acceptance of the coming generation of poets. Chekhov did not expect his contemporaries to recognize in his art the elements of the old Russian literary tradition that shaped his language perceptiveness. As a result of the preoccupation with civic and philosophical themes in the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian readers had grown unused to paying attention to such details as the harmony of the first series of syllables in a prose narrative. The story "Easter Night" functions as an evolving statement of Chekhov's artistic credo formulated in his peculiarly oblique way, as the secret manifesto of Chekhov's art.

Maxim D. Shraer

Two Poems on the Death of Akhmatova: Dialogues, Private Codes, and the Myth of Akhmatova’s Orphans

This essay will consider two poems, provoked by the same event—the death of A.A. Akhmatova on March 5, 1966. The first poem, Dmitrii Bobshev’s "Traurnye oktavy" (Funeral Octaves), was written in 1971 and appeared in Bobshev’s first published collection of verse Zitiania (Gapings) in 1979. The second, written by Josif Brodskii a year later, in 1972, was entitled "Pokhorony Bobo" (The Funeral of Bobo) and published in 1977 in his fourth collection, Chasti rechi (A Part of Speech). In 1960 Brodskii joined a literary group of young poets that had existed in Leningrad since 1956 within the literary society (lito) at the Dvoretz Kul’tury Promkooperatsii (Club of Industrial Cooperation) and included Il’ia Averbakh, Dmitrii Bobshev, Anatolii Naiman, Evgenii Rein, and David Shraer-Petrov. After the disintegration/transformation of the group (circa 1961) Bobshev and Brodskii, along with Naiman and Rein, gravitated to A.A. Akhmatova and remained closely associated with her until her death in 1966. For a number of years Bobshev and Brodskii fell under the powerful influence of Akhmatova’s personality and her poetry.

1 The poem was originally published in the 1974 collection Pamiati Anny Akhmatovoi (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1976).
2 The complete texts of both poems are provided in the Appendix. For simplicity’s sake, Bobshev’s eight-liners have been assigned Arabic numerals from 1 to 8.
3 It was later renamed Dvoretz Kul’tury Lensoveta (Club of Leningrad Soviet).
4 See David Shraer-Petrov, Dvric’ia i teni (New York: Liberty Publishing House, 1989) 66–134, 160–179, 210–222, 241–254, 273–283; Shraer-Petrov’s memoir, Dvric’ia i teni, is so far the most important published source of information about the history of the original group of five within Lito Promkooperatsii (popularly known as promka); what is hereafter referred to as “original group” consisted of five poets, Averbakh, Bobshev, Naiman, Rein, and Shraer-Petrov who perceived themselves as a separate literary unit within the larger formation of young writers, also members of the Lito Promkooperatsii. At different times, the membership of promka also included Vasili Aksenyov, Sergei Volf, Mikhail Erëmin, Aleksandr Kushner, Viktor Sosnora, Gennadii Ugreninov et al. The history of the original group yet remains to be written and currently exists in various bits and pieces of evidence such as published and unpublished memoirs, letters and accounts by both the principal actors and the witnesses of the Leningrad literary scene of the mid-late fifties-early sixties. Anatolii Naiman’s account of his years as Akhmatova’s secretary, Rasskazy o Anne Akhmatovoi (1989), contains no references to either the late Il’ia Averbakh, poet and

