

MANDEL'STAM'S EGYPTIAN STAMP: A STUDY IN ENVY?

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Who will say anything in defense of envy?
Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*

1. Chronology, postures, and style

Mandel'stam's *The Egyptian Stamp* (1928; henceforth: *ES*) appeared soon after *Envy* (1927), and its writing, begun prior to the publication of Oleša's work, may have been spurred by the latter's instant success.¹ The stylistic and thematic affinities, as well as differences, between the two did not go unnoticed by contemporary critics (e. g., by Berkovskij, 1989 [1929]), who, among other things, praised Oleša for being more in tune with the future-oriented Soviet culture than the predominantly retrospective Mandel'stam. Recently, the connection has been restated in terms that again—albeit *mutatis mutandis*—come down harshly on Mandel'stam:

The Egyptian Stamp was neither a momentary lapse nor an uncommon phenomenon. Together with Ju. Oleša's *Envy* (1927), K. Vaginov's *Goat Song* (1928), M. Zoščenko's *Mišel' Sinjagin* (1930), and B. Pasternak's *Spektorskij* (1924–1931), it belonged to the genre of *samokritika*, or self-mockery, that many intellectuals practiced at the fin de siècle for the NEP (Freidin, 215).

Lumping *ES* together with *Envy* and other instances of (in Belinkov's catchy coinage) the 'surrender and demise of the Soviet intellectual' flies in the face of certain accepted myths. Setting out to detect in *Envy* a first step towards 'surrender,' one naturally reaches for a control counterexample, and Mandel'stam the uncompromising proto-dissident (and indisputable literary great) seems to fit the bill ideally. But the historical picture does not warrant such facile rhetoric.

In his uncomplimentary portrayal of the intellectual anti-hero of the time, Oleša may have been not too wide off the mark. None other than Mandel'stam's own lyrical persona would soon sound a similar note, regretting that it is beyond him to join "the youth" at Moscow's stadiums and in "the glass palaces on chicken feet."

Я, кажется, в грядущее вхожу
И, кажется, его я не увижу.
Уж я не выйду в ногу с молодежью

На разлинованные стадионы.
 Разбуженный повесткой мотоцикла,
 Я на рассвете не вскочу с постели,
 В стеклянные дворы на курьих ножках
 Я даже тенью легкой не войду.
 ("Сегодня можно снять декалькомани . . .");
 1932, I: 190)

Although expressed at a later and grimmer moment, this attitude is instructive, coming as it does from the one-time worshipper of the "unshakable scale of values" and a soon-to-be challenger and victim of Stalin. The "stadiums" may refer to the soccer episode in "Envy" (II, 8–9),² while the "glass palaces" invoke the (anti-)utopian 'crystal palace' motif reworked by Oleša into Andrei Babičev's communal Četvertak ("Two Bits") diner.³ At the same time, the rhythm, syntax, and lexicon of the fragment echo the poet's earlier nostalgia for "world culture" in such poems as "I have not heard the tales of Ossian . . ." (1914) and "I will not see the famous Phaedra . . ." (1915),⁴ thus poignantly certifying the sincerity of the newly born yearning—however ambiguous—for the programmatic Soviet 'future.'

Mandel'stam's 1932 poem all but states in so many words the theme of the ageing person's 'envy,' and the lines about 'entering, but not getting to see the future [grjaduščee]' sound as a variation on Ivan Babičev's words: "We envy the approaching [grjaduščej] epoch [. . .] the envy of [. . . a] generation grown old" (II, 4). The word *envy*, "zavist'," had appeared a year earlier in the concluding line of Mandel'stam's "Canzona" (1931):

Я люблю военные бинокли
 С ростовщической силой зренья—
 Две лишь краски в мире не поблекли:
 В желтой—зависть, в красной—нетерпенье.
 (I: 168)

Binokl', "field-glasses," the poem's master metaphor, is, of course, highly prominent in Oleša's text (Nilsson, 1973), and its conspicuous pairing with 'envy' reads as an intertextual signal.

To be sure, 'envy' was not Oleša's exclusive property. It is a recurrent image in Mandel'stam, in fact, an instance of the idiosyncratic motif of 'unstable and/or play-acted aggressive-defensive poses,' such as 'shyness, hurt pride [*obida*], whims, reproaches, sulking, teasing, arrogance [*spes'*], etc.'⁵ The E-word appears twice quite early on in Mandel'stam,⁶ but, significantly enough, the lexical cluster of 'zavist', *zavistlivyj*, *zavistnik*, etc.' crystallizes in the poet's vocabulary only circa 1931, probably not without Oleša's influence. In his turn, Oleša's "envier," whose name, Kavalero, combines "pomposity and baseness" (II, 4), who is full of "self-abasement

and insolence" (I, 4) and hopes, together with his mentor, Ivan, to "take the young world's arrogance [*spes*'] down a notch" (II, 4), displays a gamut of overcompensatory emotions reminiscent of the Mandel'stamian persona.

The analogies extend into the sphere of style. Compare:

Mervis carried her [the morning coat] off like a Sabine woman (*ES*, I)—She [. . .] ran, pursued by her belongings, like a Pompeian woman (*Envy*, II, 10);

Rosy-fingered Aurora has broken her colored pencils. Now they lie scattered about like nestlings with empty, gaping beaks (*ES*, VIII)—They were lying [. . .] resembling bound and beheaded Chinamen. Aurora touched them with cool fingers (*Envy*, I, 11).

Compare also the synaesthetic images of 'envy' and 'impatience' (in "Canzona," above), as well as similar passages in *ES*, e. g. "the ripping sound of a torn cloth can signify honesty, and the cold of madapollam cloth—holiness" (II), with Ivan Babičev's "buttercup of pity [. . .] pink sweetbriar of melancholy or [. . .] black currant of petty vanity" (*Envy*, II, 3; cf., in turn, *smorodinnye ulybki balerin*, "currant smiles of the ballerinas," in *ES*, V).

The abundance of parallels between *ES* and *Envy*, from their general design down to idiosyncratic details⁷ is obvious, suggesting the somewhat Tolstoyan question, Who learned to write from whom—Oleša from Mandel'stam or Mandel'stam from Oleša? To my knowledge, the by now quite solid bodies of Mandel'stam and Oleša scholarship⁸ feature no comparison of the two novellas—a gap that calls for bridging.

2. Modernity

Westernism. The protagonists of both *Envy* and *ES* are inspired by the European values of individualism and even chivalric honor.

