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Radiating Nests: Metalingual Tropes in Poetry of Exile

THERE IS IN MODERN POETRY a distinct class of poems characterized by the presence of lexical units from more than one language. Most of these poems are associated with some form of exilic displacement and thematically dwell upon that experience. Though often considered as an exceptional case of poetic discourse, interlingual poems of exile raise important challenges to conventional views about the relationship between language and poetry. First, they question the underlying assumption that poetic language is an essentially monolingual idiom independent of social and historical developments. Second, they present a problem for existing literary theoretical models, which usually deal with such highly atypical texts by bracketing at least one of the constituent features: either exile or poetry. Would it be possible to construct a form of poetic discourse that accommodates diverse linguistic codes in a way that would reflect fully the duress of the exilic context while still presenting a verbally coherent and aesthetically relevant response to that context? In order to address this question, in the first part of the article I revisit some of the most prominent theories of poetic language to assess their explanatory value for interlingual poetic sequences. Specifically, I claim that Roman Jakobson's theory of equational relations, if applied with some readjustments, may show how any interlingual sequence projects a derivative metalanguage with different codes united in an overarching metaphoric nexus. The second part asks whether this enforced code switching leads to images that are specific to the metalingual situation. While the core text in my analysis is Miloš Crnjanski's "Lament over Belgrade," I also examine other instances of exilic interlinguality in poems by Ovid, Tsvetaeva, Brodsky, and Milosz. I argue that the apparent rhythmic and syntactic disparity in "Lament over Belgrade" and other code switching poems is countervailed by metaphors of outsideness that, on the one hand, project an imagined metalanguage and, on the other, reflect the human trauma of enforced displacement.

Interlinguality and the Language(s) of Poetry: Jakobson's Theory Revisited

The problem of interlinguality reaches to the very core of Modernist poetics. In an early review essay on T.S. Eliot, Conrad Aiken excludes from his otherwise

favorable appraisal of *The Waste Land* all verses written in languages other than English: "We could dispense with the French, Italian, Latin, and Hindu phrases—they are irritating. But when our reservations have all been made, we accept *The Waste Land* as one of the most moving and original poems of our time" (202). In Aiken's view, the expatriate poet's shifts from one language to another do not contribute in any sense to the overarching impression of the fragmentariness of modern life and classical tradition. These shifts are therefore hardly more than irrelevant and idiosyncratic clutter in Eliot's poetic texture. However, depending on the interpretative standpoint, Eliot's linguistic medley may have different implications. For the striking thing about Aiken's statement is that in dismissing interlinguality he denounces the very same "kaleidoscopic confusion" that he praises on the level of the poem as a whole (201).

That Aiken found polyglot verses in Eliot's poem so irksome is all the more surprising given that the most influential poetical and intellectual programs of the twentieth century decisively favored linguistic diversity. In "A New Type of Intellectual: The Dissident," Julia Kristeva argues for the emancipating value of exile and specifies language as one of the key symbolic fields that have to be estranged: "How can one avoid sinking into the mire of common sense, if not by becoming a stranger to one's own country, language, sex and identity? Writing is impossible without some kind of exile" (298). There is in this exuberant quote an unexpected echo of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, in which Stephen Daedalus claims that he will try to "fly by" the nets of nationality, language, and religion and express himself by means of silence, exile, and cunning (231, 281). Like Joyce, Kristeva conceives of exile in the archetypal Modernist way—as a prerequisite for whatever there is of value in human verbal creativity.[1] There is, meanwhile, another trope of unhomeliness in Modernist perceptions of language, one according to which the very act of signification represents a trespass in a foreign land. The world we once dully tried to objectify through the use of symbolic substitutes has changed its aspect: it cannot house us anymore. Or, as Rilke acknowledged in "The Duino Elegies" ("Duineser Elegien"): "wir nicht sehr verläßlich zu Haus sind / in der gedeuteten Welt" (24; "we don't feel very securely at home / in this interpreted world," 25). Therefore, the metaphoric idea of some form of spatial outsideness remains central to understanding the relationship between language and poetry. If this is so, then interlingual switches in poetry, such as those epitomized by Eliot's *The Waste Land*, do not represent aberrance from a norm but an apposite field for the observation of the inner dynamism of language in poetry. By a similar token, the poetry of historical exile, rather than the poetry of imaginary displacement, represents the most likely context in which such interlingual switches are generated.

If we dismiss the view expressed by a few critics that foreign words are mere rhetorical ornament or an irritating supplement to this or that poem, there remain two types of arguments with which literary theorists have addressed the problem. Both rely upon—or more precisely, intentionally embed—the outsideness as a heuristic trope. The first argument dwells on the alienating and at the same time cohesive role of foreign words in poetic discourse. The main catalyst for such an approach was the early Formalist concept of *остранение*. Etymologically derived

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[1] For other Modernist articulations of this trope, see Bertolt Brecht's poem "Die Auswanderung der Dichter" (Brecht 14) and Danilo Kiš's essay "Variations on Central European Themes" (112–13).

from the substantive *страна* (country), it suggests that poetic language incurs some form of existential displacement that is reflected in both the perception of the object represented and the means of its representation. In his seminal paper "Art as Technique" Viktor Shklovsky places examples of poetic interlinguality taken from classical and medieval literary texts side by side with stylistic intricacies gleaned from more recent poems by Pushkin and Khlebnikov in order to show that a wilfully tortuous and difficult poetic speech inevitably accompanies artistic perception: "According to Aristotle, poetic language must appear strange and wonderful; and, in fact, it is often actually foreign: the Sumerian used by the Assyrians, the Latin of Europe during the Middle Ages, the Arabisms of the Persians, the Old Bulgarian of Russian Literature" (22). Although Shklovsky's argument regarding multilingualism did not exercise a direct influence on literary criticism in the West, there is an important sequel to his view in George Steiner's discussion of modern poetry in his book *After Babel*. Steiner argues that interlingual transfers have partly taken over the role once fulfilled by meter and rhyme. Thus, what distinguishes such texts as T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* from earlier forms of poetry is the emphasis on the processes of translation as a new cohesive force in poetic diction (175–78).[2] As exemplified (albeit somewhat differently) by Shklovsky and Steiner, this first theoretical approach to interlinguality thus ambiguously involves both fissure and bond. On the one hand, the poetic word is irreversibly divorced from the word in everyday use; on the other hand, owing to analogies in semantic systems, the word belonging to one language is conceived of as related to components, as well as to the whole, of another language. The very same interlinguality that secures a distinctively rough, defamiliarized perception of the text also generates a coherent poetic diction.

Those who have recourse to the second type of argument stress the disaggregating potential of the foreign word, its precious role in transcending any immanent and coherent "meaning" in a text. This view is epitomized by Mikhail Bakhtin and his circle, for whom the concept of *вненаходимость* defines the outsideness that is irreducible to any singular position in space, time, and culture (Bakhtin, "Response" 7). In his essay "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse" Bakhtin distinguishes between *heteroglossia*, the general disposition of language to break along ideological lines into mutually opposed formations, and *polyglossia*, the coexistence and interanimation of different languages in the specific historical conditions of the contact and clash of cultures. Polyglossia, as practiced in Hellenism, in Ancient Rome, and in the Orient, is understood to be historically prior and preparatory to the heteroglot demise of a unitary language that paved the way for the modern novel: "But this speech diversity achieves its full creative consciousness only under conditions of an active polyglossia. Two myths perish simultaneously: the myth of a language that presumes to be the only language, and the myth of a language that presumes to be completely unified" (*Dialogic* 68). In such an agonistic optic, not all genres fare equally, and poetry, with its peculiar focus on private and uniform verbal idioms, becomes a major force of monoglossia. Even if some poems allow a limited degree of ideological and interlingual otherness, Bakhtin tells us in "Discourse in the Novel," it is not because they bring the inner possibilities of poetic language to fruition. In fact, it is precisely the opposite: they strike us as heteroglot

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[2] For the aesthetic background of Shklovsky's and Steiner's argument within the Formalist theories of poetic language, see Todorov's "Three Conceptions of Poetic Language" (130–35).

because their authors wisely give up the pursuit of the most extreme stylistic aspirations of poetic language (*Dialogic* 287). Ironically, these authors are redeemable because they are not poets enough. The polyglossia that for both Shklovsky and Steiner functions as a remarkable and distinctive feature of poetic language becomes for Bakhtin the vehicle for dismantling that very category.

