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Innokentij Annenskij's "The Cypress Chest": Contexts, structures and themes

Armstrong, Todd Patrick, Ph.D.
The Ohio State University, 1993
INNOKENTIJ ANNENSKIJ'S *THE CYPRESS CHEST*: CONTEXTS, STRUCTURES AND THEMES

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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To Hania and Alex
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Несомненно, русское общество когда-нибудь оценит этого редко-даровитого и обаятельного человека.

Undoubtedly, Russian society will some day appreciate this rarely-gifted and fascinating man.\(^1\)

i.

Innokentij Fedorovič Annenskij as Poet: Historical Context and Initial Response

Russian literature at the beginning of the Twentieth-Century was marked by a cacophony of new voices, a heteroglossia never before heard in its history. The Silver Age was at its height, and lyric poetry had by now regained its preeminence after almost a century of prose and civic verse. Myriad poetic movements arose, propounding new and original approaches to the poetic word, including Symbolism, the dominant and innovative poetic school of

\(^1\)From Annenskij's obituary in Apollon No. 4, 1910 (The Hague: Mouton, Slavistic Printings and Reprintings, 1971.)
the 1890's and 1900's, with such diverse poets as Brjusov, Bal'mont, Belyj, Ivanov, Sologub and Blok. New and insistent poetic voices could also be heard—those of acmeism and futurism. The poets Gumilev, Mandel'stam and Axmatova lead the way for the former, while Majakovsky, Xlebnikov, Kručenycz, and the young Pasternak were among those at the forefront of the latter. Novel and frequently controversial journals devoted to literature and the arts provided a forum for the numerous movements, and on their pages could be found the latest poetry, as well as current literary theory and polemics.

New voices appeared not only in groups, but also individually. One of these voices was heard in the 1909 inaugural issue of the St. Petersburg fledgling acmeist journal *Apollon*, where there appeared an essay entitled "On Contemporary Lyricism" ("О современном лиризме")—a review of the latest trends in Russian poetry. The article was far from a programmatic statement promoting one of the many new trends in art, reflecting instead a striking independence of thought on the part of its author, Innokentij Fedorovič Annenskij, who was obviously well versed in the works of the various poets and movements of the time. Its
contents, couched in a complex and impressionistic prose, were misunderstood by some, and even raised the ire of others. As a result, Annenskij considered it necessary to write an open letter to the journal, explaining his position. This event illustrates Annenskij's status as outsider in terms of his literary criticism; the outsider status can—tragically—frequently be applied to his creative work. As a poet, he stood on the fringes of the major trends of the day, often misunderstood by his contemporaries. Annenskij remained until recently relegated in many studies of Twentieth-Century Russian Literature to a marginal position.2 At the same time, many of the prominent poets of the three major poetic schools—symbolism, acmeism and futurism—considered him instrumental in various ways in the formation of their respective approaches to poetry. One reason for his treatment as a simultaneously marginal and influential figure can be found in his complex character.

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2Interest in this "chamber" poet is on the rise, as evidenced in two full-length monographs (Setchkarev, V. Studies in the Life and Work of Innokentij Annenskij. The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1963, and Fedorov, A. V. Innokentij Annenskij. Ličnost' i tvorčestvo. Leningrad: Xudožestvennaja literatura, 1984.), as well as a number of dissertations written in the last decades (see bibliography).
In his study of the poet, A. Fedorov, the dean of Russian (Soviet) Annenskij scholarship, observes both links to a variety of other aesthetic approaches, as well as the pronounced individuality of the poet's voice:

...ряд особенностей отражает общие положения поэтики символизма, другие особенности восходят к традициям русской поэзии XIX века, многие же является индивидуальным новшеством самого Анненского; в целом же, сливаясь вместе в живом художественном единстве, все это создает нечто специфически своеобразное, не совпадающее с творческой практикой других современников.3

...а number of distinctive traits reflect the general attitudes of Symbolist poetics, other features hark back to Russian poetic traditions of the nineteenth century, many represent individual innovations of Annenskij himself; on the whole, blended together in a vital artistic unity, all this creates something specifically original, not coinciding with the creative practice of other contemporaries.

The eclecticism of Annenskij's poetry observed by Fedorov was also reflected in the diverse manifestations of his intellectual activities, worthy of mention here in order to establish the complex

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3 "Poëtičeskoe tvorčestvo Innocentija Annenskogo." Annenskij, I. F. Stixotvorenija i tragedii. Leningrad: Sovetskij pisatel'. 1959. 46. Nancy Titler, in the preface to her dissertation, also quotes Fedorov (see: Titler, N. 'The Lyric Poetry of Innocentij Annenskij and Russian Literary Tradition' Yale University Dissertation, 1981. vi.) I have used her translation, with some variation. This excellent dissertation has but few shortcomings. They are: 1) the numbering of his "trilistniki" at 23—in the 1910 edition there are 25 (and Timenčik's article came out in 1978, in which he shows evidence of 33; see Chapter III); and 2) the translation of Annenskij's "Babočka gaza" as "Gossamer Butterfly"—it should be translated as "Butterfly of the Gas-light").
nature of the poet and man.

His entire professional life was spent in the service of pedagogy. As a committed and respected classicist, he produced, in addition to many critical articles in this area, a complete, annotated translation of the works of Euripides. His translations of various French poets, including Baudelaire, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Leconte de Lisle, and others are found to the present day in Russian anthologies of the French poets. In addition to these pursuits, Russian and other national literatures also came under his scrutiny. His two *Books of Reflections* (Книги отражений) are devoted to a broad spectrum of writers. They include most of the major figures of Nineteenth-Century Russian literature--Puškin, Lermontov, Gogol', Dostoevskij, Turgenev and Tolstoj--as well as Annenskij's contemporaries, including Andreev, Čexov, Gor'kij and a majority of the Russian symbolist poets. Among Western literary figures, Shakespeare, Heine, Ibsen, the French symbolists and others are examined by Annenskij the critic.4

Finally, as a poet, Annenskij was the author of three collections. Only his first collection of verse, *Quiet Songs* (Тихие песни) was published during his lifetime. The remaining publications of his poetry were posthumous: *The Cypress Chest* (Кипарисовый ларец) in 1910, and *Posthumous Verse* (Посмертные стихи) in 1923. He wrote a total of 350 original poems, as well as four tragedies in verse, written in the style of the ancients.

While one might expect such a multitude of intellectual achievements to bring some kind of recognition, ironically, many of his contemporaries were unaware during Annenskij's lifetime that one man was responsible for so many accomplishments. An assessment made by the Russian poet Vološin in an article dedicated to the recently deceased poet illustrates this state of affairs:

Быть многогранным, интересоваться разнообразным, проявлять себя во многом — лучшее средство охранить свою неизвестность. ... Для меня здесь было около десятка различных лиц, друг с другом не схожих ни своими интересами, ни возрастом, ни характером деятельности, ни общественным положением.⁵

To be multifaceted, to be interested in diverse things, to manifest oneself in many areas — these are the best means to protect one's anonymity. ... For me there were nearly a dozen different people here, resembling each other neither in interests, nor age, nor the type of activities, nor social position. ...

This anonymity conceivably played a role in the initial reaction to the poet's first work, which was for the most part one of indifference: "The book [Quiet Songs--T.P.A.] passed nearly unnoticed, apart from irrelevant reviews."6

Annenskij did achieve some posthumous fame, though, when the acmeist poets singled him out from among their predecessors as a teacher and mentor. For example, Anna Axmatova states in reference to her first contact with Annenskij's poetry:

And then the following happened: I read ... the proof of "The Cypress Chest" .. and I understood something in poetry ... I immediately ceased both seeing and hearing, and I could not tear myself away, and I kept repeating these poems day and night.... They revealed a new harmony to me.

Gumilev is no less flattering in his review of Annenskij's collection

The Cypress Chest, where he points out the preeminent nature of Annenskij's poetics (and that Annenskij is reacting against the symbolists). He eulogizes the deceased poet: "And now it is time to

say that not only Russia, but all of Europe as well has lost one of its
great poets.” Gumilev, a student in Annenskij’s gymnasium in
Carskoe Selo, also extols the poet in a poem printed in an issue of
Apollon, “In Memory of Innokentij Fedorovič Annenskij ("Памяти
Иннокентия Федоровича Анненского"), as seen in the first
stanza:9

К таким неожиданным и певучим бредням
Ведя с собой умы людей,
Был Иннокентий Анненский последним
Из царскооскольских лебедей.

Taking with him the minds of people
To such unexpected and melodious fantasies,
Annenskij was
The last of the Carskoe Selo swans.

Mandel’štam, in his seminal treatise “On the Nature of the Word,”
admires Annenskij as a “Hellenistic” poet, a high compliment in that
poet’s critical and poetic vocabulary.10

Annenskij’s role in the acmeist movement is important, and has
been addressed in the critical literature.11 But again—Annenskij

8 Gumilev, Nikolaj. Sobranie sočinenij. Tom četvertij. Washington: Kamkin,
1968. 234-237.
9 For Gumilev’s relationship with Annenskij, see: Struve, Gleb. “Innokentij i
10 See especially his articles “On the Nature of the Word” ("О природе слова")
and “The Morning of Acmeism” ("Утро акмеизма"): Mandel’štam, Osip. Slovo i
is by no means an "acmeist," differing from this group in several essential ways. He resists classification, having created a uniquely personal poetics that makes critics uncomfortable with its elusive and vague quality. Neither can he be considered an outright symbolist, although Blok, after an initial negative reaction to the poet's work, later saw in Annenskij a kindred soul. Indeed, Blok was perceptive even in his first reading of Annenskij's work, and his initial response to *Quiet Songs* provides a useful departure point in an investigation of Annenskij's specific aesthetics.

The work Blok reviewed was Annenskij's first collection of poetry of 1904. This slim volume contained a number of original poems, as well as verse translations of several European poets. In his review of the work, Aleksandr Blok, despite accusations of "naive bad taste" and "decadent over-indulgence," discerned behind the "doubtful pseudonym" (Annenskij signed his work "Nik. T-o," i.e., "No One" in Russian) an innovative and inspired poet:

11 See, for example, Tucker, Janet. *Innokentij Annenskij and the Acmeist Doctrine*. Columbus: Slavica, 1986.
...But suddenly, you somehow become interested, read it through, and it seems fine, and you don’t believe that what you’ve read was written by Mr. Nobody (see p. 3). It is an entirely new feeling, such as occurs during an unexpected meeting.

Here is what the novelty of impression consists of: a human soul can be felt; crushed by an unbearable anguish, this soul is wild, lonely and reticent. This reticence is even nourished by a kind of instinctive cunning -- it is as if this soul is hiding itself from its own self, experiencing its pure sensations in the heat of decadent forms.

And this decadence immediately obstructs one’s eyes with the dust of "enamel minutes" and "black halls." But the deceptive, excessive sweetness of such phrases in no way ages the youthful muse of Mr. Nobody.

In Blok’s characterization of the poet there is one ironic inaccuracy: the muse of this poet may have been "youthful," but the poet himself was not. When *Quiet Songs* was published, Annenskij was fifty-four years-old. At the same time, however, the poet’s essay

yields much of value in a discussion of Annenskij’s work. Not only did Blok succinctly identify many of the dominant features of Annenskij’s poetry (anguish, loneliness, and reticence) but he also indirectly explained Annenskij’s reasons for using a pseudonym.

An anagram of the poet’s first name “Innokentij,” the pseudonym “Nik. T-o” is the Russian version of the Greek “outis”—an alias used by Ulysses to escape the Cyclops Polyphemus. Some have posited that Annenskij’s reasons were prosaic and pedestrian: a proper and respected school official, Annenskij ostensibly used this name to “hide” himself from the “Cyclops” of the public, which may not have appreciated such “decadent” verse from the caretaker of its children. It could also be construed as an instance of ironic self-abnegation: he knew he was an unknown poet. Blok’s remarks reveal a more profound aspect of Annenskij’s use of this “doubtful pseudonym”: through it the poet emphasizes his sense of isolation and separation, a feeling that causes him such anguish and despair, that he must use this device to protect himself (as Ulysses was protected from the Cyclops) from the “cyclops” of terrifying

life. Blok, however, gives us one more key for Annenskij’s hide-and-seek game when he writes:

ином, а на более тяжкой маской, заставившей его затеряться среди сотни книг, изданных так же безвкусно и в таком же тумане безвременья.15

One would like for the poet’s persona to be revealed, the persona which he seems to hide from himself; and not under a naive pseudonym, but under the more burdensome mask that forced him to lose himself among the hundreds of books published just as tastelessly, and in the same haze of transitional times.

Annenskij is indeed engaged in a constant attempt to conceal his face from the world. Part of his game as noted by Blok is the charade of hiding from self, of pretending not to know his own “I,” as seen in the final stanza of a poem from Quiet Songs, “Which one?” (“Который?”):

O царь Недоступного Света,
Отец моего бытия,
Открой же хоть сердцу поэта,
Которов создал ты я.

O Tsar of the Inaccessible World,
O father of my being.
Reveal at least to the heart of the poet,
Which I you have created.

One of Annenskij’s most immediate and constant concerns is the theme of a tragic isolation and separation of self from the

15Ibid.
surrounding world. Compounded and intensified by a constant and acute awareness of death, this theme can be found throughout Annenskij's oeuvre. Addressed in Annenskij scholarship from its beginnings and formulated in a variety of ways, critics have employed varying strategies and terminology in attempting to define this fundamental aspect of the poet, with varying success. There is ground to argue that the poet is not always finding adequate responses.

ii.

Critical Response to Annenskij the Poet

After Annenskij's unexpected death in 1909, Apollon devoted in its fourth issue no less than four articles to his many pursuits. F. F. Zelinskij, a classicist and editor of Annenskij's translations of Euripides, wrote an article on Annenskij the "philologist-classicist;" Georgij Čulkov, a prominent poet and critic, wrote on Annenskij's critical legacy. Vološin's article, cited above, was devoted to Annenskij the poet, as was that of Vjačeslav Ivanov, the symbolist poet. The latter two are of interest here as the first critical statements following the poet's death that concern Annenskij's
poetics.

Vološin devotes the first part of his article "I. F. Annenskij as Lyric Poet" ("И. Ф. Анненский--лирик") to his realization that the many different figures he had encountered in print were one and the same man. He then outlines several important features of Annenskij's poetry, including the poet's use of the "everyday word" ("бюдничное слово") and his frequent use of the motifs of nightmares and insomnia. Vološin's observation on Annenskij's relationship with nature is germane to the present study:

У него острый взгляд импрессиониста на природу. Но импрессионист не внутри природы--он вне её и смотрит на неё. И. Ф. Анненский смотрит на природу сквозь переплет окна из комнаты.16

His view of nature is acute, like that of an impressionist. But of an impressionist not inside nature--I. F. Annenskij looks at nature as an outsider, from his room, through the transom of a window.

Annenskij understood in the word "nature" ("природа") all of the surrounding world.17 Thus, Vološin recognized a fundamental aspect of Annenskij's major thematic concern: the poet's isolation

16 Op. Cit. 15.
17 See, for example, his letter of June 25, 1906. All letters are referred to by dates, and quoted, unless otherwise noted, from the most comprehensive compilation of the same, found in: Annenskij, I. F. Knigi otrazenij. Ašimbaeva, N. T., I. I. Podol'skaja and A. Fedorov, eds. Moscow: Nauka, 1979.
from the rest of the world—a world perceived only through the window of his lonely room. In addition, Vološin was one of the first critics to mention yet another important aspect of Annenskij's poetics: the theme of mortality and death.

Vjačeslav Ivanov, the sage and mystic of the symbolist movement, is most often cited for labeling Annenskij an "associative" ("ассоциативный") poet: "I. F. Annenskij as lyric poet is ... a symbolist of that trend which one might call associational symbolism" [Ivanov's emphasis].18 Ivanov explains this "associative symbolism" as a method by which the poet begins with a concrete image, and, instead of defining it, describes various connected images, so that finally the reader grasps the original image, and perceives it in a new and fresh perspective.19 Ivanov also distances Annenskij from the more mystical nature of his own verse. At the same time, using a metaphorical approach similar to Vološin's, Ivanov indirectly recognizes the central theme of the poet:

Для нас явление--символ, поскольку оно выход и дверь в тайну;
для тех поэтов [Анненского--Т.Р.А.] символ--тюрьмы оконца,
через которые глядит узник, чтобы, утомившись приглядевшимся

19 Ivanov in effect defines Viktor Šklovskij's famous concept of "ostranenie" as a key to Annenskij's work.
и ограниченным пейсажем, снова обратить взор в черную безвыходность своего каземата.20

For us, the phenomenon is a symbol, insofar as it is an exit and door into mystery; for those poets [such as Annenskij] the symbol is a prison window, through which the prisoner looks at a landscape, only to become wearied and once again turn his gaze into the black hopelessness of his cell.

Here Ivanov describes an essential aspect of Annenskij's dilemma of self: the poet is separated from the surrounding world, imprisoned as he is within himself. Outer reality may distract him for a moment, but he is invariably returned to his room, to his "prison-cell." Ivanov's metaphor may have been inspired by the poem "Through Open Windows" ("В открытые окна"):  

Бывает час в преддверье сна,  
Когда беседа умолкает,  
Нас тянет сердца глубина,  
А голос собственный пугает,  

И в нарастающей тени  
Через отворённые окна,  
Как жерла, светятся одни,  
Сливаясь, рыжие волокна.  

