selection, but a device which reveals the author's thorough knowledge of the contemporary and the literary city. On the one hand, the description of the Dvortsovaya ploshchad' area defines more fully the nature of historical events (see below, Chapter Four, section (ii)), while Mandelstam's knowledge of the less striking areas contributes to the characterisation of the protagonists. For example, it is important to realise that the churches mentioned in Egipetskaya marka are all in what Baedeker describes as the 'unattractive' commercial area⁸³. Two are on the Sadovaya: the 'church of Quarenghi' (II, p. 5) which was the Roman Catholic Priory church of St. John and the 'Pokrov' (II, p. 24), the popular name for the Tserkov' Pokrova Bogoroditsy. The third - the 'red little church on the Moyka' (II, p. 31) - is the Lutheran church of St. John⁸⁴. By naming these specific churches, Mandelstam establishes the distinctly 'lower class'⁸⁵ tone of the setting against which the characters function.

(iii) The end of Petersburg

(a) Images of disease and death

The most powerful and threatening force in Petersburg, Peter the Great himself, is also present in Egipetskaya marka in the form traditional to Russian literature - that of the Bronze Horseman. He appeared in this form in Mednyy vsadnik and in Bely's Peterburg, and in both cases played a most hostile role - driving Evgeny to madness and, in Bely's work, heralding the disintegration of the city and of the lives of its inhabitants. In Mandelstam such forebodings occur at an early stage: 'Мандельштам рано почувствовал конец Петербурга и всего петербургского периода русской истории' (N.Ya. II, p. 114). They are present throughout the poetry, especially in Tristia, and in various prose pieces: Egipetskaya marka is rather the statement of a fait accompli.

Firstly, there is in the poetry an element of prophecy of the fall of a city. In the poem 'Kassandra' (I, no. 95), addressed to Anna Akhmatova⁸⁶, Mandelstam indicates the losses his city has already suffered, and shows that worse is to come. There is an obvious necessity to warn: 'Всё потеряли мы, любя ...'. The poem becomes all

the more disturbing by its identification of Petersburg with Troy in the evocation of Cassandra, whose prophecies were fated never to be heeded⁸⁷. Three years later, in 1920, the fated city of Troy is the scene of a poem written to Olga Arbenina (I, no. 119). Although the poem is clearly inspired by the end of Mandelstam's fleeting romance with Olga, there is considerable concentration on the fall of Troy: 'Он будет разрушен, высокий Приамов скворешник'. The fate of Troy serves as a warning of the fate of Petersburg, as do echoes of the catastrophe which befell the land of Rus' - the defeat of Prince Igor. Thus the themes of Virgil, Homer and of the 'Slovo o polku Igoreve' are fused in two of Mandelstam's poems to create an ever-increasing atmosphere of foreboding. The imagery of 'За то, что я руки твои не сумел удержать' (I, no. 119) recalls the vivid battle scenes of the Igor Tale and its lament for Oleg's fallen 'nest':

..... высокий Приамов скворешник.
И падают стрелы сухим деревянным дождем,
И стрелы другие растут на земле, как орешник.

(I, no. 119)

The city in which the poem 'Когда городская выходит на стогны луна' (I, no. 121) is placed so emphatically is not named, but the sense of foreboding which it conveys is evident in the image of the cuckoo, clearly an evocation of Yaroslavna, Igor's wife. The image of the cuckoo occurs also in 'В Петербурге мы сойдемся снова' (I, no. 118), where it contributes to the atmosphere of a city inhabited by sinister, threatening and primitive forces. The element of prophecy in Tristia is indirect, but the poetry and prose do sometimes feature fateful statements which refer directly to Petersburg, and which are developed in Egipetskaya marka. The whole of Petersburg, its buildings, river, air, is death-bound. This is implicit in the view of its regal splendour as counterfeit, a view expressed as early as 1913: 'И государства жесткая порфира, / Как власяница грубая, бедна' (I, no. 42). In 1918 this feeling is reiterated in the depiction of Petersburg's 'splendid poverty' (I, no. 101). In Egipetskaya marka Mandelstam attacks specific examples of Petersburg's moribund artificiality: even the nature of the city's architecture is now questioned - there can be no genuine basis, for example, in the names of the Egyptian and Kalinkin bridges (II, p. 20). Thus, just as the products of Petersburg's revolutions were insubstantial, so is its grandeur; the regal trappings, the very atmosphere could provide no sense of security. In Shum vremeni Mandelstam epitomizes this aspect of Petersburg's character

in the adjective 'zhiden'kiy' (II, p. 63). In this work he also expresses his awareness of the instability, the inappropriateness of the city's 'military grandeur': 'Весь стройный мираж Петербурга был только сон, блистательный покров, накинутый над бездной ...' (II, p. 55). Here Mandelstam is referring specifically to his situation as a child of the Jewish merchant class; however, the image used to depict his awareness of artificiality is reflected in Egipetskaya marka. In the latter work Tyutchev's 'brilliant covering' is seen to be part of the air which, as often in Mandelstam's compositions, is composed of different layers (see for example, I, no. 137) and saturated now with presentiments of death. In Tristia the air of the decaying Venice was of a similar composition: 'Воздух твой гранёный' (I, no. 110), and the very act of breathing in the air of Petersburg was fatal: 'Мы в каждом вздохе смертный воздух пьем' (I, no. 89). The description of the covering film which must be removed to discover the true nature of Egipetskaya marka's Petersburg conveys the sense of all that is artificial, pretentious, rotten, and doomed to destruction: 'Под лебяжьим, гагачьим, гагаринским пухом - под тучковыми тучками, под французским буше умирающих набережных ...' (II, p. 37). Mandelstam is here describing exact locations, the Lebyazhiy Canal, the Gagarinskaya, the Frantsuzskaya naberezhnaya, Tuchkov Bridge⁸⁸, in terms of a deceptively delicate, pure covering - eider down. The artificiality of the scene is emphasized by the extended, alliterative qualification of 'pukhom', by the alliterative and diminutive 'tuchka', and by the French 'bouchée'. The last of these images is particularly interesting, implying that not only Petersburg's air but also its water was deathly in content. In Bely's Peterburg it is drinking water which is the carrier of infection, and in both Bely and Mandelstam the illness thus transmitted from city to inhabitant is the same: in Peterburg, the city has as illusory a nature as it does in Egipetskaya marka, and such illusion is in itself a disease:

<u>Egipetskaya marka</u>	Проклятый сон!	(II, p. 26)

...	Петербург - его детская	
болезнь ...		(II, p. 37)

<u>Peterburg</u>	

...	столичный наш город ...
	принадлежит к стране сновидений
...	Биология сновидения еще не
	изучена ... она входит бациллами,
	проглатываемыми с водопроводной
	водою. ⁸⁹

In Egipetskaya marka destruction has reached that most important of structures, the home. Mandelstam had warned of such destruction and the ensuing horrors in 1923 ('Gumanizm i sovremennost'), when the loss of the 'home' and all that it represented was seen to blur the distinction between his native town and the 'wing of approaching night' (II, p. 352). The disappearance of the home and the infection-laden water are combined in the opening of Egipetskaya marka in the image of a toast: 'В резиновом привкусе петербургской отварной воды я пью неудавшееся домашнее бессмертие' (II, p. 5). In the pathetic humour of this oxymoron, with its implications of death, and the blatant banality of Petersburg's 'rubbery' water, can be seen an echo of the 'bouchées' of the rotten embankment, and the infection of Bely's 'bacilli'. Petersburg's outward appearance hid all that was rotten, corrupt and disease-ridden, and it is in the latter characteristic that a contrast arises with the presentation of the city in the poetry. In Tristia the emphasis is firmly on death: the river, the air (I, nos. 86, 89), even the streetlights - which appear in the guise of funeral torches (I, no. 44) - are heavy with presentiments of death: 'В Петрополе прозрачном мы умрем,/Где властвует над нами Прозерпина' (I, no. 89). In this poem Petersburg, with the appropriately classical name of 'Petropolis', is emphatically identified with Hades, realm of Proserpine, whose insubstantial, deathly nature is constantly betrayed in the collection Tristia by the adjective 'prozrachnyy'. Her influence extends even to the servants in 'Чуть мерцает призрачная сцена' (I, no. 114), who, as they attend to their masters outside the theatre, bear a distinct resemblance to the shades of hell when they rush to greet a new soul (I, no. 112). The illness is basically the same in both Tristia and Egipetskaya marka, but whereas in the poetry the threat of death is conveyed in the adjectives 'prizrachnyy' and 'prozrachnyy', in the prose the emphasis lies far more heavily on the nature of the disease that leads to death. In Egipetskaya marka the city provides ideal sites for the spread of disease:

... в диком питомнике перхоти, клопов ... (II, p. 17)

... голодных студентов с длинными соевыми патлами ...
в нефтяную радужную воду, блестящую всеми оттенками
керосина, перламутровых помоев и павлиньего хвоста.

(II, p. 20)

Specific diseases are mentioned: diphtheria, scarlatina, pneumonia, influenza, trachoma, cholera, - but there is another ailment which is

more disturbing and which has direct connections with Persephone:

Аптечные телефоны делаются из самого лучшего
скарлатинового дерева ... трубка шелушится и
голос обесцвечивается. Помните, что к
Прозерпине и к Персефоне телефон еще не проведен.

(II, p. 20)

The fact that the telephones belong specifically to chemists perhaps reflects the trouble Mandelstam himself had with such establishments, ('По всем аптекам и складам искал антитерондин. Нигде нет' III, p. 229). It should be remembered here that the words 'chemists' and 'dentists' were of special significance in the vocabulary of those who frequented the 'Brodyachaya sobaka', being applied to the philistine elements who participated in the poetry readings at the club⁹⁰. A reflection of the use of the word 'chemist' in this derogatory sense is to be found in Mandelstam's article 'Dvyatnadsatyy vek', where progress and 'Buddhism' are described as the 'religiya aptekarya' (II, p. 281). It is not surprising, then, that Mandelstam should have chosen the chemist's shop in his depiction of a state of disease. The mention of both Greek and Roman goddesses here is an emphatic indication of the inevitable consequence of the disease of disintegration. It is instructive in the context of this particular disease to refer to two poems, one with the setting of Moscow (I, no. 140), and one with the setting of Petersburg (I, no. 142). In the former, the scene described is intensely hostile: it is characterised by the presence of stars, nearly always a negative phenomenon in Mandelstam (N.Ya. I, p. 215) and by a sense of piercing cold. Here the streets suffer from the same complaint of disintegration as do the telephones in Egipetskaya marka: 'Всё шелушится им советской сонатинкой ...' (I, no. 140). The powers-that-be are represented in this poem by the image of a hostile pike lurking behind the scenes: in Egipetskaya marka this role is played by the image of the carp (II, p. 20), which is similarly cold-blooded and hostile. This poem was written in 1924, when Mandelstam had already been made aware of the nature of life in Moscow for such as him, for he had been subjected to intrigues by the Writers' Union in Moscow, and his name could no longer appear in the State-controlled Moscow journals. The harsh scene and the many unpleasant details given in the first poem contrast vividly with the second poem (I, no. 142), written only a short time later, which celebrates his return to Petersburg. The poet delights in the mildness of the winter, the pleasant aromas, the warmth of human contact

there. Here the image of the pike would seem to be no more than an imaginative description of the thawing ice-rink. In Egipetskaya marka Petersburg has inherited those characteristics which experience had brought him to attribute to Moscow, a point which reveals something of his growing apprehension at the development of his 'native' city. The ultimate reason for the disintegration of Petersburg is shown in Egipetskaya marka to be due to an act of violence accompanying the state of disease. It was noted earlier that Petersburg is presented in terms of a street plan, a brochure; this is reflected in the depiction of the fatal injury: '... о торцовой книге в каменном переплете с вырванной серединой' (II, pp. 36-37). This brings to mind the description of the essential composition of Petersburg in Shum vremeni: '... гранитные и торцовые кварталы, все это нежное сердце города ...' (II, p. 50). The 'middle' (and 'seredina' seems to imply 'serdtse') which has been ripped out is that capacity which made Petersburg Mandelstam's native town, namely the capacity to appreciate human dignity and integrity, and to honour the long artistic tradition in which such values were embodied - Petersburg is therefore represented here in the image of a book, an image which fuses those two arts which Mandelstam respected most in Petersburg: its poetry and its architecture. This is not the only image denoting violence in Egipetskaya marka: a horrifying picture is painted in Chapter VII of an eye which has been torn out (II, p. 34). Petersburg has regressed to such a state that the very atmosphere seems tainted with the effects of violence. The appearance of the verb depicting the act of aggression - 'vyrvat' - and of the image used to convey the repulsive atmosphere - 'rybiy zhir' - anticipate a poem written in 1930, where the same verb and the same image contribute to what is very obviously a denunciation of the city. Mandelstam's trip to Armenia in that year had made the new Leningrad all the more distasteful for him, and his condemnation of it is far from ambiguous in 'Я вернулся в мой город, знакомый до слёз' (I, no. 221). How very different the setting of this poem and the corresponding section in Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 34) are from that of 'Вы, с квадратными окошками невысокие дома' (I, no. 142). Gone are all the forms of comfort of the earlier poem - coffee, oranges, human contact. In their stead is a cold and hostile society where even the lifts are of no service (II, p. 22) - another sign of the disruption caused by violence. The image of

cod-liver oil epitomizes such a society, and the full force of the unpleasantness it is designed to convey in the 1930 poem can be gauged by referring back to Egipetskaya marka, where it is shown to be compounded of all the least pleasant features of Petersburg:

'Рыбий жир - смесь пожаров, желтых зимних утр ...' (II, p. 34). The image undoubtedly reflects Mandelstam's own aversion to the cold-blooded species, which was to become more apparent in his work after Egipetskaya marka: 'Низшие формы органического бытия - ад для человека' (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 164). Just as fish - the pike and the carp - embody hostile and uncanny powers in '1 yanvary 1924' and in Egipetskaya marka, the fish continues to be a character of the most dubious associations in Mandelstam's later compositions: '... жандармские морды великаньих форелей' (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 142).

(b) The image of fire

The death of Petersburg is depicted in Egipetskaya marka in terms of an art form, and through this art two important images associated with death are drawn together. The images are those of fire and of woman, and the art is that of singing, an art which Mandelstam seemed to associate specifically with women, even when he was not discussing an actual singer - for example the 'singing' eyes and shoulders of 'В Петербурге мы сойдемся снова' (I, no. 118). The seventh section of Egipetskaya marka ends with a passage in inverted commas, which may indicate that it is a quotation from the promised, but never published, novella entitled 'Smert' Bosio' (see II, p. 560). Angiolina Bosio, an Italian soprano whose extensive travelling is reflected in the opening stages of Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 7), fell victim to Petersburg's unkind climate, and died of pneumonia there in 1859 - a fact lamented in poetry by Nikolay Nekrasov⁹¹. The passage on her death forms the culmination of all those details in Egipetskaya marka which create the atmosphere of impending doom. Two such details brought together here are the images of fatal illness and fire, for in her final agony Bosio supposes the clamour raised by the passing fire brigade to be the overture to I Due Foscari. The first appearance of the fire brigade in the second chapter is connected with the 1905 revolution; the 'false alarm' described here is realised as a matter of true urgency in Chapter VII, that is, in 1917 (see below, Chapter Four, section ii (a)). Similarly the fatal illness implicit

in the description of 1905, where there is seen to be a very slight, but significant, rise from the normal body temperature of 36.9 ('... но перед концом, когда температура эпохи вскочила на тридцать семь и три ...' - II, p. 10) is realised in the dying moments of Bosio. The fire brigade is thus a figure of some importance in the work, appearing in connection with the two revolutions. It is interesting, and perhaps an additional indication of this importance, to note that the fire brigade also appears in Bely's Peterburg - and at that most threatening moment when the Bronze Horseman comes to life⁹². The lack of hope for recovery, in the cases of both Petersburg and Bosio, is conveyed in a remark which precedes the Bosio section. This remark demonstrates the ineffectiveness of the brigade against the fire of the final agony: the fire station is firmly shut, deaf to appeals for help (II, p. 35). Indeed, perhaps the only existence it can have is in the delirium such as that of the dying woman, for it is of no more use to Bosio or to the Petersburg of 1917 than it was in 1905. The image of fire has far greater implication in Egipetskaya marka than just the two revolutions, however. Fire is the embodiment of that impassive and destructive force which is relentless in separating man from his cherished possessions. It is at once destructive and sinister in Egipetskaya marka since although it fulfills its task of devastation, it is associated not with heat but with coldness: 'Тридцать лет прошли как медленный пожар. Тридцать лет лизало холодное белое пламя спинки зеркал ...' (II, p. 5). Its close connection with the similarly hostile force of time here is unmistakable. The combination of time and fire was evidently a relationship which Mandelstam regarded with some horror, for it appears again in the poetry of 1931: 'Там в пожарище время поет ...' (I, no. 245). Fire is an agent of obvious aptitude in the process of disintegration which Egipetskaya marka depicts, and one which is already established in Mandelstam's works as associated with misfortune and loss (for example, 'Sukharyovka', II, p. 135). Furthermore, its dangerous nature is shown in Egipetskaya marka in that it is a constituent part of that foul atmosphere which is identified with cod-liver oil (II, p. 34). Thus fire celebrates over Bosio and Petersburg an 'unconditionally victorious misfortune'. The reason for its unhindered success seems to be largely the compliance of the fire brigade. That they are in fact allies rather than enemies of the flames is suggested by the information that it is their torches which 'lick' the mirrors in the singer's room, just as the 'cold white

flame' had licked the mirrors in the opening of Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 5).

Although fire has a vital role to play in the fate of both Bosio and Petersburg, the identification of Petersburg with Nero (II, p. 20) hints that there was an element of wilful self-destruction at work in the downfall of Petersburg not present in Bosio's case. The city shares the artistic pretentiousness of the emperor and also, perhaps, the role of incendiary imputed to Nero.

(c) The image of dying woman

The end of Petersburg is demonstrated in the illness and death of a singer. The fact that this singer should be a woman is of great significance in assessing the relationship of Egipetskaya marka to the poetry and prose which surround it, for the image of woman and in particular dying woman plays a prominent role in Mandelstam's work. For example, the specific plight of Angiolina Bosio is apparent at various stages of Mandelstam's work; it seems to be echoed, for instance in the poem 'Чуть мерцает призрачная сцена' (I, no. 114), with its references to opera, Italy, the cruel climate: even the 'burning snows' bring to mind both Bosio's illness itself and the way in which it is depicted in Egipetskaya marka. In the case of Egipetskaya marka the central importance of the image of dying woman lies in the fact that the death of Bosio is directly related to the fate of Petersburg. A reflection of the illness of a woman being parallel to the state of a city can be found in Mandelstam's translation of Barbier's 'L'Emeute'. Barbier portrays the revolt in the image of a drunken woman: 'Et le long des grands quais, où son flot se déroule, / Hurle en battant les murs comme une femme soule'⁹³. Mandelstam's version of this, from 1924, bears out Nadezhda Yakovlevna's remark that the Barbier poems were more than just a matter of translation for him (N.Ya. II, p. 134). The two lines quoted above suggest in Mandelstam's translation a sickbed rather than simply walls and quays, and this sickbed, with its stony composition, suggests not Paris, but rather Petersburg with its stern granite outlines: 'И набережных вдоль, на каменной постели / Кричит, как женщина, тяжелая от хмеля' (Sov. ed. no. 282). Bosio's death is reminiscent too of the poem 'Solominka' (I, no. 86) where a deathly chill pervades both air and blood and where the mirrors bear a distinct resemblance to those of Egipetskaya marka.

(d) The image of woman from the classical world

However, it is the classical world, and the role played by woman in it, which provides the strongest links between Mandelstam's other works and Egipetskaya marka with its theme of the end of Petersburg. In the second chapter the figure of a dead Greek girl (see also above, Chapter Two, section (i)) is presented briefly in the image of a pine branch frozen in a block of ice (II, p. 10), a substance which here retains those deathly qualities it exhibited in 'Solominka' (I, no. 86). Of importance in the characterisation of Parnok, this image also introduces into Egipetskaya marka the theme of a woman's death. The mythological death and transformation implied in Chapter II is superseded in Chapter VII by intimations of the funeral rite typical of Grecian mortals: the burning of the body so that the soul might be released and pass the gates of Hades. A similarly 'classical' representation of Petersburg's fate appears in 'Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvaryaya', where Mandelstam speaks of the new soul of Petersburg wandering like an orphaned Psyche on the blood-stained snows of 1905 (III, p. 131). Such classical references, in addition to those mentioned above (p. 94), recall the great emphasis on the 'soul' in Tristia, where it was always a distinctly feminine entity: 'Dusha ved' zhenshchina ...' (I, no. 112). On occasions in Tristia, the soul is portrayed in the figure of the swallow 'И живая ласточка упала/На горячие снега' (I, no. 114. This image also appears in nos. 112 and 113). The swallow is in evidence once more in 'За то, что я руки твои не сумел удержать' (I, no. 119) where, in the context of the fall of a city, its associations with death accord with the fate announced for Troy.

In Tristia woman is not only one of the dying, but also predicts death ('Kassandra', I, no. 95). It is she who bears the responsibility of gathering the ashes of the dead, in the hope that one day they will be resurrected (I, no. 118). However, woman also has negative manifestations in Tristia, and these are reflected in Egipetskaya marka in both classical and Russian images. Firstly, the realm of the dead belongs to a goddess, Persephone, who is also in command of Petersburg. Secondly, one of the prime features of Petersburg's spectral character is the almost supernatural phenomenon of the white night (aptly, a feminine word in Russian). This is a phenomenon which had unsettled the heroes of Pushkin, Gogol and Dostoevsky, and which was as prone to disintegration as was

Petersburg itself: '... еще минутка и все наваждение расколется ...' (II, p. 30). To depict this very Russian feature, Mandelstam chooses imagery from Russian rather than from classical sources. The white night is personified as it strides through Petersburg, inspiring fear: 'Дворцы стояли испуганно-белые ...' (II, p. 29). Fear is immediately embodied in feminine form - a stone lady clad in the boots of Peter the Great: a somewhat distorted reflection of the Bronze Horseman who pursued the demented Evgeny through the streets of Petersburg. Here, however, it is the stone form whose mind seems to be affected, and her delirious mumbling connects her with the dying Bosio and her incoherent thoughts. A similarly hostile evocation of a city night is present in 'Когда городская выходит на стогны луна' (I, no. 121), where the moon is emphatically feminine. In the second stanza the image of the harvest field, in combination with that of the cuckoo, brings to mind the vocabulary used to describe the terrible losses of Prince Igor. The moon is portrayed in the role of reaper: 'blednaya zhnytsa' - the identification of the two is implicit not only in the epithet, but also in the fact that Mandelstam chooses the feminine form of 'zhnytsa'. The moon manoeuvres the bearers of darkness, the shadows which seem to embody potential physical harm, ('ogromnye spitsy'). Its sinister activities are all the more threatening as the normal action of a reaper is reversed: it is a disruptive force, not gathering in, but scattering its instruments.

In terms of Mandelstam's poetic past the restatement in Egipetskaya marka of classical themes (the dead Greek girl, the realm of Persephone, the soul, and also the constantly recurring feminine motif) is indicative of the retrospective nature of the work. The images in which he depicts the plight of Petersburg in Egipetskaya marka are related not only to his experience of the city in 1917. They span the development of the poet's aversion to the city, a feeling which continued to grow after 1917 and until the writing of Egipetskaya marka.

(iv) Petersburg and other cities

(a) Paris

As in the case of the premonition of doom, Mandelstam's sense of alienation can be seen in the way cities other than Petersburg feature in his works. In the Barbier translations, for example, the state to

which the magnificent city of Paris has been reduced foreshadows the depiction of Petersburg in Egipetskaya marka. Violence has had the same effect in France as in Russia: 'О город пышных похорон,/Разрытых мостовых, вдоль стен глубоких трещин ...' (Sov. ed. no. 278). The description at once echoes the stately grandeur of Petersburg and the disruptive force to which it has been subjected. Paris is in much the same condition as Mandelstam later showed Petersburg to be, with the same attributes of filth and sickness:

Отныне ты, Париж, - презренная клоака,
Ты - свалка гнусных нечистот,
Где маслянистая приправа грязи всякой
Ручьями черными течет.

(Sov. ed. no. 278)

The coincidence between this passage, close in spirit to the original, and the description of the Fontanka, with its filthy, greasy waters, (II, p. 20) is evident. As Paris once merited high praise - 'Torzhestvennyy Parizh', so too did London - 'Bog gorodov' (Sov. ed. no. 281). But neither city proved worthy of this: the atmosphere of London was as deathly as that of Petersburg: 'Всюду смерть, качаясь, куполесит ...' (Sov. ed. no. 281). Once again Mandelstam has taken Barbier's imagery and applied it to his own city. The differences in the translation are apparently slight, but significant. In 'Le gin' Barbier sees alcohol to be the cause of death and therefore makes gin the subject of a line: 'Partout le gin chancelle et s'abîme,/Partout la mort emporte une victime ...',⁹⁴ Mandelstam is more concise, and at the same time more threatening, for in his version it is death itself which is in a drunken state, and death which is the dominant element. In Egipetskaya marka the influence of the Barbier translations is reflected in the actual appearance of Petersburg - unlike, for example, the poem 'Язык бульжника мне голубя понятней' (I, no. 138), where the setting is still that of a city, but where the emphasis is on the effect of revolutionary idealism on the young. The state of Petersburg in Egipetskaya marka, as that of Paris in Barbier, reflects the corruption of the golden ideals of revolution; but it is here that Mandelstam's own particular genius is most evident. He conveys the state of the city in the most concise terms possible; both filth and a deceptively attractive appearance are implied in the oxymorons which describe the Fontanka: '... всеми оттенками керосина, перламутровых помоев и павлиньего хвоста' (II, p. 20). The city of Paris bears further resemblance to Petersburg. In a review from 1913 Mandelstam

describes it as 'hell' (II, p. 414) and associates it with 'boiling pitch'. This latter image is biblical, being used by Isaiah in the context of conflict and destruction: 'И превратятся реки его в смолу ... и будет земля его горящею смолою ...' (Isaiah 34.9).

(b) Jerusalem

Of the same order as that destructive agent, fire, the pitch image is also present in Egipetskaya marka and it connects the doomed Petersburg with the city which fell to the oriental powers of Babylon and Assyria - Jerusalem. Nadezhda Yakovlevna points to the fact that for Mandelstam the destruction of Petersburg did indeed resemble the fall of Jerusalem (N.Ya. II, p. 121), and this is borne out by several references in Egipetskaya marka. The allusions to Jerusalem and to Jewish themes are as integral a part of the work as the references to Petersburg itself, a fact which points to the continuing confusion of influences experienced by the poet from his earliest years. The identification of Jerusalem and Petersburg recalls Mandelstam's treatment of Russian and Jewish influences in juxtaposition in Shum vremeni. There the Russian influence, embodied in Petersburg, is seen to be illusory in comparison with the unpleasantly chaotic reality of Jewish origins and home. The reappearance of the Jewish theme in connection with the end of Petersburg highlights the doom of the Russian city and also the poet's isolation in it. Mandelstam felt himself to be in a condition similar to that of the Israelites in Egypt, an exile in a city subject to alien powers. The poet's isolation in Egipetskaya marka is intensified in that he can find no point of contact either with the depraved Petersburg, or with the Jewish family in whose company he finds himself (II, p. 39).

The prophets of the Old Testament, most notably Isaiah, proclaimed Israel's breaking of her covenant with Yahweh to be the sin for which the Assyrians were the instruments of judgement. Jerusalem was assailed by the prophets as being sinful and corrupt, and Petersburg is given similar treatment in Egipetskaya marka, where it is qualified as 'shameless' (II, p. 26). The atmosphere created here bears some resemblance to Mandelstam's poem of 1917 on the destruction of Jerusalem (I, no. 100), which is permeated by images indicative of alarm, darkness and doom. The colours present in this poem, yellow and black, also appear in Egipetskaya marka: yellow in the description

of 'concert Petersburg' (II, p. 25) and of the sky (II, p. 38), black in the constant presence of night. The association of these 'Jewish' colours with Petersburg was one which endured after Egipetskaya marka, and the concept of ill-omen apparent in connection with them ('zloveshchim' II, p. 25), remains in the 1930 poem 'Я вернулся в мой город, знакомый до слез': 'Где к зловещему дергю подмешан желток' (I, no. 221). Once again, images which feature in Mandelstam's work over a number of years can be seen to be used consistently in Egipetskaya marka. Mandelstam's use of the image of darkness is similarly consistent; the 'naletayushchaya noch'' which threatens Parnok (II, p. 22) stands as the terrifying answer to a question which Mandelstam had posed in 1923: '... не зная, что это - крыло надвигающейся ночи или тень родного города ...' ('Gumanizm i sovremennost'', II, p. 352). Darkness is a traditional sign of ill-omen. It covered the earth at the time of the Crucifixion (a sign of the Jews' refusal to accept Christ) and is described as doing so in Revelation before the coming of the Kingdom of God. The onset of that terrible darkness which anticipates the end of a city is presented in a most threatening form in Egipetskaya marka in an image which reveals Mandelstam's constant awareness of the history of various cultures: 'Но уже волновались айсоры-чистильщики сапог, как вороны перед затмением ...' (II, p. 15). The images of ravens and the eclipse bring to mind once more the defeat of Prince Igor⁹⁵, who took as little heed of the warnings as did Jerusalem of the prophets, or, indeed, Petersburg of Mandelstam. The Assyrian element ('aysory-chistil'shchiki') had already featured in Mandelstam's work in both poetry and prose; in 'Берег нам утешение принес' (I, no. 133) the sky is inhabited by repulsive insect-like creatures. Of Assyrian origin, these insects are identified with aeroplanes, and their presence is accompanied by intimations of an impending eclipse: 'И в блаженные полдни всегда, / Как сгустившейся ночи нарек ...'. Their evil nature and actions cause them to be subject to destruction, here embodied in the form of Azrail. In Egipetskaya marka the associations are very similar: the reference to an eclipse is followed immediately by a rather suspect eulogy of dentists, whose drills are none other than the earth-bound sisters of aeroplanes. Azrail too appears in Egipetskaya marka: Petersburg houses are already marked by the Angel of Death, who has Mervis as an earthly helper (II, p. 33).

The consequences of nurturing cultures such as those of Babylon and Assyria appear in Egipetskaya marka in connection with the houses of Petersburg in another way. Assyria would build on a massive scale, without taking into account the individual, the family unit. Such 'building' appears in Egipetskaya marka in the guise of the destruction of the home, the domestic setting, the first focus of attention in the work. The theme returns in the final chapter, where the alien Jewish family is seen to be travelling against its will, a prominent feature of Jewish history: ' - В город Малинов, - ответила она с такой щемящей тоской ...' (II, p. 39). At the same time the old woman is trying to preserve her family heritage in the bundle of treasures she carries with her. One such treasure is her silver tableware - an echo of an image used in Chapter V. There the Millionnaya was depicted as being full of little silver goblets - a most unusual state for that particular area of Petersburg, which Mandelstam described in Shum vremeni as being mysterious, devoid of passers-by, and possessing only one shop (II, p. 50). The change of state is perhaps indicative of the destruction of the home and the scattering of domestic treasures: that silver tableware is an essential feature of the home, and the Jewish home in particular, is reiterated again in Chapter VI (II, p. 31). The appearance of the silver goblets on the Millionnaya, however, is surrounded by details which strike a suitably negative note. Firstly, there is the clattering of horses' hooves which is often a negative feature in Mandelstam's work. In 'Grifel'naya oda' (I, no. 137), for example, the horse's hoof embodies in a stultified form all the movement once involved in the horse's activity - a reflection of the inertia and stultification overtaking Mandelstam at that time. In 'Я буду метаться по табору улицы темной' (I, no. 144), the hammering of hooves takes place against a distinctly hostile background of ice and stars: the horse in question here is pulling a sleigh in adverse conditions very similar to those accompanying the poet's desperate rush around the city in '1 yanvarya 1924' (I, no. 140). Secondly, there is the information that another precious object has been displaced, namely Giorgione's painting 'Judith'. This picture was inspired by the courageous act of the Jewish heroine who saved her town, Bethulia, from siege by depriving Nebuchadnezzar's general Holfernes of his head, and by carrying that object back to Bethulia as an inspiration to resist the enemy. In Egipetskaya marka Judith's

pictorial representation escapes from the Hermitage as she herself had once escaped from the Babylonians. If the little glasses which already fill the Millionnaya represent the disintegration of the domestic setting, then her act of courage is as vain in the context of Petersburg as it was in the Jews' long-term struggle against Babylon.

There is a further episode in Egipetskaya marka which draws the fates of Petersburg and Jerusalem together by associating the enemy of Parnok with Babylonian forces such as those of Nebuchadnezzar himself. In the opening chapter of Egipetskaya marka the forces which protect the kitchen, the very heart of the domestic setting for Parnok, are depicted in distinctly uncomplimentary terms. As in the case of the fire brigade, their ability to carry out their task of 'guarding' is suspect: 'Самолюбивый и обидчивый бензиновый дух и жирный запах добряка-керосина ...' (II, p. 6). There are in this description characteristics which identify the 'guardians' firmly with Petersburg itself, for they have associations in Mandelstam's work both with the literary heroes who have inhabited the city and with the city itself:

Самолюбивый, скромный пешеход -
Чудак Евгений - бедности стыдится,
Бензин вдыхает и судьбу клянет! (I, no. 42)

Самолюбивый, проклятый, пустой ... (I, no. 222)

Oil-stoves and lamps have an ideal setting in Petersburg, for they too are deceptive in character, being both good-natured ('dobrodushno', II, p. 25, 'dobryaka', II, p. 6) and hostile to their surroundings, spreading greasy, bewhiskered, insect-like particles of soot, which are related to that hostile agent, fire: 'Крик "сажа" - "сажа" - звучал как "пожар", "горим" ...' (II, p. 25). In conjunction with the cold air, let into the room to fight the spreading soot, the oil-lamp also becomes an agent of disease: colds, pneumonia and diphtheria are on its list. The oil-stove also has strong links with Jewish history; it has a 'patriarchal' wick and reminds Parnok of three of his more intrepid ancestors who, by their courage and trust in God, defeated Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 3). It is indeed fitting that the oil-stove, associated in Egipetskaya marka with fire, should tell the tale of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the burning fiery furnace. The duality of the stove's nature is apparent in its very composition; its 'window' is of the same material as the insect-like Assyrian aeroplanes of 'Ветер нам утешение принес', namely mica, extracted from granite - as cold and hard as the monumentality of the Assyrians:

'Слюдяной перепончатый лес ...' (I, no. 133); 'Слюдяное окошечко ...' (II, p. 25).

The references to a Jewish setting in Egipetskaya marka bear close resemblance to the description of Petersburg: both are characterised by a silence which excludes the poet. The Jewish silence is unpleasant, for it is 'bewhiskered' (II, p. 30), a feature which recalls the insect-like soot produced by the oil-lamp. This silence, which accords with the 'stifling' Jewish atmosphere described in Shum vremeni (II, pp. 68-69), does, however, contrast with the silence of Petersburg, which is rather impassive and majestic: 'В мае месяце Петербург чем-то напоминает адресный стол, не выдающий справок, - особенно в районе Дворцовой площади' (II, pp. 22-23). Once again, Dvortsovaya ploshchad' is seen as the epitome of the atmosphere of Petersburg; its cold silence and its precision, presented in images of the preparations for a conference, contrast strongly with the chaos which the ensuing historical session was to instigate. Whatever form the silence took the atmosphere it creates in Egipetskaya marka is as threatening for Petersburg's Jewish quarter as it is for the imperial heart of the city.

(v) Mandelstam's alienation from Petersburg

Evocations of the fall of Jerusalem and references to the Jewish settings in Egipetskaya marka emphasise several points: the end of Petersburg, the alien forces at work in it, Mandelstam's isolation from his Jewish heritage and from Petersburg itself. The latter condition can be seen as a direct result of the circumstances in which Mandelstam found himself over the years preceding the composition of Egipetskaya marka. These circumstances made it impossible for Mandelstam to return to or to accept his native town. In August 1921 his friend and fellow poet, Gumilev, had been executed for his alleged part in a conspiracy against the new regime, and Petersburg had not commemorated the poet's death as he had requested, with a requiem at St. Isaac's⁹⁶: disregard of the individual was already an established element in the Babylonian code. Although images from Mandelstam's poetry written at or near the time of the Revolution do appear in Egipetskaya marka - the image of Proserpine, for example (I, no. 89) - the death of Gumilev, four years afterwards, must surely have played a part in Mandelstam's appraisal of Petersburg in 1927 as being a city

of the dead. Petersburg no longer respected a tradition which dated from the time of Pushkin; the death of Khlebnikov (1922) had no more effect than that of Gumilev, for the city no longer appreciated the fruits of the poetic tradition: '... он разучился говорить на языке времени и дикого меда' ('Literaturnaya Moskva', II, p. 327). It was in fact reverting to that condition described in the article 'Slovo i kul'tura' in 1921, where the city was seen to be returning to a vegetable state: 'Трава на петербургских улицах - первые побеги девственного леса, который покроеет место современных городов' (II, p. 222). In Egipetskaya marka the death of poets and the death of poetic appreciation can be seen in the image of the telephone, the use of which is vain, since it is impossible to contact Persephone's realm in this way (II, p. 20). Mandelstam distinguishes between the telephones which do have connections in Petersburg and those which do not. The first are characterised by the image of the crayfish claw, and the second are 'burnt out' - an image which immediately communicates the hopelessness of the situation due to the association of fire with death. The image of the telephone and the theme of lost friends is present too in the 1930 poem 'Я вернулся в мой город, знакомый до слез' (I, no. 221). Here the image and the theme are restated, but with more defiance, as an examination of the fourth and fifth stanzas will show:

Петербург! я еще не хочу умирать:

У тебя телефонов моих номера.

Петербург! у меня еще есть адреса,

По которым найду мертвецов голоса ...

There is a contrast between the two stanzas which corresponds to the two kinds of telephone described in Egipetskaya marka. The first is connected to Petersburg - 'u tebya'. It is threatening not only because its vicious nature has already been made apparent in the prose work, but also because of the use of the plural; Mandelstam has various telephone numbers which seem to represent his lost acquaintances, Petersburg has knowledge of these affiliations and thus he is in danger. The colon between the two lines is a laconic affirmation of the fact that the death threatened in line one is a result of the information of line two. That it was not advisable for Mandelstam to make use of telephones such as those belonging to Petersburg is made apparent in 'Chetvyortaya proza', where the vilest associations are attributed to it: 'Вий читает телефонную книгу на

Красной площади ... Дайте Цека ...' (II, p. 192). The fifth stanza from no. 221 makes Mandelstam's isolation in the city apparent, but at the same time there is an element of defiant affirmation here: Petersburg may have the monopoly of the telephone, but he still has contact with the poetic voices of those who are gone and he does not need the telephone to hear - hence the emphatic contrast between the rhyming 'adresa/golosa'. The contrast between 'u tebya' and 'u menya' is equally emphatic, and the indictment laid before Petersburg is a terrible one. A contemporary comment fully reflects the daring theme of the poem, which is of the same nature as that of Egipetskaya marka, but far more explicit: 'А знаете, что бывает после таких стихов? Трое приходят ... В форме ...' (N.Ya. I, p. 289).

The city's respect for the living poet was no greater than its respect for the dead, and Mandelstam was gradually being excluded from the literary world. He was denied the possibility of publishing his own verse by 1923 and any attempt he did make to earn his living by writing in Leningrad/Petersburg clearly aroused his profound disgust: 'Ленгиз развороченный муравейник. Тенденция не то сжать, не то уничтожить. Никто ничего не знает и не понимает' (III, p. 206). Small wonder then that the theme of exile, already sounded by the evocation of Ovid in the title of the poem 'Tristia' (I, no. 104) and, at an even earlier stage, by that of Joseph in 'Отравлен хлеб и воздух выпит' (I, no. 54), should be echoed in Egipetskaya marka. Apart from reflections of the fate of the Jewish nation, there is also the fact that the death of Petersburg is embodied in the death of Bosio, who was in a sense an exile from her own land at the time of her death. Bosio appears once more in 'Chetvyortaya proza': 'То, что было прежде, только увертюра. Сама певица Бозио будет петь в моем процессе' (II, p. 186). Here it becomes apparent that if Bosio's 'overture' in Egipetskaya marka, in company with fire, had signified the death of Petersburg, then the death of that city was yet more clearly the overture to the disappearance of poetry and poets such as he. This point is made in Egipetskaya marka, although it is far from explicit, in the close identification of Mandelstam and Bosio. The link between the two is evident from a comparison between the first passage on Bosio and the passage on the alien Jewish family. Firstly, the natural setting has similar attributes in both:

... повсюду низкое, суконно-потолочное небо ... (II, p. 7)

... низкое суконно-полицейское небо ... (II, p. 38)

The association of sky and material is a very early phenomenon in Mandelstam: in a poem of 1910 (I, no. 15) it communicates a deadness in the sky. In Egipetskaya marka it would seem to indicate an oppressive, claustrophobic force; in the case of the passage associated with Mandelstam (II, pp. 38-39) the adjective 'politseyskoe', phonetically linked to Bosio's 'potolochnoe', adds extra menace to a restricting, deathly atmosphere. Secondly, just as Bosio is a singer, so there are musical associations in the Malinov passage: the carriage reels like a double-bass, and the mention of Bosio's old singing teacher is complemented by the appearance of a music teacher in the Jews' carriage. Thirdly, Bosio is depicted as telling her fortune by the wintry crunch of Russian hundred-rouble notes, a very apt medium, since it was to be the 'zimniy khrust' of Petersburg's climate which was responsible for her fatal illness. Perhaps it is a similarly fateful sign that Mandelstam should hear exactly that sound as he sets out on his vain and mysterious journey to Malinov.

(vi) The guilt of Petersburg

Although Mandelstam felt himself to be an exile in his own city, where there was no-one to whom he could turn (II, pp. 20, 26) the influence of that city continued to be vital. It is important to realise that this influence was most definitely pernicious. In Egipetskaya marka, as in much of the poetry of Tristia, Petersburg is seen to be dying, but at the same time it is itself, in company with such forces as fire, Time, and Fear, one of the destructive agents present in the work. The guilt of the city is two-fold. It is responsible for moulding the characters of its inhabitants:

Петербург, ты отвечаешь за бедного твоего сына!
За весь этот сумбур, за жалкую любовь к музыке ... (II, p. 30)

Ведь и держусь я одним Петербургом ... (II, p. 25)

It is a dream (II, p. 26), an illusion, and an illness (II, p. 37), which infects the lives of its inhabitants. Furthermore it is shameless because it is in no way repentant of the evil it has caused its inhabitants, whose souls have been fashioned by it in such a way as to make them incapable of defeating the disintegration which the city has instigated. Petersburg in its very structure had invited a revolution

which had promised much, but it had also allowed itself - in search for security which by its nature it could not give - to become subject to 'Babylonian' principles, thus crushing both the golden ideals of revolution and the individual. Thus in 1931 the city is shown to be unmoved by the ordeal of fire depicted in Egipetskaya marka, and it displays those very characteristics with which it had infected the heroes of Pushkin, and which Mandelstam had noted in 'Peterburgskie strofy' (I, no. 42) of 1913: 'Он от пожаров еще и морозов наглее, / Самолюбивый, проклятый, пустой, моложавый!' (I, no. 222). The city's air of artificiality is present here: it governs the poet in accordance with its ancient custom, at the same time growing younger and more brazen. This poem shows that if the city is responsible for the characters of those who belong to it - as displayed in Egipetskaya marka - then the poet is now, like Lady Godiva, aware of his responsibility to proclaim its degeneration and decay.

Petersburg was not the only cause of the sense of isolation which Mandelstam experienced throughout the twenties. The important point is, however, that this is the city he chose as the setting for his only composition during a period of 'poetic silence', and that in making this choice he provides a conclusion to the theme of death and decay in Petersburg expressed in Tristia and in articles such as 'Slovo i kul'tura'. The great city's attributes had remained the same; it was the same cold and stately capital which Peter the Great had masterminded, but it no longer respected the traditions it had nurtured over the years. A hybrid in conception - man's will against the natural elements, European architecture in the capital of Russia - it had given itself over to one part of its nature. Although the beauty of its architecture remained, this beauty was neither appreciated nor even seen by those who now held sway in the literary world: 'Они не видели и не понимали прелестного города с его чистыми корабельными линиями' (II, p. 27). In effect, Egipetskaya marka demonstrates a principle which Mandelstam had first stated in 1914 with regard to the city of Rome:

Не город Рим живет среди веков,
А место человека во вселенной ...
И без него презрения достойны,
Как жалкий сор, дома и алтари.

(I, no. 66)

Disregard for human life had proved this principle to be true in relation to Petersburg also, and had caused the city's beautiful symmetry

to be meaningless: 'бессмысленным нагромождением зданий' ('Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvarya', III, p. 131). The threat which Petersburg embodied for Mandelstam at the time he wrote Egipetskaya marka can be seen in his appreciative article on the actor Yakhontov. Mandelstam praises Yakhontov's rendition of a selection of readings from Pushkin, Gogol and Dostoevsky entitled 'Peterburg'. It seemed particularly apt to Mandelstam that the mad Evgeny should once more be evoked: '... он по-новому заблудился, очнулся и обезумел в наши дни' ('Yakhontov', III, p. 112). The great, but profoundly hostile Petersburg was once more at odds with the 'little man', and the atmosphere conveyed by Yakhontov evidently impressed Mandelstam by its similarity to his own appreciation of the contemporary city: 'В движениях актера все время чувствуется страх пространства, стремление заслониться от набегающей пустоты' ('Yakhontov', III, p. 113). For Mandelstam that sense of impending doom which Russian literature, in his eyes, traditionally associated with Petersburg, was all too real. If the Petersburg and the Petersburg period of history which had yielded poets such as Pushkin was no more, then the fate of living poets in the city was only too evident. In his final comment on Petersburg, after the 'cleansing' process which the writing of 'Chetvyortaya proza' had effected, Mandelstam was able to state the nature of Petersburg as he had seen it in Egipetskaya marka, but now in terms which are relentlessly concise: 'В Петербурге жить - словно спать в гробу' (I, no. 223).

Chapter Four

The Historical Setting of Egipetskaya marka

(i) Mandelstam's method of viewing historical events

Egipetskaya marka is set in that most volatile period of Russian history - the months between the February and October revolutions of 1917. The great confusion by which this period was characterised is eminently suited to the work which is concerned with the poet's own state of confusion. The treatment of this historically crucial period, the 'Kerensky summer', is defined by Mandelstam himself in his comments on the unpublished 'Fagot': 'До известной степени повторяется прием "Египетской марки": показ эпохи сквозь "птичий глаз"' ('Zayavka na neprinyatuyu povest' "FAGOT", II, p. 497). Mandelstam seems to have been much intrigued by the vision of other creatures: by the distorted, partial vision which he attributes to the fish ('Vypad', II, p. 230), and to flies ('Zapisnye knizhki', III, p. 151). He was particularly interested in the visual make-up of the bird of prey, especially in its ability to see clearly and in detail over a large distance (Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 389). Generally speaking, Mandelstam tends to consider historical events at a remove; his visual powers, like those of a bird, are able to operate over a distance. There are few references in his work as a whole to historical crises at the time of their occurrence. In his poetry only five poems deal contemporaneously, either directly or indirectly, with the First World War (I, nos. 68, 70, 83, 179, 181), one with the 1905 revolution (I, no. 255), one with the February 1917 revolution (I, no. 189) and three with October 1917 (I, nos. 192, 94, 95). His retrospective 'bird's eye' view of history involves the highlighting of certain details and gives not a composite, historian's view of the epoch, but an impressionistic picture which demands the sensitivity of the reader to the historical allusions which are made. The retrospective nature of Mandelstam's historical approach does mean that from time to time intervening material influences his interpretation of an event.

Mandelstam characterises an epoch as he does human figures - by scarce but graphic details. These are intended to convey the 'aroma' of the times ('Skipetr', III, p. 91), the 'temperature of the historical day' ('Mikhoels', III, p. 109). He defines whole periods

of history in this way - fifteenth-century France is characterised, for example, as 'zhenstvenno-passivnaya' ('Fransua Villon', II, p. 302). This 'eye' for detail is a further correspondence with that of the bird of prey.

Mandelstam's definition of Egipetskaya marka as being a 'bird's eye view' is of more than this general significance since it accords closely with the dangerously uncertain nature of the Kérensky summer. In Russian usage expressions which include the adjective 'ptichiy' can indicate an element of insecurity (for example 'zhit' na ptichikh pravakh'). In Mandelstam's own lexicon references to birds sometimes occur in the depiction of chaos or confusion: '... вся стихия/Щебечет, движется, живет ...' (I, no. 103). In 'Feodosiya' the danger of the period is highlighted when people are characterised as different kinds of birds. The railway workers forcibly removed from Kursk are depicted in terms of poultry - the type of birds most likely to be killed. Mandelstam hints that it was preferable to be the kind of bird kept as a domestic pet - safe in a cage: 'В то время лучше было быть птицей, чем человеком, и соблазн стать старухиной птицей был велик' (II, p. 117). In the revolutionary setting of Egipetskaya marka the technique of presenting the human world in terms of avian creatures is especially prominent. It is interesting to note in passing that bird imagery appears in the discussion of revolution elsewhere: '... баррикады, вылепленные ... как кузов птичьего гнезда ...' ('Ogyust Barb'e', III, p. 46).

The suggestion of danger and confusion supplied by such imagery accords with the type of event which Mandelstam tends to discuss. His historical awareness is related particularly to those transitory periods which precede a major historical change - he admires Bely's ability in Peterburg to convey a sense of 'predrevolyutsionnaya trevoga' (II, p. 423 and see above, p. 89), and in his own work the 1905 revolution is depicted in terms of premonition: 'podstupayushchey grozy' (I, no. 255). Shum vremeni is very much concerned with the period of troubled unease which came before the 1905 revolution, the 'glukhoe predystoricheskoe bespokoystvo' (II, p. 71). In this work Mandelstam sketches the features of a period which was drawing to a close. He depicts its frivolous tastes and fashions, its touches of elegance which formed a superficial layer, covering the fact that the age was dying.

The historical 'transitions' which Mandelstam discusses most frequently are those which, in effect, were no more than false transitions: the French revolution of 1830, which instituted the transitory stage of the Bourgeois monarchy ('Ogyust Barb'e', III, pp. 45-49); the Russian revolution of February 1905 which, although it was a clear sign that the end of Tsardom was not far away, in fact heralded a new period of transition, sowing the seeds for October 1917. Historical events which fail to bring about a definitive change lead precisely to that condition which Mandelstam was most predisposed to describe - new feelings of anxiety and confusion, of apprehension as to what the next historical change will bring.

(ii) The nature of the revolutionary events alluded to in Egipetskaya marka and their historical implications

Egipetskaya marka is set against a background of revolutionary events - but this does not involve only the events of 1917. There are fleeting and well-concealed references to the Russian revolution of 1905 and to the French revolution of 1830, and these highlight the particularly unpleasant nature of 1917 and suggest some of its historical implications.

(a) 1905 and 1917

There is a considerable difference between the nature of the revolutionary setting of Egipetskaya marka and of the 1905 setting which figures in Mandelstam's earlier work. This is due to the fact that the impulses behind 1905 and 1917 were quite different. Whereas in Shum vremeni Mandelstam describes the 1905 revolution as a question of 'vlyublennosti i chesti' (II, p. 97), in Egipetskaya marka there are no such romantic concepts. Honour has now been replaced by the demon scandal (II, p. 27). This entity inevitably brings to mind the works of Dostoevsky, and in particular a remark made about revolution by Karmazinov in Besy: '... вся суть русской революционной идеи заключается в отрицании чести ...'⁹⁷. The 1905 revolution is characterised in Shum vremeni as an insubstantial, theoretical event (II, pp. 79-82) and in 'Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvarya' (Mandelstam's most complete appraisal of any historical event) as a classical tragedy (III, pp. 128-132). In the latter work Mandelstam concentrates on the inevitability of events and the 'glukhoe bespokoystvo' (III, p. 128) which was the motive force behind the revolutionary march of

1905. The marchers were deaf to any warnings and the troops opened fire; the event was violent in the stark, unfeeling way in which the death of an animal is violent. Tsarist Russia was an unheeded 'zver' (III, p. 130) and its victims were 'podstrelennuyu dich' (III, p. 131). The influence of the geographical setting on revolutionary events further underlines the differences between the dramatic nature of 1905 and the Kerensky summer of Egipetskaya marka. The 1905 revolution was subject to the 'unstable' nature of Petersburg (see Chapter Three, section (ii)), which contributed to the theoretical nature of events. The results of such 'theory' were frightening, but the aftermath of 1917 was more so. Now it was a question of Petersburg's instability affecting not theory but practice, with all the abuse of theory which practice involves. It is the concern with unpleasant practice which is the distinguishing feature of the revolutionary setting of Egipetskaya marka and which leads to the use of less romantic or dramatic imagery than is to be found in Shum vremeni and 'Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvarya'.

The allusions to 1905 in Egipetskaya marka itself suggest that 1917 was the inevitable consequence of Bloody Sunday. In the first reference to 1905 the image of false alarm is present:

... перед концом, когда температура эпохи вскочила на
тридцать семь и три, и жизнь пронеслась по обманному
вызову, как грохочущий ночью пожарный обоз ...