To be sure, both approaches remain emphatically affirmative in their view of interlingual concatenations. However, it is equally obvious that both are premised on certain unbending restrictions when evaluating the various contexts in which interlinguality may arise. On the one hand, in his focus on the differential fabric of poetry, Shklovsky completely excludes the incidental everyday template he calls *быт*. As a result, if we follow his line of reasoning, we will fail to observe that it is precisely this crude social reality—individual exile and collective migrations—that gives rise to language interaction and, consequently, to at least some of the periodic shifts in verbal idiom. On the other hand, when stressing the sociohistorical mediation in heteroglossia, Bakhtin excludes poetry, as an artificially enclosed verbal microcosm, from that realm. This exclusion is surprising in that it does not follow from the premises of Bakhtin's theory as strictly as Shklovsky's elimination of *быт* follows from the early Formalist views on art as a peculiar mode of cognition and expression. It is likely that Bakhtin chose to consider poetry in a rather narrow sense—that is, as a utopian project of poetic language that is torn between neoclassicist and neoromantic stylistic modes. The last, though not the least, difficulty pertains to both arguments equally. Namely, Shklovsky's and Bakhtin's self-confident inclusiveness has led to a certain abstractness in their conclusions. The problem is not just that Shklovsky and Bakhtin have not raised the question of how the difficulties in poets' acquisition of a second language are reflected in their poetic texts. At a more fundamental level, the two theorists fail to take into account the fact that, when exposed to languages other than their own, poets develop verbal strategies unique to their own experience rather than follow a predictable pattern of creativity.

Other approaches that for various reasons do not consider poetic interlinguality may nevertheless offer valuable insights into this literary phenomenon. This is certainly the case with the crosscutting axes of selection and combination of the Structuralist linguistic model, as put forward by De Saussure (122–27) and applied by Jakobson ("Two Aspects of Language" 95–114). For the sake of clarity, let us consider only Jakobson's set of concepts. At the surface level, his model seems to have little to do with social contexts or, for that matter, exile. However, in his book *On Czech Verse* he employs, somewhat surprisingly, social event as an explanatory metaphor that captures the way in which poetic language is independent of external context: verse "is an organized violence of poetic form over language."[3] In the later articulations of his position, Jakobson never excludes contexts and functions, including the referential one; he simply hierarchizes them according to the dominant principle of organization.[4] How, then, do Jakobson's categories accommo-

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[3] "Теории безусловного соответствия стиха духу языка, непротивления формы материалу, мы противопоставляем теорию организованного насилия поэтической формы над языком" (*Selected Writings* 2:15).

[4] In his text "What Is Poetry?" Jakobson insists that "both the domain of art and its relationship to the other constituents of the social structure are in constant dialectical flux" (*Selected Writings* 749–50).

date interlingual poetry in its double capacity as both a consequence of spatial displacement and a form of hermeneutic displacement?

First, there is in any interlingual poetic practice a mental component that is observable through the paradigmatic (selection) axis Jakobson employs. Through a conscious mediation between, and the unconscious interference of, two or more codes, the poet's selection of words negotiates the relations of equivalence and opposition between the elements of these codes. In Keats's ballad "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," for instance, the eerie lady from faraway is euphemistically referred to by her French appellation, but her own words, though experienced as foreign, are reported as if they were pronounced in a genuine English utterance: "And sure in language strange she said, / 'I love thee true'" (Keats 351). Instead of the possible lines "Je t'aime vraiment," the code is displaced and the message is communicated in English. It is of course true that the displacement in Keats's ballad is an oneiric one, but it is representative of the hermeneutic processes of substitution and transference by which authors constitute their discourse. In the interlingual lexical store, words and their semantic and auditive templates commute, in two senses of the word: they travel from one unstable context to another and they are mutually interchangeable. In a broad sense, then, interlingual selection in the poetry of exile involves translation as a metaphoric textual journey and, vice versa, geographical migration as a template for, and a form of, cross-cultural translation (see Bassnett).

However, in interlingual poetry, not everything is translation—the quest for commutable words and values. There are also combinatory developments laid down along what Jakobson calls the syntagmatic axis. While scrutinizing languages for shared or opposed meanings, the poet also makes radical differentiations among them: through intentional code switching, lexical and syntactic units of different languages are combined and adhere to one another within the concrete chain of the poetic discourse. Consider, for example, the coda of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* with its embedded quotations from texts written in multiple codes (Dante's *Purgatorio*, the anonymous *Pervigilium Veneris*, and de Nerval's *El Desdichado*): "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down / *Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina / Quando fiam uti chelidon*—O swallow swallow / *Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie*" (67). The division of this string of verses into sequences written in Italian, Latin, French, and English superimposes a series of boundaries on these verses, leading to a marked alternation of rhythm and melody as well as unexpected caesural effects. Thus, while paradigmatic self-translation highlights the continual aspects of the journey metaphor, syntagmatic code switching frames the journey as discontinuous boundary crossing.[5]

Finally, there is in interlingual poetry an analogy to Jakobson's famous assertion that the poetic function of language "*projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination*" ("Linguistics and Poetics" 3:27). There is in each poem that features more than one linguistic code an overarching set of

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[5] Tzvetan Todorov's rendition of Bakhtin's вненаходимость as "exotopie" (*Mikhail Bakhtine* 155–56) is a highly revealing example of interlingual equations in scholarly discourse. It at once establishes the semantic equivalence through translation (the concept of geographic and symbolic outsideness) and involves a linguistic displacement (the Russian neologism rendered into a Greek coinage and then appended by a French suffix). When using this concept in the present essay, I thus refer both to its underlying metaphoric value and to its performative interlingual effect.

interactions that equalizes and antagonizes the different parts of the text. In her hauntingly probing poem "Новогоднее" ("New Year's Greetings"), for example, Marina Tsvetaeva switches from Russian to German to invoke the memory of the recently deceased Rilke: "Уж не спрашиваешь, как по-русски / Nest? Единственная, и все гнезда / покрывающая рифма: звезды" (110; "Why do you no longer ask what's the Russian for / 'Nest'? There's one rhyme for all havens [literally, "nests"]: / Heaven [literally, "stars"],"111).[6] Here, the transfer is observable on both metrical and semantic levels: as a rhyme, the star rounds off the etymological identification of the German "Nest" and the Russian "гнездо"; as a symbol, the stars are said to cover with their poetic light all lexical nests in every language.

To sum up my argument to this point: although Shklovsky's model opens up the possibility of analyzing the properly poetic dimension of interlinguality, it also rules out consideration of context-specific socio-historical situations (including exile) that generate interlinguality; Bakhtin's philosophy of language enables us to analyze interlinguality in terms of its being conditioned by, and conditioning in its turn, socio-historical contexts (including exile), but excludes poetry, which Bakhtin views only as an expression of monolingual consciousness; and Jakobson's model enables some degree of the analytic discrimination neglected by Shklovsky and vaguely metaphorized by Bakhtin. If my application of Jakobson's argument seems to push it beyond what it can strictly yield—that is, beyond a structural inquiry into the functions of language—it is important to grasp his concepts of selection and combination in their broad heuristic potential—as mental operations that organize experience—in the same way Jakobson himself does in "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances." In this essay, Jakobson attaches a foundational value to the principles of selection and combination, placing them simultaneously at the core of two aphasic disorders, two key rhetorical figures, and two opposing stylistic tendencies in literary history. Selection and combination are of equal importance for understanding linguistic identities in exile: translation engages a mnemonic chain to mediate what is present and what is absent, and code switching creates a chain of speech out of differential units of meaning (cf. Ascher).

However, Jakobson's model presents its own difficulties for the analysis of interlingual poems. On the one hand, Jakobson strictly limits the realm of selection and combination to the signs of the same code (a given language). On the other hand, he explicitly places the relations of similarity and contiguity at the very core of any poetic text. Does this suggest that under the principles of Jakobson's theory interlingual poems are to be considered as anomalous and even as non-poetry? If an interlingual poetic text is understood as a case of *parole*, then it is obvious that the model is premised on the assumption of a pervasive *langue* the rules of which would provide the systemic context for the relations of similarity and contiguity. In the case of interlingual poems such a metalinguistic system cannot be identified with any of the living spoken languages. If there were such a metalinguistic system, it would be akin to Tsvetaeva's "angelic" language, which transcends and reconciles her Russian and Rilke's German (Tsvetaeva 110); Remizov's splendid illu-

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[6] In this quotation, the pair "haven/Heaven" is the translator's inventive though not entirely accurate rendition of the Russian "гнезда/звезды" (nests/stars).

minations that arise above his ever-diminishing paragraphs in Russian and French (Friedman 367–92); or perhaps Benjamin's "pure" language, "a tensionless and even silent depository of the ultimate secrets for which all thought strives" (Benjamin 259). However, it is precisely because of its being beyond the grasp of conceptual cognition that such a possibility was never envisaged by Jakobson. In "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" he argues that each language, as a system *sui generis*, implies a metalingual function that surveys and redefines that language *from within* and that excludes a metalanguage that would complement it *from outside* (2:262–63; cf. "Le métalangage d'Aragon" 148–54). Of course, one may respond by claiming that it was not important for Jakobson to incorporate interlinguality, since that was not, after all, his goal. Nevertheless, once we have granted interlingual poems poetic quality under Jakobsonian terms, we commit ourselves to the corollary claim that such poems involve certain constituents that create metalingual paradigmatic symmetries and anti-symmetries as a *tentative*, if not as an underlying, function.