Не Скуки ль там Циклоп залег,  
От золотого зноя хмелен,  
Что, розовяя, уголок  
В закрытый глаз его нацелен?

There is a time on the threshold of sleep,  
When the conversation goes silent,  
And the depth of the heart draws us,  
But we are afraid of our own voice,

And in the growing shadow,  
Through the open windows,  
Like craters, only rust-colored fibers  
Merging, shine.

Was it not the Cyclops of Boredom that laid down there,  
Intoxicated by the golden heat,  
Because, turning pink, a bit of ember  
Was thrust into his closed eye?

The mention here of the "Cyclops of Boredom" supports Ivanov's claim: the persona conceivably would like to escape his vision of the Cyclops which, in keeping with its mythological origins, imprisons the poet. Thus, Ivanov, like Vološin, recognizes, albeit in somewhat different terms, the poet's focus on his relationship with the surrounding world—a theme that will continue to garner attention in subsequent studies of the poet.

In 1912, Aleksandr Buldeev in an article entitled "I. F. Annenskij as Poet" addresses in some detail Annenskij's preoccupation with the problem of self: "In no way trying to limit the writer [Annenskij--T.P.A.] forever with one general definition, I would propose to call him the singer of our tormentingly-splintered
"I"... . This critic also mentions death as one of the "riddles" addressed by Annenskij. In 1935, the Russian emigré poet, writer and critic Vladeslav Xodasevič wrote almost exclusively (and with some exaggeration) on this latter aspect of Annenskij's work, even to the extent of comparing the poet to Tolstoj's character Ivan Il'ič.

There are few other critical studies of Annenskij from the 20's, 30's and 40's: post-revolutionary times were not conducive to the appreciation of this "chamber" poet in the former Soviet Union. It would not be before 1959 that scholarship devoted to Annenskij was resumed by Andrej Fedorov in the first major collection of Annenskij's works, *Poems and Tragedies* (Стихотворения и трагедии). Fedorov is also the author of the only full-length monograph in Russian devoted to Annenskij, *The Life and Creative Works of I. F. Annenskij* (Жизнь и творчество I. F. Annenskogo), published in 1984. Fedorov, as will be recalled, recognizes the "distinctive traits" of Annenskij's verse. But he also overstates a dominant social theme in Annenskij's poetics, which, while important, is not Annenskij's primary concern. Of greater interest here is the fact that Fedorov observes the presence of the theme of

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the poet’s perception of self vis-a-vis the external world. In a
discussion of the poem "To the Poet" ("Поэту"), he considers
Annenskij’s perception of a “rift between the external world and
the internal world of the poet” as characteristic of his art, but at the
same time notes that Annenskij "does not perceive his "I" as
something self-contained and independent from the rest of the
world."\(^\text{22}\) The poem quoted by Fedorov in his introduction to the
first major collection of Annenskij’s works is well-chosen as an
illustration of this notion; below are the first stanzas:

В раздельной чёткости лучей
И в чадной слитности видений
Всегда над нами — власть вещей
С её триадой измерений.

И грани ширь бытия
Иль формы вымыслом ты множишь,
Но в самом Я от глаз Не Я
Ты никуда уйти не можешь.

In the separate clearness of rays
And in the smoky fusing of visions
The power of things, with its triad of dimensions
Always holds sway over us.

And you may expand the facets of being
Or multiply the molds with invention,
But in the very I from the eyes of the Non-I
You cannot escape anywhere.

\(^{22}\)Fedorov, A. "Поэтическое творчество Иннокентия Анненского." Annenskij,
Fedorov also notes that Annenskij's specific treatment of the theme of separation distinguishes him from his contemporaries (i.e., the symbolists): the poet does not perceive in his separation from the external world a sign of belonging to another, higher reality, but instead views it as something both personal and universal. While this rift separates Annenskij from the external world, it can also be argued that it inspires him to attempt to join with the same. In this respect, the work of the prominent Russian critic Lidija Ginzburg is illuminating.

Ginzburg has authored one of the most substantive contemporary studies of the poet. In her landmark study of Russian verse of 1964, *On Lyric Poetry* (О лирике), she devotes a chapter to Annenskij, where she states that

> органичнее всего для поэзии Анненского — диалектика страшного и прекрасного мира. Анненский больше всего Анненский там, где его страдающий человек страдает в прекрасном мире, овладеть которым он не в силах. [Ginzburg's emphasis]\(^2^3\)

Most organic of all for Annenskij's poetry is the dialectic of the terrible and the beautiful world. Annenskij is more than ever Annenskij there, where his suffering man suffers in the beautiful world, which he is powerless to master.

What Ginzburg terms Annenskij's "terrible world" can be considered the world of the "I," the poet's internal world, whereas the "beautiful world" can be interpreted as the world of the "non-I," or the external world. Ginzburg's statement can also be interpreted as attributing to Annenskij the idea of the opposition of "self" and "other"--an opposition that may also occur as "man" and "woman."

The "suffering" self (man) suffers in the presence of the other (woman), whom he is "powerless to master," and with whom he can never join or merge. In other words, the poet senses that he can never fulfill his desire. Furthermore, one must take into account the specter of death, which pervades his work. In the end, Annenskij is always frustrated, and as a consequence his verse resounds with a profound pessimism. At the same time, paradoxically, he continues his attempts to "merge" with the external world through his art. As Ginzburg states earlier in her study of Annenskij,

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24 Op. Cit. 334. It should be added that a part of this "structure," in which the "linkage of man with nature" is a "departure point" in "Annenskij"s entire poetic system" is the constant threat of destruction as the inevitable end result.
The merger of man with nature and, more broadly, with the surrounding world—this is the departure point for Annenskij's entire poetic system, determining its psychological symbolism and its objectified concreteness, which in turn defines in this system the very structure of the poetic image.

Ginzburg implies that the dominant theme of isolation and separation is constantly addressed by the poet, and, furthermore, defines his poetics. Annenskij continuously tries to bridge the gap, to merge with the world of the "non-I."

As has been demonstrated, throughout Annenskij scholarship critics have observed a common theme: the poet, experiencing a profound sense of separation and isolation from the surrounding world, through art attempts to overcome his alienation. For the most part, this theme has been discussed in predominantly abstract terms. In light of the complex, elusive and frequently enigmatic nature of Annenskij's verse, even with such substantive pronouncements as Ginzburg's, and the departure point of a common, underlying theme perceived by several critics, much in Annenskij's verse nevertheless has remained unexplored and unclear. Part of the reason must be sought in the dearth of biographical and other contextual data. There is, however, recently
published archival evidence that yields new and useful information which in turn sheds much light on this poet and his works. This evidence also suggests that the underlying thematic concern in Annenskij's work is highly personal in nature: the poet can be closely identified with the lyric persona. Furthermore, it has become clear that his verse is to a remarkable degree embedded in reality—making it not only possible, but indeed imperative to reevaluate Annenskij's poetics.

iii.

New Perspectives in Annenskij Scholarship

The publication by the Russian scholars Orlov, Timenčik, Lavrov and Podol'skaja of primary sources (including personal correspondence, memoiristic accounts and biographical information), for the most part untapped by Annenskij scholars, helps establish a concrete context for a new reading of his often enigmatic poetry—most notably in the case of his most important work, *The Cypress Chest*. Most of the letters in question were

written during the last years of his life—at the same time the poet was composing this collection. An examination of those letters and other primary sources, and their significance in terms of the dominant theme in Annenskij’s poetic collection and the main concepts of his aesthetics will be treated in the following chapter. It is not the intention here to base an analysis of *The Cypress Chest* exclusively on Annenskij’s biographical data. But in the final analysis, the poet is a man, and as such the literature he creates is intimately bound up with his life. His life can be considered a text that interacts with his art. For this reason, the use of biographical material is eminently justifiable. My reading of Annenskij’s poetry, based partly on biographical data, is intended to augment, rather than replace, past and present readings of Annenskij’s poetry.

Furthermore, with Timenčik’s 1978 discovery of new archival materials, the publication history of Annenskij’s collection *The Cypress Chest* has recently come into question. Since there are
currently two versions of the work, with some dispute as to which
text is definitive, I will address this issue in detail in a separate
chapter for the following reason: As a highly structured (as
opposed to spontaneous) work, its true composition and the correct
order of poems are essential factors in the development of the
poet's dominant theme or themes. A primary task will thus be to
establish the validity of one version over the other. The edition
shown to be definitive forms the material for a close reading of the
entire work--this is done in Chapters III and IV. Opting for the
version I deem valid, I perceive yet another important aspect of
*The Cypress Chest*: This complexly structured collection of poems
can be read as a unified lyric cycle. The view of Annenskij's
collection as a cycle unfolding a personal and poetic experience
helps to clarify numerous enigmatic passages. Hence, a discussion
of his work as a lyric cycle will comprise the concluding chapter of
the present study.

A variety of critical approaches will be utilized and evaluated
during the course of analysis. In the following chapter I will
examine relevant biographical data to establish a context for
subsequent analytic chapters. In Chapter III, where issues of
publication history and validity come under scrutiny, I will also rely extensively on primary sources, as well as on the close reading of selected texts.

In the close reading of poems and groupings of poems my approach is informed by the structuralist method. On the level of micro-analysis, the verse theories formulated by such critics as Lotman, Tynjanov and others are invaluable in the close reading of individual texts. By the same token, on the level of macro-analysis, this method is useful in that it lends itself to a study of the relationships between the individual texts, and how they result in systems of meaning within the collection, as well as how they combine to form the structure of the work as a whole.

Riffaterre's study of intertextuality is also useful when applied to Annenskij's poems—not in relation to other works, but in the manner in which poems within the collection "inform" one another. Indeed, in Annenskij's poetry, the reader must constantly search for referent texts (within a grouping or within the collection) that might fill in the gaps, or, to paraphrase Riffaterre, "redeem the ungrammaticalities of the text"—i.e., "those features, lexical or phrasal, that are both the problem, when seen from the text, and
the solution to that problem when their other, intertextual side is revealed."27 The presence of what can be termed "intratexts," in addition to providing keys to the meanings of individual poems, also suggests a reading of this work as a unified text, or cycle (i.e., the collection functions as a kind of complete "grammar").

In a consideration of Annenskij's work as lyric cycle, in conjunction with a structuralist approach, I draw on general theory of poetic collections (Fraistat, Rosenthal & Gall) and the studies of lyric cycles in Russian literature (Fomenko and Sloan). At the same time, Annenskij's own approach to criticism and to the reading of a poetic text, remarkably progressive for its time, also informs my own critical approach; it deserves brief mention here.

Annenskij anticipated contemporary notions of the autonomy of the "active" reader in his article "What is Poetry" ("Что такое поэзия"):28

...Поэзия приятна нам тем, что заставляет нас тоже быть немного поэтами и тем разнообразить нашу существование. ...


Poetry is pleasing to us because it forces us to be poets a little bit as well, thereby diversifying our existence. ...

Not one great work of poetry becomes fully explicit during the lifetime of the poet, but for that very reason it is as if for a long time his symbols engender questions which attract human thought. Not only the poet, critic and author, but even the spectator and reader eternally create Hamlet.

Understood here is the central critical notion that there are no "completely right" answers—only continuous, myriad readings of and interactions with the poetic text. New readings thus do not invalidate, but rather complement each other. The goal of the present study, then, in the final analysis, is to address from a new perspective the questions that are raised in Annenskij's own "great work of poetry," The Cypress Chest. It is hoped that the ideas set down here will also raise questions, and "attract human thought."
CHAPTER II

ANNENSKIJ’S AESTHETIC AND THE REALITY OF DESIRE

Oh Lord, but for a moment of freedom, fiery freedom, madness...
I. F. Annenskij
(letter to Muxina, May 19, 1906)

O, give me only a moment, but in reality, not in a dream,
So that I might become fire, or be consumed by fire!
"Tormenting Sonnet"
("Phantom Trefoil")

1. Selected Biographical Information

There remain to the present day many gray areas and lacunae in Annenskij’s biography. The biographies that do exist, while

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1Fedorov has compiled the most comprehensive and accurate biography of Annenskij to date. (Fedorov, A. V. Innokentij Annenskij. Ličnost' i tvorčestvo. Leningrad: Xudožestvennaja literatura, 1984. 3-75.) Setchkarev’s 1963 work also presents a fairly complete biography.
relatively complete in regard to the external events of the poet’s life, do not always provide the necessary context for an understanding of his poetics. This is due in part to the fact that the various sources of information concerning the poet’s life are not only scarce, but often inaccurate. For example, until quite recently, there were conflicting data even concerning Annenskij’s date of birth. Only in 1985 did the Russian critic A. V. Orlov, a major figure in archival research on Annenskij, establish once and for all that Annenskij was born on August 20, 1855.2 Orlov bases his findings on a primary source: Annenskij’s own autobiographical statement.3 A major shortcoming of most biographies is a reliance on the recollections of Valentin Krivič (Annenskij’s son).4

The recently published primary sources already mentioned,

2 Orlov, A. V. (Op. Cit.) bases his data on Annenskij’s “Žizneopisanie,” written when the poet was nineteen years-old; prior to the publication of this document, most researchers relied on the recollections of his son, V. Krivič, who gives the wrong date. (Krivič, Valentin (V. I. Annenskij). “Innokentij Annenskij po sameinym vospominanijam i rukopisnym materialam.” Literaturnaja mys’; Almanax. 3 (1925): 208-256.)
3 It should also be added that the 1979 edition of Annenskij’s Books of Reflections gives the correct date, as taken from church records. Orlov’s findings, however, are the only instance where Annenskij’s date of birth is based on the poet’s own statement.
4 While much of Krivič’s information is valuable (eg., his publication of Annenskij’s letters from Italy, and some factual information), the tendency of the son to eulogize his father, as might be expected, often dominates.
however, reveal a facet of this enigmatic poet previously either overlooked or suppressed. Moreover, they provide insight into the poet’s major thematic concern. Particularly valuable are Annenskij’s correspondence and a number of memoiristic accounts. Complementing the standard, official image of the poet as director of the Carskoe Selo Lyceum and respected classicist, respected father and teacher that prevailed hitherto and was established by his son in 1925, his letters open up new vistas in understanding his poetry. The more personal, intimate and unofficial sides of the poet’s life revealed in the primary sources are the most relevant in a reading of the poet’s basic theme, and for this reason are analyzed here.

ii.

Primary Sources and Annenskij’s Basic Theme

An autobiographical statement written by Annenskij and uncovered by Orlov provides the most reliable data concerning the poet’s early years. In it, Annenskij writes:

\[... меня посетила очень тяжелая и долговременная болезнь, оставившая неизгладимые следы на состоянии моего здоровья в позднейшие годы жизни.\]

\[5\] Orlov, A. V. Op. Cit. 170. All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.
I was visited by a serious and drawn-out illness that left indelible traces on the condition of my health in the later years of my life.

I grew up a weak, ill child and, in respect to my physical development, I remained far behind children my age. Quite early I began to study and, as far as I can recall, I never found studies burdensome.

...I grew up almost without friends, among people who were older than me; I was taken care of mainly by women.

On the basis of this document, several notions about Annenskij’s perception of self can already be formulated. Firstly, at an early age he was keenly aware of his physical frailty, the foundation of his subsequent acute awareness of his mortality. Secondly, he sensed his isolation and separation from others. Thirdly, there is an intimation of the important role he would ascribe to the women in his life. These three aspects of his perception of self surface in later documents as well, particularly in his private letters.
Stricken in his youth with a fatal heart disease, Annenskij was almost obsessed with the specter of his death. For example, we have the following macabre anecdotal information: when someone would say, "Forgive me, Innokentij Fedorovič, it seems that I have taken your place?", Annenskij was known to reply, "Please, think nothing of it, my place is in the cemetery." In his personal letters Annenskij constantly mentions his illness, underscoring his preoccupation with death. In a letter to E. M. Muxina (a colleague's wife), written on July 1, 1904, he writes:

... Я очень рад, что приобрел уже настолько сил, что могу поблагодарить Вас за Ваше доброе участие к ниспосланному мне memento mori. Я еще и до сих пор не вполне уверен, что опасность миновала, так как болезняный процесс, по-видимому, далеко не миновал еще.

Своим спасением я обязан не только уходу, но самоотвержению Дины Владимировны. Будь я на руках людей незнакомых мне, я бы, наверное, умер. ...

... I am very glad that I have already gained enough strength that I can thank you for your sympathy for the memento mori granted me. Even now I am not completely confident that the danger has passed, since the illness's process has far from passed.

I am indebted for my salvation not only to the care, but the selflessness of Dina Vladimirovna [Annenski]'s wife--T.P.A.] Had I been in the hands of people not close to me, I would have surely died. ...

In yet another letter to Muxina (June 5, 1905), he writes, "I was ill, but now, it seems, I'm healthy, so far as I am able to be healthy.

Only my heart is weak... ." There are many more instances in his correspondence where Annenskij demonstrates his awareness of death; this same awareness also pervades his poetry. Indeed, the poet is always conscious of his weak heart and possible death at any moment, quite suddenly and at a time when he would be particularly susceptible to fear, such as at night—the words "heart", along with "night" are the most frequent in his poetry.⁷

An intense consciousness of death is also inextricably intertwined with the poet's profound sense of isolation and separation as adumbrated in his autobiographical statement. An anguished loneliness—a consequence of his feeling of separation—is another aspect of the poet's emotional state that is frequently expressed in his correspondence. For example, in a letter to A. V. Borodina (June 15, 1904), proffering several possible reasons for his attraction to music, he confesses, "...Maybe [I like music] because I am simply unhappy and lonely." Annenskij's perception of the irreparable rift between self and other, the "I and the "non-I," with its attendant feelings of unhappiness and loneliness is also related to his relationship with various women. Additionally, it is

unambiguously reflected in his view of love and passion.