(II, p. 10)

A sense of continuity is implied between the two revolutions in that later in Egipetskaya marka similar images are developed in the depiction of fire and fatal illness (II, pp. 35-36 and see Chapter Three, section (iii) (b)). These images represent the real alarm of 1917. The 1905 alarm was false on two counts since it was unsuccessful both from the point of view of the revolutionaries and from that of the Tsarist government. The Tsarist victory had no substance to it for it did not lower the revolutionary 'temperature' of the age and when the fruits of 1905 began to be reaped in 1917 the Tsarist government proved to be equally ineffective a 'fire-brigade'. It is alluded to in Egipetskaya marka in terms of its 'muteness' and ineffectuality. Dvortsovaya ploshchad', the very centre of Tsardom, is silent (II, pp. 22-23) - perhaps a reference to Tsar Nicholas II's absence from the Zimniy dvorets on Bloody Sunday, at the very time when he was most needed. Nicholas was similarly ineffectual in February

1917 when his only definitive action was to abdicate in favour of his brother. On the occasion of the 1905 revolution the Tsarist troops had acted with precipitate haste, but when the real alarm was sounded their 'fire-fighting' activities are shown to be non-existent. The doors of the fire-station are firmly shut: 'Напротив была пожарная часть с закрытыми наглухо воротами ...' (II, p. 35). An appropriate element of deafness is implied here, a reflection of the total lack of communication between Tsar and people.

Continuity between the two revolutions is also expressed in allusions to disintegration. In the reference to the 1905 revolution in Egipetskaya marka the role of two of Petersburg's most famous landmarks is described as follows: 'Только сумасшедшие набивались на randevу у Медного Всадника или у Александровской колонны' (II, p. 10). The danger of the latter locale, the central point of Petersburg, was to be proven in the violent outcome of 1905. The foolhardiness of vying with the former was incomparably greater. Only the whole of Russia could be a match for a force such as that symbolised by the Bronze Horseman, and the whole of Russia was not ready in 1905 for such a test ('Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvary'a', III, p. 131). The peril and futility inherent in any attempt to disturb this monument had of course been depicted by Pushkin in the declining sanity of Evgeny, and reiterated by Bely: '... теперь повторилась судьба Евгения ... вдогонку за ним и вдогонку за всеми - гремели удары металла, дробящие жизни ...'⁹⁸ The implication is present in the very style of Egipetskaya marka that such a splintering has taken place (see Chapter Six, section (i)). There are references within the work to specific states of disintegration (II, pp. 20, 40) and the chaos and disruption in everyday conditions (see below, section (iv)) suggest the wider disintegration of society. 1917 may be the continuation of 1905, but it provides a much more frightening setting for now, it seems, the terrifying powers of the Bronze Horseman have once more been released.

(b) 1830 and 1917

The allusion to 1830 in Egipetskaya marka is brief indeed and would certainly elude the casual reader; but it is fundamental to an appreciation of the atmosphere created in the work. The allusion implies a link between 1830 and 1917 and is a clear example of how the experience and opinions of the intervening years between 1917 and the composition of Egipetskaya marka influenced Mandelstam's interpretation

of historical events. Mandelstam's translations of the Barbier poems had demonstrated earlier in the twenties that he saw a resemblance between 1830 and 1917 and the reference to 1830 in Egipetskaya marka is quite in keeping with the spirit of the Barbier translations. The 1830 revolution was a 'mostik' ('Ogyust Barb'e', III, p. 45) from a semi-feudal regime to the bourgeois, financially orientated monarchy of Louis Philippe. This 'mostik' was characterised by the high ideals of its participants. The Kerensky summer was in itself a kind of 'mostik' - a time when revolutionary ideals had not yet been shattered and when Russia's freedom reached its dizziest height.

The oblique reference to 1830 is made in Egipetskaya marka in connection with the infamous Krzyżanowski: 'Тот господин и скрывался всего три дня, а потом солдаты сами выбрали его в полковой комитет и на руках теперь носят!' (II, p. 16). Krzyżanowski's rise to power and popularity occupied a highly suggestive period. However, this is an allusion not to the three days between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, but to a more recent event: 'Nous devenons poussifs et nous n'avons d'haleine/Que pour trois jours au plus',⁹⁹. This was of course the length of time of the French revolution of 1830. Krzyżanowski's absence bears much relation to the action of the effeminate cowards whom Mandelstam depicts in his translation of Barbier's 'La Curée'. Their conduct is obviously similar: '... где вы скрывались молча/В дни страшных сабельных потерь ...' (Sov. ed. no. 278). Although the 'three day' reference in Egipetskaya marka is connected with the 'Trois Glorieuses' and not with Christ's entombment, a period of three days inevitably has biblical associations. Barbier was aware of these: 'Tout tombe, tout s'écroule avec la grande croix:/Christ est aux mains des Juifs une seconde fois',¹⁰⁰. Mandelstam did not translate this section of 'L'Emeute', but there is a direct reference in his own poetry from 1917 to the connection between the revolution and circumstances surrounding the Crucifixion:

- Керенского распять! - потребовал солдат,
И злая чернь рукоплескала:
Нам сердце на штыки позволил взять Пилат,
И сердце биться перестало! (I, no. 192)

It is impossible to state whether or not Mandelstam was influenced by Barbier's work at this early stage. The important point is that in the work of both poets it is the dark and violent deeds attending the Crucifixion which feature in their perception of the revolutions - and

not the miraculous overcoming of death. The fact that the French revolution lasted three days is ironic, for it did not lead to a life-giving miracle, but to the terrifying situation depicted in Barbier's Iambes. The introduction of the three day image into Egipetskaya marka is similarly ironic, for here the miraculous potential of the period is contrasted with the coming to power of Krzyżanowski - the character who thrives at the expense of the 'little man'. It is such disappointment of high ideals which in Mandelstam's view forms the vital link between 1830 and 1917. In Egipetskaya marka the corruption of the ideal is shown indirectly through Krzyżanowski. Mandelstam's poetry gives a reference which is more straightforward. The poem 'Когда октябрьский нам готовил временщик' (I, no. 192) shows the October favourite (vremenshchik) - presumably Lenin - to be involved in not very pleasant machinations: '... нам готовил .../Ярмо насилия ...'. The word 'vremenshchik' is inserted into Mandelstam's translation of 'La Curée' and is therefore a common factor between his own poem and his translation of Barbier:

De remettre en trois jours une haute couronne
Aux mains des Français soulevés.¹⁰¹

Из рук временщика высокую корону
В три дня французам возвратит.

(Sov. ed. no. 278)

In Mandelstam's version it seems to be a question of Charles X's favourite, Polignac. The 1830 revolution took power from the corrupt and insensitive Polignac only to see it corrupted once more: the 1917 revolution took power from the Tsar only to see it develop into a centralised bureaucracy which had no more respect for the individual than had the original regime.

(iii) Treatment of the revolutionary setting in Egipetskaya marka:
the political scene

In Egipetskaya marka Mandelstam deals with the period under discussion in two ways. He gives both an impressionistic representation of the political scene and intriguing references to the everyday conditions which arose because of that scene. In order to gauge the accuracy of Mandelstam's perception of the period the work of two other writers will be referred to from time to time: the contemporary comments of Aleksandr Blok and Viktor Shklovsky's extended and retrospective view of the revolution and Civil War, the Sentimental'noe puteshestvie.

The political scene is clearly one of transition. The February revolution has taken place, but there are still remnants of the Tsarist system in evidence. The Senate appears in Mervis' list of cunning excuses to Parnok: 'Затем Мервис искусно перевел разговор на адвоката Грузенберга, который заказал ему в январе сенаторский мундир ...' (II, p. 8). This uniform had evidently been ordered just before the onset of revolution. Mervis' intention in referring to it here is to arouse sympathy for himself for having undertaken this work, which is now redundant in the Kerensky summer. There is an indirect allusion to Nicholas II's rule in a totally integrated reference to the Red Cross: 'Появляясь в доме, тетя Вера начинала машинально сострадать и предлагать свои красно-крестные услуги ...' (II, p. 31). As a reaction against Tsarist neglect various private associations were formed with the aim of protecting the public interest. The Red Cross Committee was the first of these, and little by little it took over the administration of public health and became a branch of the Ministry of Public Health itself.

The recent revolutionary events are evoked by reference to several Petersburg locations which played an important part in the overthrow of the Tsarist Government. The mention of the Tavricheskiy sad (II, p. 39) brings to mind the Tavricheskiy dvorets - the seat of the Duma and, in February 1917, the site of a two-hundred-thousand-strong demonstration and of the formation of the Petrograd Soviet. The Millionnaya (II, p. 26) was the home of the Preobrazhensky regiment, which was one of the regiments to mutiny in February 1917. Dvortsovaya ploshchad' was the centre of Tsarist administration and Kolpino was the industrial region from which, as Shklovsky records, workers marched on the State Duma¹⁰². These references are far from direct and they serve to create no more than an 'aroma' of the historical scene.

A more important role in the setting of the political scene is played by the various political groups alluded to from time to time. The most striking feature here is that Mandelstam chooses to concentrate upon the least successful and the least impressive groups and events - direct reference is not made to the Bolsheviks or to the First World War for example. The focusing of attention on the unstable groups complements the atmosphere of anxiety and uncertainty prevalent in the work.

The Provisional Government and the Defencists are the only political groups referred to directly, and the latter receive only the briefest mention (II, p. 22). They were a group who believed that, in order to save the revolution, the war against the Germans must be continued and the Germans crushed. The brief reference to the Defencists does therefore also fulfil the function of bringing to mind the external politics of the time. It is a fleeting and indirect allusion to the First World War, which was so vital a force in the downfall of the Tsarist monarchy. Mandelstam's graphically accurate characterisation of the Provisional Government is not quite so brief. All the uncertainty of its existence is conveyed in the adjective 'limonadnoe' (II, p. 15) which Mandelstam attributes to it. In addition it is associated with the volatile aspects of the laundry, with the fast disappearing food supplies and with the alarming behaviour of the cars at Kerensky's disposal:

... после февральских дней, улица эта еще более
полегчала, с ее паровыми прачешными, грузинскими
лавочками, продающими исчезающее какао, и шальными
автомобилями Временного правительства.

(II, p. 14)

The cars display a feature which was at the time attributed to the head of the Provisional Government himself: 'С утра есть слух, что Керенский сошел с ума ...'¹⁰³. If Mandelstam does not indicate directly that the Kerensky government had rivals, his allusions to its insecurity hint at this. The uncertainty of the Provisional Government's position was of course an historical fact. For a few short months Russia was freer than it had ever been, thanks to the legislation of the Provisional Government, which must at the time have seemed to be part of a dream state. Equality before the law was granted; inviolability of the individual, home and correspondence was proclaimed; no arrest or search could be made without warrant; religious freedom, freedom to form associations, right of assembly and new press laws were also proclaimed. All this new legislation contrasted with that of the Tsarist regime and contributed to the heady 'lemonade' quality of the Kerensky summer. Such measures increased the chaos ensuing from the revolutionary events. In a remark from July 3rd 1917 Aleksandr Blok describes the official situation succinctly:

Заседание тянется, все время перемежаясь более или менее интересными разговорами; от этого внимание слабеет, секретарь убегает, протокол оказывается неполным. Вообще хаос, в котором обсуждается все время, в сущности, один вопрос: как бороться с хаосом? - С самим собой бороться.¹⁰⁴

The formal concept of conference was quite inappropriate in a chaotic situation where the authority of the government was minimal. (Real power lay in the hands of the Bolsheviks, of the Petrograd Soviet, on whose approval the decisions of the Provisional Government depended). This is stressed in Egipetskaya marka by the contrast between the rigidly formal preparations (apparently for some kind of official session - II, pp. 15, 23) and the constant representation of the volatility of the period. Mandelstam communicates the dangers inherent in this chaotic setting in the phrase 'И страшно жить и хорошо!' (II, p. 22). This conveys both the fear and the elation involved in the new freedom (in a far more trite manner than the will to live was later to be contrasted with life's fears in the poem 'Колют ресницы. В груди прикипела слеза', I, no. 229). Whereas Mandelstam tends merely to imply the dangers of the Kerensky summer, Shklovsky discusses directly the threats of the unaccustomed freedom which it brought:

Революция, русская революция, с максимализмом демократизма Временного правительства, освободила армию от принуждения. В армии не осталось законов, не осталось даже правил.¹⁰⁵

The Provisional Government was not only insecure, it was also ineffectual. Shklovsky refers to this when speaking of Kerensky's lack of energy: 'Жидкий огонь разлитого спирта, сгорающего, не успевая зажечь дерево, которое он облил ...'¹⁰⁶. The inefficacy of Kerensky and his colleagues is perhaps suggested in Egipetskaya marka in the passage concerned with the deaf-mutes (II, p. 23), which gives one of two extended references to an organised group. They are heading for a very official destination - through the General Staff Arch to Dvortsovaya ploshchad'. Their conversation is depicted in terms of their movements and it finally succumbs to confusion: 'Староста в гнев перепутал всю пряжу'. In choosing the image of the deaf-mute Mandelstam points to the difficulty in communication and action which was characteristic of the Provisional Government. There is something quite unreal about the actions of the deaf-mutes, just as the activity of the Provisional Government seemed unreal. When calm prevails in

the deaf-mutes' conversation even the carrier pigeons which they release (a topical detail - these were an important means of communication during the years of revolution and war) are merely imaginary ones. In its inefficacy and inability to communicate the Provisional Government was no less remote than that of the Tsars: '... звонил правительству - исчезнувшему, уснувшему, как окунь, государству' (II, p. 20).

Another set of historically noteworthy protagonists referred to in Egipetskaya marka are the Cossacks, who appear not in their traditionally pugnacious capacity, but as singers (II, p. 40). From the eighteenth century until the overthrow of Nicholas II, these were the men who had traditionally played a prominent part in Russia's external campaigns, being given land by way of reward. In 1905 they helped to crush the revolution, but in February 1917 their role was somewhat ambiguous. This is apparent in Egipetskaya marka in the contrast between what the reader might expect (a description of fighting men) and the method in fact employed (a depiction of a group of singers). In 1917 the Cossacks refused to back the police and even defended the crowds from the attacks of the mounted police (known - rather appropriately to Egipetskaya marka - as 'pharaohs'¹⁰⁷). Furthermore, the Soviet formed on February 29th did not feel entirely confident of Cossack support¹⁰⁸. According to Shklovsky the Cossacks did indeed abandon their traditional role in 1917:

... отряды казаков, высланные на улицу, никого не трогая, ездили добродушно посмеиваясь ... На Знаменской площади казак убил пристава, который ударил шашкой демонстрантку.¹⁰⁹

There is nothing in Egipetskaya marka which celebrates, according to the tradition of Gogol (Taras Bul'ba) and Tolstoy (Kazaki), the physical strength and the military prowess of the Cossacks. Nor is there any direct indication of the potential hostility which these men must surely have embodied for Mandelstam, with their military mercenary background. Mandelstam did not, however, confine his allusions to the Cossacks entirely to the passage on their peaceable activities. There is in Egipetskaya marka a reference to a writer who was aware of both the physical attractiveness of the Cossacks and of their dangerously aggressive natures. This was a writer whom, according to Anna Akhmatova, Mandelstam much admired¹¹⁰: 'Вот Бабель: лисий подбородок и лапки очков' (II, p. 21). This is Isaac Babel, bespectacled intellectual and, like Mandelstam, a Jew - traditionally

despised by the Cossacks. Despite the fact that the reference to Babel and the one to the Cossacks are well separated in Egipetskaya marka, it is significant that both are mentioned. Their mutual relationship is not stated, but its implication should be grasped, for it is the only hint which Mandelstam gives as to the Cossacks' potential hostility. Once again there is an example here of Mandelstam's intervening experience influencing his representation of an historical event. Mandelstam was doubtless acquainted with Babel's Konarmiya, stories from which were published as early as 1923. This work deals with the Cossacks' part in the Civil War (a period whose violence and lack of respect for life had been all too familiar to Mandelstam - see above Chapter One, section (iii) (c)) and with their hatred for the Jewish intellectual, who was symbolised for them by his spectacles - the very image by which Babel is characterised in Egipetskaya marka¹¹¹. Mandelstam's hints as to the hostility of the Cossacks are even more oblique than his suggestions of the dangerous nature of the Kerensky summer.

The final group to appear in Egipetskaya marka are the Aysors (another name for the Assyrians). Mandelstam has chosen a very peripheral group here; it is certainly not one that readily springs to mind when considering the events of 1917. The reference to these people is elliptical: 'Но уже волновались айсоры-чистильщики сапог ..' (II, p. 15). Mandelstam assumes that the reader is perfectly familiar with the sad tale of this group, and therefore that an allusion to them will complement Egipetskaya marka's atmosphere of chaos. The Aysors were in fact a semitic-speaking people and a Nestorian Christian sect. During the First World War they suffered very great losses through massacre by their traditional enemies, the Kurds, after which the survivors fled to both Iraq and Russia. Shklovsky spares no detail in the depiction of the Aysors' fate. In addition to a description of the massacre and subsequent flight he mentions an occupation taken up by the refugees inside Russia - that of shoe-shining:

Вы помните маленьких людей, которые сидят в России на углах с щетками? ... Древни они как булыжники мостовой; это айсоры - горные ассирийцы ... И тот другой, что сидит на углу Невского и Морской, против Дома Искусств и торгует гуталином, тоже ушел, ушел сильно раненым.¹¹²

(iv) Treatment of the revolutionary setting in Egipetskaya marka:
everyday conditions

The emphasis on the banal objects and conditions of everyday life is important in Mandelstam's appraisal of life in general. He does not discuss directly the feelings aroused in him by events, but focuses his attention on those objects which inspire his feelings. Nadezhda Yakovlevna explains that this approach was part of his general outlook on life:

... даже в повседневной жизни он редко говорил о себе или о своих чувствах и ощущениях. Он предпочитал говорить о том, что вызвало эти чувства. В его восприятии текущего момента главную роль играл не личный момент, а события и предметы внешнего мира. Это отражалось даже на том, как он говорил о мелкобытовых вещах: не спина болит, оттого что плохой матрац, а 'кажется лопнула пружина, надо бы починить'...

(N.Ya. II, pp. 270-1)

Similarly, Mandelstam does not so much discuss the political or historical nature of an event as convey the atmosphere created by the conditions ensuing from it. For example in 'Batum' and 'Feodosiya' he alludes to foreign intervention and foreign aid during the Civil War in terms of the material goods supplied by the foreign powers:

... приятные турки, продающие традиционный лаваш из очень чистой и пресной американской пшеницы.

('Batum', III, p. 11)

... гремя подковами английских ботинок, пройдет запоздавшая юнкерская рота ...

('Feodosiya', II, p. 112)

Perhaps the passing reference to 'American' laced shoes in Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 34) is also a reference to such aid.

(a) The concept of revolution in everyday terms

The concept of revolution is not represented as a dynamic force in Egipetskaya marka: Mandelstam rids it of any romantic attributes by tying it firmly to everyday life. This he achieves partly through the seasonal setting of the work. He cannot symbolise the revolution as a mighty snowstorm, as did Blok in Dvenadtsat' (a work which Mandelstam valued as a powerful 'chastushka', a part of folklore - 'Barsuch'ya nora', II, p. 274); instead he depicts it against the unattractive slush and mud of a Petersburg spring (II, p. 10). The months following the February revolution provided a suitably 'fluid' climatic background for the depiction of a period of transition and uncertainty, with the melting snow and ice. Mandelstam must have been struck by the

fact that major historical events tended to occur in the early months of the year. The 1905 revolution and Pushkin's catastrophic death in 1837 both occurred in the month of January, when the seasonal climate provided an appropriately cold and uninviting background. He depicts both events in much the same imagery:

Никто не слышал, как прозвучал в морозном январском
воздухе последний рожок императорской России ...

('Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvarya, III, p. 130)

compare

Ночью положили солнце в гроб, и в январскую стужу проскрипели
полюзья саней ...

('Pushkin i Skryabin', II, p. 313)

Imagery of fire and flame, a traditional feature in depictions of revolution, is present in Egipetskaya marka in distinctly undramatic, unromantic terms. Fire was a very real weapon of the revolutionaries (as had been predicted by Shigalyov in Dostoevsky's Besy¹¹³). It passed into the revolutionary slogans of 1917 as an image implying force and energy: 'Мировой пожар раздуем/Мировой пожар в крови ...'¹¹⁴. In Blok's work fire is given a similarly positive idealistic purpose: 'И вот задача русской культуры - направить этот огонь на то, что нужно сжечь ... чтобы сгорела хитрая, ленивая рабская похоть'¹¹⁵. In Shklovsky's work fire becomes a leitmotif which points to the dangerous energy inherent in the situation of Revolution and Civil war: 'Rossiya gorit'¹¹⁶. In Egipetskaya marka, however, fire appears only in connection with the heat of Bosio's final illness, in the unsuccessful activities of the fire-brigade, and in the phrase 'Пожары и книги - это хорошо' (II, p. 35 - in terms of everyday conditions this inevitably brings to mind the practice of burning books, necessitated during the years of upheaval by the scarcity of more suitable fuel¹¹⁷).

Mandelstam's closest approach to a direct representation of revolution in Egipetskaya marka is to be found in the passage on musical notation: 'Нотная страница - это революция в старинном немецком городе' (II, p. 24). But this highly imaginative depiction is a far cry from any romantically musical evocations of revolution, or indeed from any representation of revolution in musical slogans. Mandelstam's musical imagery provides a strange and chaotic world of chess players, starlings and turtles, where a strangely confused

fire-brigade operates ('... волокут туда и обратно пожарную лестницу' II, p. 24) and where music is described through the very homely image of washing hanging out to dry.

(b) Disruption of living conditions: transport and food supply

It is in the preoccupation with everyday conditions that the most prominent and the most effective treatment of 1917 lies. At times Mandelstam's definition of the period in such terms can be almost humorous in its bathos and euphemism: 'То было страшное время:

портные отбирали визитки, а прачки глумились над молодыми людьми, потерявшими записку' (II, p. 15). Behind the humour lurks considerable threat. A decline in the standard of craftsmanship acts as a

first sign of society's degeneration in Egipetskaya marka. The slovenly tailor's badly-made jacket is a characteristic feature of Mandelstam's contemporary comment in this area. It occurs in

Egipetskaya marka: '... и топорщились, как кровельное железо, воскресные пиджаки мужчин' (II, p. 31) and also in the review 'Kukla s millionami', which was almost contemporary with Egipetskaya marka:

'... а мы как вешалки пялим на себя готовую стандартную одежку - без примерки - в плечах топорщится, в проймах жмет' (III, p. 115).

In general, objects in Egipetskaya marka do not function as they might be expected to. The lifts are out of order and the trams display frighteningly ambiguous behaviour: '... там чепуха, бестрамвайная

глушь. Трамваи же на Каменноостровском развивают неслыханную скорость' (II, p. 14). The first statement that the city is tramless

is sustained by the second, where the adjective 'neslykhannyu' implies an unreal, fairytale speed, and accords with the unreal, unbelievably light-headed atmosphere which characterises the Kamennooostrovskiy

prospekt. The lack of trams during the revolutionary period was an historical fact, as can be seen from Blok's diary entries¹¹⁸. In

Sentimental'noe puteshestvie Shklovsky describes how the lack of trams led to the invention of make-believe stories about them: 'На

трамвайные темы создавался специальный фольклор, жалкий и характерный'¹¹⁹.

The disappearance of the trams was due partly to the disorder caused by revolutionary events and partly to the violence involved in those events:

Только простреленным на углу Гребенской и Пушкарской остался трамвайный столб ... Если вы не верите, что революция была, то пойдите и вложите руку в рану. Она широка, столб пробит трех-дюймовым снарядом.¹²⁰

Mandelstam's allusions to any damage suffered by Petersburg trams are far less direct than Shklovsky's. They appear in a negated comparison which includes mention of the repair of tram poles (II, p. 18) and feature subsequently in Parnok's impressions as he wanders round the city. In the latter case a blow torch again suggests repair work, although this is well concealed by the imaginative language: 'Он слушал жужжание паяльных свеч, приближающих к рельсам трамвая ослепительно-белую мохнатую розу' (II, p. 36). For Mandelstam the disappearance of trams signified a state of disorder and chaos in city life. The potential threat of such chaos is conveyed in a phrase from 'Chetvyortaya proza', where Mandelstam is describing a member of the 'Light Cavalry' who came to interfere in his affairs: 'Девушка-хромоножка пришла к нам с улицы, длинной, как бестрамвайная ночь' (II, p. 179). The functioning of trams seems to have played a prominent part in Mandelstam's assessment of contemporary climates. When he actually wrote Egipetskaya marka the trams were in operation again, but this in turn had a negative influence: 'В самом начале тридцатых годов Мандельштам сказал ... "Нам кажется, что все благополучно, только потому, что ходят трамваи"' (N.Ya. II, p. 213).

The food supply was very much disrupted during the revolutionary period and this is reflected indirectly in Egipetskaya marka. Here no-one ever actually partakes of any nourishment - it is no more than an illusion. Allusions to food and drink occur chiefly at times of crisis (see above, p. 58): in the laundry scene the coffee which Father Bruni has somehow managed to obtain irritates the olfactory senses of the laundress, and probably does little to aid Parnok's chances of recovering his shirt: 'Жареный мокко ... щекотал ноздри разъяренной матроны' (II, p. 15). (The verb 'shchekotat'' often has the force of 'to irritate' in Mandelstam's lexicon - for example I, no. 127, stanza 3, Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 176). Shklovsky describes the staple diet of the time in the following way: 'Утром пили кофе из ржи ... На улице же продавали ржаные лепешки. Ели овсяную похлебку'¹²¹. The only reference to be found to such substances in Egipetskaya marka is in the description of the Petersburg cabby: '... со своим ... овсяным голосом ...' (II, p. 29). Perhaps

there is an allusion here to the fact that what were normally considered to be animal foodstuffs now formed a major part of the human diet; the dehumanising effect is clear in the case of the cabby, who is firmly identified with his horse. Bread, a basic foodstuff in normal times, was scarce in 1917; indeed the shortage of flour (by mid-February there was only a ten-day supply left) was a prime factor in the unrest among the masses. Shortage of bread continued throughout the Kerensky summer: 'С утра забастовали пекаря, и нет хлеба'¹²². Mandelstam does not refer directly to the shortage of bread, but merely implies it in the last chapter of Egipetskaya marka, where the only bread and baker to appear are concerned rather with artistic creation than with nourishment: '... и калач, обыкновенный калач, уже не скрывает от меня, что он задуман пекарем, как российская лира из безгласного теста' (II, p. 40).

(c) Disruption of law and order

Mandelstam did not favour systems which were too rigidly organised since they had a stultifying effect - people no longer thought for themselves under such systems because it was easier to fit in with the modes of thought and conduct already established. His aversion from rigid patterns can be seen on an everyday level in his attitude to the normal running of the trams (see above, p. 127). In 'Chetvyortaya proza' he implies (with bitter irony) that the establishment of official channels through which complaints might be submitted is a dangerous thing:

Тогда еще не было идеологии и некому было жаловаться,
если тебя кто обидит. Когда я вспоминаю то сиротство
- как мы могли тогда жить!

(II, p. 185)

On the other hand he did approve of systems whose organisation was based on respect for the individual ('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 323). The revolutionary violence, disorder and lack of authority which characterise Egipetskaya marka's historical setting clearly preclude such respect. In this work the individual, and in particular the 'little man', is oppressed but has no recourse to any form of complaint: 'Что делать? Кому жаловаться?' (II, p. 26). Parnok has as great a chance of contacting the authorities as he has of reaching Persephone by telephone - the 'militsiya' should be informed of the violence the crowd intend to inflict, but this is evidently impossible (II, pp. 18-19). The revolution's disruptive effect on law and order in turn influenced

people's moral outlook. Human life is considered quite worthless by the crowd of Egipetskaya marka. Shklovsky gives a concise picture of this most disturbing situation:

На такую же шутку, как реквизиция спирта, т.е. вообще на полуграбеж, готовы были почти все.¹²³

Вообще это было время власти на местах ...

Каждого убивали на месте.

На Петроградской стороне в части украд мальчик-красноармеец у товарища сапоги.

Его поймали и присудили к расстрелу ...

Люди, которые это сделали без всякого озлобления, были страшны и своевременны для России.

Они продолжали линию самосудов, тех самосудов, когда бросали в Фонтанку воров.¹²⁴

The principal event in the story of Parnok is evidently a reflection of such thieving and lynching. In Mandelstam's representation the lynching has all the attributes of ceremony and ritual (II, pp. 16-18). It has a rigidly established mode of conduct and displays all the firmness of purpose which the authorities lacked. In general human terms the picture is obviously a disturbing one, but when considered in the light of Mandelstam's particular situation it is positively chilling. The position of the victim subject to the crowd's crude justice clearly resembles that of the writer surrounded by Party hacks intent upon his destruction. To a certain extent here Mandelstam predicts the 'Dreyfus' affair, which did not really come into being until Zaslavsky's odiously sarcastic article appeared in Literaturnaya gazeta in May 1929¹²⁵ - more than a year after Egipetskaya marka had been completed. It is interesting to note that it was the practice of the lynching brigades which sprang to Gorky's mind when he wrote 'O potere energiyi' in defence of Boris Pilnyak during the singularly vicious campaign launched against him in Literaturnaya gazeta during the summer of 1929¹²⁶. Although Gorky's remarks on the 'pinnacles of fame' do not apply to Mandelstam, the image of the lynching mob demonstrates the cold inhumanity which so worried Mandelstam and which he suffered during the 'Dreyfus' affair. Gorky's last sentence depicts an instinct which had struck Mandelstam six years earlier when he had translated Barbier's 'La Curée':

... у нас образовалась дурацкая привычка втаскивать людей на колокольню славы и через некоторое время сбрасывать их оттуда в прах, в грязь. Не стану приводить примеров столь нелепого и жестокого обращения с человеком ... Мне они напоминают сцены 'самосуда' в 17-18 гг. - позорнейшие драмы, авторами которых являлись обыватели. И вот эти

обывательские мещанские вольчи травли человека весьма надоедливо напоминаются каждый раз, когда видишь, как охотно и сладострастно бросаются на одного ...¹²⁷

The passage on the lynching mob is the most direct and the most detailed of all the historical allusions in Egipetskaya marka and is therefore of considerable significance. The Kerensky summer provided Mandelstam with a suitably confused and disordered setting for a work in which he set out to state the reasons for his confusion and lack of confidence. At the same time this particular historical setting allowed Mandelstam to highlight the one feature in human conduct which horrified him more than any other, and which he evidently saw to have been fostered by the revolutionary summer of 1917: the total lack of respect for individual human life. And it was this feature which he saw to be developing a decade later when he wrote Egipetskaya marka.

Chapter Five

The Treatment of Art Themes in Egipetskaya marka

(i) Background to the treatment of art forms

Mandelstam's views on the nineteenth century, as discussed above (see Chapter One, section (v)), form the background to the treatment of various art forms in Egipetskaya marka - music, painting, poetry, dance and theatre. The feature common to the nineteenth century and the revolutionary year in which Egipetskaya marka is set is to be found in the article 'Slovo i kul'tura':

Отделение культуры от государства - наиболее значительное событие нашей революции ... Государство ныне проявляет к культуре то своеобразное отношение, которое лучше всего передает термин терпимость ...

(II, p. 223)

Here is the attitude leading to the nature of art depicted in Egipetskaya marka: a toleration of art, a separation from it, rather than an acknowledgement of it as a necessary part of life. The influence of the 'Stary znakovets' Konstantin Leontiev, who appears in Shum vremeni (II, p. 102), is indeed in evidence here. Leontiev considered aesthetics to be the best measure by which to judge the conditions of history and life, and his assessment of the situation in 1891 was one which must surely have struck a chord in Mandelstam:

Но увы! ... в глазах многих весьма серьезных, ... весьма высоко в государстве поставленных людей, слова 'художник', 'эстетик' ... роняют практическую ценность мыслей. Им представляется все это сейчас чем-то вроде излишества, роскоши ... Они не могут понять, что только там и государственность сильна ... где ... видимая эстетика жизни есть признак ... творческой силы.¹²⁸

This attitude is very much present in Egipetskaya marka, a work in which the characters, in addition to playing a role in the tale of Parnok's misadventures, also represent a certain attitude towards art. Insensitivity towards art is epitomised in the figure of the dentists, whose highly suspicious merits are defined as a love of art, broad horizons and an 'ideynuyu terpimost'. The deadly effect of this 'omnitolerance' can be seen from the fact that it is no longer poetry but their snake-like drill which attacks the sky (II, p. 15, compare 'Utro akmeizma', II, p. 323: only 'poleznost' and 'neobkhodimost' are considered to be of importance in creativity now,

as Mandelstam was to point out in 'Yunost' Geta', III, p. 78).

(a) The title

The title shows the influence of the nineteenth century and immediately establishes an unfavourable tone by setting the work firmly in the oriental sphere, which Mandelstam considered to be so hostile to human beings. Egypt and Babylon are specified in his work as societies in which the warmth of human feelings did not exist, and the nineteenth century is blamed for re-introducing their influence ('Devyatnadtsatyy vek', II, p. 280). In the twenties Mandelstam began to identify certain trends in art forms with the characteristics of the hostile Egyptian world. In 'Literaturnaya Moskva' (1922) he discusses the work of Bely, Zamyatin, Pilnyak and the Serapions in terms of the building of pyramids (II, pp. 333-334). Here Mandelstam's insistence that Bely's work is impersonally 'antiseptic' and that the Serapions' writings are the organised movement of a nameless mass accords with his views on the inhuman nature of Egyptian society. Similarly, in his articles on translation written in 1929, the unrealistic, mass-produced language of translated works is likened to pyramid-building:

... бессмысленное, монументально синтаксическое построение, как бы синтез и картонная пирамида этого словесного мира из папье-маше ...

('Zhak rodilsya i umer', III, p. 57)

Монументальная серия классиков ... - работа, по существу, бессмысленная. Это - пирамида во славу ложно понятой культуры.

('O perevodakh', II, p. 435)

The hallmark of such work in both cases is a senseless monumentality. In the famous poem 'Notre Dame' (I, no. 39) Mandelstam describes the great cathedral as being composed of two elements: 'Египетская мощь и христианства робость'. The important point here was that there was a balance between the two elements - neither predominated. In the case of the 'Egyptian' allusions of the twenties, the humanising, Christian element has completely disappeared: the balance has been destroyed, and the inhuman, monumental power of Egypt predominates. It is in Egipetskaya marka that Mandelstam concentrates his attention on the degenerating condition of art created under such oriental influences.

The choice of Egypt as the focal point of oriental influences was perhaps connected with Mandelstam's association with things

Egyptian through his acquaintance with the Egyptologist Shileyko, Akhmatova's second husband. However, it is most appropriate that a work with this title should be set in Petersburg, where Mandelstam was surrounded by Egyptian influence in architectural terms: the Egyptian bridge, the Egyptian gates leading into Tsarskoe Selo, Egyptian decorations as in the palace at Pavlovsk. These Egyptian phenomena were a result of a nineteenth-century influence - that of Napoleon who, despite his enmity towards Russia, impressed the Russian people by the daring of his campaigns and, incidentally, influenced them by his interest in Egypt. Mandelstam, however, was very wary of the 'kul't velikikh lyudey' and of the dangers inherent in the idolisation of famous and powerful people ('Zhan-Rishar Blokh', III, p. 85; Shum vremeni, II, p. 55). His wariness was, of course, to prove to be all too appropriate in the years which followed Egipetskaya marka. He was aware that such 'idols' normally attain their pinnacle of power at the expense of other people and this was certainly true in the case of Napoleon. It is by likening Napoleon to an Egyptian tyrant, making use of others to achieve his own ends, that Barbier demonstrates Napoleon's ruthlessness, in a section of 'L'Idole' which Mandelstam did not translate: 'Il aime qui lui fait bâtir des Pyramides, / Porter des pierres sur le dos'¹²⁹. It is important to note that in the work of both Mandelstam and Barbier it is the pyramid - tomb for the dead - which represents the Egyptian influence. Egyptian religion was very much concerned with death, which was considered to be part of the well-ordered life cared for by the gods, and it is the preoccupation with death which largely informs the Egyptian element in the treatment of art in Egipetskaya marka. In this the work follows closely in the footsteps of Bely's Peterburg, where the end of culture itself is depicted in terms of Egypt and its pyramids:

Николай Аполлонович провалился в Египет; в двадцатом столетии он провидит - Египет; культура, - трухлявая голова: в ней все умерло ... он сам - пирамида, вершина культуры, которая - рухнет.¹³⁰

The Egyptian association with death is also reminiscent of Valimir Khlebnikov's Ka¹³¹ (1916) which evidently exerted some influence on the Egyptian background of Egipetskaya marka, particularly on the opening and closing passages and on the main character. The Ka was in fact the vital spirit within man which he joined at death. If the dead left their burial place it was in the form of Ba, an earthly

apparition usually represented as a bird. The chief characteristics of Khlebnikov's Ka are his light-heartedness and his 'bird-like' disposition,¹³² both features displayed to some degree by Parnok (II, pp. 14, 11 respectively. It should be observed too that the Petersburg street mentioned in Ka is the Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt¹³³ - Parnok's home). The opening of Khlebnikov's work, as that of Egipetskaya marka deals with Time and dreams.¹³⁴ Ka has complete power over these, and it is most interesting to note that Khlebnikov describes this power in terms of a domestic setting - the rocking chair of the centuries in which Ka installs himself. Here again there is a clear resemblance to the opening of Egipetskaya marka, whose 'milyy Egipet veshchey' (II, p. 5) - the potential pyramidal objects - is composed of domestic furniture. Khlebnikov himself stated that the particular Egyptian feature he wished to represent in Ka was the period of Sun worship, when at the command of Amenophis IV the sun became the one deity of the ancient temples.¹³⁵ There is perhaps a parallel with Egipetskaya marka here which closes with a description in which the sun plays a dominant role (II, p. 42). The title of Mandelstam's work brings to mind too Pushkin's Egipetskie nochi, where the Egyptian element also involves death, the price set by Queen Cleopatra upon her favours. Pushkin's work shares another theme which is very much part of Egipetskaya marka: monolithic or tyrannical societies usually demand that their more imaginative members should put their talents to the use of the state. Pushkin, whose freedom was so much restricted by Nicholas I, strongly denies that the artist can be dictated to in any way and asserts that he should never be dependent on the favours of anyone:

Наши поэты не пользуются покровительством господ ...
У нас поэты не ходят пешком из дому в дом, выпрашивая
себе вспоможения ... поэт сам избирает предметы для своих
песен; толпа не имеет права управлять его вдохновением.¹³⁶

Mandelstam too fully supported the view that the poet must be independent: if a poet adapts himself to the dictates of society, then that society is as good as writing the poet's works ('Poet o sebe', II, p. 217). In such a case the poet is exposed to a kind of death - that of his creativity. That Mandelstam is surrounded by artists and art forms who so adapt themselves to contemporary demands is, as will be seen repeatedly below, a prominent feature of Egipetskaya marka.

The Egyptian influence expressed in the title is sustained

with some insistence in Egipetskaya marka, although its presence is not always blatantly apparent. The 'hero', Parnok, has as his nickname the title itself (II, p. 19); here Mandelstam's work contrasts with Pushkin's Egipetskie nochi, for there is nothing remotely romantic about this Egyptian element, with its strictly utilitarian implications. The remaining elements reflecting the Egyptian influence fall into two categories: those which contribute to the creation of an oriental - not always strictly Egyptian - atmosphere (for a discussion of these see Chapter Six, section 3 (iii)), and those which are connected with the Egyptian preoccupation with death. The second group is established very early in the work with the introduction of the 'milyy Egipet veshchey' (II, p. 5) which, occurring in close proximity to various deathly or funerary elements ('neudavsheesya bessmertie', 'Khochesh' Valgallu', 'Rogozhi ... kak rizy', II, p. 5), suggests that wealth of everyday objects with which the Egyptian tomb would be filled, and which the deceased would need in the afterlife. Amongst such objects would be included ointments and oils, whose existence is hinted at obliquely in the depiction of the barber's practices - here the pyramid is once more in evidence: '... держа над головой Парнока пирамидальную фиоль с пиксафоном ...' (II, p. 13). The pyramid is referred to again in connection with funerary activities in the fourth chapter of Egipetskaya marka, although its Egyptian origin is well camouflaged here: 'Не Анатоля Франса хороним в страусовом катафалке, высоком как тополь, как разъезжающая ночью пирамида для починки трамвайных столбов ...' (II, p. 18).

An Egyptian funeral rite connected not with humans but with animals is also referred to, the animal in question being the cat. All animals were considered to be part of the divine order and the cat was sacred to the goddess Bastet and buried with much pomp in her holy ground. The bodies of these animals were frequently mummified, and it is this aspect of the funeral rite which is strongly hinted at in Mandelstam's description of the Kerensky summer: 'Одно время казалось, что граждане так и останутся навсегда, как коты с бантами' (II, p. 15). The cats would remain fixed in their grotesque positions (they are depicted as taking part in a cotillon in Egipetskaya marka) for ever, like the Egyptian cats, whose position must have seemed equally grotesque to Mandelstam, preserved as they were forever in their deathly form. Connected with these preoccupations is a hint at

Egyptian views of the afterlife. Parnok's coat is described as his 'zemnaya obolochka' (II, p. 6), which suggests the concept of the human body as merely a shell from which the soul is separated after death. Parnok's own resemblance to the bird-like 'ba' has been noted above, and in a similar way the animal features displayed by several of the characters align them with certain Egyptian gods. The vultures present in Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 8) for example, were used in Egypt in the representation of certain goddesses (for example, Nekhbet of el-Kab). The vicious crowd in Egipetskaya marka is described in terms of its 'dog' ears (II, p. 17), particularly appropriate when it is considered that Anubis, god of cemeteries, was also of a dog-like form.

Egypt is represented in Egipetskaya marka not only from the point of view of its ancient religion and mythology, but also in its role as the land of exile of the Jewish nation. Its appearance in this context is in an indirect reference to the tenth of the plagues inflicted upon Egypt as punishment for her wilful stubbornness in not releasing the Israelites. The tenth plague was the death of all the first born, from which the Children of Israel were spared by their preparations for the Passover (from the Hebrew verb pasah, which includes the idea of sparing and protection) - that is, by the smearing of lamb's blood on the lintel and door-posts of each house, a sign that the inmates trusted in the Lord's promise (Exodus 12). In Egipetskaya marka there is no mention of the Passover itself, but the emphasis is on the Angel of Death, and the marking of the houses is a sign not of protection, but of death. Here Mervis, the unscrupulous tailor, is a member of the deathly entourage: 'Чем-то он напоминает члена похоронного братства, спешащего в дом, отмеченный Азраилом, с принадлежностями ритуала' (II, p. 33). The emphasis here is clearly on punishment rather than sparing and this accords with the other deathly associations of Egypt and also, incidentally, with the fact that certain Egyptian gods are still present in the work. This latter point contrasts with the promises made in Exodus that both the gods and the animals sacred to them would be struck down: '... и поражу всякого первенца в земле Египетской, от человека до скота, и над всеми богами Египетскими произведу суд' (Exodus 12. 12).

(b) Epigraph

The plague reference is of further importance in that it is linked with the epigraph of Egipetskaya marka. Whereas the title of the work, with its Egyptian element, suggests a hostile and deathly condition which will affect the treatment of art, the epigraph is concerned with the yet more disturbing fact that time itself - that force which structures life and is one of the materials of artistic composition - is in a most pernicious state: 'Не люблю свернутых рукописей. Иные из них тяжелы и промаслены временем, как труба архангела' (II, p. 5). Mandelstam's aversion for the writing down and preservation of manuscripts is insistently depicted by Nadezhda Yakovlevna (for example, N.Ya. II, pp. 405, 534). In the epigraph the manuscripts are particularly repulsive in being 'greased', a feature which Mandelstam seemed to associate with mechanical processes - the railway in Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 41), the printing process in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu (II, p. 138). There is more than a personal dislike at issue in the epigraph, however, for here Mandelstam is in fact referring to the Book of Revelation, and in particular to the chapters of Revelation dealing with the seven trumpets (Revelation 6-9). The eleventh chapter of Revelation is concerned with the advent of the Kingdom of God, and this is heralded (in the same way as the Exodus) in earlier chapters by a series of plagues on the ungodly. Just as the Egyptian theme was carried through Egipetskaya marka to create a specific atmosphere, so too are the references to Revelation. As in the case of the references to the Passover Mandelstam's emphasis is most significant here - once more it lies firmly on the negative aspects. He is not concerned with the coming of the Kingdom of God, but with the terrifying state, with all its cosmic disorders, which precedes the end. In Egipetskaya marka he refers to certain plagues which feature in Revelation. In the epigraph itself he suggests the picture of the sky given by the frightening and ominous sixth seal:

И небо скрылось, свившись как свиток (Revelation 6. 14)
compare

Не люблю свернутых рукописей ... (II, p. 41)
Revelation's plague of darkness (Revelation 8. 12, compare Exodus 10. 21-23) is hinted at in Egipetskaya marka in the image of the eclipse (II, p. 15). The plague of locusts (Revelation 9. 1-12) makes two

appearances in the work. On the first occasion Mandelstam depicts a crowd of human locusts (II, p. 20), which have the effect of bringing darkness ('vychernila'), as did the Biblical locusts (Exodus 10. 15). On the second he depicts another group of vicious insects, ants (II, p. 22), which in their guise of war horses surrounded by dust bear distinct resemblance to the smoke-bound locusts of Revelation. The Biblical locusts also share the human features of the first locust group in Egipetskaya marka:

А черные блестящие муравьи ... словно военные лошади,
в фижах пыли скачущие на холм.

(II, p. 22)

compare

И из дыма вышла саранча ... По виду своему саранча была
подобна коням, приготовленным на войну ... лица же ее -
как лица человеческие ...

(Revelation 9. 3, 5)

The horrifying conclusion to the plagues in Revelation is the end of time itself and a cessation of the normal course of time is referred to directly in Egipetskaya marka: '...vsyo shlo obratno ...' (II, p. 39). This is a most significant statement and it corresponds closely to the declaration of the 'mighty angel', whose message is hinted at in the epigraph of Egipetskaya marka. In Revelation this angel appears at the most crucial moment, between the sixth and seventh trumpets, proclaiming that there will be no more delay, that with the sounding of the seventh trumpet the end will come, and God's purpose for mankind will be accomplished: '... что времени уже не будет ...' (Revelation 10. 6). This is clearly akin to Mandelstam's statement in 'Pushkin i Skryabin': 'Времени нет! ... время мчится обратно с шумом и свистом ...' (II, p. 314). The reasons and consequences for this situation have been considered above (see Chapter One, section (v)): a turning away from Christianity towards oriental cultures has led to the end of time, and as a result, of art itself: 'iskusstva bol'she net ...' (II, p. 314). Mandelstam discusses the unusual form which he now saw time taking in a more straightforward manner in the article 'O prirode slova':

Благодаря изменению количества содержания событий,
приходящихся на известный промежуток времени,
заколебалось понятие единицы времени ...

(II, p. 241)

His reference in this article to the equation of a year with a century (II, p. 241) is strikingly reminiscent of the Kamennostrovskiy

concept of time depicted in Egipetskaya marka: 'Мы считаем на годы; на самом же деле в любой квартире на Каменноостровском время раскалывается на династии и столетия' (II, p. 6).

The tone which is set by the title and epigraph for the treatment of art forms in Egipetskaya marka is negative in the extreme and it represents a development of Mandelstam's worst fears. Oriental influences, admitted into life by the nineteenth century are now completely dominant, threatening both life and art.

(c) Literary influences

Allusions to the orient and the nineteenth century create the hostile background to the treatment of art themes in Egipetskaya marka. Certain references of a literary nature contribute to the generally unpropitious atmosphere. Prominent in this context is Dostoevsky, whose influence is to be discerned in both minor details (the melting snow of Egipetskaya marka, for example, forms the background to Dostoevsky's Zapiski iz podpol'ya¹³⁷) and in references to certain of his ideas which so alarmed Mandelstam. The tailor Mervis embodies one of these: '... готовый крикнуть последнее неотразимо-убедительное слово ...' (II, p. 33). This is perhaps an allusion to Ivan Karamazov's 'Legend of the Grand Inquisitor', which advocates the resolution of man's doubts and the cessation of that supreme torture, freedom, by means of 'three words'¹³⁸. Ivan's formula 'vsyo pozvoleno'¹³⁹ can perhaps also be discerned lurking behind the vicious behaviour of the characters of Egipetskaya marka. The removal of moral boundaries must have been the concept which most repelled Mandelstam, who prized what he described as a 'medieval' sense of 'grani i peregorodok' ('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 325). The characters in Egipetskaya marka are at one stage described as being members of an ant colony (II, p. 22), which again is reminiscent of Dostoevsky's Brat'ya Karamazovy, where the Grand Inquisitor interprets people's desire to join together in an '... общий и согласный муравейник ...' in which all rules and regulations are clearly defined¹⁴⁰. An ant colony does have its own sense of organisation, of boundaries and distinctions, but these are on the basic level of survival, which the Grand Inquisitor sees to be the motive force in life. Mandelstam's representation of the organised structure of medieval society contrasts with the ant colony, and reveals that man can be guided by instincts other than that of survival alone:

Средневековье, определяя по-своему удельный вес человека, чувствовало и признавало его за каждым, совершенно независимо от его заслуг.

('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 323)

The influence of Gogol's work is revealed in a negative context. As in Mertvye dushi the characters of Egipetskaya marka have acquired animal features. This in turn influences their appreciation of art itself: the level of artificiality and ignorance is such that the literary concept of scandal has now also adopted an animal-like form - a dog-headed man (II, p. 27). This image brings to mind Ostrovsky's Groza, where the ignorant and superstitious characters were quite prepared to believe in such apparitions¹⁴¹.

Lastly in this context of literary influences which inform the background to Egipetskaya marka, the reference to a 'kifared' (II, p. 33) contributes to the hostile atmosphere. This could be an allusion either to Sophocles, or to Annensky's dramatic version of Sophocles' work. In Sophocles' legend, Thamyras was challenged by the Muses because of his pride in his ability to play the cithara. He was defeated and, as a punishment, deprived of his eyes and of his musical gift. In Annensky's version the artist's circumstances are even more unhappy. Famira-Kifared wrongs art when he speaks of 'marrying' the Muse¹⁴²; his sin is not of pride, as in Sophocles, but of a desire to know the ideal. This sin will never be forgiven, and Famira blinds himself, in order to cut himself off from that reality which first inspired such thoughts. In both cases, the artist is no longer able to transform reality into art. The literary background, therefore, like the oriental and nineteenth-century influence, suggests that art's condition and its chances of survival are threatened.

(ii) Art forms

(a) Poetry

Since poetry was without doubt the most important art form to Mandelstam, its treatment in Egipetskaya marka will be discussed before that of music, which was second only to poetry for him. Then the treatment of painting - an art form to which he displayed a rather more ambivalent attitude - will be considered and finally 'literature', dance and theatre, all of which he regarded as less

attractive art forms.

Distortion of poetry

It is indeed difficult to discover any discussion of poetry in Egipetskaya marka, although there is much that alludes to its absence, to the appearance of prose, and to the threats to which it is subject from literature and littérateurs. The only references to poetry actually composed present it in a much distorted light. There are allusions both to Mandelstam's own poetic method and to the poetry of others. In both cases there is little resemblance to Mandelstam's discussion of these topics outside Egipetskaya marka. It was noted in Chapter One (section (ii)) that Mandelstam felt a close kinship to exist between himself and his artistic predecessors, which he tended to describe in terms of domesticity. Within this domestic setting all was expressed by familiar quotations ('O prirode slova', II, p. 253). There is mundane distortion of this approach to be found in Egipetskaya marka, where Parnok, in need of solace, turns to his own 'domestic dictionary' (II, p. 38). This, however, is concerned not with artistic predecessors, but with poppy-seed rolls and grand pianos. The material of artistic creation is described in Egipetskaya marka partly through a reference to birds' beaks: 'Розовоперстая Аврора обломала свои цветные карандаши. Теперь они валяются, как птенчики, с пустыми разинутыми клювами' (II, p. 40). The image of the beak had occurred in the poem 'Grifel'naya oda' (I, no. 137), where it had been part of a complex of violent imagery designed to convey the danger inherent in the poet's task:

Твои ли, память, голоса
Учительствуют, ночь ломая,
Бросая грифели лесам
Из птичьих клювов вырывая?

The change in the role of the image is apparent: the beaks which form the material of prose are those of nestlings, asking for food, whereas those of poetry had been the commanding, threatening beaks of the bustard. Furthermore, the image of Aphrodite rising from the foam used in the very early poem 'Silentium' (I, no. 14) is alluded to in Egipetskaya marka; in the former case it was part of a serious representation of an artistic thought taking tangible form, but in the latter it is barely recognisable under its cloak of everyday concerns: 'Однажды он брился в счастливый для себя день и будущее родилось из мыльной пени' (II, p. 9).