Another difficulty in applying Jakobson's model to interlingual poems consists in the fact that the working field of the principle of equivalence is circumscribed mainly by rhythmical factors (intonation, syllabic form, rhyme) and grammatical categories (phonology, morphology, syntax). However, such repetitions have very different implications in monolingual and interlingual poems. Not only have many interlingual poems proven to be Modernist verbal constructs committed to free verse, but also, on a more fundamental level, the principle of equivalence cannot connect the poetic units from different languages either by similarity or by contrast because each of these languages commands its own range of prosodic and syntactic templates. In macaronic passages of pre-Modernist poetry the disjunctive effect of foreign words and phrases may have been concealed by metrical patterns and rhymes. In Modernist poetry, however, their differential quality looms large. Consider the following lines of Czeslaw Milosz's *Gdzie wschodzi słońce i kędy zapada* (*Where the Sun Rises and Where It Sets*):

> *Alpejska gwiazda spadająca, Alpine Shootingstar*
> *(Dodecatheon Alpinum)* (99)

Although there are some *intralingual* phonological and rhythmical repetitions, there is no corresponding *interlingual* link between Polish, English, and Latin designations of the flower. Moreover, even when two languages share the same system of versification, the actual meters may be entirely different in their effect. Likewise, in most cases the systems of grammatical categories do not fully overlap for any two languages: some languages have definite and indefinite articles, others have perfective and imperfective verbal forms; some have declination, and some do not; some have two grammatical genders, and some have three or more, and so on. Therefore, if Jakobson's theory is to have any validity for the analysis of interlingual poems, the principle of equivalence has to have its field of projection expanded to include non-rhythmical and non-syntactic—that is, *semantic*—units.

These tentative semantic categories may only be found in the realm of rhetorical figures. Poetic metaphors are a supreme example of Jakobson's projection principle working in reverse. We do not derive metaphors from a pre-existing system of

resemblances; we begin with a primary equivalence established on the syntagmatic level: the sequence falls into two parts, a focal word (metaphor) and a frame in which it must be embedded. We then proceed by projecting the equivalence onto the paradigmatic axis in order to know more about the underlying poetic vision in which the two concepts can be pulled together. For instance, when we read the following distich from Pasternak's "Гроза, моментальная навек" ("Storm, Instantaneous Forever")—

> Сто слепящих фотографий
> Ночью снял на память гром (109)
>
> The storm at night for souvenir
> Took snap after dazzling snap (*Selected Poems* 72)—

we first grasp the idea of lightning strikes that take snapshots of the surrounding landscape as an instance of metaphoric speech and *then* ask what kind of deeper metaphysical affinity grounds the equivalence of thunder and photography.

A similar transfer occurs in interlingual poems, but with adjacent interlingual sequences, rather than image-concepts, representing the focus and the frame. We begin with the assumption that the word or syntactic unit in another language has both a denotative meaning and an additive, metaphoric value. It is only at the following stage that we draw paradigmatic implications and establish the metalingual vision that grounds such a metaphor. Tsvetaeva's image in "Новогоднее" does not simply suggest that the lexical units of "Nest" and "гнездо" are semantically equivalent; their equivalence also suggests something more comprehensive, an underlying metaphoric link between the two language systems that is best seen from the exotopic perspective of nest–star. While on the one hand projecting a metalingual paradigm that links the constituent codes of the interlingual poem, the metaphor of the nest also bears an imprint of the coercions that give rise to interlinguality, on the other. For besides being elevated, the nest is also a protective place, a haven.

It is obvious that expanding Jakobson's model along these lines takes us a step beyond his poetry of grammar. However, in his theory of parallelisms—at least in its stated form—there is nothing to exclude the possibility that the principle of equivalence can work in reverse direction, from the syntagmatic into the paradigmatic. Quite the contrary, he envisages that possibility when he compares equivalences in poetry with those in utterances such as "*Mare* is *the female of horse*": "Poetry and metalanguage, however, are in diametrical opposition to each other: in metalanguage the sequence is used to build an equation, whereas in poetry the equation is used to build a sequence" ("Linguistics and Poetics" 3:27). Since the equations can work the other way round, my only point of disagreement with Jakobson is his double claim: a) that the metalingual function necessarily operates within the coordinate system of one language (even in translation), and b) that the metalingual and the poetic function cannot overlap. The key difference that distinguishes interlingual and monolingual poetry is that in the former the metalanguage is constructed not as a firm coordinate system rooted in a single code but as an interstitial metaphoric space evolving around textual boundaries between codes. In other words, in interlingual poetry the positional equations and oppositions established by the syntagmatic sequence build a metaphoric projection of metalanguage. Insights obtained by this paradigmatic projection are no less

poetic than those obtained by applying the standard Jakobsonian model to mono-lingual poetry.

Polyglot Monsters: Code Switching in Crnjanski's "Lament over Belgrade"

To claim that interlingual poetry involves metaphors that create (rather than reflect) paradigmatic relations between languages may seem an obvious thing to say. To argue that these tropes present imagery of outsideness is a step forward but one that opens a new question: in interlingual poems arising from exile, are these tropes connected in any respect to the duress of their context? The core text I will use to address this question will be "Lament nad Beogradom" ("Lament over Belgrade"), an interlingual poem by the Serbian poet Miloš Crnjanski (1893–1977). A passionate traveller in his youth, Crnjanski later became a political émigré at a time when his reputation, as well as his literary idiom, had already been established. Soon after the German occupation of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Crnjanski moved from Rome, where he previously had been employed as a press attaché in the Yugoslav Consulate, to London, where he spent the next twenty-four years. While residing in London, he initially worked for the Yugoslav Government in Exile, but after the Communist ascension to power in Yugoslavia in 1945 the royalist administration was dissolved, and Crnjanski was left with only two options: to accept the humble and marginal status of a displaced person in London or to return to Belgrade and face possible recriminatory measures from the newly installed regime. Crnjanski's bilingual performance was determined by his peculiarly strenuous acculturation in England. On the one hand, for fear of becoming a victim of political conspiracy, Crnjanski tended to avoid contact with the Yugoslav émigré community and thereby foreclosed the possibility of using his native language in everyday speech situations. On the other hand, he developed a peculiar aversion to the values and norms that he considered "English," and this repulsion hampered his half-hearted attempts to improve his knowledge of the English language. It should come as no surprise, then, that he composed "Lament over Belgrade" (1956) in a state of utter dejection. I quote the original version in Serbian followed by my own tentative translation in which I attempt to balance the rhythmical and phonic richness of the poem against the demands of semantic correspondence:[7]

> "Lament nad Beogradom"
>
> JAN MAJEN i moj Srem,
> Paris, moji mrtvi drugovi, trešnje u Kini,
> priviđaju mi se još, dok ovde ćutim, bdim, i mrem,
> i ležim, hladan, kao na pepelu klada.
> Samo, to više i nismo mi, život, a ni zvezde
> nego neka čudovišta, polipi, delfini,
> što se tumbaju preko nas i plove, i jezde,
> i urliču: "Prah, pepeo, smrt je to."
> A viču i rusko "ničevo"—
> i špansko "nada".

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[7] The original text and my translation of "Lament over Belgrade" are presented here by courtesy of the Miloš Crnjanski Foundation, Belgrade, which holds the copyright to Crnjanski's works. For an earlier translation of "Lament over Belgrade" by Borislava Šašić, who follows only semantic correspondence, see Crnjanski, "Lament over Belgrade" 33–38.

Ti, međutim, rasteš, uz zornjaču jasnu,
sa Avalom plavom, u daljini, kao breg.
Ti treperiš, i kad ovde zvezde gasnu,
i topiš, ko Sunce, i led suza, i lanjski sneg.
U Tebi nema besmisla, ni smrti.
Ti sjajiš kao iskopan stari mač.
U Tebi sve vaskrsne, i zaigra, pa se vrti,
i ponavlja, kao dan i detinji plač.
A kad mi se glas, i oči, i dah, upokoje,
Ti ćeš me, znam, uzeti na krilo svoje.

ESPANJA i naš Hvar,
Dobrović mrtvi, šejk što se u Sahari beli,
priviđaju mi se još, kao utvare, vatre, var.
Moj Sibe poludeli, zinuo kao peš.
Samo to više nismo mi, u mladosti i moći,
već neki papagaji, čimpanzi, neveseli,
što mi se smeju i vrište u mojoj samoći.
Jedan se "Leiche! Leiche! Leiche!" dere.
Drugi mi šapće: "Cadavere!"
Treći: "Leš, leš, leš."

Ti, međutim, širiš, kao labud krila,
zaborav, na Dunav i Savu, dok spavaju.
Ti budiš veselost, što je nekad bila,
kikot, tu, i u mom kriku, vrisku, i vapaju.
U Tebi nema crva, ni sa groba.
Ti blistaš, kao kroz suze ljudski smeh.
U Tebi jedan orač peva, i u zimsko doba,
prelivši krv, kao vino, u novi meh.
A kad mi klone glava i budu stali sati,
Ti ćeš me, znam, poljubiti kao mati.