Kavalerov, whose very name can be interpreted as "Mr. Knight,"⁹ secretly identifies with the Balzacian-Stendhalian heroes, who pursue success even at the price of crime. The English version of personal fulfillment, emblemized by 'Tom Viriliri,' who is, of course, "none other than Dick Whittington at the outskirts of London" (Barratt, 21),¹⁰ is equally attractive to him. Ivan Babičev, too, defends the cultural tradition—the West's presence, as it were, in Russian culture, including the concept of honor. And among Kavalerov's Western models there is the "fabulous fencer who walked in the rain repelling the drops with his foil" (I, 15).

The fencing motif appears in Mandel'stam as well, notably later, in the poem about Lamarck—"the fencer on behalf of Nature's honor"¹¹—but, in fact, already in *ES*, where Time is seen as "the hilt of that bloodless brittle sword, broken off the drainpipe one freezing day" (XV).¹² The issue of the disappearing honor is also raised, in connection with one of the dominant themes in *ES*: that of the rights of the individual, in particular, the mob's victim, so chivalrously but ineffectually defended by Parnok. The latter, in his turn, is explicitly linked with

the delirious images of the novels of Balzac and Stendhal [. . .] young men in the act of conquering Paris and flicking at their shoes with handkerchiefs as they stand at the entrances of private residences. [. . .] Lucien de Rubempré wore rough linen underwear and an awkward suit sewn by the village tailor (I).

In this way, a Western aroma is imparted even to the essentially Russian—Gogolian—clothing theme of *ES*.¹³

My olfactory metaphor is all the more relevant as the 'Balzacian passage' goes on to include the picture of Parnok's "fortunate [. . .] shaving when the future was born out of his lather [*myl'noj peny*]" (I). In the next chapter, this motif develops into the episode of the poignant sensations experienced by Parnok at the hands of his barber (II).¹⁴ In Oleša's text, the 'Western' motif of everyday service is represented by Andrej's love of fancy clothes ("he's a dude [*ščegol'*"]; I, 1) and his indulgence in morning ablutions, good soap and cologne, which, incidentally, have a Russian, indeed, Gogolian, literary source with, what's more, a Westernizing twist,—Čičikov.

Another feature of the Western way of life dear to both authors is 'technology.' In *Envy*, there are the bicycle of the student Šemiot (II, 1), the airplane and the romantically fragile and perishing pilot Lilienthal (I, 9), the "iron waffle" of a construction crane, and the entire constructivist esthetics of "Two Bits." Their counterparts in *ES* include

- the bicycles buzzing in the green foliage—"the metal hornets of the park" (VI);
- "the old-fashioned pilot of the nineteenth century, Santos-Dumont [. . .] thrown by the play of elements from the basket of his balloon [. . . and] hanging by a rope" (I); and
- the airplane, whose metaphoric treatment resembles Oleša's. Compare:

I love the buzz of the dentist's drill, that poor earthbound sister of the airplane, which also drills holes with its little bit into the azure (*ES*, III; in a paragraph that foreshadows Parnok's visit to the dentist)—A machine took off from the air terminal [. . .] The distance was changing and it [the airplane] was changing, taking the forms of various objects: a rifle bolt, a quill pen, a trampled lilac blossom (*Envy*, I, 10; in the passage following Kavalero's ejection from the airfield).

As has been shown (Beaujour, 1970: 53), Kavalero defends himself from the negative airplane image by generating a series of its ever less threatening metaphorizations. Mandelštam's narrator echoes and even doubles the effect by blunting the threat of both the airplane and the dentist's drill through their mutual comparison.

3. Modernism

Space and mirrors. Both texts abound in urbanistic scenes unfolding in the open. In *Envy*, the action takes place under the windows of Andrej and

Valja; in the lane that leads from Valja's house; on the bridge from which Kavaleroŭ wants to dump the new sausage; at the air terminal; in the street where Ivan confronts his statesmanly brother; twice at the "Two Bits" construction site; and at the soccer stadium. In *ES*, the corresponding settings are the street and the embankment where the lynching mob drags the "little man"; the road along which the blocks of ice are transported to the creamery; the woodyards; and Nevskij Avenue, along which the fire brigade thunders in the anachronistic passage about the death of Angiolina Bosio (VII).

One *objet trouv * readily used in modernist cross-breedings of interiors and cityscapes is the street mirror. In both texts under discussion, street mirrors figure prominently in the settings of important scenes. *Envy's* anti-heroic 'doubles' Kavaleroŭ and Ivan first meet at the end of Part One (I, 15), i. e. at the mirror-symmetry center of the composition, and their meeting takes place in a street mirror. In turn, *ES's* Parnok tries to ward off a lynching by trying to "telephone the [. . .] state" from a mirror shop.

The mirrors threw back and forth the reflections of houses that looked like buffets; the frozen pieces of street, teeming with the beetling mob, appeared in the mirrors still more terrifying and shaggy (IV).

The motif of 'mirror in the street' was foreshadowed at the very beginning of *ES*, where the "cheval-glass floats sideways down the staircase, maneuvering its palm-tree length about the landings" (I).

Modernist perspective is pushed to its extreme in the geographer's bird's-eye view of the entire globe. In one of Kavaleroŭ's passages, "a huge cloud [has] the outline of South America" (I, 14). In *ES*,

the singer [Bosio] preparing to take off on her tour of [. . .] America, covers the geographical map with her voice [and . . .] upside down on the retina of her eye are those same two Americas, like two green gamebags containing Washington and the Amazon (I);

while the tailor Mervis has

a rather bizarre iconostasis [. . . with] a representation of some Dutchmen on stilts, who were running all about their little country like cranes" (I).¹⁵

Time. In modernist prose, not only space, but time as well becomes the object of direct perception. As a schoolboy, "taken to a museum of wax figures, [. . . Kavaleroŭ] for the first time heard the rumble of time. Seasons soared over [his] head" (I, 6). The issue of 'time' is central to the novella that focuses on the people and feelings receding into the past. Accordingly, the street mirror, while reflecting space, turns out to be capable of stopping time as well:

[U]nprecedented changes have taken place with the world, with the rules of the world [. . .] A trolley which has just disappeared from your eyes, rushes again before you [. . .] A straw hat hanging [. . .] over someone's arm (just this minute you saw it [. . .] but you didn't have the

time to look around) returns to you and floats by across your eyes [. . .] But you rejoice at the dizziness [. . .] you hurry to the azure square. Your face hangs motionless in the mirror, it alone is a particle remaining from the regular world [. . .] Your face is just as if in a tropical garden. Too green the greenery, too blue the sky (I, 15).