In Egipetskaya marka Mandelstam advocates that the prose manuscript (which he usually never made any great attempts to preserve) must be destroyed, that the only important products of his activity are the absent-minded jottings in the margin (II, p. 41). It is such 'arabesques' (II, p. 21) which bring to mind the 'brodyachie stroki' (N.Ya. II, p. 439) of Mandelstam's poetic method. These were lines of poetry which came to him during the composition of a particular work, but which were in fact the germs of other poems not yet begun. The 'brodyachie stroki' of Egipetskaya marka, however, are not of a poetic nature; in depicting them Mandelstam emphasises that they are drawn ('risuet' II, p. 21, 'risuyu' II, p. 25, 'nachertali' II, p. 41), a process which he associates with the composition of prose, rather than with the oral and mobile composition of poetry (see for example '... чутье к рисунку прозаической фразы ...' 'Yakhontov', III, p. 113).

The specific poet whose work undergoes a transformation in Egipetskaya marka is Pasternak, and it is poetry from the cycle 'Sestra moya zhizn'' which is in evidence. It is most appropriate that this particular cycle should be reflected in Egipetskaya marka, for 'Sestra moya zhizn'' is Pasternak's view of the summer of 1917, just as Egipetskaya marka is Mandelstam's retrospective appraisal of that time. In Doktor Zhivago Pasternak was to describe the interval between the two revolutions of 1917 as a time when life was vividly real¹⁴³. It is this sense of the importance of life as such which pervades 'Sestra moya zhizn'' and which is emphasised by the fusion and participation of man with nature. It was perhaps this aspect of 'Sestra moya zhizn'' of which Mandelstam was thinking when he praised Pasternak's work in the article 'Zametki o poezii', where he describes 'Sestra' as 'refreshment to the throat and lungs' (II, p. 264) - two vital components in the poetic process. In Egipetskaya marka, however, it is not the poems celebrating a joy in life and nature which are reflected, but the group of poems under the title 'Popytka dushu razluchit'' which are connected with the second theme of the 'Sestra' cycle - the pain of separation which followed the end of a love affair. The allusion to the title of this group is to be found in the reference to the theft of Parnok's coat: 'Зачем лишил Парнока земной оболочки, зачем разлучил его с милой сестрой?' (II, p. 6). It is perhaps indicative of the two very different appraisals

of the period that in Pasternak's work separation from the soul is merely attempted, whereas in Egipetskaya marka it has been successfully completed. From the poem 'Mukhi muchkapskoy chaynoy' (from the 'Popytka dushu razluchit' group) comes a stanza which features some of the insect life prominent in Egipetskaya marka:

Будто это бред с пера,
Не владеячи собою,
Брызнул окна запирать
Саранчю по обоям. 144

It is of interest to note the correspondence in imagery between this stanza and the passages in Egipetskaya marka which deal with the pernicious disobedience of the pen ('... оно расщепилось и разбрызгало свою черную кровь ...', II, p. 25) and with the delirious state accompanying prose composition ('задаток любимого прозаического бреда ...', II, p. 40). In the laundry passage of Egipetskaya marka (II, pp. 14-16) there is a coincidence in imagery with Pasternak's poem 'Дик прием был, дик приход':

Дик прием был, дик приход,
Еле ноги доволоок.
Как воды набрала в рот,
Взор уперла в потолок. 145

compare

Набрав в рот воды, эти лукавые серафимы прыскали ею ...

(II, p. 15)

In Mandelstam's work the image of the mouth spouting water is very much part of the everyday preoccupations prevalent in Egipetskaya marka. In a note on Pasternak from 1931 Mandelstam recalls the image again as he comments on Pasternak's fusion of man and universe:

1. Набрал в рот вселенную и молчит. Всегда-всегда молчит. Аж страшно.

Набравши море в рот,
Да прыскает вселенной.

(III, p. 146)

Here again, however, the emphasis is taken away from cosmic significance and placed on the nature of the reader, who bears, incidentally, a singular resemblance to Parnok:

2. К кому он обращается?
К людям, которые ничего не совершат...
Как Тиртей перед боем, - а читатель его -
тот послушает и побежит ... в концерт ...

(III, p. 146)

The disappearance of poetry and its replacement by prose

There are hints in Egipetskaya marka that poetic composition has ceased. Mandelstam uses the image of the 'Nurmis' skate - a special kind of skate which screwed into the heel of a shoe¹⁴⁶ - to demonstrate the idea of thought joining with form to give a poetic whole. He attributes to this whole poetic qualities of joyfulness and value (II, p. 34). However, although thought has not lost its 'sharpness' ('ne pritupilas'), its activity, like that of the 'Nurmis' skate in the thaw, is a thing of the past: 'skol'zivshikh kogda-to'. This is very much reminiscent of the poem 'Nashedshiy podkovu' (I, no. 136) with its image of the horseshoe which remains, although the activity in which it once took part is long since over. The impact of this poem is pessimistic in regard to the further creation of poetry, for potential poetry exists now only in petrified form (it shows no movement as, for example, had the 'russkoe vino' of 'O этот воздух, смутой пьяный', I, no. 107): '... подобно зернам окаменелой пшеницы' (I, no. 136).

It was noted in Chapter Two that Parnok's occupation seemed to be concerned with writing and it is through Parnok that Mandelstam alludes to the materials of composition. These are seen in a most unpromising light, characterised by images expressing stultification and threat:

Все труднее перелистывать страницы мерзлой книги,
переплетенной в топоры при свете газовых фонарей.

Вы, дровяные склады - черные библиотеки города -
мы еще почитаем, поглядим.

(II, pp. 34-35)

There are several features which show that the wood of the second paragraph is the very same material which forms the basis of Parnok's 'sobytiya' (II, p. 11), while the 'frozen book' of the first paragraph could well be one of his creations. This material is evidently not of the same durable nature as the horseshoe or the Nurmis skate, as the contrast in weight between the latter ('radostnyy ves') and the wood indicates. The book's frozen form corresponds with the state of the birch wood, light as a frozen fish (II, p. 11), and with the bright-green pine branch trapped in ice (II, p. 10). This latter image, symbolising inertia, confirms the fate of that green twig which was depicted in the poetry of the early twenties (I, nos. 112, 113), where it was associated with the disappearance of the poetic

word: 'Слепая ласточка бросается к ногам/С стигийской нежностью и веткою зеленой' (I, no. 112). The emphatically urban nature of the book (its binding is done under street lights), and the image of axes, also relate it to Parnok, who is seen to consider the city of Petersburg in terms of a book to which violence has been done: '... о торцовой книге в каменном переплете с вырванной серединой' (II, pp. 36-37). Despite the ordinary, unpromising nature of Parnok's material, and the unpleasant nature of his creation, his 'black' (i.e. little known, unimposing) libraries are nevertheless preferable to the popular bookshops of the Podyacheskaya - a street in the region frequented by Krzyżanowski.

The verbs 'pochitayem', 'poglyadim' (II, p. 35) give further hints about the absence of poetry, for reading and sight were not functions which Mandelstam associated with either poet or reader. To him hearing and voice were the essential features in both composition and appreciation (see for example 'Armiya poetov': 'Голосом, голосом работают стихотворцы', II, p. 215). In Egipetskaya marka insensitivity to sound is represented in various ways. Positive descriptions of sound are conspicuous by their absence, the majority being either paradoxical ('glukhonemye ... razgovarivali', II, p. 23) or expressing some kind of dishonesty or deceit ('otvetili ... lzhiyem ... khorom', II, p. 16; 'ovsyanyu golosom', II, p. 29). In Chapter VI Mandelstam treats deafness directly in the depiction of the restricting head-gear to which he had been subjected as a boy, and here he gives a direct reference to his inability to compose poetry: '... не слыша своего голоса' (II, p. 32). He is acutely aware of the threat to poetry, of the all-pervading insensitivity to it, and of the need to alert people to this situation: 'Ему хотелось обернуться и крикнуть: "кухарка тоже глухарь"' (II, p. 32).

It is clear in Egipetskaya marka that poetry's chances of survival are slim, both in written and in verbal forms. In the case of the written form, Mandelstam had depicted in Shum vremeni a volume of poetry (the Isakov Pushkin) which was indestructible: '... не боялся он ни пятен, ни чернил, ни огня, ни керосина ...' (II, p. 58); in Egipetskaya marka, however, ink, fire and oil are all forces which are free to destroy, whereas Parnok is quite incapable of living up to his nickname of 'stain-remover' (II, p. 19). Poetry's existence in an audible form was also precarious - a fact of considerable threat,

since Mandelstam placed far less store by manuscripts than by the poetic work heard and held in people's memories. Amongst the images used to describe the condition of poetry those associated with omnivorousness are of great importance. This group represents a metamorphosis of Mandelstam's earlier images of grain, in evidence in Tristia: 'В прохладных житницах, в глубоких закромах/Зерно глубокой, полной веры' (I, no. 124), and also in the prose after Egipetskaya marka: the 'fol'klornaya zhitnitsa' of Puteshestvie v Armeniyu (II, p. 171) and the 'grainy' pages of Pallas' writings (III, p. 165). These are images expressing potential fruitfulness, as is that of maturing wine, which in the poem 'О этот воздух, смутой пьяный' (I, no. 107) is seen to be hidden away in dark, cool cathedrals. The potential of Georgian culture is embodied in much the same way:

Грузины сохраняют вино в узких, длинных кувшинах и зарывают их в землю ... земля сохранила узкие, но благородные формы художественной традиции, запечатала полный брожения и аромата сосуд.

('Кое-что о грузинском искусстве', III, p. 37)

Grain and hidden wine are images which convey potential, two of Mandelstam's expressions of 'condensed reality' ('Utro akmeizma', II, p. 320), of which both poet and reader must appreciate the full worth. The concept of 'condensed reality' plays an important part in Mandelstam's ideas on the relationship of poem to reader, ideas expressed most clearly in 'O sobesednike' and in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu. In the former Mandelstam stresses that true poetry is a matter of the unexpected, that work addressed to a specific reader is barren: 'Обращаясь к известному, мы можем сказать только известное' (II, p. 237). By an allusion to Goethe's Wilhelm Meister in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, he demonstrates again the inferiority of obvious and didactic literature; in this context his conclusions on the benefit of parting are drawn from Jarno's words to Wilhelm. Thomas Carlyle's somewhat condensed version of the original German conveys Mandelstam's point of view admirably:

'There is nothing more frightful', said he 'in a state like ours, than to meet an old true friend, to whom we can communicate our thoughts without reserve. So long as one is by himself, one fancies that there is no end to the novelties and wonders he is studying; but let the two talk a while together, right from the heart, one sees how soon all this is exhausted ... But now I will dive into the chasms of the rocks and begin with them a mute unfathomable conversation.'¹⁴⁷

Whereas images of grain and hidden wine have a positive force in Mandelstam's work (for example, 'Barsuch'ya nora', II, p. 273), when grain is transformed into a more tangible form the impact can be negative. Thus bread might be considered to be a sign of warmth and domesticity, but in Mandelstam's work it can play a negative role. In the poem 'На развальях, уложенных соломой' (I, no. 85) the smell of baking bread pervades the atmosphere (stanza 2), but the image of warm domesticity which this smell implies contrasts with the threatening events being described and hence highlights the hostile background. In the poem 'Как растет хлебов опара' (I, no. 130) the loaves produced at first have very evident connections with poetry, even being associated with the same cathedral of Saint Sophia (stanza 2) as was the grain of 'Люблю под сводами седья тишины' (I, no. 124). Again, it is not the loaves themselves but the attendant circumstances which are hostile: the process of their baking is interrupted by the destructive influence of time, which affects both the poem ('slovo-kolobok') and the poet himself:

И свое находит место
Черствый пасынок веков -
Усыхающий довесок
Прежде вынутых хлебов. (I, no. 130)

It is this intermediate stage in the making of bread which plays the most negative role in Mandelstam's work. The appearance of the image of 'testo', a characterless substance which can be moulded to assume any shape or form, has been noted above (Chapter One, section (iv) (c)). Mandelstam applies the negative dough/bread/baking imagery to artistic creativity in the critical articles of the twenties: to architecture ('oparoй etazhey' - 'Kholodnoe leto', II, p. 132); to literature ('Literatory ... kak labazniki' - Shum vremeni, II, p. 98); and to translation work ('... на лабазные весы магазинов пудами везут дешевый мозг', 'Zhak rodilsya i umer', III, p. 60). In Egipetskaya marka it is the image of the 'testo' which reappears in connection with the creation of the prose which has replaced poetry. Here a form of art has been created out of a voiceless mass:

'... обыкновенный калач ... задуман пекарем, как российская лира из безгласного теста ...' (II, p. 40). This sentiment is very similar, despite the far more banal tone of expression, to that demonstrated in the poem 'Notre Dame': '... из тяжести недоброй/И я когда-нибудь прекрасное создам' (I, no. 39). The kalach image is negative

because composition has been rendered here in terms of something edible which will disappear, rather than in terms of that which has the potential to grow. This depiction fits in admirably with what has been learnt about the habits of the majority of the characters in Egipetskaya marka. The attendant circumstances are hostile, for the image appears in a passage dealing with illness: '... инфлуэнзного бреда, жар ... карантина ... термометры, по заразному лабиринту ...' (II, p. 40). This is the state of delirium accompanying prose composition which is death-bound, suffering from the same feverish illness as Bosio. Both prose and the singer infect their surroundings:

(prose) ... с графинчиками запотевшей водки (II, p. 42)

(Bosio) ... к квадратным запотевшим окнам ... (II, p. 35)

The diseased labyrinth which supplies the material for composition is 'hung about with subordinate clauses' in much the same way as the sinister Chinaman is 'hung about with ladies bags' in the dream which opens Egipetskaya marka. It is significant that these latter bags should resemble a 'necklace of partridges': the image of a game-bird here, while corresponding to that of the edible form of lark in Chapter VIII contrasts with another necklace which had indicated a force spent in the creation of poetry: 'Невзрачное сухое ожерелье/ Из мертвых пчел, мед превративших в солнце' (I, no. 116).

The prose composition which has firmly taken the place of poetry is connected with the mundane elements of the Egipetskaya marka world - with the railway and its associated instruments (II, p. 41), and (through the presence of the verb 'obmerivat' and the arshin measurement, II, p. 42) with the tailor and his trade. It is clear that prose is not Mandelstam's favourite mode of expression:

'... обмеривающая, бесстыдная, наматывающая на свой живоглотский аршин ...' (II, p. 42): the implications of dishonesty and gluttony are probably connected here with the fact that prose had become for Mandelstam a financial proposition, the means of earning a living. It is not coincidental that this metamorphosis in composition - from the poetic honey, bee and sun, to the railway and partridge - should be accompanied by the figure of the Chinaman. This is quite in accordance with the view of the 'Buddhist' or rather 'oriental' influence, and with Mandelstam's later insistence on the attribution of various evils to a Chinese influence in 'Chetvyortaya proza' (for

example II, p. 180). It is also reminiscent of Bely's Peterburg, with its ominous Mongolian, Persian and Japanese motifs and its final fateful comment on the end of culture¹⁴⁸. The image of the kalach considered together with associated images, is an indication of the impossibility of poetic composition in Egipetskaya marka: nothing could be further removed from Mandelstam's concept of free and joyous creation ('Pushkin i Skryabin', II, p. 315) than the nineteenth-century 'railway' mentality of the prose, the references to disease, and the financial analogies ('pokupkami', 'podstavlennyy meshok', 'obmerivayushchaya') of the last chapter.

The tailor Mervis plays a considerable part in the treatment of poetry in Egipetskaya marka. As was noted above (Chapter Two), he is most decidedly of the omnivorous camp, because of his constant associations with food. A metamorphosis of Mandelstam's originally positive, poetic grain image exists in relation to Mervis also. Just as the baker formed his creation from shapeless dough, so too the tailor must create from shapelessness:

Простой мешок на примерке - не то рыцарские латы, не
то сомнительную безрукаву портной-художник исчертил
пифагоровым мелком и вдохнул в нее жизнь и плавность.

(II, p. 6)

Here are three concepts which occur frequently in Mandelstam's allusions to poetic composition: breath, life and fluency. The most striking examples of their use involve the image of wind filling a sail in the 'Vosmistishiya'. The image had, however, appeared in 1910 in 'Слух чуткий парус напрягает' (I, no. 15), in which Mandelstam describes the initial stages of awareness before the process of poetic creation begins. In the 1933 composition the image is more fully developed; here the final, fruitful breath of poetic air gives birth to a poem, as a burst of wind can give shape to a sail which is then characterised by its graceful movement. This is almost an exact parallel to the tailor's work as described in Egipetskaya marka. There is considerable irony, however, in the application of such highly poetic imagery to the work of the unsavoury Mervis. Images associated with the tailor - weaving, seams, sewing - do have positive associations in Mandelstam's later works (for example Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 365; 'Zapisnye knizhki', III, p. 155; I, no. 342, st. 2), but their impact in Egipetskaya marka is negative, because of the nature of Mervis. The true worth of this tailor's activity is indicated in

Egipetskaya marka in the equation of tailoring and idleness:

'Portnyazhu, bezdel'nichayu' (II, p. 25). The use of the first person indicates that Mandelstam is referring here to his own creative condition at that time - to his inability to compose poetry. It is important to note that idleness is a disease which pervades

Egipetskaya marka: it afflicts the mosquito (II, p. 38) and Parnok, who is identified with the drone (II, p. 26), a word which in Russian has connotations of idleness ('zhit' trutnem' = 'bezdel'nichat'). Idleness is barren, as is amply demonstrated in the passage on the deaf-mutes (II, p. 23). The appearance of this group is most appropriate, for in the twenties Mandelstam considered himself to be surrounded by people who were 'deaf' to the true nature and purpose of poetry: 'Слово, рожденное в глубочайших недрах речевого сознания, обслуживает глухонемых и косноязычных ...' ('Vypad', II, p. 231). The adjective 'glukhonemoy' is again in evidence as Mandelstam discusses his surroundings in the section 'Moskva' of the 'Zapisnye knizhki' of 1931 (III, p. 151), which deals with his unattractive Moscow neighbours. Deaf-mutes had first appeared in Mandelstam's article 'Utro akmeizma', in a demonstration of the fact that the 'Word' (slovo) has a much deeper significance than the simple relaying of meaning, which can be conveyed in a purely visual way (II, p. 320). It should be noted here that the railway is classed with the deaf-mutes in this respect. In Egipetskaya marka the deaf-mutes' conversation is described largely in images relating to the tailor. Their wordless conversation is barren, as worthless as Mervis' creations, for the deaf-mutes use only one component of poetry, the air, not the vital lips and voice: '... непрерывно заметывая крупными стежками воздух, шили из него рубашку' (II, p. 23). Mandelstam's impression of Yakhontov's representation of the tailor Petrovich perhaps influenced this description of the deaf-mutes: 'Чудаковатый портной Петрович кроит ножницами воздух так, что видишь обрезки материи ...' ('Yakhontov', III, p. 112). The important point here, however, is that the 'weaving' of the deaf-mutes' conversation is not a process of order and symmetry, but is subject to considerable confusion. This confusion is described in negative terms; one skein is 'superfluous', a fact which has a rather ominous ring, while one deaf-mute is very much the odd-man-out (a position not unfamiliar to Parnok and to Mandelstam himself), who could easily damage the weaving.

The calm following the confusion is no less hostile, for it ensues as the deaf-mutes 'disappear' (compare I, no. 189) through the General Staff Arch, part of the very 'mute' Dvortsovaya ploshchad' area (II, pp. 22-23). (It is interesting to note in connection with the Parnok-like figure of the odd-man-out that the Office of the General Staff housed the Foreign Ministry to which Parnok so vainly aspired.) The weaving image is continued here, although the passage ends on a suitably negative image - that of the carrier pigeon, presumably associated with the negative image of the postman (see above p. 54). The implications for artistic creation in the deaf-mute passage, with its sustained tailor images, are negative and the negative influence of the tailor imagery is continued in connection with Mervis' creation. The inspiration behind the coat is suspect, for it is admirably suited to the dandyish and unscrupulous Krzyżanowski. Like the prose discussed above it is characterised by several attributes which link it quite firmly with the influence of the nineteenth century. The coat inherits its creator's close associations with food: '... подышала родным тмным воздухом' (II, p. 33). The caraway image aligns the coat with Mervis' omnivorous traits and brings to mind the poem 'Я не знаю, с каких пор ...' (I, no. 131), where images of caraway seeds and a sack (both elements involved in the creation of the coat) are in evidence in Mandelstam's expression of the desire for order and harmony in a chaotic atmosphere which impedes poetic composition. The coat is associated with the nineteenth-century's railway influence (through its ultimate allegiance to Krzyżanowski), and it exhibits the bourgeois character which might therefore be expected. The feature which points most clearly to this nature is the coat's youthfulness (II, pp. 6 and 42), of a different nature from that of Parnok and Geshka Rabinovich who have quite simply never reached maturity. The coat's youthfulness is artificial - 'omolazhivaetsya' (II, p. 6) - a fact which links it very much with the bourgeoisie of 'Chetvyortaya proza', who are kept artificially young by their contact with railways: 'Буржуа, конечно, невинее пролетария, ближе к утробному миру, к младенцу ...' (II, p. 178). True youth and real future can be guaranteed only by the process of maturing, of growing old, as in the case of the 'wine' of Georgian culture ('Koe-chto o gruzinskom iskusstve', III, p. 39). The coat tucks itself into Krzyżanowski's suitcase in a neat and orderly fashion,

like a youthful dolphin; this further identifies it with the bourgeois of 'Chetvyortaya proza', who are characterised by a love of orderliness: 'Порядочность - это то, что роднит буржуа с животным' (II, p. 178). Dostoevsky too saw 'poryadochnost'' to be a negative quality: '... а вообще во все времена, порядочный человек должен быть трус и раб ...',¹⁴⁹.

The coat, like the prose, represents a distorted form of art. There are, however, implications that neither the coat, nor indeed Krzyżanowski, will survive. Through its relationship with Krzyżanowski, the coat (like the prose - see above p. 148), is associated with a potentially inimical heat - the window of Krzyżanowski's room is 'neveroyatno nagretoy solntsem' (II, p. 42). It is important that Mandelstam should choose to close the work with this phrase, for it is relevant to his inability to compose poetry in the twenties. Heat and fire ('zhar' and 'pozhar') appear in Egipetskaya marka in connection with Krzyżanowski (and the coat, II, p. 42), with the prose (II, p. 40), with Bosio (II, pp. 35-36), with the destruction of the home (II, p. 5), and with the 1905 revolution (II, p. 10). These are very different from the 'warmth' of human contact which Mandelstam valued so greatly (for example I, no. 127). More importantly, the image of the conflagration seems to be a menacing metamorphosis of the image 'ogon'', whose role in the poetry had been similar to that of the grain and wine images - a confidence in the existence of powerful, maturing art forms: 'В кувшинах спрятанный огонь ...' (I, no. 107). As far as the treatment of poetry in Egipetskaya marka is concerned the images of fire and heat are indicative rather of alarm, destruction and disease. On occasions the destructive nature of heat has a positive force. The heat of the villain Krzyżanowski's room perhaps implies that he is at risk. In his rapid rise to power (as described by the laundress, II, p. 16) he exposes himself to public attention, often a dangerous thing to do, since popularity and swift falls from favour were very closely related in those times. The image of the sun on glass (II, p. 42) perhaps suggests an uncomfortable heat which is symbolic of the instability of a powerful and exposed position. Also subject to the action of fire are books from the 'literary lumber room': 'Пожары и книги - это хорошо' (II, p. 35). In this literary context, fire acts as a purifying agent, destroying infected materials - the sentimental,

moralising novels of Bourget and Ohnet, which share the disintegrating disease of Petersburg itself: 'Некоторые страницы сквозили как луковичная шелуха. В них жила корь, скарлатина, ветренная оспа' (II, p. 35). The Parnok-like creation (the 'frozen book', II, p. 34) is no less susceptible to destruction by fire (as the insistence on wood imagery shows) than the products of the literary lumber room: these must all be destroyed so that the way may be cleared for true poetry.

The most important element in the role of the fire imagery is the alarm. The image of the fire brigade was used in Egipetskaya marka as a sign of alarm in relation to the revolution of 1905. It is also used to sound a warning about the condition of poetry: 'А на Садовой у Покрова стоит каланча. В январские морозы она выбрасывает виноградины сигнальных шаров - к сбору частей' (II, p. 24). The time and exact location establish the particularly disturbing nature of this alarm. The mention of January here inevitably brings to mind the death of Pushkin, whose fatal duel took place in the month of January. Mandelstam regarded this event with horror, seeing in it a lack of respect for poetry which was to assume grotesque and threatening forms in his own times. This, incidentally, is one of several passing references to January in Egipetskaya marka. Another of these is in connection with the anti-poetic Mervis, who mentions that in January the lawyer Gruzenberg had ordered a senator's coat from him: the combination of January and the legal profession here is an intimation of the legal profession's peculiar disrespect for Pushkin (see below, p. 171). The Sadovaya suggests the presence of the villain, for it was a street which Krzyżanowski must have frequented: his first appearance is on the corner of Voznesensky prospekt, a street adjoining the Sadovaya, while the Sadovaya, Voznesensky prospekt and the Ofiterskaya (the other locations mentioned in connection with Krzyżanowski) all bordered on the Teatral'naya ploshchad' - Krzyżanowski's ultimate destination (II, pp. 28-29).

The alarm is sounded also in terms which refer more directly to poetry, a point revealed by the appearance of the word 'slovo': 'Я спешу сказать настоящую правду. Я тороплюсь ... Небольшой нам отпущен срок' (II, p. 34). The urgency of this alarm corresponds to Parnok's own musings on the ephemerality of life (II, p. 36) and is a

clear continuation of Mandelstam's awareness of the threat to poetry stated in '1 yanvary 1924':

Еще немного, - оборвут
Простую песенку о глиняных обидах
И губы оловом зальют. (I, no. 140)

The poetic alarm in Egipetskaya marka forms part of a section in Chapter VII which treats the threat to poetry at some length; here images of coldness and heat are involved. Images of coldness, in the climatic setting of the work, in Parnok's experiences at the barber's (II, p. 13), and in the author's journey to Malinov (II, p. 39), play as hostile a role as those of heat. All is seen to be fading away, melting like ice - even the great Goethe is sinking into oblivion: 'Книги тают, как ледяшки ... Все уменьшается. Все тает. И Гете тает' (II, p. 34). The use of the verb 'tayat' here, while being in accordance with the fact that Egipetskaya marka is set in early spring, suggests that Mandelstam is referring to the 'disease' of poetic deafness which overtook him:

Холодок щекочет темя ...
Жизнь себя перемогает,
Понемногу тает звук ... (I, no. 129)

Striking correspondences arise in imagery between the prose and the poetry. Both are pervaded by a coldness which in both cases is indicative of alarm and anxiety. Both have disturbing references to the changing substance of life: 'Я не знаю жизни: мне подменили ее ..' (II, p. 34), and both refer to incisive qualities - either of time (I, no. 129), or of thought (II, p. 34). Despite such correspondence in imagery, however, a considerable change has taken place in the nature of the illness described in the 1922 poem and that depicted in Egipetskaya marka. The sense of dislocation, of disorientation, is far stronger in Egipetskaya marka; not only is Mandelstam now unable to write poetry, he is unable even to distinguish between 'books' and 'things'; he no longer has a strong awareness of life, a firm sense of what is real and what is not real:

Я не знаю жизни: мне подменили ее еще тогда, когда я
узнал хруст мышьяка на зубах у черноволосой французской
любовницы, младшей сестры нашей гордой Анны. (II, p. 34)

This is a clear allusion to Flaubert's Madame Bovary¹⁵⁰, a novel which Mandelstam criticised for its lack of spontaneity, its sterility, for the paralysing effect of its perfection, for the

danger inherent in its polished style: '... стиль романа может отобразить любой предмет' ('Devyatnadstatyy vek', II, p. 281). The total unreality of this novel had become accepted as real. This in itself was a disease of whose infection Mandelstam was only too aware: 'Где различие между книгой и вещь?' (II, p. 34). Earlier in Egipetskaya marka an example of this confusion of the unreal world of the novel with the real world was provided by the speaker who asks where Anna Karenina had sat in the theatre - with the full conviction that Anna Karenina had been a real person (II, p. 29). The reference to Madame Bovary in Egipetskaya marka is extremely important. It is quite in keeping with Egipetskaya marka as a whole that the subject of sterility and death should be a woman, and it corresponds with Mandelstam's earlier poetry addressed to women. Mandelstam's view of Madame Bovary as dangerously unreal led him to associate it elsewhere with the theatre: '... классическое красноречие префектуры, запечатленное Флобером ... с ... театральными повышениями и понижениями голоса ...' ('Men'sheviki v Gruzii', II, p. 196). The theatre was a form of art which earned his condemnation in addition for its lack of spontaneity, its lack of reality. Mandelstam saw it as diametrically opposed to poetry because of its 'nedoverie k slovu' ('Khudozhestvennyy teatr i slovo', III, p. 100). It is of considerable interest that two women with whom Mandelstam had affairs of varying degrees of seriousness should have been actresses, and that he should have written poems to them (Olga Arbenina and Olga Vaksel). The sense of unreality associated with his relationships with them is accompanied in poems to both ladies by indications of an inability to compose poetry: that is, the actresses have upon him the same effect as the theatrical unreality of Egipetskaya marka. Particularly striking here is the correspondence between the lines of 'Я наравне с другими' (I, no. 122, to Arbenina): 'На дикую, чужую/Мне подменили кровь' and the substitution of life itself in Egipetskaya marka; the disease of unreality is apparently at a more advanced stage in the prose work. It is also important to note that in the cases of the poem to Arbenina, the poem on his relationship with Vaksel (I, no. 144), and Egipetskaya marka, the absence of poetry, stemming from a sense of guilt and grief (in the case of the two poems) and from his saturation with unreality (in the case of the prose), is described in terms of the mouth and of taste:

Не утоляет слово
Мне пересохших уст ... (I, no. 122)
... на губах остается янтарная сухость ... (I, no. 144)
... привкус меди во рту (II, p. 34)

Here, as in the later poem 'Сохрани мою речь навсегда за привкус несчастья и дыма' (I, no. 235), the word leaves behind it nothing more than an aftertaste. In the 1931 poem the taste is the result of the poet's bitter acceptance of his role as 'отщепенец в народной семье' whereas in Egipetskaya marka the word's aspirin-like aftertaste stands in clear contrast to the diseased state of society and art to which the poet is exposed. Poetry, indeed considered by Mandelstam to be curative in nature ('Zapisnye knizhki', III, p. 159), is now reduced to the banal medicinal image of cod-liver oil ('rybiy zhir'), which is composed of a variety of repulsive elements: '... смесь пожаров, желтых земных утр и ворвань: вкус вырванных лопнувших глаз ..' (II, p. 34). In including an allusion to Madame Bovary in a passage of this nature where images appeal to the sense of taste, Mandelstam had perhaps not forgotten that the arsenic which Mme Bovary consumed left her with a 'goût d'encre'¹⁵¹, a substance which Mandelstam associated with the inimical work of the littérateurs (see below, section (d)).

Madame Bovary is concerned not only with fatality, of course, but with suicide (a fact emphasised by the mention of Anna Karenina in the same sentence), and it seems here that Mandelstam is stating reasons why suicide should ideally be rejected. It is not a realistic choice, for as a poet he must continue to live and continue to write poetry, even though death might seem preferable to life. Nadezhda Yakovlevna's comments are most illuminating in this respect:

Обычной формой самоубийства О.М. не признавал, как и Анна Андреевна. А на самоубийство толкало все - одиночество, изоляция, время ... (N.Ya. I, p. 166)

Смерть была настолько реальнее и проще жизни ... (N.Ya. I, p. 279)

The 'neobychnaya' form of suicide implied here is the writing of poetry such as Mandelstam was unable to write during the silence, but which was finally to bring disaster in 1934.

(b) Music

Music too is shown to be at risk in Egipetskaya marka. It is perhaps the most imaginatively represented art form in Egipetskaya marka, but it is characterised by its vulnerability. Mandelstam's attitude to music has been discussed in Chapter Two (see above, p. 60): this was the art which was for him most closely related to poetry, for like poetry, it is concerned with sound and with performance. Mandelstam's most insistent identification of poetry and music is to be found in the Razgovor o Dante, where he compares poet and conductor - both of whom must coordinate disparate elements in performance (II, pp. 395-396).

Neither instrumental nor vocal music thrives in Egipetskaya marka. References to the former are usually of a nature which indicates the absence of music: the old music-teacher's keyboard is 'mute' (II, p. 39), and double basses are present only in an analogy describing the movement of carriages (II, p. 39) and an impossible paradise (II, p. 26). However, it is apparent that of the two forms instrumental music is the more likely to survive. Whereas the preservation of the piano is stressed (II, pp. 5, 24), the death of song is repeatedly emphasised (II, pp. 5, 8, 35-36). This is in accordance with the trend in music which Mandelstam had observed in 'Pushkin i Skryabin' as being part of the general turning away from Christianity in art: 'Разрыв Скрябина с голосом, его великое увлечение сиреной пианизма, знаменует утрату христианского ощущения личности ...' (II, p. 317). He thought of the voice and choir as an expression of 'sobornost'', a sense of brotherhood which allowed individuals to retain a full freedom of their own personality while being part of the sobor. This is conveyed clearly in the poetry: 'Все причащаются, играют и поют ...' (I, no. 117), where the verb 'igrat' implies the freedom and joyfulness inherent in such participation. Similarly, in the poem 'В разноголосице девического хора' (I, no. 84), a correspondence between music, physiology and architecture indicates the joyous participation of individual elements. This participation is of the order of that displayed by stones in a building or by words in a poem: in 'Utro akmeizma' Mandelstam's musical analogy suggests the depth and richness involved here: '... симфония с органом и пением ...' (II, p. 324). Again the 'Pushkin i Skryabin' fragments demonstrate the reasons for the

disappearance of such music: it can be tolerated only by a free and joyous unity based on the concept of 'lichnost' (II, pp. 316-317). It is quite apparent that the world of Egipetskaya marka obeys none of these requirements, and hence, in Egipetskaya marka, as in the pre-Christian world (II, p. 316), music is a thing to be feared. Therefore the grand piano in Egipetskaya marka is fed upon innocuous delicacies - asparagus sonatinas, so that passions might not be roused; once again an art form has been reduced to the level of food.

The forms of singing which appear in Egipetskaya marka demonstrate further the regression from Christian music as depicted in 'Pushkin i Skryabin'. In the case of Bosio the noises which become transformed in her delirium into an operatic overture are in effect the 'official' and 'arrested' clamour of the fire-brigade. The sounds which she produces are as strident ('grudnym neobrabotannym tembrom', II, p. 36) as those of the firemen's horns, which are qualified by the adjective 'petushinyy' (strident, clamorous). The same adjective is used also in connection with the singing of the Lutherans, an occupation which clearly does not accord with the performance of Christian music. There is an element of compunction here - 'nuzhno pet' - and the religion which such singing celebrates is depicted in a typically hostile fashion - through food imagery: '... сыпались горохом, пахли спиртом и творогом' (II, p. 31).

The most detailed description of choir-singing in Egipetskaya marka, that of the Cossack squadron, (II, p. 40), is far from positive. It is associated with food imagery, with the golden foil of hops. The song forms the Cossacks' chief activity; the intoxication which it produces represents the victuals, while the traditional action of the cavalry is simply the condiments: 'Она свободный приварок к мелкому топоту, теньканью и поту' (II, p. 40). The song occupies a more prominent place than the actual activity, in much the same way as the theatrical side of the 1830 revolution was more impressive than the actual historical events. The implication is that the song is of the order of that pernicious but deceptively attractive covering which characterised the Petersburg air (see above, p. 92). The image of gold foil certainly accords with such an interpretation, as does the level on which the song floats - '... с зеркальными окнами бельэтажей ...', which bears a striking resemblance to those windows which had

been shown to be as deceptive as the disease-ridden air: '... под зеркальными зеркалами барско-холуйских квартир ...' (II, p. 38). The most negative feature in the description of this choir, however, is the lack of individuality of its members. They have an animal-like appearance ('mokhnatyy') and their monotonous similarity and facelessness leads to implications that they are blind: '... с лицами, повернутыми полосонь, как одинаковые косые полтинники ... на слепеньких мохнатых башкирках ...' (II, p. 40). The concept of singing as described so affirmatively in 'Pushkin i Skryabin' is quite absent in Egipetskaya marka. It appears here only in a distorted, debased form. This can be seen further from the hint Mandelstam gives about the confusion of the spheres of music and other art forms, a confusion which was exhibited in actual fact by the Soviet poets' insistence that their work was 'song' - a practice which was deeply distasteful to Mandelstam, degrading to both poetry and song. This is represented in Egipetskaya marka in the caricature of the Fontanka, patroness of Tragedy, who appears as a shabby Lorelei playing on a comb with missing teeth, an image which perhaps prefigures that of the poem 'Квартира тиха, как бумага' (I, no. 272), where the reference is directly to poetic, rather than dramatic, composition: 'А я как дурак на гребенке/Обязан кому-то играть ...'.

Only two specific pieces of music are named in Egipetskaya marka: these are orchestral pieces, Beethoven's Leonora and Egmont overtures. Their function in the work is to form an ironic complement to Parnok's heroic rescue attempt. Both overtures are connected with stories of altruistic courage: the former with Fidelio/Leonora's rescue of her husband Florestan, held in Pizarro's prison after trying to expose the latter's corruption; the second with Egmont, who opposed Philip of Spain, and was beheaded by the Duke of Alva in 1567. It is important to note that these pieces are not actually heard in Egipetskaya marka, but their presence in the future merely hinted at; these are the strains which the 'arabeski' of Egipetskaya marka would take up: '... в благодарность своему творцу тут же заварят увертюру к Леоноре или к Эгмонту Бетховена' (II, p. 41). Similarly, Parnok's heroic attempt is given no satisfactory conclusion in Egipetskaya marka. Moreover, Parnok's actions seem timid and vague in comparison with the very positive heroism of Leonora and Egmont.

It is typical of Egipetskaya marka that the longest passage on music (II, pp. 23-24) should be devoted to music in a visual form - musical notation. This is a form which is quite alien to Mandelstam because it is not characterised by the vital 'ispolnyayushchee ponimanie', so important to both poetry and music (Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 364). He does not seem to associate music in written form with that in audible form, as many musicians would. It is fitting that the musical notation discussed should be that of piano music ('fortepiannoy gammy', II, p. 23), for as the piano has been removed to a place of storage its music can now survive only in visual form. This section is an extremely interesting one. The impressions which Mandelstam gives of the musical notation of composers from Bach to Lizst are delightfully succinct, but at the same time they are expressed in images entirely in keeping with Egipetskaya marka as a whole. These images can be divided into two categories: those associated with the plant world (fruit, fruit-stones, trees) and those associated with revolution (battle and chaos). In the former group the tree imagery conveys simply the appearance of musical notation. Here the descriptions of Mozart and Beethoven seem particularly apt; Mandelstam expresses all the elegance and charm of Mozart in the image of hanging gardens, trembling on five wires - no doubt a reflection of those five lines which support a stave, while the reference to Beethoven's 'stubby' bushes brings to mind the aggressive terseness of Beethoven's sonata structures. The fruit-stone imagery, that of a pattern of plum-stones, is again an impressionistic representation of the visual appearance of music - the pattern of light and dark intervals on a page. The potential of a fruit-stone is also hinted at here: whereas a fruit-stone normally has the ability to produce more fruit, the potential of the plum-stone here lies in its positive ability to dismember the darkness of the night which approaches so menacingly (II, p. 22). The specific choice of the plum-stone is perhaps also connected with the parallel degeneration in material and artistic circumstances which Mandelstam was experiencing when he wrote Egipetskaya marka. In 'Kiev' Mandelstam specifies 'slivnyanka' (plum brandy) as one of those luxuries which make life bearable (III, p. 9). The plum's appearance in Egipetskaya marka in its most basic form is parallel to the presence of music in its least satisfactory, least fulfilled form. The images of fruit itself, those of the grape and the raisin (the latter also features in Mandelstam's list of life's

necessary luxuries - III, p. 9) are fused with battle imagery in the depiction of the visual aspect of music. Each beat, composed of several notes, is likened to a little boat laden with grapes, which recalls the imagery of 'O prirode slova', where poetry is characterised as a vessel equipped with everything necessary for life (II, p. 259). The picture of the little boat is developed in the representation of a whole page of music as a deployment of sailing flotillas in a battle, which suggests the sense of organisation inherent in written music. The emphasis on the imagery of battle and the fruit-stone conveys an impression of arid rigidity, rather than of the joyful freedom and abundance with which music should be connected. A consideration of Mandelstam's application of plant imagery to music in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu highlights its negative function in Egipetskaya marka. In Puteshestvie v Armeniyu the stress is on the richness and fertility of the plant world: 'Спелые железистые ягоды висели трезвучьями, пятизвучьями, пели выводками и по нотам' (II, p. 151). The depiction of Bach's musical notation in Egipetskaya marka as 'sheaves of dried mushrooms' contrasts vividly with the discussion in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu of Pallas, the naturalist, in terms of German music:

Телесную круглость и любезность немецкой музыки он перенес на русские равнины. Бельми руками концертмейстера он собирает российские грибы. Сырая замша ...

(II, p. 163)

It is important to note that it is the image of battle which is the more fully developed. Battle imagery is a feature which occurs in Mandelstam's discussions of poetry ('O prirode slova', II, p. 251, 'Zametki o poezii', II, p. 260); in the Razgovor o Dante he describes it as a necessary part of the poetic process, which the modern, anti-poetic cinema lacks:

Между тем современное кино с его метаморфозой ленточного глиста оборачивается злейшей пародией на орудийность поэтической речи, потому что кадры движутся в нем без борьбы, и только сменяют друг друга.

(II, p. 364)

In Egipetskaya marka, however, the emphasis is not on clash and contrast within battle, but on the rigidity of military organisation - the plan of the arrangement of plum stones and the organisation of the sailing flotillas. Even Bach and Handel (distinguished from the other composers in that they are least of all associated with the piano)

are characterised by suggestions of struggle. Handel's measured tones are seen to be involved in the chaos implied by the racing turtles, while it is Bach's military nature which is stressed - a comment perhaps on the almost military, hypnotic regularity of Bach's rhythms.

The emphasis on struggle is epitomised in the identification of a page of music with a revolution in an ancient German town. It is clearly fitting that in a work set in 1917 music should be treated in terms of revolution. There are obvious visual parallels between this treatment and the appearance of musical notation, but at the same time the imagery employed is that of Mandelstam's discussions of revolution in other works:

Миражные города нотных знаков стоят, как скворешники,
в кипящей столе ...

Большеголовые дети. Скворцы. Распрягают карету
князя. Шахматисты выбегают из кофеев, размахивая ферзями
и пешками.

(II, p. 24)

The chaos and fear ensuing from revolution are conveyed in the chaotic images depicting the usually very ordered chess game. The unharnessed carriage recurs and is elucidated at the end of the work: 'Страх распрягает лошадей, когда нужно ехать, и посылает нам сны с беспричинно-низкими потолками' (II, p. 41). The image of the 'low ceiling' was evidently one which Mandelstam associated with the unpleasant aftermath of revolution, for it occurs in his translation of Barbier's 'La popularité', where it is both a more imaginative and more ominous version of Barbier's 'sombres cieux'¹⁵²: 'Раздутым теменем большеголовой качки/Колотит крышу низких туч' (Sov. ed. no. 280).

The atmosphere created in the musical passage is one of threat, and, as in 'Язык булыжника мне голубя понятней' (I, no. 138), the birds, the 'large-headed children', represent those most in danger.

Similarly at risk are the 'starling boxes' which to the Russian would indicate a comforting banality. Mandelstam employs this image when discussing cities exposed to threat (I, no. 119, stanza 5), to denote the very heart of a city ('Kholodnoe leto', II, p. 131), and in the listing of everyday characteristics of a city (I, no. 140, stanza 5). In Egipetskaya marka it first appears in musical terms (to represent a violin). Aptly, the music with which these starling houses are associated is in written form only: '... по длинному

свитку рукописных нот' (II, p. 16). In the case of musical notation, which is clearly identified with a city - 'mirazhnye goroda', 'fonarshchiki' - the starling houses play an important role in stressing the danger to which music is subject: the contrast between the lightness of the starling house-cities and the boiling pitch carries an unmistakable threat.

The danger implied is partly due to the fact that the musical notation depicted is specifically that of piano music; like the youthful idealism of the 'bol'shegolovye' (of 'Язык булыжника мне голубя понятней'), the storm created by the 'bol'shegolovye deti' of piano music can create a hostile backlash. One of the youthful idealists of the poem (I, no. 138) was Herzen, whose political thought Mandelstam had likened in Shum vremeni to a Beethoven sonata (II, p. 98). Fittingly, the characterisation of Beethoven's music in Egipetskaya marka clearly reflects a stormy, revolutionary nature: the descending and ascending 'lamp-lighters', while being an accurate impression of the rapid descending and ascending figurations in Beethoven's piano sonatas (for example op. 111), also convey a sense of feverish haste, and the 'cavalry of eighths and sixteenths' (that is, the semi and demisemiquavers) reflect an increasingly stormy emotion (the concluding passages of op. 111 are again a case in point). In considering Beethoven in such stormy, revolutionary terms, Mandelstam had perhaps in mind the identification which Beethoven felt with Napoleon and which came out in much of his music. This identification was not without its own backlash - in the first MS of the Eroica symphony the title was originally Bonaparte, but this was removed with much indignation when Beethoven learned that his 'hero' had become Emperor - heroism had given way to what Beethoven saw to be ambition and tyranny. Beethoven's inclusion in this passage is no doubt occasioned by the correspondence between the situations of composer and poet: both Beethoven and Mandelstam were tortured by a form of deafness which hindered them in their work.

It is significant that Chopin, the composer in whom Mandelstam saw the most pronounced 'individualisticheskoye nachalo' (N.Ya. II, p. 127) - presumably because he was first and foremost a composer of piano music - should head the list of composers depicted, and that he should be followed immediately by Lizst. Lizst's persistent demands

for virtuosity are conveyed in the image of the staircase festooned with bells, while something of the rage of the virtuoso is present in the picture of the notation waving crutches and vainly wielding fire-ladders.

'Languid' Schumann's 'washing' hung out to dry does not contradict the stormy impressions of Beethoven, Chopin and Liszt, for it brings to mind Parnok's chaotic experiences with the laundry. In defining Schumann as 'languid' Mandelstam was perhaps alluding to the languorous mood prominent in Schumann's piano music (in Carnaval (op. 9), two pieces under Eusebius (no. 5) where the large groupings of notes - septuplets and quintuplets - do indeed give the impression of washing on a line).

The overall impact of the musical notation passage is hostile and it implies that in its unfulfilled, written form music is susceptible to the destruction which overcomes its exponent, Bosio. A comparison between the assessment of music present in the notation passage and an assessment of poetry through similar images of revolution and fruit in 'K nemetskoy rechi' (I, no. 266) emphasises Mandelstam's lack of confidence in composition at the time of Egipetskaya marka. It is important that the revolution associated with music in Egipetskaya marka should be specifically that of a German town. This is no doubt partly attributable to the fact that the composers discussed are largely from Germany or from countries bordering on Germany. At the same time it is interesting to note that the representation of Schubert, whom Mandelstam associated very closely with Goethe, forms a distorted version of Mandelstam's joyful rediscovery of German poetry in 1932 in 'K nemetskoy rechi' (I, no. 266). Schubert's 'notational vineyard' in Egipetskaya marka displays the effect of chaotic revolution: '... расклеван до косточек и исхлестан бурей' (II, p. 24). In the poem, however, poetry (and the poet, in the person of Christian Kleist) is shown to have a resilience and to prosper in the face of storms. The concentration here is not on the grape in its reduced form, but on the grape with a potential fruitfulness. This is the case in the similarly celebratory 'Batyushkov' (I, no. 261):

Я буквой был, был виноградной строчкой (I, no. 266)
compare

Только стихов виноградное мясо
Мне освежило случайно язык. (I, no. 261)

This is quite different from the complex of images involving grain and bread, where the more tangible element was seen to be the least affirmative. The grape belongs to a group which indicates the refreshment and enrichment to be gained from works of art: in the article 'Slovo i kul'tura' the poet is seen to gain inspiration from the 'wine' of classical poets (II, p. 225). The rich grape image of 'Batyushkov' contrasts with the storm-afflicted grapes, the plum-stones and the lemon pip of Egipetskaya marka. A further contrast exists between the notational passage of Egipetskaya marka and the celebration of German poetry: whereas the movement and lack of control of horses had been used in the setting of revolution to create an atmosphere of threat and fear (II, pp. 24, 41; compare also I, no. 138, line 28), in the 'German' poem such movement represents the first joyful stirrings of poetry: '... кони гарцевали/И, словно буквы, прыгали на месте' (I, no. 266).

(c) Painting

Mandelstam had a rather more ambiguous attitude towards painting than to poetry and music. He clearly admired certain groups of painters (the Impressionists, for example, see below, p. 169), but at the same time, it is evident from Puteshestvie v Armeniyu that he considered painting to be at one remove from life itself:

Материал живописи организован беспронигрышно, и
в этом его отличие от натуры. Но вероятность тиража
обратно пропорциональна его осуществимости.

(II, p. 162)

Certainty, according to Mandelstam, has the lowest practicability: although a painting records a particular scene, and perhaps an ideal scene, in a fixed form, this does not accord with nature itself which is constantly changing. In Puteshestvie v Armeniyu Mandelstam dwells at some length on the way in which a painting should be appreciated. This, it would appear, is because in its static form painting is highly susceptible to the abuse of being appreciated only at its most basic level - that is, on the level of how it depicts that reality which the viewer knows. Mandelstam speaks of the need to remove and to wash away an outer shell, in order that the painting's true worth, its 'inner secretions', might be perceived:

... начинайте второй этап реставрации картины, ее
отмывания, совлечения с нее ветхой шелухи, наружного
и позднейшего варварского слоя, который соединяет ее,
как всякую вещь, с солнечной и сгущенной действительностью.

(II, p. 161)

Mandelstam's somewhat cautious approach to painting is in evidence in Egipetskaya marka in his depiction of the Barbizon school. Firstly, however, there are three less significant allusions to painting which must be considered. The first reference is at the end of the laundry scene and it fulfils the function of transforming what is banal and threatening into a traditional biblical fresco (II, p. 16). Here, as Clarence Brown points out, Mandelstam was perhaps guided by the relationship of Father Bruni (present with Parnok in the laundry) to the artist Fyodor Antonovich Bruni, famous for his biblical and historical paintings and for his decorations in St. Isaac's Cathedral¹⁵³. The result is the metamorphosis of the ineffectual Father Bruni and the steam-bound laundresses (whose banality is epitomised in the doughnut image), into a choir of heavenly cherubim, after the style of those appearing in The Concert, a picture attributed variously to Titian and Giorgione. Giorgione's work is referred to once more in connection with Parnok's adventures: on this occasion it is to the painting of the Jewish heroine Judith (II, p. 26), and the reference has the effect of lifting Parnok's situation to a more dramatic level. The third allusion to painting comprises different artists, and has the function of transforming the dangerous position in which Parnok finds himself into an artistic scene. It is noteworthy that in both this and the first allusion Mandelstam includes food imagery: here Parnok forms a 'cocktail' (II, p. 19) of artistic impressions - from Rembrandt and a 'kozlinoy' Spanish painting. The former seems to be included because of the heavily Jewish overtones of Parnok's futile visit to the jeweller's. Nadezhda Yakovlevna indicates that Mandelstam had been influenced on another occasion by a Rembrandt painting with a Jewish theme - the Prodigal Son (N.Ya. II, p. 621), a picture which he valued for the warmth of its gold and scarlet glow. Perhaps the reference to Rembrandt in Egipetskaya marka is a metamorphosis of the sickly, unhelpful aspects of the Jewish setting which Parnok has just encountered into a scene of a more idealistic, Rembrandt-like warmth. The goatly Spanish painting is connected with the crowd from which Parnok is constantly fleeing. Associations with the goat in Mandelstam's work are invariably threatening (for example, I, no. 140, stanza 7; 'Chetvyortaya proza', II, pp. 180, 186), and in view of such a hostile epithet the fact that this is a Spanish painting perhaps indicates the work of a painter such as Goya, whose fascination with the darker realms of terror and

menace is reflected in the activities of the crowd.

