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“Precisely ‘That’”: Vladislav Chodasevič’s Poetic Technique in Mandelštam’s *Novye stichi*

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Abstract

This paper is devoted to the influence of Chodasevič’s poetic technique on Mandelštam’s poetry. We make an attempt to analyze Mandelštam’s late *Novye stichi* (“Ne govori nikomu...”, “Kuda kak strašno nam s tobom...” and “My s tobom na kuchne posidim...”), which are connected to each other through the theme of fear. From the point of view of the poetic technique, these texts are also connected to each other through the literary device of the unexpected twist of meaning, which was associated with Chodasevič’s lyrics in Mandelštam’s consciousness.

Keywords: Osip Mandelstam, Vladislav Khodasevich, Silver Age of Russian poetry, poetics, literary devices.

The poetic worlds of O. Mandelštam and V. Chodasevič are so distant from each other that it is counterintuitive to assume their mutual influence, except at the evident points of intersection. Nevertheless, there exist certain observations related to the topic of our interest. For instance, an assumption was recently made that Chodasevič’s “Lastočki” (1921) is a poetic response to “Ja slovo pozabyl...” (Surat 2009, 348–350). It is likely that “Ballada” (“Sižu, osveščajemyj sverchu...”; 1921) also relates dialogically to the aforementioned poem of Mandelštam (Uspenskij 2014, 458–459). As far as we can tell, no other hypotheses have been suggested regarding the poetic dialogue between Chodasevič and Mandelštam.

Researchers have in fact collected slightly more evidence for the reverse – Chodasevič’s impact on Mandelštam. For example, O. Ronen draws attention to the fact that Mandelštam’s poem “Kvartira ticha, kak bumaga...” (1933) recalls, among other works, Chodasevič’s “Ballada” (1924) (Ronen 1973, 385; Ronen 2002, 41–42). A. S. Kušner developed this observation in detail, not-

ing that in the poems of Mandel'stam references may be found two lines from "Okna vo dvor" (1924) and "Bednye rifmy" (1926) as well. In his article he also suggested that two more of Mandel'stam's texts are related to Chodasevič. The lines "Как будто в руку вложена записка / И на нее немедленно ответь..." ("Šestogo čuvstva krošičnyj pridatok ..."; 1932–1934) are originally found in Tynjanov's judgment about the poem "Perešagni, pereskoči..." (1921, 1922) by Chodasevič. This piece was referred to as a *note* (записка) in "Promežutok" (Tynjanov 1977, 173). In its turn, "My s toboj na kuchne posidim..." (1931) directly correlates with the poem "Skvoz' nenastnyj zimnij deněk..." (1927) (Kušner 1994). In Kušner's opinion, similarities of this kind are not intentional. In other words, Mandel'stam used some of Chodasevič's imagery unconsciously and did not expect readers, in these instances, to recall the other poet's work (Kušner 1994, 50–51, 53).

In the present study we would like to examine the impact of Chodasevič on Mandel'stam from another perspective – and by this we mean poetic technique. At the same time we do not exclude the possibility that, in any event, this utilization of another poet's material could be unconscious. We are here interested in three texts: "Kuda kak strašno nam s toboj...", "Ne govori nikomu..." and "My s toboj na kuchne posidim..." (the similarity of the latter poem to "Skvoz' nenastnyj zimnij deněk..." has been noted by Kušner, but attentive readers are probably aware of this already).

In October 1930, after a long-lasting poetic silence, Mandel'stam regained his voice and, together with a cycle of poems about Armenia, composed this piece:

Не говори никому,
Всё, что ты видел, забудь –
Птицу, старуху, тюрьму
Или еще что-нибудь.

Или охватит тебя,
Только уста разомкнешь,
При наступлении дня
Мелкая хвойная дрожь.