Annenskij writes in his autobiographical statement that during his youth he was for the most part under the care of women. Women continue to be more important than men in his later life. And while the specifics of his relationships with the various women in his life are difficult to define, the recently published archival materials shed much light on this aspect of Annenskij's life. Indeed, there is overwhelming material evidence that points to an intimate and passionate relationship with various women, providing a vital key to an understanding of the poet's art. Not necessarily consummated, these love affairs were at the very least envisioned by the poet. This is conveyed both in his personal correspondence and other primary sources, and, as will be shown in later chapters, in a significant portion of his creative output. Although the notion of passion, realized or not, has been mentioned by some critics, it has only been given limited attention. There is as well notable critical dispute in this area.

Sergej Makovskij, in his article "Portraits of Contemporaries" ("Портреты современников"), was one of the first memoirists to
suggest the influence of a "love affair" on Annenskij's work. He states that when one witnessed how the poet interacted with women, one could tell that Annenskij

предложил какую-то несчастливую любовь. Может быть одну, единственную на всю жизнь?.. Несчастливую -- не потому, что без взаимности, а потому что судьба не захотела этой любви. И когда восторгавшись в его стихах, особенно в трагедиях, такие эврипидовские по духу, видишь -- что эту личную неудачу он связывал с самой горькой из своих идей: о несуществовании вообще любви в ее высочайшем значении, -- любовь осуждена звездным роком.

endured some kind of unhappy love. Maybe a once in a lifetime love?.. Unhappy not because it was not reciprocated, but because fate did not want this love. And when you read his poems closely, especially his tragedies, so Euripidean in spirit, you see that he linked this personal misfortune with the most bitter of his ideas: the notion of the impossibility in general of realizing love in its highest sense; love is condemned to an earthly fate.

Other critics, however, disagree. In his comprehensive study of the poet, the American critic Vsevelod Setchkarev rejects Makovskij's notion: "This very uncertain conjecture [of a love affair -- T.P.A.], in spite of Makovskij's quotations, is not, in my opinion, confirmed in any of Annenskij's poems." Even without the evidence found in several of Annenskij's letters (first published in 1973 and to which Setchkarev, writing in 1963 therefore had no access), it is quite
clear, however, that certain of Annenskij's poems deal with love and unfulfilled passion. For example, consider the first lines of "The Three" ("Троё"):

Ее факел был огнен и ал,
Он был талый и сумрачный снег;
Он глядел не ево и сгорал,
И сгорал от непознанных игр.

Her torch was fiery and scarlet,
He was thawing and twilight snow;
He looked at her and burned away,
And burned away out of untasted blisses.

or the final stanza of "В марте":

Только раз оторвать от разбухшей земли
Не могли мы завистливых глаз,
Только раз мы холодные руки сплали
И, дрожа, поскорее из сада ушли...
Только раз... в этот раз...

Only once could we not tear our envious
Eyes from the moisture-swollen earth,
Only once we clasped cold hands and,
Shivering, left the garden hurriedly...
Only once... that time...10

As we now know beyond doubt, the latter poem was written under the inspiration of a particularly poignant moment with an actual

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10 Translations from The Cypress Chest, unless otherwise noted, are from R. H. Morrison's translation of the 1910 edition. (Annenskij, Innokenti. The Cypress Chest, Bilingual Edition. R.H. Morrison, trans. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1982.) Morrison's translations are usually excellent. However, the syntax and structure of Annenskij's poems are changed considerably—conceivably in the interests of presenting a poetic translation. I have altered some of his translations, opting for a closer adherence to the syntax of the original for reasons of analytic clarity.
This fact to a certain degree invalidates Setchkarev's statement: "Passion exists in Annenskij also, but is solely directed towards problems of the soul, not toward real persons or ideals representing such persons." As evidence has shown, Makovskij is closer to the truth than Setchkarev. He is the critic to have perceived the power of passion in Annenskij's verse:

And it is none but the voice of love that at times so forcefully bursts from his lines (not only abstract, but intimate, biographical love). And how convincingly do some poems from The Cypress Chest testify to this love, as for example in "Trefoil of Temptation" or "Moonlit Trefoil," or "A Current of Mignonette in a Dark Railroad Car" from the "Hinged Icon" "Virtue."

Fedorov does not explicitly reject the possibility of a "love affair," but does not embrace it either. Instead, he presents excerpts of the

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11 This is revealed in a letter by Ol'ga Xmara-Barščevskaja, Annenskij's daughter-in-law (Addressed to V. V. Rozanov, and dated February 20, 1917, this document is reproduced in its entirety by Lavrov and Timenčik (Op. Cit. 118-119.). This letter is discussed in detail further in this study.
13 Makovskij, Op. Cit. 231. Makovskij cites different poems than those excerpted above, thus revealing that "passion" is an integral part of Annenskij's verse.
existing evidence (the Russian critic had access to archives which contained the letters, articles and reminiscences about the poet analyzed here) ultimately avoiding the issue in an encomiastic closing to his chapter on Annenskij's biography:

Although one should not exaggerate the well-being of Annenskij's life, even if only externally, one should also not underestimate the difficulties and complexities that occurred in his life. The primary substance of this life, and possibly the main source of his joy was the enormous creative workings of his mind—in poetic, critical and scholarly terms. And the entire legacy left behind by the writer is the fruit of this labor.

I summarize: a concrete love affair, however Platonic, did exist. Annenskij's poems frequently, albeit obliquely, refer to the existence of such a biographical event, and many of his personal letters addressed to women clearly imply intimacy, either intellectual or erotic. The bulk of such intimate letters were written to A. V. Borodina and E. M. Muxina. The former was a relative, the latter the wife of one of his colleagues. I. I.

Podol'skaja, who initially published much of Annenskij's personal correspondence, discusses a letter to Muxina, noting that "the poet sent [to Muxina] a letter that is difficult to define as anything other than a love letter, although not one word about love is spoken in it." Since Annenskij was married, his relationship with his wife and his domestic situation warrants attention.

As in other areas of Annenskij's biography, information concerning his marital relations differs greatly depending on the source. Thus, according to his son Valentin Krivič (who, in Lavrov's words, strives to "paint a noble picture of the over-all familial situation"), Annenskij's life with Dina Valentinovna was blissful. Setchkarev regards Krivič's assessment as probable, quoting an early letter by the poet in which the latter describes to an acquaintance his love for his bride:

"...Моя Дина очень хороша собой. Она блондинка и волосы её blond sendrée [sic] с зелёноватым отливом. Она светская женщина, т. е. обладает всем тем привлекательным изяществом, которое, ... для меня обаятельно. Но это не та противная светскость, которая гонит мысль и стесняет чувство... Опять-таки, судя с своей точки зрения, я не нахожу ничего несоответствующего моим умственным интересам и требованиям в её умственном уровне, и напротив, её ясный ум часто"

My Dina is a very handsome woman. She is blond and her hair is blond cendrée with a greenish tint. She is a woman of the world, that is, she possesses all that attractive refinement which for me ... is enchanting. But it is not that disgusting worldliness which chases away thought and impedes feeling... Again, judging from my point of view, I do not find anything that does not correspond to my intellectual interests and demands on her intellectual level, but, on the contrary, her clear mind often shows me where the truth lies whenever my mind contrives to wander around and about. ...

Her character is firm; she has great patience in the enduring of physical suffering, a nervous temperament without an "irritability", a strong will which is somewhat excessively despotic and subjugating.

She is very, terribly kind and very simple...
She loves me very much, and is no less jealous. I love her very much, and I try to think that I am by no means afraid.

Well, there you have her portrait, sketched after many long seances, during which, by the will of God, I discovered

...love
With its tormenting languor
With its heavenly delight

Setchkarev somewhat categorically concludes: "From Krivič's article, we must believe that this affection continued through the years."\(^1^8\) V. S. Sreznevskaja, a childhood acquaintance of Axmatova, also gives a favorable description of Annenskij's wife in her memoirs:

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Это была когда-то прекрасная, слывшая красавицей светская женщина — много старше своего мужа(...), на всю свою жизнь сделавшись нежным и преданным другом поэта, его garde-malade, секретарем и хранителем "кипарисового ларца".\(^1^9\)

This was once a beautiful, woman of the world, with the reputation of a beauty — much older than her husband (...), who for the rest of her life became the tender and devoted friend of the poet, his garde-malade, secretary and guardian of the "cypress chest."

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Their great difference in age—Annenskij was 14 years younger—is noted in several recollections, and exaggerated by some who describe her in disparaging terms. For example, B. V. Varneke, to whom can be ascribed the most negative appraisal of his former colleague, writes:

Чуть не студентом И. Ф. женился на вдове, матери своего товарища по университету, увлеченной ее красотой, о которой догадываться можно было по ... молодым портретам. ... Теперь это была дряхлая высокая старуха, по крайней мере на 25 лет старше своего цветущего мужа.\(^2^0\)

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\(^1^8\) Ibid.


\(^2^0\) Varneke, B. V. "I. F. Annenskij." (Lavrov, A. V.; Timenčik, R. D. Op. Cit. 73.)
Just out of school, I. F. married a widow, the mother of a classmate at the university; attracted by her beauty, about which one could only guess by looking at portraits of her when she was young. ... Now this was a decrepit, shrivelled up old woman, at least 25 years older than her blossoming husband.

Further emphasizing the unhappiness he perceived in Annenskij's domestic life, Varneke describes a scene in which Annenskij had just been subjected to a rather humiliating gesture (his wife had fed him a section of orange at a dinner party):

И. Ф. ничего не сказал, покорно проглотил апельсин, но по глазам видно было, что он с удовольствием растерзал бы её в эту минуту на части: такая ласка была бы очень мила, если бы была направлена нежной бабушкой на маленького внучка, но когда расписанная как маска старуха так публично ласкала своего супруга, это становилось смешно и противно.²¹

I. F. said nothing, obediently swallowed the section of orange, but one could see in his eyes that he would have torn her to pieces that very moment with pleasure: such a caress would have been endearing had it been directed by a tender grandmother toward a small grandchild, but when an old woman, painted-up like a mask, publicly caressed her spouse in this manner, it became ridiculous and offensive.

O. S. Begičeva, the daughter of a relative, also observes in a similar vein:

Тяжёлая домашняя жизнь была у И. А. Анненского. Его жена не понимала его творчества. В прошлом красивая женщина, в годы 1906-1909 уже старуха. Она мучительно цеплялась за Анненского, видя в нем главным образом источник материального благополучия. ²²

²¹Ibid.
In. Annenskij had a burdensome domestic life. His wife did not understand his work. In the past a beautiful woman, in the years from 1906-1909 she was already an old woman. She agonizingly clung to Annenskij, seeing in him for the most part a source of material well-being.

In addition to a difference in age, other factors suggest that Annenskij's relationship with his wife may have been somewhat superficial. The difference in their backgrounds—Annenskij was well-educated, a poet and pedagogue, while his wife was from the petty landed gentry—could have contributed to a certain intellectual rift. Although he emphasizes her intellectual capacity in his earlier letter (quoted above), at the same time he calls her "simple," and also mentions that he is "afraid" of her. Other evidence suggests that this poet may not have found in his wife a suitable audience for either his intellect or his passion. For example, apart from a copy of *Bacchae* (1894) that bears a dedication to his wife,23 there is only one poem dedicated to her in all of Annenskij's works: "From the Bed" ("С кровати") from *Posthumous Verse*. Even in this poem, however, Annenskij does not directly address his wife, but devotes the poem to his "garde

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23Setchkarev. Ibid.
malade." This absence of dedications to his wife was not because he was not in the habit of writing them. In fact, Annenskij dedicated a number of poems, either directly or indirectly, to other people. Significantly, these are addressed predominantly to women, including the aforementioned E. M. Muxina and A. V. Borodina—with whom he also frequently corresponded.

Podol'skaja writes that little is known about Borodina and Muxina or Annenskij's relationship with them. As the critic suggests, his relationship with Borodina differed somewhat from that with Muxina.24 Indeed, in letters to the former there is a note of propriety and restraint, indicating that Annenskij may have repressed any less-than-appropriate feelings for this woman. Furthermore, she was a relative, and he often refers to her as "cousin" ("кузина").25 In addition, Annenskij frequently mentions his wife in letters to Borodina. Yet at the same time, he finds an obviously compassionate audience for his notions of poetry and artistic creation lacking elsewhere (i.e., in his spouse). He also considers Borodina a source of inspiration, as recorded in the following letter (July 14, 1905):

25Of course, affairs between cousins and relatives were by no means nonexistent in Russia at that time.
... Часто-часто за последние время останавливал я свои мысли на Вас, дорогая Анна Владимировна, и чувствовал, что мне недостает Вас: в разговорах именно с Вами не раз приходили мысли, которые потом я обдумывал для своих сочинений, и никогда не утомляло меня -- как утомляет почти все на свете -- сидеть под большим абажуром, -- и я только жалел, что стрелка идет слишком быстро. Вы не думаете, не правда ли, что я рисуюсь перед Вами? Нет, нет и нет! Я совершенно убежден, что работал бы лучше, если бы Вы были теперь в Царском. ...

Very often of late I have rested my thoughts on you, dear Anna Vladimirovna, and I have felt that I miss you: it is in conversations namely with you that thoughts have often occurred to me, which I have later considered for my compositions, and it has never wearied me--as almost everything on earth wearies me--to sit under the large lampshade; and I only regretted that the clock's hands moved too quickly. You don't think, do you, that I am showing off to you? No, no and no! I am completely convinced that I would work better, if you were now in Carskoe Selo. ...

In his missives to Muxina, Annenskij is much more effusive. Indeed, in many of his letters to her there is clear evidence of passion. For example, in a letter of May 19, 1906, the poet is obviously baring his soul to the addressee.26 Or in yet another letter to Muxina (June 16, 1905), Annenskij writes:

**Ma chère et douce amie**
Votre lettre m'a fait du bien -- je la lis et la relis, et elle me donne plus de «Vous», de votre «Moi», que vous ne prétendiez peut être m'y faire parvenir. Je la combine mentalement à la pivoine rose et mystiquement ensoleillée qui s'épanouit tout près de mon balcon et je pense à Vous... et tout enfoui dans la saleté de mes bouquins je ne sais que penser à Vous, si entourée et pourtant si seule et si mystiquement ensoleillée du feu de ma pensée solitaire...

26This is the letter cited by Podol'skaja as a patent love lyric.
In this letter there are suggestions of the merger that Annenskij sought in his aesthetics, as well as in reality: "elle me donne plus de "Vous," de votre "Moi". The fact that Annenskij wrote to Muxina in French is also revealing. It is the language of a literature (French symbolism) that he considered akin to his own aesthetics. His use of French is also another method of emphasizing a distance, or in other words shielding his desire in the code of another, foreign language. Finally, French is the language of the forbidden grands passions. Of note is the fact that he apparently dedicated an early poem to Muxina which was composed in French ("Poésie dernière"). Annenskij writes to Muxina on October 27, 1906, once again in French, displaying an intense longing and pathos:

Après une nuit très tourmentée, dans le désespoir d'une vilaine chambre d'hôtel que bienfait, oh ma blanche consolatrice, que quelque pages de Vous en ces chers caractères romains si ... effacés... si lointains...
Toute la journée 'a ma triste besogne je ne pensais qu à vous écrire. Il fait déjà sombre mais mon premier moment libre vous appartient.

27 This poem was only published in Posthumous Verse (Посмертные стихи). The original was provided by Muxina, according to Annenskij's son (Krivič, V. "Predislovie k 2-omu izdaniju" and "Primečanija." Annenskij, I. F. Kiparisovų laere. Vtoraja kniga stikov (posmertnaja). Peterburg: Kartonnyj domik, 1923. 154.). I say "apparently," since the dedication is also "encoded," reading as follows: Dedié à Madame C. M. — only the last initial coincides with Muxina's name (whose first initials were "E. M." The date is also a type of code: "Le 7-m 8-bre, 1900."
In his correspondence with these women, Annenskij frequently quotes certain poems, either partially or in their entirety. In this manner, his letters "supplement, and at times also clarify much of that which until now remained unclear or was only vaguely divined in his poems." In a similar manner, they form an important key in understanding the dominant theme in Annenskij's aesthetics. This is even more convincingly demonstrated in another letter to Borodina.