The fourth and longest reference to painting is the treatment of the Barbizon school (II, pp. 21-22). Here Mandelstam mourns the fact that he is unable to delight in the 'open air' studies of the French school, being restricted to the Hermitage's collection of 'gloomy' Flemish landscapes. In lamenting his confinement he adds a hint of envy - unlike the Barbizon painters who, when discouraged by their lack of success in the Salon, were able to settle and paint in the Forest of Fontainebleau, he can neither create nor escape: 'Мне хочется бежать от моего порога./Куда? На улице темно' (I, no. 140). Yet his qualifications are equal to those of the Barbizon painters - he is unpopular with the authorities, as the Barbizon painters were with the authorities which emerged from the 1830 revolution: 'This is the painting of democrats, of those who don't change their linen ... This art displeases and disquiets me'¹⁵⁴. Like the Barbizon painters Mandelstam has an awareness of colour, but this is described in strictly negative terms: the 'cardinal violet' implies some kind of ritual and the blue 'cud' of an alien planet recalls the featureless cud of nineteenth-century thought ('O prirode slova', II, p. 243). The depiction of colour in terms of pain caused to the eye ('razdrazhitel'no-krasnuyu trakhomu', II, p. 21) is the only feature in this passage which accords with Mandelstam's major treatment of painting in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu (for example, II, p. 160). It is significant that the Barbizon paintings are shown in Egipetskaya marka to appeal to only two senses, to sight and to taste, whereas in Mandelstam's later treatment of painting the poetic faculty of hearing has an important role to play:

... глаз - орган, обладающий акустикой ... (II, p. 161)

И красок звучные ступени ... (I, no. 258)

In Egipetskaya marka the awareness of painting, like that of music, is restricted. The numerous food images used in connection with the Barbizon painters are related in the first instance to the fresh colours of their landscapes. However they also fulfil a negative function in that they undermine the value of a form of art whose highest activity is a zavtrak (II, p. 21 - presumably a reference to Manet's Déjeuner sur l'herbe - II, p. xv). Mandelstam was obviously aware of the generally accepted merits of the Barbizon school; they were the first painters to paint landscape for its own sake, and not

as the enactment of a story, to do their studies in the open air, and (like their successors, the Impressionists) to lend such importance to light: 'Without light there is no creation, everything is chaos, death, or pedantry',¹⁵⁵. These positive elements, light, sun and air, are however compromised by their association with food: 'Воздух, вкус и солнце уминались с зелеными тряпками ...' (II, p. 21). This is perhaps indicative of the fact that the Barbizon painters did not carry their intention to portray the 'virgin impression of nature',¹⁵⁶ to its logical conclusion by completing their paintings in the open air. Their pictures were in fact finished in the studio - away from the distractions of nature, where it was easier to obtain a desired effect. The association of the painter's vital tools with food is one aspect of the description which identifies the Barbizon painters firmly with the decaying culture of the nineteenth century. The allusions to the railway made in the context of the Barbizon discussion are also of this nature. (Here Mandelstam was perhaps thinking of the influence which it was to have on the Impressionists. This was particularly so in the case, for example, of Monet, whose fascination with railways is revealed in such paintings as Gare St. Lazare, 1877). In Egipetskaya marka a train is shown at an early stage, not yet completely under control; even in the Barbizon period, however, it was beginning to foster a certain attitude: 'Уже весь воздух казался огромным вокзалом для жирных нетерпеливых роз' (II, p. 22). The image of the rose here seems to represent the culture of the Mediterranean, for it is used again in the context of Sicily, centre of the Mediterranean and rich in the cultural influences of ancient civilisations (II, p. 22). The railway brings such civilisations nearer in terms of distance, but is accessible only to those who, unlike Parnok, can produce the requisite ticket - the slice of lemon. The impatience of the roses is a sign of their association with modern mechanical phenomena which quicken the pace of life. The rose image is developed in the poem 'Kontsert na vokzale' (I, no. 125) where a later stage in the decay of the nineteenth century is depicted: 'И запах роз в гниющих парниках ...' (I, no. 125). The poem, which shows art and the railway to be completely (if incongruously) fused, bears much resemblance to the first chapter of Shum vremeni. Here a sense of doom is conveyed in the almost grotesque over-sophistication in the dress of those who

frequented Pavlovsk station (II, p. 45). Mandelstam mentions very similar attire in Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 22) to suggest a certain degree of artificiality in the Barbizon proceedings. The representation of this school through railway, dress and food imagery indicates that its value as an art form is restricted. Its treatment is typical of Egipetskaya marka and it reflects Mandelstam's attitude at the time. There is no joyous synaesthesia here, so characteristic of the discussion of painting in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu (see above, p. 167), where his admiration for the Impressionists is apparent in very positive imagery of light, air and life: '... в живой импрессионистской среде, в храме воздуха, света и славы Эдуарда Манэ и Клода Монэ' (II, p. 155).

(d) Literature

In contrast to poetry, music and painting, comes the treatment of Mandelstam's three least favourite art forms: literature, dance and theatre, all three being depicted in terms of open hostility. Firstly, then, literature and its practitioners.

Nineteenth-century literature and littérateurs

Mandelstam defines the most prominent feature of nineteenth-century literature as 'scandal' (II, p. 27) which, appropriately, began to appear in the 1840's. Doubtless here he was thinking largely of Dostoevsky, since he goes on to refer to Dostoevsky's Idiot (II, p. 27). Mandelstam demonstrates that the concept of scandal could not survive in Russian society - the 'passport' issued to it by Russian literature has long since expired. The reasons for this are once more to be found in the break in continuity of the cultural heritage which came about in the nineteenth century, the '... отпадение от единства европейской культуры ...' ('Barsuch'ya nora', II, p. 271). A description of nineteenth-century pseudo-intellectual littérateurs shows the uncongenial conditions with which Dostoevsky's works had to contend. These are definitely nineteenth-century characters, since they are participating in the production of the latest fad - the daguerrotype. Everything points to their total inability to appreciate Dostoevsky, whose works Mandelstam considered to represent tragedy (N.Ya. II, p. 390): their ridiculous attire (their trousers are like pneumatic bells), their fascination with what was in effect a less spontaneous form of painting, their

absurdly banal, strictly gastronomic aspirations: '... один тревожно-глубокомысленный вопрос: почему сегодня фунт слоновьего мяса?' (II, p. 27). This grotesque description anticipates the information that these figures are at a loss to understand either the intensity of Dostoevsky's Ippolit or his preoccupation with good and evil. Their lack of comprehension Mandelstam attributes to the disappearance of honour: 'Пропала крупиночка: гомеопатическое драже, крошечная доза холодного белого вещества ...' (II, p. 27). The concept of honour was a phenomenon of long ago, from the age of the American 'cuckoo' duel (II, pp. 5, 27), when men were prepared to go to ridiculous lengths in order to protect their reputations. The American duel was held between two people, one of whom was bound to die; sometimes it took the form of the choice between two pills, one of which was poisoned, the other not¹⁵⁷. Mandelstam emphasises the suicidal nature of such duelling in his version of it as the destruction of one's own home (his attribution of the word 'cuckoo' is thus connected with the cuckoo's unconcern at having no nest of its own); Mandelstam does however retain an allusion to the practice of choosing between two pills in the image of the 'homeopathic dragée' (II, p. 27). The dragée (a sweetmeat, enclosing a drug, nut or fruit) image accords with the introduction of Ippolit, for it is reminiscent of Ippolit's dream, when the white juice released by a scorpion kills his dog, Norma. There the dog represents normality, and the scorpion disease, and the dream as a whole reveals Ippolit's awareness of right and wrong. Such an awareness is an essential feature of the Christianity and the cultural heritage from which the nineteenth century had turned away: without it tragedy could no longer survive (compare 'Pis'mo o russkoy poezii', III, p. 35). Dostoevsky, as Nadezhda Yakovlevna points out (N.Ya. II, p. 389), had written at a time when the structure of society had not yet 'completely collapsed'; he could therefore include in his work the 'homeopathic dose' of evil in order to prompt an awareness of its existence. However, in a society where Christianity had given way to 'Buddhism' the homeopathic dose has lost its beneficial, curative properties and excited that very disease it was intended to prevent, since there was no longer any concept of 'honour' to balance the effect of evil - hence the somewhat ominous 'propala'. As in the case of the aspirin aftertaste and the cod-liver oil, Mandelstam is employing a negative medical image. Nadezhda Yakovlevna's comments on his attitude to Dostoevsky

indicate that it is just such potential danger, embodied in the negative medical image, which is discussed in Egipetskaya marka:

'... он ощущал Достоевского, как вместилище всех бесов ...'

(N.Ya. II, p. 319). In Egipetskaya marka Dostoevsky's 'demon' is transformed into an apparently less dangerous 'imp' which has become a lawyer, part of that system which determines right from wrong.

Like Flaubert's novel, with its covering of lacquer, it represents stultified forms and its influence has affected the appreciation of poetry: Pushkin's memory is now confined to a museum: '... как музей, как пушкинский дом ...' (II, p. 27). Here Mandelstam attacks those 'professional Pushkinists' who, like Vengerov of Shum vremeni (II, p. 61), were employed with Pushkin's works 'po sluzhbe'. This phrase reveals the utter insensitivity of such people, who practise literary rites according to a ceremonial calendar (II, p. 75). The littérateurs of Egipetskaya marka perform a grotesque ritual dance in galoshes, which is characterised by a lack of respect for the 'master of the house'. This basis of their dance denies one of the essentials of art which Mandelstam had first stated in 'Utro akmeizma' - a joyous acceptance of the world: 'В самом деле, что вы скажете о неблагодарном госте, который живет за счет хозяина ... а между тем в душе презирает его ...' (II, p. 322). Completely absent in the professional littérateur is the sense of joyful 'domesticity' of the unbroken heritage, such as Mandelstam praised in the work of Annensky ('O prirode slova', II, p. 253).

Twentieth-century literature and littérateurs

Twentieth-century littérateurs are a more vicious breed than their nineteenth-century counterparts. Their characterisation in Egipetskaya marka is second only in virulence to that of 'Chetvyortaya proza'. There is a particularly striking example of resemblance between the two works in an ominous remark made in Egipetskaya marka, which anticipates the circumstances surrounding the writing of 'Chetvyortaya proza':

... сначала на морозе ... и театр мне страшен, как курная изба, как деревенская банька, где совершалось зверское убийство ради полшубка ...

(II, p. 25)

Although the theatre is the subject of this passage, its connection with the 'murder of poets' is unmistakable. The frosty scene depicted recalls the frost at Pushkin's clandestine funeral, while the image

of the fur coat is all too accurate a prediction of the 'literary murder' to which Mandelstam was to fall victim in 1928-1929. During the 'Dreyfus affair', Gornfel'd had accused Mandelstam of stealing a fur coat, altering it, and putting it up for sale - his version of Mandelstam's work on Thyl Eulenspeigl ('Pis'mo v redaktsiyu', II, pp. 477-480). Mandelstam's assertion in Egipetskaya marka that murder could take place for the sake of a fur coat was, then, proven to be wellfounded. The absurdity and horror of this situation, when those associated with art can stoop so low, are graphically reiterated in 'Chetvyortaya prcza' where Mandelstam returns to the circumstances surrounding Pushkin's funeral. Here Gornfel'd takes the place of D'Anthès, but in a grotesquely distorted form:

К числу убийц русских поэтов ... прибавилось тусклое
имя Горнфельда. Этот паралитический Дантес ...
Погибнуть от Горнфельда так же глупо, как от велосипеда
или от клюва попугая.

(II, p. 185)

The littérateurs of Egipetskaya marka are scoundrels clad, fittingly, in fur coats. The sensual image of their breath on the collars not only identifies them with the amorous Krzyżanowski (II, p. 19, p. 29), but also with the idea of prostitution in art, hinted at in Egipetskaya marka in connection with memory (II, p. 30) and with prose's 'shamelessness' (II, pp. 41-2). Mandelstam's allusions to this kind of prostitution appear in his article on Barbier with its extremely dangerous reference to the effect of the Napoleonic cult on art: 'Яд наполеоновского культа ... яд, приготовленный в лабораториях лучших поэтов и художников ...' ('Ogyust Barb'e', III, p. 48). Mandelstam no doubt had in mind here the fourth section of Barbier's L'Idole (he actually translated only the first and third sections - Sov. ed. nos. 279, 284), where Barbier attributes Napoleon's deification to the 'flatteurs mélodieux,/Aux poètes menteurs',¹⁵⁸. The prostitution of literature is most bluntly expressed in 'Chetvyortaya proza' (II, p. 188). Mandelstam was evidently concerned here with the adaptation of writers' material to their 'masters' every demand, a habit epitomised in 'Chetvyortaya proza' in the image of the parrot (II, p. 188). The 'Word', in being bent to commands, has suffered that very fate predicted by the influence of the nineteenth century: it is now no more than 'vseterpimost'' (II, p. 184).

The ascendancy of 'prostitute' literature over poetry is represented in the state of the materials and instruments of composition. The Barbier poem 'L'Idole' speaks of the restrictions imposed on the artist in the image of air: '... et jusque dans la bouche/S'en venir respirer notre air'¹⁵⁹. These lines seem to have provoked the dangerous reference in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, where Mandelstam talks of Tasr Shapukh having 'stolen his air' ('... он взял мой воздух себе', II, p. 175). This degree of control makes it impossible for the true artist to function, since air is vital in the process of composition (in the verse 'vozdukh' and related images occur frequently in the discussion of poetic creation - for example 'Grifel'naya oda' I, no. 137 and 'Люблю появление ткани' I, nos. 275-276). In Egipetskaya marka the instruments of composition hold sway over the poet: 'He повинуется мне перо ...' (II, p. 25). This information introduces a paragraph which most definitely anticipates the treatment of literature in 'Chetvyortaya proza'. The pen is part of a telegraph office, an image present in both works. In Mandelstam's works the telegraph office - ostensibly an advanced form of communication - is seen as a typical example of the lowering of cultural values. The effects of this on poetry are stated clearly in 'Chetvyortaya proza' in the description of the poet's instrument, the air. Here Mandelstam is describing that citadel of literature, Herzen House, where aspirations rise no higher than the alimentary level of Egipetskaya marka:

... созданном ... из мечты о всемирном блаженстве,
воплощаемом как перманентное фойе с буфетом ... из
почтово-телеграфной сухости воздуха, от которого
першит в горле.

(II, p. 180)

The image of ink - another tool of the writer - is common to both 'Chetvyortaya proza' and Egipetskaya marka. In the latter the pen now retains no features of its original conception: no trace is left of its avian association (the swallow, II, p. 25) which Mandelstam stressed in his works dealing with poetic creation (I, no. 137, Razgovor o Dante, II, pp. 406-408). In Egipetskaya marka the pen scatters its ink uncontrollably; even the wood of the chemist's shop smells of ink (it also suffers from scarlatina, the disease prevalent in 'Chetvyortaya proza'), while the locust crowd which pursues its victim to the banks of the Fontanka (an event reflected in 'Chetvyortaya proza' in the depiction of boys drowning a kitten - II, p. 180) has a distinctly ink-like effect on the

surroundings: '... человечья саранча вычернила берега ...' (II, p. 20). It seems highly probable here that the human locusts should be representatives of literature - the striking image of the locust had been used before by Mandelstam in discussing translation, that close relative of literature: '... густой саранчой опустившийся на поля мысли и слова ...' ('Zhak rodilsya i umer', III, p. 58). Ink in both Egipetskaya marka and 'Chetvyortaya proza' is likened to blood - the life-force of literature (II, p. 25) and of the age (II, p. 181). The latter is no natural blood, as that of true philology had been (II, p. 184), but horse's blood which, present in great abundance, reveals once more the age's turning away from the cultural wealth of the Christian and classical worlds to the works of the newspaper editor, the '... безграмотный коновал происшествий ...' ('Chetvyortaya proza', II, p. 181). The correspondence between ink and blood occurs in the poetry (I, no. 272), where it is a firm indication of the vicious nature of literature. Both Egipetskaya marka and 'Chetvyortaya proza' highlight this viciousness by associating it with terrifying ritual. In the former, a sense of heavily defined ritual is evident in the movement of the lynching party:

... с молитвенным шорохом ... свой порядок, своя
система ... распорядители всего шествия ...
церемониальный порядок, как шииты в день Шахсе-
Вахсе ...

(II, pp. 16-18)

The precise import of such ceremony is made clear once again by comparison with Mandelstam's translations of Barbier and with 'Chetvyortaya proza'. The ceremonial lynching which Parnok endeavours to prevent could also quite conceivably be the treatment meted out by the littérateurs to the non-conformist writer - the subject both of the Barbier translations and of 'Chetvyortaya proza'. In the Barbier translations Mandelstam had shown the vicious nature of those writers who were prepared to adapt their art to the needs of the moment at the expense of those who were not. This is the theme of 'Sobach'ya skloka' (Sov. ed. no. 278), in which the brutish, insensitive cruelty of dogs at the spoils of the hunt is depicted. It is important to realise that Mandelstam introduces an element of structure - of ritual almost - into his translation, with the words 'pravo', 'zakon' and 'chesti'.

Car il faut au chenil que chacun d'eux revienne
Avec un os demi-rongé.¹⁶⁰

compare

То право конуры, закон собачьей чести:

Талди домой наверняка ...

Дымящуюся кость в зубах ...

(Sov. ed. no. 278)

A similar cruelty is evident in 'Chetvyortaya proza', where literature treats Mandelstam as a wild animal might have done:

'... она меня мяла, лапала и тискала ...' (II, p. 189). Here too strictly defined ritual is seen to accompany such acts of cruelty, as it did in 'Sobach'yaskloka' and Egipetskaya marka. The 'literary dishonouring' which Mandelstam describes is clearly his own:

'... которое совершается согласно обычаю и календарным потребностям писательского племени ...' ('Chetvyortaya proza', II, p. 187).

Mandelstam speaks of this 'order' to which he does not belong with some irony (II, p. 181), while he spares no detail in depicting the littérateurs obnoxious habits (II, p. 188). This is surely simply a more direct representation of the Fontanka scene (II, p. 20), where the appearance of the locust crowd is accompanied by a host of unpleasant details, including that of the supremely revolting soup of crushed flies, associated with Nero. The organisation and ritual of the littérateurs in both Egipetskaya marka and in 'Chetvyortaya proza' in fact raises them no higher than the level of the vicious dogs of Barbier's 'La Curée'. It is evident in everything they do (in their translating work, for example: 'Это какое-то шаманство на диком выпренном жаргоне', 'Veer gertsogini', III, p. 54. This is, of course, the language Parnok is forced to adopt, II, p. 11) and it makes their vicious activities seem all the more horrifying. Akin to witchcraft, their practices insist on an organised progression of events, and thus emphasise the inevitability of ritual sacrifice.

(e) Dance

The forms of dance which appear in Egipetskaya marka express that same rigid organisation as did the ritual of the literary tribe which was epitomised in the image of the grotesque galosh dance. It is interesting to note in connection with this, and with the similar concentration on Parnok's shoes and the movement of his feet, that the actual figure upon which the fictional Parnok is based was himself extremely interested in dance, a fact of which Mandelstam must have been aware, even though Parnok's Histoire de la danse did

not appear until 1932¹⁶¹. It is clear that Mandelstam was not greatly attracted by dance as an art form: he evidently associated it with the lack of spontaneity he saw in the theatre. Thus images of dance appear when he is discussing the dangerously refined: 'Основной нерв прозы Белого - своеобразное стремление к изяществу, к танцу, к пируэту, стремление танцуя объять необъятное' (Review of Zapiski chudaka, II, pp. 423-424). It is not only the lack of spontaneity which leads to the dance being a prominent art form in Egipetskaya marka. Like the sign language of the deaf-mutes, dance is essentially a visual expression of the art of music which, like poetry, should ideally appeal to the sense of hearing. It is most important that such strictly visual forms of art should be in evidence whereas Parnok's love of music is demonstrated to be out of place and singing shown to be unable to survive. Even the Mariinskiy theatre is mentioned in Egipetskaya marka only from the point of view of ballet, whereas of the theatres of Petersburg it was the Mariinskiy which established a reputation for opera, at least in the early years of the twentieth century¹⁶². This comes in sharp contrast to Mandelstam's poetry, where there are several allusions to opera (for example I, nos. 55, 114), but scarcely any to dance; those which do appear are either accompanied by singing, in the form of 'khorovod' (which in any case occurs in conjunction with 'teney' - I no. 123 - and is therefore decidedly reminiscent of the setting of the opera Orpheus in the Underworld) or have threatening associations such as are common in Egipetskaya marka: thus the 'plyaska dikarey' (I, no. 168).

The ritual which dance represents is present in the very opening paragraphs of Egipetskaya marka, in the dismantling of the domestic scene by sacerdotal workers: '... артельщики приплясывая в ужасе ... Рогожи стелются как ризы' (II, p. 5). Here mundane employment becomes ominous through the image of dance. A similar device carries the same impact in a brief reference to Parnok's potential enemies - the 'floorpolishers', whose movements are likened to those of an Egyptian dance, (II, p. 22, - in the children's poetry too, the floorpolishers' dance - I, no. 410), a reference to the symbolic performing arts of the East. Even the everyday activity of floor polishing has assumed attributes of that terrifying ritual in which the majority of characters in Egipetskaya

marka take part. Mandelstam was perhaps thinking here of the rigid organisation of Egyptian dance as displayed on Egyptian stone reliefs, which feature stiff and angular postures. He had described the elegant polish of Egyptian dance in poetry (I, no. 171), where the image of 'glyanets' inevitably brings to mind the 'shining lacquer', the sterility and the immobility of the Flaubert novel. The influence of the Egyptian dance has infected the world of Egipetskaya marka via two forms of nineteenth-century dance. The grotesque artificiality of life, events (II, p. 15) and people (II, p. 13) is embodied in the form of the cotillon, that elaborate nineteenth-century dance which consisted in the imitation of set figures performed by the leading couple and which in Egipetskaya marka Mandelstam identifies with the immobility of mummified cats. It was precisely the reverse of such artificiality which attracted him in art. He craved a sense of free, spontaneous movement such as he perceived in Villon's poetry ('Fransua Villon', II, pp. 306-307) which contrasted with contemporary tendencies in evidence, for example, in the film industry, where it was necessary to 'myslit' kadrami' ('Ya pishu stsenariy', II, p. 500). The passage on ballet provides the second form of nineteenth-century dance (II, pp. 28-29). The specific ballet depicted is Giselle, very much a product of the nineteenth century, first given in Paris in 1841. Théophile Gautier, who provided the story for the ballet, describes the trend which Giselle represented in a manner which makes it clear why this ballet should have been chosen as the epitome of nineteenth-century artificiality. Gautier writes of the ballet, often very ironically, in a letter to Heinrich Heine, from whom the original inspiration derived. The emphasis here is on the unreality then in vogue:

... des elfes à la robe blanche ... des nixes ... des wilis au teint de neige, à la valse impitoyable, et de toutes ces délicieuses apparitions que vous avez recontrées dans le Hartz et sur le bord de l'Isle, dans la brume veloutée du clair de lune allemand ... Ainsi mon cher Heine, vos wilis allemandes ont parfaitement réussi à l'Opéra Français.¹⁶³

Like the theatre and the novel ballet was opposed to poetry in its alienation from reality. The treatment of Giselle in Egipetskaya marka is composed both of allusions to the lack of spontaneity of dance, and of images which stem from the unhealthy, supernatural world of this specific ballet (compare the strange world which was

depicted on Mervis' screen - II, p. 9). The lack of spontaneity is conveyed by the military character of the orchestra and by the rigidity of ballet, expressed in the Tyutchevyan image of 'state ice' (II, p. 29)¹⁶⁴. The most damning adjective here, however, is 'krepostnoy', for it implies a form of art which is subject to a lord and master. Mandelstam was therefore treading on rather dangerous ground here in suggesting control of art by the state. Once again, the full hostility of the passage on ballet can be judged from work created when Mandelstam's poetic silence was over: in this case, from Puteshestvie v Armeniyu. In the 'Zapisnye knizhki' to Puteshestvie v Armeniyu a serf ballet is identified with Chinese theatre and embodied in the image of an insect (III, p. 174), while in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu itself such insects are seen to perform very much the kind of sign-language dance associated with the Chinese theatre, whose code of hand gestures conveyed the events of a story. The 'food' of these insects reveals that they are surely the hack writers of 'Chetvyortaya proza', whose works are as ephemeral as the life of an insect: '... пожирают черное чтиво настоящей минуты' (II, p. 158). The association in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu of serf-ballet, Chinese theatre, and insects points to a connection between the ballet itself and the action of the crowd in the fourth chapter of Egipetskaya marka: 'А черные блестящие муравьи, как плотоядные актеры китайского театра ...' (II, p. 22). Like the hack writers of 'Chetvyortaya proza', and indeed like Krzyżanowski, the members of the crowd are insects - creatures of the moment. The ephemerality or rather the sterility of ballet itself is indicated in the fact that no natural continuity is associated with this form of art: '... великолепное пренебрежение к материнству ...' (II, p. 28). This phrase is particularly suited to the depiction of the nineteenth-century heroines of Egipetskaya marka, for Giselle, Mme. Bovary and Anna Karenina all died unable to fulfil a role as mother.

The supernatural, fantastic nature of ballet is reflected in references to the Zodiac and in the characterisation of the violinists as dryads, whose roots and branches fill the orchestra pit - perhaps another example of that metamorphosis which was seen to be overtaking the streets of Petersburg in 'Slovo i kul'tura' (II, p. 222). Further influence of the encroaching plant world is in evidence in

the 'rastitel'noe poslushan'e' of the corps de ballet (II, p. 28). The strict monopoly of the ballet master over the movement and thoughts of the dancers reduces them to the level of the vegetable world, which has no thoughts, but simply obeys the laws of nature. The characters in Giselle are as unreal as a king and queen in a pack of cards, and Giselle's 'grandmother' exhibits an unnatural youthfulness, a quality already seen to be negative.

(f) Theatre

The theatre, like dance, is another expression of artificiality. As has been noted, Mandelstam's attitude to the theatre was largely negative, since he saw in it an art form which, unlike poetry, demanded little of the audience, all interpretation being done in advance by the producer. Just as dance was a 'silent' form of art, so also was the theatre, in the sense that it did not possess a poetic approach to words and hearing. The theatre's silence is characterised in Mandelstam's work either by the 'svinoe rylo deklamatsii' (Shum vremeni, II, p. 101), or by the silence of Chekhovian pauses ('Khudozhestvennyy teatr i slovo', III, p. 100). Komissarzhevskaya's style of acting evidently aroused more sympathy in Mandelstam: '... ее игра была на три четверти словесной ...' (Shum vremeni, II, p. 101), but even here it is clear that he is dealing with a nineteenth-century art which could lead nowhere: her talents as a tragic actress existed only in embryonic form (II, p. 100), and the days of her theatre were numbered (II, p. 101). Although the theatre was evidently not Mandelstam's favourite art form, it was one which was particularly popular in the early years of the twentieth century, as Professor Filippov explains in his essay on Akhmatova's Poema bez geroya:

Характерно, что русское искусство десятих годов - если исключить поэзию, отчасти - музыку - преимущественно театрально: искусство театра, балета, театральной живописи - искусство мнимости, кажимости.¹⁶⁵

In Egipetskaya marka no specific dramatic work is treated, with the exception of a possible reference to Ibsen's Peer Gynt: 'Пуговицы делаются из крови животных!' (II, p. 18), an allusion, perhaps, to the unpleasant justice meted out by the Buttonmoulder, where the imperfect button (Peer himself) must go into the Buttonmoulder's ladle to be melted down¹⁶⁶. It is the theatre buildings (the Malyy, the Mariinskiy, the Aleksandrinskiy) which contribute most

substantially to the hostile nature of the treatment of theatre in Egipetskaya marka. The degeneration of art, and in particular of tragedy, is the theme in the treatment of the Malyy theatre. The Muse of Tragedy is surely at her least attractive here (II, p. 20) - bold, shabby and witchlike, she smells of patchouli, a perfume obtained, fittingly, from an oriental shrub. (The unpleasant cheapness of this perfume can be judged for example, from Chekhov's Vishnyovyy sad, where it is associated with the pretentious Yasha, whose odours constantly offend the refined Gaev and his sister)¹⁶⁷. The Muse of Tragedy has undergone a considerable transformation since the days when she ruled over a temple (I, no. 114), while the patroness of the theatre is now a degenerate Lorelei, the Fontanka itself, whose unhealthy composition and inimical association with the crowd have already been noted. Just as supernatural presences appear in the ballet Giselle, the Fontanka is here identified as an undine, a female water spirit. The Mariinskiy theatre was a nineteenth-century building (built in 1860), and its interior design was based on the ancient form of the amphitheatre (II, p. 29). This is incongruous, for the amphitheatre existed at a time when tragedy could be appreciated, whereas in Egipetskaya marka this is quite clearly not the case. The building is very much a part of the hostile world of Egipetskaya marka: it is not, unlike Parnok, susceptible to the destructive influence of moisture, and its 'indecently waterproof rear' is involved in the shady dealings of the ticket-hucksters (II, p. 28).

The Aleksandrinskiy theatre is also singularly unpleasant. Mandelstam describes it as a claustrophobic place, with 'low ceilings'. It is interesting to note that it is precisely this characteristic which Viktor Shklovsky notes in his Sentimental'noe puteshestvie, where he identifies it with the nightmare setting of an Eastern bazaar after a pogrom - a setting which is frighteningly relevant to the oriental overtones and violent events of Egipetskaya marka:

... Я беру по узкому, низкому корридору с
выбеленными стенами, переходящими в потолок.
Похоже немножко на корридоры Александринского
театра ...¹⁶⁸

The Aleksandrinskiy theatre is also connected with superstition: it is described as a 'kurnaya izba' (II, p. 25), which brings to mind

the dwelling place of Baba-Yaga. Such a setting of evil appears in several of Mandelstam's poems. In 'Я с дымящей лучиной вхожу' (I, no. 231) the evil presence within the dwelling is identified as 'nepravda', while in 'Я буду метаться по табору улицы темной' (I, no. 144) the theatre and the image of untruth are brought together. Perhaps Mandelstam had not forgotten here the hostile 'izba' of the preceding poem (I, no. 143):

И только и свету - что в звездной колючей неправде,
И жизнь проплывет театрального капора пеной,
И некому молвить: 'из табора улицы темной'... (I, no. 144)

Here, with the specific art form of the theatre, Mandelstam epitomises the essential features of all Egipetskaya marka's art forms: artificiality, threat, and the ensuing isolation of the poet, his inability to speak. The treatment of the theatre in Egipetskaya marka, however, is far more hostile, far more unpleasant than that of this poem, because of the wealth of unpleasant details attributed to it. It is the scene of evil and violence (II, p. 25), the site of disease and degradation of art (II, p. 20). The impact of the theatre in general is to highlight the artificiality of the world of Egipetskaya marka in artistic and in historical terms. It must be remembered that Egipetskaya marka is set in the revolutionary year of 1917, for Mandelstam tended to depict revolution in terms of the theatre: for example his depiction of the 1830 revolution is reflected in the revolutionary setting and the theatrical artificiality of Egipetskaya marka:

Между тем картинная, театральная сторона парижской революции 1830 г. была великолепна и не стояла ни в каком соответствии с ее реальными достижениями.

('Krovavaya misteriya 9-go yanvary'a', III, p. 45)

In Egipetskaya marka the historical setting - which separated state from culture - is theatrically sterile and artificial and it is implied that the art now tolerated shares similar attributes.

The treatment of art forms in Egipetskaya marka points clearly to Mandelstam's condition at the time of its composition. The seriousness of this condition is amply demonstrated by the fact that even his most treasured recollections - those of an artistic nature - have acquired attributes of the chaos which surrounded him, while the forms of art which do survive are of an unpleasant nature.

Spontaneous, joyous creation has given way to an omnivorous, death-bound culture, in which Mandelstam found it impossible to create. In Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, he was to describe creation in terms of recollection, shown to be a process of growth. Just as the nasturtium, the Impressionist painting and the chess game respond to light (to 'rays' of concentration in the case of the chess game - II, p. 155), so too the 'embryo' of recollection responds to some kind of invitation from the environment. The vocabulary used here makes it very clear that Mandelstam is thinking of his own particular art:

... черточка лица или полухарактера, полужвук,
окончание имени, что-то губное или небное, сладкая
горошина на языке, - развивается не из себя, но
лишь отвечает на приглашение ...

(II, p. 155)

No joyful recollection and growth is possible in the cultural world of Egipetskaya marka, which provides no such invitation. Here there has been a turning away from Christian culture and art, and memory itself is diseased and fickle (II, p. 30). As was predicted in 'Pushkin i Skryabin' (II, p. 314), this has led to total chaos, to the 'backward flow of time'. Life is like a terrible dream in which it is no longer possible for Mandelstam to alter or improve the situation (II, p. 39; the repeated references to the process of growing younger - 'omolazhivaetsya' II, p. 6, 'molozhavaya babushka' II, p. 28 - are part of this chaotic reversal of time). The way in which the theatre is characterised in Egipetskaya marka accords with the treatment of the other art forms. All combine to give a relentless statement both of the hostility of Mandelstam's environment and of his inability at that time to combat it in poetry.

Chapter Six

The Structure of Egipetskaya marka

Область искусства и особенно поэзии относится к
человековедению, к которому никаких методологических
щипчиков не подобрать.

(N.Ya. II, p. 49)

Nadezhda Yakovlevna's comments on the approach to artistic creation are highly relevant to Egipetskaya marka which is, as has already been observed, a 'poet's prose'. This work does not lend itself easily to traditional structural analysis, for there are many points at which the use and significance of certain structural devices overlap. And yet a close study of the structure is extremely helpful, since it can lead to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the work's content and implications. This is due to the fact that Mandelstam considered the form and content of a work to be organically related, the form being a result of the impulses behind the work. He demonstrates this through the example of the Divina commedia:

То есть, драматическая структура самого рассказа
вытекает из тембра, а вовсе не сам тембр подыскивается
для нее и напяливается на нее, как на колодку

(II, p. 400)

... то есть форма ему представляется выжимкой, а не
оболочкой ... форма выжимается из содержания-концепции ...

(II, p. 375)

In order to resolve the contradiction between the benefit and difficulties involved in the study of Egipetskaya marka's structure, Mandelstam's own theories on creative writing have been taken as the framework to this chapter. The purpose here is not only to define the means by which Mandelstam creates the fascinating style of Egipetskaya marka, but also - by referring to his own ideas - to attempt to assess the impulses behind the structure and its relationship to the structures of Mandelstam's poetry and other prose. The theories in question are those of fragmentation (to be found in 'Zapisnye knizhki'), contrast (discussed in Mandelstam's review of Bely's Zapiski chudaka) and 'obrashchaemost'' (in Razgovor o Dante). In each case the tendencies exhibited by Mandelstam's

other prose and his poetry will be discussed, and the form each theory takes in Egipetskaya marka will be analysed.

1. Fragmentation

In the 'Zapisnye knizhki' Mandelstam asserts that prose must necessarily be of a fragmentary nature since man's perception of reality is uneven. Reality may be continuous, but our appraisal of it can never be a continuous whole:

Наша память, наш опыт с его провалами ... проза, как
бы ясно и подробно, как бы деловито и верно она ни
составлялась, всегда образует прерывистый ряд ... она
имеет дело только с интервалами ...

('Zapisnye knizhki', III, pp. 165-167)

Somewhat earlier in the same 'Zapisnye knizhki' Mandelstam explains more graphically his technique for treating the material with which reality presents him. He is like a little boy catching rays of sunlight in a mirror and reflecting them in unusual directions:

Но глаз мой/падкий до всего странного, мимолетного и
скоротечного/улавливал в путешествии лишь светоносную
дрожь/случайностей/, растительный орнамент/
действительности/...

(III, p. 149)

Hints of the principles of Impressionist painting are to be seen here in the concern with the effects of light and with unusual (but not continuous) detail which forms the basis of Mandelstam's prose, as of the Impressionists' work. The etymological link between the words 'podrobnyy' and 'drobnyy' was clearly appreciated by Mandelstam ('Zapisnye knizhki', III, p. 151) and it is parallel to the relationship between close attention to detail and fragmentary style, which is so important in his prose. Mandelstam considered that the Impressionists had resolved the task of organic, synthetic creation (III, p. 161) and synthesis was precisely the task which he allotted to prose: 'Prozaicheskaya forma: sintez' (III, p. 167). He therefore rejects the idea of a continuous ('sploshnoy', III, pp. 166-167) prose style in favour of a fragmentary form. As Irina Semenko suggests, this preference is very much a part of his aesthetic outlook¹⁶⁹. An awareness of breaks in continuity is a characteristic of his appraisal of the work of various scholars and artists. In his article 'Pyotr Chaadaev' (1915) Mandelstam demonstrates that the fragmentary form of Chaadaev's work should be

appreciated as a means of comprehending the latter's thoughts:

Фрагменты ... что это: начертанный план или уже само его осуществление? Напрасно добросовестный исследователь вздыхает об утраченном ... фрагментарная форма ... внутренне обоснована ... Зияние пустоты ... - это отсутствующая мысль о России.

(II, p. 288)

In 'Barsuch'ya nora', written on the first anniversary of Blok's death, Mandelstam contrasts Blok's ability to hear the 'subterranean music of Russian history' with the absence of sound which is the lot of others: '... Блок слушал подземную музыку русской истории, там, где самое напряженное ухо улавливало только синкопическую паузу' (II, p. 272). Perhaps the 'straining ear' belonged to Mandelstam himself (it was part of his poetic equipment - see 'Слух чуткий парус натягает', I, no. 15). The 'syncopated pause' is certainly more characteristic of Mandelstam's own perception of the times in Shum vremeni, for example, where the emphasis is on separation and lack of continuity: '... между мной и веком провал, ров ...' (II, p. 99).

Similarly, Mandelstam's assessment of the work of the evolutionists, Lamarck and Darwin, stresses separation and breaks in continuity. In the case of Lamarck this is in terms of the theory itself: 'Ламарк чувствует провалы между классами' ('Zapisnye knizhki', III, p. 161); in the case of Darwin it is in terms of the way in which the theory is presented. Here Mandelstam alludes once more to the techniques of Impressionist painting:

... Дарвин призывает себе на помощь свет и воздух, внимательно учитывает расстояние ...

('Vokrug naturalistov', III, p. 134)

... забота Дарвина-писателя о наиболее выгодном физическом освещении каждой детали ... Дарвин располагает факты ... Он позволяет им дышать.

('Literaturnyy stil' Darvina', III, p. 178)

(i) Fragmentary tendencies in Mandelstam's poetry and other prose

The principle of fragmentation, which is at its most developed in Egipetskaya marka, is barely in evidence in the critical prose - the critical genre is far more direct in its approach than the creative. However, it does appear in Mandelstam's other major creative prose works. It is present indirectly in their overall construction. Shum vremeni and Puteshestvie v Armeniyu are of a

suite-like structure, made up of individual titled sections. These sections are complete in themselves and they bring to mind Mandelstam's definition of suite structure in the 'Zapisnye knizhki', where he speaks of 'samostoyatel'nye glavy' as making up a suite ('Literaturnyy stil' Darvina', III, p. 176). 'Chetvyortaya proza' is also divided into chapters, but these are not titled and are shorter than those of the other two works. Here it is a question rather of variations on a theme. In none of the works is explicit comment made on the connection between the chapters. Shum vremeni and Puteshestvie v Armeniyu have the unifying basis of being inspired by the people, places and events of Mandelstam's own experience and 'Chetvyortaya proza' is given a sense of cohesion by the theme of his bitterness and disgust. A more obviously fragmentary device is seen in the short paragraphs, the short statements and question, the brief impressionistic scene-setting sentences which begin to appear in Shum vremeni. In all three works it is the last chapter which contains the most directly fragmentary style and this is significant since in each case it is the last chapter which deals with the most disturbing material. The final chapter of Shum vremeni is the most disturbing from the point of view of Mandelstam's creative life, with its development of the themes of spite, cold, snake-like sounds, wild beasts and night. In the last chapter of 'Chetvyortaya proza' unfinished sentences are used in the presentation of a series of characters who pass fleetingly and menacingly through the final paragraphs - Lenin, Trotsky and the monster Viy (II, p. 192). In the case of Puteshestvie v Armeniyu the use of short paragraphs and short sections within each chapter is prominent throughout (for example the chapter 'Frantsuzy', II, pp. 159-162). The last chapter depicts a singularly disturbing situation and has the most obviously fragmentary form. Mandelstam increases the effect of fragmentation by spacing out his short sentences and by the use of numerals (II, pp. 175-176) - a device which he must have observed in the work of the Serapion Brothers (in Nikitin's Noch' for example)¹⁷⁰. The Serapions' concern for innovation in literary style - for instance the inclusion of vagrant footnotes, documents and numerals - was intended to inspire in the reader an appreciation of strikingly contrasting styles. The Serapions do not seem to have impressed Mandelstam, however, for he describes their style as

'tsementirovannoy chem ugodno' ('Literaturnaya Moskva', II, p. 334). The numerical device in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu is not just for effect. It is a continuation of the fragmentary style developed in the work and it highlights the impression that the statement being made is a matter of urgency. Mandelstam is describing 'odin dobavochnyy den' (II, p. 176) granted to Arshak and to himself - time is short and a device stressing the urgency of the situation is therefore required.

The poetry does not share the principle of fragmentation evident in Egipetskaya marka and the other major prose works. The gaps and spaces in the poetry are of a rather different nature from the fragmentation upon which the creative prose is based. Poetry is concerned with wholeness (I, no. 75) which would seem to be connected with the fact that it stems from a greater depth and is a statement of deep personal conviction, as Nadezhda Yakovlevna explains (N.Ya. II, pp. 211, 271). The only intervals in the poetry are 'signs' ('znaki') which indicate wholeness and to which the reader must be sensitive if he is to appreciate the poem as a whole:

... поэтическое письмо в значительной степени
представляет большой пробел, зияющее отсутствие
множества знаков ... поэтически грамотный
читатель ставит их от себя, как бы извлекая их
из самого текста.

('Vypad', II, pp. 230-231)

(ii) Fragmentation in Egipetskaya marka

In Egipetskaya marka Mandelstam clearly states his intention to adopt a fragmentary manner in the following imaginative representation of fragmentary style:

Я не боюсь бессвязности и разрывов.
Стригу бумагу длинными ножницами.
Подклеиваю ленточки бахромкой.

(II, p. 25)

If perception of reality ('опыт', 'память') is the guiding principle of prose composition, then the state both of reality and of the one who perceives it will play some part in the resultant work. Mandelstam's allusions to his own situation and to his view of life and reality make it evident that a fragmentary style is the fitting form for Egipetskaya marka. His situation is characterised by a lack of confidence and by the inability to create ('Господи! Не сделай меня похожим на Парнока!' II, p. 24; '... не слыша своего голоса' II, p. 32). He is acutely aware of life's 'provaly' ('... все должно оборваться ...' II, p. 36). His appraisal of

reality in Egipetskaya marka is in effect a definition of the work and it clearly demonstrates the impulses behind the disjointed style:

Страшно подумать, что наша жизнь - это повесть без
фабулы и героя, сделанная из пустоты и стекла, из
горячего лепета одних отступлений, из петербургского
инфлуэнциного бреда ... во всем решительно мне
чудится задаток любимого прозаического бреда ...
... состояние? Когда у всех вещей словно жар ...

(II, p. 40)

The work is composed of two elements which lack any human characteristics - emptiness and glass. The latter is at once a material which features in Mandelstam's depictions of the death-bound world of pre-revolutionary years (I, no. 125; II, p. 45) and the unassailable substance of which Dostoevsky's Crystal Palace and its modern descendants were formed (I, no. 265). The reality which is the subject of composition is characterised by the contrasting symptoms present in a patient before the onset of an illness such as influenza: '... все они радостно возбуждены и больны ...' (II, p. 40). The resultant composition shares this state of feverish delirium - 'bred' - an invariably negative word in Mandelstam's lexicon (in 'Pushkin i Skryabin', for example, it features in the statement that art is no more - II, p. 314). Prose is made up of feverish mutterings and the process of composition itself has the attributes of a dream state: 'mne chuditsya' (II, p. 40). The terrifying point here is that life and prose writing are completely identified ('.... наша жизнь - это повесть ...', II, p. 40; '... открытый русской прозой или самой/русской жизнью ...', II, p. 27). During the period of silence life was for Mandelstam distinguished by that same frighteningly dream-like quality depicted in Egipetskaya marka. This is reflected in one of his most despairing letters, written in 1930: 'Стоит ли тебе говорить, какой бред, какой дикий тусклый сон все, все, все ...' (III, p. 260). In its concern with a nightmarish state Egipetskaya marka does of course follow in the footsteps of the work of Dostoevsky (Prestuplenie i nakazanie), Gogol (Nevskiy prospekt, Portret) and, most strikingly, of Pushkin's Mednyy vsadnik, where the world with which the mad Evgeny must contend bears much resemblance to that of Egipetskaya marka: '... жизнь ничто, как сон пустой'¹⁷¹. Things are no longer what they seem to be - the exact opposite in fact of the '... прекрасная фамильярность с миром реальных вещей' (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 143) which had so

impressed Mandelstam in Armenia. A phrase from Gogol's Nevskiy prospekt gives an accurate description of the deceptive nature of the world depicted in Egipetskaya marka: 'Все обман, все мечта, все не то, что кажется',¹⁷². Mandelstam makes further comment in the last chapter of Egipetskaya marka on the nature of his prose composition. Here he depicts specific effects of reality upon the process of composition itself, which is exposed to all the dangerous influences of the modern world - primarily that of the railway: 'Железная дорога изменила все течение, все построение, весь такт нашей прозы' (II, p. 41). (It should be noted here that Mandelstam reflects this influence in the train-like rhythm of this repetitive, rhyming statement.) He does not say that his prose has acquired the characteristics of the railway - either the railway's regularity (expressed in the rhythm) or the potential hostility of the railway's heaviness, beefiness and oiliness (II, p. 41). Prose inherits only attendant characteristics and is related to the:

... бессмысленному лопотанью французского мужичка из Анны Карениной. Железнодорожная проза, как дамская сумочка этого предсмертного мужичка, полна инструментами сцепщика, бредовыми частичками, скобяными предложениями, которым место на столе судебных улик, развязана от всякой заботы о красоте и округленности.

(II, p. 41)

There is indeed no sense of 'beauty' or 'roundedness' about these instruments, but they are not hostile in themselves - their heavy metallic nature is not necessarily threatening. After all, Mandelstam was not entirely ill-disposed towards machinery (N.Ya. I, p. 267) or heavy instruments. He describes the Armenian language, a source of inspiration, in terms of ironmongery and the 'skobyanye predlogi' of Egipetskaya marka bring to mind the incisive consonants of Armenia: 'Где буквы - кузнечные клещи, /И каждое слово - скоба ...' (I, no. 205). Nor are these instruments necessarily opposed to what Mandelstam is trying to achieve in his prose, as Clarence Brown suggests:

His prose could never be submitted as legal evidence in any imaginable court, for its aim is to be beautifully rounded. Its only testimony is to that ineffable satisfaction that comes when sentences wave like flags and strut like peacocks and roll trippingly off the tongue.¹⁷³

Professor Brown seems to be concerned here to an extent with the sound of his own prose. Although it is true that individual

sentences and passages in Egipetskaya marka display a delightful skill and mastery in the handling of language, it seems unlikely that Mandelstam's aim in the composition of this work was to achieve a sense of 'beauty and roundedness'. It is evident that his blatantly stated intention to make the work fragmentary does not correspond with the strictly conventional concepts of 'beauty and roundedness'. Indeed it would appear that Mandelstam's allusions to these concepts are of a sarcastic nature. Comments from several of his articles and reviews reveal that he associated 'roundedness' with the fixed, overtly explicit and unimaginative forms common to bureaucratic, translating and editorial circles, which had no truck with fragmentation, understatement or 'bessmyslennoe lopotan'e':

... где фраза закруглена как в канцелярском протоколе

(Review of An. Sventitsky's 'Kniga skazan'ya', II, p. 420)

Редактор ... дезинфицирует перевод ... закругляет фразы, устраняет бессмыслицы ...

('Potoki khaltury', II, p. 429)

The fundamental 'zabota' of translators and editors was to achieve an outward effect of beauty and roundedness - for example, no unorthodox use of particles and linking words was permitted ('истребляет многие тысячи "который" и "что" ...' 'Potoki khaltury', II, p. 429). Mandelstam's own use of particle/instruments is defiantly contradictory: they are 'delirious' and have no connection with beauty or roundedness. Indeed perhaps their appearance in Mandelstam's prose could be cited ('... место на столе судебных улик ...' II, p. 41) as an example of his unorthodox style. The task and mentality of the prose writer may be identified with those of the railway worker, but in the case of Mandelstam at least the delirious particles do not fulfil their task of coupling: 'На побегушках у моего сознания два-три словечка, "и вот", "уже", "вдруг"; они мотаются из вагона в вагон ...' (II, p. 41). They display a sense of movement which Mandelstam was later to advocate as a prerequisite of prose: 'Смысловые словарные частицы, разбегающиеся по местам' ('Zapisnye knizhki, III, p. 167). Mandelstam negates the editorial approach in depicting the particles as being in a state of feverish movement. In his hands they are used not to fix and explain, but to dislocate and fragment (see below, pp. 238-239). His wish to avoid

the conventionally rounded forms is in evidence again in his intention to partake of unboiled water straight from the tap (II, p. 41). Boiled water in Egipetskaya marka is a feature of very bureaucratic, highly unartistic conference preparations: '... с белыми листами бумаги, с отточенными карандашами и с графином кипяченой воды' (II, p. 23) - paper and pencils were hardly prerequisite in Mandelstam's creative process (N.Ya. I, pp. 192-197). He attributes to boiled water a 'rubbery' aftertaste (II, p. 5), precisely the quality he was to ascribe to the 'kantselyarskiy' (II, p. 478) translation work of Gornfel'd: 'Камеобразный синтаксис, отсутствие ритма прозы, резиновый язык ...' (Pis'mo^V redaktsiyu Vecherney Moskvy, II, p. 479). Mandelstam is eager to expose himself to disease, to get away from the negatively sterile approach which he sees not only in the work of editors and translators, but in other prose writers too. (For example, his assessment of psychological experimentation in prose is couched in terms of antiseptic surgery - 'Literaturnaya Moskva', II, p. 333). The abandonment implied in Mandelstam's declared intention to drink unboiled water is a step on the way to his sarcastic denunciation in the first chapter of 'Chetvyortaya proza' of those who protect themselves with a sterile shroud (II, p. 179). This abandonment is thoroughly in keeping with the spirit of Egipetskaya marka's structure and style, where the prose's lack of conventional 'beauty' is a reflection of Mandelstam's protest against the conditions of the twenties and in particular against the work which he was forced to undertake. It is an example of his inability to concede to the 'major form' mania (N.Ya. II, pp. 380 ff.) which gripped the literary world at the time. Indeed it would seem that Mandelstam is intent on parodying such a form.

Fragmentation is apparent in Egipetskaya marka in both the overall construction (layout, plot, chapter division) and in certain structural devices (simile, metaphor, transfer of epithet, narrators, temporal and spatial displacement).

(a) Layout

The publication of Egipetskaya marka in a separate edition with Shum vremeni was a matter on which Mandelstam had very definite views. In his letter to a certain Korobova (evidently a member of the editorial staff - II, pp. 492-494) he insists on the necessity of

following his layout of the work, with its definite spacings and gaps: 'В Ег м., состоящей из фрагментов, пропущен целый ряд "спусков". Они очень важны. Я их отмечаю' (II, p. 493). The layout of Egipetskaya marka is not as unconventional as that of other prose works of the twenties (for example Bely's Zapiski chudaka) but it does create a visual impression of fragmentation. Mandelstam makes use of short, indented lines (for instance II, p. 25) and extended sentences in which fragmentation is expressed by means of the arrangement and spacing of lines (II, p. 28, lines 8-22). Passages constructed in this way are inserted at intervals throughout the work. This frequently strengthens the impression that they are not at first sight connected with the surrounding material.

(b) Plot construction

The construction of the plot seems specifically designed to enhance the effect of fragmentation - in this Mandelstam is perhaps parodying strict forms of composition. He identifies his work in Egipetskaya marka with the preparations for a sonata (II, p. 25). This most ordered of musical forms was one which Mandelstam heard resounding loud and clear in the twenties - to the exclusion of the sound of his own poetry. In his verse it is characterised as the embodiment of threat, the product of that hostile instrument of bureaucrats and writers, the typewriter:

То ундервуда хрящ: скорее вырви клавиш --
И шучью косточку найдешь ...

Но пишущих машин простая сонатина -
Лишь тень сонат могущих тех.

(I, no. 140)

Where traces of sonata structure are discernible in the plot they are strongly parodied. One characteristic reminiscent of sonata form in Egipetskaya marka is the presence of two plot lines. (Indeed Mandelstam seems to have had a penchant for taking two thematic lines - this was to have been the case in 'Fagot' II, p. 497).

The first thematic line is concerned with the theft of the coat and Parnok's attempts to recover it. In the first chapter hints of the theft are given in a highly surrealistic manner:

- Спит?
- Спит! ... Шарамыжник, на него электрической лампочки жалко!
Последние зернышки кофе исчезли в кратере мельницы-шарманки.
Умыкание состоялось.
Мервис похитил ее как сабинянку.

(II, p. 6)

Mandelstam does not state who the two criminals are here, although it seems likely that the wily Madame Mervis would be assisting her husband. The first plot line develops as Parnok's energies are divided in his desperate rush around Petersburg. His visits to the barber, laundry, the dentist, his meeting with the Shakhse-Vakhse crowd, give new dimensions to the plot. But the descriptions of these events are characterised chiefly by vagueness. Krzyżanowski's assessment of events is blatantly confused:

О нем не беспокойтесь: честное слово он пломбирует
зуб. Скажу вам больше: сегодня на Фонтанке - не то
он украл часы, не то у него украли. Мальчишка!
Грязная история!