Oleša's anti-hero relishes his ability to immobilize—indeed, regain—the time lost;¹⁶ and, sure enough, it is along 'temporal' lines that his momentary hubris gets its comeuppance. The mirror presents him with his 'double,' Ivan Babičev. Kavalerov keeps asking him where he came from but in his heart of hearts knows the answer already:

He [Ivan] took off his derby uncovering a bald spot and made an exaggeratedly smart bow. In the way has-beens [*byvšie ljudi*] greet an alms-giver. And as of a has-been, bags drooped under his eyes like lilac stockings (I, 15).

Kavalerov's narcissist looking-glass wonderland of the past is shattered precisely by the way it makes him face his own hidden identity as an old *byvšij*, an *ancien*, a Dorian Gray whose life is a *temps perdu*.¹⁷

According to Kavalerov's antagonist, Volodja Makarov,

Time is [. . .] a technical concept. If everyone were a technician, then spite, self-esteem and all petty feelings would disappear [. . .] An offense, let's say, lasts an hour or a year [. . .] They see only three or four divisions on the dial [*ciferblat*], they crawl, fuss [. . .] They won't embrace the whole dial [. . .] I say: the main feeling of man must be the understanding of time (II, 5).

'Timescape' is thus crucial to the problem of 'envy' and other old-fashioned emotions.

Later on in the same chapter, Makarov has a dream in which he and Valja are "looking into a telescope at the moon." The chapter ends with another vision, this time Andrej's: "he dreamed that a/the young man [*molodoj čelovek*—Kavalerov? Makarov?—*A. Zh.*] hanged himself on a telescope," in a telling synthesis of the novella's leitmotifs of time, distant perspective, and man's symbolic death at the hands of a time/space machine.

For Mandelštam (whose 1925 title *The Noise of Time* (*Šum vremena*) may have inspired Kavalerov's prosodically and semantically similar phrase about "the rumble of time [*gul vremena*]," quoted above), 'time' was a topic of constant and obsessive interest. As early as in "Admiralty" (1913), he created the image of a dial [*ciferblat*] open to all the elements of nature and all dimensions of human activity, an image which may underlie Makarov's dissertations on "embracing the whole dial."

In *ES*, the temporal theme permeates in a variety of ways the story of the lynching episode (IV). The narrator

—apostrophizes time itself: "*Time*, shy chrysalis [. . .] you had better not look!" (italics added, here and below);

—specifies that the "little man" has been caught "because of an American *watch*, a conductor's *watch* of white silver, a lottery *watch*";

- sums up his life in the *past tense*: “*Poguljal ty čeloveček, . . .* (“You have had your stroll, my dear little man . . .”); and
- mentions Parnok’s failed attempt to “telephone the state” from a *watchmaker’s*.

Intertextuality. In a modernist gesture of deliberate metaliterariness, both novellas revel in quotation. Mandel’stam has Parnok provocatively deriving his genealogy from Russian literature’s stock of “little” and “underground” men (rather than from his actual—and rejected—family):

There was only one thing wrong—he had no pedigree. And nowhere to get one [. . .] But—wait a moment—what do you mean, no pedigree? [. . .] What about Captain Goljadkin? And the collegiate assessors, to “whom the Lord God might have given more brains and money”? All those people who were shown down the stairs, publicly disgraced, insulted in the forties and fifties of the last century [. . .]? (*ES*, VIII).

This passage would be equally appropriate as a definition of Kavalero’s origins, which the critics (notably, Barratt) have traced back to a similar set of literary prototypes.

In addition to the dense literary aura, both authors lace their prose with references to other arts. As Šapiro and Andrej ritually drank to and nibbled on the famous new sausage, the enviously defiant Kavalero

refused participation in the repast. I observed them from the balcony [. . .] New Tiepolo! Hurry here! Here are feasting personages for you . . . Paint them, new Tiepolo, paint “The Feast at the Industrial Executive’s.” I see your canvas in a museum (*Envy*, I, 9).

Similarly, as Parnok, accompanied to the laundry by his friend, a priest, fails to retrieve his shirt, which has been appropriated by Captain Krzyzanowski, newly popular with the revolutionary masses, the narrator seeks relief in the realm of the arts:

And I would have given the girls not irons but Stradivarius violins [. . . and] given each a long scroll of musical notes. All of this cries out to be painted on a ceiling. The cassock in the clouds of steam would pass as the soutane of an abbot directing an orchestra. The six round mouths would open [. . .] like the astonished circles in “The Concert at the Pitti Palace” (*ES*, III).

An escapist appeal to a painting—Manet’s “*Déjeuner sur l’herbe*” (a luncheon to which the Mandel’stamian narrator is not to be invited)—also underlies a passage in the next chapter.¹⁸

Parnok’s world revolves around music and the ballet. Similarly, musicians, a ballerina, and an entire circus troupe accompany the imaginary destruction of “Two Bits” in Ivan’s “Tale of the Meeting of Two Brothers” (*Envy*, II, 6). And it is by the sounds of music that Valja is carried above the orchestra in the alternative dream version of the “Two Bits” inauguration (II, 11). Mandel’stam’s most pronounced counterpart to these multimedia events is perhaps the entire fifth chapter. There, writing, music, and

painting are all fused together as the musical notations of various composers come alive to turn into scenes of real life; these are followed by the images of “scandal in Russian prose,” which is said to be a sort of ballet in galoshes instead of ballet slippers.

Oleša's and Mandel'shtam's metaliterariness would have been incomplete without the ultimate step of reification. In both novellas, the equation ‘literature = cityscape’ is quite prominent.

Everything seems to me a book. Where is the difference between a book and a thing? [. . .] It is more and more difficult to turn the pages of the frozen book, bound in axes by the light of gas lanterns.¹⁹ You, wood yards—black libraries of the city—we shall yet read, we shall still have a look (*ES*, VII).

This comes from the narrator, but in the beginning of the next chapter the same reader-perception of life is ascribed to the protagonist:

That evening Parnok [. . .] received back all the streets and squares of Petersburg in the form of rough galley proofs, he composed the prospects, he stitched [*brošjuroval*] gardens (VIII),—

which is, after all, small wonder, given his strictly literary origins.

Oleša's two anti-heroes, Kavalerov and Ivan Babičev, in their turn, are *littérateurs* of sorts. Accordingly, a memorable scene between them takes place at a literature-ridden vacant lot.

[L]ook—a page from a book—bend down, look, before the wind carries it away—you see: illustrations to *Taras Bulba*, recognize them? [. . .] Further—a bottle [. . .] the famous fragment glorified by writers [namely, Čexov in *Seagull*—*A. Zh.*] for its ability to suddenly flash up [. . .] and create all sorts of images for lonely travelers (II, 6).