The letter in question was written on January 12, 1907. Annenskij recalls an event that had occurred 25 years prior. Although the woman in the event could be his wife (at the time he had already been married three years) it is more probably Borodina herself, suggesting that in the past they may have been quite close, or even intimate. In any case, Annenskij defines to a large extent an important aspect of his aesthetic, the notion of the "I" and the "non-I," and his personal attempts to bridge the rift between them. Below is an excerpt from this letter:

Мне было очень приятно прочитать в Вашем милом письме, что Frostzauber заставил Вас подумать и обо мне. Знавте — смешно подумать иногда: отчего это не хочется порой возобновлять приятных впечатлений?.. Это было более 25 лет тому назад; зимой, в морозную, густо белозвездную ночь мы по дороге во

28 Podol'skaja (Ibid.)
I found it very pleasant to read in your dear letter that the Frostzauber also made you think about me. You know—sometimes it's amusing to think: why does one not feel like renewing pleasant impressions?.. It happened more than 25 years ago; in the winter, on a frigid, thickly white-starred night we got lost in a area of felled timber along the road to Ržev... If you could imagine this place on a July day--this mossy meadow, which smokes along the sides of your road, its rooted out stumps, so mossy and dusty, and this trembling noontime air, all full of the smell of burning, of white butterflies, stifling dust, heat and fresh tar, -- and now the hoarfrost has transformed this entire burdensome crippled earth! If there was ever a time in my life when I was not ... happy ... but blissful, then it was precisely on that night. Next to me was a woman whom I loved, but she had nothing to do with this mystery; I was a poet, but it didn't even occur to me to approach this enchanted non-I with the shrouds of words, with the importunity of rhythm, with an attempt of whatever kind of limit there might be...

Interesting here is Annenskij’s paradoxical attitude towards poetry: he states that he “was a poet,” but that it did not even occur to him to turn to the “cover of words” “to approach this enchanted non-I” verbally. There is a suggestion of an almost mystical union with
the surrounding world, one "beyond words" in a Tjutčevian spirit. Also somewhat paradoxical is his statement that the woman who sat beside him was unaware and uninvolved ("ни при чем"), not realizing what was happening. Here we find an intimation of the transposition of a personal or physical passion into an artistic or aesthetic one. Significant in this connection is Annenskij's prose piece "Andante." After a lyrical description of the transformation of a tiresome, hot July day into a soothing evening, during which the poet rides in a wagon with another woman, he writes:

... И странно, — как сближает нас со всем тем, что и не-мы, эта туманная ночь, и как в то-же время чуждо друг другу звучат наши голоса, уходя, каждый за своей душой в жуткую зыбкость ночи...

Брось возжи и дай мне руку. Пусть отдохнет и наш старый конь...

Вот ушли куда-то и последние кусты. Там, далеко внизу, то сверкнет, то погаснет холодная полоса реки, а возле маячит слабый огонек парома... не говори! Слушай тишину, слушай, как стучит твое сердце! Возьми даже руку и спрячь ее в рукав. Будем рядом, но розно. И пусть другими, крутыми путями наши растаявшие в июльском тумане тени сблизятся, сольются и станут одна тень...

Как тихо... Пробило час... еще... еще... и довольно... Все молчит...

Молчи те и вы, стонущие, призывные. Как хорошо!

А ты, жизнь, иди! Я не боюсь тебя, уходящей, и не считаю твоих

And it's strange how it [the evening?] brings us closer with everything that is also "not-us," this misty night, and how at the same time our voices sound alien to one another, departing, each beyond its soul, into the terrible, unstable night...

Throw down the reigns and give me your hand. Let our old horse rest as well...

Now the last bushes have also gone off somewhere. There, far below, the cold strip of the river first glitters and then disappears, and alongside the weak little flame of a ferry looms... don't speak! Listen to the silence, and how your heart is pounding!... Even take your hand and hide it in your sleeve. We will be next to each other, but separate. And let our shadows, dissipating in the July mist, draw close, merge, and become one shadow...

How quiet... The hour strikes... again... again... and enough... Everything is silent. Be silent as well you [chimes] that moan and call. How fine...

And you life, go! I do not fear you as you depart, and I do not count the minutes you are doling out. And you cannot even leave me, for you are after all me, and nothing else -- it is this that is certain...

Of note here is that in both of these excerpts, the poet appears to bridge the gulf between the "I" and the "non-I," in this case signified as death and life (in "Andante": "I do not fear you as you depart, and I do not count the minutes you are doling out. And you cannot even leave me, for you are after all me, and nothing else -- it is this that is certain..."). At the same time, he nonetheless recognizes a sense of separation. In "Andante" he at first desires to
physically join with his partner ("Give me your hand") but then reconsiders, settling for an aesthetic fulfillment of his desire ("We will be next to each other, but separate") opting only for a merger of his and the woman's images (their shadows). On a personal level love and passion remain unfulfilled. On an aesthetic level the frustration of desire and its eventual sublimation are transformed into a major theme of his lyrics and linked to the theme of art. Another primary source—a letter written by Annenskij's daughter-in-law, Ol'ga Xmara-Barščevskaja to the writer V. V. Rozanov—confirms this beyond doubt.

This letter, although not written by or addressed to Annenskij, nevertheless contains important information concerning his relationship with its author, his daughter-in-law.30 (Unfortunately, the personal correspondence between Annenskij and Xmara-Barščevskaja, as well as her own reminiscences, have yet to be discovered.31) Below are quoted the relevant sections of the letter in question:

30 Ol'ga Xmara-Barščevskaja was married to one of Annenskij's two stepsons, Platon Petrovič Xmara-Barščevskij (Podol'skaja, I. I. 1987. Op. Cit. 533); Annenskij had one son by his wife—Valentin Krivič.
Вы спрашиваете, любила ли я Иннокентия Федоровича? Господи! Конечно, любила, люблю... И любовь моя «plus fort que mort»... Была ли я его «женой»? Увы нет! Видите, я искренне говорю «увы», потому что не горжусь этим ни мгновения: той связи, которой покровительствует «Змей-Ангел», между нами не было. И не потому, чтобы я греха боялась, или не решилась, или не хотела, или боялась себя лживыми уверениями, что «можно любить двумя половинами сердца», -- нет, тысячу раз нет! Поймите, родной, он этого не хотел, хотя, может быть, настояще любил только одну меня... Но он не мог переступить его убивала мысль: «Что же я? прежде отнял мать (у пасынка), а потом возьму жену? Куда же я от своей совети спрачусь?» -- И вот получилась «не связь, а лучеварное слияние».32 ...

Он связи плотской не допустил... Но мы «повенчали наши души», и это знали только мы двое... а теперь знаете Вы... По какому праву? Почему Вы? Господь ведает... значит, так нужно... для кого? для чего? Не спрашивая... подчиняюсь и только... и знаю, это самая сильная форма брака... Вы спросите, «как это повенчали души»? Очень просто: ранней весной, в ясное утро мы с ним сидели в саду дачи Эбермана: и друг созналось безумие желания спиться... желание до остр ряд боли, до страдания... до холодных слез... Я помню и сейчас, как хрустнули пальцы безнадежно стиснутых рук и как стон вырвался из груди... и он сказал: «хочешь быть моей? Вот сейчас... сию минуту? Видишь эту маленькую ветку на березе? Нет, не эту, а ту... вон высоко на фоне облака? Видишь?.. Смотри на неё пристально... и я буду смотреть со своей срастся желания... Молчи... Сейчас по лучам наших глаз сольются наши души в той точке, Левенька, сольтся навсегда...» О, каков чувство блаженства, экстаза... безумия, если хотите... весь мир утонул в мгновении! Есть объятия... без поцелуя... Разве не чудо? Нет, не чудо, а естественно (ведь объятия и поцелуи для тела)... А потом он написал:

Только раз оторвать от разбухшей земли
Не могли мы завистливых глаз,
Только раз мы холодные руки сплели
И, дрожа, поскорее из сада ушли...

Только раз... в этот раз...33

32 This is a quote from the poem "Amethysts" ("Аметисты") a poem to be discussed in detail in Chapter III.
You ask whether I loved Innokentij Fedorovič? Lord! Of course I loved him, and I still do now... And my love is "plus fort que mort"... Was I his "wife"? Alas no! You see, I sincerely say "alas," because I am not for a moment proud of this; that connection, which the "Snake-Angel" patronizes did not exist between us. And not because I was afraid of sinning, or didn't dare, or did not want to, or lulled myself with false hopes, that "one can love with two halves of the heart"—no, a thousand times no! Understand me, my dear, he did not want this, although, maybe, truly he loved only me... But he could not transgress... he was tormented by the thought: "Who am I? first I took the mother (from his stepson), and now I'm going to take his wife? Where on earth will I go to hide from my conscience?" --And this is when it turned out to be "not a union, but a resplendent merger...."

He would not allow a union of the flesh... But we "married our souls," and only the two of us knew this... and now you know... By what right? Why you? God knows... that means that's how it should be... for whom? for what? I do not ask... All I can do is submit... And you know, this is the strongest form of marriage... You ask, "how did they marry their souls? Quite simply: early in the spring, on a clear morning, he and I were sitting in the garden of the Eberman dacha: and suddenly there was realized the madness of the desire to merge... a desire to the point of acute pain, of suffering... of cold tears... I remember it even now, how the fingers of our hopelessly clenched hands crackled, and how a moan burst from the breast... and he said, "do you want to be mine? Here, right now... this minute? You see this small branch on that birch? Not, not this one... that one... there, high up on the background of that little cloud? You see?.. Stare at it, and I will too, with all the passion of my desire... Be silent... Now, along the rays of our eyes, in that very point our souls will merge, Lelen'ka, they will completely merge forever...." Oh, what a feeling of bliss, ecstasy... madness, if you like... The entire world drowned in a moment! There are embraces... without a kiss... Is this not a miracle? Not, not miraculous, but natural (after all, embraces and kisses are for the body)... And then he wrote:

33From the poem "In March" ("В марте") from--in this context, appropriately--"Trefoil of Temptation" ("Трилистник соблазна").
Only once could we not tear our envious
Eyes from the moisture-swollen earth,
Only once we clasped cold hands and,
Shivering, left the garden hurriedly...
Only once... that time...

This letter makes Annenskij's profound sense of unfulfillment, or frustration at being unable to "merge" with his daughter-in-law in the ordinary sense of the word, clear. At the same time, he finds a release from this agony of desire in a non-physical, aesthetic manner, fixing a point in space in which their dual passions and desires can be focused and thereby suspended (and merged, as in "Andante"). The poet then recreates the scene in verse. While it seems clear that Annenskij did not consummate a physical relationship with Xmara-Barščevskaja, what is important is that sublimation was achieved and that this life experience suffused his poetry.34 Art is seen by the poet as a way to address his isolation and separation from the surrounding world, to bridge the gulf between self and other, between the world of the "I" and the "non-I."

34 Data is lacking to establish with the same clarity his relationships with the other women cited.
iii.

The Role of Poetry

Annenskij's sense of separation and isolation from others, and his unfulfilled physical passion for a woman (or women) beyond reach, are analogous to his aesthetic attempts to bridge the gulf between himself and the surrounding world. The pattern of his real desires and yearnings--his effort to join the "I" with the "non-I," as well as the consummation of desire on a higher, spiritual-aesthetic level--becomes a predominant element in his aesthetic, taking various forms, but continuously echoing the basic struggle to join self with other.

At the same time, his preoccupation with death, also evidenced in the primary sources, is equally clearly projected into his aesthetics. Since for Annenskij man's final destination is death and oblivion, the attempts to merge, or bridge the gulf between "I" and "non-I" through poetry are tainted with a constant awareness of mortality, and hence marked by futility. This notion is reflected in pessimistic poetry on the theme of man's mortality and inevitable death, as emphasized, for example, in the last lines of the sonnet
"The Desire to Live" ("Желание жить"), from "Trefoil of the Road" ("Трилистник дорожный"):  

И во всём безнадежность желанья:  
«Только жить, дольше жить, вечно жить ...»

And in everything is the hopelessness of the desire:  
"Only to live, live longer, live eternally..."

It should be added, however, that there is a something akin to a ray of hope in Annenskij's very pessimism. Just as fusion with another is possible for a moment, so, ultimately, immortality through art is affirmed as a poetic theme and confirmed by the very act of writing poetry. The poet realizes the power of art to create harmony, and to leave behind a window into the world of beauty. In a definition of modern aestheticism the Polish poet Czeslaw Milosz writes: "Man perishes entire and leaves no trace except a spark of beauty, provided he can trap it." Annenskij was indeed conscious of the fact that "man perishes entire." At the same time, he also sensed the presence of "sparks of beauty," and the role of poetry in capturing them. For Annenskij, this "spark of beauty" is an equivalent of the moment of a merger of the "I" and the "non-I," be it through sublime passion or art. Evidence of this

notion can also be found in Annenskij's correspondence; consider his letter to Borodina of June 25, 1906:

...Мне кажется, что настоящая поэзия не в словах -- слова разве дополняют, объясняют ве: они, как горный гид, ничего не прибавляют к красоте заката или ледника, но без них вы не можете любоваться ни тем, ни другим. По-моему, поэзия эта -- только непередаваемый золотой сон нашей души, которая вошла в сочетание с красотой в природе -- считаю природой равно: и запах <1 нрзб.>, и игру лучей в дождевой пыли, и мраморный обломок на белом фоне версальских пестов, и лихорадочный блеск голубых глаз, и всё, что не я ...

... It seems to me that real poetry is not in words -- words really only supplement, explain it: they, like a mountain guide, do not add anything to the beauty of the sunset or a glacier, but without them you can not admire either one or the other. In my opinion, this kind of poetry is only the untransferable golden dream of our soul, which has entered into a coupling with the beauty in nature -- considering nature as equal to: both the smell [illegible], and the play of rays in rain-filled dust, and a marble shard on the white background of the sands of Versailles, and the feverish flash of blue eyes, and everything, that is not I...

In this excerpt, Annenskij views poetry as a way to "transfer" to others the "untransferable golden dream of our soul" which has "entered into a coupling with the beauty in nature." Nature in Annenskij's poetic universe, as seen in this letter, is the entire world, i.e. "all that is not I." He considered these notions as an essential facet of "modern literature" as well. Remarks from his article on Bal'mont, "Bal'mont as Lyric Poet," ("Бальмонт-лирик") are
illuminating in this regard:

Here ... glimpsed only fleetingly is an "I" which would like to become the entire world, dissolve and pour into it, an "I" tormented by the consciousness of its own inescapable solitude and purposeless existence; an "I" in the nightmare of returns, under the weight of heredity, an "I" in a nature where other "I's" live, speechlessly and unseeingly reproaching him, an "I" in a nature mystically close to him and painfuully and purposelessly linked by someone to his own existence.

The contemporary Annenskij scholar E. P. Berenšteīn observes that "many researchers agree that in the center of Annenskij's artistic world stands the human "I," searching for a way of overcoming alienation from the real world."37 Here the "real world" can be read as the entire world of the "non-I." While various critics have arrived upon this thesis proceeding for the

most part from an analysis of Annenskij's poetry, biographical data adds a concrete context to the abstract notions critics had before. This is true not just on the level of detail, but in the comprehension of structure: For example, the "struggle" of the trefoil structure is much clearer in view of the sublimation moment described by Xmara-Barščevskaja in her passionate letter. In essence, this validates the methodology used thus far: a thorough examination of the available archival evidence illuminates an important aspect of Annenskij's elusive aesthetics, and provides a pertinent context for a reading of the poet's work.

Primary sources, then, are instrumental in discerning major themes within Annenskij's poetry--themes unmistakably grounded in the poet's reality. In addition, the information found in these materials also provides a key for a reinterpretation of Annenskij's collection, *The Cypress Chest*.

Many of the poems in this book are in some manner connected with Annenskij's epistolary legacy (specifically in correspondence with Muxina and Borodina) and other primary sources, most notably in Xmara-Barščevskaja's letter to Rozanov. As Fedorov has mentioned, it is virtually impossible to date with complete accuracy
the majority of Annenskij's poems. Many of those which are dated by the poet, however, can in some way be linked to the women in question. Furthermore, on the basis of various references to individual poems in his letters, many texts can be dated more-or-less accurately as having been written after 1904, i.e., in the period when Annenskij was composing the poems for his new collection. Although some texts may have come from previous endeavors, the majority can be attributed roughly to the period 1904-1909, especially since his collection Quiet Songs was published in 1904. In this earlier work, the theme of the rift between the "I" and the "non-I," and art's role in healing this same rift is evident to a certain degree. In The Cypress Chest it comes to full fruition, forming an important element in the composition of this collection of poems. By the same token, the nature of Annenskij's letters suggest yet another possible reading of The Cypress Chest: as a type of lyric diary, or, given the context of his letters and other primary sources, a lyric confession, in which the poet conducts an intimate self-examination, while at the same time employing the poetics of "reticence" noted by Blok in his review of Quiet Songs. Or, it can be considered as the Russian critic Smirnov states, "a type
of book of life," in which the theme of unfulfilled yet creatively inspiring desire and love can be seen as a unifying element.\textsuperscript{38}

Further, given the obvious importance that Annenskij placed in art's role in solving his dilemma of self, this collection can also be read as an artistic statement, interwoven with metapoetic concerns. Ultimately, as is demonstrated below, \textit{The Cypress Chest} can--and should--be read as a unified work, a lyric cycle.

The remainder of the present study is devoted to an in-depth examination of this cycle of poems. Prior, however, to an analysis of its texts, I consider it vital to establish the actual composition, or more precisely, the more valid version of \textit{The Cypress Chest}. Published posthumously, there is still disagreement as to authorial intent and the correct ordering and arrangement of this uniquely structured work. This problem in Annenskij scholarship--in itself deserving of more critical attention--is discussed in Chapter III, thus making possible in subsequent chapters a more comprehensive examination of what can be considered Annenskij's poetic magnum opus.