Вспомнишь на даче осу,
Детский чернильный пенал
Или чернику в лесу,
Что никогда не собирал.
(Mandel'stam I, 150)

This poem was analyzed in detail by K. F. Taranovskij (2000, 188–191). According to him, it is dedicated to the “forced artistic silence” caused by fear of execution (“при наступлении дня” is a metonymy of execution by firing squad), provoking a sequence of random childhood memories. The scholar noted this poem's relation to a series of autobiographic themes: imprisonment in the Vrangel' jail in Feodosia (see the essay “Staruchina ptica” in *Feodosija*), memories of childhood from *Putešestvie v Armeniju*: “В детстве из глупого самолюбия, из ложной гордыни я никогда не ходил по ягоды и не нагибался за грибами” (Mandel'stam II, 317). We can see the literary tradition in which the poem is situated through the autobiography: “Mandel'stam's ‘don't speak’ (не говори) clearly alludes to Tjutčev's ‘be silent’ (молчи) from ‘Silentium’, and ‘the contrasting comparison of a bird and a jail continue the tradition of the prison theme in Russian poetry and recalls to the reader's mind Puškin and Lermontov's lines: ‘Sižu za rešetkoj v temnice syroj...’ [...] ‘Začem ja ne ptica, ne voron stepnoj...’” (Taranovskij 2000, 189–190).

In our opinion, analyses of the literary tradition of these poems have not given enough consideration to one significant moment, suggested by the poet himself. N. Ja. Mandel'stam remembers: “O. M. said about this poem that this is precisely ‘that’ what Chodasevič considers poetry”¹ (“Об этом стихотворении O. M. говорил, что именно ‘такое’ Ходасевич считает стихами”, Mandel'stam N. 1990, 194). Let us attempt to understand what the poet meant and what stands behind the phrase “precisely ‘that’”.

Taking into consideration that the poem “Ne govori nikomu...” is directly connected to silence, we could suppose that what is hidden behind the words of Mandel'stam is the theme of silence, also important for Chodasevič: in fact it accompanies, implicitly but with persistence, the collection *Evropejskaja noč'* (which was not published as a separate edition, but included in the *Sobranie stichov* of 1927). Speaking of which, we may also recall the lines from an other text which was not included in this collection, but where the theme of silence appears explicitly: “А под конец узнай, как чудно / Всё вдруг по-новому понять, / Как упоительно и трудно, / Привыкши к слову, – замолчать” (“Пока duša v poruče junom”; 1924, publication: *Beseda*. 1925, No. 6/7) (Chodasevič 1989, 251).

The fact that *Evropejskaja noč'*, as well as the quoted verses, appeared in the emigrant press should not disturb us. Actually, Chodasevič's poetry was

1 Translations here and following are by the author.

known in Russia: though excluded from official cultural life, the poet was popular among men of letters and, apparently, had something of a cult following. We can refer to Benedikt Livšič's (Mandel'stam's friend) letter to David Burl'uk from March 2, 1926: "Together with Pasternak and Chodasevič, he [Aseev], taking into account all the difference of their talents, is deservedly recognized in the circle of the true masters of the word, is truly famous [...] Do you know *Tjaželaja lira* and the *later poems* of Chodasevič?" (Livšič 1998, 248, our emphasis).

It is interesting to note that Mandel'stam and Benedict Livšič were both acquainted with Anna Chodasevič (the poet's second wife) and, according to her recollections, helped her to edit the translation of two French novels (Chodasevič A. 1990, 406). From her the poets could have learned of Chodasevič's new verses. A. I. Chodasevič recalled: "In the letters, Vladja often sent his poems. I started to put them all down in a notebook. Hereby, I gathered many poems, and a whole book appeared. In several years, one of my friends from Leningrad brought Vladja's book from abroad, *Evropejskaja noč*. I compared with my notebook and saw that I have even more than were collected there" (Chodasevič A. 1990, 407). The poems that were read in the intellectual circles can be found, for example, in a manuscript from N. K. Gudzij's book collection, where different texts by Chodasevič were written down (see Andreeva and Kotrelev 1996, 153–158).

Thus, it is quite likely that Mandel'stam was familiar with the late poems of Chodasevič (including those not published in the collected poems of 1927). Nevertheless, the above-mentioned lines referring to muteness are not obviously similar to "Ne govori nikomu...", either in their tonality or vocabulary or the development of the poetic theme.² "Precisely 'that'" could have been considered poetry, for example, by E. A. Boratynskij, in whose late verses the theme of the refusal of poetry was expressed even more clearly than in Chodasevič's texts.