4. *Problems of growth*

The ‘branch’. Plant imagery pervades *Envy* in a network of associations that link many of its protagonists. Plants provide the master tropes for Valja, whose first appearance in the text is spliced with the “blue vase with a flower” in her window and whom Kavalerov emblemizes as “a bough full of flowers and leaves” (I, 7); later on, she is appropriately surrounded by the greenery of the little yard, as Kavalerov and Ivan voyeuristically observe her. Ivan tries to put a decadent spin on her healthy plant nature—and fails:

I dreamed of finding a woman who would blossom [. . .] with an unprecedented feeling. Like the wonderful flowering of a fern. So that the new man would [. . .] close his eyes, blinded by the light of what to him seemed a piece of rotten wood. I found such a being [. . .] Valja [. . .] But [. . . s]he left the bedside of the old age (II, 4).

Ivan sees himself in the plant code, too,—as a dying tree²⁰:

Once he raised his hand [. . .] where the veins were arranged in the form of a tree [. . .] “Here [. . .] is the tree of life [. . .] I discovered that my wrist [*kisť*, lit. bunch, as in ‘a bunch of grapes’—*A. Zh.*] blooms like a tree [. . . i]t branched out [. . .] It became rough and brown

and in that, might was concealed [. . .] But now [. . .] How decrepit it is, how rotten! [. . .] The branches are breaking, the hollows have appeared" (II, 1).

Ivan also wears "a flower in his buttonhole (left there almost until fruition)" (II, 2). This latter detail instantiates a characteristic motif, recurrent in *Envy*,—that of maturity as a dead end. See, for example, Kavaleroŭ's realization of his similarity to his father:

I sort of suddenly sensed my father's seed in me [. . .] And someone sort of said to me: you're done. Finished. There won't be anything more. Bear a son (I, 6).

Kavaleroŭ's identification with/dissociation from his natural and surrogate fathers is consistently couched in the plant code. Thus in the episode where he is thrown out of Andrej's apartment:

The lock clicked above me just as though a twig [*vetka*] broke, and I fell off from the beautiful tree like an overripe, lazy fruit, spattering [*šmjakajuščij*] on the fall (I, 14).

This castrative trope marks the cutting short of one of Kavaleroŭ's wistful attempts at grafting himself on the young tree of Soviet life. It echoes and effectively closures a similar aftermath of his earlier ouster from the airfield:

[T]he holiday clamoring there beckoned to me. I stopped on a green bank and stood, leaning against a tree [. . .] The bushes surrounded me, like a saint. I broke off tender acidulous shoots and sucked on them (I, 10).

In Ivan's fanciful tale of the vengeance wreaked by him upon his hateful aunt, plant imagery comes to the fore as the centerpiece of its plot (II, 1):

- the growing, with the help of a fake "remedy for warts," of the "modest field bluebell" out of the aunt's wart;
- its "tickling her lips [. . . that] sounded like the whisper of despondently spent youth";
- her hopes for its scattering in the fall, the mad bee buzzing around it, and the flower's "swelling up [. . .] from the sting and turning into some sort of tropical tuber"; and
- the aunt's fear of cutting it off: "[I]t was a wart after all! What if it led to blood poisoning?!" (I, 1).

The same recurrent microplot of a plant's life and death symbolizing the demise of things past is woven into the characterization of Andrej:

But [. . .] on the small of his back I saw a [. . .] special hereditary, aristocratic birthmark—the [. . .] tender little thing, standing out from the body on a small stem, by which after decades mothers recognize their kidnapped children [. . .] But [. . .] on his chest [. . .] was a scar [. . .] As if a branch had grown in that spot and had been chopped off. He escaped and they shot him (I, 3).

Even the two antagonist brothers' industrial proxies—"Two Bits" and "Ophelia"—partake of the novella's plant life: Andrej's project is a "ten-

der, growing framework [*ostov*]”, surrounded by *lesa*, “scaffolding, *lit.* forests,” a lexical ambiguity Ivan repeatedly plays up (II, 6). In turn, his own creature, “Ophelia,” at the very thought of which he is “blooming” (II, 6), catches up with him (in Kavalero’s dream; II, 11), “picking up dandelions on its way” to kill him with its Martian-like sparkling needle. The dandelions clearly hark back to the circumstances of the original Shakespearean heroine’s drowning, as well as to the “buttercup of pity [. . .] this flora and fauna [. . . that] has to be driven out of the heart of the new man,” in Ivan’s own earlier provocative statement to the GPU investigator (II, 3).

Appropriately, the one major protagonist totally alien to plant imagery is Volodja. He openly proclaims this in his letter to Andrej (purloined by Kavalero):

Your work [. . .] disposes you to sentimentality: fruits, herbs, bees, calves, and everything like that. But I am an industrial man [. . .] I don’t like these very calves. I am a man-machine (I, 13).

A similar ‘branch’ motif, symbolizing life threatened with death, is quite conspicuous in *ES*.

In February [Parnok] fixed the following incident in his mind: Blocks of good bottom ice were being transported to the creamery. The ice was geometrically whole, untouched by death and spring. But on the last sled there floated a bright green pine branch frozen into the sky-blue glass like a Greek girl in an open grave (II).

This image is linked by manifold associative chains to the major themes in *ES*:

- the novella’s only female character, the Italian singer Bosio, dying in frosty Petersburg and metaphorically rent to pieces by the “golden vultures”—the Cavalier Guards (I);
- the recurrent images of Parnok being swallowed, e. g. by the Petersburg granite like a lemon seed drunk with black Turkish coffee (IV);
- the motifs of frozen fish, frozen wood yards, *alias* the black libraries of the city, and the “fearful threat—[the] chunk of ‘governmental ice,’ ” underpinning the imperial ballet and the Russian empire itself (VI)²¹;
- the recurrent Mandelštamian motif of Greece as a symbol of world culture, Parnok’s “desire to get a position [. . .] in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [and] persuade Greece to undertake some risky adventure [. . .]” (II), and Captain Krzyzanowski’s “Greek chariot” (VI);
- the topos of murder/slaughter, invoked here not only by the images of death, coffin, and ice, but also by the inner form of the word *maslobojnja*, which denotes “creamery,” but literally means “butter-beatery” and connotes *bojnja*, “slaughterhouse.”²²

The pine branch is echoed by a similar image in the narrator’s first-person account of his own childhood experiences:

Sometimes out [of a book read at the country-house] would fall a piece of fern—a little Gothic fir tree, flattened and spoiled [or compressed: *sležavšajasja*—and occasionally the mummy of some nameless northern flower (VII).