CHAPTER III

AUTHORIAL INTENT AND THE CYPRESS CHEST

i. Publication History

In 1910, several months after Innokentij Annenskij's untimely death, a small volume of his poetry entitled The Cypress Chest (henceforth referred to as CC) was published—the title arising out of the fact that Annenskij accumulated his poems in a small cypress chest. This collection of poems was republished in the same format in 1923, as well as in the first publication of his collected works in the "Biblioteka poeta" series entitled Poems and Tragedies (Стихотворения и трагедии) in 1959, under the editorship of Andrej Fedorov. This was also the version uncritically adopted in several other small editions of his verse. However, in 1987, under the guidance of I. I. Podol'skaja, yet another version of Annenskij's works was published under the title Selected Works (Избраннов). This edition contains Quiet Songs, his two Books of Reflections,
various critical essays and articles, a select number of letters and individual poems and CC. The particular version of the latter differs substantially from that published in 1910 and later reprinted in 1923, which appeared in every collection of Annenskij's works printed prior to Podol'skaja's 1987 edition.¹ Not only are a number of the famous tripartite groupings, "trilistniki" ("трилистники"--henceforth referred to in English translation: "trefoils") reordered or recomposed in the latter, but a number of texts previously published in Posthumous Verse are added, as well as several new sections. In 1988, Fedorov republished his edition of Annenskij's works, adding a substantial amount of new material, but adhering to the 1910 format of CC. The most recent appearance of Annenskij's collection was published as a separate work by N. A. Bogomolov, and adheres to Podol'skaja's 1987 version.² As is evident from the current existence of rival


² Annenskij, I. F. Kiparisovyj larec. N. A. Bogomolov, ed. Moscow: Nauka, 1990. Bogomolov, in his introductory article to the collection, however, does not continue the polemic, but simply indicates that there is some debate. Commendable is his inclusion of both the plan for the 1910 edition, as well as those poems from Krivič's edition which are not included in the 1987 version of
editions, controversy surrounds the composition of this work. There is a wealth of evidence, however, that suggests the greater validity of the 1987 variant.

ii. The Case for the 1987 Edition

At the time of Innokentij Annenskij's death, his son, Valentin Krivič, had been assisting the poet in compiling poems for a second book. Krivič had received all the materials for the new collection, to be entitled *The Cypress Chest*, and had been entrusted to send the prepared manuscript to the publishing house "Grif." According to his published recollections about his father, on the very night of Annenskij's unexpected death, November 30, 1909, Krivič had planned to work on the book: "That evening I was supposed to once and for all begin work on the manuscripts of *The Cypress Chest*, so

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*Kiparisovyj larec*. The texts of Bogomolov's edition are reprinted in identical format from Podol'skaja's version. He utilizes Fedorov's and Podol'skaja's notes to the same, while also adding some additional findings of his own, as cited below. All poems contained in the present work are taken from the 1987 version.

Annenskij had originally intended to publish the volume at a new publishing house being founded under the auspices of *Apollon*; due to financial difficulties, the journal failed to follow through with this venture. (Timenčik, R. D. 1978. Op. Cit. 307-308.)
that we could send the material in the next few days to "Grif." Further, he writes that the structure of the book in its final form had not yet been completely determined: "The book had already been roughly planned out by father. But not everything was ... 'clean.' A few details in the sense of the collection's arrangement still remained to be completed." For this reason, Krivič's role in structuring the 1910 version must have been significant. Fedorov observes that "it is not possible to establish what corresponds directly to authorial intent, and what was completed by the hand of the author's son, even if it was done according to the poet's general instructions." In a similar vein, Ginzburg notes that:

... «Кипарисовый ларец» не имеет последней авторской воли. Кривич мог много внести от себя в окончательное «перераспределение» материала; и все же очевидно, что на Кривичу принадлежит сложная система «трилистников» и «складней».

... The Cypress Chest does not reflect the final intent of the author. Krivič could have introduced much of his own ideas in the final "redistribution" of the materials; but it is nevertheless clear that the complex system of "trefoils" and "hinged icons" does not belong to Krivič.

5Ibid.
6Fedorov, A. V. 1984. 156.
Despite the efforts of Annenskij's son, the version of CC that he finally published on April 6, 1910 was met with consternation by his father's admirers, among them two Annenskij connoisseurs, D. S. Usov and E. Ja. Arzippov (the latter compiled the first Annenskij bibliography in 1914 for the journal Žatva). When Krivič asked Usov's opinion of the recently published CC, Usov expressed to him "all of [his] dismay and chagrin as regards The Cypress Chest."\(^8\)

There is a general consensus in both the primary sources and the critical literature that the poet's devoted son, who undoubtedly had every interest in following his father's wishes as precisely as possible, for a variety of reasons did not succeed. As recently as 1990, N. A. Bogomolov notes that Krivič was not a "perspicacious interpreter and careful executor of the poet's will."\(^9\) One of the "sources" to which Bogomolov refers is Usov, also cited above. The latter wrote in another letter concerning Krivič, "he is an unworthy protector of The Cypress Box, a negligent executor of Annenskij's will, and an unfortunate son."\(^10\) Lavrov and Timenčik, commenting on this letter, and also mentioning other shortcomings in his memoirs, note: "one could add yet further testimony of

\(^8\)As quoted by Timenčik, R. D. Op. Cit. 314.
Krivič's ignorance of his father's interests."\textsuperscript{11} Lavrov also notes the dubious quality of Krivič's data.\textsuperscript{12} In other words, Krivič evidently was not the most qualified--either in terms of his concrete knowledge of facts, or in artistic terms--to compose and arrange the collection as planned by Annenskij. The issue of the collection's structure, a cause of dismay from its first appearance in 1910 remained a question mark in Annenskij studies for the next sixty-eight years.

In 1978 archival evidence of Annenskij's intention concerning the composition of \textit{CC} was uncovered by the noted Russian scholar R. D. Timenčik. In his seminal article, "On the Structure of Innokentij Annenskij's Collection \textit{The Cypress Chest}" ("О составе сборнике Иннокентия Анненского «Кипарисовый ларец»), Timenčik discusses a letter from Ol'ga Xmaro-Barščevskaja to Valentin Krivič (from January 7, 1917), in which he found the "sole existing established plan of \textit{The Cypress Chest}".\textsuperscript{13} That this plan can be considered authentic and reliable is demonstrated by a number of factors.

\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{12}Lavrov, A. V. Op. Cit. 171.
\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
On the basis of the revealing and intimate letter written by Xmara-Barščevskaja to the writer V. V. Rozanov, discussed in detail in the preceding chapter, it is clear that Annenskij's daughter-in-law, in addition to an intimate companion was also his confidant. They had, after all, as Xmara-Barščevskaja phrased it, "wed their souls." In addition, Timenčik notes that she was friendly with the entire Annenskij family, and very interested in the poet's work.\textsuperscript{14} Not only are the poems "The Last Lilacs" ("Последние сирены") and "Stanzas of the Night" ("Стансы ночи") dedicated to her, but the poignant and passionate (albeit to all appearances Platonic) episode described in the same letter is reflected in the poem "In March." There is yet another reason for considering Xmara-Barščevskaja an authority on Annenskij's work: when in 1916 his translations of Euripides were published, together with Krivič she engaged in polemics with the work's editor, F. F. Zelinskij, objecting strenuously to changes made by the renowned classicist.\textsuperscript{15} Indeed, one cannot but concur with Timenčik in thinking that Annenskij shared with Xmara-Barščevskaja his "poetic ideas" ("поэтические замыслы"). In short, Ol'ga Xmara-Barščevskaja is an eminently reliable source.

\textsuperscript{14}Timenčik, R. D. Op. Cit. 309.

\textsuperscript{15}Fedorov, A. 1984. 71.
Below are the relevant passages of her letter concerning the plan for the ordering of CC. Of note is the fact that Annenskij composed the document at Xmara-Barščevskaja’s house. The text, quoted from Timenčik’s article, was also verified by and implemented by I. I. Podol’skaja in her 1987 edition:  

...Посылаю тебе копию с черновой, которую Кеня составлял у меня на Малой улице относительно выпуска своего «Кипарисового ларца» (разбивание стихов на трилистники, складки и размятанные листы), может быть, ты этим поруководствуешься, выпуская 3-ю книгу стихов; но уже во второй книге был несколько нарушен порядок... и разбиты трилистники...

Вот копия.

Порядок в сборнике: 1. Мысли-иглы, 2. 33 трилистника, 3. 9 складок, 4. 18 расмятанных листов, 5. 5 романов, 6. 2 песни под музыку, 7. 2 песни с декорацией. Итого: 139 стихотворений и одно стихотворение в прозе.

... I am sending you a copy with the draft that Kenja [an endearing diminutive of the poet's first name, Innokentij--T.P.A.] composed at my house on Malaja street concerning the publication of The Cypress Chest (the division of poems into trefoils, hinged icons and scattered leaves); perhaps you can follow it when you publish a third book of poems; but already in the second the order was somewhat disturbed ... and trefoils were broken...

Here is the copy.

The order in the collection: 1. Thoughts-Needles; 2. 33 trefoils; 3. 9 hinged icons; 4. 18 scattered leaves; 5. 5 romances; 6. 2 songs to...

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17 Timenčik then quotes the remainder of the letter, which gives a precise ordering of all the poems of the collection.
music; 7. 2 songs with stage-sets. In total: 139 poems and one poem in prose.

This is in marked contrast to the 1910 variant: 25 trefoils, 6 hinged icons and 22 scattered leaves—in total 109 poems. Further establishing the credibility of Xmara-Barščevskaja's letter, Timenčik determines the time-frame for the plan:

Приведенный план записан не ранее 12 декабря 1908 года -- судя по наличию в списке стихотворения «Струя резеды в темном вагоне» (в составе сказания «Добродетель»), написанного 11 декабря ночью. Вряд ли он составлен позже, чем 31 мая 1909 года, -- этим днем датировано стихотворение «Баллада», отсутствующее в списке. Скорее всего этот план относится к весне 1909 года и связан с проектом издания при «Аполлоне».

The plan set forth here was written no earlier than December 12, 1908, judging from the presence in the list of the poem "A Current of Mignonette in the Dark Car" (included in the hinged icon "Virtue"), written the night of December 11. It is doubtful that it was composed later than May 31, 1909--this is the date given the poem "Ballad," absent from the list. This plan most probably dates from the spring of 1909 and is linked to its projected publication under the auspices of Apollon.18

There is a precedent for accepting a "plan" taken from Annenskij's personal correspondence: In a letter to another female confidant, A. V. Borodina, the poet enclosed a precise plan for the forthcoming edition of his collection of critical essays, A Book of Reflections—a plan that coincides exactly with the actual published edition.19

Fedorov, on the other hand, does not agree with Timenčik, and offers several reasons why the 1910 version of CC was structured as it was. He first cites a "purely external circumstance." The owner of "Grif," S. A. Sokolov (Krečetovyj) proposed a much smaller collection than had been originally planned. He further suggests that in 1909 Annenskij had written many new poems, and was gathering material for another book (later published in 1923, in Posthumous Verse). Finally, Fedorov states that Annenskij's "creative intentions" ("творческие намерения") were in a state of transformation at that time, that he was creating new poems, and that the idea of composition "allowed for variation, but the principle of structure and order itself were clearly important to the poet." This latter point—the importance attributed by the poet to the structure and order of the book—supports the contention that the version described in Xmara-Barščevskaja's letter is closest to authorial intent, given the more logical composition and systematic ordering of this version of the collection. In any event, as

19 Annenskij wrote this letter on July 2, 1905.
20 Op. Cit. 158. He repeats much the same argument in the 1988 edition; he does call the 1910 version the "traditional version" ("традиционный вариант").
21 Ibid.
22 It should also be added that Krivič himself apparently considered the letter; Timenčik provides a simple reason as to why Krivič did not follow the plan
Podol'skaja notes, "Annenskij took the composition of his books extremely seriously."\(^{23}\)

At this juncture, one is justified in tentatively considering the 1987 edition of CC the more accurate for the following reasons: 1) the immediate negative response to Krivič's edition, as well as the latter's unsuitability for carrying out the aesthetic designs of his father; 2) the existence of a reliable plan for its composition; and 3) the fact that the principle of composition and order were clearly important to the poet.

The above analysis was conducted primarily through an examination of primary sources (reminiscences and correspondence), together with the insights offered by several critics. It is also possible to further support the validity of the 1987 edition as the more accurate on a purely formal level, namely through an analysis of the actual poems contained within the respective editions. The most logical point of departure for such an

undertaking is suggested by Xmara-Barščevskaja's letter, in which she notes that several of the trefoils were "broken" ("разбиты") in the 1910 edition. By examining several trefoils formal support for the argument set forth above can be established. This is accomplished most effectively by first examining the trefoils that coincide in both editions, and then considering examples of those that appeared as "broken" in the 1910 edition--and which were subsequently "repaired" by Podol'skaja in 1987.

iii.
The Trefoils: 1910 vs. 1987

The number of trefoils in the two versions of CC differs substantially, with 25 contained in the 1910 edition, and 33 in the 1987 edition. (The symmetry of the latter number, based on three, is immediately apparent.\textsuperscript{24}) The actual composition of many of the tripartite groupings is dissimilar. At the same time, there are a number of trefoils that are structured \textit{identically} in both collections. An examination of these groups of poems on one hand

\textsuperscript{24}Tirinen \textsuperscript{5}ik (Op. Cit. 311) also notes the numerical symmetry of the 1987 version; it also extends to the new number of "skladni" (nine), as well as "scattered leaves" (eighteen). The last three sections considered together number nine as well. The total number of groupings of poems, then, in the 1987 version equals sixty-nine, also a factor of three.
reveals several important aspects of the underlying structural principles of the work, and on the other contributes to establishing the validity of the 1987 edition.

Lidija Ginzburg writes of the trefoils that their "structure is indeed the most conventional."25 Discussing the twenty-five that are included in the 1910 edition, she notes three aspects of how the poems of an individual grouping are interrelated:

1) sometimes there exists a direct thematic connection; 2) sometimes the unity of a trefoil is supported by connection through association; 3) in several trefoils it is not possible to determine the principle of their composition without stretching the point.

Ginzburg's observations are important in a discussion of the merits and demerits of the two collections: in both there are indeed trefoils with obvious "thematic connections" as well as others which operate on "connections through association." Further, to concur with Ginzburg, there exist trefoils in the 1910 collection in which the "principle of their composition cannot be established without stretching the point." I contend that those trefoils that occur in

26 Ibid.
both collections in *identical* format are those in which Ginzburg discerns a clear unifying principle. By the same token, the "broken" (Xmara-Barščevskaja's term) trefoils are precisely those that Ginzburg finds difficult to analyze in terms of composition.

Those 1910 trefoils that are duplicated in terms of composition and order in the 1987 edition are: "Twilight Trefoil," "Trefoil of Temptation," "Nightmarish Trefoil," "Trefoil of Malediction," "Phantom Trefoil," "Icy Trefoil," "Trefoil in the Railroad Car," "Paper Trefoil," "From an Old Copybook," "Trefoil of the Crowd," "Sideshow Trefoil," "Jesting Trefoil," and "Trefoil of Waning."27 Although Timenčik lists "Moonlit Trefoil" ("Трилистник лунный") and "Trefoil in the Park" ("Трилистник в парке") as coinciding in both editions, these two trefoils, while including the same poems, are printed in varying sequences in the two versions.28 Annenskij's concern for the "composition and order" of his texts surely extends to the level of the individual "trefoils." There are thus thirteen trefoils that are


found in identical forms in both collections. The unifying principle underlying each of these particular trefoils is inextricably linked with Annenskij's dominant thematic concern as established in Chapter I. An abundance of textual evidence supports this notion. Since the primary purpose at this juncture, however, is in establishing the cohesiveness of these identical "trefoils," I will limit my comments to general statements on those points which immediately indicate a clear unifying principle.

The titles of the individual trefoils usually set a motif, and thus serve as a first step in determining their composition. Of these thirteen groupings, several are easily decoded. They are those trefoils in which a "general thematic connection" (Ginzburg's term), informed by the poet's basic theme, is clearly evident. This can take the form of a chronologically progressive development that is revealed when the three texts are read in sequence.29 There are two types—those trefoils which develop a specific motif or theme in a sequential reading, and those in which a plot is intimated, suggesting a "story" or fragment of a story; and also uniting the poems into a clear sequence.30 Six of the thirteen identical trefoils

29 Of the many studies on Annenskij's poetry, rarely do critics analyze all three poems of a trefoil at once; this greatly limits the possible readings of a given poem or group of poems.
are of this type.