From our perspective, Mandel'stam meant something different.³ Let's have another look at his poem. The ending of "Ne govori nikomu...", as it seems,

2 To a larger extent, "Ne govori nikomu..." correlates with Chodasevič's poem "V poslednij raz zovu Tebja: javis'...", though the latter was written after Mandel'stam's text in 1934, and published as late as 1940.

3 It is worth noting the similarity of the poetic constructions of enumeration. The Mandel'stam's lines – "Птицу, старуху, тюрьму / Или еще что-нибудь..." – are similar to lines from the beginning of Chodasevič's verse: "Перешагни, перескочи, / Перелети,

is more complicated than it appeared to К. Ф. Taranovskij. The lines “Или чернику в лесу, / Что никогда не собирал...” can indeed be interpreted as a reference to *Putešestvie v Armeniju*: “I have never gathered berries”. However, due to the fundamental polysemanticism of poetic texts, especially those of Mandel'stam, we can see here more than an evocation of childhood memory. In other words, the last line can be tied not only to the preceding one, but also extended to the whole text, changing the meaning of the entire poem.

If this is the case, we have here quite a complicated example of the unfolding of meanings in verse. The last line can be interpreted as the incarnation of what the poet (being afraid of the execution, according to Taranovskij) speaks of at the beginning – about the necessity to forget “всё, что ты видел”. This fear, not just of speech (“не говори никому”), but also of memories that can somehow bring harm and which, therefore, are dangerous, is so strong that it spreads to everything: “птицу, старуху, тюрьму / или еще что-нибудь”. Notably, in the focus of the lyric utterance, very different phenomena are equated, and the phrase “еще что-нибудь” indicates the openness of this sequence and, at the same time, that what is most important (and most frightening) is not subject to nomination and, probably, is intentionally sent to the domain of oblivion.

The last strophe, which describes what would happen to the poet as soon as he “разомкнет уста”, is born as a chain of associations with the phrase “хвойная дрожь”. Apparently, it is linked to coniferous trees and the morning freshness of the forest. This explains the base images of the last quatrain: “дача”, “лес”, “черника”, “оса”. The poem's ending relates to another, deeper layer of memory – that of childhood. However, the fear of remembering is so much stronger than the memory itself that in the space of the lyric verse its images already begin to be obliterated. In other words, the last two lines may be interpreted not as if the poet had never picked up forest berries in reality, but as if his fear distorts and destroys real memories. The poet, being afraid of other things, as if tells a flagrant lie to his reader, and this is the strongest expression of the emotional content of the text.⁴

пере- что хочешь...” (1921, 1922) (Chodasevič 1989, 139). In both cases, the increasing lexical tension is relieved not by an exact word, but by an intentionally indeterminate, vague word. Although this resemblance, most likely, was sensed by Mandel'stam, it is an additional detail of the subject set forth below.

4 The last lines can be likened to a common linguistic situation, vividly depicted at the beginning of the film *Chrystalëv, mašinu!* (1998) by A. German. While walking along the

Thus, the poem's ending may be read in this exact way to depict the effects of all-encompassing fear. If so, then the last line provides a backward illumination of the whole strophe (childhood memories become as if spurious and counterfeit) and, thereafter, of the whole text – attaching to everything described a feeling of fragility and illusion, if not outright mysticism. It is significant that the dominating theme of fear, which we have attempted to describe above in our analysis, takes its full shape only in the last line.

If we attempt to describe the structure of the poem, we can say that it is an instance of an unexpected twist of meaning at the end of a text. The last line does not directly conform with the preceding ones, and the reader has to resolve the contradiction and reconcile the meanings of the text. This is a literary device undoubtedly more widespread in prose than in poetry. A prosaic narrative is usually (but not always) organized in quite a simple manner: new information takes precedence over old. Strictly speaking, an unexpected meaning-twist at the end of a text is a characteristic device of short stories.