Plant imagery is also prominent in the episode of the winter trip to the city of Malinov, lit. “Raspberryville,” which includes the picture of “large, warty raspberries right in the snow” and is rife with connotations of childhood, the fur coat, the freezing Bosio, death, and many others (Ronen, 274, 296–7).

Childishness. The life-cycle topos, emblemized by the growth, withering, and death of plants, has as its natural human counterpart the theme of ‘childhood.’²³ In the two texts under consideration, that theme takes the idiosyncratic form of ‘childishness, infantilism, refusal to grow up.’ Whereas the ‘branch’ appears in both texts mostly as a trope, ‘childishness’ affects rather directly the characterization of the protagonists and the narrative’s overall tone and tenor.

Kavalerov feels like a baby, indeed, like the son of the widow Prokopovič, and is similarly perceived by others; the widow refers to him as *popolzenok*, “my little creeper” (II, 10). He is consistently associated with the bed and blanket—as a child and grown-up, at the widow’s and at Andrej’s. He does not want to grow up to be a “father”—a man who is *zakončen*, “completed, finished” (I, 6). Through the eyes of others he sees himself as a “little man” (“I was just something on the side, a little man [*čeloveček*] accidentally attached”; I, 9) and would like to revert to childhood. Sickly and helpless, he craves protection or even adoption by any and all parent figures available (Andrej, Ivan, the widow). At the same time, he harbors hostile feelings for them, nurses his infantile offences, sulks, and—threatens to grow up.

I dream of something else. Not you—I’ll get Valja. We’ll thunder in Europe [. . .] I’ll get Valja—as a prize—for everything: for the humiliations, for the youth which I didn’t have time to see, for my dog’s life (I, 11).

Infantilism is also characteristic of Ivan, despite his middle age. He is introduced through his own version of his childhood, which shows him goading his stolid elders with fantasies and pranks and nursing various childish grievances. The grown-up Ivan is consistently described as “a little man” (*čeloveček*; I, 3, 6, 7), time and again slighted by his powerful brother and even the younger generation opponents—Volodja and Valja.

The ‘childish’ theme is so central to *Envy* that it encompasses the representatives of both camps. Like Kavalerov, Volodja perceives Andrej as his adoptive father and even—at one point—mother (“I close my eyes [. . .]—like with Mama”; I, 13). Valja, too, is pointedly kept at the brink of adolescence and youth. Furthermore, *Envy*’s central father figure, the universal savior, redeemer, and adopter—Andrej Babičev is portrayed (at

least, by Kavaleroŭ the narrator) in childish terms: "He washes like a little boy [. . .] He resembles a grown-up fat boy" (I, 1).

In Mandelštam's novella, infantile motifs play no lesser a role, and the protagonist's 'childishness' repeatedly merges with that of the narrator. Now one, now the other appears as a child who

- "had [. . .] stolen into a sumptuous conference hall and turned on the lights (II);
- "lay falling asleep in [his] bed with a sagging mattress" (II);
- thinks of himself as a "son" who is to be pitied by his Mother (out of Gogol's "Diary of a Madman"; II) and for whom Petersburg (from Puškin's "The Bronze Horseman") must be responsible (VI);
- was "fitted out like [a] knight [. . . in] gaiters, wide padded trousers, and ear flaps" (VI) (cf. in *Envy*, the "infant resembling in vesture the Pope of Rome" (I, 15);
- remembers taking cod-liver oil (VII);
- has been always plagued by various illnesses and "thought of Petersburg as his infantile disease" (VIII).

Like in *Envy*, the infantile anti-hero's attitude towards the adult world is ambivalent: "Such people never feel themselves to be grown up and, at thirty, are still finding someone to be offended by, someone whose apology they require" (II). The Mandelštamian 'child' has difficulty tearing himself away from the "dear Egypt" of familial objects (I), however alienated he feels from his clan; he wants to complain and seek protection. And his plans for growing up smack of puerile defiance in an almost exact replica of Kavaleroŭ's:

[H]e would recover, become like all other people, even—perhaps—get married . . . Then no one would dare call him "young man" [. . .] He would have himself a new morning coat made, he would have it out with Captain Krzyzanowski, he would show him (VIII).

The 'infantile' club of *ES* includes also the dying diva Angiolina Bosio, as opposed to the father figure of her teacher:

She raised herself a bit and sang what was required, but not in the sweet voice, metallic and pliant, which had made her fame [. . .] but with the chesty, unpracticed timbre of a fifteen-year-old girl, with an incorrect wasteful production of the sound, for which Professor Cattaneo had been so cross with her (VII).

The club (which already counts the narrator, Parnok, and Bosio) is also joined by the nameless victim of lynching. He is linked to Parnok as yet another *čeloveček*, "little man." Parnok enters the novella accompanied by the following introduction:

There lived in Petersburg a little man [*čeloveček*] with patent leather shoes, who was despised by doormen and women [. . .] In early spring he would run out onto the street and

patter along the still wet sidewalks with his little sheep hooves [. . .] A wide parabola joined Parnok with the pompous enfilades of history and music [. . .] “They will throw you out one of these days, Parnok [. . .], they’ll take you by the arm and pf-f-t . . . out of the Symphony Hall (II).

This image of a little man going out into the street, entering a music hall, and eventually being thrown out of there by the hostile “them” finds an unexpected continuation and closure in the narrator’s apostrophe of the man led down to his death by the street mob:

You have had your stroll, my dear little man [*čeloveček*], along Ščerbakov Lane [. . .] hung for a bit on the handrails of a streetcar [. . .] frequented the public baths and Ciniselli circus; you have done a bit of living [*požil*], little man,—enough! (IV).

As a result, there emerges an image of the composite *čeloveček*’s lifespan, complete with an introduction, strolls, cultural pastimes, punishment, and violent death, all the way from “*Žil . . .*” to “. . . *požil*.”

5. Marginality

‘*Non-belonging*’: situations. Parnok’s identification with the other *čeloveček*, which spurs his rescue efforts in the first place, is emphasized by the narrator’s comments that are essentially applicable to both:

More than anything in the world he feared to attract upon himself the displeasure of the mob. There are people who for some reason or other displease mobs. The mob picks them at once, taunts them, and pulls them by the nose. Children have no special liking for them and women find them unattractive. Parnok was among their number (IV).