filmmaker, and David Shraer-Petrov, poet, novelist, and memoirist, or the transformation of the original group circa 1961. Making no mention of the Lito Promkooperatsii—Naiman’s poetic alma mater—his account thus ipso facto blurs the important literary-historical distinction between the original group of five within Lito Promkooperatsii and a later development, the so-called group of Akhmatova’s orphans (akhmatovskie siroty) which originated in 1961–62 to include Bobyshhev, Brodskii, Naiman and Rein. Parts of Naiman’s memoir distort and obfuscate historical facts, particularly the temporal framework of the events he reminisces about. In places, Naiman contradicts himself. For instance, he writes the following regarding the formation of the group: “Bobyshhev i Rein v 1953 godu [...] postupili v LENINGRAD rukovoditeli technologicheskii institut i izdavali on otdom fakultete [...]. Togda zhe v tek zhe institut postupila, no sobshhia s nimi tol’ko dvie osoby: cherez tri [note the temporal ambiguity—M.D.S.], kogo my uze prochno družili i v predstavlenii postoronnikh, a poetomu—vyrazhdno—i v svoim sobstvennom sostavliali literaturnuu gruppu, k nam prisoeedinilis Brodskii, on byl nemnogo moložhe nas [...]. Kak gruppu vospriminala nas i Akhmatova—[...]” (Novyi mir 1 [1989]: 198–99). A series of simple calculations yields the following: 1953+1=1954, the year when Naiman met Bobyshhev and Rein; 1954+3=1957; 1957–1958 are precisely the years of the highest activity of the Lito Promkooperatsii. At the same time, Naiman’s account contradicts Brodskii’s own account of his activity circa 1957 as quoted by Valentina Polukhina: “In 1957 [Brodskii was born in 1940 and is four years younger than Bobyshhev, Naiman, Rein, and Shraer-Petrov—M.D.S.] he joined the geologists: ‘I had some interest in geology—it gave me an opportunity to travel as widely as I could possibly wish. I covered quite a lot of the ground in the Empire. I saw lots of landscape. Then gradually I began to write.’ One day, finding himself in Yakutsk, Brosky discovered a slim volume of Baratynsky’s poetry in a bookstore: ‘When I read this book, it became clear to me that I had no business in Yakutsk, or with the experiment, that I knew and understand nothing else, that poetry was the only thing I understood’” (Valentina Polukhina, Joseph Brodsky: A Poet for Our Time [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990] 7). Thus, Brodskii could not possibly join the group around 1957 (“goda cherez tri” in Naiman’s text). In a later interview with Polukhina, Naiman is again ambiguous about the date of his first meeting with Brodskii: “ia dumaiu, chto eto bylo godu v 58-m, naverno. Tut mozhet byt oshibka v podgody” (Anatoli Naiman, “Interview with V. Polukhina,” Iosif Brodskii razmerom podlinnika. Shornik, postviščenov 50 let Polotskage [Tallinn: n.p.], “T27”). Other accounts of Brodskii’s early steps in poetry date his appearance in the literary circles of Leningrad as 1959–1960; see, for instance, Konstantin Kuz’minsky, The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry, vol. 2B (Newtonville: Oriental Research Partners, 1982) 303. Brodskii joined the original group of five no earlier than the fall of 1959, which is in full agreement with the date, offered by Rein in an interview with V. Polukhina in 1990. In the interview, Rein recalls his first meeting with Brodskii in the apartment of Efim Slavinsky; see “The Introduction of the Prosac into Poetry,” Brodskii Through the Eyes of His Contemporaries, ed. Valentina Polukhina (New York: Macmillan, 1992) 57. Another telling instance of Naiman’s self-contradicting emerges out of the Russian version of his 1989 interview with V. Polukhina. There, Naiman recalls that it was Rein who introduced Brodskii to him; see Iosif Brodskii razmerom podlinnika (Tallinn, n.p., 1990) 128. Then, how could Brodskii and Naiman have met before the fall of 1959 when Rein himself did not get to meet Brodskii before October, 1959? From the fall of 1959 until the spring of 1961, Shraer-Petrov—the Chairman of the Lito Promkooperatsii—served as military physician in Belorussia; Shraer-Petrov’s departure—along with Averbakh’s having already left for Sheksna near Vologda upon his graduation (from medical school 1958–1960)—largely contributed to the transformation of the original group of five. Beginning with 1960 Bobyshhev, Brodskii, Naiman and Rein were changing their literary orientation; their turning to Akhmatova laid foundations for a new, later formation, Akhmatova’s orphans (akhmatovskie siroty). Their rapprochement to Akhmatova marked a radical turn in the verse aesthetics of the young poets. Just how rapid the change of their poetic preferences really was—these poets started off with much vowing Khlenskii and Zhobotskii but now turned to Akhmatova’s predominantly classical forms and prosodies—becomes apparent, for instance, in the following passage from Naiman’s memoir. Naiman describes his first conversation with Bobyshhev when they shared their favourite poets and texts: “V vesennii solnechnyi den’, kogda ia i Bobyshhev vseye zagovori drug s drugom, mozhli peshkom po Zagorodnomu, Vladimirstomu, Lietunom, cherez Nevu, po Lesnomu, do mogo dela nedaleko ot Lanskoj, bespreryvno chitat sikhii, i esheh to chast postran’ v voroni, dochityvala ‘Fevral’ Bagriiskogo i na vybor iz ‘Ordy’ i ‘Bragi’ Tikhonova” (Novyi mir 1 [1989]: 190). The group of Akhmatova’s orphans emerged after Bobyshhev, Naiman and Rein, joined by Brodskii, replaced Averbakh, their old mentor, with a new mentor, Akhmatova. Neither Averbakh nor Shraer-Petrov chose to belong to the new group although both certainly had their independent entrance to enter Akhmatova’s circle; see, for instance, David Shraer-Petrov, “Belaia staia nad Finskim zalivom,” Druc’la i tevi (New York: Liberty Publishing House, 1989), 160–65. The desintegration of the original Lito Promkooperatsii group of five was not only prompted by circumstances (first Averbakh’s, and then, Shraer-Petrov’s two-year absence) but was also a result of growing aesthetic differences. At Averbakh’s funeral on January 12, 1986 in Moscow all the members of the original group—living and deceased—except Bobyshhev who had emigrated to the U.S.—gathered for the first time in many years. Naiman, Rein, and Shraer-Petrov all stood there around Averbakh’s coffin reminding the world and themselves of their shared past in poetry and of Averbakh’s role in the formation of their original group. 5 See, for example, M.M. Kratin’s recent anthology Ob Anne Akhmatovoi (Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1990).
Russian culture. While all poems on the death of Akhmatova may be seen as part of a larger funeral text, it is only in the case of “Funeral Octaves” and “The Funeral of Bobo” that we encounter what may be termed “funeral text of dialogue,” a unique textual space which emerges from a consecutive/simultaneous reading of the two poems and concerns itself with a set of problems created by the death of Anna Akhmatova, the poet and the person. Trying to understand the dialogue between the two poems depends largely upon decoding a number of private and semi-private codes contained in the texts and the (inter)textual space of dialogue. That in turn requires a close comparative analysis of the metric and stanzac structures of the two poems and their sound-and-image structure, as well as an inquiry into the way cultural history and its cultural myths inscribe themselves into the texture of the two poems.

Bobyshov’s “Funeral Octaves” consists of eight eight-liners, each bearing a title: “Golos” (Voice), “Vospominanie” (Recollection), “Portret” (Portrait), “Vzgliad” (Look), “Peremeny” (Changes), “Vse chetvero” (All Four), “Vstrecha” (Encounter) and “Slova” (Words). Each of the eight-liners or octaves, as Bobyshov so terms them, comprises at least two distinct moments in time, one preceding the other. In eight-liner 1, “Voice,” the moment of the past is that of Akhmatova’s recording her poetry; the moment of the present is that of Bobyshov’s playing a record with the poems of the already dead poet. In eight-liner 2, “Recollection,” the two moments are represented by the two different states of Bobyshov’s being, the one before Akhmatova’s death and the one after it. In eight-liner 3, “Portrait,” the moment of the past is represented by the

6 Hereafter all citations from the text of “Traurnye oktavy” are from Dimitrii Bobyshov, Zilazila (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1979) 56–60.
7 In fact, none of Bobyshov’s “octaves” is indeed an octave. In versification, an octave, otava rima, is solely an eight-liner with a rhyme scheme abababab and therefore three different rhymes (a, b, c) and not two as in Bobyshov’s “octaves”; also, an octave is usually written in five- or six-foot iambics, while “octave” 3 is in trochaic pentameter, “octave” 5— in dactylic tetrameter. Three of Bobyshov’s eight-liners, “Golos” (1), “Portret” (3), and “Slova” (8), belong to the type of otava siciliana or, simply, siciliana, an eight-liner which rhymes ababab. Siciliana is rather rare in modern Russian poetry. One of Bobyshov’s eight-liners, “Portret,” has a major predecessor, Blok’s famous “Mai zhetskii s belymi nochami...” (1908), written in trochaic pentameter and rhyming AbAbAbAb // CcCdCcCd. A, B, C here and hereafter stand for feminine rhymes, a, b, c for masculine. By calling his eight-liners “octaves” Bobyshov uses poetic licence: also, “Traurnye oktavy” is actually an octave of eight-liners, a highly deliberate poetic form.