The three poems of "Icy Trefoil" were first published during Annenskij's lifetime in *Apollon*, indicating that the poet considered them a fixed sequence. As Borker remarks, "By virtue of their common history, they represent as definitively as any [trefoil] in [CC], three poems which were clearly combined by the design of their author rather than Krivij's [sic] later editing."31 The three poems are "Icy prison" ("Ледяная тюрьма"), "Snow" ("Снег") and "Daughter of Iairus" ("Дочь Иаира"). Read in sequence, we find the development of a single motif—that of seasonal change—that is paralleled by a progression in time. In this particular case, Annenskij focuses on the transformation of seasons, of winter into spring, the "three poems thus form[ing] a chronological progression."32

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30 Timevčik terms this feature of the trefoil "povestvovatel'nost'" (повествовательность) *Op. Cit.* 312.
31 *Op. Cit.* 61. Borker detects a printing error in Fedorov's 1959 version of the poem "Icy Prison" ("Ледяная тюрьма"): in line 13 the original "svidelem" ("свидетелем")—appearing thus in *Apollon* and in the 1910 and 1923 editions of *Kiparisovvj larec*—is printed as "svidelejman" ("свидательям") in Fedorov. This printing error is corrected by Podol'skaja in *Selected Works* (1987) but is repeated once again in Fedorov's 1988 edition of Annenskij's poetry—giving yet another reason for trusting in the Podol'skaja edition. Borker, however, neglects to mention that the group was titled as a "trefoil," a fact which further supports his notion.
The three poems of "Twilight Trefoil," "Lilac Mist," ("Сиреневая мгла"), Anguish of Transitoriness" ("Тоска мимолетности") and "They have Brought in a Candle" ("Свечу внесли") are clearly united by the motif of dusk. Each poem's setting is twilight, the transitional moment between day and night. The theme centers around Annenskij's notions of the rift between the "I" and the "non-I." The persona senses his isolation and separation in the first poem, and yearns to be with the transitory, ephemeral beauty of the outside world. He simultaneously realizes his own weakness and inability to unite with Beauty (the "non-I"), as personified in the "lilac mist" ("сиреневая мгла"). In the second poem, the poet focuses on the moment of dusk, here a symbol for the "instant" ("миг") of poetic inspiration where "everything" exists, i.e., where it is possible to merge with the outside world, the world of the "non-I." The poet describes his pity and simultaneous love for that moment, precisely because of its transitoriness--hence the poem's title: "Anguish of Transitoriness." In the final poem of the trefoil, the poet further develops the theme, in this case emphasizing the transitoriness of art. Further, he stresses the fragile nature of the
moment: a flaming candle suffices to dispel the magical quality. The three poems, therefore, present a progressive development of Annenskij's basic theme. Here, the transitoriness of the moment of inspiration is transformed into the transitoriness of art itself. The set motif, twilight (сумерки), presents an analogy: the moment, life, love, art—all are just as transitory as twilight.

"Trefoil of the Railroad Car" consists of the poems "Anguish of the Station" ("Тоска вокзала"), "In the Railroad Car," ("В вагоне"), and "Winter Train" ("Зимний поезд"). The texts contain a plot, tracing the spatial and chronological movement of the lyric persona in a train station and on a train, developing the notion of life as an odyssey that is always filled with torment and ultimately ends in death, again, a fundamental part of Annenskij's dominant thematic concern.33

The trefoil entitled "From an Old Copybook" also exhibits a chronological progression—in this case with a clear plot-like structure. The title here does not directly name the motif or theme, but is rather in a metaphoric relationship with the poems included in the grouping. The three poems, "Anguish of the Pendulum, ("Тоска маятника"), "The Little Picture" ("Картинка"), and "The Old

33See Ginzburg's discussion of this trefoil. (Op. Cit. 356-360.)
Estate" ("Старая усадьба"), center around the theme of artistic creation. When considered together they form a chronological movement from, in the first poem, a pessimistic, oppressive atmosphere, with an intimation of the onset of inspiration, to a brief overcoming of banal existence in the moment of inspiration in the second poem, and finally to the passing of this fleeting moment of art, and a return to reality in the last text of the trefoil. As a sequence, they also relate an episode from the poet's life (in this case a dreary ride through the countryside interrupted by a brief moment of creativity). Annenskij constantly addresses the same basic theme from a variety of perspectives; one such perspective is that of irony. Evident in many trefoils, in "Sideshow Trefoil" it is a dominant tonality.

The title of this trefoil, comprised of the poems "Silvery Noon" (Серебряный полдень"), "Children's Balloons," ("Шарики детские"), and "Dying" ("Умирания"), signifies the "sideshow" (i.e. ironic) quality of life. In all three can be found the common motif of the balloon. The first poem exposes the ironic illusion of freedom; the second reveals the bonds that life constructs around us; the third underscores the irony of life and emphasizes the predominance of
death. Further, "Sideshow Trefoil" reveals a definite narrative. In the first text, the persona witnesses from afar a balloon peddler selling balloons; in the second poem he actually buys one, and in the third he has returned to his room, and is sunk in contemplation of the irony he associates with the inevitable deflation of the children's toy, seeing in it a parallel to his own demise.

"Trefoil of Waning"--"I love" ("Я люблю"), "The Sunset's Bell in the Field" ("Закатный звон в поле") and "Autumn" ("Осень")--is also obviously unified as a micro-cycle, both through the motif of "waning" ("замирание") and through a chronological progression (the transition of morning into night). This suggests the actual theme of the trefoil: the waning of life itself. Although the poet loves life in some incarnations (as in the poem "I love"), he subsequently gives in to his obsession with death (in the second poem), and finally to death itself in the third.

Vjačeslav Ivanov termed Annenskij an "associative symbolist;" Ginzburg also uses this term, stating that the poet connects the poems of some trefoils through associations. Brjusov likewise discerns this associative quality in Annenskij's lyrics: "He thought in strange analogies, establishing a connection between, it would seem,
completely heterogeneous objects." Four trefoils are developed as series of associations, or from a variety of different perspectives on a single theme, in seemingly heterogeneous poems.

Although there are four poems in "Trefoil of Temptation,"--the first two can be considered as two versions of one theme, i.e. as a single unit. This trefoil develops the theme of the temptation and frustration of passion (artistic and erotic) from a number of perspectives, as is immediately evident in the titles of the poems: "Poppies," "Poppies at Noon," "The Bow and the Strings," and "In March" ("Маки," "Маки в полдень," "Смычок и струны," and "В марте"). In the first two texts (again, to be considered as one "leaf" of the trefoil), Annenskij describes the ephemeral beauty of red poppies and the inevitable fading of these most fragile and seductive flowers. In the second poem, the bow and strings of a violin become metaphors for artistic and erotic passion, also short-lived and transitory, ending in death. The final poem, "In March," quoted by Xmara-Barščevskaja in the letter discussed above, describes a furtive attempt at erotic union, with its attendant transitoriness and sense of unfulfillment on a physical plane which

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may be deemed lower than the spiritual, yet never ceases to exude its temptation. Koreckaja, in her study of impressionistic tendencies in Russian poetry, observes that a distinctive trait of Annenskij’s love lyrics is "the motif of unattained happiness, of a "half-sung," unexpressed feeling." Thus the texts of the trefoil, while diverse in subject matter, are united by association into a common theme.

In "Cardboard Trefoil," each poem focuses on the motif of a false reality, portrayed in Annenskij’s metaphorical vocabulary as "cardboard." In the first poem, "To a Female Companion" ("Спутнице"), the poet compares his own perceptions of reality with hers. Where she sees only life’s beauty and light, he can only comprehend death and its darkness. The second poem, "The Lifeless One" ("Неживая") offers an interesting, ironic twist on the first poem, since the feminine entity in "To a Female Companion" was fully "alive." Now, however, the poet portrays the futile struggle of a "thinking" reed (the Russian "trostinka" is feminine, and hence connected with his "female companion"). Set against

36Blok’s cardboard symbolism in his play "Balagančik" is similar in this regard.
the background of a "cardboard" sky (symbolizing a false and deceptive reality), this struggle forms a parallel to that of man's own futile efforts. In the final poem, "The Etching" ("Офорт"), the poet creates a sombre setting in keeping with the genre of the "etching" (e.g., Goya), in which death reigns triumphant.

"Trefoil of the Crowd" is interconnected through a series of meditations on the poet's relationship with the outside world, a constant concern in Annenskij's aesthetics. Each poem is linked by the relationship of artist and "crowd." In the first poem, "Prelude" ("Предлюdia") the poet invites the reader to feel the opposition of the poet and those who live around him (there was usually quite a large number of relatives living in the Annenskij residence).38 In the second poem, "After the Concert," ("После концерта") the poet perceives himself as part of the audience viewing the artist—here a singer.39 As poet, he mourns the passing of a moment of artistic

37The "thinking reed" of Tjutčev's poetry comes to mind.
38Krivič notes his father's response to the "noise" of the "crowd that often filled the family dwelling: Father did not make any kind of "event" out of his work. He didn't like this... The door to his office was almost never closed; even... when the families of his older brothers were visiting, and the apartment was filled with the noise of children. This "noise of life" that carried did not bother him. Krivič, V. Op. Cit. 112.
creation that seemed like a magical dream, and recalls the poignancy of the singer’s performance, as well as her stunning image. There is also an intimation that the crowd cannot fully appreciate her art, a notion developed and foregrounded in the final poem of the trefoil. "Buddhist Mass in Paris" ("Будийская месса в Париже") places the poet outside a now vulgarized crowd. Similar to Puškin, who presents the traditional romantic opposition of the divinely inspired artist and the "rabble" ("чёрнь") who cannot understand art, Annenskij shows how, confronted with what should be respected and pondered (as an equivalent of art), the Parisian visitors to a Buddhist shrine in a Paris museum display what can only be termed "поэзия".40 The poet identifies with the traditional opposition of poet and crowd, and at the same time utilizes it to underscore his own theme of separation and isolation.

Each poem of "Jesting Trefoil" concerns in some way the craft and substance of poetry—meter and verbal material. All three poems are sonnets. In the first two texts, "Interrupted Rhythm" ("Перебой ритма") and "Second Paeon—Fourth Paeon" ("Пеон второй—пейон четвертый"), Annenskij experiments and plays with

40 While Annenskij was not overtly religious, in this poem it is clear that he perceived the sanctity of this exotic ritual. (See: Krivč, V. Op. Cit. 113-114.)
meter, as the titles suggest. In the final sonnet, "Man" ("Человек"), Annenskij infuses his verse with "everyday" words (Vološin's notion of the "будничное слово"), creating out of the banal sounds of life a sound image of himself—an image that confines him to the realm of the ordinary.41

Three trefoils contain what can be termed a "synthetic" thematic development, in which the first two poems present two aspects of the theme, while the third text addresses the previous two, synthesizing them. Examples of this type are "Nightmarish Trefoil," "Trefoil of Malediction" and "Phantom Trefoil."

"Nightmarish Trefoil" depicts various forms of nightmares. The first poem, entitled "Nightmares" ("Кошмары"), presents nightmare as reality. "Kiev Catacombs" ("Киевские пещеры"), the second text, is a reversal of the first: reality is seen to be a nightmare. In the third poem, "This and That" ("То и это"), the poet nurses his ailing head, ostensibly having awoken from the delirium induced by the "nightmares" experienced in the first poems, and contemplates the waking nightmare of life.

41 As Setchkarev observes, Annenskij "tries to represent man's life by characteristic syllables." (Op. Cit. 70.)
The first two poems of "Trefoil of Malediction, "Iambics" ("Ямбы") and "Little Tight Fist" ("Кулачишка"), describe various aspects of gambling, and its attendant "pošlost'."42 The last poem of the trefoil, "Oh No, Not Your Waist" ("О нет, не стан"), summarizes Annenskij's thoughts as set forth in the first two, specifically in its final two lines: "Perhaps filth and baseness are only a tormented longing / For the beauty that is shining somewhere there... " ("А если грязь и низость, -- только мука / По где-то там сияющей красота..."). The first two poems depict the "filth and baseness" of human life. The last poem also introduces Annenskij's constant theme: that there exists a "somewhere," a world of "shining beauty" that can be glimpsed in sublime moments of transcending a "terrible" reality. (In contrast, the lyrical "I" in the first two poems is is trapped in the baseness portrayed there.) Furthermore, there is an obvious intimation of passionate desire in the final poem (avoided only by a conscious effort). This is expressed in its title, which hints at an actual event during which the poet was faced

42Annenskij, according to his son, for a brief period was attracted to cards; realizing the insidiousness of gambling, through sheer will-power, he overcame this vice, and ceased playing. Gambling, a common motif in Russian literature, represents for Annenskij a form of irony: to rely on the clearly ephemeral joy offered by cards or other games of chance is to give in to illusion. (Krivič, V. 1925. Op. Cit. 231-232.)
with erotic temptation.

In "Phantom Trefoil," the poet focuses on the theme of memory and his vanished youth, and more precisely, on unfulfilled desire. In the first two texts, "Nox vitae" (the title given in Latin script) and "Square Windows" ("Квадратные окошки"), the poet simultaneously invokes his past and mourns the fact that it is beyond recall. In the final poem the poet considers the wasted opportunity of his past and yearns for its return and for yet another chance to engage in passion:

O, дай мне только миг, но в жизни, не во сне, 
Чтоб мог я стать огнем или сгореть в огне!

O, give me only a moment, but in reality, not in a dream
So that I might become fire, or be consumed by fire!

This final stanza, it will be recalled, served as an epigraph to Chapter I. It was presented with an excerpt from a letter to E. M. Muxina ("Lord, but for a moment of freedom, fiery freedom, madness... "). Here the tensions become very clear. As a man, the poet naturally feels desire and temptation, and mourns erotic frustration and the lack of earthly happiness. As a poet--at least in other poems--he realizes that there is a more sublime love than "sex" (shadows merging is better than bodies merging to the poet's
sensibilities). This trefoil, then, offers evidence of the connection between Annenskij's poetry and his relationships with women.

As is evident, the thirteen trefoils that appear in identical compositional format in both variations of CC are unified structures, what Ginzburg terms "tripartite micro-cycles." In addition, as was demonstrated, the themes and motifs of the different works are all related in some way to Annenskij's basic thematic concern: the notion of the tragic rift between the "I" and the "non-I" (in both physical and aesthetic terms), a rift further complicated by an obsession with death, and the role of Art in resolving this dilemma.

At the beginning of Part III, it was stated that those trefoils that Ginzburg found coherent would have included the identical thirteen discussed above. By the same token, those found incoherent as unified texts (connected only by "stretching the point"—"с натяжкой") were most probably those that were "broken" under Krivič's editorship, i.e., the remaining twelve from the 1910 collection. As is demonstrated below, this is indeed the case. At the same time, Ginzburg does list "Fiery Trefoil"--one of the "broken" twelve--as a trefoil which functions successfully.43
"Fiery Trefoil" is composed differently in the two versions of CC. In the 1910 edition, it consists of "Amethysts," "Dove-gray Sunset," and "January Fairytale" ("Аметисты," "Сизый закат," and "Январская сказка") whereas in the Podol'skaja edition, the poem "Butterfly of the Gaslight" occurs in place of "Amethysts" in this trefoil. In addition, "Amethysts" concludes an entirely new trefoil in the 1987 edition: "Wedding Trefoil" ("Трилистник брачный"). A methodology therefore suggests itself: a comparison of the two versions of "Fiery Trefoil," in conjunction with a consideration of "Wedding Trefoil." This is most successfully accomplished through a close reading, since sequence often hinges on minute details. Indeed, in the comparison of varying structures from the two editions, the tools of literary analysis in the form of a close reading of the texts also aid in establishing the 1987 version of CC as the definitive edition. Such an analysis also offers an appropriate transition to the following chapters, in which the poems of CC are subjected to a similar close reading and structural analysis.

iv.

The Case of "Fiery Trefoil"

As mentioned, the poem "Amethysts" in the 1910 version is replaced by "Butterfly of the Gaslight" in the Podol'skaja version. Since the last two poems coincide in both versions, they will be analyzed first in order to establish a context (albeit incomplete). The other two poems in question, "Amethysts" and "Butterflies of the Gaslight" will then be considered in turn as initial texts. I will also include discussion of the poem "Amethysts" in its context in the 1987 version: as the final poem of "Wedding Trefoil." Taken together, these close textual readings provide additional evidence for considering the 1987 edition of CC the more valid.

The first four lines of "Dove-gray Sunset" present the setting, as well as a temporal frame:

Близился сизый закат.
Воздух был нежен и хмелен,
И отуманенный сад
Как-то особенно зелен.

The dove-gray sunset drew near,
The air was tender and heady,
And the misted garden
Somehow was specially green.
Described here is a time of day found in many of Annenskij's poems, a period of transitory sensations related to the passing of the day. It is that time when there is a potential for art, which in Annenskij's aesthetics is a merger of the worlds of the "I" and the "non-I." The temporal frame is that special time when artistic creation is a perceived possibility. In the next lines, he affirms the enchanting qualities that this moment holds for him. The four adjectives in this first stanza reinforce the notion that this is a pleasing time for the poet, an impression accentuated by the adverb "specially." The air and the garden are enchanting and full of magic. In the next stanza, mystery and poignancy are infused into the mood presented in the first:

И, о Незримой твердя,
В тучах таиной печали,
В воздухе, полном дождя,
Трубы так мягко звучали.

And affirming the Unseen One
In clouds of hidden sadness,
In the rain-filled air,
Trumpets were sounding so softly.

Mystery is conveyed in the phrase "affirming the Unseen one," which in this context intimates death, not as a horrifying entity, but
rather as a final repose. The trumpets that "softly sound, affirming" the existence of this "Unseen one" suggest music, and a poignancy is felt in the fact that they are heard in the "clouds of hidden sadness" and in "rain-filled air." The entire atmosphere conveys calm resignation, even a certain enchantment. Death is present—"the Unseen one" ("Незримая") is feminine, and can thus be linked to the feminine noun "Death" ("Смерть")—but it is not terrifying, and is instead perceived as a salutary oblivion. The third stanza, however, radically intrudes into this background of tenderness and calm:

Вдруг -- точно яркий призыв,
Даль чем-то резко разъялась:
Мягкие тучи пробив,
Медное солнце смеялось.

Suddenly, like a clear summons,
Something sharply broke open the distance:
Piercing the soft clouds,
The coppery sun was laughing.