The sense of outsidership that afflicts Parnok, the lynched *čeloveček*, and the narrator of *ES* is also at the root of the title emotion of Oleša’s novella.²⁴ The stubborn infantilism evinced by all these anti-heroes is, in fact, a manifestation of their traumatic marginality. In *Envy*, this complex is formulated in so many words:

Really, I was just something on the side [*s boku pripeka*], a little man accidentally attached. No one consulted me; my impressions didn’t interest anyone [. . .] Suddenly I clearly realized my own incongruity [*neprinadležnost*’, lit. “non-belonging”] to those who had been called to gather for the sake of this big and important event, the complete unnecessaryness of my presence among them, the estrangement [*otorvannost*’, lit. “being cut-off or out of touch”²⁵] from everything these people were doing [. . .] (I, 9).

The anti-hero’s outsidership is varied through a plethora of situation types:

- ‘Dependence on protection’: Kavalero is picked up from the gutter (by Andrej), given refuge and home (by Andrej; by the widow), gainfully employed (by Andrej), taken to the airfield (ditto), offered moral guidance (by Andrej; by Ivan);
- ‘Unequal participation’:

I feel good for having participated in the fate of the Bread Supply [. . .] I experience administrative ecstasy. But my part is really insignificant. The pawn's part [*Xolujskaja rol'*]! (I, 3); We gathered at the air terminal. I say, "we!"²⁶ Really, I was just something on the side (I, 9).

—'Presence of the real masters': it is not Kavalero, but Volodja who is Andrej's privileged "son," who plays the *barčuk*, "young lord" (I, 13), to Andrej's *barin*, "lord" (I, 3), and is the rightful occupant of the sofa in Andrej's apartment;

—'Being barred/ejected':

"Oh, how the holiday will be sparkling there—where they won't let us in!" (Ivan to Kavalero; II, 4); "I'll remove you from the air terminal" (the guard to Kavalero; I, 9); "They threw me out" (Kavalero—from the beer hall; I, 4); "I was driven out" (Ivan—from the children's ball; II, 4);

—'Marginal position (beyond the fence, outside the home, on foot next to a vehicle)': Kavalero's—"behind the barrier" at the air terminal²⁷; Ivan's—under Valja's and Andrej's windows (I, 5, 7) and in front of Andrej's limousine (II, 3); Kavalero's—beneath Andrej, who is astride the construction crane (I, 10).

'*Non-belonging*': *emotions*. These consist of the anti-hero's feelings and the new masters' reactions. The outsiders are consumed, in addition to their all-pervasive 'envy,' by

—'Anger and fear': Kavalero, angry because of his inability to share Andrej's and Šapiro's joy over the new sausage, wants—but does not risk—to throw the sample into the river (I, 8); he both hates Andrej and is afraid of him, like a scared little boy (I, 9, 11);

—'Sense of superiority': it is manifested in Kavalero's internal monologues, his letter to Babičev, Ivan's sermons, Kavalero's posture of an unrecognized genius and future exhibit at the waxworks museum, and Ivan's self-styled role of a mock-Christ and "king of the vulgarians" [*korol' pošljakov*] (II, 3);

—'Defiance and desire of revenge': Kavalero defies the beer-hall "troupe of monsters" (I, 4); Ivan tears up the dress of the girl that eclipses him at the ball; Kavalero contemplates the murder of Andrej; Ivan propounds the theory of "leaving with a bang."

The brave new world²⁸ responds to the outsiders with

—'Indifference, inattention, scorn': Andrej consistently ignores Kavalero, even when taunted by him; Kavalero never gets to see his

eyes, only “the two stupidly [. . .] shining plates of the pince-nez” (I, 9); Valja never once so much as notices Kavalerov’s existence; from behind the barrier, Kavalerov fails to get through to Andrej, the People’s Commissar, and other military brass; “[T]hings don’t like me [Kavalerov . . .] Things like him [Andrej]” (I, 1).

ES offers a similar picture. Its anti-hero, too, is out of favor with life, the mob, women, and children. He is marginally attached to something he does not like, need, belong to.

From childhood [Parnok] had been devoted to whatever was useless, [. . .] and when he began to fall in love [. . . women] did not understand him, for which he revenged himself by speaking to them in a wild, bombastic birdy language (II) (cf. Kavalerov’s vain poetic overtures to Valja and Andrej).

Among the many variations on the theme of ‘non-belonging’ in *ES* are

- the passage about the non-invitation to the Barbizon luncheon on the grass (IV);
- the narrator’s confession that he, like Parnok, is barely “sustained by Petersburg alone” (V);
- Parnok’s anticipated ejection from the concert hall (II);
- his acceptance of “the pedigree [. . . of] all those people who were shown down the stairs [. . .] all those who did not ‘live’ but ‘reside’ ” (VIII).
- his ‘marginal, sidelined’ demeanor: he is one of those “people who [. . .] are somehow hooked on to the present age *sideways* [. . .]” (II); “Weaving his way *sideways* along the sidewalk,” he runs to appeal in vain for help to Captain Krzyzjanowski, who is “wearing a military topcoat [. . .] with a saber” (VI) and later appears in “droshky [. . . that] could not have looked more like a Greek chariot” (VI; cf. Ivan on foot *vs.* Andrej in his chauffeured car); the narrator, in turn, sees himself as “attached to someone else’s family and carriage” (VIII) and thinks of his aunt, “inimically bound to someone else’s life” (VI); the anti-hero’s alter ego, the “little mosquito,” is “the last Egyptian [. . . a] beggarly [. . .] Ramses [. . .] the prince of ill fortune” (VIII).

‘*Scandal, fear, and marginalia.*’ Since there is no other way out (“What is to be done? To whom can one complain?”; *ES*, VI), the anti-hero’s defense of his precarious identity takes the form of ‘scandal,’ which was inaugurated in Russian literature by Dostoevsky’s characters and to which the narrator devotes an ambivalent laudation (“Scandal is the name of the demon discovered by Russian prose . . .”; V). In fact, ‘scandal’ was foreshadowed already in the imaginary scene of Parnok’s ejection from the

concert hall: "They will throw you out [. . .] with frightful *scandal* and shame [. . .]" (II).

'Scandal' is also the course of action dreamt of by Kavalero and advocated by Ivan. In fact, a scuffle, provoked by Kavalero as a way of making a statement in a beer hall,—although "at first nothing even hinted at a *scandal*" (I, 4),—marks Kavalero's entry into the plot (and results in his first ouster). Kavalero's pet project for overcoming his outsidership is through provocation—the existentialist *geste gratuit*.