10 See Litteraturnaia gazeta, September 15, 1971: 7; in the book edition of his memoir Naiman provides an account of the relationship between Bobyshov’s epigraph and Akhmatova’s poem, see Anatolii Naiman, Rasskazy o Annu Akhmatsoyi (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1989) 110.
11 Also note that within each of Bobyshov’s eight-liners diachrony is also preserved by two principal groups of means, grammatical and metrical. The grammatical means include the following: juxtaposing past tense forms of the verb with those of present or non-past, for example, in eight-liner 1 “zabolios,” peremolots’ vs. stencet, lavit’; in 2 zetkla, posmotel’ vs. sdvino, videl’ Vas... main bedat; in 4 ushla, skazal vs. reshit, puski prazdnotv, in 5 zashecila, zamenil vs. podadiet; in 6 wpil, prozerla vs. zakhotdkn, zhtin’... ne obratim; in 7 velela, vnes vs. l vot — ona; in 8 stikho vs. nemotvitvist. Among other grammatical means are such markers of the past and present as segodniaishche (vremia) vs. byloe (mgnovenie). togdnishni vs. tepershni (about the authorial subject), both in eight-liner 2. The metrical diachrony is supported by regular alternation of two rhymes within each
project is that of matching a set of present moments that form his present state of being with a respective set of moments from the past, both on the level of the eight-liner (part) and the poem (whole). Akhmatova’s death serves as the controlling agency in selecting and organizing the time and space of the poem.

Eight-liner 8 not only completes the diachronic chain of the poem, it also follows the rhyme scheme and meter of eight-liner 1. At the same time, the rest of the eight-liners are marked by a unique combination of their meters and their rhyme schemes, as can be seen in the following table:

### METER AND RHYME SCHEME IN BOBYSHEV’S “FUNERAL OCTAVES”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eight-liner</th>
<th>Meter</th>
<th>Rhyme scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Voice” (1)</td>
<td>iambic pentameter</td>
<td>AbAAbAb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Recollection” (2)</td>
<td>iambic pentameter</td>
<td>AbAAbA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Portrait” (3)</td>
<td>trochaic pentameter</td>
<td>AbAAbAb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Look” (4)</td>
<td>iambic pentameter</td>
<td>aBBAabB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Changes” (5)</td>
<td>dactylic tetrameter</td>
<td>AAbAAb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“All Four” (6)</td>
<td>iambic pentameter</td>
<td>aBBAabB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Encounter” (7)</td>
<td>iambic pentameter</td>
<td>AbbAAb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Words” (8)</td>
<td>iambic pentameter</td>
<td>AbAAbAb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the diachronic structural principle of the poem does not allow for a repetition of the meter-rhyme scheme combination in any of the eight-liners except 1 and 8. The function of each eight-liner is to create a poetic intonation that would express a unique past/present concurrence, and for that reason may not match with any other concurrences. In the case of 8, as has been suggested earlier, the diachronic chain is completed, and the coupled moments of the past and of the present are either the same as in eight-liner 1, or temporally contiguous with it.

Brodskii’s four-part lyrical poem “The Funeral of Bobo” follows the meter/rhyme scheme combination of the first quatrains of eight-liner 6 of

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13 This is, of course, a commonly occurring pattern in Russian versification as a whole; still, as I will demonstrate below, quatrains six of “Traurnye oktavy” communicates the most significant, the most compelling signal for Brodskii to be reacting to in “Pokhorony Bobo.”

14 Quatrain 1 of part 3 is one of the five instances in the poem when the past tense forms are used. But the effect of the dream process is that if remembered (as it is presented in the quatrains) it becomes a present-tense extension of the past, or past-in-the-present. Thus, “Segodnia mne prisnitos”, chto tezhu v svoei krovati. Tak ono i bylo” does not disrupt the synchronic organization of Brodskii’s poem: the time/lease of the poem (continuing present) is joined with the clock time of the extra- “Pokhorony Bobo” space. Similarly, in quatrains 2, part 1, stratos” of “Chto stratos” the perfective form connotes the present result of a past action/event, i.e. of Akhmatova’s death. In quatrains 1, part 4 we read: “Ty vsom byla, No, potom chto ty/ toper’ mertva, Bovo moia, ty stala/ nichem.” While stala connotes a present-moment result of a past action (much like stratos’), byla, like bylo of quatrains 1, part 3, provides the extra-temporal frame of the poem (along with sreda i chevreg).
peculiarity of the vowel o is that both its graphic shape and the shape of the mouth upon pronouncing it are round.

The first quatrain of part 1 is opened by the word Bobo. The phonetic pattern of roundness, set by the first word of “The Funeral of Bobo,” continues throughout the poem, its last word being slovo, again with a stressed o. While in the first quatrain of part 1 the chain Bobo – nedološ – prokolem – tol’ko does not seem to signal anything but sheer phonetic roundness, already in the second quatrain the sound-shape-image interactions begin. Two things occur. First, the round shape of o (and from quatrain 1 on 0 encodes Akhmatova’s persona) is inserted into the square frame: kvadraty okon. Second, answering the question about Akhmatova’s death (“Chto striaslos’?”) is compared to opening a tin can, empty inside (“pustuiu iznutri/otkroi zhestianku: ‘Vidimo, vot eto’”). Opening a tin can (a cylinder, round shape) parallels opening one’s mouth to utter round vowels (voi, a stressable word, retains its vocalic o-quality). Thus, the round-shaped emptinesses (“pustuiu iznutri zhestianku,” “vot eto”) signify the result of Akhmatova’s death and Brodskii’s despair over it. The next quatrain is opened by the word Bobo, the chain Bobo – belo – nochnoi brings us to part 2, the first quatrain of which also starts with Bobo, and further solidifies the sound-shape-image quality of the poem.

In line 2, quatrain 1, part 2, kvadraty okon are inserted into arok polukruzh'ia. The o phonetic chain continues: Bobo – strochke – okon – takoi – moroz – kol'. In quatrain 3 the roundness of the sound image of Akhmatova’s name Bobo (obraz here stands for Bobo) is further inserted into the symmetry of the right angles (“v nepovtorimoi perspektive Rossi”). The use of Rossi’s architecture into which the image of Akhmatova is inserted recalls the first quatrain of the poem. There also landmark of Petersburg’s architecture (“igloi admiraliteista”) is situated in the textual space next to the line that communicates the absence of consolation (“uteshat’sia nechem”). Quatrain 3 of part 2 is also exemplary in terms of the o-vocalism. All its four lines rhyme stressed ‘o’s: napered’ – moroz-lomonose – naoborot – Rossi.