(II, p. 29)

The vagueness of the first plot line in the work is increased by the lack of chronology, by the absence of any normal unfolding of events - the 'fabula' itself. The main character, Parnok, around whom events circle, is not formally introduced until Chapter II (II, p. 10); Mervis is accused of the theft of the coat before the theft has taken place (II, p. 6); hints as to the reason for the theft (that is, to Parnok's being a 'neplatel'shchik') are not given until the penultimate chapter of the work (II, p. 33); the most threatening branch of the plot line - the sinister intentions of the crowd - is abandoned without conclusion. Persistent autobiographical and artistic digressions further dislocate the already disjointed first plot line. In view of this the 'recapitulation' of the coat theme at the end of the work forms an ironic conclusion: Mandelstam adopts a traditionally 'rounded' kol'tso form, but conveys not the fate of the hero, but that of the coat (II, p. 42) - which was, in any case, known (II, p. 33).

The hero does not fulfil the traditional role of unifying the plot. Digressions distance the various events and therefore Parnok's name is mentioned only at very irregular intervals. And yet Mandelstam often confidently refers to Parnok as 'on', as though he were carrying on an uninterrupted narrative, however many gaps may have intervened. At the beginning of the fourth chapter Parnok features prominently in his first brush with the crowd, but concentration on him gradually dwindles and specific mentions of his name become less frequent. After the Fontanka passage (II, p. 20) he is referred to simply as 'on' and among the various fragments which constitute the rest of the chapter he receives only two more cryptic

mentions ('Парнок встряхнулся ... Он - лимонная косточка ...' II, p. 22). In the fifth chapter Parnok is mentioned only twice - in Mandelstam's appeal not to be identified with him (II, p. 24) and, after a two-page interval, in the section 'Он сделал слабое умоляющее движение ...' (II, p. 26). Here Parnok is referred to exclusively as 'on'. Similarly in Chapter VIII his name is given only once (II, p. 36) and thereafter he is known as 'on' (II, pp. 36-38). Other characters are introduced in the same vague manner. It is not explained, for example, who is the subject of 'Они с важностью шли ..' (II, p. 32); that it is a question of Krzyżanowski and his lady must be inferred here from the manner and location of the walk ('с важностью ... по Офицерской'). The chief method of characterisation - the concentration on one particular feature - further fragments the plot, for the reader receives only a distorted view of the protagonists (for example, the crowd's victim is characterised by his coat collar - II, p. 17; Aunt Vera by her curls - II, p. 31; and Parnok, of course, by his 'hooves' - II, pp. 10, 19).

It should be noted that in the structure of the first plot line Mandelstam does to a certain extent follow the traditional situations of folklore. A villain attempts to deceive his victim in order to take possession of his belongings¹⁷⁴; this necessitates a quest (the most traditional theme of folk tales) in which Parnok, who has to leave home in order to undertake the quest¹⁷⁵, has the role of 'seeker', although there are suggestions that he is also the 'victimised party'¹⁷⁶. At this point the first plot line and the traditional folk tale diverge: there is no magical intervention to rescue Parnok, no direct confrontation or combat with the villain, and the tale does not end on the traditional note of fulfilment - the marriage of the hero¹⁷⁷. The only hints of marriage for Parnok are purely hypothetical and blatantly improbable (II, p. 37). Mandelstam has indeed merely touched upon the idea of a 'fabula' in the first plot line by hinting at the anecdotal tale of a folk-like structure. It is most interesting to note that imagery used in Egipetskaya marka had appeared earlier in Mandelstam's critical work in his observations that the Serapions were concerned with anecdote and folklore, not with 'fabula':

... но анекдот щекочет усами из каждой щели ...
Милый анекдот, первое свободное и радостное
порхание фабулы ...

('Literaturnaya Moskva', II, p. 336),

compare

... воздух, весь кишевший усатыми, живыми порхающими
чайниками.

(II, p. 26)

The first plot line peeps out through the crevices of the second in Egipetskaya marka but at no point is it developed as it might have been in a 'major form'.

The 'second subject' of the work consisted of Mandelstam's treatment of artistic and autobiographical themes and the development of these certainly does not fit in with the demands of sonata form. The two subjects of Egipetskaya marka do not complement each other, as in a musical sonata, but constantly oust each other from the reader's view. Egipetskaya marka opens with the second subject -- a dream which features domestic objects (II, p. 5 -- whose connection with art has been noted above p. 148). Thereafter the work returns constantly to various artistic allusions and autobiographical reminiscences connected with art. An ironic recapitulation of the original 'dream' statement of the second subject is given in the last chapter in the reference to Anna Karenina's dream (II, p. 41 and see above p. 73).

(c) Chapter division

The work's division into chapters does not fulfil the conventional function of distinguishing stages in a chain of ideas or events. In the first publication of Egipetskaya marka (in Zvezda) there were three chapters and this seems to have been a more logical division than that of the 'Priboy' edition. The first of the three Zvezda chapters ('Priboy' chapters I-IV) comprised the Parnok plot, with his various adventures and only occasional fragmentation (the references to Shapiro, the Barbizon school). The second ('Priboy' chapters V-VI) was more fragmentary, dealing with the muteness of Petersburg, deaf-mutes, musical notation, scandal, ballet and referring to the Parnok plot only in the picture of the hero's despair (II, p. 26) and of Krzyżanowski's pompous prosperity (II, pp. 29, 32). The third chapter ('Priboy' chapters VII-VIII) opened with a picture of Mervis, alluded to Parnok, but was chiefly

concerned with the writer's creative condition and his prose composition (II, pp. 34, 40-42). Each of the three chapters treated a variety of themes but in each, one particular theme was prominent. In the first it was the Parnok plot, in the second artistic digressions, and in the third digressions concerned specifically with prose. The final division into eight chapters distorted the very faint outlines of this scheme. Each chapter became an isolated unit of shifting scenes in which a sonata form of exposition/development/recapitulation is dimly visible. Chapter I opens with a disturbing dream and develops into an equally disturbing picture of Parnok's life and misfortunes. The dream is not recapitulated directly but the depiction of Mervis' screen which closes the chapter repeats the technique of representing disturbing scenes and objects in a modified manner. Similarly in Chapter III the marvellous depiction of the real laundry is 'recapitulated' at the end of the chapter in the modified and 'unrealistic' imagery of a ceiling painting. Chapters II and V share the feature of opening with a description of Petersburg and closing with an allusion to some part of it (II - Kamenoostrovskiy prospekt; V - the cabby). The exposition and recapitulation of Chapters IV, VI and VIII are concerned with the first plot line. Chapter IV is the most directly threatening, with its insistence upon the crowd - the opening picture of the dentist (to Mandelstam a suitably horrific introduction to the crowd) and the final frightening vision of Parnok's fate (he will be swallowed like a lemon pip). Chapter VI opens with a view of Krzyżanowski and closes with his pompous procession along the Ofiterskaya; Chapter VIII begins by describing Parnok's unhappy situation and ends with Krzyżanowski's success. In contrast to the other chapters Chapter VII shows an ominous development rather than a kind of kol'tso - Mervis' funerary associations (II, p. 33) find their conclusion in the death of Bosio. The 'development' sections of the chapters are largely made up of disparate material which distorts any effect of 'sonata' structure which could be gained from the hints of recapitulation. The only distinguishable pattern in the development sections is that when Mandelstam alludes directly or indirectly to Parnok (either to the deficiencies of his character or the dangers of his situation) he often then makes an autobiographical digression - perhaps to trace the origins of their mutual misfortunes (see for example II, pp. 11, 25, 30, 38).

(d) Narrators

Egipetskaya marka is Mandelstam's only work to make use of a narrator. It is true that Puteshestvie v Armeniyu is interspersed with comments by the author, but here the tone is of a cheerful and impertinent Pushkinian digression (for example 'No ne dovol'no li?' II, p. 161) not of a confused and schizophrenic consciousness.

In the final chapter of Egipetskaya marka Mandelstam makes an ironic comment on the narrative aspect of the work: 'Какое наслаждение для повествователя от третьего лица перейти к первому!' (II, p. 41). This highly inappropriate comment highlights the diverse narration employed. The narrator assumes a variety of guises which tend to fragment the structure of the work. These are sometimes interrelated and it is often difficult to define the specific nature of each narrator. Mandelstam is present to some extent in most of the narrator figures. His most prominent function is to interrupt the plot with personal asides: 'Мне представлялось ... Я почему-то был уверен ...' (II, pp. 11-12), 'А я не получу приглашения ...' (II, p. 21). Where Mandelstam as narrator is involved directly with the Parnok plot different functions can be discerned. He may offer a different interpretation of a hostile scene - in the case of the laundry scene this has the effect of softening the inimical impact of Parnok's experiences there: 'А я бы роздал девушкам вместо утюгов скрипки Страдивария ...' (II, p. 16). On other occasions Mandelstam is revealed as a narrator concerned with the fate of his hero, to whom he issues warnings and commands (for instance he advises Parnok about the dangers inherent in using the telephone - II, p. 20). Mandelstam does not always appear as such a level-headed narrator; in Chapter V he does not give advice, but is overcome by the full horror of Parnok's situation and his only wish is to be quite separate from his hero: 'Господи! ... Дай мне силы отличить себя от него ...' (II, p. 24). On certain occasions Mandelstam the concerned narrator addresses his audience directly, interpreting the nature of his characters and their preoccupations: 'На бумаге верже, государи мои ...' (II, p. 13), 'На такой бумаге, читатель ...' (II, p. 13), '... вы никогда не скажете ...' (II, p. 33). The influence of the author/narrator can be observed less directly in the use of quotation marks. These can introduce personal or topical comments: the inclusion of the Bosio passage in quotation marks suggests that he

was quoting his own unpublished story; the quotation marks used in connection with the mutterings of the fearful stone lady (II, p. 30) seem to be an allusion to a saying from student circles and the 'strig kupony' (II, p. 31) attributed to Pergament was obviously a topical saying. Sometimes Mandelstam is more direct in his use of quotation marks - in the quotation from Pushkin's Mednyy vsadnik (II, p. 37), for example, they point to the familiarity of Parnok's literary heritage.

One narrator assumes the part of an unspecified 'we':

Мы считаем на годы ... (II, p. 6)

Не Анатоля Франса хороним ... а ведем топить на
Фонтанку ... (II, p. 18)

Мы берегли его от простуды ... (II, p. 24)

In the first case the subject of the verb may be taken as 'those who follow accepted practice'; in the second the narrator summarizes the thoughts of the crowd; in the third the 'we' seems to be an extension of the personal 'nepodaleku ya' (II, p. 24). When the narrator represents the consciousness of the crowd the use of language can be quite chilling. The victim's way of life is depicted by the narrator in colloquial and derogatory terms (II, p. 18) which deprive it of all significance and value. The final phrase of this depiction is particularly unnerving, with the prefix 'po-' attached to the verb 'zhit': 'Погулял ты, человечек ... пожил ты, человечек ...' (II, p. 18). Closely related to the crowd consciousness is the interfering busybody, who constantly interpolates his own comments and pronounces judgement:

Ах Мервис, Мервис, что ты наделал! (II, p. 6)

Она, конечно, надеялась, - сумасшедшей надеждой ...
(II, p. 30)

This narrator's contributions bring to mind the style of Gogol's Petersburg stories. He is less vicious than the crowd narrator and is characterised above all by his use of colloquial language. He is very much part of the Petersburg setting and demands a close knowledge of that city:

... в одну из зеркальных лавок, которые, как
известно, все сосредоточены на Гороховой.
(II, p. 19)

Что же! Египетский мост и не нюхал Египта и ни
один порядочный человек в глаза не видал Калинкина!
(II, p. 20)

It is interesting to note that where Mandelstam aligns himself with the interfering narrator in the use of colloquial language, the intention is sarcastic: 'Я, признаться, люблю Мервиса, люблю его слепое лицо ...' (II, p. 33). The use of 'priznat'sya' here highlights the contradiction contained in this profession of love, for Mervis is obviously a character who does not win Mandelstam's approbation. His blindness is perhaps an outward manifestation of his unscrupulous nature: he is blind to the injustices which he perpetrates and such injustices are evidently common in the world of Egipetskaya marka. The only possible 'love' which Mandelstam could have felt was an envy that he too could not become blind and therefore no longer be tormented by what he saw around him (for Nadezhda Yakovlevna's description of this kind of 'blindness' see N.Ya. II, pp. 566-568). The formula 'ya lyublyu' is, indeed, one of the leitmotifs of contradiction in the work, indicating in each case a lack of love for the object named. This 'love' is usually qualified by a colloquial aside:

Люблю, грешный человек, жужжание бормашины ... (II, p. 15)

Я люблю, я уважаю страх. Чуть было не сказал "с ним мне не страшно!"

(II, p. 41)

The contradictory nature of the 'lyublyu' formula is first seen in 'Kholodnoe leto', where Mandelstam's portrayal of bankers as wild animals in cages throws the genuineness of his proclaimed love for banks into question (II, p. 132). Of greater relevance to Egipetskaya marka is a passage in Shum vremeni, where Mandelstam professes a love for those very same things which inspire fear in Egipetskaya marka: 'И я любил страну, где все женщины безукоризненные прачки, а извозчики похожи на сенаторов' (II, p. 62).

(e) Temporal and spatial displacement

The impression of confusion which emerges in Egipetskaya marka is due partly to Mandelstam's use of temporal and spatial displacement. He not only makes rapid and unexplained changes of place - from a Warsaw room to the Tauride Palace Gardens, for example (II, p. 39) - but even moves the Theban Sphinxes from the Akademiya khudozhestv to the University (II, p. 10, see also II, p. xiv). Both places and people are unstable, liable to movement and metamorphosis. There are suggestions of supernatural existence when it is suggested that the cabby be transferred from this world to the Zodiac

(II, p. 29). The real and the unreal are deliberately fused: whereas the 'real' Petersburg cabby is more suited to the mythical world of the Zodiac, the products of the realm of fantasy are quite suited for existence in the real world: '... создания вашей фантазии не пропадут в мире ...' (II, p. 41). Even names change mid-paragraph: Geshka Rabinovich becomes Genrikh Yakovlevich (II, p. 30) and characters may become fused - as the composite figure of the mosquito demonstrates (see above p. 68).

The tenses of verbs blur the borderline between past and present. Scenes concerned with historical events are described in both past and present tenses. The Kerensky summer is depicted in the past tense (II, p. 15) but the portrayal of the Cossack squadron, so much a feature of the period, is in the present tense (II, p. 40). A particularly striking example of a change in tense in the description of the historical scene is the following:

В мае месяце Петербург чем-то напоминает адресный стол,
не выдающий справок ... справки никогда и никому не
выдаются ... В это время проходили через площадь
глухонемые ...

(II, pp. 22-23)

The historical period is described in the immediate terms of the present tense. Having set the scene in this way, Mandelstam introduces a sudden contrast with the imperfective verb 'prokhodili' and the phrase 'V eto vremya' increases the confusion, for it is quite unclear what precise 'time' this is. Mandelstam tampers with the natural progress of time by his use of tenses. Events can follow a highly concentrated pattern, as in the case of the portrayal of Bosio, where an atmosphere of immediacy and inevitability reigns. The passage treating her acquaintance with Russia opens in the present tense, which makes her a more immediate character than Parnok, who is treated in the same context in the past tense (II, p. 7). Bosio's expectations in the present tense ('Ona obnovlyaet', II, p. 7) are followed by the past tense in the negative statement of what actually happened: 'Пятидесятые годы ее обманули' (II, p. 7). Then a highly effective change to the future tense ('skrasit', 'zashchekochut', 'budet', II, pp. 7-8), under the influence of an indirect statement, suggests in all its immediacy what Bosio's fortune-telling ('gadaya') might have foreseen. Bosio's life is viewed on a much reduced time scale; her experiences of life in Russia were to be followed immediately by her funeral: 'А потом кавалергарды слетятся на отпевание ...'

(II, p. 8). The tense here is still an insistent indication of the inevitability of what would happen. The further description of her funeral in the past tense ('polozhili', II, p. 8) affirms this, for it shows that her death is something which actually happened.

A mixture of tenses in the case of Parnok indicates how out of place he is in his surroundings, which are generally described in the present tense (the kitchen, II, pp. 6-7; the Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt, II, p. 14). Parnok himself is associated with the past tense, as can be seen, for example, in his enchantment with the map which follows on from the description of the kitchen, and his connection with the Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt: 'Парнок был человеком Каменноостровского проспекта ...' (II, p. 14). The instrumental case after 'byt' here stresses the uncertainty of Parnok's position in the unstable Kerensky summer. Parnok's situation is frequently given in the imperfective aspect (not an unusual technique for the depiction of a character and his environment) and his definite, completed actions are predictably described by the perfective ('skatilsya', II, p. 18; 'sdelal', II, p. 26). But there are examples of the use of an aspect in an unusual context. This is so in the case of Parnok's visit to the barber (II, p. 13); there are nine imperfective verbs in this passage which are applied to the actions of Parnok and his barber - a veritable '... рун несовершенного прошедшего' (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 171). The effect here is distinctly one of threat. The barber's actions are obviously hostile and the use of the imperfective prolongs this hostility - there is no perfective hint that the process is over and done with.

(f) Transfer of epithet

Transferred epithet is a common feature in Egipetskaya marka. It is used to suggest the metamorphosis which people and things undergo and to complement the technique of spatial and temporal displacement. In the latter category are the heavenly bodies, described in terms of earthly processes ('lakirovannyi meteor', II, p. 5) and the streets, depicted through an uncanny natural phenomenon ('po belomu Nevskomu', II, p. 10). An anachronistic event (the Napoleonic wars) implying threat is suggested when the air of the Kazan Cathedral acquires the nature of the flags and standards which it houses (II, p. 12). Transferred epithet is more frequent in the

case of metamorphosis - indeed it is perhaps the most important single device here. Several different kinds of metamorphosis are involved and when considered together they give a clear indication of the frightening chaos of Egipetskaya marka. Objects are both personified ('sheviotovym snom', II, p. 6; 'samolyubivyy ... benzinovyy dukh', II, p. 6; 'bezotvetstvennykh ulits', II, p. 14) and treated in terms of quite different objects ('sukonno-potolochnoe nebo', II, p. 7) and of animals ('tsyplyach'imi porshnyami', II, p. 22; 'petushinnoy kirke', II, p. 31; 'sheviotovym del'finom', II p. 42). The last of these categories is the most common and bears the uncomfortable implication that objects may suddenly come to life. On the other hand, humans and human attributes are described in terms of objects ('tramvaynyy lepet', II, p. 11; 'tramvaynoy golove', II, p. 14; 'farforovyy portnoy', II, p. 33) and animals ('ptich'em yazyke', II, p. 11; 'ovsyanyy golosom', II, p. 29). The border between animal/object/human is therefore confused and there is a strong suggestion that man is at risk not only from potentially hostile objects but also from his fellows who are rapidly regressing to the animal state.

2. Contrast

The second important prose theory is considered by N.Ya. Berkovsky to be the principle by which Mandelstam's prose is governed - he calls it the principle of 'nesoobraznost',¹⁷⁸. This is closely allied to the theory of fragmentation and therefore it is sometimes difficult to categorise certain techniques under one heading rather than the other (for example, transfer of epithet is a means of fragmentation since it splits up and alters the 'real' world, but it is also an instance of contrast, bringing together objects from different spheres). The techniques discussed in this section are felt to be most significant in terms of contrast, but their role in the fragmentary process should not be overlooked.

Mandelstam's statement of the contrast principle is to be found in his criticism of Bely's prose:

Но отсутствие всякой стилистической мысли в его новой прозе делает ее чрезвычайно элементарной ... Проза асимметрична, ее движения - движения словесной массы - движение стада, сложное и ритмичное в своей неправильности; настоящая проза - разноречивая, разлад, многоголосие, контрапункт ...

(II, p. 424)

This is a development of the fragmentation theory. Mandelstam criticises the movement of a complex verbal 'mass' in Bely's work and demands a splitting up of that mass by discord and counterpoint. Mandelstam's respect for Darwin's literary style is explained partly by the fact that Darwin was not afraid of such contrasts ('gruppiruet neskhozhee', 'Literaturnyy stil' Darvina', III, p. 176). Contrasts of many different kinds feature in all of Mandelstam's creative prose and are particularly important in Egipetskaya marka since they sustain the effects of dislocation created by his fragmentary techniques. In the creative prose he tends to choose diametrically opposed elements: for example in Shum vremeni epithets of heat and cold are attributed to the same noun ('v goryashchem/ledyanom dome', II, p. 71) and the heroic is juxtaposed to the distinctly unheroic in the case of the unattractive Vengerov (II, p. 61). The principle of contrast - of juxtaposing incongruous elements - can also be observed in the poetry. There are examples from many different spheres: lightness and heaviness ('legkiy zhar/tyazhyolyy par', I, no. 114), heat and cold ('... goryachie/snega', I, no. 114), elevated and banal ('solntse zolotoe/... yabloko prostoe', I, no. 117), strong and frail ('tyazhest'/nezhnost', I, no. 108; 'nemetskaya kaska/... merlushka legka', I, no. 179), fluid and inert ('rucheykom/podkov', I, no. 138). In the poems of the early thirties Mandelstam tends to combine elements from contrasting spheres in so consummate a fashion that the points of contrast are hardly visible. The fine poem 'Impressionizm' (I, no. 258) is an example of this. The impulses behind the picture, the process of painting and the effects of the completed work all feature in this marvellous fusion of disparate elements: the heat of the day causes the lilac to 'faint', and this inspires the 'brain' of the paint ('lilovym mozgom razogreto'). The poem does not confine itself to the artistic sphere but, via the colour of an extinguished match, alludes to the cook in his kitchen. This in turn leads to a 'domestic' image when the poem returns to the outdoor scene: 'khozyaynichaet shmel'. In general, the function of contrasts in the poetry is to highlight in a laconic manner a central theme in each poem. In 'Impressionizm' they convey the strong impression which the painting (probably by Monet) makes on all five senses. In 'Lyuteranin' (I, no. 37) the phrase 'surovoe/volnen'e' conveys all the stern simplicity of a Lutheran funeral through its contrasting elements of restraint and emotion. The combination 'goryachie/snega' (I, no. 114) implies the threat to which a singer such as Bosio was

exposed on her encounter with the cold, unhealthy climate of Petersburg - her illness was a 'goryachka'. The contrasting 'kaska/... merlushka' (I, no. 179) stresses the horrors of war in its implications of the fact that even an apparently strong and durable object such as a helmet can be destroyed, leaving its wearer a helpless victim. (Steven Broyde seems to have overlooked the force of this contrast in his assertion that this poem is a statement of Mandelstam's respect for Germany's military prowess¹⁷⁹). A particularly important form of contrast in the poetry is Mandelstam's tendency to associate an abstract feeling with a mundane substance. Invariably the two elements are suited to each other in some way: 'sherst'/tishina' (I, no. 106 - a link of pastoral calm), 'neschact'ya/dyma' (I, no. 235 - a link provided by the acridity of smoke which, like unhappiness, makes one weep). This type of contrast is an expression of Mandelstam's 'прекрасная фамильярность с миром реальных вещей ...' (Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 143). This is a vital aspect of his poetic method, as can be seen from the Barbier translations, where he often expresses the French poet's work in more direct, more concrete terms. For example, Barbier's 'Se ruaient à l'immortalité'¹⁸⁰ is transformed into the more graphic 'В бессмертье взламывали дверь' (Sov. ed., no. 278), while 'Comme des damnés en enfer'¹⁸¹ becomes 'Что грешникам в котле кипеть' (Sov. ed., no. 284) - which is all the more horrific for its cannibalistic overtones.

(i) Contrast in individual phrases in Egipetskaya marka

The role of contrasts in Egipetskaya marka is to provide a distinct structural pattern reflecting the content of the work. This pattern can most easily be discerned through an examination of individual phrases. In his introduction to The Prose of Osip Mandelstam Professor Brown notes the principle of contrast in individual phrases in Egipetskaya marka and sees a 'basic dichotomy'¹⁸² between the frail or defenceless and the strong or threatening. In fact contrasts in Egipetskaya marka's individual phrases are more far-reaching than this. The main type of contrast is perhaps best understood as the clash set up when life is threatened by a chaotic force which changes the normal nature of people and things. The importance of the contrast principle in Egipetskaya marka lies here. Several kinds of contrast come within this category. Time is

characterised by an order/chaos contrast ('tsentrobezhnaya/razmetala, II, p. 5) and government by a stable/unstable contrast ('zasedalo/limonadnoe, II, p. 15). On a more concrete level hot contrasts with cold ('kholodnoe/plamya', II, p. 5), dark with light ('chyornyy/meteor', II, p. 5) and diseased with healthy ('slepoe/izborozhdyonnoe zryachimi', II, p. 33). The borderline between the ordered and the chaotic is as fluid as that between the intervals of time. This is partly due to the fact that one element in a contrast may become affected by the characteristics of the other element. For instance, any curative, health-giving implications in the adjective 'aptechnye' (II, p. 20) - applied to telephones - are completely dispelled by the adjective 'skarlatinovogo' which follows and which therefore defines not only the telephones but the 'apteka' itself. Implications of the order/chaos dichotomy occur in ironical contrasts involving elevated and banal elements. The contrasts between 'serafimam/dushonku' (II, p. 26) is a case in point. Here the banal element is the disdainful 'dushonka' and the contrast is ironical because the traditionally elevated image of the seraphim is compromised and reduced to a similarly banal level since seraphim have already appeared in the work - in the hardly traditional setting of the laundry (II, p. 15). In the latter case they were part of the contrasting phrase 'lukavye/serafimi' and their quality of cunning contrasted with the traditional view of these angelic creatures. The elevated/banal contrast often pinpoints the triteness of the elevated element, claiming the attention of the reader by the new interpretation of very traditional imagery. For instance the 'rosy-fingered Dawn' of the last chapter might have been expected to introduce a scene of pastoral calm, but in fact it contrasts with a banal picture not devoid of threat: 'Розовоперстая Аврора/обломала свои цветные карандаши' (II, p. 40). On a more personal level, a chaotic force impinges on Mandelstam's situation as a writer - he can no longer view things clearly for the real and the unreal have become fused ('reshitel'no/chuditsya', II, p. 40). There are also suggestions of the chaos he experienced as a Jewish child in a Russian setting in the Russian/Jewish contrast ('Nikolay/Davydych', II, p. 11).

Professor Brown's frail/powerful dichotomy is therefore only one facet of the order/chaos category of contrast. Although it obviously holds good on some occasions (for example, 'korku/nezhnuyu',

II, p. 39) this is not always the case. This can be seen in the following examples which are taken from individual phrases and whole sentences. Frailty can be a negative quality - in the contrast 'lomkoy/shpagi' (II, p. 34), which occurs in the passage describing the disappearance of the surroundings, the adjective infects the sword with brittleness. In its fragile state the sword now contrasts with that incisive durability which Mandelstam craves for thought (as displayed in the image of the 'Nurmis' skates' steel). Irony is sometimes used to blur the positive and negative aspects of the powerful/frail dichotomy. A striking example of this is to be found in the last chapter: '... горящим маслом мясистые рычаги/голубушка проза ...' (II, p. 41). The frail feminine element is at the mercy of the powerful masculine, but after so trite a contrast it comes as little surprise that Mandelstam should refuse to arouse pity for the element at risk. On the contrary, he indicates that the frail element is quite capable of turning the situation to its own benefit: '... вся пущенная в длину - обмеривающая, бесстыдная ...' (II, p. 42). Suggestions of prostitution are not far to seek when Mandelstam uses this kind of contrast, which involves an ironically trite feminine diminutive (compare also 'nebritykh pokhabnikov/telegrammku', II, p. 25).

Simile and Metaphor

Similes are a very important means of expressing the order/chaos dichotomy in individual phrases and they are very numerous in Egipetskaya marka. They firmly establish a contrapuntal principle and aid fragmentation by splitting phrases into two halves. Their chief function is to emphasise the unreality of people and objects. The second half of the simile is often taken from a completely different sphere from the first and the clashes created give fine examples of 'nesoobraznost':

фарфоровый портной мечется/как каторжанин ... (II, p. 33),

лампы толпились/как идиотки-жирафы ... (II, p. 32),

Прошрое ... щекотало ноздри/как партия свежих ... чаев
(II, p. 38),

Шуман развешивает ноты/как белье для просушки ...
(II, p. 24)

The simile split by 'kak' is by far the most common in Egipetskaya marka (similes constructed with 'slovno' are less numerous and

'vrode', 'budto', 'pokhozhe', 'vse ravno, chto' occur very infrequently). It is most interesting to note that the concentration of the 'kak' simile is at its highest in passages depicting threatening situations and characters (for example the Kerensky summer, II, p. 15; the jeweller and crowd, II, p. 18; Petersburg, II, p. 20; theatre, II, p. 25; Mervis, II, p. 33). Perhaps Mandelstam preferred the 'kak' simile in such cases because of its incisive phonetic qualities. In Russian the distinction between simile and metaphor is not always as fine as it is in English, since when the instrumental case is used in qualifications it can have the force either of a metaphor or of a simile. Qualifications involving the instrumental case are not particularly common in Egipetskaya marka and whether they imply simply resemblance or total identification the important point is that they usually demonstrate elements from contrasting spheres. Voice becomes food ('tyaguchim evreyskom medom/kontral'to, II, p. 9), frosty air becomes drink ('shampanskim/moroz', II, p. 26) and an inanimate coat becomes an aquatic mammal ('Vizitka/sheviotovym del'finom', II, p. 42). There are many true metaphors in Egipetskaya marka and generally speaking these are highly inventive. Once again, the principle of 'nesoobraznost'' is striking:

Черный сахар снега ...	(II, p. 10),
... Время, робкая хризалида ...	(II, p. 18),
... широкие лестницы с колокольчиками листовских этюдов ...	(II, p. 23)

It is important to realise that in no other work does Mandelstam employ similes so consistently and so frequently. Only 'Feodosiya' approaches Egipetskaya marka in this respect - a point in keeping with the fact that this is a work which deals largely with the unreality of relationships. 'Feodosiya's own peculiar characteristic, the qualified simile, very much accords with Egipetskaya marka's theme of things not being what they seem ('kak ...no bolee pokhozhe na ...', II, p. 112; 'pokhodil ne na ...', II, p. 113). The poetry in its laconicism is far less dependent on simile than is the creative prose in its inventiveness, for simile tends to fragment and reduce the impression of immediacy and laconicism. In the period under discussion only one fifth of the poems involve the use of simile, but where similes do occur it is usually to communicate some aspect

of hostility, ill-omen or unreality - precisely those characteristics most frequent in Egipetskaya marka, where the use of simile is so predominant. For example the poem 'Квартира тиха, как бумага' (I, no. 272) is concerned with Mandelstam's revulsion at the hypocritical and mercenary principles by which he saw writers to be governed and it has an unusually high number of similes for one of his poems:

Квартира тиха, как бумага ...
Лягушкой застыл телефон ...
А я как дурак на гребенке ...
Проваренный в чистках, как соль ...
Как будто вколачивал гвозди ...
Давай же с тобой, как на плахе ...

In 'Нет, не спрятаться мне от великой мур' (I, no. 232) similes are used in the depiction of the supernatural activities of Moscow: 'А она - то сжимается как воробей, / То растет, как воздушный шар ...'. Similes are prominent too in the poem 'Жизнь упала как зарница' (I, no. 198), where Mandelstam deals with the 'zaresnichnaya strana', that imaginary land where Ol'ga Vaksel' could have been his wife.

(ii) Contrast sustained in individual sections

Some of the contrasts set up in an individual phrase or sentence in Egipetskaya marka may be sustained over a whole section. The characterisation of Mervis, for example, is built entirely on the contrasts fragile/destructive, seeing/blind (II, pp. 33-34), but by far the most impressive example of sustained contrast is to be found in the laundry passage (II, pp. 14-16), which Berkovsky has described as an instance of 'ostraya prelest' nesovpadeniy¹⁸³. It is unusual in that a chapter is almost entirely devoted to it. The chapter opens with an introduction to Parnok's laundry adventure - his enlistment of Father Bruni's support (II, p. 14). This is followed by an impressionistic representation of the historical scene (II, p. 15, lines 1-8, which is continued at intervals during the chapter, for example, p. 15, lines 18-20), the function here being to stress the hostility of the background against which Parnok's visit takes place. It is in the depiction of the historical scene that the play on contrasts begins. Firstly, the stable and unstable are contrasted ('stoyalо', 'zasedalo', 'bylo prigotovleno' / 'limonadnoe'). Secondly, there is a contrast between the traditionally evil omens - ravens and an eclipse - and an omen of a far more

mundane nature, namely the disappearance of false teeth. Contrast plays an important part in the depiction of Parnok and Father Bruni in the laundry itself: '... Парнок, прикрываясь авторитетом отделенной от государства церкви/препирался с хозяйкой' (II, p. 15). Mandelstam continually takes the ground from under Parnok's feet by means of such contrast. The literary, even bureaucratic terms of the first part of the above sentence contradict the colloquial terms in which Parnok's attitude is expressed: the verb 'prepirat'sya' is not only colloquial, but has the added implication of arguing about trivialities. At the same time it is clear that Parnok's protection, which features in the pompous words of the first part of the quotation, will be no protection at all, for the 'authority' of the Church quails with nervous modesty and embarrassment before the 'batistovye melochi' (II, p. 15, lines 14-17).

The laundry itself and those who work in it are depicted in a picture built up from an impressive series of contrasts which feature in the objects described and in their phonetic representation. In the former case the contrasts are basically between lightness and heaviness and in the latter Mandelstam makes full use of those consonants most suited to the spluttering and hissing noises of the laundry. These consonants were to Mandelstam the vital components of the Russian language, as he explains in appropriately alliterative terms in 'Zametki o poezii': 'Русский стих насыщен согласными и цокает, и щелкает, и свистит ими' (II, p. 261). These are the sounds described in Shum vremeni as able to portray strong sensations: '... предпочтение патриархальным и воинственным согласным звукам боли и нападения, обиды и самозащиты' (II, p. 105). The use of these consonants is in evidence in a detail which shows that the omens are not good for Parnok: 'Жареный мокко в мешочке отца Бруни щекотал ноздри разъяренной матроны' (II, p. 15). The alliterative 'r' conveys the anger of the lady and the verb 'shchekotat'' fulfils its usual function in Mandelstam's work of representing the presence of an irritant (compare Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, II, p. 176). The deeper Parnok and Father Bruni penetrate into the laundry, the more the use of consonants is apparent: 'Они углубились в горячее облако

прачешной, где шесть шебечущих девушек плели, катали и гладили' (II, p. 15). The assonance of 'uglubilis'' clashes with the biting consonants of 'goryachee', and there is a similar phonetic contrast between 'goryachee' itself and the noun which it defines, 'oblako'. Mandelstam's skill is especially prominent in the second half of the sentence, where the six bird-like laundry girls assume the hissing characteristics of their surroundings (sh, shch, ch). The stresses in this part of the sentence give a light and rapid rhythm: -/-/--/---. This is the 'light' aspect of the laundry. With the phrase 'ploili, katali i gladili' implications of heaviness are introduced; the preponderance of vowels and the alliterative 'l' slow the rhythm down. The regular pattern of stresses in the first two verbs (-/- - / -) contrasts with that of the last verb (/ - -), where the initial stress conveys the heavy movement of an iron as it is brought down on to a surface. In these lines (II, p. 15, lines 23-24) the contrast is between the laundry girls and their actions, whereas later it is between the girls and their irons (II, p. 15, lines 25-28). Their frivolity is not lessened by the heavy tools which they must wield: the playfulness implied in the verb 'kuraletsi' is set against the 'zverski tyazhyolye utyugi'. There is a phonetic contrast in the movement of the irons which both hiss ('shipeli, sovershaya reysi') and move with the cumbersome dignity of a large ship, expressed in the verb 'gulyali', whose sounds first introduced the idea of the heaviness of the irons ('gladili'). They cannot subdue the feminine frivolity of the linen, however - it is 'vzdor', 'meloch' with the lightness of foam or whipped cream. The latter is an image which occurs in 'Sukharyovka' (II, p. 135) where it creates just such an effect of lightness: '... чуть не наступил на белую пену кружевных оборок, взбитых как сливки ...'. The combination of whiteness and beaten foam seems to be one which Mandelstam associates with charmingly trivial feminine occupations:

И ты пытаешься желток
Взбивать рассерженною ложкой.
Он побелел, он изнемог.
И все-таки еще немножко.

(I, no. 120)

The additional feature of anger in the above poem to Arbenina appears in a similar combination of imagery in the Barbier translation 'Eto zyb' (Sov. ed. no. 280), but its use is far more hostile here. In Egipetskaya marka and the Arbenina poem traces of 'anger' suggest a

feverish and perhaps vain dispensing of energy. Once again, the elements contrasted do not fall strictly to the negative or the positive side. The girls are aligned with the linen in terms of frivolity, but the redness of their fingers contrasts with the creamy, foam-like appearance of their wares ('Utyugi v krasnykh ... pal'tsakh', II, p. 15).

The depiction of the laundry itself and its transformation into a ceiling painting provide an example of the elevated/banal dichotomy. It is no angelic quality which leads Mandelstam to associate the girls with cherubim, but the roundness of their faces as they go about their everyday tasks: 'Набрав в рот воды, эти лукавые серафимы прыскали ею на зефирный и батистовый вздор' (II, p. 15). The cherubim image forms the starting point for other elevated/banal contrasts involved in the laundry's transformation. The lightness of the Stradivarius violins which the narrator would give the girls evidently contrasts with the heaviness of the irons and in addition clashes with a mundane element: '... скрипки Страдивария, легкие, как скворешни ...' (II, p. 16). Mandelstam identifies the most respected of violins with the starling house - symbol of comforting domesticity. Father Bruni's cassock is part of an elevated/banal contrast on three occasions. On the first the contrast is explicit: '... пар осаждался на его рясу, как на домашнюю вешалку' (II, p. 16). On the second, where Father Bruni's Orthodox 'ryasa' is transformed into a Catholic 'sutana', the contrast is implied in the application of the colloquial verb 'soyti' to the depiction of ceremonial vestments. The third contrast is provided by the mundane clouds of laundry steam which suggest the heavenly clouds of ceiling paintings: 'Ряса в облаках пара ...' (II, p. 16). The final contrast in the laundry passage is between the laundresses and the cherubim of The Concert and it serves to stress the banality of the actual scene. Here again the elevated element ('udivlyonnymi kruzhochkami') seems somewhat trite in comparison with Mandelstam's graphic description of the laundresses' true nature: 'Шесть круглых ртов раскроются не дырками бубликов с Петербургской стороны, а удивленными кружочками "Концерта в Палаццо Питти"' (II, p. 16). Mandelstam's flair for depicting the banal so delightfully brings to mind the fact that this was a quality he valued in others, as is made clear in his article on Villon: '... он сразу оживляется, когда речь заходит о жареных под

coycom утках ...' (II, p. 306).

(iii) Contrast expressed in the mixing of disparate styles

Mandelstam's creative prose is consistent in its mixing of disparate styles. In Shum vremeni he mixes measured statements concerned with topical references (II, p. 97, lines 3-16) with impressionistic pictures (II, p. 97, lines 17-27); in 'Chetvyortaya proza' balanced and rhetorical sentences (II, p. 189, Chapter 14) differ from the rhyming and rhythmic language of folklore (II, pp. 186-187, Chapter 11). Egipetskaya marka features elevated and rhetorical styles and elements of folk-tale language. The various styles contrast not only with each other but also with the material which they depict. The bringing together of disparate styles is another feature which contributes to the fragmentary nature of the work.

(a) Balanced style

Mandelstam frequently chooses to depict an ominous scene in a very balanced way and thereby creates a contrast between style and content which highlights the disturbing nature of the scene: 'По Гороховой улице с молитвенным шорохом двигалась толпа' (II, pp. 16-17). Here place has its traditional position at the beginning of the sentence, followed by an adverbial phrase and verb, and, finally, the ominous subject. The further portrayal of the crowd provides another example of balanced style:

Где-то между Сенной и Мучным переулком, в москательном
и кожевенном мраке, в диком питомнике перхоти, клопов
и оттопыренных ушей, зародилась эта странная кутерьма,
распространявшая тошноту и заразу.

(II, p. 17)

The location, the trades carried out and the unpleasant features which thrive there are described in phrases which balance almost exactly. Each is depicted by a phrase made up of two parts ('Sennoy i Muchnym'/'moskatel'nom i kozhzhevenom'/'v dikom pitomnike perkhoti, klopov i ottopyryennykh ushey'). The verb and the subject follow in an extended statement which again falls into two parts ('zarodilas' eta .../rasprostranyavshaya ...'). Repetition and balanced rhythm are used to focus attention on what is concerned not with balance and measure, but with threat and chaos. The following sentence is of this nature:

Под лебяжьим, гагачьим, гагаринским пухом -- под
тучковыми тучками, под французским буше умирающих
набережных, под зеркальными зенками барско-
холуйских квартир обнаружится нечто совсем
неожиданное.

(II, pp. 37-38)

The sentence is firmly structured by the repetitive 'pod' clauses and by the alliterative 't', 'g', and 'z'. Of the twenty intervals between stresses fourteen have two unstressed syllables, four have three unstressed and the remaining two, four unstressed. The rhythmic effect created by the predominantly regular stress (with the two unstressed intervals) is enhanced by the rhyming effect of the nouns and adjectives agreeing with the 'pod' clauses.

A balanced style can be used to highlight the mundane nature of things. Rhetorical exclamation provides an example of this:

Петербург, ты отвечаешь за бедного твоего сына!

За весь этот сумбур, за жалкую любовь к музыке,
за каждую крупинку 'драже' в бумажном мешочке у
курсистки на хорах Дворянского собрания ответишь ты,
Петербург!

(II, p. 30)

Here the repetitive 'za' clauses grow more hostile as they increase in length each time; the change in emphasis from the present 'ty otvechaesh'' ('you are responsible for') to the rhetorically inverted 'otvetish' ty' ('you will answer for') accords with this increase in hostility. The contrast lies in the fact that such rhetorical means are used to convey Petersburg's guilt and responsibility not, for instance, in respect of one of the great historical upheavals which the city witnessed, but with regard to the little man, Parnok, and the dragées consumed by girl students. Similarly banality and rhetoric clash in the passage 'Ved' i ya stoyal ... nakhokhlennym, zimmim' (II, p. 25) where inversion leads once more to increased emphasis on rhetorical structure: 'Ved' i ya stoyal ... Ved' i teatr mne ... Ved' i derzhus' ya ...'. Here the rhetorical framework contrasts with the host of subordinate clauses which qualify the verbs and which abound in banal detail. Mandelstam leaves no noun unqualified: 'Ведь и театр мне страшен, как курная изба, как деревенская банька, где совершалось зверское убийство ради полушубка и валеных сапог' (II, p. 25).

(b) Folk-tale style

From time to time Mandelstam employs folk-tale elements (for example rhyming prose). Normally the vehicle for childhood stories and myths, this style is used in his creative prose to contrast with and highlight the serious or threatening nature of scenes depicted. In 'Chetvyortaya proza' (where folk-style is used to an even greater degree than in Egipetskaya marka) the position of Bukharin's secretary is also described in rhyming folk language:

'У Николая Ивановича есть секретарша - правда, правдочка, совершенная белочка, маленький грызунок' (II, p. 186). She is not obviously a hostile figure, but her folk-tale characterisation contrasts with and helps to convey the danger inherent in the position of secretary to one so highly placed in the Party apparatus. The most extreme example of folk style used in this way is in the neatly rhyming sentences and phrases in the horrific little poem in Chapter 11 of 'Chetvyortaya proza', which is couched in diminutive terms (II, p. 187). Mandelstam's description of 'Mother Philology' would divide conveniently to give two or four lines of poetry: 'Была вся кровь, /вся непримиримость/а стала псякрев, /стала всетерпимость' (II, p. 184). 'Chetvyortaya proza' makes use of folk-tale elements when Mandelstam is at his most bitterly sarcastic - a technique not in evidence in Egipetskaya marka. For example the fiendish glee of the deathly newspaper editor is stated in colloquial terms (II, p. 181, lines 6-9) as is the passage dealing with the ills inflicted upon Mandelstam by official documents:

Здесь имя звучит вполне объективно: звук, новый
для слуха и, надо сказать, весьма интересный. Мне и
самому подчас любопытно: что это я все так не делаю.
Что это за фрукт такой этот Мандельштам ...

(II, p. 189)

'Feodosiya' provides examples of the rhyming and rhythmic language of folk tales, but these are chiefly in the depictions of hostile locales: '... в раскаленную глушь верхнего города-града, /копыт хватало на четыре квартала ...' (II, p. 122).

Generally speaking colloquialisms also have a sarcastic import in the critical prose:

Для разбега Дюамель ... придумывает поэтичный легенды:
для Финляндии немного из Калевалы ... для Голландии
историйку с Саваофом ... для Греции, чутьочку археологии ...

('Zhorzh Dyumel'', III, p. 88)

The colloquial sarcasm directed at the Symbolists' insistence on depriving objects of their true identity is reminiscent of a folk-tale curse: 'Нельзя зажечь огня, потому что это может значить такое, что сам потом не рад будешь' ('O prirode slova', II, p. 255). Mandelstam's sarcasm in the critical prose can also involve very apt mockery. In the article 'Detskaya literatura' he describes one worthy lady's attempts to adapt her own childrens' literature to demands for realism and he uses the colloquial terms which she herself might have employed in her childrens' stories: 'Но и она не сразу попала в точку и долго бродила вокруг да около' (III, p. 50).

In the poetry folk-tale elements and colloquialisms occur infrequently and are usually connected with Mandelstam's own difficulties in terms of physical and creative conditions: 'А ведь раньше лучше было ...' (I, no. 129). The supernatural often features where folk-tale language is used:

Дай-ка я на тебя погляжу -
Ведь лежать мне в сосновом гробу! ...
Тишь да глушь у нее, вошь да мша,
Полуспапенка, полутюрьма ...

(I, no. 231)

Чур-чур меня! Далеко ль до беды!
И в лабиринте влажного распева
Такая душно стрекочет мгла,
Как будто в гости водяная дева
К часовщику подземному пришла.

(I, no. 213)

Similarly, in Egipetskaya marka itself Mandelstam employs folk-style to depict threatening matters. For instance, he uses a 'poetic' folk-style form (with colloquialisms) to suggest his own disturbing position:

- Сыщики-барышники, барышники-сыщики,
Что вы на морозе, миленькие, рыщете?
Кому билет в ложу,
А кому в рожу.

(II, p. 28)

Folk style is also used to highlight less threatening matters in Egipetskaya marka and the inspiration here is parody rather than fear. The atmosphere of the passage describing the Lutherans (II, p. 31, lines 21-29) is that of a folk-tale and it provides a humorous contrast with the strictness of their nature and religion. There are four sentences of approximately equal length here, three of which begin with the insistent phrase 'Ekhalı taratayki'. Each one contains a description given in a simile: '... kak krovel'noye zhelezo', 'sypalis' gorokhom', 'v yubkakh, tvyordykh, kak zhest''.

The number of cabriolets is given in the manner of a folk-tale ('двадцать одна и еще четыре ...') and the passage ends with a 'kol'tso': '... той же дорогой вернуться домой ...', an echo of the phrase which opened the paragraph: '... по твердой шоссе-ной дорогой ...'. Aunt Vera, who represents the Lutherans, is also to a certain extent depicted in the language of a folk-tale. Initially no contrast is implied in this, since such language - with its repetitive and proverbial elements - is quite appropriate to the description of Aunt Vera's 'mythical' father, Pergament: 'У него была квартира в сорок комнат ... На улице под сорока комнатами ... "Дом - полная чаша"' (II, p. 31). A greater contrast is implicit in the depiction of Aunt Vera's totally unspontaneous nature by devices reminiscent of the folk-tale. The phrase introducing her is balanced and alliterative; both parts of the phrase have four syllables, feature the letters 't' and 'r' and create a rhyming effect: 'Tyotya Vera - lyuteranka' (II, p. 31). The spinster's stiff and uncompromising character is further conveyed by the rigidly emphatic rhythm which describes her singing: '... подпевала прихожанам в красной кирке на Мойке'. The contrast within this phrase itself should be noted - the change from the alliterative 'p' to 'k' and the accompanying change of rhythm, as the stress moves from the third to the first syllable.

(iv) Contrasting sentence structures

Sentences in Mandelstam's prose vary in length and construction. Some are long and fluent, others short and staccato. The long sentences are the chief means by which he creates his balanced and rhetorical style. In both creative and critical prose they are extended in the main by the use of dual and triple qualification. The opening sentence of Shum vremeni provides an example of this; here the triple qualification strikes a balance with the two word phrases surrounding it (II, p. 45). In the critical prose multiple qualification provides the most important structural feature:

... составляет необходимейшую принадлежность¹ и часть²
... обуславливает его возможность¹ и безопасность² в
не меньшей степени, чем исправность¹ руля или
бесперебойность² мотора.

(Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 382)

(For further examples of dual qualification see II, pp. 209, 210, 215, 216, 224, 231, 248, 280, 305, 306, 342, 351; III, pp. 40, 55, 111, 130). In the case of triple qualification the last element is sometimes expanded into a phrase composed of three parts:

... загро¹можда²я его пути, раз³враща⁽¹⁾я его совесть,
дела⁽²⁾я его сгов⁽³⁾орчи⁽³⁾вым, уклон⁽³⁾чивым, приме⁽³⁾рительно-
безличным.

('Zhak rodil'sya i umer', III, p. 60)

(For further examples of triple qualification see II, pp. 389, 392, 412; III, pp. 100, 101, 110, 130, 139, 146, 155, 167; for triple qualification with expansion of the last element see II, pp. 403, 406; III, p. 173).

Mandelstam's sense of rhythm is very much present in the critical prose. It is achieved by repetition, multiple qualification (especially of verbs) and alliteration. In the following phrase the stress is at a further remove with each successive verb, thus building up to a greater emphasis on the last verb: 'Он морщ¹ится, гримас²ничает, приве³редничает ...' ('Vypad', II, p. 229). Mandelstam is especially fond of using rhythmic alliteration when he is depicting some kind of movement: '... время мчит¹ся обратно с шумом и свистом, как прегражденный поток ...' ('Pushkin i Skryabin', II, p. 314). The letters 'm', 's', 'sh', 'p', 'r' have an alliterative force which enhances the rhythm created by the regular stresses. There are fewer unstressed syllables here than in the greater part of the critical prose. In the less graphic expository passages there is an average of four or five unstressed syllables, rather than the intervals of one or two unstressed seen in the rhythmic passage from 'Pushkin i Skryabin'. It is interesting to note that where Mandelstam deals with language, poetry or poets, the prose tends to be more rhythmic, more alliterative: 'Зато каждое слово словаря Даля есть орешек Акрополя, маленький Кремль, крылатая крепость ...' ('O prirode slova', II, p. 251). This is especially true of the Razgovor o Dante: '... размер и ритм шагов ...' (II, p. 367),
... Он пишет под диктовку, он переписчик, он переводчик ...' (II, p. 406).

In both critical and creative prose short sentences are used to contrast with the long rhetorical structures. Extremely short sentences give impressionistic descriptions of invariably hostile

scenes:

Пушкина хоронили ночью. Хоронили тайно.

('Pushkin i Skryabin', II, p. 313)

compare

Ослепнуть. Осязать и узнавать слухом. Печальный удел!

(Shum vremeni, II, p. 103)

More frequently short sentences in the critical work act as the bearer of an important idea (a function which they also carry out in the creative prose):

Нет лирики без диалога. ('O sobesednike', II, p. 239)

compare

В поэзии всегда война. ('Zametki o poezii', II, p. 260)

Mandelstam's letters, which must also be considered to be part of his prose oeuvre, bear the stamp of his other prose. They are characterised by short impressionistic sentences (the logical form when paper was short and letters frequent), multiple qualification and an awareness of the rhythmic nature of language:

Беспорядок. Грязь. Холод. (III, p. 202),

Тепло. Тихо. Татка. Тихонечко работаю. (III, p. 211),

... за жизнь, за радость, за словечки ... (III, p. 214),

... то мороз, то грязь, то оттепель ... (III, p. 227)

The various sentence structures employed in the poetry are necessarily not as complex as those of the prose. In the great majority of the poems each stanza is composed of one sentence; where the poem is made up of four-line stanzas, as is frequently the case, there is little room for complexity. However, within the confines of poetic form there are reflections of Mandelstam's prose tendency to extend a sentence by multiple qualification. In the poem 'Язык булыжника мне голубя понятней' (I, no. 138) a long sentence in the first paragraph permits Mandelstam to use two examples of triple qualification, with an extended third element in each case:

- Здесь толпы¹ детские, событий² попрошайки,
Парижских воробьев испуганные стайки
3 { Клевали наскоро крупу свинцовых крох,
Фригийской бабушкой рассыпанный горох,
1 И в воздухе плывет забытая коринка,
2 И в памяти живет плетеная корзинка,
3 { И тесные дома - зубов молочных ряд -
На деснах старческих как близнецы стоят.