In our country the roads to glory are obstructed by barriers [!]. A talented man must [. . .] dare to raise the barrier with a big scandal [. . .] do something obviously absurd, perpetrate some sort of ingenious [*genial'noe*] prank and then say: "So that's the way you are and this is the way I am." Come out on a square, do whatever you'd like and exit bowing: I lived, I did what I wanted to do (VI).

That is, of course, more or less what Ivan preaches is to be done:

"What can I do [*Čto že mne delat'*]?" asked Kavalero. "My dear boy, here you have to reconcile yourself or . . . make a scandal. Or you have to leave with a bang. Slam the door, as they say [. . .] Don't give in without a fight" (II, 4).

And that is what Ivan does do, or rather, pretends—in his "Tale . . ."—having done:

[I]n the meantime some man in a derby hat had already [. . .] disturbed the attention of the forward spectators [. . .] Having separated from the crowd, he did venture to get over the rope guarding the approaches to the lectern [. . .] which obviously showed some rights as either really belonging to him or simply seized by him . . . He [. . .] stood leaning on the rope, or rather half sat on the rope, hanging his rear over it and not caring about what complete disorder would occur if the rope broke [. . .] (II, 6).

Having thus literally transcended the 'barriers' and, indeed, the condition of 'non-belonging,' Ivan eventually makes it to the lectern, challenges his brother, and has "Ophelia" destroy "Two Bits," in a perfect—albeit imaginary—reification of his cherished "bang."

Both Mandelštam and Oleša take a dim or, at best, ambivalent view of the literature-inspired 'scandal.' They portray their protagonists as effectively sidelined by history. The real—full-blooded—engagement is not their cup of tea: Kavalero only dreams of killing Andrej, but is actually reduced to proofreading the latter's brochure about "the blood collected during slaughter [. . .] processed [. . .] for the preparation of sausage [. . .] or the manufacture of [. . .] buttons [. . .]" (*Envy*, I, 7). Parnok at least makes an attempt to save the other "little man" from violent death, whose depiction bears an uncanny resemblance to Andrej's brochure ("They stink of bloated bowels, thought Parnok and was for some reason reminded of the terrible word 'entrails' [. . .] Buttons are made of animal blood"; *ES*, IV) (see Note 22). But he does so from the periphery, *bočkom*, "sideways," without jumping into the fray. The reason is—fear.

Someone had only to try, with the most modest sort of exclamation, to come to the aid of the [victim . . .] and he himself would land in the soup, would be suspect, declared an outlaw and dragged into the empty square. This was the work of the master cooper, Terror [*strax*] (IV).

Strax, “terror, fear,” is the leitmotif of this chapter, whose penultimate paragraph reads: *Strašno žit' i xorošo!* “Life is terrifying and beautiful!”

The theme of ‘fear’ is resumed at the end of *ES*—in a new key.

Terror [*strax*] takes me by the hand and leads me. [. . .] I love terror, I respect it. I almost said “With it, I’m not terrified [*s nim mne ne strašno*] (VIII).

The narrator finds himself able to come to grips with fear by writing about it and, indeed, creating a stylistic equivalent of the ‘outsidership’ that haunts him.²⁹ The eccentric, centri-fugal, de-centralized design of the novella is proclaimed as a new esthetic program, brought about by “the end of the novel,” i. e. by the irrelevance, under the prevailing historical circumstances, of the traditional centripetal action premised on an individualist hero with a strong biographical and psychological identity. Hence:

Destroy your manuscript, but save whatever you have inscribed in the margin out of boredom, out of helplessness, and, as it were, in a dream. These secondary and involuntary creations of your fantasy will not be lost in the world [. . .] (VIII).³⁰

Mandel’stam’s narrator has, indeed, heeded this advice all along, as he kept interrupting—with endless digressions, *marginalia*, and arabesques—what little there is of the main *fabula*, where the protagonist has little chance of succeeding, be it in his struggle for a coat, a woman, or another little man’s life.

Oleša’s anti-heroes behave in a similar way, compensating with verbal fireworks for their practical helplessness against the victorious ‘new people.’ Yet, the poetics of ‘marginality’ is not formulated in *Envy*, nor is it, in fact, as characteristic of Oleša’s novella as it is of Mandel’stam’s. From *Envy* (which, all its modernism notwithstanding, is a “regular” narrative with a story and characters) a path leads rather to Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*, whose carnivalesque plot it foreshadows in many ways (Zholkovsky 1987). *The Egyptian Stamp*, on the other hand, remains an early, rare, and promising instance of Russian surrealist prose, which has only recently started garnering critical appreciation and literary influence.

Ironically, Oleša’s own later career can be said to have followed Mandel’stam’s prescription for survival through marginality. He was gradually forced off the Soviet literary thoroughfare, and his single major work written after *Envy* was *No Day Without a Line*, a “secondary and involuntary” collection of plotless marginal notes on literature and life, which ended up “not lost in the world,” albeit barely, as it was published posthumously in 1965.