16 One could even argue that the interaction in question starts as early as the title of the poem, “Pokhorony Bobo.”

17 A side projection of a tin can is also a rectangle and therefore we have another instance of inscribing a round emptiness into a system of right angles.

occurs again in the last line of quatrain 2: “i vozdukh vkhodit v komnatu kvadratom.” In quatrain 3 the roundness—emptiness correspondence, established in quatrain 2 of part 1, is utilized again: “I khochetsia ust’/slegka razzhav, proiznesiti ‘ne nado’./ Na verno posle smerti pustoto.” The proximity of the word pustoto further crystallizes the connection between Akhmatova’s death, emptiness, and roundness.

In part 4 the o-vocalism is represented by the following chain: Bobo – rozhno – Bobo – nozh no – Bobo – nevozmozhno – kherovo – pustoe – slovo. Two important finalizing moves take place in part 4. Firstly, Bobo, standing for Akhmatova and roundness in the poem, is connected directly with pustoto, the “emptiness word” par excellence: “Bobo moia, ty stala/nichem—tochnoe, gushtkom pustoto.” Despair and loss, communicated in quatrain 2 by “kruglye glaza,” and thus, round again, are intersected by the straight line of horizon: “vid gorizonta deistvuet, kak nozh.” That act belongs to the group of acts aimed at inscription of the poem’s various roundnesses into straight lines and right angles. (Recall, in quatrain 2: “Tvoi obraz budet, znau napered’/ v zharu i pri moroze-lomonose/ ne umen’shat’sia, no naoborot/ v nepovtorimoi perspektive Rossi.”) In quatrain 3 of part 4, the last quatrain of the poem, all the sound-shapes-images of roundness/emptiness are brought together: “Idet chetverg. Ia veria v pustoto./ V ne, kak v Adu, no bolee kherovo./ I novyi Dant skloniaetsia k listu’/ na pustoe mesto stavit slovo.”

Thus, the synchronic organization of “The Funeral of Bobo” centers the structure of the poem on a chain of unique metamorphoses of the sounds, shapes, and various images of roundness. Part 1 of the poem establishes links between roundness and despair/loss, caused by Akhmatova’s death, and assigns the above combination another spatio-emotional characteristic: emptiness. Part 2 continues the inscription of roundness into the right angles and straight lines of Petersburg architecture that begins in part 1. Part 3 continues the fusion of the various forms of roundness and emptiness in the poem that appear in parts 1 and 2. Quatrain 3 of part 3 and quatrain 2 of part 2 demonstrate close sound-shape-image correspondences. As indicated above, part 4 brings the metamorphoses of roundness/emptiness to their completion. As a whole, Brodskii’s poem offers the

18 Although the o in ne nado is unstressed and therefore loses the vocalic quality of a stressed o, the very act of describing opening one’s mouth falls in sync with the imagery of emptiness, while ‘ne nado’ communicates enormous despair. In addition to rendering roundness by means of stressed o-vocalism, “Pokhorony Bobo” contains a system of u-vocalism that I will not consider in this essay; there are 37 words with the vowel u in the text; the chains of u-words are parallel to the chains of o-roundness/emptiness; nul’ and ust’ are the two important points in the text where the two chains are joined (although, in the case of ust’, u does lose some of its vocalic quality, the shape of the orifice still remains the same).
following chains of associations, based on the principle of sound-shape-image roundness, amended by the addition of emptiness as a second spatial parameter:

Bobo — mertva — uteshat’sia nechem — kvadraty — okon — chto striastos’? — pustui iznutri ... zhestianku — Bobo — mertva — Bobo — mertva — grust’ — kvadraty — okon — prosehai — Bobo — Bobo — obraz; — v — perspektive Rossi — Bobo — mertva — nul’ — bez Bobo — vozdukh — kvadratom — Bobo — mertva — usta — pustota — mertva — Bobo — sgustkom pustoty — Bobo — mertva — kruglye glaza — vid gorizonta — Bobo — nevozmozhno — pustota — kherovo — listu — slovo. The last quatrain of the poem inscribes slovo into a sheet of paper, i.e., usually a plane, limited by four perpendiculars. The very act of inscribing slovo into the empty space of this non-round emptiness not only destroys the emptiness, but also signifies the emergence of a conclusion to the various acts of round and empty despair in “The Funeral of Bobo.”

The deeply syncronic organization of the poem lies in the fact that all the metamorphoses of the sound-shape-image complex, signifying and communicating Akhmatova’s death and its result, are spatial, but never temporal extensions of roundness/emptiness.

To return to Bobyshiev’s “Funeral Octaves,” whose diachronic structure was analyzed earlier in the essay, the transition from eight-liner 1 to eight-liner 8 is a temporal one; it consists of a series of past-present constructs, each of them establishing a connection between a certain point of Akhmatova’s past and of her present as they exist in Bobyshiev’s memory. From quatrains 1 of part 1 to quatrains 3 of part 2 the authorial subject of Brodskii’s “The Funeral of Bobo” makes a spatial transition of meaning without making a temporal transition. On the contrary, Bobyshiev’s “Funeral Octaves,” presents us with a series of temporal transitions while the meaning of what it communicates does not change, but rather saturates itself with layers of reminiscences. It is only natural in the light of the above distinction that the first two and the last two lines of Brodskii’s poem frame a nearly timeless textual space that provides an answer to the question about Akhmatova’s literary heir:

Bobo mertva, no shapki nedoloi. (1) Chem ob’iasnit’, chto uteshat’sia nechem. (2) I novyi Dant skloniaetsia k listu (47) i na pusto mesto stavit slovo. (48)

20 Characteristic is the use of the name Khanna in the poem. It most likely refers to Akhmatova’s sister-in-law Khanna Vul’fova Gorenko who lived in Riga and frequently visited Akhmatova; thus “Khanna! / Zdes’ molodye liudi k nam, vizgani...” are Akhmatova’s own words, molodye liudi k nam, vizgani... are in fact Akhmatova’s actual words becomes evident from Bobyshiev’s memoiristic essay “Akhmatovskie siroty,” published in 1984. Here is Bobyshiev’s account of his first visit to Akhmatova (together with E. Rein): “Otkryla dver’ ona sama [Akhmatova — M.D.S.]: — Khanna! — kriknula ona v glub’ kvartiry, Zdes’ molodye liudi k nam prishli...” see Dmitrii Bobyshiev, “Akhmatovskie siroty,” Russkata myst’ No, 3507, March 6 1984: 8. At the same time, the ecclesiastical context of the beginning of eight-liner 8 may suggest two more identifications, with Hannah the mother of Samuel from 1 Samuel and with (Anne) Hannah the mother of Virgin Mary. Since Anna is merely a Western version of the Hebrew Hannah, Khanna in Bobyshiev’s text also points to Akhmatova herself. Also, another Anna, the
Probably to compensate for the title-decoding dedication of his poem, Bobyshev incorporates a larger number of other private codes in his text.