TI, PROŠLOST, i moj svet,
mladost, ljubavi, gondole, i, na nebu, Mljeci,
priviđate mi se još, kao san, talas, lepi cvet,
u društvu maski, koje je po mene došlo.
Samo, to nisam ja, ni Venecija što se plavi,
nego neke ruševine, aveti, i stećci,
što ostaju za nama na zemlji, i, u travi.
Pa kažu: "Tu leži paša!—Prosjak!—Pas!"
A viču i francusko "tout passe".
I naše "prošlo".

Ti, međutim, stojiš nad širokom rekom,
nad ravnicom plodnom, tvrd, uzdignut kao štit.
Ti pevaš vedro, sa grmljavom dalekom,
i tkaš u stoleća, sa munjama, i svoju nit.
U Tebi nema moje ljudske tuge.
Ti imaš streljača pogled prav i nem.
Ti i plač pretvaraš kao dažd u šarene duge,
a hladiš, ko dalek bor, kad te udahnem.
A kad dođe čas, da mi se srce staro stiša,
Tvoj će bagrem pasti na me kao kiša.

LIŽBUA i moj put,
u svet, kule u vazduhu i na morskoj peni,
priviđaju mi se još, dok mi žižak drhće ko prut
i prenosim i zemlju, u sne, u sne, u sne.
Samo, to više nisu, ni žene, ni ljudi živi,

nego neke nemoćne, slabe, i setne, seni,
što mi kažu, da nisu zveri, da nisu krivi,
da im život baš ništa nije dao,
pa šapću "não, não, não"
i naše "ne, ne".

Ti, međutim, dišeš, u noćnoj tišini,
do zvezda, što kazuju put Suncu u Tvoj san.
Ti slušaš svog srca lupu, u dubini,
što udara, ko stenom, u mračni Kalemegdan.
Tebi su naši boli sitni mravi.
Ti biser suza naših bacaš u prah.
Ali se nad njima, posle, Tvoja zora zaplavi,
u koju se mlad i veseo zagledah.
A kad umorno srce moje ućuti, da spi,
uzglavlje meko ćeš mi, u snu, biti, Ti.

FINISTÈRE i njen stas,
brak, poljupci, bura što je tako silna bila,
priviđaju mi se još, po neki leptir, bulke, klas,
dok, iz prošlosti, slušam, njen korak, tako lak.
Samo, to više nije ona, ni njen glas nasmejan,
nego neki kormoran, divljih i crnih krila,
što viče: zrak svake sreće tone u Okean.
Pa mi mrmlja reči "tombe" i "sombre".
Pa krešti njino "ombre, ombre"—
i naš "grob" i "mrak".

Ti, međutim, krećeš, ko naš labud večni,
iz smrti, i krvi, prema Suncu, na svoj put.
Dok meni dan tone u tvoj ponor rečni,
Ti se dižeš, iz jutra, sav zracima obasut.
Ja ću negde, sam, u Sahari, stati,
u onoj gde su karavani seni,
ali, ko što uz mrtvog Tuarega čuči mati,
Ti ćeš, do smrti, biti uteha meni.
A kad mi slome dušu, koplje, ruku i nogu,
Tebe, Tebe, znam da ne mogu, ne mogu.

ŽIVOT ljudski, i hrt,
sveo list, galeb, srna, i Mesec na pučini,
priviđaju mi se, na kraju, ko san, kao i smrt
jednog po jednog glumca našeg pozorišta.
Samo, sve to, i ja, nismo nikad ni bili više,
nego neka pena, trenuci, šapat u Kini,
što šapće, kao i srce, sve hladnije i tiše:
da ne ostaju, ni Ming, ni yang, ni yin,
ni Tao, trešnje, ni mandarin.
Niko i ništa.

Ti, međutim, sjaš, i sad, kroz san moj tavni,
kroz bezbroj suza naših, večan, u mrak, i prah.
Krv tvoja ko rosa pala je na ravni,
ko nekad, da hladi tolikih samrtnički dah.
Grlim još jednom na Tvoj kamen strmi,
i Tebe, i Savu, i Tvoj Dunav trom.
Sunce se rađa u mom snu. Sini! Sevni! Zagrmi!
Ime Tvoje, kao iz vedrog neba grom.
A kad i meni odbije čas stari sahat Tvoj,
to ime će biti poslednji šapat moj.

<div align="center">Cooden Beach 1956</div>

"Lament over Belgrade"

JAN MAYEN and my Srem,
Paris, my dead friends, cherries in China,
still haunt me, here, as I grow quiet, wakeful, in demise,
and lie, cold, like a log in ash.
Yet, it's no longer us, life, nor stars
but some monsters, polyps, dolphins,
which roll over us, sail by, and speed,
and howl: "Dust, ashes, death is what it is."
And also the Russian "nichevo"—
and the Spanish "nada."

Thou, however, grow'st, under the fair star of morn,
with the blue Avala, in the distance, like a hill.
Even here Thou glitter'st, when the stars die out,
and meltest the ice of tears, like the Sun yesteryear's snow.
In Thee there is no inanity, and no death.
Thou shinest like an old unearthed sword.
In Thee everything is risen, bounds and revolves,
and recurs, like day and like an infant's cry.
And when my voice, eyes, and breath find their rest
I know Thou wilt take me to Thy lap.

ESPAÑA and our Hvar
Dead Dobrović, a sheik in the Sahara glaring white,
still haunt me, like phantoms, fires, farce.
My Sibe, insane, gaping like a bass.
Yet, it's no longer us, in youth and force,
but some despondent parrots and chimpanzees,
laughing at me and yelling in my solitude.
One is shrieking "Leiche! Leiche! Leiche!"
To me the other's whispering: "cadavere!"
The third: "Corpse, corpse, corpse."

Thou, however, spreadst, like swanly wings,
oblivion, over the Danube and Sava, as they sleep.
Thou rousest merriment, which once used to be,
giggle, here, even in my scream, shriek, and moan.
In Thee there is no worm, not even from the grave.
Thou gleamest, like a human laugh through tears.
A ploughman singeth in Thee, even in wintertime,
having poured blood, into a new skin, like wine.
And when my head droops and my hours cease,
I know Thou wilt, like a mother, give me a kiss.

THOU, THE PAST, and my world,
youth, passions, gondolas, and Venetians in the sky,
you still haunt me, like a dream, a wave, a lovely bloom,
in the company of masks, that have come for me.
Yet, it's not me, nor Venice in the blue,
but some spectres, relics and sepulchres,
that remain on earth, and in the grass, after us.
So they say: "Here rests a pasha!—A beggar!—A dog!"
And shout the French "tout passe."
And our "gone."

Thou, however, risest upon the wide river
and fertile plain, solid, upright as a shield.
Thou sing'st brightly, with a distant thunder,
and weavest into centuries lightning and Thy yarn.

In Thee there is no human grief of mine.
Unbowed and still is Thy gaze, as of an archer.
Thou turn'st tears, like rain, into iridal bright,
and soothest my breath, like a distant pine.
And when the hour cometh, my old heart to appease,
Thy black locust will fall, like rain, upon me.

LISBOA and my voyage,
into the world, spires in the air, and on sea foam,
still haunt me, whilst my candle quivers as a birch,
and this land I carry into dreams, into dreams, into dreams.
Yet, it's not women, nor living men, anymore,
but some shades, helpless, feeble and distressed,
saying they are not beasts, and not debased,
and that life had nothing on them to bestow,
so they whisper "não, não, não"
and our "no, no."

Thou, however, breathest, in the silence of the night,
to the stars, leading the Sun right into Thy dream.
Thou listenest to Thy heart's beat, deep down,
pounding as a stone against the dark Kalemegdan.
For Thee, the pangs of ours are but small ants.
The tears we pearled Thou tossest into the dust.
But, soon after, bluing above, cometh out Thy dawn,
which had taken in my gaze, youthful and jocund.
And when my weary heart falls silent, to sleep,
the soft pillow in my slumber Thou wilt be.

FINISTÈRE, and her figure,
nuptial kisses, the storm so forceful in its pass,
still haunt me, a chance butterfly, poppies, and a spike,
as I listen to her pace, so light, from the past.
Yet, it's no longer her, with that beaming voice,
but some ferocious, black-winged cormorant
screams: the ray of every glee sinks into the Ocean.
And murmurs the words "tombe" and "sombre."
And cries their "ombre, ombre,"—
and our "grave" and "dusk."

Thou, however, soarst, timelessly, like our swan,
from death, and blood, on Thy flight, to the Sun.
As my daylight plunges into Thy fluvial abyss,
Thou risest, from the morn, bathed in beams.
Alone, I will halt, somewhere in the Sahara,
thither, whither caravans are just shades,
but, as a dead Tuareg's mother crouching by,
Thou wilt remain my comfort until I die.
When my soul, spear, arm and leg they break,
Thee, Thee, I know, they cannot, nay, unmake.