In the poems composed of shorter sentences the use of multiple qualification reflects the poet's anxiety to convey the many impressions and sensations of which he was so much aware:

Рожаящий, спящий, орущий,
К земле пригвожденный народ. (I, no. 217)

Наслаждается мускатом
На язык, на вкус, на цвет ...
Пахнет городом, потоком,
Нет - жасмином, нет - укропом,
Нет - дубовою корой. (I, no. 263)

Contrasting sentence and phrase lengths are not as prominent a feature in the poetry as in the prose, although they certainly are in evidence. As in the prose, the function of short sentences can be the impressionistic setting of the scene:

Бессонница. Гомер. Тугие паруса (I, no. 78)

Огромный парк. Вокзала шар стеклянный (I, no. 125)

Уже светает. Шумят сады зеленым ... (I, no. 260)

They can also act as the 'kernel' of the poem, resuming an important point or carrying the main imagery:

Бал-маскарад. Век-волкодав (I, no. 230)

Не волноваться. Нетерпенье - роскошь (I, no. 247)

Often short sentences can convey a hostile atmosphere:

Прозрачна даль. Немного винограда (I, no. 111)

Я опоздал. Мне страшно. Это сон. (I, no. 125)

In the second paragraph of 'Язык бульжника мне голубя понятней' (I, no. 138) a long sentence is composed of short phrases, which convey the heated and inimical activity of revolution:

Но все-таки скажу: я помню одного,
Он лапу поднимал, как огненную розу,
И как ребенок всем показывал занозу,
Его не слушали; смеялись кучера,
И грызла яблоки, с шарманкой, детвора,
Афиши кленли, и ставили капканы,
И пели песенки, и жарили каштаны ... (I, no. 138)

Short sentences and phrases obviously also contribute to the breathless effect which was to become so much a feature of Mandelstam's Voronezh poetry (for example I, nos. 301, 359). Punctuation plays a part here, but there is little striking use of the comma and the dash until the Voronezh work. However, aposiopesis is in evidence earlier in Mandelstam's poetic oeuvre; the series of three dots is often used to break off distressing thoughts (I, no. 140, stanza 4; no. 197, line 12; no. 220, line 2; no. 228, stanzas 3, 6).

Egipetskaya marka very much follows the patterns of sentence structure indicated above. Long sentences contrast with short sentences and phrases. The latter are the bearers of an important idea, giving in a nutshell what has just been discussed or what will shortly be discussed, and they are used to sustain an atmosphere of immediacy and panic within certain sections. Short sentences reveal the 'cutting and sticking' technique (II, p. 25) - they are split up by various forms of punctuation which have the effect of fragmenting a sentence or drawing attention to certain parts. Commas are used liberally in Egipetskaya marka and they create a rather breathless, jerky style:

Он ощущал полено, как живое, в руке (II, p. 11)

... Давыдовыч, то есть сам Шапиро, кланяется,
вобрав голову в плечи ... (II, p. 11)

The short phrases which they enclose often contrast with longer phrases within individual sentences (for example II, p. 27, lines 9-12). The most striking and effective forms of punctuation are the dash and the series of three dots. The dash fulfils its usual functions of introducing direct speech and replacing the present tense of the verb 'to be'. Like the comma it sometimes tends to split up the sentence (making the reader pause), creating a breathless, telegraphic effect. This is the case when it serves as a link to relate thoughts or encloses parenthetical explanations. It is important to note that it usually appears in threatening contexts (the mosquito passage, II, p. 38; the treatment to be meted out to Parnok, II, p. 11; the description of Mandelstam's 'love' for dentists, II, p. 15). The series of three dots, a form of aposiopesis, frequently breaks off thoughts which are evidently too uncomfortable to be dwelt on or developed - they therefore often occur in the same type of context as the dash (II, p. 11; II, p. 38; see also the description of Petersburg's telephones, II, p. 26, lines 24-27).

(a) Sentence structures in fragmentary passages

Striking rhythmic, phonetic and visual contrasts are set up between short sentences and the longer sentences and clauses. Variations in presentation and sentence length are made most obvious by the insertion of fragmentary passages which contrast with surrounding material. For example, Mandelstam interrupts his

imaginative interpretation of the oil-stove and his own experiences of the oil-lamp as a child with a series of sentences set out in a manner quite distinct from the surrounding text:

Я не боюсь бессвязности и разрывов.
Стригу бумагу длинными ножницами.
Подклеиваю ленточки бахромкой.
Рукопись - всегда буря, истрепанная, исклеванная.
Она - черновик сонаты.
Марать - лучше, чем писать.
Не боюсь швов и желтизны клея.
Портняжу, бездельничаю.
Рисую Марата в чулке.
Стрижей.

(II, p. 25)

This passage brings to mind the device of 'obnazhenie priyoma' practised by Viktor Shklovsky in his Sentimental'noe puteshestvie: 'Мне скажут, что это сюда не относится. А мне какое дело. Я-то должен носить все в душе?'¹⁸⁴. Mandelstam's 'baring of device' is a little less straightforward. It is created not by direct address to the reader, but by separation from the text in terms both of subject and presentation. The fact that the sentences are placed on separate lines highlights their brevity - had they been set out in an ordinary paragraph Mandelstam would not have drawn attention to the important ideas on writing which he puts forward here with such urgency in the increasingly telegraphic and breathless style.

(b) Contrasting structure within individual sections

The passage on musical notation (II, p. 24, lines 1-16) provides an interesting example of contrasting sentence structure within an individual section. Here the short sentences create an impression of chaos. An initial build-up in both sentence and clause length, followed by a return to the original lengths can be seen. Two ten-word sentences introduce an atmosphere of panic and danger (II, p. 24, lines 1-4) which is conveyed by a regular rhythm and the highly alliterative 'k', 'g', 't', 's', 'r':

'... всегда расклеван до косточек и исхлестан бурей' (II, p. 24).

A most interesting sentence of forty-four words follows. In the first part of this short clauses are concerned with a banal, Parnok-like musical interpretation: '... подвешивая бемоли к ржавым крюкам, укрепляя флюгера дизелов, снимая целые вывески поджарых тактов ...' (II, p. 24). The second part of the sentence gives a more romantic interpretation and is extended accordingly: '... когда кавалерия восьмых и шестнадцатых в бумажных сутанах с конскими значками и

штандартиками рвется в атаку ...' (II, p. 24). Following this is a sentence of approximately the same length as the first two. The impression of a neat 'kol'tso' which this recapitulation in length provides is instantly dispelled by the fragmentary nature of the next paragraph, with its implications of danger: 'Большеголовые дети. Скворцы. Распрягают карету князя. Шахматисты выбегают из кофейен, размахивая ферзями и пешками' (II, p. 24). The structural balance in this list of chaos should be noted. The first and third phrases are of roughly equal length (eight and nine syllables respectively), punctuated by the single-word sentence 'skvortsy'. In the last sentence the two phrases are of exactly the same length.

A similar principle of Parnok-like language contrasting with rhetorical sentences is applied in the discussion of Parnok's characteristic inclinations ('Он любил дровянные склады и дрова ... исключительно о высоких материях' II, p. 11). The first paragraph is made up of five short sentences (with an average of six words in each) in which the phrases are short and breathless: 'Он ощущал полено, как живое, в руке' (II, p. 11 - note the repetitive rhythm here). On the other hand the second paragraph comprises only one sentence of forty-six words, in which the clauses are extended to the furthest possible limit: '... и в отместку он говорил с ними на диком и выпрленном птичьим языке исключительно о высоких материях' (II, p. 11). The variation in sentence lengths represents the contrast between the two types of language being described - the impressionistic, imaginative language which Parnok would ideally use, and the complicated kind which social practice demands.

Contrasting sentence lengths within a section can follow a pattern. In the depiction of the Cossacks' song (II, p. 40) the pattern is quite distinct: twenty words, nine, twelve, nine and twenty-five words. The 'kol'tso' effect is complemented by other regular devices which seem to be a parody (rather than an imitation) of song structure. The first sentence has an emphatic, rather trite rhythm which perhaps conveys the regular movement of the horses. This rhythm stops short with the final stress: 'Можно сказа́ть и за́жмури́в гла́за, что́ ё́то пою́т ко́нники ...' (II, p. 40). The irony reflected in the rhythm is expressed in the description of the song, which is not explicitly mentioned in the first sentence (II, p. 40,

lines 23-25) but ironically included in the second: 'i zazhmuriv glaza' - the emphasis is on seeing here and not on hearing, which for Mandelstam was the vital activity in both music and poetry.

(c) Contrasting structures between sections

The mixing of structures can be seen on a larger scale by comparing consecutive passages. For example, the long rhetorical sentences describing the Petersburg air (II, pp. 37-38) are juxtaposed with the short fragmentary phrases and clauses of the mosquito, which form a horrible parody of poetry (II, p. 38). This in turn is followed by the sentences of a biblical structure which define a given word. The nature of the long rhetorical sentences preceding the mosquito passage has already been noted above (section 2 (iii)). There an incantatory effect was produced by devices of rhyming and repetition. The effect of the mosquito passage is similar, but the means by which the effect is obtained are rather different. Sentences are either very short or so divided by the use of aposiopesis that the unity of the sentence is broken:

- Я князь невезенья - коллежский асессор из города
Фив ... Все такой-же - ничуть не изменился -- ой,
страшно мне здесь - извиняюсь ...

(II, p. 38)

This obviously fragmentary form creates once more a sense of breathlessness and urgency and it contrasts with certain regular devices in the section. The regular refrain 'izvinyayus'' and the insistent references to the first person singular (fourteen in all) recur with the monotonous regularity of a funeral knell and create an atmosphere of fateful hostility. Although the sentences are fragmented with dashes, the phrases which they enclose are finely balanced:

- я плакальщик, пестун, пластун - я маленький
князь - раскоряка - я нищий Рамзес-кровопийца - я
на севере стал ничем - от меня так мало осталось ...

(II, p. 38)

This could almost be the stanza of a poem. Each phrase is composed of approximately the same number of words and each is very rhythmic: the alliterative 'p' and 'l' of the first phrase, 'k' and 'r' of the second and third, 's' of the fourth, and the frequent regular stresses (only one or two unstressed syllables between each stress) contribute to this effect. Rhyme, the only poetic feature missing

in this sentence, is provided at a later stage: '... на копейку - египетской кашки, на копейку -- девической шейки' (II, p. 38). The use of 'poetic' form here - the closest approximation to such form in the work - is horribly threatening in view of the elements of fragmentation which reflect the mosquito's wasting disease. Small wonder Parnok stands in need of comfort after listening to this incantation. Mandelstam turns to biblical structure to represent this comfort as he lists and defines words from Parnok's 'domestic dictionary'. Here a regular formation lends to Parnok's own 'comfortable words' the air of a set of rules or commandments:

- 'Не коверкай' - так говорили о жизни.
- 'Не командуй' - так гласила одна из заповедей.

(II, p. 38)

There is internal contrast within the passage in the application of biblical forms to banal objects: '" - Подкова" - так называлась булочка с маслом' (II, p. 38).

3. 'Obrashchaemost'

Perhaps the most interesting theory to arise from the Razgovor o Dante is that of the 'obrashchaemost' (or 'obratimost') of images, which governs creative writing.

... представьте себе самолет ... который на полном ходу конструирует и спускает другую машину. Эта летательная машина так же точно, будучи поглощена собственным ходом, все же успевает собрать и выпустить еще третью.

(II, p. 382)

This is certainly extremely helpful in the consideration of Mandelstam's work, for it suggests that there are connections behind what at first may seem to be an aimless movement from image to image. The reader must constantly bear in mind all the various forces which influence a work (II, p. 413) and be able to supply for himself the links between images and the associations between images and ideas which Mandelstam does not state explicitly:

Надо перебежать через всю ширину реки, загроможденной подвижными и разноустремленными китайскими джонками,
- так создается смысл поэтической речи.

(II, pp. 364-365)

Poetic creation was Mandelstam's chief subject in this discussion and indeed his poetry provides interesting examples of 'obrashchaemost'. The principle is reflected primarily through

image patterns - here again 'Я буду метаться по табору улицы темной' (I, no. 144) can be cited as an example. Perhaps the most impressive instance of image giving birth to image is supplied by 'Grifel'naya oda' (I, no. 137), whose closely-knit associations have been discussed by Jennifer Baines¹⁸⁵. A specific image can also relate different poems. The image of grain is an important and obviously logical feature in the representation of potential poetry and indeed of potential cultural values in general. In 'Люблю под сводами седых типини' (I, no. 124) the cathedrals are seen to possess those qualities essential to the nurturing of the seed entrusted to them:

Амбары воздуха и света ...
В прохладных житницах, в глубоких закромах
Зерно глубокой, полной веры.

The idea behind the grain imagery is taken to its logical conclusion in 'Как растет хлебов опара' (I, no. 130), where the poetic word (that is the embodiment of the poetic potential which the poet grasps) is identified with the end-product of grain - bread ('slovo-kolobok'). The grain image recurs in 'Nashedshiy podkovu' (I, no. 136), representing potential artistic form.

The idea of 'obratimost'' is also relevant to the prose, however. Without an appreciation of 'obrashchaemost'' in Mandelstam's prose it is difficult to understand how he could possibly avoid turning upon himself the criticism which he had directed (and so aptly) against Bely's Zapiski chudaka: 'В книге можно вылущить фавулу, разгребая кучу словесного мусора ...' (II, p. 422). Mandelstam's skill as a prose writer lies precisely in the fact that he is able to give his work an inner, continuous structure while sustaining effects of fragmentation and contrast. In Egipetskaya marka he approaches through the use of 'obrashchaemost'' the kind of style which he saw to be quite absent, and detrimentally so, in the works of the Serapions: 'Стихия прозы - накопление. Она вся - ткань, морфология' ('Literaturnaya Moskva', II, p. 334). A sense of cohesion is given to Egipetskaya marka in the first instance by the constantly recurring artistic themes, but a more impressive kind of 'obrashchaemost'' is present in the work's construction: in the relationship of individual sections, in the recurrent order/chaos pattern of the contrasts (see section 2), in the continuity between small details of theme and imagery.

(i) 'Obrashchaemost' in the 'Marginalia'

In Razgovor o Dante Mandelstam discusses the importance of rough drafts. Although he asserts that they are indispensable in the appreciation of a composition, he admits that their preservation is difficult, not to say impossible (II, p. 383). He then goes on to make the following paradoxical statement: 'Черновики никогда не уничтожаются' (II, p. 384). The theory of 'obrashchaemost' is vital here, for Mandelstam has in mind the reader's ability to reconstruct the 'rough drafts' for himself. By 'rough drafts' he means the unstated associations and influences which inspire imagery within a work - the 'bridges' which Mandelstam constantly 'burns' behind himself¹⁸⁶. Egipetskaya marka is unique in Mandelstam's oeuvre in that it does to a certain extent preserve the 'rough drafts' within itself in the form of the highly fragmentary passages. They are almost direct indications of the main themes and provide much of the imagery developed elsewhere in the work. The list-like form which these 'marginalia' tend to take implies that they contain the rough material from which a more developed version will grow. Perhaps their inclusion in Egipetskaya marka was a result of Mandelstam's shattered confidence in his ability to communicate and in the possibility of his work surviving - normally he would have expected a work to be appreciated by the reader without such 'signposts'. It is important to note that he attributes greater importance to the marginalia than to the manuscript itself, presumably because they provide the kernel of what is to be said: '... сохраняйте то, что вы начертали сбоку ... Эти второстепенные и мимовольные создания вашей фантазии не пропадут в мире ... (II, p. 41). The marginalia are integrated into the text by various means and they display continuity within themselves, with the material surrounding them and with each other.

An impressive example of internal continuity is provided by the passage concerned with ballet (II, pp. 28-29). This contrasts with devices of dislocation such as the introduction of un-named speakers and the splitting up of the lengthy sentence by 'spuski'. The primary impulse in the passage is the image of ballet, which leads to the picture of the goat saltant, Capricorn, and thus the predominant image of the Zodiac is introduced. Since Capricorn

belongs to January a New Year calendar appears, its crackling newness a reflection of both the season's icy climate and a new pack of cards:

Январский календарь с балетными козочками, образцовым молочным хозяйством мириадов миров и треском распечатываемой карточной колоды ...'

(II, p. 28)

The 'model dairy-farm of myriad worlds' is connected both with the Zodiac and with the 'almond milk' poured by Giselle's grandmother (II, p. 28, lines 19-20). The appearance of the pack of cards, also related to the Zodiac through a common concern with fortune-telling, was predicted earlier in the passage by a reference to the card game 'Sixty-six': '- Этим нетанцующим королем и королевой только что играли в шестьдесят шесть' (II, p. 28). In addition, the Zodiac is the ideal environment for the inimical Petersburg cabby, more at home in the sphere of the supernatural than in the actual world.

In the case of internal and external continuity the passage 'Ya boyus' ... Strizhey' (II, p. 25) can be cited as an example. It is linked internally by phonetic continuity: 'strigu' leads to the noun 'Strizhey' and 'marat' anticipates 'Marata'. It includes much 'tailor' imagery which is prominent in the work as a whole and, on a more localised basis, reflections of the imagery used in the musical notation passage:

Рукопись - всегда буря, истрепанная, исклеванная.

(II, p. 25)

compare

Нотный виноградник Шуберта всегда расклеван до косточек ...

(II, p. 24)

It is perhaps the first indented passage in the work which is integrated most fully into the text, for it corresponds with fellow fragmentary passages and with other sections in the work:

Перо рисует усатую греческую красавицу и чей-то лисий подбородок.

Так на полях черновиков возникают арабески и живут своей самостоятельной, прелестной и коварной жизнью.

Скрипичные человечки пьют молоко бумаги.

Вот Бабель: лисий подбородок и лапки очков.

Парнок - египетская марка.

Артур Яковлевич Гофман - чиновник министерства иностранных дел по греческой части.

Балторны Мариинского театра.

Еще раз усатая гречанка.

И пустое место для остальных.

(II, p. 21)

Individual details prepare the way for details occurring later in the work; the mention of the Mariinskiy theatre's French horns and the 'skripichnye chelovechki' anticipates the later references to orchestral players (II, pp. 28, 41). Details in the indented passage also resume important points of the Parnok plot to date - Parnok's nickname, his aspirations to join the Foreign Ministry, and even a reference to a mysterious Greek girl such as appeared in Parnok's view of a 'sobytiye' (II, p. 10). Most significantly this passage includes comments on the independent growth of the 'marginalia', which link it with opinions on writing expressed elsewhere in Egipetskaya marka.

(ii) 'Obrashchaemost'' between individual sections

It has been seen that the 'marginalia' are integrated by certain themes and images into the text as a whole. This is also true of the less fragmentary passages. Although the juxtaposition of apparently unrelated passages is part of the technique of fragmentation and counterpoint, it is most interesting to try to assess how the individual sections are connected and how the introduction of 'spuski' into the text helps or hinders these connections. It is the sense of 'obrashchaemost'' between sections which binds the shifting scenes together - after all, Mandelstam most definitely did not want to 'myslit' kadrami' ('Ya pishu tsenariy', II, p. 500).

Sometimes very clearly related passages are deliberately interrupted. The 'kerosinka' section, connected with Parnok (II, p. 25), would quite naturally lead into an autobiographical reminiscence of oil-lamps - but the insertion of the claim 'Ya ne boyus' bessvyaznosti ...' breaks the continuity. The 'spuski' highlight this very obvious interruption. Perhaps Mandelstam wanted to break the link between himself and Parnok here.

Usually neither connection nor interruption is as obvious as this. The focal point of the first four chapters is Parnok and the consideration of his character and exploits from a variety of angles gives rise to different scenes often related by some specific image. His geographical fantasies, effected by his pen-holder (II, p. 7), lead to a musical comparison - Bosio's geographical musings which are effected by her voice (II, p. 7). In both cases it is the tool of the trade which acts as the medium. Parnok's resolution to win

back his coat inspires a general literary comparison (the heroes of Balzac and Stendhal - II, p. 8) which prepares the way for a more specific allusion to a Balzacian character and his attire (Lucien de Rubempré - II, p. 9). The common factor here is literature. Sometimes Parnok's exploits are given artistic parallels and the more unpleasant the actual situation, the more likely the artistic parallel is to be accompanied by a fragmentary passage. In Chapter IV Parnok's trials with the telephone are interrupted by an 'arabesque' (II, p. 21) and a passage on Mandelstam's exclusion from the Barbizon gatherings - a parallel to Parnok's exclusion from the communications network. Gradually the Barbizon section works its way back to Parnok. At the highly colourful Barbizon breakfast ladies brush tiny ants ('murashey', II, p. 22) from their shoulders and this image is taken up and applied to Parnok's enemies, the crowd ('murav'i' - II, p. 22), which is involved in an even more stylised ceremony than the Barbizon guests.

The relationship of sections in Chapter V is one of theme rather than image. Petersburg's 'silence' inspires a series of reflections on the 'silence' of art - that is the ineffectiveness of the art created there. The city is populated by people with no voice and no means of hearing (II, p. 23), music exists only in written form (II, pp. 23-24) and writers are lecherous scoundrels whose 'offspring' scandal is a grotesque monster (II, p. 27). The degeneration suffered by art provides a parallel with Parnok's condition, which is the secondary element here.

The position of 'spuski' is usually quite logical. In Chapter VI the movement is from a hostile setting - an uncanny city (the white night - II, p. 29) with no feeling for its inhabitants (II, p. 30) - to a series of 'family portraits' (which perhaps are an ironic sequel to the 'family canvases' of Chapter I, II, p. 5). The description of each is separated by 'spuski' which give a natural break (Geshka/Vera/Lutherans/Blomquist). The unifying theme here is unnaturalness in human relationships and the people portrayed are as unattractive as the setting itself. The cohesive images are of stiffness (mechanical sympathy, tin skirts - II, p. 31) and they give rise to a reflection on the restrictions of Mandelstam's youth (II, p. 32). On occasions the 'spuski' do not simply create a natural pause. Like

short sentences and aposiopesis they appear at moments of greatest urgency. For example Mandelstam's digression on dentists with its important ideas on art (II, p. 15) is given prominence by its separation from the surrounding material. A more striking instance is in Mandelstam's proclamation of his task:

Я спешу сказать настоящую правду. Я тороплюсь.
Слово, как порошок аспирина, оставляет привкус меди
во рту ...

Птичье око, налитое кровью, тоже видит по-своему
мир.

(II, p. 34)

Attention is drawn to the passage because it is divided from the rest of the text by 'spuski' and the significance of the last line is highlighted by its isolation within its own section.

(iii) Continuity effected by leitmotifs

Egipetskaya marka is given a sense of continuity by the association and repetition of certain themes, phrases and words which become leitmotifs. These are integrated into the work to so great a degree that a sensitivity to detail is essential if they are to be appreciated. The elements of continuity do not contradict the techniques of fragmentation because the repetitive and associative devices employed are linked in an almost fateful chain. They therefore create an atmosphere of claustrophobia which is as much a part of the states of nightmare and delirium as are sensations of dislocation and unreality. Mandelstam's methods of integration are subtle. He repeats not whole phrases but single words or even parts of words. The appearance of these in a new context can create a system of mutual influences which bring together the original and the new context¹⁸⁷.

The title Egipetskaya marka exerts an influence which is revealed throughout the work in references to Egypt and the Orient (for example: 'fivanskies sfinksy', II, p. 10; 'korobku finikov', II, p. 12; 'shurum-buruma' - from the Turkish 'burum' meaning 'vrashchenie' - II, p. 35; 'v kirgizskoy kibitke', II, p. 41. It is interesting to note that the insistence on washing and cleaning perhaps stems from this same Egyptian influence. Herodotus notes - with scornful amusement - that the Egyptians always kept their clothes freshly laundered and were fussy about hygiene, going so far as to take cold baths and use enemas¹⁸⁸ - compare II, p. 20, line 29).

The 'Egyptian' references are often concealed by the intriguing way in which they are integrated into the text. The crowd's activities furnish a useful example of this:

Не Анатоля Франса хороним в страусовом катафалке,
высоком как тополь, как разъезжающая ночью пирамида
для починки трамвайных столбов ...

(II, p. 18)

Here the Egyptian element, the pyramid, is completely fused (by the use of simile) into the picture of an urban occupation, the repair of tram poles. At the same time the image of the pyramid continues the funerary association expressed at the beginning of the sentence.

The title's function as the nickname of Parnok exerts another influence over much of the work. In contrast to the insubstantiality of the Egyptian stamp, papers of a more sturdy nature are mentioned. There is the luxurious paper which Parnok would use (II, pp. 13, 26) and Ippolit's notebook, the 'kleyonchatuyu tetradku' (II, p. 27) - this is not as Clarence Brown has translated it, 'checkered'¹⁸⁹ ('kletchatyy'), but a book made of the waterproof material 'kleyonka'. Less obviously, Aunt Vera's father goes by the name Pergament, which is also a kind of paper - either a parchment, or paper impervious to grease and water. The irony in the presence of such sophisticated forms of paper lies in the fact that they are no more successful in surviving than is the Egyptian stamp. Parnok's flowery missives are completely fruitless, Ippolit's thoughts fail to capture the littérateurs' attention and Pergament's prosperity is a thing of the past. Only the 'neprilichno vaterprufnyy' Mariinskiy theatre (II, p. 28) can survive in a world in which even the natural phenomena seem determined to wash all objects from existence (II, pp. 29-30). Mandelstam's attention to detail is further witnessed in terms of the washing/stain removing theme in the description of the crowd as ants preparing to exterminate their prey, for their feet are compounded of turpentine: 'А черные блестящие муравьи ... чванились скипидарными лапками ...' (II, p. 22).

The basic plot of the work gives several leitmotifs. Its 'tailor' theme influences the description of composition (II, p. 25), the deaf-mutes (II, p. 23) and (by association with II, p. 23) the mosquito (II, p. 38). A sustained example of this influence can be seen in the depiction of the crowd and its victim (II, pp. 17-18)

where, chillingly, people exist only in so far as they resemble coats: 'Шли плечи-вешалки, вздыбленные ватой, апраксинские пиджаки, богато осыпанные перхотью ...' (II, p. 17). The emphasis in this passage is on the shoulder/coat hanger/dandruff complex of imagery and the victim is defined in terms of a collar: '... злополучного воротника, который ценился дороже соболя и куницы ...' (II, p. 17). Here the mentality of the Underground Man and his concern for a smart collar are brought to mind¹⁹⁰. Punishment for anyone daring to attempt a rescue of the 'perkhotnaya veshalka' is expressed by the ambiguous phrase 'vzyat' v peredelku' which can either mean 'to do alterations' (as a tailor) or, colloquially, 'to land in the soup'. The former certainly has the more grisly implications. The final coat image of the section occurs in Parnok's panic-stricken exclamation: '- Пуговицы делаются из крови животных!' (II, p. 18). There are obvious implications of violence here. It seems likely that Mandelstam is bringing together two hostile definitions of the crowd - one associated with the tailor and one with animals' entrails ('lyogkie', 'trebukha', II, p. 18. Animals' blood was indeed used in the manufacture of buttons, as can be seen from Yury Olesha's Zavist: '... собираемое при убое кровь может быть перерабатываемая ... на выработку ... пуговиц ...'¹⁹¹). So, on consideration, Parnok's apparently nonsensical exclamation makes a very fitting conclusion to the extremely hostile crowd scene.

The characterisation of Parnok provides the 'hoof' leitmotif (II, pp. 10, 19). The hoof image is found again in the section dealing with the melting of the surroundings, in the description of the 'Nurmis' skates: 'Так коньки, привинченные к бесформенным детским ботинкам, к американским копытцам-шнуровкам, срачиваются с ними ...' (II, p. 34). Parnok is helplessly dislocated: he has lost that part of his nature which would make him successful in his fight for survival. He is as little equipped for life in the society of Egipetskaya marka as is a boot to travel over ice without the effective 'steel' of the 'Nurmis' skate.

Parnok's activities take place against a background of fear and apprehension which is created partly by the repetition of certain words which may be grouped under the heading 'suspicion': 'pod podozrenie' (II, p. 18), 'podozritel'nyy chekh-zerkal'shchik' (II, p. 19),

'v tishine, podozritel'noy' (II, p. 26). There is a hint of superstition related to this atmosphere. The old lady in the Jewish coach wears the shawl of a gypsy - the traditional fortune-teller - and Mandelstam is gripped by the feeling of ill-omen ('nekhoroshim predchuvstviem', II, p. 39). The seasonal setting of Parnok's exploits provides another recurring theme. Although different months are mentioned (February, II, p. 10; May, II, p. 22; summer, II, p. 15) the overall impression is of the change between seasons - from spring to summer. There are references to the melting snow and ice of the unpleasantly damp Petersburg spring in association with Parnok (II, p. 10) and with Mandelstam's creative condition (II, p. 34). The emphasis on early spring is complemented by a detail in the last chapter: the 'zhavoronki' of prose composition refer to rolls traditionally baked in spring at the time of the larks' return from warmer climes. The white nights of Petersburg (II, pp. 10, 29-30) are a feature of early summer and accord with the seasonal setting depicted above in their effect on the surroundings which come to share the colouring and fluidity of melting snow and ice: 'Временами белизна их напоминала выстиранный с мылом и целоком платок оренбургского пуха' (II, pp. 29-30). (It is interesting to note an unstated element of topographical continuity in connection with the snow/ice/skating imagery, namely that the Kamennostrovskiy prospekt was the site of a skating rink¹⁹².)

The second subject of Egipetskaya marka provides a group of leitmotifs related to Mandelstam's creative condition: these are 'inertia', the railway and uncleanness. The first is expressed in the image of a green pine branch frozen into a block of ice (II, p. 10), which is echoed later in that of the pressed fern and flower to be found in 'dachnye knigi': 'Иногда выпадала готическая елочка папоротника, приплюснутая и слежавшаяся, иногда - превращенный в мумию безымянный северный цветок' (II, p. 35). Coniferous trees are common in both references, as is the contrast between life and inertia, expressed in terms of a living form preserved in a death-like state. The railway imagery which provides the second leitmotif in the discussion of artistic creation appears at important moments. The epigraph includes a reference to manuscripts which bear a striking resemblance to the train at the end of the work:

Иные из них тяжелы и промаслены ...

(II, p. 5)

compare

... горячим маслом мясистые рычаги паравозов ... (II, p. 41)

This leitmotif also appears at less structurally important moments - in the first chapter the shunting of a train is suggested in the verb 'manevriruya' (II, p. 5) which is applied (in an impressive contrast) to the graceful pier-glass. The railway leitmotif shows that the hostile transformations of the object world, which provides the writer with so much material, are reflected in his work. The practitioners of literature and their compositions inspire the third theme, that of 'uncleanliness' - a clear expression of Mandelstam's attitude towards them. Those unshaven scoundrels who frequent the telegraph office are related to literary men since they are clad in fur coats and they make their surroundings dirty by their very presence: Не повинуется мне перо: оно расщепилось ... как бы привязанное к конторке телеграфа - публичное, испакощенное ерниками в шубах ...' (II, p. 25). The produce of these men is the literary concept of scandal, which is also unclean: 'Скандал живет по засаленному просроченному паспорту, выданному литературой' (II, p. 27). Uncleanliness is a feature of the repulsive Fontanka (II, p. 20) and of the Sennaya and Muchnyy pereulok (II, p. 17). These are all sites of the crowds' activities, which bear a strong resemblance to the action taken by littérateurs against uncooperative writers (see above, Chapter Four, section (iv) (c)).

(iv) Continuity effected by 'formulae'

The function of repeated phrases is less conventional in Egipetskaya marka than in the other creative prose. In 'Chetvyortaya proza' for example parallel and repeated phrases are used to emphasise a point such as Mandelstam's wish to dissociate himself from 'writerdom' ('K nam khodit ... Ya prishyol k vam ...', II, p. 180). Certain repeated phrases in Egipetskaya marka have the effect of formulae and their contribution to continuity lies in the fact that they help to create a fateful atmosphere. For instance the phrase 'Больше всего на свете он боялся ...' (II, p. 19) is reflected later in the oil-lamp passage: 'Больше всего у нас в доме боялись' (II, p. 25) and the words 'Все было приготовлено к большому котильону' (II, p. 15) are repeated in the later '... все до

ужаса приготовлено к началу исторического заседания' (II, p. 23). The first pair of phrases defines the atmospheres of Parnok's world and of Mandelstam's childhood and in each case the setting which inspires fear is described in mundane and colloquial terms. There is a balance between the two phrases which points to their relationship - the first depicts fear in the world at large ('na svete') and the second fear in the domestic scene ('v dome'). In the second set of formulae a 'conference' is involved in both phrases ('zasedalo', 'zasedanie') and both feature a compromise of the official by mundane or colloquial elements: 'limonadnoe pravitel'stvo' (II, p. 15), 'vsydo do uzhasa' (II, p. 23). The balance between these two formulae is struck by their similar syntactical structure: '... k bol'shomu kotil'onu ...', '... k nachalu istoricheskogo ...'. The repetitive phrases with the most fateful force are those which give warning ('... лучше бы ты не глядела!' II, p. 18; 'Лучше к нему не прикасаться' II, p. 38) or express a determined hope which stands in clear contradiction to the actual situation described ('... мы еще почитаем, поглядим ... Мы еще поглядим - почитаем' - II, p. 35).

The most important formula in Egipetskaya marka is the construction '- eto', or sometimes just a dash. This may be called a 'naming process'. Mandelstam redefines the objects and characters of the world in his own impressionistic way, thereby throwing them into particularly vivid relief:

Мандельштам совершает крестинный обезд богатой епархии; шуточно крестит вещи наново, соперничая с теми, кто давал имена и определения накануне, до его объезда. Назвать - значить опознать.¹⁹³

The application of a regular formula to an unusual definition highlights its unusualness. The 'eto' formula and the simple dash recur throughout the work (II, pp. 14, 15, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 35, 40) and are most frequent in the passage on musical notation, where they appear nine times - for example:

Каждый такт - это подочка ...

Вот черепахи ... состязаются в беге - это Гендель ...

Рояль - это умный и добрый комнатный зверь.

(II, pp. 23-24)

The 'eto' naming formula does not share the same fateful impact of the formulae noted above. It reflects rather Mandelstam's determination to state his view of things in a more direct manner than is

employed in his other creative prose.

(v) Linguistic continuity

The language of Egipetskaya marka is distinctly that of the characters, although it is not directly attributed to them. Mandelstam tends in his creative prose to represent an object or situation in the linguistic terms of those most closely associated with that object or situation. For example, in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu the elevated comparison of the Trojan horse is given in the strictly colloquial terms of a carpenter: '... струг совершенно готовой баржи ... Размером он был с доброго троянского коня ...' (II, p. 142).

The Petersburg location gives the first element of linguistic continuity. Petersburg usage is present in the spelling of 'prachechnaya' ('pracheshnaya', II, p. 15; see also 'skvoreshniki', II, p. 24). The preposition 'v' is used with the word 'kontsert' (II, p. 13) which is not normal practice, but part of the rather superior habit of the inhabitants of stressing that they were from Petersburg (this practice is reflected in Akhmatova's work¹⁹⁴). The appearance of Gallicisms ('karre', II, p. 17; 'bushe', II, p. 37) is a further indication of the 'refined' linguistic practices of Petersburg.

At the opposite extreme the opening sentence of the work is written in the colloquial terms which might have been used by the servant-girl they describe: '... посплетничать и помоняться Матке Божьей' (II, p. 5). On yet a different level, the consciousness of a singer is to the fore in the highly alliterative, rhythmic description of Bosio's death at the end of Chapter VII. Here the singer's consciousness blends with the representation of fire - 'con brio' is, after all, the musical requirement for spirit or fire: 'Воинственные фиоритуры ... неслыханное брио ...' (II, p. 35).

The strongest influence in this permeation of the text by language which the characters might have used comes from the world of the little man of Gogol's Petersburg. The mentality of this character is a feature of much of Mandelstam's creative prose. For example, in 'Chetvyortaya proza' the despised Mandelstam makes a sarcastic address to one of the formative influences in his life in terms which the little man might have used to a social superior:

Александр Иванович Герцен! ... Разрешите представиться ... Кажется, в вашем доме ... Вы, как хозяин, в некотором роде отвечаете ... Изволили выехать за границу? ... Здесь пока что случилась неприятность ... Александр Иванович! барин! как же быть?! Совершенно не к кому обратиться!

(II, p. 187)

The unfinished sentences, the uncertain qualifications ('kazhetsya', 'v etom rode'), the tone of despair all bring to mind the mode of address used by Parnok and his predecessor, Akakiy Akakevich. The Gogolian technique of playing on irrelevant words is common to all Mandelstam's creative prose works ('... а нечто грозное и даже опасное ...' - Shum vremeni, II, p. 71; '... несколько казарменного и даже бастионного характера ...' - 'Feodosiya', II, p. 122).

Shades of Gogol's world are present first and foremost in Egipetskaya marka in the tale of the stolen coat, where Gogol's favourite expression 'odnim slovom' is in evidence (II, p. 6). In Shinel' this phrase appears, for example, when Gogol depicts the evening entertainments of Petersburg: activities are built up in hyperbolic language only to be reduced to '... словом, даже тогда, когда все стремятся развлечься ...',¹⁹⁵. A similar technique is used in Egipetskaya marka although obviously on a much smaller scale: '... визитка на венской дуге кувyrкается, омолаживается, одним словом, играет? ...' (II, p. 6). Similarly, in the description of Krzyżanowski's carriage (II, p. 29) an expanded definition (seven adjectives and adjectival phrases) is followed by the colloquial resumé: '... ни дать ни взять греческая колесница'. The mentality of Gogol's Kovalyov is revealed in the work in the narrator's language, as he wonders at the impudence of death's appearance in the presence of the diplomatic corps: 'Смерть и пикнуть не смеет в присутствии дипломатического корпуса' (II, p. 8). This is reminiscent of the similarly ridiculous hesitation on approaching a social superior, even when that personage should happen to be one's own pose: 'Как подойти к нему? - думал Ковалев, - По всему, по мундире, по шляпе видно, что он статский советник',¹⁹⁶. The most prominent 'little man' features in Egipetskaya marka are the colloquialisms and the linking words and phrases, whose role is to confuse and contradict. They are close relatives of the 'bredovye chastichki' described in the final chapter of Egipetskaya marka (II, p. 41).

They are also the parts of speech which Mandelstam considered to be characteristic of the age, as can be seen from Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, where he discusses the horror of living in such a linguistically barren time: 'Страшно жить в мире, состоящем из одних восклицаний и междометий!' (II, p. 158). Mandelstam craves in the place of this a strong language based on the firm foundation of proper names and description of action: 'Цветы - великий народ и насквозь грамотный. /Волнующий/ их язык состоит из одних лишь собственных имен и наречий' ('Zapisnye knizhki', III, p. 154). In Egipetskaya marka the particle 'to' is prominent, in combination with 'chto', 'gde' and 'pochemu' (II, pp. 12, 17, 19, 22, 33, 37, 38). The effect of this particle is to create an atmosphere which has no firmness about it. Sometimes the resultant vagueness is of a hostile nature ('Где-то практиковала женщина-врач Страхунер' II, p. 32) and sometimes its use is simply glaringly irrelevant - in the best Gogolian tradition:

'Они воняют кишечными пузырями', - подумал Парнок, и почему-то вспомнилось страшное слово 'требуха' (II, p. 17)

Есть люди почему-то неугодные толпе ... (II, p. 19)

The reasons for both circumstances are obvious. In the first the thought of stinking entrails would lead naturally to thoughts of the word for offal, and in the second the timid Parnok is a clear candidate for victim of the vicious crowd. In both cases the use of 'pochemu-to' is irrelevant. On the other hand, Mandelstam also depicts circumstances as being obvious when they are far from clear: 'По всему было видно, что в голове у Мервиса совсем не портняжное дело, а нечто более важное' (II, p. 8). Up to this point only Mervis' appropriation of Parnok's coat has been mentioned, and nothing about either character has yet been made clear.

Another feature of the Gogolian consciousness is the contradictory use of paranthetical phrases: 'Мы считаем на годы; на самом же деле в любой квартире на Каменноостровском время раскалывается на династии и столетия' (II, p. 6). The phrase 'na samom zhe dele' is normally used to emphasise the reality of one situation in contrast to the unreality of another. But here Mandelstam negates the actual situation - the division of time into years - by attributing reality to the unreal processes of the Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt. He continues this practice of using parenthetical phrases in paradoxical

ways in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu. At the close of the 'Sevan' section he discusses the reasons behind Armenia's ability to renew his confidence:

Не оттого ли, что я находился в среде народа,
прославленного своей кипучей деятельностью и,
однако, живущего не по вокзальным и не по
учрежденческим, а по солнечным часам ... (II, p. 143)

The final remark here is apparently an afterthought ('odnako') but in actual fact it epitomises all that has gone before: the Armenians' way of life is not regimented or mechanical in any way and it is their resultant spontaneity which inspires Mandelstam with courage in the face of his life and times.

The most sustained linguistic imitation of Gogol's little man in Egipetskaya marka appears in the last chapter, where the narrator first states and then interprets Parnok's thoughts (II, p. 37). This passage falls into three paragraphs: lines 3-15, lines 16-22 and lines 23-33. Although there are contrasts in style between these paragraphs, they are united by the common literary influence of the little man. Parnok's thoughts are expressed in the language of Akakiy Akakevich, with an abundance of qualifications and conjunctions: '... пожалуй женится даже ... Тогда никто уже ... он тогда ... Ведь обещал ... А там видно будет' (II, p. 37). It is in such terms that Parnok muses on his cherished dreams of Greece and on the possibility of tackling Krzyżanowski. The elements of decision here ('Khvatit s nikh! ... Dovol'no ...') are swiftly replaced in the second paragraph by Parnok's realisations of his deficiencies in terms of family connections. He has only Aunt Johanna, who is deformed and cannot even speak Russian. Parnok's nervous haste in both his fears and aspirations is expressed in these two paragraphs by short sentences and phrases and the use of colloquialisms and particles ('... нет и все тут! Всех-то ...'). In the third paragraph the literary narrator intervenes. Initially he agrees that Parnok's family tree can furnish no great advantage; but then he indignantly interrupts himself: 'Впрочем, как это нет родословной, позвольте - как это нет! Есть'. However unattractive Parnok's actual family tree might be, with its dwarfs and tongue-tied characters, he nevertheless possesses a very rich heritage in terms of his literary genealogy. Whereas short sentences were used to reflect Parnok's discouraging thoughts on his actual heritage,

the literary genealogy is expressed in rhetorically expanded phrases. Two parallel sentences beginning with 'A' name specific ancestors (Dostoevsky's Golyadkin and Pushkin's mad Evgeny) and these are followed by a long sentence composed of three parallel constructions, which make general comments on the nature of these ancestors: 'Vse eti ... vse eti ... vse te ...'. The first phrase contains verbs which list the humiliation inflicted. The second, formed from two nouns and two qualifications of dress, shows a phonetic progression ('bormotuni', 'obormoty') which carries over into the third phrase ('bormochut'), dealing with the residence of Parnok's ancestors. If the short sentences dealing with Aunt Johanna are an example of her inability to speak Russian, then these neatly balanced sentences are surely a mocking representation of the pretensions of the little man, whose actual speech and actions are so unimpressive.

(vi) Associative and phonetic preparation

A major feature of continuity in Egipetskaya marka is the way in which preparation is made for the introduction of a theme or image. Sometimes a technical device such as a simile will prepare the ground for an image which exists independently:

Водевильные мелочи разбросанной пеной ...
Броненосцы гуляли по сбитым сливкам ...

(II, p. 15)

Чернели фортепианной гаммы, как фонарики ...
Когда сотни фонариков ...

(II, pp. 23-24)

Sometimes it is a verb which introduces an image or complex of imagery - in the first chapter the verbs 'rasklyuyut' and 'sletalis' (II, p. 8) prepare for the important complex of bird imagery. ×

The most common types of preparation are made through the association of imagery or through phonetic similarities ('podgotovka rechi', Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 405). Associative preparation provides many examples of image begetting image (Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 382) throughout Mandelstam's creative prose. In 'Feodosiya' the impulse ('poryv' - Razgovor o Dante, II, p. 413) behind the description of Mazesa da Vinci's washing is maritime - the nautical 'rey' introduces a whole complex of maritime imagery (II, p. 123). In Puteshestvie v Armeniyu a pastoral setting furnishes

the impulse for the following cluster of dairy images: 'Наступало молочное успокоение. Свертывалась сыворотка тишины. Творожные колокольцы и клюквенные бубенцы' (II, p. 174). Phonetic preparation was to become more frequent in the creative prose after Egipetskaya marka and it is especially prominent in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu where it is revealed in the phonetic play on the root of the word:

... как в кисее по кисельному ...
... черепки и человеческие кости, но кроме того
был найден черенок ...

(II, p. 139)

... напяливал ее на колодку - на синии морской
околодок ...

(II, p. 159)

Phonetic preparation is also important in the poetry. An early example is to be found in the first two lines of 'Мне холодно. Прозрачная весна' (I, no. 88) which introduce the generally unpleasant nature of 'Petropolis'. They are built around the alliteration of the initial letter 'p' and this provides a contrast with the second half of the poem, where the letter 'k' is prominent in the depiction of the hostile creatures belonging to the city. Just as in the prose Mandelstam's use of phonetic association becomes more pronounced in his later work, being most pronounced in the Voronezh poetry. The most obvious example of this is 'Пусти меня, отдай меня, Воронеж' (I, no. 301) - here Mandelstam seems to be delighting in the phonetic possibilities of the language (see also I, no. 356, stanza 3).

In Egipetskaya marka associative and phonetic preparation are most frequent on a localised scale: 'Вот Бабель: лисий подбородок и лапки очков' (II, p. 21). Here the 'foxy chin' produces the unusually effective image of the 'spectacle paws' and Babel, in spite of his most human apparel, becomes a member of the animal kingdom. In the following passage both associative and phonetic preparation are featured:

Все было приготовлено к большому котильону. Одно
время казалось, что граждане так и останутся навсегда,
как коты с бантами.

Но уже волновались айсоры - чистильщики сапог ...

(II, p. 15)

The phonetic association between the words 'kotil'onu' and 'koty' must have intrigued Mandelstam and the idea of a highly stylised

dance leads him to thoughts of Oriental culture, and in particular the sacred cat. Mandelstam's tendency to introduce animals into the depiction of Oriental settings (compare I, no. 111, stanza 3) is to be seen twice in this passage: in the Oriental cats and the Aysor bootblacks who are compared to ravens. Further examples of phonetic association are found in the discussion of Shapiro ('finolinki'/'finikov', II, p. 12) and in the Cossack passage ('topotu'/'potu', II, p. 40). The latter seems to have been one which appealed to Mandelstam. It appears in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu, where he directly defines a human activity as equine ('конский пот и топот очередей' II, p. 142) - in contrast to the Cossack passage in which no specific mention of horses is given.

Preparation is sometimes made and not followed up:

Зеркала перебрасывались отражениями домов, похожих
на буфеты, замороженные кусочки улицы, кишевшие
тараканьей толпой, казались в них еще страшней и
мохнатей.

(II, p. 19)

The buffet image applied to the houses prepares the way for the culinary 'zamorozhennye kusochki' depicting the street, but this food imagery breaks off in favour of strictly alliterative propulsion ('kh', 'zh', 'sh', 'shch', 's', 't', 'k'). On other occasions preparation is made but not developed until a much later stage. For example the 'bochka' used by the firemen in the passage depicting Bosio's final agonies (II, p. 35) had been anticipated in a far less hostile image in the Barbizon section, where its role was to combat climatic, rather than conflagratory heat:

Бочка опрыскивала улицу шпагатом тонких и ломких
струн

(II, p. 22)

Битюги с бочками, линейками и лестницами ...

(II, pp. 35-36)

It is interesting to note that in neither case is water - the vital agent in fire-fighting - specifically mentioned. This contrasts with what might normally be expected and affirms that the heat cannot be conquered.

The most striking and sustained example of both associative and phonetic preparation is connected with the laundry passage. Chapter II closes with two paragraphs which prepare for the laundry passage by establishing several of the characteristics of Parnok's

adventure in the laundry. The Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt is the object of description here. Its laundries share the insubstantial, steamy nature of the laundry which Parnok is about to encounter and the idea of the laundry begets that of the street as a dandy which, like Parnok, must take its shirts to be cleaned: 'Это молодой и безработный хлыщ, несущий под мышкой свои дома, как бедный щеголь свой воздушный пакет от прачки'. (There is a misprint in the American edition here - II, p. 14 - which gives 'bezzabotnyy'. The Priboy edition gives 'bezrabotnyy'¹⁹⁷). The adjective 'vozdushnyy' suggests the steam of the laundry and also hints at the emptiness of the packet which will be Parnok's lot. Both here and in the passage as a whole (II, p. 14, lines 8-22) phonetic preparation is prominent in the 'volatile' consonants ('sh', 'shch', 's', 'kh'), which are so important in the laundry scene itself.

4. Conclusions on the structure of Egipetskaya marka

The unifying feature of Mandelstam's prose, whether creative, critical or epistolary, is his love for the rhythmic and alliterative qualities of the Russian language, and the employment of highly inventive language which involves the use of simile and metaphor. In terms of structure the prose (and in particular Egipetskaya marka) and the poetry are obviously not so closely related. The genre and inspiration here mean that resemblances are few. Because of its greater wholeness poetry has a laconicism and immediacy which the creative prose does not have, for the prose is in essence a highly inventive representation of reality. The poetry before the period of silence bears some relationship to Egipetskaya marka in terms of complexity. For example the poem 'Я буду метаться по табору улицы темной' (I, no. 144) is more closely related to the prose (with its intricate pattern of imagery, see above Chapter One, section (ii)) than it is to the lucid and laconic verse of the early thirties - either to the briefly stated desires for domesticity (I, nos. 202, 224), the straightforward statements of the position he wished to adopt (I, nos. 227, 235) or the brilliant characterisations (I, no. 258).

Although the consideration of Egipetskaya marka's structure and style can highlight techniques employed in the other prose works

and the poetry, it is important to realise that the effect of these techniques is different in each work, since no two compositions share the same inspiration. This is particularly true of the different devices involved in the principle of 'obrashchaemost'. This is a central feature of the creative prose, but it could not possibly be expressed in identical ways - for example leitmotifs of Egypt and death would be quite out of place in Puteshestvie v Armeniyu. Of all the creative prose 'Feodosiya' bears perhaps the most resemblance to the general tenor of Egipetskaya marka with its colloquialisms and folk-tale elements and its complexes of fascinating and irrelevant detail which create confusion (in the definition of place, for example: 'Esli proyti ... za ... minuya ... gde ... pozadi ... gde ...', II, p. 116). The impulses behind this composition do indeed approach those which inspired Egipetskaya marka, for 'Feodosiya' could be defined as a consideration of a time when vicious practices were creating fear and destroying relationships and the appreciation of human life. The impulse behind 'Chetvyortaya proza' was one of determination to state Mandelstam's dissociation from hack writers. Therefore the devices which this work has in common with Egipetskaya marka are used to stress his bitter sarcasm. This is so in the case of the longer, more formally constructed sentences, where repetitive devices such as alliteration are insistent and incisive:

Писателям, которые пишут заранее разрешенные вещи,
я хочу плевать в лицо, хочу бить их палкой по голове
и всех посадить за стол в Доме Герцена, поставив
перед каждым стакан полицейского чая и дав каждому
в руки анализ мочи Горнфельда.

(II, p. 182)

Mandelstam builds up to a climax here - but the contrast should be noted between the formal structure of the build-up (organised round a series of verbs) and the imagery which features in the final phrases. The intention here is clearly sarcastic (as, presumably, is the 'obrashchaemost' between the 'politseycheskogo chayu' and the 'analiz mochi'). Shum vremeni and Puteshestvie v Armeniyu are not related to Egipetskaya marka in any overall effect but only in individual details noted in the course of this chapter. Shum vremeni is much more straightforward than Egipetskaya marka as a result of the fact that it is more directly personal. Puteshestvie

v Armeniyu was inspired with Mandelstam's new-found confidence and the use of stylistic devices reflects this. For example the concentration on phonetic association (see above, p. 241) shows Mandelstam to be revelling in the joys of the Russian language once more.

Egipetskaya marka itself provides some of the best examples of fragmentation, contrast and continuity to be found anywhere in Mandelstam's work. It is possible that in using these techniques (and in particular fragmentation) he hoped to reduce the emphasis on the disturbing nature of the situation which he was examining. However, when the work is examined in detail it is clear that he did not succeed in this - any reduction of horror is only an initial effect. The 'Impressionist' technique of highlighting certain details and disregarding others is taken to the extreme, so that the resultant synthesis - the whole built up from the various parts - remains one of confusion and dislocation. The overall effect is very similar to that described by Gogol in Nevskiy prospekt:

'Точно какой-то демон искрошил весь мир на множество разных кусков'¹⁹⁸. This is entirely in keeping with the background against which the work was written. Egipetskaya marka is a complex work in terms of structure because of the disparate styles and techniques which it uses. It is not surprising that the most difficult and confusing period of Mandelstam's life in creative terms should have given rise to so complex a work. It has been seen that different genres in his work do have various devices in common. The important point is, however, the degree to which these devices are employed in a work. Egipetskaya marka develops to the greatest extent those devices which lend themselves most readily to the depiction of a nightmarish state of confusion and hostility. Mandelstam was not able to compose poetry when he wrote Egipetskaya marka and the vision of his poetic eye was fragmented and dislocated by what was going on around him. But he was still able to pick out important details in order to communicate his own particular vision of the world:

Птичье око, налитое кровью, тоже видит по своему
мир.