In the 1979 Biblioteka poëta edition of Akhmatova’s poetry, her poem “The Fifth Rose” appears with a dedication, that encodes the name of Dmitrii Bobyshev: Dm. B-vu. The title of the poem figures in the first line of “Encounter” (eight-liner 7) in Bobyshev’s poem. The eight-liner narrates two encoded episodes that form a diachronic relationship. The first episode (the past moment) deals with Akhmatova’s asking Bobyshev for an epigraph from his poem for her “The Fifth Rose”: “Ona vevela me dla Platoi rozy/ epigrafom svoiu vprosita...” The second episode (the present moment) describes the publication of Akhmatova’s poem in a newspaper without the epigraph and Bobyshev’s name: “I vost—ona, ona v gazetnoi prozel/ Epigraf zhe—i vprosit po-albatros’i—kuda drug ustele—ne razykati.” In fact, Bobyshev’s poem is dated 1971, which suggests that the September 15, 1971 Literaturaia gazeta posthumous publication of Akhmatova’s poems, including “The Fifth Rose,” served as direct impetus to the creation of at least eight-liner 7 of “Funeral Octaves.” This, in its turn, illustrates the way Bobyshev’s poem records history (literary and political) and time. The title and the last stanza of “The Fifth Rose” (1963) both call upon an earlier poem by Akhmatova, “Posledniaia roza” (The Last Rose), dated 1962. The latter poem first appeared in the January issue of Novyi mir for 1963 under an epigraph from Brodski’s 1962 poem “A.A. Akhmatovi” (To A.A. Akhmatova). The epigraph reads: “Vy napishite o nas naiskosok.” Its author is disguised under the initials I.B. The Biblioteka poëta collection of Akhmatova’s verse prints neither the epigraph of “The Last Rose,” nor its source. In the case of Bobyshev, the situation is almost completely reversed: the newspaper publication does not have Bobyshev’s name, while the

communication, stand behind the dialogue between Brodskii’s and Bobyhev’s poems. While “Funeral Octaves” encodes “The Fifth Rose” and its connections with Bobyhev, Brodskii’s poem contains no references to “The Last Rose” or any other poem by Akhmatova. In the light of Iurii Lotman’s notion of minus-device, the absence of the above references may be seen as meaningful silence, i.e. as a silence answering Bobyhev’s use of Akhmatova’s poem and its aura in his poem. In the dialogue between the two poems Brodskii’s minus-device serves the synchronic and focused organization of “The Funeral of Bobo.” (As demonstrated above, until the very last quatrain the whole poem communicates one and only one emotional state: despair over Akhmatova’s death via a sound-shape-image system of different forms of roundness emptiness.) Any digression or reference (of the kind that Bobyhev makes on the subject of the epigraph in eight-liner 7 or Arsenii Tarkovskii’s funeral speech in eight-liner 42) is impossible within Brodskii’s highly structured and consistently mono-semantic poem.

“All Four,” eight-liner 6 of Bobyhev’s poem, carries a reference to four poets, whose names are encoded in the text as the diminutives from their first names: Osia for Iosif Brodskii, Tolia for Anatolii Naiman, Zhenia for Evgenii

...v cheredu utrat
zakhodiat Osia, Tolia, Zhenia, Dima
akhmatovskimi sirotami v riat.
Lish’ priamo, drug na druga ne gliadiat
chetyre stikhovotrs—a pобрatima.
Ix družbha, kak i zhizn’, ne obratima.

The term akhmatovskie siroty implies a genetic/hereditary relationship between the poetry/persona of the dead Akhmatova and the four poets who survive her. It is precisely the ambiguity of the term that resulted in its general misconception, and in the emergence of an obfuscatory literary/cultural myth. The myth presents the four poets “orphans” as starting their literary genealogy from Akhmatova. Akhmatova is presented as the only poetic mentor of the four poets although it is quite apparent—both from the early texts of the “four orphans” circa 1956–1960 and their memoirs and interviews—that long before meeting Akhmatova they had received a serious formal education in poetry (see beginning of the essay and, especially, fn. 4). How can we understand such a severe change in the aesthetic models of the would-be “Akhmatova’s orphans”? How did Bobyhev, whose literary idols during the Lito Promkooperatsii period were Khlebnikov and Zabolotski (Akhmatova’s animosity toward Zabolotski is well-known!), end up an Akhmatova orphan? Or consider Brodskii himself whose early poetry is saturated with the formal achievements of the Constructivists, Slusskii, Tsvetaeva, quite alien, it seems, to Akhmatova’s poetics.