The device is encountered in some poetry as well. One of the most striking examples in Russian literature of the 20th century is found in Blok's poem *Dvenadcat'*. Its unexpected ending makes readers reconsider the whole text. Unlike more simplistic instances of the use of this device, the last lines of the poem change the meaning of everything related previously, and in an ambiguous manner. This makes it possible for readers to interpret the text from diametrically opposed points of view (Uspenskij 2011).

Although this example of Blok's is very striking, in Russian lyrics of the 20th century the device of an unexpected twist of meaning at the end of a poem is most frequently met in the works of Chodasevič (Bethea 1983, 110–115; Levin 1998, 244–254). If we were to compile a list of such texts, it would be quite impressive. One could say that this device is Chodasevič's "trademark". Let us consider several examples. Rather equivocally but nevertheless vividly, this device is at work in the poem "Žizel", included in *Tjaželaja lira*: "Да, да! В слепой и нежной страсти / Переболей, перегори, / Рви сердце,

street, Fedja Aramyšev, a boiler man, gets enticed by a statuette on the radiator of an empty car covered with snow, which is standing on the roadside. He tries to break it off, but at this very moment MGB (Ministerstvo gosudarstvennoj bezopasnosti) officers jump out of the car. They twist the boiler man's arms and drag him into an alley. Understanding that the situation leads to a crisis, Aramyšev, looking over his shoulder, says to the officers: "I am not looking... I am not looking... I am not looking... Guys! I have passed by... I have walked by" ("Я не оглядываюсь... Я не оглядываюсь... Я не оглядываюсь... Мужики! я пошел мимо... Я пошел мимо...").

как письмо, на части, / Сойди с ума, потом умри. // И что ж? Могильный камень двигать / Опять придется над собой, / Опять любить и ножкой дрыгать / На сцене лунно-голубой” (Chodasevič 1989, 134). For the reader, the tragic situation ultimately appears conventional, repeating, and the final stylistic shift is in accordance with this impression. One might say that in the poem a shift of the point of view takes place: at first the author observes the situation from within and depicts the emotional state of the heroine of a ballet, but in the second strophe the perspective is that of an outside observer viewing the ballet dancer, performing one and the same role day after day.

A more complicated version of this device appears in the verse Tynjanov called a *note*: “Перешагни, перескочи, / Перелети, пере- что хочешь – / Но вырвись: камнем из пращи, / Звездой, сорвавшейся в ночи... / Сам затерял — теперь ищи... // Бог знает, что себе бормочешь, / Ища пенсне или ключи” (Chodasevič 1989, 139). In this case, the ending changes the poem's meaning in an ambiguous way: the contrast between the parts is so strong that the reader has to invent new explanations after each reading (for more details on this poem see Lejbov 2006; Uspenskij 2005).

This device of the unexpected meaning-twist genetically originates in the poetics of the epigram, where it is usually implemented in a rather simple manner. Chodasevič was not the first to introduce it into “serious” poetry – E. A. Boratynskij, whom the poet of the Silver Age looked constantly up to, was insistently inserting this device a century earlier (Uspenskij 2013). Nevertheless, in the poetry of the late 1910s and 1920s this very device was marked as characteristic of Chodasevič. It is not by chance that Mandel'stam, when talking about the poet, in a single paragraph (but in different contexts) reveals the poetic genealogy of which we have just written: “Chodasevič cultivated the theme of *Baratynskij*: ‘My gift is poor and my voice is low [Мой дар убог, и голос мой негромок]’ and varied in different ways the theme of the premature child [недоносок]⁵ [...] Departing from the best epoch of the Russian poetic dilettantism, [...] everyday *epigram* [...], Chodasevič has

5 The usage of this word, which had appeared from Boratynskij's poem of the same title, can be interpreted as a kind of attack on Chodasevič (which fits within the context of the reference about his poetry). Interestingly, the “premature child” (недоносок) in Mandel'stam's text is not inserted between quotation marks (as would be the title of a verse). In other words, the word under discussion can manifest two meanings: the literal one and the reference to the poet of the Puškin era. In all likelihood, this attack can be regarded as Mandel'stam's reply to Chodasevič's skeptical attitude to his poetry.

brought even to the 20th century the sophistication and delicate roughness of the folksy Moscow talk” (Mandel’stam II, 134; our emphasis).