(II, p. 34)

Conclusion

The Importance of Egipetskaya marka

The importance of Egipetskaya marka is apparent on several different levels. A close examination has shown it to be an intriguing work in terms of its themes, its structure and in what it can reveal of Mandelstam's personal situation. It must now be viewed at a remove in order to assess its place in the context of both Russian prose writing of the twenties and thirties and of Mandelstam's own work. On a more general level, its value in relation to the present age must be considered.

Although Egipetskaya marka is in its entirety a highly unusual work, certain of its characteristics considered individually show that it has features in common with the work of Mandelstam's contemporaries - as a brief review of their prose will demonstrate. Mandelstam was by no means alone among twentieth-century writers and poets in having stated both personal and general problems in a specific work, nor are many of the points which he introduces unique. A 'degree of affinity' has already been noted between Egipetskaya marka and Akhmatova's Poema bez geroya by Jeanne van der Eng-Leidmeier and Kees Verheul¹⁹⁹: the two works share the technique of retrospection to approximately the same period, both deal to an extent with personal concerns, with the examination of the past as a 'key' to the present (N.Ya. II, p. 481), and it is very tempting to see in the title of Akhmatova's work a reference to the opening of Egipetskaya marka's final chapter (II, p. 40. It should be noted that the two works are linked by another factor - Nadezhda Yakovlevna's disapproval: N.Ya. II, p. 496). Among compositions more strictly contemporary with Egipetskaya marka the retrospective mode features in Pasternak's work: in Povest' (1929), for example, he considers the summer of 1914. This is especially interesting, since he represents this period as the end of an era:

Так передвигались люди тем последним по счету летом,
когда еще жизнь по видимости обращалась к отдельным,
и любить что бы то ни было на свете было легче и
свойственнее, чем ненавидеть.²⁰⁰

One of Mandelstam's chief concerns is clearly in evidence here -

namely the significance of man the individual, which, in Pasternak's eyes, was grossly undermined with the advent of the First World War. Indeed, Mandelstam's anxiety on behalf of the individual was shared by several contemporary writers: for instance Zamyatin discusses it directly in one of his essays: '... мы переживаем эпоху подавления личности во имя массы',²⁰¹. In Zoshchenko's work a less directly expressed concern for the individual is to be discerned.

(Mandelstam approved most strongly of Zoshchenko's work. In 'Chetvyortaya proza' he demonstrates that Zoshchenko's writing, like his own, is quite unmoved by the utilitarian demands of society:

'Вот у кого прогулы дышать, вот у кого брюссельское кружево живет!' II, p. 192).

Zoshchenko's writing in the twenties, often flavoured with bitter humour, deals basically with the individual's struggle to survive, his accompanying disillusionment and, in some cases, his regression to an animal state. (In this context it is interesting to note that the main protagonist of Lyudi (1924)²⁰² is one Ivan Ivanovich Belokopytov - a name with some relevance to that of Parnok). Zoshchenko's constant concern with the banal in life is another point of contact between his work and that of Mandelstam, although it is treated rather differently by each: for Mandelstam it is a device implying hostility and immediacy, whereas for Zoshchenko it is a source of humorous and petty detail. Yuriy Olesha's Zavist' (1927) also suggests the oppression of the individual in Babichev's plan to replace the home by his monstrous communal dining room: 'От вас хотят отнять главное ваше достоинство: ваш домашний очаг',²⁰³. Dying woman, so prominent a theme in Egipetskaya marka, also has a place in Zavist' as the symbol of a dying era²⁰⁴ and, as in the case of Egipetskaya marka, there is no hero in the work²⁰⁵ (such 'bezgeroynost'' was a very common feature in prose writing of the twenties and one which incurred the disapproval of Party critics²⁰⁶).

In addition to individual themes and images Egipetskaya marka has technical features in common with other works of the period: the mixing of first and third person narration (Zavist'), the confusion of the main protagonist and the author (Zavist', Bely's Zapiski chudaka), techniques of contrast and incongruity. The latter was manifested in various ways: in Shklovsky's device of

'ostranenie', for example, which Professor Brown identifies in Egipetskaya marka²⁰⁷, and in Zamyatin's emphasis on the unusualness of usual things - as in his description of human skin viewed under a microscope: 'И кто скажет, "реальная" - это вот, привычная, гладкая, видимая всем Фомам, а не та - фантастическая равнина на Марсе?'²⁰⁸. Perhaps the closest resemblances in form are to be found in the prose of another writer who won Mandelstam's approbation ('O prirode slova', II, p. 245) - Velemir Khlebnikov. Professor Brown sees a 'clear influence' of the latter's work in Egipetskaya marka (I, p. XIX). Indeed, Khlebnikov's Ka (written rather earlier than Egipetskaya marka, in 1916) has many devices in common with Mandelstam's prose piece: temporal and spatial displacement, rhythmic prose, short indented sentences which give impressionistic descriptions, phonetic association. On the last point Khlebnikov is perhaps more inventive than Mandelstam, who tends to develop or play on words in close proximity, whereas Khlebnikov associates parts of words or even individual consonants with definite ideas²⁰⁹. In both Ka and Egipetskaya marka the various devices combine to create a most striking and (for the reader) demanding style. In the former, however, the devices are used to produce a 'humorous and lighthearted' piece²¹⁰, in which Khlebnikov seems to aim to show the many possibilities of the prose medium; in Egipetskaya marka they contribute to that complex style which is an integral part of the work, accurately reflecting the confusion experienced by Mandelstam at the time, and to an extent camouflaging his fears.

Egipetskaya marka may in certain aspects not be unique, but it is most distinctly the work of Mandelstam, with an important place in the context of his work as a whole. The question will no doubt always be raised as to the comparative value of Mandelstam's poetry and prose, and the answer, I think, must always be the same. Poetry was Mandelstam's constant preoccupation (apart from the period of silence); it was the medium through which matters of the most urgency could be communicated - as can be seen from the fact that in the years when he was in the greatest personal danger and could sense the most terrible general danger, it was poetry, not prose, which he composed with such force and determination. And yet

his prose does exist and, though often more involved than his poetry, remains the work of a highly gifted and unusual artist. (Had his circumstances been different, Mandelstam might well have gone on to write more creative prose which would have been as fascinating as the pieces which have survived; no doubt their most characteristic element would still have been Mandelstam's cultural, historical and linguistic preoccupations.) The creative prose fulfilled an important task in his oeuvre - it has been seen that Nadezhda Yakovlevna describes how the prose usually 'cleared the way' for poetry (N.Ya. II, p. 213). 'Chetvyortaya proza' was particularly important in this respect, releasing him from the long poetic silence²¹¹. But Egipetskaya marka is no less important a link in his work; surely this composition in the very process of its writing - albeit in its extremely indirect statement of anxieties - must have played some part in the movement towards poetic recovery. An appreciation of the confused and frightening atmosphere of Egipetskaya marka throws into vivid relief the impudent lightheartedness and 'truancy' ('Chetvyortaya proza', II, p. 191) of remarks made elsewhere. For example, the 'backward' movement of time is described in a far more down-to-earth manner in 'Chetvyortaya proza'; gone now are the frighteningly dark and chaotic images evident in this context in Egipetskaya marka: 'Оттого-то мне и годы впрок не идут - другие с каждым днем все почтеннее, а я наоборот - обратное течение времени' (II, p. 190). Similarly in the poem 'Еще далеко мне до патриарха' (I, no. 251) Mandelstam seems to be giving a defiantly impudent conclusion to the anguished excuses of the mosquito of Egipetskaya marka: '... Ну чтож, я извиняюсь, / Но в глубине ничуть не изменяюсь'. The determination and strength of character shown here become ever more apparent in the poetry of the Voronezh period. In Egipetskaya marka details of everyday life are reduced to a level of banality which is frightening and sometimes even grotesque. In the Voronezh poetry, however, day-to-day existence provides Mandelstam with a source of simple pleasures, even when a degree of hardship is involved (for instance, I, no. 354). Ten years after the composition of Egipetskaya marka Mandelstam's poetry reveals his astonishingly calm acceptance of his circumstances, and his convictions as to the importance and the healing powers of his work:

В прекрасной бедности, в роскошной нищете
Живу один - спокоен и утешен -
Благословенны дни и ночи те,
И сладкозвучный труд безгрешен.

(I, no. 354)

A consideration of Egipetskaya marka impresses on the reader more forcefully the amazing singlemindedness of the above poem and, most importantly, the fears and confusions which the poet suffered before such singlemindedness could be attained.

Egipetskaya marka has a significant place among Mandelstam's own work and that of his contemporaries; but it is also relevant to the present age. It should be noted that the more modern critics point in the first instance to the difficulty of the work's style: 'He is too insistent, too arcane a stylist ... in Egipetskaya marka ... the detail is too insistently enchanting for the story to be satisfying as a whole ...'²¹². The French critic Jean Blot finds that while Mandelstam's highly fragmentary style is occasionally rewarding, it more often wearies the reader, making it difficult to appreciate the work as a whole: '... malgré la difficulté, elle ravit par ses trouvailles ... La phrase brisée, étourdissante, lasse bientôt, et justement, l'attention ...'²¹³. Professor Poggioli, however, perceives through the fragmentary form (the 'quasi-cinematographic technique' as he calls it) a definite purpose in the work: 'Its aim is to recollect in obsessive tranquillity, through the perspective of fragmentary episodes, the forlorn and chaotic atmosphere of our era'²¹⁴. How succinct an appraisal that is: Egipetskaya marka does have the aim of conveying Mandelstam's frustration at his own situation, and his anxiety as to the state of society; Professor Poggioli's 'obsessive tranquillity' is an exact definition of the insistent way in which Mandelstam builds up his fragmentary scenes with their highly-charged images. John Bayley's and Jean Blot's less complimentary assessments do not err far from the truth, however: the fragmentary style does indeed make great demands on the reader. But it is precisely in this that Egipetskaya marka's chief value lies; unlike the later poetry it does not offer powerful statements of commitment which can today inspire us with a regard for the value of human life, but it provides startling and rewarding 'trouvailles' for the reader who will rise to the demands of its style. Mandelstam never intended

to make concessions to the reader of his prose. Towards the lazy, undiscerning audience he displayed the kind of condescension which Leopold Averbakh attacked so bitterly in 1924²¹⁵. The 'omni-tolerant' reader who would unquestioningly absorb all placed before him was to Mandelstam a most dangerous phenomenon:

Люди, читая, погружаются в иллюзорный мир и стараются запомнить зачитанное, иначе говоря, полностью отдаются во власть печатного слова. Сам же О.М. предлагал читать, не запоминая, а припоминая, то есть выверяя каждое слово на своем опыте или созвучия его со своей основной идеей, той самой, что делает человека личностью. Ведь на пассивном, 'запоминающем' чтении спокон веку строилась пропаганда общедоступных идеалов ... О.М. называл чтение 'деятельностью', и для него это была прежде всего деятельность отбора.

(N. Ya. I, pp. 244-245)

Egipetskaya marka provides no illusory world, no set of passive images, and its appeal is surely limited to the most discerning audience. At every turn it gives some original, imaginative combination of words, some striking image which permits a new consideration of reality. The work demands constant 'deyatel'nost'; Mandelstam's absolute ease in making historical or cultural allusions produces amazingly succinct characterisations which may shed a new and rewarding light for the attentive reader, but will elude the casual approach. (Mandelstam's perceptive insights on a wide range of historical and cultural themes are surely more vivid than anything the modern media can offer. The latter's tendency in presenting various cultural and artistic subjects has been described as 'pre-digested internationalism'²¹⁶ - a phrase which sums up Mandelstam's worst fears with regard to modern man's approach to art and history.) The form of Egipetskaya marka both provokes the reader to question (to 'check against his own experience') and enhances his perception of some aspect of art or life. The work as a whole does not furnish an escape from reality, but arouses in the discerning reader a concern for art, artists and the cultural heritage, and an anxiety for a society which is 'forlorn and chaotic'.

Notes

1. O.E. Mandelstam, Sobranie sochineniy v tryokh tomakh, edited by G.P. Struve and B.A. Filippov (I, 2nd edition, New York, 1967; II, 2nd edition, New York, 1971; III, New York, 1969).
2. O.E. Mandelstam, Stikhotvoreniya (Leningrad, 1973).
3. N.Ya. Mandelstam, Vospominaniya (New York, 1970) and Vtoraya kniga (Paris, 1972).
4. Clarence Brown, Mandelstam (Cambridge, 1973).
5. Jennifer Baines, Mandelstam: the Later Poetry (Cambridge, 1976).
6. Steven Broyde, Osip Mandelstam and His Age (Cambridge Mass., 1975).
7. Sydney Monas, Osip Mandelstam: Selected Essays (Austin Texas, 1977).
8. ibid. p. xxii.
9. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, 2nd edition (Princeton, 1967).
10. N.Ya. Berkovsky, 'O proze Mandel'shtama', first published in Zvezda (5 1929); 2nd publication in Tekushchaya literatura (Moscow, 1930).
11. N.Ya. Berkovsky, 'O proze', Tekushchaya literatura, p. 156.
12. G.V. Adamovich, 'Neskol'ko slov o Mandel'shtame', Vozdushnye puti (2 1961) p. 99.
13. Yu.B. Margolin, 'Pamyati Mandel'shtama', Vozdushnye puti (2 1961) pp. 102-110.

14. L.Ya. Ginzburg, 'Poetika Osipa Mandel'shtama', Izvestiya AN SSSR seriya literatury i yazyka (4 1972) p. 317.
15. See for example Renato Poggioli, The Poets of Russia, 1890-1930 (Cambridge Mass., 1960) p. 309.
16. Prince D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, 'Shum vremeni', Blagonamerenny (2 1926) p. 169.
17. Prince D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, 'Shum vremeni', Sovremennye zapiski (5 1925) p. 542.
18. Prince D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, 'Shum vremeni', Blagonamerenny, p. 169.
19. A.A. Morozov, in Kratkaya literaturnaya entsiklopediya (4 1967) col. 569.
20. Harry T. Moore and Albert Parry, Twentieth Century Russian Literature (London, 1976) p. 91.
21. O.E. Mandelstam, Egipetskaya marka (Leningrad, 1928).
22. E.I. Zamyatin, Novaya russkaya proza, Litsa (New York, 1955) p. 188.
23. Sydney Monas, Selected Essays, p. xxi.
24. Kiril Taranovsky, 'Essays on Mandelstam', Harvard Slavonic Studies (6 1976) p. 114.
25. See also Jennifer Baines, 'The Poetry of Osip Mandelstam' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oxford, 1973) pp. 164 ff. This cycle includes I, nos. 225-235.
26. Jennifer Baines, 'The Poetry of Osip Mandelstam', pp. 198 ff. The second book includes I, nos. 252-295 (excluding nos. 260, 265) and nos. 487-490.

27. Jennifer Baines, The Later Poetry, p. 100.
28. Clarence Brown, Mandelstam, pp. 97-98.
29. A.S. Pushkin, Evgeny Onegin, Sobr. soch., 10 vols (Moscow) iv (1975) p. 91.
30. Jennifer Baines, 'The Poetry of Osip Mandelstam', p. 136.
31. Prince D. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, 'Shum vremeni', Blagonamerenny, p. 169. See also Clarence Brown, Mandelstam, p. 78.
32. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 198, note 46.
33. Clarence Brown, 'Osip Mandelstam: Fourth Prose', Hudson Review (Spring 1970) p. 51.
34. N.V. Gogol, Povest' o tom, kak possorilsya Ivan Ivanovich s Ivanom Nikiforovichem, Sobr. soch., 6 vols (Moscow) ii (1959) p. 196.
35. N.S. Gumilev, Sobr. soch., 4 vols (Washington) ii (1964) no. 257.
36. Compare B.L. Pasternak's use of the same image in connection with a clock in 'Razmolvka', Stikhi i poemy 1912-1932 (New York, 1961) p. 28.
37. N.V. Gogol, Povest' o tom, kak possorilsya ..., Sobr. soch., ii p. 244.
38. F.M. Dostoevsky, Bobok, Sobr. soch., 10 vols (Moscow) x (1958) p. 343.
39. ibid. p. 342.
40. M.A. Gershenzon, 'M. Bartel'. Zavoyuem mir', Pechat' i revolyutsiya (8 1925) pp. 252-254.

41. H-A. Barbier, 'L'Idole', Iambes et Poèmes (Paris, 1858) p. 39.
42. H-A. Barbier, 'Le Gin', Iambes, p. 206.
43. Jennifer Baines, 'The Poetry of Osip Mandelstam', p. 126.
44. Omry Ronen, 'Leksicheskiy povtor, podtekst i smysl v poetike Osipa Mandel'shtama', in Slavic Poetics. Essays in Honour of K. Taranovsky, edited by Roman Jakobson (The Hague, 1973) p. 378.
45. R.D. Timenchik, 'Zametki ob akmeizme', Russian Literature (7/8 1974) p. 37.
46. Omry Ronen, 'Leksicheskiy povtor', p. 378.
47. F.M. Dostoevsky, Dvoynik, Pol. sobr. soch., 17 vols (Leningrad) i (1971) p. 138.
48. Andrey Bely, Peterburg (Munich, 1967; reprint of Moscow 1928 edition) part 1, p. 157.
49. N.V. Gogol, Nevskiy prospekt, Sobr. soch., iii (1959) p. 42.
50. F.M. Dostoevsky, Zapiski iz podpol'ya, Pol. sobr. soch., v (1973) p. 174: '... представлять все на свете так, как сам еще в мечтах сочинил ...'
51. F.M. Dostoevsky, Dvoynik, Pol. sobr. soch., i p. 132.
52. N.V. Gogol, Zapiski sumasshedshego, Sobr. soch., iii p. 193.
53. F.M. Dostoevsky, Dvoynik, Pol. sobr. soch., i p. 114.
54. Artur Lur'e, 'Cheshuya v nevide', Vozdushnye puti (2 1961) pp. 202-203.

55. Johann Goethe, Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre, Goethes Werke, 14 vols (Hamburg) vii (1950) p. 145.
56. Jennifer Baines, The Later Poetry, p. 135.
57. Nonnus, Dionysiaca 2, line 85.
58. Karl Baedeker, Russia with Tehran, Port Arthur and Peking (Leipzig, 1914) p. 176.
59. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 2, p. 74.
60. N.Ya. Berkovsky, 'O proze', Tekushchaya literatura, p. 178.
61. I.F. Annensky, Stikhotvoreniya i tragedii, 2nd edition (Leningrad, 1959) p. 109.
62. N.V. Gogol, Shinel', Sobr. soch., iii p. 128.
63. G.S. Rabinovich, 'Shutochnoe', Vozdushnye puti (3 1963) pp. 24-25.
64. F.M. Dostoevsky, Dvoynik, Pol. sobr. soch., i p. 134.
65. L.N. Tolstoy, Anna Karenina, Sobr. soch., 20 vols (Moscow) viii (1963) p. 424.
66. ibid.
67. N.V. Gogol, Shinel', Sobr. soch., iii p. 136.
68. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, pp. 45-46.
69. Karl Baedeker, Russia, p. 85.
70. B.O. Unbegaun, Russian Surnames (Oxford, 1972) pp. 365, 368, 342.

71. N.V. Gogol, Shinel', Sobr. soch., iii p. 137.
72. ibid. p. 143.
73. F.I. Tyutchev, Lirika, 2 vols (Moscow) i (1965) pp. 117, 170.
74. H-A. Barbier, 'La Popularité', Iambes, p. 28.
75. H-A. Barbier, 'L'Emeute', Iambes, p. 22.
76. F.M. Dostoevsky, Dvoynik, Pol. sobr. soch., i p. 229.
77. Compare Anna Akhmatova's association of white with a deathly presence, e.g. 'я рожу у белой смерти' in Sochineniya, 2 vols (West Germany) i, 2nd edition (1967) p. 148.
78. A.A. Akhmatova, Sochineniya, ii (1968) p. 177.
79. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 1, p. 34.
80. F.M. Dostoevsky, Zapiski iz podpol'ya, Pol. sobr. soch., v p. 101.
81. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 1, p. 49.
82. F.M. Dostoevsky, Prestuplenie i nakazanie, Pol. sobr. soch., iii (1973) p. 60.
83. Karl Baedeker, Russia, p. 124.
84. ibid. p. 86.
85. ibid. p. 123.
86. A.A. Akhmatova, Sochineniya, ii p. 174.
87. Virgil, Aeneid II

88. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 201, note 76.
89. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 2, pp. 119-120.
90. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 49. See also H.W. Tjalsma 'The Petersburg Poets' in Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avant-Garde, 1900-1930, edited by George Gibian and H.W. Tjalsma (New York, 1976) p. 76.
91. N.A. Nekrasov, 'O pogode', Sobr. soch., 8 vols (Moscow) ii (1965) pp. 132-133.
92. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 1, p. 221.
93. H-A. Barbier, 'L'Emeute', Iambes, p. 23.
94. H-A. Barbier, 'Le Gin', Iambes, p. 207.
95. Тогда Игорьъ взре на светлое солнце и виде от него вся своя воя прикрыты ... Всю ночь съ вечера бусови врани възгряху.
96. N.S. Gumilev, 'Zabludivshiysya tramvay', Sobr. soch., ii no. 257.
97. F.M. Dostoevsky, Besy, Pol. sobr. soch., x (1974) p. 288.
98. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 2, p. 131.
99. H-A. Barbier, 'Quatre-Vingt-Treize', Iambes, p. 21.
100. H-A. Barbier, 'L'Emeute', Iambes, p. 23.
101. H-A. Barbier, 'La Curée', Iambes, p. 12.
102. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe puteshestvie (Moscow/Berlin, 1923) p. 13.

103. A.A. Blok, Sobr. soch., 8 vols (Moscow/Leningrad) vii (1963) p. 258.
104. ibid. p. 271.
105. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, p. 84.
106. ibid. p. 27.
107. ibid. p. 13.
108. Marc Ferro, La Révolution de 1917 (Paris, 1967) translated by J.L. Richards (London, 1972) p. 47.
109. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, pp. 13-14.
110. A.A. Akhmatova, Sochineniya, ii p. 178.
111. I.E. Babel, 'Moy pervyy gus'', Izbrannoe (Moscow, 1957) p. 42.
112. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, pp. 345, 353.
113. F.M. Dostoevsky, Besy, Pol. sobr. soch., x p. 393.
114. A.A. Blok, Dvenadtsat', Sobr. soch., iii (1960) p. 351.
115. A.A. Blok, Sobr. soch., vii p. 297.
116. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, p. 182.
117. ibid. p. 247.
118. A.A. Blok, Sobr. soch., vii p. 272.
119. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, p. 10.
120. ibid. pp. 199-120.
121. ibid. p. 204.

122. A.A. Blok, Sobr. soch., vii p. 283.
123. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, p. 206.
124. ibid. pp. 196-197.
125. D.I. Zaslavsky, 'O skromnom plagiats i razvyaznoy khalture', Literaturnaya gazeta (May 7th 1929).
126. Max Hayward, 'Pilnyak and Zamyatin. Two Tragedies of the Twenties', Survey (April-June, v 1961) p. 89.
127. Maxim Gorky, 'O potere energiya', Izvestiya (September 15th 1929).
128. K.N. Leontiev, Russkiy vestnik (285 1903) p. 418, see II, pp. 583-588.
129. H-A. Barbier, 'L'Idole', Iambes, p. 42.
130. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 2, pp. 267-268.
131. Velemir Khlebnikov, Ka, Sobr. soch., 4 vols (Munich) ii (1968).
132. ibid. p. 48.
133. ibid. p. 69.
134. ibid. p. 47.
135. Velemir Khlebnikov, Snake Train. Poetry and Prose, edited by G. Kern (Ann Arbor, 1976) p. 254.
136. A.S. Pushkin, Egipetskie nochi, Sobr. soch., v (1975) p. 229.
137. F.M. Dostoevsky, Zapiski iz podpol'ya, Pol. sobr. soch., v p. 124.

138. F.M. Dostoevsky, Brat'ya Karamazovy, Pol. sobr. soch., xiv (1976) p. 230.
139. ibid. p. 240.
140. ibid. p. 235.
141. A.N. Ostrovsky, Groza, Pol. sobr. soch., 12 vols (Moscow) ii (1974) p. 226.
142. I.F. Annensky, Famira Kifared, Stikhotvoreniya i tragedii, p. 546.
143. B.L. Pasternak, Doktor Zhivago (Milan, 1957) p. 466.
144. B.L. Pasternak, Stikhi i poemy 1912-1932, p. 37.
145. ibid.
146. N.A. Nilsson, 'Mandelstam and the Nurmis Skates', Scandoslavica (18 1972) pp. 91-95.
147. Thomas Carlyle, Wilhelm Meister, translated from the German (London, 1871) p. 191; see the following passages from the original:
'Warum denn aber,' fiel Wilhelm ihm ein, 'gerade dieses Allerseltsamste, diese ein samste aller Neigungen?' -
'Eben deshalb,' rief Jarno, weil sie einsiedlerisch ist. Die Menschen wollt ich meiden ...'
'Unterhaltender scheinen sie mir doch,' versetzte Wilhelm, 'als deine starren Felsen.' - Keineswegs,' versetzte Jarno, 'denn diese sind wenigstens nicht zu begreifen.'
Johann Goethe, Goethes Werke, viii (1950) pp. 33 ff.
148. Andrey Bely, Peterburg, part 2, p. 267.
149. F.M. Dostoevsky, Zapiski iz podpol'ya, Pol. sobr. soch., v p. 125.

150. Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary, Les Oeuvres de Gustave Flaubert, 18 vols (Paris) viii (1965) p. 374;
'... elle saisit le bocal bleu, en arracha le bouchon, y fourra sa main, et, la retirant pleine d'une poudre blanche, elle se mit à manger à même.'
151. ibid. p. 375.
152. H-A. Barbier, 'La Popularité', Iambes, p. 31.
153. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 47.
154. Count Nieuwerke, Superintendent of Fine Arts, quoted in Phoebe Pool, Impressionism (London, 1967), p. 31.
155. ibid. p. 30 (The words of Théodore Rousseau).
156. John Rewald, The History of Impressionism (London, 1973) p. 95 (Théodore Rousseau).
157. Brokhaus-Efron, Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar' (St. Petersburg, 1898) p. 143.
158. H-A. Barbier, 'L'Idole', Iambes, p. 40.
159. ibid. p. 36.
160. H-A. Barbier, 'La Curée', Iambes, p. 15.
161. V.Ya. Parnakh, Histoire de la Danse (Paris, 1932).
162. Karl Baedeker, Russia, p. 94.
163. Théophile Gautier, Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-cinq ans, 6 vols (Leipzig) ii (1859) pp. 133, 142.
164. F.I. Tyutchev, '14-oe dekabrya 1825', Lirika, ii (1965) p. 58.
165. A.A. Akhmatova, Sochineniya, ii p. 62.

166. Henrik Ibsen, Peer Gynt, The Oxford Ibsen, 8 vols (London) iii (1972) p. 401.
167. A.P. Chekhov, Vishnyovyy sad, Pol. sobr. soch. i pisem, 20 vols (Moscow) xi (1948) pp. 328, 316.
168. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, p. 131.
169. I.M. Semenko, 'Osip Mandel'shtam. Zapisnye knizhki. Zametki', Voprosy literatury (4 1968) p. 181.
170. N.N. Nikitin, Bunt, Rasskazy (Moscow/Petrograd, 1923) pp. 64, 89.
171. A.S. Pushkin, Mednyy vsadnik, Sobr. soch., iii (1974) p. 262.
172. N.V. Gogol, Nevskiy prospekt, Sobr. soch., iii p. 42.
173. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 59.
174. V.Ya. Propp, Morfologiya skazki, 2nd edition (Moscow, 1969) p. 32.
175. ibid. p. 40.
176. ibid. p. 40.
177. ibid. p. 59.
178. N.Ya. Berkovsky, 'O proze', Tekushchaya literatura, p. 163.
179. Steven Broyde, Osip Mandelstam and His Age, p. 22.
180. H-A. Barbier, 'La Curée', Iambes, p. 10.
181. H-A. Barbier, 'L'Idole', Iambes, p. 34.
182. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, pp. 55-56.

183. N.Ya. Berkovsky, 'O proze', Tekushchaya literatura, p. 163.
184. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, p. 226.
185. Jennifer Baines, 'Grifel'naya oda' Oxford Slavonic Papers (v 1972).
186. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 61.
187. See also the comments of Lidiya Ginzburg, 'Poetika Osipa Mandel'shtama', p. 317.
188. Brian Wilson and David Miller, Stories from Homer (Oxford, 1973) pp. 59-61.
189. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 174.
190. F.M. Dostoevsky, Zapiski iz podpol'ya, Pol. sobr. soch., v p. 131.
191. Yu.K. Olesha, Zavist', Izbrannoe (Moscow, 1974) p. 29.
192. V.B. Shklovsky, Sentimental'noe, p. 192.
193. N.Ya. Berkovsky, 'O proze', Tekushchaya literatura, p. 163.
194. A.A. Akhmatova, Sochineniya, ii p. 198.
195. N.V. Gogol, Shinel', Sobr. soch., iii pp. 132-133.
196. N.V. Gogol, Nos, Sobr. soch., iii p. 50.
197. O.E. Mandelstam, Egipetskaya marka (Leningrad, 1928) p. 23.
'Bezrabortnyy' seems far more appropriate than 'bezzabotnyy';
with the former quality the Kamennooostrovskiy prospekt
resembles both the unfortunate Parnok (unable to achieve his
diplomatic ambitions) and Mandelstam (unable to compose poetry
at that time).

198. N.V. Gogol, Nevskiy prospekt, Sobr. soch., iii p. 21.
199. Jeanne van der Eng-Leidmeier and Kees Verheul, Tale without a Hero and Twenty-Two Poems by Anna Akhmatova (The Hague, 1973) p. 109 note.
200. B.L. Pasternak, Proza 1915-1958 (New York, 1961) p. 200.
201. E.I. Zamyatin, 'Zavtra', Novaya russkaya proza, p. 174.
202. M.M. Zoshchenko, Lyudi (Moscow, 1924).
203. Yu. K. Olesha, Zavist', Izbrannoe, p. 76.
204. ibid. p. 64.
205. ibid. p. 62.
206. I.G. Lezhnev, 'Khudozhestvennaya literatura revolyutsionnogo desyatiletiya', Literaturnye budni (Moscow, 1921) p. 254.
207. Clarence Brown, The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, p. 54.
208. Yu. K. Zamyatin, 'O sintetizme', Novaya russkaya proza, p. 237.
209. Velemir Khlebnikov, Snake Train, p. 256. (It is interesting to note that there is a correspondence between Khlebnikov's association in Ka of 'pugovitsa' and 'pugat'' and Mandelstam's use of 'pugovitsy' in a situation characterised by fear - II, p. 18.)
210. ibid. p. 254.
211. Clarence Brown, 'Osip Mandelstam: Fourth Prose', p. 52.
212. John Bayley, 'Again in Petersburg', The Listener (March 17th 1966) p. 399.

213. Jean Blot, Ossip Mandelstam (Paris, 1972) pp. 60-61.
214. Renato Poggioli, The Poets of Russia, pp. 309-310.
215. L.L. Averbakh, 'Polemicheskie zametki', Prozhektor (22 1924) p. 25.
216. David Holden, 'The Unreal Image', a talk given for the BBC in 1969 and July 1978.

Bibliography

(i) Bibliography of works cited in the text

Adamovich, G.V., 'Neskol'ko slov o Mandel'shtame', Vozdushnye puti
(2 1961)

Akhmatova, A.A., Sochineniya, 2 vols (West Germany, 1967-1968, i
2nd edition)

Annensky, I.F., Stikhotvoreniya i tragedii, 2nd edition (Leningrad,
1959)

Averbakh, L.L., 'Polemicheskie zametki', Prozhektor (22 1924)

Babel, I.E., Izbrannoe (Moscow, 1957)

Baedeker, K., Russia with Tehran, Port Arthur and Peking (Leipzig,
1914)

Baines, J., 'Grifel'naya oda', Oxford Slavonic Papers (v 1972)

Mandelstam: the Later Poetry (Cambridge, 1976)

'The Poetry of Osip Mandelstam' (unpublished doctoral
dissertation, University of Oxford, 1973)

Barbier, H-A., Iambes et Poèmes (Paris, 1858)

Bayley, J., 'Again in Petersburg', The Listener (March 17th 1966)

Bely, A., Peterburg (Munich, 1967; reprint of Moscow 1928 edition)

Berkovsky, N.Ya., 'O proze Mandel'shtama', Tekushchaya literatura
(Moscow, 1930)

Blok, A.A., Sobr. soch., 8 vols (Moscow/Leningrad, 1960-1963)

Blot, J., Ossip Mandelstam (Paris, 1972)

Brockhaus - Efron, Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar', 43 vols, edited by
K.K. Arsen'ev and F.F. Petrushevsky, (St. Petersburg, 1898)

Brown, C., Mandelstam (Cambridge, 1973)

'Osip Mandelstam: Fourth Prose', Hudson Review (Spring
1970)

The Prose of Osip Mandelstam, 2nd edition (Princeton,
1967)

Broyde, S., Osip Mandelstam and His Age (Cambridge Mass., 1975)

Carlyle, T., Wilhelm Meister, translated from the German
(London, 1871)

Chekhov, A.P., Pol. sobr. soch. i pisem, 20 vols (Moscow, 1944-1951)

Dostoevsky, F.M., Sobr. soch., 10 vols (Moscow, 1956-1958)

Pol. sobr. soch., 17 vols (Leningrad, 1972-1976)

Ferro, M., La Révolution de 1917 (Paris, 1967) translated from the
French by J.L. Richards (London, 1972)

Flaubert, G., Madame Bovary, Les Oeuvres de Gustave Flaubert, 18 vols
(Paris, 1964-1965)

Gautier, T., Histoire de l'art dramatique en France depuis vingt-
cinq ans, 6 vols (Leipzig, 1858-1859)

Gershenzon, M.A., 'M. Bartel'. Zavoyuem mir', Pechat' i revolyutsiya
(8 1925).

Ginzburg, L.Ya., 'Poetika Osipa Mandel'shtama', Izvestiya AN SSSR
seriya literatury i yazyka (4 1972)

Goethe, J., Goethes Werke, 14 vols (Hamburg, 1948-1960)

Gogol, N.V., Sobr. soch., 6 vols (Moscow, 1959)

Gorky, M., 'O potere energiya', Izvestiya (September 15th 1929)

Gumilev, N.S., Sobr. soch., 4 vols (Washington, 1962-1968)

Hayward, M., 'Pilnyak and Zamyatin. Two Tragedies of the Twenties'
Survey (v 1961)

Ibsen, H., The Oxford Ibsen, 8 vols, edited and translated by
J. Macfarlan (Oxford, 1960-1977)

Khlebnikov, V., Sobr. soch., 4 vols (Munich, 1968)

Snake Train. Poetry and Prose, edited by G. Kern
(Ann Arbor, 1976)

Leontiev, K.N., in Russkiy vestnik (285 1903)

Lezhnev, I.G., 'Khudozhestvennaya literatura revolyutsionnogo
desyatiletia', Literaturnye budni (Moscow, 1921)

Lur'e, A., 'Cheshuya v nevide', Vozdushnye puti (2 1961)

Mandelstam, N.Ya., Vospominaniya (New York, 1970)

Vtoraya kniga (Paris, 1972)

Mandelstam, O.E., Sobr. soch., edited by G.P. Struve and B.A.
Filippov (I, 2nd edition, New York, 1967; II, 2nd edition,
New York, 1971; III, New York, 1969)

Stikhotvoreniya (Leningrad, 1973)

Egipetskaya marka (Leningrad, 1928)

Margolin, Yu.B., 'Pamyati Mandel'shtama', Vozdushnye puti (2 1961)

- Monas, S., Osip Mandelstam: Selected Essays (Austin Texas, 1977)
- Moore, H.T. and A. Parry, Twentieth Century Russian Literature (London, 1976)
- Morozov, A.A., in Kratkaya literaturnye entsiklopediya (4 1967)
- Nekrasov, N.A., Sobr. soch., 8 vols (Moscow, 1965-1967)
- Nikitin, N.N., Bunt, Rasskazy (Moscow/Petrograd, 1923)
- Nilsson, N.A., 'Mandelstam and the Nurmis Skates', Scandoslavica (18 1972)
- Nonnus, Dionysiaca 2
- Olesha, Yu.K., Izbrannoe (Moscow, 1974)
- Ostrovsky, A.N., Pol. sobr. soch., 12 vols (Moscow, 1973-1978)
- Parnakh, V.Ya., Histoire de la Danse (Paris, 1932). Part of a series entitled 'Bibliothèque générale illustrée'
- Pasternak, B.I., Doktor Zhivago (Milan, 1957)
Proza 1915-1958 (New York, 1961)
Stikhi i poemy 1912-1932 (New York, 1961)
- Poggioli, R., The Poets of Russia 1890-1930 (Cambridge Mass., 1960)
- Pool, P., Impressionism (London, 1967)
- Propp, V.Ya., Morfologiya skazki, 2nd edition (Moscow, 1969)
- Pushkin, A.S., Sobr. soch., 10 vols (Moscow, 1974-)
- Rabinovich, G.S., 'Shutochnoe', Vozdushnye puti (3 1963)
- Rewald, J., The History of Impressionism (London, 1973)

Ronen, O., 'Leksicheskiy povtor, podtekst i smysl v poetike Osipa Mandel'shtama', Slavic Poetics, Essays in Honour of K. Taranovsky (The Hague, 1973)

Semenko, I.M., 'Osip Mandel'shtam. Zapisnye knizhki. Zametki', Voprosy literatury (4 1968)

Shklovsky, V.B., Sentimental'noe puteshestvie (Moscow/Berlin, 1923)

Svyatopolk-Mirsky, Prince D., 'Shum vremeni', Sovremennye zapiski (5 1925)

'Shum vremeni', Blagonamerenny
(2 1926)

Taranovsky, K., 'Essays on Mandelstam', Harvard Slavonic Studies (6 1976)

Timenchik, R.D., 'Zametki ob akmeizme', Russian Literature (7/8 1974)

Tjalsma, H.W., in Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avant-Garde, 1900-1930, edited by G. Gibian and H.W. Tjalsma (New York, 1976)

Tolstoy, L.N., Sobr. soch., 20 vols (Moscow, 1960-1965)

Tyutchev, F.I., Lirika, 2 vols (Moscow, 1965)

Unbegaun, B.O., Russian Surnames (Oxford, 1972)

Van der Eng-Liedmeier, J. and K. Verheul, Tale without a Hero and Twenty-Two Poems by Anna Akhmatova (The Hague, 1973)

Virgil, Aeneid II

Wilson, B. and David Miller, Stories from Homer (Oxford, 1973)

Zamyatin, E.I., Litsa (New York, 1955)

Zaslavsky, D.I., 'O skromnom plagiate i razvyaznoy khalture',
Literaturnaya gazeta (May 7th 1929)

Zoshchenko, M.M., Lyudi (Moscow, 1924)

(ii) Bibliography of translations and works dealing with Mandelstam which are not included in the bibliographies of the American edition. Also included here are works not directly concerned with Mandelstam, but which were consulted during the preparation of this thesis: these are marked with an asterisk.

Translations

Brown, C. and W.S. Merwin, Selected Poems (Oxford, 1973)

Burago, A. and B. Raffel, Complete Poetry of Osip Mandelstam (New York, 1973)

Harris, J.G. and C. Antony, The Completed Critical Prose and Letters (Ann Arbor, 1979)

McDuff, D., Selected Poems (Cambridge, 1974)

Monas, S., Osip Mandelstam; Selected Essays (Austin Texas, 1977)

Rayfield, D., Chapter 42, by Nadezhda Mandelstam; and The Goldfinch by Osip Mandelstam, Introduced and translated by D. Rayfield (Menard Press, 1973)

* * *

Beksin, O., 'O. Mandel'shtam. O poezii', Pechat' i revolyutsiya (6 1929)

* Borland, H., Soviet Literary Theory and Practice during the First Five-Year Plan, 1928-1932 (New York, 1950)

* Bukharin, N.I., 'O nashey khudozhestvennoy politike', Prozhektor (10 1924)

Bukhshtab, B., 'The Poetry of Mandelstam', Russian Literary Triquarterly (1 1971) translated from the Russian by C. Brown

Cohen, A.A., Osip Emilevich Mandelstam: an Essay in Antiphon
(Ann Arbor, 1974)

Eagle, H., 'On the free-verse rhythm of Mandelstam's "Horseshoe
Finder"', Russian Literature Triquarterly (4 1972)

* Erlich, V., 'A note on the Grotesque. Gogol: A Test-Case',
Essays to Honour R. Jacobson i (The Hague, 1967)

Foster, L., 'Nekotorye leksicheskie i semanticheskie osobennosti
sbornika "Tristia" Osipa Mandel'shtama', Slavic Poetics,
Essays in Honour of K. Taranovsky (The Hague, 1973)

Gifford, H., 'Mandelstam and Pasternak, the Antipodes', Russian and
Slavic Literature (BANFF, 1976)

Gifford H., Pasternak (Cambridge, 1977)

Hope, A.D., 'The blind swallow: some parleyings with Mandelstam',
Melbourne Slavonic Studies (9/10 1975)

Jangfeldt, B., 'Osip Mandelstam's Ode to Stalin', Scandoslavica
(22 1976)

Khardzhiev, N., 'Vosstanovlennyy Mandel'shtam', Russian Literature
(7/8 1974)

Klimova, A., 'Blazhennoe nasledstvo', Novyy zhurnal (117 1974)

Koubourlis, D.J., A Concordance to the Poems of Osip Mandelstam
(New York/London, 1974)

Levin, Yu., 'Zametki k Razgovoru o Dante Mandel'shtama', International
Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics (15 1972)

'Razbor dvukh stikhotvoreniy Mandel'shtama', Russian
Literature (2 1972)

'O chastnom slovare yazyka poeta' Russian Literature
(2 1972)

Levin, Yu., 'O sootnoshenii mezhdru semantikoŷ teksta i vnetekstovoy real'nostyu', Russian Literature (10/11 1975)

'Razbor odnogo stikhotvoreniya Mandel'shtama, Slavic Poetics, Essays in Honour of K. Taranovsky (The Hague, 1973)

'Russkaya semanticheskaya poetika, kak potentsial'naya kul'turnaya paradigma', Russian Literature (7/8 1974)

'Zametki o "krymsko-ellinskikh" stikhakh Osipa Mandel'shtama', Russian Literature (10/11 1975)

Levinton, G.A. and R.D. Timenchik, 'Kniga K.F. Taranovskogo o poezii Mandel'shtama', Russian Literature (vi - 2 1978)

Mandelstam, N.Ya., Mozart and Salieri (An Essay on Osip Mandelstam and poetic creativity), translated from the Russian by R.A. Mclean (Ann Arbor, 1973)

Nilsson, N.A., 'The Russian Imaginists' (Stockholm, 1970)

'Mandelstam's poem "Voz'mi na radost'", Russian Literature (7/8 1974)

'Osip Mandelstam. Five Poems', Stockholm Studies in Russian Literature (i 1973)

'"Proslavim brat'ya" and "Na kamennykh otrogakh". Remarks on 2 poems by Osip Mandelstam', Slavic Poetics, Essays in Honour of K. Taranovsky (The Hague, 1973)

* Oulanoff, H., The Serapion Brothers. Theory and Practice (The Hague, 1966)

Pavlov, V., 'Istoricheskie vzglyady Osipa Mandel'shtama', Grani (xxv, 78 1970)

Pshibyl'sky, R., 'Osip Mandel'shtam i muzyka', Russian Literature (2 1972)

Rayfield, D., 'A Winter in Moscow', Stand (Dec., 1972)

Rayfield, D., 'Mandelstam's Voronezh poetry', Russian Literary Triquarterly (11 1975)

'Mandelstam's creative process - in the light of his widow's memoirs', Russian and Slavic Literature (BANFF, 1976)

Ronen, O., 'Mandelstam's kashchey', Studies presented to Prof. R. Jacobson by his students (Cambridge Mass., 1968)

Scammell, M., Russia's Other Writers (London, 1970)

Segal, D.M., 'Fragment semanticheskoy poetiki O.E. Mandel'shtama', Russian Literature (10/11 1975)

'O nekotorykh aspektakh smyslovoy stryktury "Grifel'noy ody" O.E. Mandel'shtama', Russian Literature (2 1972)

'Pamyat' zreniya i pamyat' smysla', Russian Literature (7/8 1974)

Semenko, I.M., 'Mandel'shtam - perevodchik Petrarki', Voprosy literatury (10 1970)

Stacy, R.H., Russian Literary Criticism (New York, 1974)

Struve, G.P. 'Osip Mandelstam and Auguste Barbier: some notes on Mandelstam's Versions of Iambes', California Slavic Studies (8 1975)

Taranovsky, K., 'Dva "molchaniya" Osipa Mandel'shtama', Russian Literature (2 1972)

'Dve publikatsii "Stalinskoy ody" O.E. Mandel'shtama', Scandoslavica (23 1977)

'Razbor odnogo zaumnogo stikhotvoreniya Mandel'shtama', Russian Literature (2 1972)

'Osip Mandel'shtam; "Na rozval'nyakh, ulozhennykh solomoy"', Russian Literature (7/8 1974)

'The Jewish Theme in the Poetry of Osip Mandelstam', Russian Literature (7/8 1974)

Terras, V., 'Osip Mandel'shtam i ego filosofiya slova', Slavic Poetics, Essays in Honour of K. Taranovsky (The Hague, 1973)

Toddes, E., 'Mandel'shtam i Tyutchev', International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics (17 1974)

Turner, C.J.G., 'On Osip Mandelstam's "Vek"', Slavic and East European Journal (2 1976)

Van der Eng-Liedmeier, J., 'Mandel'shtam's poem "V Peterburge my soydyomsya snova"', Russian Literature (7/8 1974)

Weidle, V., 'Batyushkov i Mandel'shtam', Novyy zhurnal (117 1974)

Appendix

A translation of Egipetskaya marka

Attention has been paid most particularly in this translation to those points of style which are felt to be most characteristic of the work. These are, firstly, the use of contrast; within this group special note has been taken of the high/banal contrast since Egipetskaya marka is striking in its use of bathos and of colloquial elements, which are often involved in the high/banal contrasts. Secondly, aspects of continuity (repeated themes and imagery) are considered to be important and an attempt has been made to reflect these in the translation. Such stylistic features as alliteration and rhythm have been included wherever possible. Unusual metaphors, similes, epithets and turns of phrase have not been 'explained' since they were evidently intended to be unusual and to attract the reader's attention. For example, the epithet 'concert' appears several times (pages 286, 300) applied directly to a noun, with no intermediate explanation (not 'concert-loving').

A series of notes follows the translation. This includes an explanation of the less obvious proper names (where it has been possible to identify these) and also comment on passages which further illustrate points discussed in the thesis itself. The notes have not been asterisked or numbered in the text so that continuity in reading should not be interrupted. Reference has been made in the notes to Professor Brown's The Prose of Osip Mandelstam and to Baedeker's Russia with Tehran, Port Arthur and Peking (see Bibliography (i)); and to Professor Taranovsky's 'Fragment semanticheskoy poetiki' (see Bibliography (ii)).

The Egyptian Stamp

I do not like rolled-up manuscripts. Some of them are heavy and greased with time, like the archangel's trumpet.

I

The Polish parlour-maid had gone to Quarenghi's church to have a bit of gossip, and to say a prayer or two to the Holy Mother of God..

At night a Chinaman appeared in a dream, hung about with handbags, like a necklace of hazel hens; there was an American duel too, consisting in the opponents aiming their pistols at cabinets of crockery, at inkwells and at family canvases.

Oh, family of mine, I propose a coat of arms to you: a glass of boiled water. With the rubbery aftertaste of Petersburg's sterilised water I drink to failed domestic immortality. The centrifugal force of time has dispersed our Viennese chairs and our Dutch plates with the little blue flowers. Nothing remains. Thirty years have passed like a slowly burning fire. For thirty years a cold, white flame has licked the mirrors' spines, where the bailiff's tags are now.

But how to tear myself from you, dear Egypt of things? The evident eternity of dining room, of bedroom, of study. How to expiate my guilt? Do you want a Valhalla? There are the Kokorev warehouses. Go there for preservation! Already the porters' gang, hopping and tripping in horror, raise up the grand piano, a Mignon, like a black patent meteor fallen from the sky. Bast mats are spread like chasubles. The pier-glass flows sideways down the staircase, shunting its palm-tree length on the landings.

When evening came, Parnok hung his morning coat on the back of a Viennese chair: through the night it should rest its shoulders and arm-holes, should sleep out its hearty Cheviot sleep. Who knows,

perchance the morning coat turns somersaults on that Viennese arc, becomes rejuvenated - in a word plays about? ... Spineless lady-friend to young men, it longs for the triptych of mirrors at the fashionable tailor's ... Simple sack at the fitting session - neither knightly armour nor yet a dubious shift, this the tailor-artist has covered with the lines of his Pythagorean chalk and has inspired with life and fluency:

- Forth, my beauty, go and live! Flaunt yourself at concerts, give lectures, love and make mistakes!

- Ah Mervis, Mervis, what have you done? Why have you robbed Parnok of his earthly shell, why have you parted him from his dear sister?

- Is he asleep?

- Yes! ... The pest, it's a pity to waste electric light on him!

The last grains of coffee disappeared in the crater of the barrel-organ-mill.

The kidnapping had taken place.

Mervis had accomplished his Sabine abduction.

We count in years; but in actual fact, in any flat on the Kamennooostrovskiy time cleaves into dynasties and centuries.

The government of the house is always grandiose. The span of life is unbounded: from the comprehension of the Gothic German alphabet to the golden grease of university pasties.

Quick to take offence, the self-^{esteeming} breath of petroleum, and the greasy smell of that good soul kerosene: these guard the flat, so vulnerable from the kitchen, where yard-keepers burst in with their catapults of firewood. Dusty rags and brushes warm up its white blood.

To begin with there was a joiner's bench and Ilin's map of the hemispheres.

Parnok drew comfort from this. He was reassured by its

indestructible canvas. Poking at oceans and continents with his pen-holder, he compiled routes for grandiose travels, comparing the light outlines of Aryan Europe with the blunt boot of Africa and with toneless Australia. In South America, starting with Patagonia, he also found a certain sharpness.

Respect for Ilin's map had been in Parnok's blood from those years of legend when he had supposed that the aquamarine and ochre hemispheres, like two large balls closed in a net of latitudes, were authorised for their visual mission by a scorching administration in the very bowels of the earth, and that they, like nutritional pills, contained within themselves condensed space and distance.

Is it not with such feeling that the songstress of the Italian school, preparing for her crossing to tour the infant America, takes in with her voice the geographical map, measures the ocean with its metallic timbre, checks the inexperienced pulse of the steamship's engines with roulade and tremolo ...

Tipped upside down on the retina-net of her pupils, those same two Americas, like two green game-bags with Washington and the Amazon. She first brings this map into use by her maiden voyage across the salty sea, reading her fortune by dollars and by Russian hundred-rouble notes with their wintry crunch.

The fifties deceived her. No bel canto could have lent charm to them. Everywhere the same low cloth-sky, the same smokey reading-rooms, the same stakes lowered into the heart of the age - 'The Times' and the 'Gazettes'. And, at the last, Russia ...

Her little ears will start to itch: 'Kreshchatik', 'shchastie', 'shchavel'. Her mouth will be rent to her ears by the unprecedented, the impossible sound 'Ы'.

And then the Household Cavalry will flock to the church of Quarenghi for the funeral service. The golden buzzard-birds will peck to pieces this Roman-Catholic songstress.

How high they placed her! Could this really be death? But death would not dare so much as to utter a word in the presence of the diplomatic corps.

- We celebrate her with plumes, with gendarmes, with Mozart!

At this point feverish images from the novels of Balzac and Stendhal flashed through his mind: young men conquering Paris and brushing their shoes with a handkerchief at entrances to private residences - and he set off to win back his morning coat.

The tailor Mervis lived on the Monetnaya, next to the Lyceum itself, but whether or not he made clothes for the students was a vexed question; it was more of a common assumption that he did, just as one assumes that a fisherman on the Rhine catches trout, and not some filthy rubbish or other. From all the signs it was clear that Mervis' head was occupied by no tailor's trade, but by something of more importance. It was not by chance that relatives came flocking to him from distant places, while his customer would back away, stunned and repentant.

- For who indeed will give my children their roll and butter?
- said Mervis, as though plucking at some butter with his hand, and in the birdy air of the tailor's flat Parnok seemed to see not only creamy 'starlet' butter, crimped to the shape of watery petals, but even bunches of garden radishes. Next Mervis artfully twisted the conversation round to the advocate Gruzenberg, who had ordered a senator's uniform from him in January, and then for some reason dragged in his son Aron, a student at the conservatory, became confused, fussed and flustered, and whisked behind a partition.

- Well then, - thought Parnok, - perhaps this is how it has to be, perhaps the morning coat is no more, perhaps he really did sell it to pay for the cheviot, as he says.

And indeed, if one thinks about it, Mervis has no feel for the cut of a morning coat - all he can manage is a frock coat, clearly more his level.

Lucien de Rubempré had coarse linen underwear and an ungainly suit, stitched by a rural tailor; he ate chestnuts on the street and was afraid of concierges. Once, on a day most fortunate for himself, he was having a shave when his future was born from his shaving lather.