The myth of Akhmatova’s orphans emerges from both versions of the

26 The term “obfuscatory myth” was used by Professor Stephen Walker of Rutgers University in his seminar on drama in the Spring of 1990. Professor Walker contrasted obfuscatory myths with Jung’s “compensatory myths.”
27 See Brodskii’s interview with Tomas Venclov: “Mne uzhasno nral’sia v molodoosti Bagritskii. Uzhaso nral’sia — men’she, chem Reim, naprimer, no dovo’no sti’no — Se’vinskii”; see “Chuvstvo perspektivy.” Strana i mir, 3 (45), 1988: 150.
relationship between Akhmatova and the four poets that "Funeral Octaves" intertwines. Akhmatova's death is perceived as 1) a great personal loss of an older friend of maternal stature by a group of younger friends: "ona ushla ot nas"; 2) a loss of a poet whose verse has deeply affected the poetry of Brodskii, Naiman, Rein, and Bobyshev: "chetyre stikhovortsa-pobratima/ Ikh druzhba, kak i zhizn', ne obratima". The salutary bridge between the two perceptions is created by the lines "zakhodiat Osia, Tolia, Zhenia, Dima/ akhmatovskimi sirotami v riadi." The latter lines are the locus of obsfuscation in the poem, and they most likely are the locus classicus of the whole confusion over akhmatovskie siroty. Its location in immediate proximity to both the very personal reference to the four poets (diminutives, semi-private codes, etc.) and the reference to poetry ("chetyre stikhovortsa") makes the term akhmatovskie siroty a highly loaded one. What does akhmatovskie siroty mean in Bobyshev's text? An allegorical rendition of the relationship between a matrilineal figure and four younger men? An indication of the existing literary, textual connections between the corpus of texts known as Akhmatova's oeuvre and the texts by Brodskii, Naiman, Rein, and Bobyshev? Does druzhba in the last line of eight-liner 6 refer to a personal friendship among the four young men, or to a literary camaraderie among the four poets? Bobyshev's text leaves it for us to interpret and to misinterpret. Having done so, the text proceeds to its final eight-liner ("Words") which offers an extremely pessimistic answer to the question about Akhmatova's heritage/legacy. The appearance of molodye liudi in line four of eight-liner 8 forms a connection between eight-liner 6 and eight-liner 8. Thus, "Teper' stikhom zvuchat' by nevozbranno/ no bez nee nemotstvuiut oni" can be read in four major ways: 1) as proclaiming a poetic dead-end for Akhmatova's four orphans; 2) as stating Bobyshev's own poetic crisis after the death of Akhmatova—the poem was written five years following Akhmatova's death; 3) as a conclusion to eight-liner 1 with its motif of the record and the shadow of Akhmatova's voice on it; 4) as a combination of all of the above. In any event, Bobyshev's poem via a series of past-present transitions communicates his great despair over the death of Akhmatova but does not nominate a literary heir to Akhmatova's poetic legacy.

Brodskii's poem "The Funeral of Bobo," written a year after Bobyshev's "Funeral Octaves" and forming an intricate dialogue with the latter, challenges Bobyshev's answer to the question about Akhmatova's legacy. Twice in his poem, Brodskii refers to an entity that seems to coincide with what Bobyshev calls akhmatovskie siroty.31 Both of the encoded references occur in the first half of the four-part poem; in quatrains 1 of part 1 we read: "My ne prokolem babochku igloi/ Admiraliteitsta—tol'ko izuvechim"; in quatrains 2 of part 2: "Nam za toboi posledovat' slabo,/ no i stoit' na meste ne pod sili." Already in the latter quote we can see a difference between the two positions. "Nam...slabo" literally means "we have not got the guts." Not having the guts, being incapable, refers to both following Akhmatova in her last journey, and continuing Akhmatova's poetic legacy. The reference to a particular tradition in Russian verse is present in an encoded form in quatrains 1 and 3, part 1 of Brodskii's poem. "Igloi admiraliteitsta" is a paraphrase of Pushkin's "admiralteiskaia igla" from the prologue to Mednyi vsadnik (The Bronze Horseman), "chernaiia voda/ nochnoi reki ne prinimaet snega" brings in the topic of Pushkin's duel at Chernaiia rechka.

That Brodskii responds, here and elsewhere, to Bobyshev's earlier poems by arguing with them, becomes evident from Bobyshev's poem "Ego zhe slovami" (In His Own Words, 1963). The latter is built as a dialogue with Pushkin incorporating Pushkin's "Na kholmak Gruzii lezhit nochnaia mgl..." (On the Hills of Georgia Lies the Night Dim...). The immediate reason for Brodskii's use of Pushkin's "admiralteiskaia igla" also has to do with Bobyshev's "In His Own Words": "Puskai ne skhozhi glinik i grani/ no s kholodom soshilis' puti tepla/ na kholmak Gruzii lezhit/ Admiraliteiskaia igla, NA KHOIMAL Gruzii LEZHIT NOCHNAIA MGLA...."32 The source of Brodskii's "my ne prokolem babochku igloi/ Admiraliteitsta—tol'ko izuvechim" also lies in Bobyshev's "In His Own Words": "i tonkaia izdakea igla, / kotorai prikalyvaet naspkeh/ chuzhoe serdtse na chuzhikh prostranstvakh, / kak motyl'ka, na gran' ego stola." Both "kak motyl'ka, na gran' ego stola" and "my ne prokolem babochku igloi" are in iambic pentameter. This, again, substantiates my thesis of the dialogic nature of Brodskii's response to Bobyshev's funeral poem. However, despite the metrical and imagistic proximity to Bobyshev's subtext, Brodskii's response, "my ne prokolem babochku igloi/ Admiraliteitsta—tol'ko izuvechim," reflects doubt about the very compatibility of the two traditions which began to dovetail each other when Bobyshev fell under Akhmatova's influence. "Iglo Admiraliteitsta" (Admiralty spire) here stands for the Pushkin-Akhmatova tradition in Russian poetry whereas the "babochka" (butterfly) which it pierces embodies the Khlebnikov-Zabolotskii tradition. It is the latter that

31 In the context of the dialogic exchange between the two poems equating Brodskii's my, nam and Bobyshev's nas, sirotami appears to be a legitimate operation.
32 In Bobyshev's poem the verses from Pushkin's "Na kholmak Gruzii lezhit nochnaia mgl..." are given in all caps, see Dimitri Bobyshev, Ziauliai 105.
shaped Bobyshev’s early verse and still remains his aesthetic foundation nowadays. The poetic dead-end depicted in “Funeral Octaves” was caused by the loss of the living connections with Akhmatova’s poetry after her death and Bobyshev’s incapacity for a harmonious synthesis of the two major traditions. The salutary myth of Akhmatova’s orphans, shaped by Bobyshev’s funeral poem, presents Bobyshev (and the other orphans) as stemming specifically from Akhmatova’s poetry and thereby masks the historical and textual realia of Akhmatova’s relationship with the would-be “orphans.”