These considerations, as it seems, help to uncover the meaning of Mandel’stam’s self-commentary to “Ne govori nikomu...”. Chodasevič regards “precisely ‘that’” as poetry because this very text uses the device, characteristic of his lyrics, and uses it in a very refined and delicate manner. However, in Mandel’stam’s lyrics this device occurs infrequently. Indeed, for its full effect on the reader, a rather clear and logical poetic language is required. In this regard, “Ne govori nikomu...” has a more complicated structure, and the development of the verse, despite the consecutive unfolding of the main themes, is constructed as a chain of associations. We may assume that in this poem Mandel’stam, on the level of poetic craftsmanship, seeks alternative ways of applying the device under discussion and proceeds along this path, which is different from that of Chodasevič though genetically connected to it.

In connection with this, it is interesting to regard Mandel’stam’s other poems from that period (autumn of 1930 – winter of 1931) as well. In the aftermath of muteness, the first to “awake” was this verse (Mandel’stam N. 1990, 192) addressed to his wife:

Куда как страшно нам с тобой,
Товарищ большепотый мой!
Ох, как крошится наш табак,
Щелкунчик, дружок, дурак!
А мог бы жизнь просвистать скворцом,
Заесть ореховым пирогом –
Да, видно, нельзя никак...
(Mandel’stam I, 145)

This poem was written earlier than “Ne govori nikomu...” and is, probably, related to it through the theme of fear, which the poet attempts to resolve by means of the elevated intonation. We will not assert that “Kuda kak strašno nam s toboj...” fully employs the device of unexpected meaning-twist, but we will note that the last line, though not radically altering the poem’s sense, nevertheless provides a backward illumination of the whole. The fear, which seems to start being overcome in the fifth line by the modeling of a hypothetical life, returns in line 7, which rhymes with the endings of lines 3 and 4. In

fact, the last line abandons this pointless dreaming and brings the author, as well as the reader, back to the beginning of the poem, attaching to it a greater seriousness and revoking once and for all the elevated intonation, which seemed to have restored, by its appearance, the order of things (or changed the poet's attitude to them).

It is necessary to draw attention to another classic verse, written in January of 1931 (thus, it is separated from the texts regarded above by 2–3 months):

Мы с тобой на кухне посидим,
Сладко пахнет белый керосин,
Острый нож да хлеба каравай...
Хочешь, примус туго накачай,
А не то верёвок собери –
Завязать корзину до зари,
Чтобы нам уехать на вокзал,
Где бы нас никто не отыскал.
(Mandel'stam I, 153)

It seems that this poem uses the device of unexpected meaning-twist, which was discussed above. Indeed, the idyll of the kitchen, peaceful and cosy, changes into feverish movement, and in the last distich “instead of the kitchen, in front of the reader there arises its complete antipode, the crowded station, where the husband and the wife arrive, fleeing from the ominous ‘no one’” (Lekmanov 2009, 201). One should add that the inertia of the initial lines is so strong that the last line, explaining the reason for the departure to the station, appears unexpectedly. A sudden transition to the presence of “the others” in the poet's life, those bringing danger and misfortune, throws a retrospective light upon the beginning of the verse. The idyllic view and the attention to the details of the kitchen appear to be a way of distracting from the agonizing fear, which was, we realize, at first an underlying message, but eventually became clearly apparent.

In light of the last line, the customary kitchen items can change their meaning as well: “острый нож”, in the context of the impending danger, seems not so idyllic, let alone “верёвки” (see the analysis of the poem's lexemes that change their meaning in light of the last lines in Ju. I. Levin's brilliant analysis (Levin 1998, 24–28)). We will supplement the researcher's observations with

several thoughts. “Хлеба каравай” may also appear to be a less than pleasant detail. According to a Russian tradition, important guests should be welcomed with bread and salt, with a “*karavaj*” on an embroidered towel. It could be that use of exactly this lexeme connects it to the lines of an adjacent poem, “Ja vernulsja v moj gorod, znakomuj do slöz ...” (December 1930), dedicated to the same theme of fear and waiting for arrest: “И всю ночь напролёт жду гостей дорогих, / Шевеля кандалами цепочек дверных” (Mandel’stam I, 153). In other words, the phrases “гостей дорогих” and “хлеба каравай” may correlate with each other: the *karavaj*, at first an idyllic item, becomes a sign of waiting for the police.