HUMAN LIFE, and a greyhound,
a dry leaf, seagull, doe, the moon on the open sea,
haunt me finally, as a dream, as passing away,
in succession, of the actors from our stage.
Yet, all that, and I, have never been more
than foam, fleeting bits, a whisper in China,
murmuring, like the heart, colder and softer,
that there remains no Ming, nor yang and yin,
no Tao and cherries, no mandarin.
No one and nothing.

Thou, however, shinest, in that gloomy dream of mine,
through our countless tears, eternal, into dusk and grime.
Like dew, Thy blood has fallen down on plains,
to cool many a moribund gasp, as in the old days.
Over again I embrace on Thy precipitous rock
Thee, and the Sava, and Thy lazy Danube.
The Sun is risen in my dream. Gleam! Rumble! Light!
Thy name, like thunder from a clear sky.
And when Thy old clock sounds the knell for me,
with my last whisper I will be calling Thee.

Cooden Beach 1956

Despite its focus on exilic disintegration, "Lament over Belgrade" presents us with compositional and grammatical/phonic structures of extraordinary regularity. The poem has twelve stanzas, each containing ten lines, and the graphic layout creates six consecutive stanzaic pairs. In the original text, almost all odd-numbered stanzas have the same rhyme and syllabic pattern: *a(6)-b(14)-a(15)-c(13)-d(15)-b(14)-d(14)-e(11)-e(9)-c(5)*;[8] even-numbered stanzas also have a rhyme and syllabic pattern that both links them together and differentiates them from the odd-numbered ones: *a(12)-b(13)-a(12)-b(14)-c(11)-d(11)-c(15)-d(12)-e(14)-e(12)*. The linear distribution of syntactic subjects and objects conveys the change from the image of the poet as metonymically attached to the home city (stanzaic pairs 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6) to the image of that city as a metonymical extension of the poet's being after his anticipated death (stanzaic pairs 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12). Furthermore, the differentiation between the anterior and the posterior sections of the poem is also rigorously carried out within the stanzas. Thus, in the odd-numbered stanzas the syntactic cut separating the delusory images of a bygone youth from the monsters of the present is established in the fifth and sixth line with the antithetic form "Samo, to više i nismo mi [. . .] nego" (265; Yet, it's no longer us [. . .] but). These and other equivalences and oppositions are precisely what Jakobson would highlight, and there can be no doubt that their semantic value can be inferred by the application of his principle of equivalence.[9]

In addition to these standard rhythmic and grammatical equivalences, there are in "Lament over Belgrade" dramatic code switches that impose their own intratextual boundaries. This alternative subdivision transforms the entire poem into a running commentary on the poet's struggle for the preservation of his linguistic identity in exile. The odd-numbered stanzas introduce random, fragmentary scenes of the exilic life marked by various monstrous creatures that emerge from all sides to shriek disturbing foreign words in a number of languages: Russian, Spanish, German, French, Italian, and Mandarin Chinese. The interlingual counterparts of Poe's ironic raven, these lurid creatures seem to take particular pleasure in transience and negation. The even-numbered stanzas, by contrast, are thematically focused on hospitable, intimate aspects of Belgrade; they present syn-

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[8] The only exceptions are the eighth line of the fifth odd-numbered stanza (11 syllables) and the seventh line of the sixth odd-numbered stanza (15 syllables).

[9] For a list of correspondences between odd and even stanzas of "Lament over Belgrade," see Petrov 121–38. Petrov's list, however, does not include the opposition between internal and external stanzas and anterior and posterior stanzas. Indeed, these correspondences have not been explored in any study of the poem.

tactically integrated, idyllic images that counteract the scenes of desolation in exile. The poem thus proceeds through several cycles in which the exiled poet's helpless, tormented consciousness returns time and again to the safe haven of the language of home. The contrast with the odd-numbered stanzas is especially remarkable if one considers the selection of words that suggest the stately tranquillity of the city. There is no code switching to foreign lexical units, and, apart from a few exceptions, there are no loan-words either. Crnjanski conspicuously tunes his lexical range to Serbian words of ancient Slavonic lineage: "breg" (hill), "orač" (ploughman), "stoleća" (centuries), "štit" (shield), "dažd" (rain), and so on.

Just as there is a clear opposition between the languages present in the text of the poem, so there is also an opposition between present and absent codes. In the Babylonish medley of the poem's odd-numbered stanzas there is a conspicuous lack of English—the official endogenous linguistic code of Crnjanski's place of exile. Extant manuscripts indicate that Crnjanski's verbal performance in England was determined by seclusion and a dearth of genuine communicative situations (Crnjanski, *A Novel*). The result was a "fossilized interlanguage," a formulaic buffer code that enabled basic communication but impeded any affective and poetic appropriation (Hamers and Blanc 225–28; Koljević 76). The absence of English in "Lament" thus suggests a double banishment: because Crnjanski perceives that he has been foreclosed from mastering English for poetic purposes, he in turn exiles this language from his own poem. Still, English does find an oblique way into the poem through a curious calque: the English phrase "Chinese whispers," signifying a game, becomes a mysterious "šapat u Kini" (268; a whisper in China).

Extending Jakobson's principle of equivalence from intralingual to interlingual relations necessarily takes one to a slippery terrain of intuitive interpretations. To be sure, one cannot quarrel with the claim that in interlingual poems, just as in any other poem, one looks for a criterion of compositional coherence and that this is most likely to be found in symmetries and anti-symmetries. But why does it seem so peculiarly out of place to argue that in the fifth stanza the Turkish word "pasha," the French expression "(tout) passe," and the Serbian word "pas" (dog) project the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection onto the axis of combination? Before becoming a part of the actual poetic sequence, these lexical units have not been connected by any abstract systemic framework, and it would be very awkward indeed to argue for pre-existing paradigmatic relations between them solely on the grounds of paronomasia. In other words, there is no link between these words prior to the one created by syntagmatic disposition. Would it make any more sense to claim that in the seventh stanza the Portuguese "não" and the Serbian "ne," two words occupying the same end position in a line, form a phonic coupling that highlights their semantic equivalence? One cannot help but be struck by how little relevance this statement has despite its methodological consistency: in fact, since both words derive from the same Indo-European root (*ne*) it would be equally pertinent to claim that the difference in their vowels conveys a putative opposition in their way of denial. Otherwise, we would be forced to commit ourselves to positing as paradigms Proto-Indo-European grammatical categories—a highly precarious endeavor since that language has not been entirely reconstructed.

Unless we are willing to take these and similar cases as mock illustrations of Jakobson's principle of equivalence—which they are not—we have to work on a different rationale, one that takes into account the metaphoric potential of code switching and then establishes the paradigmatic implications of that metaphoricity. Thus, while in the ninth stanza of "Lament over Belgrade" Crnjanski uses the French words "sombre" (somber) and "ombre" (shadow), it is obvious that these words summon possible auditive substitutes in other languages, such as the Spanish "hombre" (man). Furthermore, the "ombre" is preceded by the possessive pronoun "njino"[10] (their) and the Serbian words "grob" (grave) and "mrak" (dark) are "naše" (our). These possessive determinants are not merely grammatical categories induced upon syntagmatic sequence. They indicate a wider paradigmatic trope that juxtaposes languages on an axiological scale. In "Lament over Belgrade" we—whoever "we" may be—belong to the sepulchral void of our language to no less extent than it belongs to us. However, the empty space of this verbal tomb is delineated by the rough surfaces of foreign tongues as they are perceived in exile.

Meanwhile, the gloomy crypt is not the only matrix of interlingual sequences in "Lament over Belgrade." On several occasions, the sinister code switching comes from an elevated point, a promontory or a celestial body, and descends upon the dazed subject. Yet in the first stanza the stars do not resemble the radiating nests that Tsvetaeva so movingly conjures in her poem on Rilke. To the contrary, Crnjanski's stars appear as monstrous polyps and dolphins that sail over the firmament and shriek the words of despair in Serbian as well as in Spanish and Russian. Here, too, the interlingual paradigmatic network produces an ironic point no less uncanny than the one that unites "ombre" and "hombre" in the sepulcher: namely, the Spanish "nada" (nothing) is an auditive equivalent to Serbian "nada" (hope), a homonymy that immediately creates metaphoric synonymy in that the two are seen as equally futile emanations of an exilic heaven.

We may thus argue that in "Lament over Belgrade" both tomb-like nadirs and celestial zeniths fulfill a twofold role. They both contrast the spatial setting for code switching and at the same time appear as poignant metaphors for that verbal strategy. But do these metaphors present similar visions of interlinguality? In order to comprehend the paradigmatic implications of the two polarized images in more detail, we need to compare them with some other metaphors that capture exilic interlinguality in a more explicit way.