To come back to the question of the place Brodskii outlines for himself within the Pushkin-Akhmatova tradition, “stoia’ na meste ne pod silu” suggests a powerful alternative to Bobyshev’s motif of a poetic dead-end after Akhmatova’s death. The references to Pushkin establish Akhmatova’s connection to the Russian poetic tradition going back to that poet. In addition to the Akhmatova-Pushkin connection encoded in the poem, parts 3 and 4 refer to a different poetic tradition, that of Dante. The last two lines of part 3 read: “Naverno posle smerti—pustota. / I veroiatnee, i khuzhe Ada” 33; the last quatrain of part 4 decodes the capitalization of “Ad” by introducing directly the author of The Inferno: “idet chetverg. / Ya verui v pustotu. / V nei, kak v Adu, no bolee kherovno. / I novyi Dant skloniaetsia k listu / i na pustoe mesto stavit slovo.” 34 Akhmatova took a great interest in Dante, of which Brodskii was certainly aware. Akhmatova’s poem “Dante” (1936) served as one of the subtexts to Brodskii’s “Dekabr’ vo Florentsi” (December in Florence, 1973), which is structured by a series of parallels between Brodskii’s fate and the fate of Dante, and, inevitable as it is at the interjection of the Brodskiesque and the Dantesque contexts, between Leningrad/Petersburg and Florence. 35 In the context of the

encoded references to Pushkin, novyi Dant not only refers to a direct heir to the poetic tradition of Dante, but also suggests Akhmatova’s being the staryi Dant of Russian poetry. 36 Thus, the “I” of the last lines of Brodskii’s poem is the sole heir of the great tradition of European poetry, represented by Dante, Pushkin, and Akhmatova. Note that Brodskii avoids using direct self-references and references to the group of Akhmatova’s orphans in the last two lines. It is neither nam or my, referring to Akhmatova’s orphans in the (con)text of the Bobyshnev-Brodskii dialogue, nor the clear ia of Brodskii’s poem—“Ia verui v pustotu.” Thus, responding to Bobyshev’s “no be ne nemostvui oni,” Brodskii’s poem nominates a new Dante who is to fill the post-Akhmatova poetic void with slovo. 37 Whether or not Brodskii is a new Russian Dante is a separate and legitimate question, demanding a separate forum for discussion. But while Bobyshev in “Funeral Octaves” assumes the role of heir to sorrow, Brodskii in “The Funeral of Bobo” makes a claim to being heir to poetry. 38

In summary: Bobyshev’s “Funeral Octaves” (1971) and Brodskii’s “The Funeral of Bobo” (1972) present the reader with a unique funerary text of poetic dialogue that occurs simultaneously on a number of levels. 39 While Bobyshev’s poem consists of eight eight-liners that are marked by a different combination of meter and rhyming patterns, Brodskii adopts the meter/rhyme scheme combination of the first four lines of Bobyshev’s eight-liner 6 and follows it consistently. While

36 Barbara Heldt writes on the subject of Bobyshev’s “Traurige oktav” in connection with Dante: “Bobyshev’s ‘Funeral Octaves’ pay tribute to the woman who was able to connect the younger Leningrad poets (Bobyshev calls them ‘Akhmatov’s orphans’) to the poets of the prerevolutionary age in Russia and all ages outside it—to Dante, for example.” (Barbara Heldt, “The Other Worlds of Dmitri Bobysev,” WLT 58[1]: 28) However, in the poem, Bobyshev, unlike Brodskii, does not make any connection between Akhmatova’s orphans (or one of them) and Dante via Akhmatova.

37 I realize how loaded the word slovo is; the discussion of golos (Bobyshev) vs. slovo (Brodskii), speaking vs. writing, and a number of Biblical references in both poems calls for a separate inquiry. Suffice it to say here that Brodskii’s insistence upon the singularity of slovo, the last word both in his poem and in poetry contradicts Bobyshev’s plurality of the words of sorrow in his last eight-liner, “Slova.”


39 My essay has left unaccounted a number of interesting small-scale dialogues; for example, Bobyshev’s “Da leto vyzhli pristavit’ by k vsiku/ kogda v razlade zhizni, i net spasenia” and Brodskii’s “ko’l’ ubryut’ to pust’iz ognestrel’nogo oruzh’ja” attract immediate attention.
diachrony serves as a main organizing principle of Bobyshiev's poem, a synchronic principle underlies the structure of Brodskii's poem. While each of Bobyshiev's eight-liners creates its own poetic intonation and its own poetic microcosm, all twelve quatrains of Brodskii's poem communicate one poetic intonation. While each eight-liner in Bobyshiev's poem celebrates an autonomous system of imagery, Brodskii's 12 quatrains are centered on a single principle: the sound-shape-image of roundness/emptiness. While Bobyshiev's poem mourns the defeat of authorial time by historical time, Brodskii's poem creates a nearly-timeless textual space that transends despair into a new self-awareness. While Bobyshiev's poem contains a number of references to Akhmatova's poetry, and to his biography and the way in which it is inscribed into Akhmatova's biography, Brodskii's silence may be interpreted as aminus-device. Finally, while Bobyshiev's poem gives a pessimistic answer to the question about Akhmatova's poetic heritage/legacy, Brodskii's poem nominates a successor to the poetic tradition that Akhmatova carries into the second half of the twentieth century.

By means of a number of private and semi-private codes both poems inscribe literary, cultural, and political history into their texts. The ultimate result of the dialogue between “Funeral Octaves” and “The Funeral of Bobo” is that the intertextual structures in Bobyshiev's poem become intratextualized in Brodskii's poem. Having once belonged to the same literary group and having both contributed to the formation of the literary/cultural myth of Akhmatova's orphans, Dmitrii Bobyshiev and Iosif Brodskii represent opposing tendencies in modern Russian poetry.  

APPENDIX:
(The eight-liners of Bobyshiev's poem have been assigned numbers from 1 to 8.)

ТРАУРНЫЕ ОКТАВЫ
Памяти Аны Ахматовой

ГОЛОС (1)
Забылось, но не всё перемололось: огромно-трубный и грустный, в разлуке с собственной горечью, голос от новой муки стонет под игой.
Не горько, но безжалостная полнота сейчас, теперь вот ловит миг былой.
И заунывающей резко волос, но только нет от голоса со мной.

ВОСПОМИНАНИЕ (2)
Зазвесь время так и влечет даровое... Куда его прикажете девать, сегодняшнее? Как добыть опять из памяти мгновение живое?
Тогдаший и теперьший — нас двое, и — горькая двойная благодарность вас вижу Вас, и я вспоминаю вспять сквозь эти слёзы в рядуное бывшее.

ПОРТРЕТ (3)
Затянула рука сердечной болью...
Как Вы посмотрели навсегда
из того мгновения на волю
в этот вот текущий миг, сюда!
В памяти я этот облик садью
с тем, что знал в позднейшие года.
Видеть Вас посмертою вдруго,
Вас не видеть — вот моя беда.

ВЗГЛЯД (4)
С мольбой на лбу, в кладбищенском лесу
в день грустный и сырой, зимне-весенний
она ушла от нас к корням растений,
туда, в подпочву, к мерзлому песку.
"Кто сползает решет, — сказал Арсений, —
пускай представит глаз её тоску".
Да, этот взгляд приставай бы к виску,
когда в разладе жизнь, и нет спасенья.