The vocabulary of this stanza is in stark contrast to that of the first and second: "suddenly," "clear," "sharply," "broke open," and "piercing." These words signal an abrupt, jarring intrusion into the magical atmosphere of the preceding stanzas. The last moment of dusk and the onset of darkness and night, while on the one hand
symbolizing Death, also suggests a peaceful rest ("an indifference to the offenses and the years," in the poet's own words). The final emanation of daylight, on the other hand, in its final appearance is the representative of a tormenting, mocking Life, and reminds the poet of the oppressiveness of existence. Ultimately, life is more terrifying than Death. Accordingly, the sun, reflecting the motif suggested by the title of the triad, "Fiery," is presented as a mocking entity. Its attribute, "copper," is in Annenskij's œuvre frequently associated with death. This "coppery sun" is thus linked to death, in spite of belonging to life, and laughs at the poet. Life mocks and horrifies the poet, in opposition to the "dove-gray sunset," which soothes and calms the nocturnal Annenskij. In effect, death (just like love), in Annenskij's poetry has two faces: there is a positive death liberating man from earthly existence and "pošlost,'" presenting him with a final repose. There is at the same time the horrifying decay, as well as the death in a life of banalities.

44Cf. his poem "PACE. Statue of Peace" ("PACE. Статуя мира").
45The adjective "copper" ("медьный") is also an attribute of the stone which blocked the cave-entrance into the underworld (i.e. the world of death and darkness): "медьный порог". The classicist Annenskij undoubtedly intended a connection here. In Greek mythology this adjective also meant "hard--"твердый," "крепкий." (As explained by Fedorov A. 1949. 632.) There are other associations with death here as well—the copper coins placed on a corpse's eyelids, or copper (brass) funereal instruments.
or a "purposeless existence," to use Annenskij's own phrase.

At the same time, this poem can be interpreted as a metaphor for the frustration of inspiration: the poet seems on the verge of accessing the "inaccessible" when the sun (Life) brutally intrudes upon, and destroys his creative moment.

In "January Fairytale," the first stanza presents the theme of the onward flow of time and Annenskij's reflections on his relationship to the same:

Светилась колдуньина маска,
Постукивал мерно костыль...
Моя новогодняя сказка,
Последняя сказка, не ты ли?

The witch's mask was glittering,
Her crutch rapped in its measured way...
My New Year fairy tale,
Are you not my last fairy tale?

Fantastic metaphors represent the moon ("a witch's mask") and the march of time, (in the "crutch's" measured rap), lending the poem a mysterious, magical atmosphere that is reinforced in the twice repeated "fairy-tale" of the third and fourth lines. In the third line, the poet reveals that he is on yet another threshold--New Year's eve. This crossing-over into a "new time" becomes a metaphor for stepping beyond (over the mythological "copper threshold" into the
Underworld), into death or immortality. The poet expresses this in the question of the final line: "Are you not the "last fairy tale?", or, more prosaically. "Is this not the end of my life?" The second stanza hints at the existence of some other, "unearthly" world:

О счастье уста не молили,  
Тенями был полон покой,  
И чаши открывшихся лилий  
Дышали нездешней тоской.

Lips were not praying for happiness,  
The repose was filled with shadows,  
And the lilies' open goblets  
Exhaled an unearthly anguish.

The first two lines suggest resignation. There is no prayer for happiness, and the "repose" is "full of shadows." The word "pokoj" also means "room" in Russian: in concrete terms the poet is confined inside a "tranquil room" full of shadows, contemplating the world outside. A heightened sense of perception is created in these first two stanzas: the halting march of time (on crutches) can be heard, as well as the soft breathing of lilies. The world of beauty, the realm of the "non-I," is in "January Fairy-tale" the "other" world suggested in the image of lilies in the next lines.46 Their anguish

46Lilies are ambiguous (as are death, life, love and art) in Annenskij’s poetics: they can signify death ("decay," "тлении") as well as eternity ("imperishability," "непреходящее")—even in the same poem, as in for example, "The Aroma of Lilies is Burdensome to Me" ("Аромат лилий мне тяжел") from "Trefoil of Loneliness" (Трилистник одиночества), and other "lily" poems.
is directed at the poet in stanza three:

И взоры померкшие нежа,
С тоской говорили цветы:
«Мы та же, что были, все те же,
Мы будем, мы вечны... а ты?»

And soothing the dimmed glances,
The flowers were speaking with anguish:
"We are the same ones that we were, always those;
We shall be, we are eternal... and you?"

Here the lilies represent a beauty that is immortal. Their question to the poet is also an invitation, enjoining the artist to come to them in their world of beauty.47 Annenskij finds this call difficult to heed, as shown in the next stanza:

Молчите... Иль грезить не лучше,
Когда дымятся угли?..
Январское солнце не жгуче,
Так пылки его хрустали...

Be silent... Is it not better to dream
When the embers are barely smoldering?
The January sun is not fierce,
Its crystals are so glowing...

The poet does not want to think of immortality, at least not the generic immortality the flowers have to offer. The imperative "Be

47This "invitation" on the part of the world of Beauty is also expressed in the poem "Lilac-colored Haze" ("Сиреневая мгла"), where the "haze" beckons to him to follow it to the edge of a whirlpool covered with a thin layer of ice, an image that symbolizes dangerous beauty.
silent..." is addressed to them. He questions their entreaty, asking the "eternal" flowers if it is not better to live for a moment (in sublime love, or art) than to exist forever (as species). Here, he envisions a moment of aesthetic bliss: "To dream" is an equivalent to composing poetry.\(^4\) The final lines intimate the diminished power of the mocking sun from "Dove-gray Sunset": the January sun is not "fierce," no longer issuing an appeal to, or mocking, the poet. This poem, then, is a tentative reaffirmation of the value of creating art, especially voiced in the rhetorical question, "Or is it not better to dream, / When the embers are smoldering?.." Even when the fires of life are burning out it is still better to dream (create poems), than to try and comprehend the words of the lilies. Also implicit in the image of embers smoldering is the fact that the fumes from a coal fire can be intoxicating and at the same time poisonous; the poet implies a delirium of perception.

These two texts are joined in a number of ways. Firstly, the motif of the sun occurs in varying, but related incarnations--first as a mocking daytime sun, and then as the "nocturnal" sun of St. Petersburg in January. A further link between the two poems is the Annenskian theme of a poetic merger, an equivalent of

\(^4\) As described in the prose-poem "Thoughts-Needles" ("Мышли-иглы"): "my branches dream" ("мои ветки грезят").
inspiration and the creative act. In "Dove-gray Sunset," the poet describes a moment in time when inspiration is possible—but interrupted by Life's vagaries; "January Fairytale" tentatively reaffirms the creation of art despite the banalities of human existence.

"Amethysts", the first poem in the 1910 version of "Fiery Trefoil" ostensibly can be connected in various ways to the last two poems of the triad. The motif suggested by the title of that trefoil is evident in the opening lines:

Когда, сжигая синеву,  
Багряный день растет неистов,  
Как часто сумрак я зову,  
Холодный сумрак ametistov.

When, setting the blue on fire,  
The raging crimson day grows,  
How often do I invoke the twilight,  
The cold twilight of amethysts.

The poet first describes the rising of the sun--when the "raging crimson day grows, burning the blue [of the sky]". It is then that he invokes the magical "twilight," understood as the time of potential artistic creation. In other words, he desires the "cold twilight of amethysts" as opposed to the "crimson day." Amethysts in Annenskij's "mythology" are equivalents of art or poetry.49 He

49 Fittingly, they also represent a transfigured passion or sublimated eros,
yearns to protect the facets of these symbols of art in the second stanza:

И чтоб не знойные лучи
Сжигали грани аметиста,
А лишь мерцанье свечи
Лилось там жидкo и огнisto.

But let no blazing rays
Burn the amethyst's facets,
May only a candle's gleam
Flow there liquidly and ardently.

The image of a candle flickering and guttering is yet another equivalent of the fragile moment of creation (and an adumbration of its demise.) The fourth line of the second stanza also echoes the fire motif, while also quenching it ("liquidly and ardently"). The final stanza represents the definition of art, the resolution of the poet's dilemma of separation from the surrounding world. It is also the state that the poet conjured up between himself and his daughter-in-law, Xmara-Barščevskaja in a moment of intense desire—unfulfilled on a physical plane, but super-fulfilled on a

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50 This is also conveyed in "They Brought a Candle In" ("Свечку внесли") from "Dusky Trefoil": "Но едва запыляет свеча, / Чуткий мир уступает без боя." ("But hardly has the candle burst into flame, when / That delicate world yields without fighting.")
spiritual plane:

И, лиловая и дробясь,
Чтоб уверяло там сиянье,
Что где-то есть не наша связь,
А лучезарное сиянье...

And, turning lilac and crumbling,
May a radiance there assure us
That somewhere there exists not our union
But a resplendent merger.

What the poet yearns for, as evinced in the closing lines of this poem is a merging, as opposed to a connection. In the former state, there is an inherent indivisibility: two entities merged cannot be torn asunder. Annenskij contrasts this state to "connection" ("связь"), suggesting the existence of a "between," or intermediate state in which separation is nonetheless a possible threat. Annenskij the poet constantly yearns for a "merger" ("слияние") or merger of his "I" with the "non-I" (the surrounding world). This poem, then, is informed by his basic theme. Together with a motif common to the other two poems of the trefoil discussed above, "Dove-gray Sunset," and "January Fairytale," it can be seen as potentially fitting into the context of these second two poems. On the other hand, however, the poem that appears in the 1987 version of "Fiery Trefoil"--"Butterfly of the Gaslight"--when considered in this same context adheres to the Annenskian logic of
this trefoil much more convincingly. In other words, the sequence of "Fiery Trefoil" should be ordered as it appears in Podol'skaja's edition: 1) "Butterfly of the Gaslight" 2) Dove-gray Sunset," and 3) "January Fairytale."

The "fire" motif is immediately evident in the poem "Butterfly of the Gaslight," a text which also concerns metapoetic issues, in this case the pain and frustration involved in the act of poetic creation (analogous to the same feelings consequential to passion). The opening stanza of this poem reveals the involuntary nature of the poetic act. It opens with a series of frantic questions in which the poet is alarmed at what is happening within him:

"Скажите, что стало со мной?
Что сердце так жарко забилось?
Каков безумь волной
Сквозь камень привычки пробилось?

Tell me, what has happened to me?
Why has my heart begun to beat so ardently?
What wave of madness
Has forced its way through the stone of habit?

The first question is general in nature, while the second two are more specific, and indicate the growing influence of inspiration. The poet's heart has "begun to beat hotly," and "madness" in a wave has penetrated the "stone of habit." Flutterings of the heart
indicate trepidation. The "madness" suggests another world, a world where art reigns. This state is what Ginzburg terms in her study of Annenskij the "beautiful world". By the same token, the "stone of habit" is a metaphor for what she perceives as Annenskij's "objective correlative" for a "terrible world"—a drab and nondescript life (what the Formalists term "automatization"). The second stanza questions the nature of the moment, which contains both pleasure and pain in the remembering of "forgotten phrases,

another way of describing the act of creating verse:

В нём сила иль мука моя,
В волненьи на чувствую сразу:
С мерцающих строк бытия
Ловлю я забытую фразу...

Whether my strength or my torment are in it
In my agitation I do not feel at once:
From the shimmering lines of existence
I catch a forgotten phrase...

The "forgotten phrase" implies a metatext: Beauty exists outside reality, or rather in the world of the "non-I," and the poet's task is to attempt to gain access to it. Although the poet is on the verge of success in the form of creating verse, his attempts appear to be unfruitful, as seen in the following stanzas, where the poet is
compared to both a thief and a "butterfly of the gaslight":

Фонарь свой не ведит ли тать
По скопищу литер унылых?
Мне фразы нельзя не читать,
Но к ней я вернуться не в силах...

Не вспыхнуть ей было невмочь,
Но мрак она только тревожит:
Так бабочка газа всю ночь
Дрожит, а сорваться не может...

Does the thief not pass his lantern
Over the gathering of cheerless letters?
I cannot help reading the phrase
But I am unable to return to it...

It could not help flashing out,
But the phrase only troubles the gloom:
Thus the butterfly of the gaslight
Trembles all night, but cannot break loose...

The metaphor of the thief signifies on one hand the poet's self-doubt and sense of unworthiness as an artist, while on the other hand, it implies the furtive efforts of the poet to access the world of Beauty. In this regard, all artists are "thieves" trying to get more out of life than it is prepared to give them. Despite this ambivalence in self-perception, the artist must engage in the process ("I cannot help reading the phrase;" "It [the butterfly] could not help flashing out"). Conversely, he is not always able to achieve true art, because he lacks the creative strength ("But I did not have
the strength to return to it."). In these last lines he creates a strikingly original metaphor for his poignant attempts at creating art: a "butterfly of the gaslight," in reality a quivering gas-flame, which is on the verge of both flaring up, and going out. It is a "symbol for [the] complex condition of unsteady burning, fluttering and inability to get free." However, as poet he is as powerless as the butterfly in conquering the "gloom": "But it only makes the gloom uneasy."

On one level, then, the poem addresses the issue of the poet's frustration in the face of a perceived poetic inadequacy. On yet another level, the poem is a description of the persona's ardent yearning for an illegitimate and elusive happiness that, for a variety of reasons, is not to be his.

At this point in the analysis, either "Amethysts" or "Butterfly of the Gaslight" might be logically inserted into the context of Annenskij's "Fiery Trefoil." Several aspects of "Butterfly of the Gaslight," however, suggest that its place in the context of this grouping of poems is eminently more justified. In the semantic texture of the entire series, the theme of this text--frustrated

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inspiration—logically "flows" into that of the second poem, in which Life mocks the poet. By contrast, in "Amethysts," there is an immediate suggestion of an attainment of pure creation (in an Annenskian "merger"—"сляние"). This poem, then, although related to the following two poems, does not "introduce" them, as it were, but would more logically be placed in a central or final position in the structure of the trefoil. As it happens, the latter is its location in the 1987 edition of CC—in "Wedding Trefoil." An analysis of this group of poems shows that "Amethysts" more logically belongs in its position there.

As the trefoil's title suggests, a "conjugal" motif unites the three poems, "The Three" ("Трое"), "The Anguish of Slow Drops" ("Тоска медленных капель"), and the poem previously discussed, "Amethysts." In order to show the logical positioning of the poem "Amethysts" in this series, the first two texts must first be examined. As is demonstrated, when read together, the three poems present a clear chronological development of Annenskij's basic theme, and hence form a cohesive micro-cycle. It will be remembered that the poem "Amethysts" is the poem quoted in Xmara-Барчевская's letter; this series of poems hinges on the
important connection between passion for a woman and Annenskij's aesthetics.

"The Threesome" introduces the "conjugal motif" in an erotically charged image:

Ea фажель был огнен и ал,
Он был талый и сумрачный снег:
Он глядел на нее и сгорал,
И сгорал от непознанных наг.

Her torch was fiery and scarlet,
He was thawing and twilight snow;
He looked at her and burned away,
And burned away out of untasted blisses.

The woman is equated with heat—a heat that metaphorically melts the observer, a man. In other words, the man is consumed by passion, to the point of immolation, not because he has delved into the flame, but rather because he has not—or cannot—indulge in his intense desire. The second stanza introduces a note of despair into the equation. Not only is the poet denied a consummation of his burning passion, but he is also faced with imminent death. All that remains is a "hopeless flame of love":

Лоно смерти открылось черно —
Он не слышал призыва: «Живи»,
И осталось в эфире одно
Безнадежное пламя любви.
The womb of death gaped open blackly, 
He did not hear the summons: "Livel" 
And alone in the ether there remained 
The hopeless flame of love.

The title of the poem, "Threesome," suggests three actors. One possibility is that the poet fantasizes about a union with another woman and realizes the danger of fulfilling his passionate desires. In this sense, the second stanza can be read as a lament on self-denial. The lyric persona, in this case to be identified with Annenskij, aware of his mortality, nevertheless does not risk fulfilling his desire, and extinguishes the flame of love, hopeless for many reasons—a lack of resolve, frail health, or his many obligations as husband, paterfamilias and school official. Despite the fact that he may not have consummated his desire, the mere thought of it is an equivalent to the act itself, as seen in the final stanza, where the poet forsakes his legitimate union, leaving in his wake a "widow:"

And on the bed of the deep pit, 
Covered to the ground with a foaming chasuble, 
The lonely widow dreams 
And the chill waters boil...
The lonely widow left behind is conceivably the abandoned woman of his legitimate union. She is abandoned by the poet not only by his death (symbolized by the "bed of the deep pit"), but already in life. The final line is a reference to the images at the beginning of the poem: the man, compared to melting snow, has turned into water. The fire of a feminine entity, (which in Annenskij's aesthetics can be perceived not only as a woman, but also as the Muse) now consumes him totally, signifying the potential destruction contained in passion (and by extension, art). That the "waters" are cold indicates a grounding in reality: Xmara-Barščevskaja, it will be recalled, describes the moment when she and the poet experience a mad desire to "merge" in similar terms: "a desire to the point of acute pain, of suffering... to cold tears...[my emphasis]."52 This final image of water also provides a textual link to the next poem, "Anguish of Slow Drops."

The poet apostrophizes the "drops in the nighttime silence" in this poem. He finds in this standard image of life's measured passage a symbol of his own "cold" tears, brought on by the agony of desire. They also echo the tears of the widow.