Capsule, Mountaintop, Nest, and Abyss: Four Metaphors of Interlingual Outsideness

While it is true that Crnjanski left us no definitive extraliterary pronouncement on linguistic pressures in exile, the relationship between language and geographic dislocation has been observed and evaluated from various pragmatic standpoints by other poets. Although these poets dwell on issues as different as the relative importance and sustainability of the mother tongue and the cultural template of the host community's tongue, in each case languages are considered as paradigms,

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[10] "Njino" is a dialectal form of "njihovo" that has a distinctly exclusive, distancing undertone.

and exile becomes, in various visual and auditory guises, a metaphor that assesses the very possibility and value of interlingual mediation. Let us now consider a few elaborate and well-differentiated instances of this metaphoric creation of the paradigmatic axis.

In his address to the audience of the Vienna Conference on literature in exile (1987), Joseph Brodsky argued that the specificity of the position of the writer in exile consists in his capacity to bracket all corollary and superfluous elements of his cultural identity and focus on that single quality that in his view constitutes the stuff of literature—the native language: "For one in our profession the condition we call exile is, first of all, a linguistic event: he is thrust from, he retreats into his mother tongue. From being his, so to speak, sword, it turns into his shield, into his capsule. What started as a private, intimate affair with the language in exile becomes fate—even before it becomes an obsession or a duty" (Brodsky 32). This well-known parable need not strike one as typical of Brodsky,[11] but it is highly representative of a peculiar centripetal tendency that incites many displaced writers, including Crnjanski, to ascribe a supraindividual value to their exile. Indeed, Brodsky's capsule retains some of the cryptic quality of Crnjanski's tomb but with a more optimistic, ascendant spin. Before exile, the mother tongue is a depository for the poet's private idiom; in exile, the poet as a whole is assigned to that mother tongue. Its uteral shape shields him by encapsulating him, and it also enables his creativity to go through a period of gestation. The wider implications of Brodsky's capsule metaphor can only be apprehended if it is considered within the theoretical and historical context of a long-running quarrel concerning the relationship between a culture and its language. The Romantic philosophers of language, especially Herder, argued that language is a quintessential vehicle of the national spirit (*Volksgeist*), a privileged symbolic system that epitomizes everything for which its respective culture stands (147–54; see Bauman and Briggs 163–96). A corollary ideologem claimed that this spirit of culture is not embodied to an equal degree in all utterances pronounced within a language community. It is literary artefacts, especially the genres of poetry, that stand out among other arts as being entirely verbal and, for that reason, capable of encapsulating *via* language the specific ethos of a nation. By the same token, Brodsky's exilic capsule provides the writer, and more specifically the poet, with an unparalleled opportunity to bring this inherent potential to fruition.

There is, however, another metaphoric construal of exilic interlinguality that, contrary to linguistic essentialism, stresses the cognitive and aesthetic advantages of language contact, however forcefully it may occur. Exile provides the writer with what Christine Brook-Rose aptly defines as "*the distance needed* for the transcending of regional/national themes into those of the human condition anywhere" (15, my emphasis). Ironically, it is again Brodsky who proposes that a writer's linguistic consciousness in exile

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[11] For instance, in his poem "Колыбельная Трескового Мыса" ("Lullaby of Cape Cod" [1975]) Brodsky declares that "Перемена империи связана с гулом слов / с выделеньем слюны в результате речи" (Перемена 284; "The change of Empires is intimately tied / to the hum of words, the soft, fricative spray / of spittle in the act of speech," *A Part of Speech* 110; translated by Anthony Hecht) and in "Строфы" ("Strophes" [1978]) that "Знаешь, все, кто далече, / по ком голосит тоска— / жертвы законов речи, / запятых, языка" (Перемена 318; "You know, dear, all whom anguish / pleads for, those out of reach, / are prey of the laws of language— / periods, commas, speech," *A Part of Speech* 140; translated by David McDuff with the author).

is, if you like, a remarkable situation psychically, because you're sitting on top of a mountain and look-ing down both slopes. I don't know if that's so or not in my case, but at least when I do something, my vantage is good. . . . It's always your own spot, right? But still, you see both slopes and this is an abso-lutely special sensation. Were a miracle to occur and I were to return to Russia permanently, I would be extremely nervous at not having the option of using more than one language. (Volkov 185–86)

For one thing, Brodsky's mountaineering metaphor provides a remarkable con-trast to the imagery of "Lament." The even-numbered stanzas of Crnjanski's poem abound in various natural promontories and hills that form the landscape of Belgrade, but these elevations are never climbed: their shapes are admired from below, and so from only one side. Brodsky, however, insists on an elevated vantage point that brings with it two possible perspectives. His second metaphor thus presents an excellent illustration of a complementary strand of the Roman-tic philosophy of language, one that emphasizes, with Humboldt, that acquiring another language means acquiring another world for one's mind and, indeed, another mind itself (von Humboldt 167). In this view, because each language imposes a specific conceptual grid upon reality, examining as many such grids as possible enables one to get as close as one can to a comprehensive cognizance of that reality.

Still, there is also semiotic consistency in Brodsky's competing metaphors: the capsule and the mountaintop substitute the political arbitrariness of the hori-zontal movement in exile for the axiological certitude of the vertical ascent. The two metaphors, opposed though they are, share one implicit assumption: that the perception of the primary and adoptive language is thoroughly segregated on a number of levels of the paradigmatic axis. First, they are differentiated spa-tially in that both the capsule and the opposing slopes stand for the post-Babel distribution of tongues along seemingly arbitrary geographic lines. Second, they are also separated psychologically, since the writer is supposed mentally to be able to distinguish between two linguistic codes, each of which refers to its own conceptual network. Third, the languages are divorced aesthetically, in that each one commands its own static values.

However, such a segregative model, in its two versions, is not the only trope that has been articulated to represent the condition and processes of the writer's linguistic consciousness in exile. As we have already seen, Tsvetaeva created met-alingual effect through the metaphor of the nest, the elevated place laboriously built from many branches taken from different trees. When in his memoir *Speak, Memory* Nabokov recollects how his father, a passionate cyclist, used to "take one's 'bike by the horns' (*bïka za roga*)," he creates a supreme interlingual pun based on the scriptural homology and phonetic similitude of the English word "bike" and the Russian word "бык" (bull or ox) (Nabokov 33). Since in Russian taking the bull by the horns implies someone taking control over a situation, Nabokov con-sciously mistranslates *бык* as "bike" and has his authoritative father taking the bike by its metaphorical horns (the handlebars). This is a supreme example of what can be called the "nesting" strategy. Just as in Picasso's *Tête de taureau* (1942) the animal's head is conjured by a metal bike-seat and its horns by the handlebars, so Nabokov uses an interlingual transfer to convey a point that would not be acces-sible without such interaction. Like the capsule, the interlingual nest is an insu-lated place of incubation for a fledgling; like the mountaintop, it is an elevated point that gives a panoramic view. Unlike both the capsule and the mountaintop,

however, the nest does not keep languages separate one from the other; rather, it brings them together in a stereoscopic view made possible by the nest's composite construction.

Other poets in exile have adhered to an interactive rather than segregative view but have evaluated that interaction in a negative way. For them, the authorial subject is not a controlling center of discourse formation: exile affects one's linguistic faculty in all its formative aspects and pragmatic functions, including the poetic one. In his *Tristia* (III.xiv.43–50) Ovid formulates a memorable autobiographic account of this process in what is the earliest case of a writer presenting a running commentary on his own poetic demise in exile:

> Saepe aliquod quaero verbum nomenque locumque,
> > nec quisquam est a quo certior esse queam.
> Dicere saepe aliquid conanti—turpe fateri!—
> > verba mihi desunt dedidicique loqui.
> Threïcio Scythicoque fere circumsonor ore,
> > et videor Geticis scribere posse modis.
> Crede mihi, timeo ne Sintia mixta Latinis
> > inque meis scriptis Pontica verba legas. (Ovid, 154, 156; cf. *Tristia* V.vii.51–64)

Often I am at a loss for a word, a name, a place, and there is none who can inform me. Oft when I attempt some utterance—shameful confession!—words fail me: I have unlearned my power of speech. Thracian and Scythian tongues chatter on almost every side, and I think I could write in Getic measure. (155, 157)

This description is strikingly similar to the monster-words of Crnjanski's odd-numbered stanzas and contains a hint of a rather elaborate model of the irreversible breakdown of native idiom. The stages of this breakdown are interconnected, for it is impossible to distinguish between the disturbance caused by Ovid's lack of verbal communication in Latin and the one caused by his contact with vernaculars spoken in Tomis on the Black Sea, his designated place of exile. First, the loss of verbal memory that arises from the isolation in exile is paralleled by a veritable auditory invasion of foreign words that progressively take possession of the poet's lexical store. Second, through the same auditory channel, the rhythmic regularities of the foreign syntax penetrate and take control over the poet's power of versification.