Parnok stood alone, forgotten by the tailor Mervis and his family. His eyes fell upon the partition, behind which a feminine contralto droned like sticky Jewish honey. This partition, pasted over with small pictures, was indeed a rather strange iconostasis.

Here was Pushkin, with crooked face and fur coat, whom some gentlemen resembling torch-bearers were carrying out of a carriage, narrow as a sentry-box, and, paying no attention to the astonished coachman in his metropolitan's cap, were intending to throw into a porch. Next to this, an old-fashioned pilot of the nineteenth century - Santos-Dumont, in double-breasted jacket and pendants - thrown by the play of the elements from the basket of his air-balloon, he hung by a rope, gazing at a soaring condor. Then some Dutchmen on stilts were depicted, running like cranes around their tiny country.

II

The places in which Petersburg people arrange to meet one another show no great diversity. They are sanctified by antiquity, by the sea-green sky and by the Neva. They could be marked on a plan of the city by little crosses amid the heavy-fleeced parks and cardboard streets. Perhaps they really do change in the course of history, but before the end, when the temperature of the epoch leapt up to thirty seven point three and life shot out on a false alarm, roaring at night along the light Nevsky, they were as follows:

Firstly, the Empire pavilion in the Engineer Garden, where it was actually shameful for a passer-by to look, lest he should get mixed up in other people's business, and be obliged to launch (for no apparent reason) into an Italian aria; secondly, the Theban sphinxes opposite the University building; thirdly - that ugly arch where Galernaya Street begins, which is incapable even of giving shelter from the rain; fourthly - a side pathway in the Summer Gardens, the exact position of which has slipped my mind, but which any knowledgeable person could point out with no problem. That's all. Only madmen would insist on a rendez-vous by the Bronze Horseman or the Alexander Column.

There once lived in Petersburg a little man with patent shoes, despised by door-keepers and by women. He was called Parnok. In early spring he would run out into the street and patter with his little sheep's hooves along the soggy pavements.

He wanted to join the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as a dragoman, to persuade Greece to embark on some risky step and to write a memorandum.

In February he made a mental note of the following incident:

Blocks of good bottom ice were being taken through the city to the creamery. The ice was geometrically perfect and sound, touched by neither spring nor death. But on the last sled a bright green pine branch floated by, frozen into the pale blue glass like a Greek girl in an open grave. The black sugar of the snow was disappearing underfoot, but the trees stood in warm little moons of melting earth.

A wild parabola connected Parnok with the majestic enfilades of history and music.

- You'll be thrown out one of these days, Parnok, thrown out with terrible scandal and shame - you'll be taken by the arm and booted out - from the Symphony Hall, from the Society of Friends and Amateurs of the Last Word, from the Chamber Circle for Dragonfly Music, from Madame Bookbinder's salon - goodness knows where from - but you'll be thrown out, covered with shame and disgrace ...

He had some false memories: for example, he was sure that once, as a child, he had crept into a magnificent conference-room and switched on the light. All the clusters of bulbs and bunches of candles with crystal icicles immediately blazed up like an empty apiary. The electricity gushed out with such a fierce current that his eyes began to hurt, and he burst into tears.

Dear, blind, selfish light.

He loved wood-piles and firewood. In winter a dry log should be resonant, light and hollow. And birchwood should be lemon-yellow. And weigh no more than a frozen fish. He would feel a log as though it were alive in his hand.

Since childhood he had been attached heart and soul to all that was unnecessary; he would transform life's tram-car babble into events, and when he began to fall in love, he would endeavour to tell women of it, but they did not understand him and by way of revenge he would speak to them exclusively on lofty subjects in a wild, grandiloquent, birdy language.

Shapiro was called 'Nikolay Davydich'. Where the 'Nikolay' had come from was not clear, but its combination with Davyd fascinated us. I imagined that Davydich, i.e. Shapiro himself, had drawn his head into his shoulders and was grovelling before some Nikolay or other, asking for a loan.

Shapiro depended on my father. He would sit for hours in the preposterous study with its copying machine and armchair 'style russe'. People said that Shapiro was honest and 'a little man'. For some reason or other I was convinced that 'little men' never spent more than three roubles and lived, without fail, on the Sands. The

big-headed Nikolay Davydich was a rough, kind guest, for ever rubbing his hands, with the guilty smile of a messenger-boy, admitted to the house. He smelt of tailor and iron.

I was quite convinced that Shapiro was honest and, rejoicing in this, I secretly wished that no-one save him should dare to be honest. Below Shapiro on the social ladder were only the artel messengers, those mysterious runners sent to the bank and to Kaplan. Threads passed from Shapiro through the artel runners to the bank and to Kaplan.

I loved Shapiro because he needed my father. The Sands, where he lived, were a Sahara, which surrounded his wife's dressmaker's shop. My head spun at the thought that there were people dependent on Shapiro. I was afraid that a storm would blow up on the Sands, and would carry away his dressmaking-wife with her one seamstress and his children with their ulcerated throats, like a feather, like three roubles ...

At night as I dozed off in my bed with its sagging mattress by the pale blue night-light, I wondered what to do with Shapiro: should I give him a camel and a box of dates, so that he would not perish on the Sands or should I take him together with the martyr, Madame Shapiro, to the Kazan Cathedral, where the pierced air was black and sweet.

There is a dark heraldry of moral concepts dating from childhood: torn cloth's ripping can signify honesty, and the cold of madapollam, holiness.

But the barber, holding a pyramidal phial of 'Piksafon' above Parnok's head, poured right onto that crown, balded at Scriabin concerts, a cold, brown oozing liquid, slopped around on his temples with an icy myrrh, and, as he felt the icy slap upon his skull, Parnok was revitalised. A concert chill ran over his dry skin and - Mother, have pity on your son, - crept beneath his collar.

- Not too hot? - asked the barber, immediately tipping onto his head a jug of boiling water, but he only screwed up his eyes and receded further into the marble execution block of the wash-basin.

And his rabbit blood was momentarily warmed under the Turkish towel.

Parnok was the victim of his own preconceptions with regard to the progress of a love affair.

On laid paper, gentlemen, on English laid paper with water marks and a deckle edge, did he inform the totally unsuspecting lady that he had re-polished the distance between the Millionnaya, the Admiralty and the Summer Gardens, and had brought it into full fighting trim, like a diamond carat.

On such paper, dear readers, the caryatids of the Hermitage might have corresponded, expressing their sympathy or respect for one another.

For there are indeed people in this world, who have never caught anything worse than influenza and who are somehow fastened on askew to the present, like cotillion badges. Such people never feel that they are grown up, and at thirty still persist in being offended by someone or other, still forever demand explanations from someone else. They have never been particularly spoiled by anyone but they are as corrupt as if they had been receiving for ages the academic ration of sardines and chocolate. These are muddle-headed people, who know only the odd chess-move, but who nevertheless poke their noses into the game just to see how it turns out. They ought to spend their whole lives with acquaintances at some dacha or other, listening to the rattle of cups on the balcony round the samovar (heated with pine-cones), chatting to the crab-merchants and the postman. I would gather them all together and settle them in Sestroretsk, since there is no longer anywhere else.

Parnok was a person from the Kamennooostrovskiy Prospekt - one of the most light-headed and irresponsible streets in Petersburg. But in seventeen, after the February Days, this street became lighter than ever, with its steamy laundries, its Georgian shops, selling the fast-disappearing cocoa, and with the crazy cars of the Provisional Government.

Don't risk turning left or right: it's all a muddle there, a tramless backwater. But the trams on the Kamennooostrovskiy reach an

unheard-of speed. The Kamennostrovskiy is a flippant, dashing young chap, who has starched his two solitary stone shirts, and the sea-wind whistles through its tram-car head. It is a young fop out of work, with its houses tucked underneath its arm, like a dowdy dandy carrying his light linen from the laundress.

III

- Nikolay Aleksandrovich, Father Bruni! - Parnok called to the beardless Kostromich priest who, evidently not yet accustomed to his habit, was holding a fragrant packet of ground and roasted coffee.

- Father Nikolay Aleksandrovich, come with me!

He tugged at the priest's lustrine sleeve and steered him like a small boat. It was not easy to talk to Father Bruni. Parnok considered him, to some degree, a lady.

The Kerensky summer had arrived and the lemonade government was sitting.

All was prepared for a great cotillion. At one time it seemed as if the citizens would remain like this forever, like cats in bow-ties.

But the Aysor bootblacks were already agitated, like ravens before an eclipse, and at the dentists' false teeth were swiftly disappearing.

I love dentists for their love of art, for their broad horizons, for their ideological tolerance. Sinful chap that I am, I love the buzzing of the drill - poor earthly sister of the aeroplane - which also bores into the azure with its needle.

The girls blushed at the sight of Father Bruni; and young Father Bruni blushed at the sight of the cambric trifles, while Parnok, shielding himself with the authority of a Church separate from the State, bickered with the proprietress.

Those were terrible days: tailors took back morning coats and laundresses scoffed at young men who had lost their ticket.

The roasted mocha in Father Bruni's bag set the furious matron's nostrils itching.

They plunged deeper into the hot cloud of the laundry, where six sweetly chirping cherubs were folding, mangling and pressing. Taking water into their mouths, these cunning seraphim squirted it onto the zephyr and cambric nonsense. They cavorted with brutally

heavy irons, and their chatter did not cease for a moment. Vaudeville trifles waited their turn like scattered foam on the long tables. The irons hissed and spluttered in the red maidenly fingers, accomplishing their runs. Battleships sauntered along whipped cream, while the girls sprinkled.

Parnok recognised his shirt: it was lying on a shelf, pressed and guzzling pins, its pique front sparkling, with a thin stripe of ripe cherry running throughout.

- Girls, whose is this?

- Captain Krzyżanowski's, - replied the girls in a lying, unscrupulous chorus.

- Father, - the proprietress turned to the priest, who stood, authority incarnate, amid the gluttoned mist of the laundry, steam descending onto his cassock as onto a coat-hanger. - Father, if you know this young man, please have a word with him. Even in Warsaw I never came across such a chap. Always coming to me with rush jobs; he can go rot with his rush jobs ... Comes creeping in by the back entrance, as though I were a priest or a midwife ... I'm not so crazy I'd give him Captain Krzyżanowski's linen. He's not a policeman, but a real lieutenant. That gentleman hid himself away for just three days, and then the soldiers themselves elected him to the regimental committee, and now they carry him on high!

There was no answer to all this, and Father Bruni looked beseechingly at Parnok.

But in place of the irons, I would have given out amongst the girls Stradivarius violins, light as starling boxes, and I would have given them each a long scroll of manuscript music. All of this begs to be put on a ceiling. The cassock in clouds of steam would pass for the soutane of an abbé, conducting. And six round mouths would open not like the holes in doughnuts from the Petersburg side, but like the astonished circlets of the 'Concert at the Pitti Palace'.

IV

The dentist hung up the drill's proboscis and went up to the window.

- Ay-ay ... Look out there, then!

Along the Gorokhovaya, with prayer-like rustle, there moved a crowd. In the middle of it, kept empty, was a square-shaped space. But this air-hole, through which gleamed the chess-board of paving-stones, had its own order, its own system: there half-a-dozen men stepped out as though in charge of the whole procession. Their gait was that of aides-de-camp. Between them, someone's quilted shoulders and dandruff collar. The queen of this strange hive was the one whom the aides-de-camp were cautiously nudging along, carefully steering, guarding like a pearl.

Could it be said that he had no face? No, there was a face on him, although faces in a crowd are of no significance and only napes and ears live independent lives.

Onward moved the shoulder-hangers, quilted with wadding, secondhand jackets richly strewn with dandruff, irritable napes and dog ears.

'All these people are brush salesmen', - Parnok managed to think. Somewhere between the Sennaya and Muchnyy Lane, in the musk of chandlery, of tannery, in the wild nursery of dandruff, bed bugs and protruding ears, this strange commotion was born, spreading nausea and infection.

- What a stench of stinking bowels, - thought Parnok, and for some reason the terrible word 'offal' came to his mind. And he felt slightly sick, apparently from the recollection of an old woman near him in a shop the other day, who had asked for 'lights', - but in reality it was because of the terrible order which was forging the crowd together.

Here mutual guarantee was law: absolutely everyone would answer for the safety and successful delivery of the dandruff-hanger to the fishpond on the bank of the Fontanka. It only needed someone to try (with even the most feeble sort of exclamation) to come to the aid of the owner of the ill-starred collar, which was treasured more highly than sable or marten, and he too would be taken in for

alterations, under suspicion, declared an outlaw and dragged into the empty square. Here fear-the-cooper was at work.

The nape-neck citizens, preserving the ceremonial order of the Shiites on the day of Shakhse-Vakhse, advanced ineluctably towards the Fontanka.

And Parnok, spinning like a top down the gap-toothed, concierge-less staircase, left the puzzled dentist by his drill, hanging like a sleeping cobra, and in place of any thought he repeated:

- Buttons are made from animals' blood!

Time, timid chrysalis, cabbage-white butterfly sprinkled with flour, young Jewess, peering through the watchmaker's window - it were better for you not to look!

It is not Anatole France we bury now, with ostrich feathers and catafalque tall as a poplar, as a pyramid driving through the night to repair tram poles; no, we are off to the Fontanka to drown one little man in the fishpond, because of an American watch, a conductor's watch of white silver, a lottery watch.

You've had your stroll, little man, along Shcherbakov Lane, you've turned up your nose at bad Tartar butchers', you've hung now and then from handrails in trams, you've made your trips to Gatchina, to your chum Serezhka's place, you've been to the baths and to Cinizelli's circus; you've lived your little life, little man, and that's enough!

To begin with, Parnok rushed into the watchmaker's. The latter sat, a hunchbacked Spinoza, peering through his Jewish eyeglass at insect springs.

- Have you got a telephone? I must contact the police!

But what sort of telephone could a poor Jewish watchmaker from the Gorokhovaya be expected to have? Daughters he had, melancholy as marzipan dolls, haemorrhoids too, and tea with lemon, and debts - but no telephone.

Without even taking a sip of his hastily prepared cocktail of Rembrandt, goatly Spanish painting and the babble of cicadas, Parnok sped away.

Sideways along the pavement, outstripping the sedate procession of lynchers, he dashed into one of the mirror shops, which are, as everyone knows, all concentrated on the Gorokhovaya. The mirrors cast back and forth reflections of houses resembling buffets, making the frozen pieces of the street, swarming with the cockroach crowd, seem yet more terrible, more shaggy.

The suspicious mirror-maker, a Czech, anxious to protect the reputation of his firm, unsullied since eighteen hundred and eighty one, slammed the door in his face.

On the corner of the Voznesenskiy Captain Krzyżanowski himself, with dyed moustache, flashed by. He was clad in a soldier's great coat, but with a sabre and was casually whispering to his lady the sweet nothings of the Household Cavalry.

Parnok rushed to him as though he were his best friend, begging him to draw his sword.

- I appreciate the crisis, - declared the hobbling captain coldly, - but pardon me, I'm with a lady, - and deftly sweeping up his companion, he clattered his spurs and stole away into a cafe.

Parnok sped on, tapping at the flag stones with the little sheep's hooves of his patent shoes. More than anything else in the world he was afraid of falling into the crowd's bad books.

There are some people whom, for some reason or another, crowds find objectionable; they are spotted at once, taunted, slapped upon the nose. Children are not keen on them, and women don't find them pleasing.

Parnok was one such.

Chums at school had teased him with offensive nicknames such as 'sheep', 'patent hoof' and 'Egyptian stamp'. Without rhyme or reason the little brats had put about the rumour that he was a 'stainremover', i.e. he knew of a special potion to combat oil, ink and other stains, and, for a laugh, they would pinch their mothers' hideous old sacks, bring them to school and with an innocent air suggest to Parnok that he 'remove this little stain'.

And here is the Fontanka - Undine of rubbish collectors and hungry students with long hair hanging in greasy hanks, Lorelei of boiled crabs, playing on a toothless comb; the river - patroness of the shabby Malyy Theatre - with its squalid, bald Melpomene, a witch perfumed with patchouli.

Well then! The Egyptian bridge has never even had a whiff of Egypt and no decent man has ever clapped eyes on Kalinkin!

A countless swarm of seething human locusts, flocking from no-one knows where, blacked out the bank of the Fontanka, stuck themselves to the fishpond, to the firewood barges, to the wharves, to the granite gangways and even to the boats of the Ladoga potters. Thousands of eyes stared into the oily water's rainbow, which glistened with all the hues of kerosene, of mother-of-pearl slops and of a peacock's tail.

Petersburg had declared itself to be Nero, and was as vile as if it were eating a soup of squashed flies.

However, he telephoned from the chemist's, he rang the police, rang the government, the vanished state, sleeping perch-like.

He would have had as much success had he rung Proserpine or Persephone, who have not yet had a telephone installed.

Chemists' telephones are made from the very best scarlatina wood. The scarlatina tree grows in an enema grove and smells of ink.

Do not speak on the telephone at Petersburg chemists': the receiver peels away, the voice fades. Remember, Proserpine and Persephone have not yet had a telephone installed.

The pen draws a moustached Greek beauty and someone's foxy chin.

Thus in rough-draft margins arabesques appear and live their own independent, charming and crafty lives.

Little violin men drink paper milk.

Here's Babel: foxy chin and spectacle paws.

Parnok - the Egyptian stamp.

Artur Yakovlevich Hofman - an official from the Foreign Ministry, Greek Department.

French horns from the Mariinskiy Theatre.

The moustached Greek woman again.

And a blank space for the rest.

The Hermitage sparrows were twittering about the Barbizon sun, about plein-air painting, about colouring like spinach with morsels of toast, in a word about everything that the gloomy Flemish Hermitage lacked.

But I will not receive an invitation to the Barbizon luncheon, even though in childhood I did break the jagged hexagonal coronation lanterns, and directed onto the sandy pine forest and the juniper first an irritable red trachoma, then the blue noonday cud of some alien planet, then a violet cardinal's night.

Mother seasoned the lettuce with egg yolks and sugar.

The torn, crushed ears of lettuce and the gristle were dying from vinegar and sugar.

The air, vinegar and sun were all kneaded with the green rags into a complete Barbizon day, crashing with crockery, burning with salt, trellises, glass beads, grey leaves, larks and dragonflies.

The Barbizon Sunday went on towards its zenithal luncheon, fanning itself with newspapers and serviettes, scattering over the grass feuilletons and notes about wasp-waisted actresses.

Guests in wide trousers and leonine velvet waistcoats flocked to the Barbizon parasols. And women flicked tiny ants from their round shoulders.

The open wagonettes of the railway, showing but poor obedience to the steam, tousled their curtains and played lotto with the camomile field.

The top-hatted steam-engine with its chicken-pistons was

vexed at the weight of the chapeaux-claques and the muslin.

A barrel sprinkled the street with a twine of frail and fragile strands.

Already the whole air seemed to be a huge railway station for rich, impatient roses.

And shining black ants, like the carnivorous actors of Chinese theatre in the ancient play with the executioner, conceitedly paraded their turpentine paws and dragged along the apportioned spoils of a body as yet not hacked apart, reeling about with their strong agate rears, like war horses galloping uphill in farthingales of dust.

Parnok shook himself.

A lemon slice is a ticket to the rich roses of Sicily and floor-polishers dance with Egyptian movements.

The lift's out of order.

Menshevik-defencists go from house to house, organising night-duty at the gateways.

Life's both terrible and good.

And he, he is a lemon pip, thrown into a crevice of the Petersburg granite and he will be drunk with black Turkish coffee by night, which comes swooping down.

V

In the month of May Petersburg, and especially the Palace Square area, brings to mind an address bureau which does not give information. The absolute preparation of everything here for the opening of the historic session is really horrific - the sheets of white paper, the sharpened pencils, the carafe of boiled water.

I repeat once again: the grandeur of this place lies in the fact that information is never given to anyone.

At that time some deaf-mutes were crossing the Square: they were swiftly spinning a yarn with their hands. They were chatting. Their elder was in charge of the shuttle. The others helped him. A young boy kept on running up from the side, spreading out his fingers with the thread plaited obliquely on them, as if begging for it to be taken off, so that the weave should not be spoiled. It seemed that between them - there were four of them, - there were supposed to be five skeins. One skein was superfluous. They spoke the language of swallows and beggars as they sewed a shirt from the air, constantly basting it with huge stitches.

The elder tangled all the yarn in anger.

The deaf-mutes disappeared through the General Staff Arch, still spinning their yarn, but far more calmly now, as if dispatching carrier pigeons in different directions.

Musical notation lulls the eye no less than music lulls the ear. The little blacks of the piano scale, like lamplighters, climb up and down. And each bar is a little boat, laden with black grapes.

And a page of notation is, firstly, the disposition of sailing flotillas in battle; and secondly - a plan by which night, organised into plum stones, sinks.

The immense concert descents of Chopin mazurkas, the spacious staircases, bedecked with little bells, of Liszt études, and Mozart's hanging gardens with flowerbeds, trembling on five wires - these have nothing in common with the undersized shrubs of Beethoven

sonatas.

Mirage cities of musical symbols stand like starling boxes in boiling pitch.

Schubert's notational vineyard is always pecked down to the pips and lashed by the storm.

When squadrons of lamplighters with ladders rush about the streets, hanging flats on rusty hooks, fortifying the weathercocks of sharps, taking down whole sign-boards of sinewy bars, - all this, of course, is Beethoven; but when the cavalry of quavers and semi-quavers, in paper plumes with horse insignia and little standards, burst into the attack, - this too is Beethoven.

A page of notation: this is revolution in an ancient German city.

Children with large heads. Starlings. The prince's carriage is being unharnessed. Chess-players rush from coffee-houses, brandishing queens and pawns.

And here are tortoises, stretching out their tender heads, competing in a race - this is Handel.

But how martial are Bach's pages - those stupendous sheaves of dried mushrooms.

And on the Sadovaya near the Pokrov there is a fire-tower. In the frosts of January it tosses out grape-balls, signals to call together the brigades. I used to study music just a stone's throw from here. I was taught to place my hands in accordance with Leszetycki's system.

Let lazy Schumann hang out his notes like washing out to dry, while down below Italians wander, their noses in the air: let the most difficult passages of Liszt brandish their crutches as they strain the fire ladder to and fro.

And the grand piano is an intelligent and friendly domestic pet with stringy wooden meat, golden veins and constant arthritis. We protected it against colds, and fed it upon asparagus-light sonatinas ...

Lord! Preserve me from being like Parnok! Give me strength to distinguish myself from him.

For I too have stood in that terrible, patient queue which creeps up to the box office's little yellow window, in the frost to begin with, and then under the low bath-house ceiling of the Aleksandrinskiy. For the theatre too terrifies me, like a smokey hut, like a village bath-house where a brutal murder was committed for the sake of a sheepskin coat and some felt boots. For indeed it is upon Petersburg alone that I too depend, on concert Petersburg, yellow, sinister, morose, wintry.

My pen will not obey me: it has splintered and spattered everything with its black blood, like a counter pen in a telegraph office - a public pen, spoilt by rogues in fur coats, a pen which has exchanged its original swallowy flourish for the 'come, for God's sake', 'missing you', 'love and kisses' of dirty old men breathing their sweet little telegrams into their warm fur collars.

The oil-stove existed before the primus. Little mica window and a folding lighthouse. The Tower of Pisa oil-stove nodded to Parnok, and revealed its patriarchal wick, chatting good-naturedly about the youths in the burning fiery furnace.

I do not fear incoherence and gaps.

I cut the paper with long scissors.

And stick on ribbons to make a fringe.

A manuscript is always a storm, torn and pecked to pieces.

It is the rough draft of a sonata.

It is better to scribble than to write.

I do not fear seams or the yellowness of glue.

I'm a tailor, I'm an idler.

Drawing Marat in a stocking.

And martlets.

More than anything else they were afraid of 'soot' at our house - that is to say, of the lamp-black from oil-lamps. The cry of 'soot', 'soot' resounded like 'fire', 'we're ablaze', as they ran into the room where the lamp had been up to its tricks. Throwing up their hands, they would stop and sniff at the air, which teemed with living tea-leaves, whiskery and fluttering.

The offending lamp was executed by the lowering of its wick.

Then the little ventilation panes were instantly thrown open and the frosty champagne-air shot in, hurriedly grasping the whole room - and the bewhiskered butterflies of soot which had settled themselves on bedspreads and pillowcases - in a chilling ether of colds, a sublimate of pneumonia.

- You mustn't go in there, the panes are open, - Mother and Grandma whispered.

But it burst in even through the keyhole, that forbidden cold, that marvellous guest from diphtherial expanses.

Giorgione's Judith has stolen away from the eunuchs of the Hermitage.

The trotter flings out its pasterns.

Little silver glasses fill the Millionnaya.

Accursed dream! Accursed squares of this shameless city!

He made a feeble, pleading motion with his hand, dropped the leaf of scented, powdered paper and sat down on the kerbstone.

He recalled his ignominious victories, his shameful rendez-vous - standing on the streets - and terrifying ale-house telephone receivers, like crayfish claws ... Numbers of useless, burnt-out telephones ...

The luxurious rattle of a drozhky melted away in the suspect silence, shady as a cuirassier's prayer.

What is to be done? To whom can one complain? To which seraphim entrust this timid little concert soul, part of the raspberry paradise of double-basses and drones.

The demon discovered by Russian prose, or Russian life itself, in the forties (more or less) is called Scandal. This is not catastrophe itself, but its mimic, a base transformation, as when a dog's head grows from the shoulders of a man. Scandal exists thanks to a dirty passport, out-of-date, issued by literature. Scandal is literature's fiend, her favourite offspring. A tiny grain has vanished: a homeopathic dragée, a minute dose of a cold, white substance ... In those distant times when the cuckoo-duel was still practised - the opponents aiming their pistols in a darkened room at cabinets of crockery, at inkwells and at family canvases - in those days this little pellet bore the name of honour.

One day, bearded littérateurs, in trousers wide as pneumatic bells, climbed onto a starling house to have their photograph done on an excellent daguerreotype. Five of them sat and four stood behind the backs of walnut chairs. In front of them a boy was arranged in a Circassian coat, a little girl with ringlets next to him, while a kitten darted round the legs of the assembled company. It was removed. Every face conveyed a single and disturbingly serious question: how much was elephant meat a pound these days?

In the evening at a dacha in Pavlovsk these literary gentlemen gave a good ticking off to a poor young chap, Ippolit. So, he didn't get a chance to read his oil-cloth exercise book right through either. He too fancied himself as Rousseau!

They neither saw nor understood the lovely city with its clean nautical lines.

And the Imp scandal installed itself in a flat on the Raz"ezzhaya, fixing up a brass plate with the name of a counsellor-at-law - this flat is even now inviolable, like a museum, like Pushkin House, - and it snored on the ottomans, fidgeted in the entrances, - people who live under the star of scandal never know when to leave - it nattered, made tiresome farewells, poking about into others' galoshes.

Literary sirs! Just as ballet shoes belong to ballet dancers, so do galoshes belong to you. Try them on, swap them: this is your dance. It is performed in dark anterooms under the following indispensable condition - disrespect for the master of the house.

Twenty years of such a dance constitute an epoch, and forty, history ... This is your right.

Currant smiles of ballet dancers,

muttering of ballet shoes rubbed with talc,

the military complexity and the audacious strength of the string orchestra concealed in the luminous ditch, where, like dryads, the musicians have become entangled by their branches, roots and bows,

vegetable obedience of the corps-de-ballet,

the women's magnificent disdain for motherhood:

- They've just been playing at Sixty-Six with that non-dancing king and queen.

- Giselle's youthful grandmother pours out what must be almond milk.

- Any ballet does to a certain extent belong to serfdom. No, indeed on this point you can't argue with me!

The January calendar with its prancing nanny-goats, its model dairy-farm of myriad worlds and the crackle of a freshly opened pack of cards ...

Driving up to the rear of the indecently waterproof Mariinskiy opera:

- Spying-hucksters, huckster-spies,
Why are you searching, sweet ones, in the cold?
For some in a theatre-box - a night out,
But for others - one straight in the snout.

- No, whatever you say, at the foundation of classical dance
there is a warning - a fragment of 'state ice'.

- What do you think, where did Anna Karenina sit?

- Take note of this: antiquity had the amphitheatre, while
we in modern Europe have circles. Both on the frescoes of the Last
Judgement and at the opera. Exactly the same attitude.

The streets, smokey with bonfires, spun like a carousel.

- Cabby, to 'Giselle' - that is, to the Mariinskiy!

A Petersburg cabby - he is a myth, a Capricorn. He should be
sent to roam the Zodiac. He would not be out of place there, with
his lady's purse, his sleigh-runners, narrow as truth, and his oaty
voice.

VI

The drozhky had a certain classical stylishness, which belonged to Moscow rather than to Petersburg; with its high seats, the gleaming lacquer of its splashboard, and its tyres inflated to the last degree - every inch a Greek chariot.

Captain Krzyżanowski was whispering into a criminally pink little ear:

- Don't bother about him: honestly, he's having a tooth filled. What's more, today on the Fontanka he either stole a watch or had one stolen from him. The wretch! A nasty business!

The white night, striding through Kolpino and Srednyaya Rogatka, reached Tsarskoe Selo. The palaces stood, white with fear, like silken cockle weeds. At times their whiteness brought to mind a shawl of Orenburg down, washed with soap and washing soda. Bicycles rustled in the dark greenery - the park's metallic hornets.

It could not possibly have grown any whiter: just a moment or two more, or so it seemed, and the whole delusion would break up like new bonny-clabber.

A terrible stone lady 'in the high galoshes of Peter the Great' roams the streets and talks.

- Refuse in the squares ... Simoom ... Arabs ... 'Semyon minced into the seminar' ...

Petersburg, you are responsible for your own poor son!

For all this confusion, for the pathetic love of music, for every grain of dragée in a paper bag, held by a girl student in the gallery at the Dvoryanskoe Sobranie, you will answer, Petersburg!

Memory - a sickly Jewish girl creeping away stealthily to the Nikolaevsky station at night, on the offchance that someone would abduct her.

That 'little old insurance man', Geshka Rabinovich, demanded policy forms and Ralle soap as soon as he was born. He lived on the

Nevsky in a minute, maidenly little flat. Everyone was touched by his illicit relationship with a certain Lizochka. - Genrikh Yakovlevich is asleep, - Lizochka would often say, putting her finger to her lips and blushing furiously. Of course, she did have hopes - mad ones - that Genrikh Yakovlevich would yet grow up and live long years with her, that their pink, childless marriage, sanctified by the bishops of Filippov's coffee-shop, was only the beginning ...

But Genrikh Yakovlevich darted like a toy dog down the stairs and issued life-insurance policies.

In Jewish flats a sad and whiskered silence reigns.

It is made up of the pendulum's conversations with the breadcrumbs on the oilcloth, and with the silver glass-holders.

Aunt Vera used to come for lunch and bring along her father, the old man Pergament. Behind Aunt Vera's shoulders stood the myth of Pergament's ruin. He used to have a flat with forty rooms on the Kreshchatik in Kiev. His house was 'his castle'. On the street beneath the forty rooms Pergament's horses used to beat their hooves. Pergament himself 'detached coupons'.

Aunty Vera - a Lutheran lady, sang responses to Protestant parishioners in a red little kirk on the Moyka. She embodied the chill of a companion, reader and sister of charity - that strange species which has a hostile attachment to someone else's life. Her thin Lutheran lips criticised the running of our household, and her old maid's curls would bend over a dish of chicken soup with a slight squeamishness.

Once in the house, Aunt Vera would begin to serve out sympathy mechanically, offering her red-cross services as though unwinding a roll of gauze, tossing out invisible bandage like a streamer.

The gigs drove on along the hard macadam road, and the men's Sunday jackets puckered like corrugated iron. The gigs drove on, from 'järvi' to 'järvi', so that the kilometres poured out like peas and smelled of spirits and curds. The gigs drove on, twenty-

one with yet four more, - the old women in black scarves and cloth skirts, stiff as tin. They had to sing psalms in the cockerel church, to drink black coffee diluted with pure alcohol, and return home by the very same road.

A young crow puffed itself out: - We bid you welcome to the funeral.

- You don't invite people like that, - chirped a little sparrow in the park of Mon Repos.

The lean crows, with feathers stiff and blue from age, broke in: - Karl and Amalia Blomquist wish to inform their relatives and friends of the demise of their beloved daughter, Elza.

- That's quite a different matter, - chirped the little sparrow in the park of Mon Repos.

Little boys were equipped to go out into the street like knights for a tournament: gaiters, quilted trousers, hoods and ear-flaps.

The ear-flaps set the head buzzing, engulfing it with deafness. To answer anyone you had to undo the tapes which cut into the chin.

He spun around in his heavy winter armour, like a deaf little knight, not hearing his own voice.

The first dissociation from people and from himself and, who knows, perhaps a sweet pre-sclerotic sound in his blood - as yet still rubbed by the shaggy towel of the seventh year of life - all this was embodied in his ear-flaps: and the six year old padded Beethoven in gaiters, armed with deafness, was thrown out onto the staircase.

He wanted to turn round and yell: 'the cook also is deaf, you know'.

They strolled down the Ofitsterskaya with a sense of importance and selected a duchesse pear in one of the shops.

Once they called into Aboling's lamp shop on the Voznesenskiy, where ostentatious lamps were crowded together like idiot-giraffes in red hats with festoons and frills. Here they were for the first time seized by an impression of the 'forest of things'.

They never called into Eyler's, the florist's.

Somewhere or other the lady doctor Strashuner was practising.

VII

When a tailor takes away his finished work, you would never say that he was carrying a new garment. Somehow he recalls a member of that funereal brotherhood hurrying, complete with ritual accessories, to the house marked out by Azrail. Just so the tailor Mervis. Not for long did Parnok's morning coat warm itself on his hanger, breathing in its native caraway air only for an hour or two. Mervis' wife congratulated him on his success.

- A mere nothing, - replied the master, flattered, - now my grandfather used to say that a real tailor is one who can take a frock-coat in broad daylight on the Nevsky Prospect from a chap who won't pay up.

Then he took the morning coat from its hanger, blew on it as if it were hot tea, wrapped it up in a clean linen sheet and took it to Captain Krzyżanowski, in white shroud and black calico.

I have to admit that I like Mervis, I like his blind face, furrowed with seeing wrinkles. Theoreticians^c of classical ballet pay much attention to the smile of a dancer, considering it to be an addition to her movement, an interpretation of her leap and flight. But sometimes an eye-lid lowered sees more than does an eye, and tiers of wrinkles on a human face gaze out like a crowd of blind men.

Then the refined china tailor dashes along like a convict fallen from his bunk, beaten by his mates, like a steaming bath-house attendant, like a thief in a bazaar, ready to yell out the last irrefutably convincing word.

I perceive of Mervis through certain persistent images: a Greek satyr, an unhappy singing citharist, at times the mask of a Euripidean actor, at others the bare breast and perspiring body of a tortured convict, a Russian tramp, or an epileptic.

I'm in a hurry to tell the real truth. I'm in a rush. The word, like aspirin powder, leaves a taste of copper in my mouth.

Cod-liver oil is a mixture of fires, yellow winter mornings

and train-oil: a taste of eyes, torn out and burst, a taste of revulsion carried to the point of delight.

The eye of a bird, blood-shot, also has its own view of the world.

Books are melting like fragments of ice brought into a room. Everything is getting smaller. Every single thing seems to me to be a book. Where is the difference between a book and a thing? I do not know life: something was substituted for it when I first came to know the crunch of arsenic between the teeth of that black-haired French paramour, younger sister of our own proud Anna.

Everything is getting smaller. Everything is melting. Even Goethe is melting. There's not much time left to us now. The palm is chilled by the slipping hilt of a pale, brittle sword from the ice-crustured drain-pipe.

But thought, like the executioner's steel of Nurmis skates which once used to glide along the blue and blistered ice, has not grown blunt.

Thus skates, when screwed into formless children's boots, into American lace-up hooves, become one with them - fresh and youthful lancets - and the shoes thus equipped and pulling their joyous weight, are transformed into the splendid remains of a dragon, which have neither name nor price.

It is more and more difficult to turn over the pages of the frozen book, bound in axes by the light of gas lamps.

You, O wood yards - the city's back-street libraries -

We'll still read, we'll still see.

Somewhere on the Podyacheskaya that wonderful library is to be found, whence piles of brown tomes by authors Russian and foreign are taken away to dachas, their infectious pages silky from so much

reading. Plain young ladies selected books from the shelves. For one - Bourget, for another - Georges Ohnet, and for a third some other item of reading junk.

Opposite was the fire station with its gates tightly shut, and its bell under a mushroom hat.

Certain pages were transparent as onion skins.

They were inhabited by measles, scarlatina, and chicken pox.

Stuck down the spines of these holiday books, forever being left on the beach, was the golden dandruff of seaside sand and however much one shook it out, it still reappeared.

Sometimes a little Gothic Christmas tree of fern would fall out, flat and squashed, and sometimes a mummified nameless northern flower.

Fires and books - that's good.

We will still see - still read.

'A few minutes before the agony began, the fire brigade thundered down the Nevsky. Everyone leapt back to the square, misted windows, and Angiolina Bosio, native of Piedmont, the daughter of a poor strolling player, a basso comico, was left for a moment to herself.

'The martial ornaments of the firemen's cockerel horns burst into the airless bedroom of the Demidovs' house with an unprecedented brio of unconditionally victorious misfortune. Cart-horses with casks, long wagons and ladders roared off and torch flames licked at the mirrors. But through the fading consciousness of the dying singer this heap of delirious bureaucratic din, this frantic gallop in sheepskins and helmets, this armful of sounds, arrested and taken away, these were changed into the invitation of an orchestral overture. In her small plain ears there resounded clearly the final bars of the overture to I Due Foscari, her London debut ...

'She raised herself slightly, and sang what was required, but not in that sweetly metallic, supple voice which had made her fame and which the newspapers had praised, but with the chesty unpolished

timbre of a fifteen year old girl, and an incorrect, uneconomical production of sound, for which she had been much chastised by Professor Cattaneo ...

'Farewell Traviata, Rosina, Zerlina ...'

VIII

That evening Parnok did not return home for dinner, nor did he take tea and rusks, which he loved like a canary. He listened to the buzz of blowlamps as they touched the tram rails with blindingly white shaggy roses. He received back all the streets and squares of Petersburg in the form of rough proofs, he made up the avenues, stitched the gardens.

He approached the raised bascule-bridges, which brought to mind the fact that everything must suddenly end, that emptiness and yawning gaps are splendid wares, that there would be, there certainly would be parting, that both enormous masses and years alike are controlled by fraudulent levers.

He waited until the camps of cabbies and of pedestrians had accumulated, one on one side, one on the other, like two inimical tribes or generations, who have had a dispute about the wood-block stone-bound book with the torn-out heart.

He thought of Petersburg as his infantile disease, and that all he had to do was to come round, to come to his senses, and the delusion would disperse: he would get better, become like other people; perhaps he would even get married ... Then no-one would so much as dare to call him 'young chap'. He would leave off kissing ladies' hands then too. - Enough is enough! The accursed creatures, organising their own Trianon ... Some old bag, a mangy cat, would stick her paw under his lips, and then, for old times' sake: smack! Enough. Time to put an end to the dog's life of his youth. And indeed, Artur Yakovlevich Hofman promised to fix him up as a dragoman in Greece, even. Then there'd be a sorting out. He would have a new morning coat made, he'd have a settling up with Captain Krzyżanowski, he'd show him.

But there's just one difficulty, - he has no pedigree. And absolutely nowhere to get one from, and that's all there is to it. Of relations he has but one, an aunty - Aunt Johanna. A dwarf. The Empress Anna Leopoldovna. Speaks Russian like the very devil. As if Biron were her next of kin. Stubby little arms. Can't button anything up herself. And she has a maid Annushka - Psyche.

No, you'd not get far with such a pedigree. But excuse me just a minute, why isn't that a pedigree, why? It is. What about Captain Golyadkin? And the collegiate assessors, unto whom 'God could have added more brains and money'? All those people who were kicked down the stairs, decried, dishonoured in the forties and fifties, all those grumbling, mumbling block-heads in capes, their gloves worn out with washing, all those who do not live but 'reside' on the Sadovaya or Podyacheskaya in houses made of stale slabs of stone chocolate, muttering under their breath, - 'How can this be? A university education, and not a penny to my name?'.

One needs only to remove a film from the Petersburg air for its latent layer to be revealed. 'Neath the swan-down, duck-down, eider-down fluff, 'neath the stormy storm clouds, 'neath the French bouchée of dying embankments, 'neath the lovely looking-glass windows of noble lackeys, something quite unexpected will be revealed.

But the pen which removes this film is, like a doctor's spoon, tainted with diphtherial infection. Better not to touch it.

- The mosquito droned:

Look what has happened to me: I am the last Egyptian - I'm a weeper, wise old tutor, walking soldier - I'm a little bandy-legged prince - I'm a beggarly, blood-sucking Ramses - in the north I've become nothing - so little is left of me - excuse me! ...

- I am the prince of bad luck - collegiate assessor from the city of Thebes ... Just the same, - not changed a bit - oh, but it terrifies me here - excuse me ...

- I am worthless. I am nothing. And I beg the choleraic granite for a copeck's worth of Egyptian porridge, a copeck's worth of maiden's neck.

- I don't - I'll pay - excuse me.

To calm himself he turned to a certain unwritten little dictionary, that is, rather, a little register of home-made words, which had gone out of use. He had this compiled in his head in case of troubles or shocks.

- 'Horse-shoe' - thus was named the poppy-seed roll.

- 'Fromuga' - thus his mother named the large ventilation pane, which used to slam shut like the lid of a grand piano.

- 'Don't muck it up' - thus did one speak of life.

- 'Don't give orders' - thus spake one of the commandments.

These little words sufficed for a brew. He assimilated the aroma of this little pinch. The past became disturbingly real, and set his nostrils itching like a batch of fresh Kyakhta teas.

Carriages were driving through the snowy field. A low police-cloth sky hung over the field, stingily measuring out a yellow, and somehow shameful, light.

I had been attached to an alien family and carriage. A young Jew was counting through new hundred roubles notes with their wintry crunch.

- Where are we going? - I asked an old woman in a gipsy shawl.

- To the town of Malinov, - she replied with such harrowing anguish, that my heart quaked with evil presentiments.

The old woman, fumbling in her striped bundle, drew out silver table-ware, linen cloth, and velvet slippers.

The shabby wedding-carriages crept on and on, reeling like double-basses.

The wood merchant Abrasha Kopelansky rode on, with his angina pectoris and Aunt Johanna, rabbis and photographers. An old music teacher held a mute keyboard on his knees. The flaps of the old man's beaver coat were drawn tightly round a restive cockerel, destined to meet the ritual slaughterer.

- Look, - someone cried, leaning out of the window, - here's Malinov.

But there was no town there. But an enormous warty raspberry bush was growing right there on the snow.

- It's a raspberry bush! - I gulped, beside myself with joy and ran off with the others, gathering snow in my shoe. My boot

came undone and because of this I was overcome by a sensation of great guilt and disorder.

And they took me into a disgusting Warsaw room and made me drink water and eat onion.

I kept on bending down to tie my boot in a double bow, and get things properly sorted out - but it was useless. Nothing could be retrieved or restored; everything was going backwards, as is always the case in a dream.

I dispersed other people's featherbeds, and ran out into the Taurid Gardens, clutching my favourite childhood toy - an empty candle-stick, richly coated with stearin - and I took from it the white crust, tender as a bridal veil.

It is terrible to think that our life is a tale without a story or a hero, made from emptiness and glass, from the heated babble of nothing but digressions, from the delirium of Petersburg influenza.

Rosy-fingered Dawn has broken her coloured pencils. Now they lie about like nestlings, their empty beaks wide open. And meanwhile in everything I do distinctly see the beginnings of the beloved delirium of prose.

Are you familiar with this condition? When everything seems to have a fever, when they're all filled with joyous excitement and illness: barricades in the street, peeling of posters, grand pianos swarming in the depot, like an intelligent, leaderless herd, born for sonata-swooning and boiled water ...

Then, I admit, I cannot endure quarantine and, breaking thermometers, through the infectious labyrinth I boldly stride, hung about with subordinate clauses, like lucky bargains ... and into the waiting sack fly the browned bird-rolls, naive as the plastic art from the first years of Christianity, and the kalach, the humble kalach, no longer conceals from me that it was devised by the baker, to be a Russian lyre from mute dough.

Now the Nevsky in seventeen: - it's a Cossack squadron with blue hats askew, with faces turned towards the sun, like identical fifty-copeck pieces.

One can say even screwing up one's eyes that this is the cavalry singing.

The song sways in the saddles, like great gratuitous sacks of the golden foil of hops.

It is an extra ration, a free addition to fine clattering, rattling and sweating.

It flows on a level with the looking-glass windows of the first floor on the blind and shaggy fur caps, as if the squadron itself were floating on a diaphragm, and trusting it more than saddle-girth and thigh.

Destroy your manuscript, but keep what you have sketched by the side out of boredom, ineptitude, as if in a dream. These secondary, unconscious creations of your fantasy will not be out of place in this world, but will instantly sit themselves down at shady desks, like the third violins of the Mariinskiy Opera, and there and then, out of gratitude to their creator, they'll set about Beethoven's Leonora overture, or Egmont.

What delight for the narrator to change from the third person to the first! It's just like, after fiddling about with a thimbleful, suddenly thinking 'bother it', taking stock, and having a good drink of cold, unboiled water straight from the tap.

Fear takes me by the hand and leads. A white woven glove. A mitten. I love and respect fear. I nearly said: 'when it's here I'm not afraid!'. Mathematicians should build a tent for fear, since it is a coordinate of time and space: they are a part of it, as rolled-up felt is part of a nomad's tent. Fear unharnesses the horses when one must leave, and sends us unreasonably low-ceilinged dreams.

Two or three little words 'and now', 'already', 'suddenly' run errands for my consciousness; they fuss about from carriage to

carriage on the dimly-lit Sebastopol train, holding on to the buffers just where two thundering frying-pans keep striking one another and crawling apart.

The railway has changed the whole course, the whole construction, the whole beat of our prose. It has handed it over to the control of the senseless babble of the little French peasant from Anna Karenina. Railway prose, like the lady's bag of that deathly peasant worker, is full of coupler's instruments, of delirious particles, iron-mongery prepositions, whose place is on a table with judicial evidence, apart from all concern with beauty and roundedness.

Yes, just there, where the brawny levers of steam-engines ooze with hot oil, - just there she breathes, that little darling prose, - stretched out full length - cheating, shameless, winding onto her greedy yardstick all sixty-nine versts of the Nikolaevsky line, with its decanters of sweating vodka.

At nine thirty p.m. the former Captain Krzyżanowski got ready to catch the Moscow express. In his case he packed Parnok's morning coat and his best shirts. The morning coat, folding its fins, settled into the case particularly well, with hardly a crease - a playful cheviot dolphin, to which it was related by its cut and its youthful soul.

Captain Krzyżanowski got out to have a vodka at Lyuban' and at Bologoe, muttering incidentally 'soirée-moirée-poirée', or some other such incredible officer's rubbish. He even tried to have a shave in the carriage, but this he did not manage.

In Klin he had a taste of railway coffee, made according to a recipe unchanged since the time of Anna Karenina, from chicory with a hint of cemetery soil or some other such vileness.

In Moscow he stayed in the Hotel Select - a very good hotel on the Malaya Lubyanka, - in a room converted from a shop, with a stylish shop-front instead of a window, made unbelievably hot by the sun.

Notes

Page no.

- 279 Quarenghi, G (1744-1817): Leading Petersburg architect.
- Kokorev, V A (1817-1889): Important entrepreneur.
- 280 time cleaves into dynasties and centuries: Introduction of 'grandiose' here is immediately reduced to banal by the contrast with 'greasy' pasties.
- 281 retina-net of her pupils: An attempt to reflect Mandelstam's phonetic progression from 'v setku' ('in a net of latitudes') to 'na setchatke' ('on the retina-net'). The phonetic association here highlights the link between the two characters being discussed.
- 282 Rubempré, Lucien de: From Balzac's Illusions perdues and Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes.
- 283 Santos-Dumont, Alberto (1873-1932): Aviation pioneer, produced famous grasshopper monoplane in 1909. Committed suicide after becoming depressed by the use of aircraft in war.
- 284 a bright green pine branch: Professor Taranovsky notes the correspondence between the fate of this living thing and that of Bosio, who also came to grief due to excessive cold. (He refers to I, no. 114 in this respect; 'Fragment semanticheskoy poetiki', p. 115). He suggests that Bosio is the starting point for the various 'Italian' associations which appear - e.g. 'Italian aria' (p. 284), 'Sicily' (p. 296), 'Tower of Pisa' (p. 299).
- 285 Shapiro: No clear source. One of the many Jewish names which combine to emphasise the atmosphere of Petersburg's commercial area (cf. Kaplan, Hofman, Gruzenberg).

- 285 Sands: Popular name for area of Petersburg at juncture of Liteynaya and Rozhdestvenskaya quarters.
- 286 Piksafon: 'название особого сорта жидкого дегтярного мыла для мытья волос' (Ushakov).
- 287 cotillion badges: Badges with a picture. Partners' badges bore the same picture.
- 290 as though I were a priest: 'priest' - this is a specifically Catholic, Polish priest.
- I'm not so crazy: 'var'yatka' ('madwoman') is also of Polish origin.
- Petersburg side: The oldest quarter of Petersburg.
- Concert at the Pitti Palace: Reference to The Concert (Pitti Palace, Florence, 1510-1512), painting of much debated authorship. Now most commonly attributed to Titian.
- 291 the Sennaya and Muchnyy Lane: Since other street names have not been translated these also have merely been transliterated. However, the choice of these exact locations - Haymarket and Flour Lane - obviously emphasises the commercial nature of the area being described.
- 292 Shakhse-Vakhse: For a description of this Shiite feast-day see N.Ya. II, pp. 78-79. Her comparison of the procession (with its regular organisation) to a ballet is most apt with regard to Egipetskaya marka's treatments of the lynching mob and of ballet.

Gatchina: South-south-west of Leningrad, a suburb noted for the palace built there in 1766-1772 by Rinaldi for Count Orlov, favourite of Catherine II. Famous Gatchina

Park created at same time. (From 1923-1929, i.e. when Egipetskaya marka was written, it was known as Trotsk).

292 Chinizelli's circus: On the Fontanka, performances in winter only (Baedeker, p. 95).

294 Kalinkin: Bridge across Fontanka.

Ladoga: Lake Ladoga, to the North East of Leningrad.

298 rusty hooks: signs in ancient Russian musical notation (Brown, p. 199) - cf. our 'crotchet' from the French croche (a hook).

Leszetycki's system: Leszetycki, T (1830-1915), Polish pianist and teacher who lived in Petersburg 1852-1878.

299 Drawing Marat ... An appropriate reference in the 1917 setting to the leader of the radical Montagnard faction, Jean-Paul Marat (1743-1793). There is a phonetic association in the Russian between 'marat'' (to scribble) and the name 'Marat'; the meaning of 'strizh' (martlet) permits a similar association in translation.

302 Currant smiles of ballet dancers: As in the passage on musical notation (p. 298) there is a mixture of plant/military imagery here (currant, branches, roots, vegetable/military complexity, audacious strength, ditch).

304 bonny-clabber: Milk naturally clotted on souring (Irish bainne, milk, clabba, thick).

305 järvi: Finnish word for 'lake'.

kilometres poured out like peas: The 'scattering of peas' occurs more than once in Mandelstam's work (see I, no. 138 and Shum vremeni, II, p. 52). From Shum vremeni it is clear that the colour pea-green is associated primarily

with the uniforms of police spies (II, p. 81). The pea image is therefore quite in keeping with the threatening atmosphere of Egipetskaya marka; perhaps the choice of the Gorokhovaya (p. 291) as the scene of the mob's march was guided by its phonetic associations with 'gorokh' (although in fact the street was named after a certain Count Harrakh).

306 Mon Repos: Vyborg country seat (Baedeker, p. 207).

310 Bourget, Paul (1852-1935), wrote in support of the Church, traditionalism, nationalism and monarchy.

Ohnet, Georges (1848-1914), chose subjects with sentimental and moralising tendencies.

a mummified nameless northern flower: the stultifying effect of the nineteenth century, through the medium of 'reading junk' (cf. the image used in Shum vremeni: 'в узком гробу девяностых годов лежала как живая', II, p. 59).

311 Professor Cattaneo: No clear source in musical world. Perhaps another 'aroma' of the revolutionary period of the nineteenth century; Carlo Cattaneo (1801-1869) was a member of the Revolutionary Council in Milan in 1848.

312 Biron: (1690-1772) Duke of Courland. Chief advisor to Empress Anna Leopoldovna. Discriminated against Russian nobility. Generally despised by the Russian population.

313 'Neath the swan-down... The translation here aims to convey the rhythm of the original, rather than that place names are incorporated - namely Swan Canal, Gagarin Street, French Embankment, Tuchkov Bridge (see Brown, p. 201).

314 Kyakhta: Town on the frontier with Mongolia; in eighteenth and nineteenth centuries trade between Russia and China

was confined to this border city.

- 314 Malinov: As Professor Brown points out (p. 201) there is a play on words in the original between malina (raspberry) malinnik (raspberry bush) and the name of the town, Malinov.