Something similar can be seen to take place in the second line of the poem “Sladko pachnet belyj kerosin”. Just as the line “Ох, как крошится наш табак!” of the verse “Kuda kak strašno nam s toboj...” obviously plays with the proverb “Дело – табак!”, Mandel’stam’s words about kerosene are, probably, a play on the then recent idiom “Дело пахнет керосином!” This expression originates in M. E. Kol’tsov’s *feuilleton* published in the newspaper *Pravda* on the 22nd of April, 1924.⁶ It is quite possible that the poet was aware of it. In light of this phrase that became rooted in folklore, the appearance of “керосин” in the verse anticipates nothing pleasant. Indeed, for Mandel’stam himself the word “керосин” was ambiguous. Whereas in “Му s toboj na

6 As a central metaphor of the satirical article “Všě v porjadke”, dedicated to the investigation of the oil case in the U.S.A., Kol’tsov used the smell of kerosene and petrol, as well as the oily stains on the coats and the reputation of American judges: “Americans have sniffed with suspicion: some fuel was clearly smelling from the White House. Oil... or not oil, but something like a refined petrol can be felt. [...] Several of the court investigators appeared to be not without sin. One has several oily banknotes on the bottom of his pocket. Another one has very recently been given, for the cessation of the oil case, a bribe, larger than average, strongly and persuasively *smelling of kerosene*” (Kol’cov 1924; our emphasis).

At the same time, the semantic model of the phrase “дело пахнет керосином” existed for a long time. The verb “пахнуть”, besides its literal meaning, “to emit an odour”, was already used figuratively in the 19th century as “to discover the presence, existence or possibility of something” and “to indicate a potential threat, to invoke a foreboding of something dangerous or unpleasant”. In both cases, this verb collocated with the nouns of the negative, evaluating plane: “Тут пахнет кражей и подлогом” (Saltykov-Ščedrin), “Пахнет каторгой, Сибирью” (Щернушевский), “пахнет уголовщиной” (Leskov). Also, it may be worth mentioning the widespread phrases “пахнет скандалом”, “пахнет взяткой” (see Gorbačevič 1974, 116–118).

However, we should bear in mind that the phrase “дело пахнет керосином” occurs in literature later – after the war – but it is possible that it was used only in the spoken language.

kuchne posidim ...” it mediates between the two contexts (the idyll of kitchen and the situation of all-embracing fear), in lines from his lost poems written, it seems, in May–June of 1931, “керосин” has only negative connotations. This is what N. Ja. Mandel'stam recalled: “In this verse there was a kitchen – ‘And the fingers of women smell of kerosene’ and ‘Blood is gushing from the kitchen sinks’” (Mandel'stam N. 1990, 211).

So a close reading of the poem helps us to reach the conclusion that it uses the device of an unexpected meaning-twist. In this case it is even more distinct than in “Ne govori nikomu ...” and “Kuda kak strašno nam s tobomj...”. This makes it even more interesting that “My s tobomj na kuchne posidim ...”, as noted by Kušner, correlates with a verse from Chodasevič included in *Evropejskaja noč'*:

Сквозь ненастный зимний денек –
У него сундук, у нее мешок –

По паркету парижских луж
Ковыляют жена и муж.

Я за ними долго шагал,
И пришли они на вокзал.
Жена молчала и муж молчал.

И о чем говорить, мой друг?
У нее мешок, у него сундук ...
С каблуком топотал каблук.
(Chodasevič 1989, 177)

“Feminine rhymes, the words ‘вокзал’ (“Чтобы нам уехать на вокзал, / Где бы нас никто не отыскал ...”), ‘веревка’, and ‘корзина’ in Mandel'stam, ‘мешок’, ‘сундук’ in Chodasevič, and, in general, both situations undoubtedly resemble each other. [...] And, of course, he did not want his readers, while reading ‘My s tobomj na kuchne posidim ...’, to recall Chodasevič. The concerns of Parisian life are of no concern in this case: the French poverty is incomparable to ours, French life, as compared to life in the Soviet Union, looked like heaven (‘Я молю как жалости и милости...’); there was no desire to juxtapose it with his own” (Kušner 1994, 53).