More recent descriptions of verbal disorientation in exile are often remarkably consistent with the image of linguistic death presented by the Roman poet. In her memoir *Lost in Translation*, Eva Hoffman recollects her experience of the loss of the precious capacity verbally to apprehend the world in a manner both distinctly her own and distinctly poetic:

Polish, in a short time, has atrophied, shriveled from sheer uselessness. Its words don't apply to my new experiences; they're not coeval with any of the objects, or faces, or the very air I breathe in the daytime. In English, words have not penetrated to those layers of my psyche from which a private conversation could proceed. . . . I'm not filled with language anymore, and I have only a memory of fullness to anguish me with the knowledge that, in this dark and empty state, I don't really exist. (107–08)

Hoffman provides Ovid's insight with a linguistic rationale: the loss of verbal memory can be explained by a disconnection between signified (exilic experience) and signifier (the Latin or the Polish language). As with Ovid, the vigorous, sparkling words of a foreign language act upon the mind, "penetrating" into a vacuous entity. But, in contrast to Ovid's account, it is precisely the incompleteness of this penetration that initiates in Hoffman the fear that the resulting linguistic

vacuum will bring the end of her spiritual life, the end of her world. In a way that contrasts completely with the upward movement of Brodsky's space capsule, the loss of an inner language of "private conversation" is compared to "some black hole" (108) that is completely unlike the "fathomless abyss" over which Humboldt's vision of the sovereign mind "hovers" and "from which . . . it can always create the more, the more it has been already been replenished from that source" (146–47). Instead of levitation over the abyss of language, Hoffman suggests that exile brings a fall into something akin to the "tomb" and "dusk" so compellingly represented by Crnjanski's black cormorant.

The overarching compatibility of the images developed by Tsvetaeva, Ovid, and Hoffman makes the temporal and generic distance that separates their texts lose its differentiating force. It is this analogy that suggests the possibility of a conception of exilic interlinguality not envisaged by Brodsky. In physics, interferences are defined as the conjunction of two or more waves at a single point of an axial system whereby these waves either strengthen or cancel each other. Analogously, in Tsvetaeva and Nabokov languages add to one another through a series of complex interactions between different language codes, thereby enhancing our intellectual grasp of the world. By contrast, in the metaphors suggested by Ovid and Hoffman, the languages subtract from one another. The author in exile is not a sovereign consciousness that contemplates immutable linguistic essences and draws freely from them to build his/her poetic universe. On the contrary, he/she emerges as a derivative instance in which a vacuum asserts its presence surreptitiously, through disturbing first the affective and then the creative part of the self.

Furthermore, while these poets in exile consider their interlingual experience in terms either of the segregation or the interference of codes, they use different visual templates to conjure up these two types of relations. In Brodsky's capsule and Hoffman's abyss, on the one hand, interlinguality is grasped as an enclosed space in which the poet surrenders to the exotopic situation and is determined by it. Enveloped by a protective shell of "native" language or thrown into a black hole, the poet remains in a self-reflexive mode: interlinguality prompts him/her to reassess goals and the sustainability of a poetic vocation in exile. The metaphors of the mountaintop and the nest, on the other hand, rely on open vistas rather than enclosures. Interlinguality is seen not as a peculiar condition but as an opportune vantage point from which to observe reality and achieve insights that could not be attained in a monolingual environment.

A Jakobsonian critic would likely be tempted to represent the exiled poets' paradigmatic construals of interlingual experience in a table:

relation / exotopic template	segregative	interferential
enclosed space	capsule	abyss
vantage point	mountain slopes	nest

Yet this would be a mistake: just as particular languages are not connected by a super-language, so their metaphoric correlates do not form a self-regulating system. For one thing, the four metaphors are not pre-textual archetypes but retroactive projections of archetypes based on the poets' actual interlingual experience. Instead of informing interlingual sequence, each of these tropes is formed post

factum—by the poet's interlingual performance and attitude toward it. All of them frame spaces defined by outsideness, but the images used to conjure up such spaces are entirely different in semantic bearing. In the case of the capsule, the external is a place of isolation and concentration; in the metaphor of the mountaintop, it is a commanding position in which different codes unlock different aspects of the world; in the metaphor of the nest, it is a place of a harmonious synthesis; in the metaphor of the abyss, it becomes a place that is defined by conflict and the risk of annihilation.

However, it is important to note that semiotic mappings of an imagined meta-language in the four authors testify to another aspect of their creativity. Namely, while creating exotopic spaces on the internal boundaries of interlingual poems, the four metaphors also bear the imprint of exile as an event that sets the scene for the interlingual experience. It is hardly surprising, for, after all, they represent the response of verbal imagination to one of the most severe human situations. The metaphors we use are not impervious monadic wholes, and the paradigmatic relations based on them cannot but be imbued with social and political values.

Exilic Eschatology: Metaphors as a Metalanguage of Code-Switching Poetry

How, then, do these metalingual metaphors relate to the code-switching sections of Crnjanski's "Lament over Belgrade"? Let us recall: Jakobson begins with the assumption that paradigmatic relations are locked in a monolingual system when he considers their distributional arrangement in poetic texts. In interlingual poetry, however, there are no pre-existing paradigmatic relations among the languages that constitute the sequence. The only way to process any such equivalences is to begin with their distributional arrangement in the text and then determine their paradigmatic implications. This inversion of Jakobson's model is all the more important in that it also applies to the metaphoric nature of such equivalences. Since there are no ready-made templates to generate poetic metaphors, it is only when we identify them in an actual poetic sequence that we can explore their semiotic implications. As the last section of the article will show, Crnjanski's interlingual code switching in "Lament over Belgrade" elicits tropes that converge towards some of the four exotopic metaphors. This convergence is not simply an effect of our interpretative procedures; it is also a function of the author's verbal performance and desire within an interlingual environment.

To begin with, in most of the odd-numbered stanzas of the poem there is a specific image employed to represent the abyss and vacuity. While the former is conjured by visions of empty and threatening holes, the latter is suggested by images that create outlandish catachreses and hiatuses. Thus, in the third stanza the hole is configured by the fishlike mouth of his late friend Sibe Miličić: "Moj Sibe poludeli, zinuo kao peš" (266; My Sibe, insane, gaping like a bass); in the penultimate stanza it is revealed in the peremptory emptiness that absorbs both yin and yang (268). The hole becomes a grave in the fifth stanza with the epi-taph "Tu leži paša!" (266; Here rests a pasha!), and in the ninth stanza it appears as the Ocean where "zrak svake sreće tone" (268; the ray of every glee sinks) and the dark "tombe" / "grob" (grave). The first stanza brings a peculiar catachresis— "nego neka čudovišta, polipi, delfini / što se tumbaju preko nas i plove, i jezde"

(265; but some monsters, polyps, dolphins, / which roll over us, sail by and speed)—in which the monsters tumble, sail, and glide over an unidentified and utterly void "us." The seventh stanza brings an equally incongruous image: "kule u vazduhu i na morskoj peni" (267; spires in the air and on sea-foam). What we can deduce from all these examples is that both abyss and vacuum appear in two main forms. On the one hand, they are exotopic spaces in the bosom of nature (ocean, grave, towers built on the sea-foam); on the other, they gape in the center of the tormented subject (a dead friend with mouth open like a fish, the monsters tumbling above "us"). As in Hoffman's metaphor, where the subject experiences, inside, a loss of fullness and then falls, outside, into a black hole, so Crnjanski sees abysses all around because he feels his own self as a deep void.

The most terrific aspect of the void is that it is open to the intrusion suggested by the code switching at the end of the odd-numbered stanzas. "Lament over Belgrade" is not only a grotesque vision of monsters that cry out the ominous foreign words: "ничего," "nada," "Leiche," "cadavere," "tout passe," "ombre." It is also an extended metaphor about the foreign words that acquire monstrous shapes as they become a part of the poem's language.[12] Thus, whereas Ovid does not go further than expressing the fear that the Thracian and Scythian tongues will infiltrate his verse, Crnjanski's "Lament" deepens this anxiety as the perceived barbarisms take control of his auditory imagination and step into the actual poem. What for the Roman poet had to remain beyond the pale, in "Lament" becomes the very fabric of the poem. The intrusion of foreign words, accompanied by the images of chasms and by catachreses, produces metaphoric equivalences tied together by the metaphor of the abyss.