NOTES

- 1 See commentaries to *ES* in Mandel'stam, 1990, II: 404. In what follows, references to *Envy* will be by Part and chapter (e. g., I, 3), to *ES*, by chapter only (e. g., III), and to Mandel'stam, 1967, by volume number (I). I use the English translations of *ES* (Mandelstam, 1965: 151–89) and *Envy* (Oleša, 1975), emending them where necessary according to the originals (Mandel'stam, II: 43–79; Oleša 1956: 25–128).
- 2 *Envy* canonized soccer as a legitimate theme of artistic prose, but it was Mandel'stam who inducted it into Russian poetry—with his 1913 “Futbol” and “Vtoroj futbol” poems.
- 3 The motif goes back to Zamjatin's *We*, to Dostoevskij's “Notes from the Underground,” and to Černyševskij's “What Is to Be Done?” Mandel'stam's 1932 version of it was apparently prompted by the then new Le Corbusier building in Moscow (see Mandel'stam, 1990, I: 517).
- 4 Especially striking are the similarities with “Phaedra,” cf.: Я не увижу знаменитой “Федры”/ В старинном многоярусном театре,/ С прокопченной высокой галереи,/ При свете оплывающих свечей,/ И, равнодушен к суете актеров,/ Сбирающих рукоплесканий жатву,/ Я не услышу обращенный к рампе/ Двойною рифмой оперенный стих (I: 50). For the discussion of the rhythmical-thematic formula ‘*Ja ne + Verb*’ in Mandel'stam, see Zholkovsky, 1986: 212.
- 5 On this cluster and Mandel'stam's other invariants, see Zholkovsky, 1986: 205–14, esp. 210–13.
- 6 Я каждому тайно завидую/ И в каждого тайно влюблен (“Из омута злого и вязкого . . .”; 1910); О, время, завистью не мучай/ Того, кто во время застыл (“Где вырывается из плена . . .”; 1909–1910), see Koubourlis, 161, Mandel'stam, I: 11, 121.
- 7 E. g., the presence of an honest Šapiro character dependent on the narrative's central father figure: on the narrator's father (*ES*, II), on Andrej Babičev (*Envy*, I, 8).
- 8 In much of what follows I rely, often without point-by-point references, on the studies of Oleša by William Harkins, Elizabeth Beaujour, M. O. Čudakova, N. A. Nilsson, Andrew Barratt, Kazimiera Ingdahl, and Milton Ehre and on the Mandel'stam studies of N. Berkovskij, Clarence Brown, Omry Ronen, Dmitrij Segal, Charles Isenberg, and Gregory Freidin (see *Works Cited*).
- 9 Cf. the title hero of Nabokov's *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* (1941); another way to read Kavalero's name is as “Mr. Beau.”
- 10 Cf. Mandel'stam's reference to Lady Godiva in his “S mirom deržavnym . . .” (1932); the name ‘Virlirli’ may be also correlated with Kavalero's ‘virility’ complex.
- 11 “Кто за честь природы фехтовальщик?! Ну, конечно, пламенный Ламарк” (Ламарк”, 1932; I: 177).
- 12 The “hilt of a sword” (*efes*) appears also in Mandel'stam's programmatically ‘foreign’ poem “К немецкой речи”: Поэзия, тебе полезны грозы!/ Я вспоминаю немца-офицера,/ И за эфес его цеплялись розы,/ И на губах его была Церера (1932; I: 191).
- 13 In *Envy*, the theme of clothing is less central; note, however, that Andrej Babičev is a smart dresser, while Kavalero and Ivan wear shabby old-fashioned clothes; and, as a child, Ivan desecrates the fancy dress of his little rival (II, 4).
- 14 They go back to Gogol's “Diary of a Madman” (“Mother, have pity on your son!”) and look forward to Mandel'stam's own 1931 poem “Dovol'no kuksit'sja . . .” (Сегодня в корень голову шампунем/ Мне вымыл парикмахер Франсуа; I: 171).
- 15 Cf. Oleša's image of Europe in his posthumous *No Day Without a Line*: “[Napoleon] really was a miracle—a profoundly European [. . .] one, all steeped in the aura of *moderate distances* [italics added here and below—A. Zh.], names of capitals, peoples, mountains and rivers” (1979: 189). This perspective may, in turn, have been inspired by

- Mandel'stam's 1914 poem "Europe," which Oleša mentions twice (1979: 169, 209), singling out for special praise: "Mandel'stam's definition of a peninsula in a poem where *geographical forms* are being enumerated: 'And ethereal [are] its sculptured peninsulas [И полуостровов воздушны изваянья; Mandel'stam, I: 42]' " (Oleša, 1979: 209).
- 16 Cf. the cinematic technique of 'reverse splicing' in Dziga Vertov's 1924 film *Kinoglaz*, where a cow is first processed into beef cuts and then "resurrected" from them.
 - 17 The view of the dissenting intellectuals as "old" was typical of the time: "Once [. . .] M. refused to sign a collective letter [. . .] to the Central Committee, on the grounds that 'in literary matters they should appeal to us, not we to them' [. . . A] lot of people [. . .] crowded around M. [. . .] His words seemed to them like a musty old rag pulled from some family chest of the past [. . .]. I remember the astonished look on Kaverin's face [. . .] He thought M. was simply an old-fashioned eccentric who didn't understand the times he lived in. When M. and Axmatova were still not much over thirty they were quite seriously thought of as old people. [. . . T]hey gradually came to seem younger [. . .] as the views of those who had espoused the 'new age' grew hopelessly obsolete" (Nadežda Mandel'stam, 1976: 166–7).
 - 18 Noted by Isenberg (107, 175n.), who also establishes a parallel with *Envy* as discussed in Nilsson, 1973. The opening sentence ("А я не получу приглашения на барбизонский завтрак . . .") is yet another instance of the recurrent formula '*Ja ne + Verb*' (see above).
 - 19 Cf. the equation 'world = library' (prefaced again by the nostalgic '*Ja ne + Verb*' formula) in the "Armenia" cycle (1930): [Я] уже никогда не раскрою/ В библиотеке авторов гончарных/ Прекрасной земли пустотелую книгу (I: 155).
 - 20 See Ingdahl, 78–82. A likely literary source is Prince Andrej's famous oak-tree in *War and Peace*, presented by Oleša in reverse.
 - 21 The image is naturalized subtextually—by Pobedonoscev's notorious suggestion that "Russia could use some freezing."
 - 22 On this motif cluster in *ES*, *Envy*, Pil'njak, Bulgakov, and Babel' see Zholkovsky, forthcoming.
 - 23 For the profound kinship of plant and childhood imagery (in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*) see Brooks, 1975.
 - 24 The theme of 'non-belonging' and the corresponding focus on 'non-involved and outsider' characters in Soviet literature, is discussed, with special reference to Il'f's and Petrov's novels, by Ščeglov (18, 23–24, 36, 47–49).
 - 25 These are, of course, typical Mandel'stamisms (see above).
 - 26 An allusion to Zamjatin's title is likely.
 - 27 This setting is prototypical of many scenes in Soviet literature, e. g., in Chapter 29 of Il'f's and Petrov's *The Golden Calf*, where Bender is separated by a fence from the official crowd.
 - 28 The text (which antedates Aldous Huxley's novel by four years) contains what looks like the corresponding Shakespearean phrase: "Here he is fallen asleep so close to me, my beautiful new world" (Andrej about Volodja; II, 5).
 - 29 On the role of 'fear' in Mandel'stam's poetics, notably, in "The Slate Ode" (1923), with special reference to the line: Здесь пишет страх, здесь пишет сдвиг (I: 107), to *ES*, and to the poet's widow's comments on the two kinds of fear—'civilized, creative' vs 'GPU-induced, deadening'—see Ronen, 106–107, and Nadežda Mandel'stam, 1976: 42, 79, 85.
 - 30 Critics (see esp. Isenberg, 103–106) have correlated *ES*'s programmatic 'marginalism' with Mandel'stam's contemporaneous essay "The End of the Novel." There he claims that "Europeans have been plucked out of their own biographies" and notes "the growing impotence of the psychological motives in the confrontation with the forces of reality" (1979: 200), all of which has doomed the traditional plot. On the role of 'associative chains' and other techniques of 'the new prose' in *ES* see Isenberg, 84–142.

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