39 This paper was originally presented to Professor Vladimir E. Alexandrov (Yale University) for his Proseminar in Russian Literature in the Fall, 1990. An earlier version of the paper was read at the AATSEEL Conference in San Francisco in 1991. In May, 1993 it was also given as a lecture at the Faculty of Philosophy of Charles University (Prague). In November, 1993 a different version was given as a lecture at the Department of Modern Slavonic Studies of the University of Leeds. The author wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance of the following colleagues who have commented on the several drafts of this paper: Mikhail L. Gasparov, Hilary Fink, Michael J de K Holman, Susan Seigas, Edward Stankiewicz, Miluše Zadražilová. Special thanks to CSP's anonymous readers.
ПЕРЕМЕНЫ (5)

Холмы песчаный заснежил кручка,
Два деревянных скрестились обруча;
Их заменили — железо прочнее.
На перекладину села голубка,
Но — упорхнула курица... Бег с ней!
Степи сложили из плоских камней.
Всё погребенье мимически-жутко
Знак подаёт о добыче своей.

ВСЕ ЧЕТВЕРО (6)

Закрыл глаза, я выпил первым яд.
И, в кладбищенском кресте гвоздика,
Душа прозрела: в черепу утрат
Заходят Ося, Толя, Жена, Дима
Ахматовские сироты в ряд.
Лишь прямо, друг на друга не глядят
Четыре стихотворца — поэтами.
Их дружба, как и жизнь, не обратима.

ВСТРЕЧА (7)

Она велела мне для Пятой розы
Эпиграфом свою строку вписать.
И мне бы — что с Шошаровым ей мерить,
А я — о превращениях албатроса
Неправдам винец в её тетрадь.
И вот — она, она в газетной прозе!
Эпиграф же — и впрямь по-албатросы —
Куда вдруг улетел — не разыскать.

СЛОВА (8)

Когда горит — алтарной частью храма,
Тогда слова Святых Даром сродни.
И даже самое простое: “Хвоя!"
Здесь молодые люди к нам, взгляни...”
Встает магически, полёт благоухает.
Всё стихи под разном в марте в дни.
Теперь всем звучать бы невзрачно,
Но не всё немотствуют они.

1971


ТВОРИТ ПОБОШО

1

Бобо мёртва, но шаги недолой.
Чем объяснять, что утешаться нечем.
Мы не прохолаем бабочку иглой,
Адмиралтейства — только изувечим.

Квадраты окон, сколько ни смотри
По сторонам. И в качестве ответа
На „Что страхлося“ пустую изнутри
Открытой железнку: „Видимо, вот это“.

Бобо мертва. Кончается среда.
На улицах, где не найдёшь ночлега,
Белым-белая. Лишь черная вода
Ночной реки не принимает снега.

2

Бобо мертва, и в этой строчке грусть.
Квадраты окон, арок полукружь.
Такой мороз, что коль убьют, то пусть
Из огнеострого оружья.

Проси, Бобо, прекрасная Бобо.
Слезы к лицу разрезанному сыну.
Нам за тобой последовать слабо,
Но и стоять на месте! Не под силу.

Твой образ будет, знаю наперёд,
В жару и при морозе-ламоне
Немучиться, но наоборот
В неповторимой перспективе Росси.

3

Бобо мертва. Вот чувство, дележу
Доступное, но скользкое, как мел.
Сегодня мне пришлось это увидеть,
В своей кровати. Так оно и было.

Сорви листок, но дать переправы:
Нуля открывает перечень утрат.
Сны без Бобо напоминают явь,
И воздух входит в комнату квадратом.

Бобо мертва. И хочется, уста
Слегка разжав, произнести „не надо“. 
Наверно, после смерти — пустота.
И вероятнее, и хуже Ада.
The First (and Only) Year of the May 3 Constitution

Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, a young deputy elected to parliament in 1788, dashed off his political comedy, "The Deputy’s Return" for the 1790 Fall election campaign. Already well-known as an advocate of radical social and political reform, Niemcewicz depicted the romance of a hero from a reform-minded noble family of modest means with a heroine from a much richer, politically conservative, noble family. The prospective father-in-law, Stanislaw Sapieha (Sir Chatterbox) agreed to the young couple's engagement, after considerable discussion about Poland's future direction, on condition that his future grandson receive a traditional education.¹ The magnate had come to see that old-fashioned values could be maintained in a reformed system, while the son-in-law accepted the continuation of tradition within reform. Niemcewicz intended his comedy "to ridicule all...outmoded prejudices" of traditional patriotism, but, like other reformers, he enthusiastically endorsed the compromise solution to Poland's problems that was soon embodied in the Constitution of May 3, 1791 and the supplementary legislation passed in succeeding months.

The compromise nature of the May 3 constitution has often been obscured in Polish popular rhetoric since the constitution offered a valuable symbol for developing patriotic and democratic traditions throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Historians have long understood the constitution's imperfections, but the reasons for its limitations have escaped analysis until recent decades. Although that analysis is not yet complete, enough new archival research has appeared to provide a revised account of the May 3 system as it actually functioned in its only year of existence before Polish opponents destroyed it by inviting Russian military intervention. Without the partitions, that system would have governed Poland for at least one generation.

Analysis of the May 3, 1791 Constitution occupies a central place within Polish political and historical consciousness, together with the causes of the Polish Partitions in general, as the French Revolution plays a central place in French consciousness. May 3 celebrations became an annual political ritual in Polish emigre communities in the nineteenth century and continue to the present

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ARTICLES

The Faces of Mr.Cogito
George Gomori
1

The Notion of the Road in The Twelve Chairs and The Golden Calf by I. Ilf and E. Petrov
Boris Briker
13

Chekhov’s “Easter Night” and the Ornate Style
Natalia Pervukhina
29

Two Poems on the Death of Akhmatova: Dialogues, Private Codes, and the Myth of Akhmatova’s Orphans
Maxim D. Shrayev
45

The First (and Only) Year of the May 3 Constitution
Daniel Stone
69

Part One: Origins, 1917–1922
David W. McFadden
87

The Polish Club, Badeni, and the Austrian Parliamentary Crisis of 1897
Philip Pajakowski
103

DOCUMENTS

A Rediscovered Source on Bakunin in 1861:
The Diary of F.P. Koe and
[Excerpts from the Diary of F.P. Koe]
Robert M. Cutler
121