The central metaphor of the odd-numbered stanzas is replicated in the tenth stanza, in which the Ocean is replaced by the river flowing beneath the fortress of Belgrade: "Dok meni dan tone u tvoj ponor rečni" (268; As my daylight plunges into Thy fluvial abyss). However, this remains an exceptional case in the relation between the odd- and even-numbered stanzas of the poem: on the whole, the even-numbered stanzas deploy a very different imagery and do so in a compositionally different way as well. Thus, the line I have just quoted is followed by a line in which the city is identified with the rising sun: "Ti se dižeš, iz jutra, sav zracima obasut" (268; Thou risest, from the morn, bathed in beams). In addition to this image of levitation, the fourth and tenth stanzas suggest the security of enfoldment. Both stanzas begin with the stately image of the swan spreading its wings: "Ti, međutim, širiš, kao labud krila, / zaborav" (266; Thou, however, spreadst, like swanly wings / oblivion); and "Ti, međutim, krećeš, ko naš labud večni" (268; Thou, however, soarst, timelessly, like our swan). Both end with the image of the *mater dolorosa* embracing her dead son: "A kad mi klone glava i budu stali sati, / Ti ćeš me, znam, poljubiti kao mati" (266; And when my head droops and my hours cease, / I know Thou wilt, like a mother, give me a kiss); and "ko što uz mrtvog Tuarega čuči mati" (268; as a dead Tuareg's mother crouching by). The imagined spatial enfoldment is reflected in the correspondence of positions (beginning and

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[12] The archive department of Radio Belgrade preserves a recording of Crnjanski reciting "Lament over Belgrade" in 1975. Although this reading occurred many years after the poem's composition, the poet's perception of exile as interlingual inferno had remained unchanged. At the end of the odd-numbered stanzas Crnjanski modifies his voice to make the foreign words resemble the actual shrieks of animals ("Lament nad Beogradom").

end of stanzas, second and penultimate stanzaic pairs). It is also important to note that the sixth stanza begins with a distich in which the city is explicitly compared to a shield, the word Brodsky will use to describe the protective effect of the capsule: "Ti, međutim, stojiš [. . .] / tvrd, uzdignut kao štit" (267; Thou, however, risest [. . .] solid, upright as a shield). In Crnjanski's vision, then, Belgrade is more than a spatial point marking the center of the poet's exilic longing. It is also the visual, symbolic expression of the "native" language that forms the poet in exile and that is formed by him in turn.

Is, however, this cultivated idiom his *mother* tongue or his *personal* tongue? These even-numbered stanzas remind us of Brodsky's capsule image, and they are not free from their own ideological tension. Crnjanski's painstaking rhymes and assonances warn us against any referential fallacy: the monolingual poetic idiom cultivated in segregation is not the tribe's Ur-language but the product of artifice, no less cunningly wrought than its corresponding image of maternal embrace.

"Lament over Belgrade" remains an excellent example of how two tropes of metalingual relations, the interferential abyss and the segregative capsule, emerge from the linear arrangement of words from different languages. Moreover, the poem reveals that these tropes only make sense when considered in their mutual alternation. After exposure to the abysmal visions of the odd-numbered stanzas, in every even-numbered stanza Crnjanski retreats to the capsular space of his mother tongue for protection and the gestation of a monolithic poetic idiom. In these stanzas, the exotopy remains a distant position from which the poet can determine interlingual context and gain aesthetic benefit from his situation. In the odd-numbered stanzas, however, he is in dangerous proximity to language rivalry, in which verbal consciousness is determined by forces external to it.

This interpretation of metalingual tropes in "Lament over Belgrade" still does not of course explain *why* they are arranged in such a way and with such semiotic elements. To be sure, "Lament" does introduce a few nest-like images featuring a mixture of parts suspended at an elevated point in the air. In the sixth stanza Belgrade is seen as a celestial weaver who with lightning interlaces centuries into his yarn and then as a maker of rainbows who transforms tears into bright-colored stripes. Likewise, in the eleventh stanza the desolate exilic landscape is said to contain no yin and yang. We can safely assume that Crnjanski, the editor of an important anthology of Chinese lyric in the early 1920s, knew that this oppositional pair signified, among other contraries, north slope (yin) and south slope (yang). Yet these scattered images, closely akin to the nest and the mountain, are not activated as metaphors of exilic interlinguality. While the yarn and rainbow do not refer to code-switching sequences, because the loanwords *yin* and *yang* are non-existent for the poet their dualism does not bring light to interlinguality or, for that matter, to exile. It seems as if Crnjanski saw only two avenues for verbal consciousness in exile: it either falls back on its pre-exilic code or risks being erased in an open conflict of codes.

Although light and fire do not figure as semiotic elements in Brodsky's and Hoffman's metaphors, their distribution in "Lament over Belgrade" neatly points to metalingual relations defined by capsule and abyss. In each even stanza, Crnjanski associates Belgrade with one or another luminous form of heaven: like a distant star, the city shines into his slumber, and, like sudden lightning, it illumines his

landscape. However, Crnjanski's luminosity remains substantially different from Tsvetaeva's radiating nest. "Lament's" light is ignited not through the mutual friction of words from multiple languages but through the crepuscular combustion of a single idiom. It is this capsular idiom that sets on fire other segregated codes while at the same time making them as spurious as carnivalesque effigies, "utvare, vatre, var" (266; phantoms, fires, farce). Yet this capsular idiom is still part of a metalanguage: it communicates a metaphor that connects interlingual sequences into a meaningful, if ambiguous, whole.

What is it that moves Crnjanski's interlingual switches towards an alternation of abyss and capsule rather than towards nest and/or mountaintop? In exile, the poet's primary concern is not to relate to a static linguistic system (there is none at hand), but to bridge the divide between, on the one hand, previously acquired and, on the other hand, developmental features of verbal activity. The ultimate touchstone for the success of this process is the ability to form a sequence—conversational or poetic—from whatever linguistic elements exist in his/her mnemonic store and the dynamics of everyday discourse. As we have already seen, this process may result in the juxtaposition of codes within isolated sequences or in the interaction of codes within a single sequence. Furthermore, these possibilities may be assessed optimistically, as a boost to creativity, or pessimistically, as a demise of poetic speech. "Lament over Belgrade" indicates that Crnjanski's stance was a peculiar mixture of probing approaches and defensive strategies. If he was trying to master the English language and make it a part of his idiom, he was also not ready to relinquish the precarious status of Serbian as the primary and self-referential code. The failure he soon faced in the first task meant that even more emphasis would be given to the second one. In other words, an incomplete integration of codes was followed by their increased segregation on compositional, syntactic, and metaphoric levels.

What can one positively say about the metalingual interplay of the four metaphors? Or, alternatively, what can one say by using this metalanguage? Not much—apart from re-enforcing the postulate that it is elsewhere. The metalingual instance that arises in the interlingual poetry of exile is not an economic and impersonal vehicle of communication or, for that matter, a socially endorsed system of language universals; rather, it is the author's personal mirage of a poetic metalanguage. The textual code switching relies on the trauma of enforced interlinguality to draw individual semiotic templates of exotopy. Since language codes fall into paradigmatic order a posteriori, according to the extent to which the poet succeeds in making them a part of the poetic sequence, the metalanguage can only communicate a record of the individual poet's struggle to do so.

In conclusion, I would like to discuss briefly how the model applied here relates to earlier criticisms of Jakobson's theory of equivalences. For example, Michael Riffaterre has questioned the relevance of equivalences to the aesthetic perception of a poem: "How are we to pass from description to judgment—that is, from a study of the text to a study of its effect upon the reader?" (202)—an argument replicated by Jonathan Culler, who matter-of-factly remarks: "To say that there is a great deal of parallelism and repetition in literary texts is of little interest in itself and of less explanatory value. The crucial question is what effects patterning can have" (71). In both comments, the somewhat awkward word "effect" conceals a highly pertinent question: how is the reader supposed to perceive, discriminate,

and semantically activate grammatical parallelisms? And with the advent of various deconstructive approaches in literary theory—approaches that addressed precisely this pragmatic side of the reading experience—Jakobson's theory was consigned to a marginal position and engaged with scepticism. The interpretative model applied here retrieves some elements of Jakobson's theory while at the same time answering this criticism. To say that in the interlingual poetry of exile the relations between codes are transferred from the syntagmatic axis onto the paradigmatic axis means that at least some paradigms are the effects rather than the driving force of a poetic text. They are not already given in an immutable linguistic system but shaped by a sustained poetic effort in a specific historical situation. In other words, the emergence of metalingual metaphors that transcend and illuminate the code-switching sequences is at the same time a projection of the author's desire for a comprehensive poetic language *and* a reflection of the linguistic duress of his/her exile. These aspects are, furthermore, inseparable: every projection is a reflection. The nowhere of exile projects an imaginary nowhere that emerges especially clearly in some lines by Milosz:

> Kto mnie potępi jeżeli ojczyzny
> I tu i nigdzie szukałem,
> Myląc dialekty, prowincjonalizmy
> Z oceanowym chorałem? (*Gdzie słońce* 114)
> Who can blame me for seeking a native land
> Here or perhaps nowhere,
> Mixing dialects and provincial idioms
> With an oceanic choir? (*Collected Poems* 279)

Therefore, this modified version of Jakobson's model does not merely describe the interlingual poems of exile but also tells us something about how they achieve their poetic effect. Moreover, it is precisely interlingual poems of exile such as "Lament over Belgrade" that prompt us critically to re-examine his theory and reclaim some of its tenets to gain insight into the rhetoric tropes that negotiate textual and sociopolitical fields of experience. Thus, "Lament over Belgrade" shows how symmetries and anti-symmetries remain crucial to our activating the semantic potential of such poems not only in poetic but also in metalingual aspects of the text. For if we allow that in code-switching poems the metalingual function can also be the field in which the poetic function asserts itself and that such a metalingual function may work from outside rather than from within particular languages, we open an important pathway: the exploration of the intrinsic pragmatism of paradigms—the ways in which they are posited, evaluated, and interpreted in a manner that reflects both our historical position and our innermost desires.

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