Unfortunately, the domain of poetic intentions can be only reconstructed, and we can recover the aims of a poet only by approximation. It is likely

that Mandelštam did not set out to consciously refer to the Parisian verse of Chodasevič. However, though not on the thematic plane but rather on the level of poetic technique – craftsmanship – Chodasevič is present in these three of Mandelštam's poems, connected not only by the proximity of the times of their writing, but also by their variation on the same theme.⁷ This theme, in the analyzed poems, always reaches its climax by means of the device of an unexpected meaning-twist. In one case, Mandelštam as if “laid down his cards” by explaining to his wife that “precisely ‘that’” is what Chodasevič regards as poetry. In the other cases the poet did not do that, but the connections between the three verses on the thematic and compositional level speak for themselves. Thereby, although not explicitly intending his readers to sense the connections of some of his new poems, thematically, to the lyrics of Chodasevič, Mandelštam used Chodasevič's poetic technique at a deeper level and attempted a new field of application of the characteristic device.

In connection with this, it should be noted that in Chodasevič's poem “Skvoz' nenastnyj zimnij deněk...” the device under consideration here is used minimally. Indeed, the closing line, being as if redundant for the author (“И о чем говорить, мой друг?”), returns us to the beginning of the text and does not change its meaning substantially, but rather adds a tragic shade to the lyrical exposition. In this regard, this use of the device by Chodasevič is more similar to the strength of its influence in “Kuda kak strašno nam s tobój...”. The power of emotional influence of the line “Да, видно, нельзѧ никак...”, conveying the hopelessness of dreams and expectations, approximates ending of the poem by Chodasevič, who formulates the same impression by means of poetic detail.

7 In this regard, it is significant that in the planned publication of *Novye stichi* all these poems are arranged in succession and seem to constitute a cycle. For instance, the selection “Sem' stichotvorenij” was planned to appear in *Novyj mir*: “My s tobój na kuchne posidim...”, “Ne govori nikomu...”, “Kuda kak strašno nam s tobój...”, “Ja vernulsja v moj gorod, znakomyj do slěz...”, “Posle polunoči serdce voruet...”, “Na policejskoj bumage verže...”. For the magazine *Leningrad* another set of poems was planned – “Pjat' stichotvorenij”: “My s tobój na kuchne posidim...”, “Ne govori nikomu...”, “Kuda kak strašno nam s tobój...”, “Ja vernulsja v moj gorod, znakomyj do slěz...”, “Na policejskoj bumage verže...” (Mandelštam I, 589). The initial verses of these selections form a kind of cycle. Note that the supposed order of these poems in print is precisely reverse to the actual order of their writing – a fact that requires a separate analysis, which, at the same time, indicates that the poet imagined these verses as closely connected to each other.

At the same time, as we have attempted to demonstrate, in “My s toboj na kuchne posidim...”, this device functions in a more intensive manner – not only does it overthrow the initially idyllic image, but it also alters the meaning of a number of lines. We could conjecture that Mandel'stam, while creating his text, noticed its similarity to the verse of the emigrant poet and, as a result, added some features of Chodasevič's poetics to it. Filled with existential melancholy and hopelessness, the Parisian sketch of one poet is transformed, on Russian ground, into a hypothetically desired situation that offers respite from even greater threats – arrest, prison, death.

Thus, beside the fact that the poetics of Chodasevič *per se* were clearly present in the consciousness of Mandel'stam during the period of the autumn of 1930 to the winter of 1931 – and were exhibited in a characteristic device – we suppose that the poetics of “Skvoz' nenastnyj zimnij deněk...” may have influenced “Kuda kak strašno nam s toboj...”, and its thematics could have made an impact on “My s toboj na kuchne posidim...”. If our hypothesis is right, we can argue that in *Novye stichi* Mandel'stam, whose poetics was extremely open to all kind of influences, took inspiration from such a distant poet of his time as Chodasevič.

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