52Ibid.
Oh, капли в ночной тишине,
Дремотного духа трещотка,
Дрожа набухают они
И падают мерно и четко.

В незванный полночный час
Их лязга не ждать не могу я:
Фитиль одинокой свечи
Мигает и пышет тоскуя.

Oh drops in the stillness of the night,
Rattle of the drowsy spirit,
Trembling they swell
And fall evenly and precisely.

In the stirless-sleepless night
I cannot help waiting for their clang:
The lonely candle's wick
Winks and flares up in anguish.

The poet cannot help but wait for the "clang" of the drops in his heightened sensitivity to the silent world of his room. Falling "evenly and precisely," the drops represent the inexorable, blind march of time. In the second stanza, the image of the candle wick, "guttering and flickering" while "longing" is a metaphor for the poet himself, who measures his own tremulous existence against the steady and relentless march of time. The final stanza underscores his view of life as a senseless state:

И мнятся, я должен, таясь,
На странном присутствовате браке,
Поняв безнадежную связь
Двух тающих жизней во мраке.
And it seems that, hiding, I must
Attend a strange wedding,
Having understood the hopeless union
Of two lives dwindling in the gloom.

The phrase "two lives" is significant here: it is a reference to the "life" of the "slow drops," and to that of the poet. The union between them is strange and absurd, since the drops represent not only his frustrated desire, but also the horror of life, the terrible world with which the poet is joined in a "hopeless union." At another level, this union can also signify simply the lives of two people, man and woman, the poet and his wife. In this event, the hopelessness (echoing the "hopeless flame of love" in the first poem) and the "strangeness" of the "wedding" are clear, in that the joining of two lives that are "dwindling" is ultimately strange and hopeless. Here there is only a "union" that will inevitably be separated by death. What the poet truly values and yearns for in his aesthetics is revealed in the poem "Amethysts," which forms a logical continuation of the sequence formed by the first two texts.

The final stanza of this poem (partially quoted by Xmara-Barščevskaja in her passionate confession) provides the most important link between the three texts:
The third line here could be read "our hopeless union" ("наша безнадежная связь"); the "resplendent merger" becomes the ultimate goal in a "true" marriage—be it aesthetic or erotic, spiritual or physical. Clearly, then, "Amethysts" forms a conclusion to the semantic context and flow created in the first two poems. This can be seen on the thematic level: In the first poem the poet develops the theme of art as analogous to erotic passion (as in a "union") and the underlying hopelessness of his personal situation. In the second, the poet defamiliarizes his perceptions and finds anguish in the iron necessity of circumstance, represented by tormentingly "slow drops." He also contemplates the "strangeness" of the union of two lives that are "dwindling," or dying. The final poem reveals the hope and desire of the poet for something more than a mere

53 The reader will recall as well that Xmara-Barščevskaja states in her letter to Rozanov that she and Annenskij "wed their souls;" this is for Annenskij a "true" wedding. The conjugal motif, then, is dominant in "Amethysts."
"union": a "merger" ("слияние") of a mystical and sublime nature.

The three poems are also connected on the level of lexicon, motif and image. For example, the "hopeless flame of love" ("безнадежное пламя любви"), which describes his relationship with another woman, is transformed in the second poem into a "hopeless union" ("безнадежная связь") which is how the poet describes his union with the woman he does not love. The third poem, addressed to the true object of his desire, emphasizes the difference between the two relationships: "not our connection, / but a resplendent merger" ("не наша связь, / А лучеварков слияние"); The adjective "resplendent," can also mean "radiant," or "exalted." Together with the word's highly poetic (i.e. Romantic) connotations, there is a markedly emphatic shift from the hopelessness of the previous two poems, revealing, finally, the victory of the poet over despair—a victory attained through Art.

The motif of fire, as in burning passion, undergoes a series of transformations in the sequence of poems. The intense heat of "Threesome"—"Her torch was fiery and scarlet," "He burned," and "cold waters boiled"—diminishes in the second poem, "Anguish of Slow Drops," reflecting the dampening of his passions. The "torch"
is now a "candle" that is not "scarlet and fiery," but which "flickers and flares." In the final text, the poet appeals to the "cold twilight of amethysts," seeking a way in which he can partake in the heat of the first poem--without being consumed:

И чтоб не эйонных лучи
Сжигали гранн аметиста,
А лишь марцаны свечи
Лилось там жидко и огнisto.

But let no blazing rays
Burn the amethysts's facets,
May only a candle's gleam
Flow there liquidly and ardently.

Only the "gleam" of the candle is present; more importantly, it is filtered through the cooling facets of the amethyst. It retains some of the passion, as in the fourth line ("огнisto"), but is tempered, and seen through the prism of the precious stone, while also made into cool "fluid" (жико").54 This is in reference to the first text, where "the cold waters boiled." In the final text the passion is tamed, and converted into a pleasing aesthetic image that should "assure" or "persuade" that there exists the possibility of a merger with the world of the "non-I" and its realm of Beauty--a "resplendent merger." The three poems together are basically

54Cf. Annenskij's poem "Into the Magic Prism" ("В волшебную призму") from "Trefoil of Triumph" ("Трилистник победный").
analogous to the event described in Xmara-Barščevskaja's letter, where the poet transforms a moment of intense, burning passion—impossible (in the poet's eyes) to consummate in a physical sense—into an aesthetic construct, in which a true merger becomes possible.

On the basis of the above analysis, it is clear that, although the poem "Amethysts" in some respects can be read in the context of "Fiery Trefoil," the poem "Butterfly of the Gaslight" fits into the context of that triad in a more logical manner. Moreover, "Amethysts" in its 1987 positioning functions as the thematic culmination of the sequence established by the first two poems of "Wedding Trefoil."

Thus, the results of the analysis provide yet another justification for considering the 1987 version of CC as the definitive edition, its composition most clearly following authorial intent. While it may be argued that ambiguity may occur (for example "Amethysts" can ostensibly be read as part of "Fiery Trefoil"), there are also examples of trefoils that in the 1910 version conspicuously do not function in the manner intended.
The "Broken" Trefoils and the Case of "It Happened at Vallen-Koski"

There are several trefoils in the 1910 edition that are composed of poems clearly unintended as components of a sequential tripartite arrangement. They were not only seen as "broken" by Xmara-Barščevskaja but, as Podol'skaja notes, "were cause for dismay among his contemporaries." An example of a trefoil that undoubtedly created such an impression in the 1910 edition is "Autumn Trefoil" ("Трилистник осенний") and, more precisely, the placing therein of Annenskij's famous poem, "It Happened At Vallen-Koski" ("То было на Валлен-Коски").

This poem, included in "Autumn Trefoil" in the 1910 edition, concludes "Trefoil of Fear" ("Трилистник страха") in the 1987 edition. Briefly, the poem depicts the senseless "suffering" of a doll thrown into a waterfall for the amusement of tourists. As Setchkarev observes, "In the doll [the poet] sees a symbol of human life." The theme of suffering is clearly dominant in this poem.

56 Karlinskij coins the phrase "pity for things" ("жалость к вещам") to define this aspect of Annenskij's poetry. (Karlinskij, S. "Veščestvennost' Annenskogo" Novyj Žurnal 85 (1966): 73.)
In "Autumn Trefoil" as it appeared in 1910, the other two poems, "Again You are with Me" ("Ты опять со мной") and "August" ("Август"), concern a theme somewhat removed from that of "It Happened at Vallen-Koski." The poet Aleksandr Kušner notes similarly that:

"... В «Трилистнике осенном» наряду со стихами «Ты опять со мной подруга Осень» и «Август» оказалось стихотворение «То было на Валлен-Коски», которое, пожалуй, с таким же основанием могло быть включено в «Трилистник одиночества».

In "Autumn Trefoil" side by side with the poems "Again You are with Me" and "August" there was found the poem "It Happened at Vallen-Koski," which, probably, for the same reason could be included in "Trefoil of Loneliness."

As mentioned, in the 1987 edition, the poem "It Happened at Vallen-Koski" is found not in "Trefoil of Loneliness," but in "Trefoil of Fear." In the latter, the dominant theme is a contemplation of man's senseless suffering. "On the Road Again" ("Опять в дороге"), the first poem of "Trefoil of Fear," compares the poet's baseless intellectual fears with the senseless suffering of a "fool" ("дурашка"). The second text, "Beyond the Fence" ("За оградой") conjures up the fear of suffering in a case of pathetic fallacy: "Is the grass terrified in the nighttime?... " ("Страшно травам в час

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In this context, the text of "It Happened at Vallen-Koski" is immediately discerned as a logical component of this trefoil.\(^5^9\)

Returning to "Autumn Trefoil," in this triad the poem "Lilac on the Rock" ("Сирень на камне") is positioned in place of "It Happened at Vallen-Koski"—an eminently more logical positioning. Timenčik questions whether "Lilac on the Rock" might be more appropriate in the context of "Trefoil of Loneliness," and suggests that Annenskij might have chosen a poem with a clearer "seasonal connection" ("календарное приурочение") for "Autumn Trefoil." In response to his own question, the critic states:\(^6^0\)

Здесь и кроется один из ответов на вопрос о структуре трилистников. -- Анненский, в нарушение читательского ожидания и в опровержение общей логики, вводит некоторые трилистники стихотворения, тематически не связанные с заглавием.

Here is also where one of the answers to the problem of the structure of the "trefoils" is hidden; Annenskij, in violation of the reader's expectations and in a denial of everyday logic, introduces into his trefoils poems which are not thematically connected with the title.

\(^{5^9}\)Kušner places it in "Trefoil of Loneliness," one of the thirteen identical trefoils—which form cohesive sequences, as discussed above—and hence erroneously, in my opinion.

\(^{6^0}\)Ibid.
In point of fact, "Lilac on the Rock" does adhere to the poetic calendar created by a cluster of three trefoils in the 1987 edition with the respective titles of "Icy" (a "winter" trefoil), "Spring," and "Autumn." At the same time, Timenčik is correct in stating that Annenskij "violates the reader's expectations." Confronted with a seeming "violation" we are forced to reread, and exchange the code we employed for a new one.

The logic in Annenskij's work, and particularly in his trefoils is indeed not an "everyday logic." Those poems which on the level of this type of logic are not "thematically connected with the title" are connected according to a deeper, aesthetic logic, often revealed through reference to his basic theme. This becomes increasingly clear when all thirty-three trefoils of the 1987 edition are considered—the task of Chapter IV.

As has been demonstrated, the edition of CC published by Podol'skaja (and later used by Bogomolov in 1990) is the closest to Annenskij's original "poetic plans." An investigation into its publication history and recently published archival materials supports this notion. At the same time, this question still remains

61 This "violation" is at the core of creating art, as in the formalists' notion of "making the text difficult" ("zatrudnenie").
an issue of scholarly debate in Russian literary criticism (cf. Fedorov's 1988 re-publication of the 1910 format as opposed to Bogomolov's 1990 edition). In order to demonstrate on a more formal basis the validity of the 1987 edition, several of the actual poems of the two editions were compared. The brief thematic analyses of the thirteen identical "trefoils," together with the more in-depth textual analyses of "Fiery Trefoil" and "Wedding Trefoil," as well as the example of "It Happened at Vallen-Koski," have further established that the 1987 edition more closely follows the plan of the author. Moreover this version eliminates many instances of discrepancies and inconsistencies of composition and order. Other aspects of the differences between the two collections have not been discussed here, such as the number and order of "Hinged Icons" ("Складни") and "Scattered Leaves" ("Разметанные листы") or the presence in the 1987 edition of three new sections—"Romances" ("Романсы"), "Songs to Music" ("Песни под музыку") and "Songs with Stage-sets" ("Песни с декорацией"). Although these issues are clearly relevant to a consideration of the two editions, the primary issue addressed in Chapter II has been accomplished: the establishment of the greater validity of Podol'skaja's 1987
edition of CC over the Krivič and Fedorov editions. Hence, this edition forms the basis for the further analysis of CC undertaken here. In Chapter IV, an in-depth discussion of Annenskij's tripartite device—begun in this chapter's close readings—is extended to include the entire body of trefoils. The remaining divisions of the collection are also analyzed in Chapter IV. As becomes clear in a consideration of the entire collection, just as there are clear organizing principles on the level of the trefoil, there also exists a similar foundation to the entire work.
CHAPTER IV

THE TREFOIL

Chapter Title

\[ X_{\text{pycrom}} \]

Hrystal' moy volshebn trikryty:
Pod pervym ustoem rebr --
Tam ruki s muchenym razhaty,
Raskidanoplyama kostra
"V volshebnu prizmu"
Triлистник победный

My crystal is magic thrice over:
Beneath the facet's first base
Are embraces thrown open in torment,
The flame of a bonfire is scattered.
"Into the Magic Prism"
Trefoil of Triumph

1. The Trefoil and "Thoughts-Needles"

One of the first associations to come to mind when
encountering Annenskij's "trefoil" is its association with "leaf" (even
more apparent in the Russian word "trilistnik"). O. N. Semenova, as
quoted by Fedorov, sees this motif as connected with "pages." As
she remarks, "one of the facets of the symbol "leaves" (in the sense
of the 'pages of a life story') found reflection in the 'trefoils,' as well

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as in the 'hinged icons,' and in the 'scattered leaves.'" 

This notion is supported when considered in the context of the opening prose-poem of the collection, "Thoughts-Needles" ("Мысли-иглы").

The major theme to emerge in this programmatic, introductory prose-poem is a version of the basic theme as set forth in the opening chapters of this study: Annenskij’s focus on a perceived separation and isolation from others—in this case with other poets.

In the piece, the poet identifies himself as a "sickly spruce":

Я -- чаяла аль, я печальная аль северного бора.
Я стою среди свежего поруба и ещё живу, хотя вокруг зелёные побеги уже заслоняют от меня раннюю зарю.
С болью и мукой срываются с моих веток иглы. Эти иглы -- мои мысли. И когда закат бывает тих и розов, и ветер не треплет моих веток, мои ветки грезят.
И снится мне, что когда-нибудь здесь же вырастёт другое дерево, высокое и гордое.
Это будет поэт, и он даст людям всё счастье, которое только могут вместить их сердца.
Он даст им красоту оттенков и свежий шум молодой жизни, которая ещё не видит оттенков, а только цвета.
О, гордое дерево, о брат мой, ты, которого ещё нет с нами! Что за дело будет тебе до мёртвых игол в создавшем тебя пергамон?
И узнавшь ли ты, что среди них были и мои, те самые, с которыми уходит теперь последняя кровь моего сердца, чтобы они создавали тебя, Неизвестный?
Падайте же на всеюмляющее чёрное лоно вы, мысли, ненужные людям!
Падайте, потому что и вы были иногда прекрасны, хотя бы тем, что никого не радовали!

1Semenova, O. N., as quoted by Fedorov, A. 1984. Op. Cit. 153. (I arrived at a similar notion prior to a reading of Fedorov’s remarks—my findings were presented in a paper entitled “Annenskij’s ‘trillistniki’” at the AAASS (Midwest Regional Affiliate) Conference in Columbus, Ohio, 1992.)
I am a sickly spruce tree, I am a sad spruce from a northern pine forest.
I stand among the stumps of freshly cut trees and still live, although all around me the young green sprouts of trees already screen me from the early dawn.
With pain and torment needles tear themselves from my branches. These needles are my thoughts. And when the sunset is quiet and of a rosy hue, and the wind does not stir my branches, my branches dream.
And I dream that sometime, in precisely this place another tree will grow, tall and proud.
This will be a poet, and he will give people all the happiness that their hearts can possibly hold.
He will give them the beauty of nuances as well as the untamed roar of youth that does not perceive shades, seeing colors only.
O, proud tree, oh my brother, you who are not yet with us! What will you care for the dead needles in the humus that has created you?
And will you recognize that among them were my needles as well, those very same ones that now leave with the last drops of the blood of my heart, so that they would create you, Unknown one?
Fall then on the all accepting black bosom, you thoughts that people do not need.
Fall, because you too were also sometimes beautiful, if only by virtue of the fact that you gladdened no one.

This tree, symbolizing the poet, clearly senses its separation from the rest of the world, in this case from the other poets/sprouts surrounding him. At the same time, the poet despite his age and perceived obsolescence, recognizes his connection with these poets—a type of merger achieved through the creation of poetry: The "needles" which fall to the ground are his poems, which will
subsequently nourish and hence join with the young poets around him. Furthermore, eventually these "poems" will provide the ground for a new, "unknown" poet who will succeed in achieving a true art, i.e., a poetry that bridges the worlds of the "I" and the "non-I." The piece affirms the power of art, while at the same time revealing the poet's own sense of isolation and separation, clearly setting a tone for the entire work. Thus, the "leaves" in this poem, the "thoughts-needles" of the title, are symbols of poetry. "Thoughts-Needles" are followed by the trefoil "From an Old Copybook." The relationship between the two texts, and more specifically the connection between their titles, is of note. In "Thoughts-Needles," the needles are perceived as equivalent to thoughts, which are then equated with poems. In a different vein, the "needles" of a spruce are its "leaves"; in Russian, as in English, "leaves" can signify either those of a plant, or the leaves, or pages of

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2The theme of the older poet stepping down (in death) to make way for youth (i.e., the "green sprouts") is reminiscent of Puškin's "When'er I walk on noisy streets..." (брожу ли я вдоль улиц шумных...”). Consider, for example, the following lines: A dear, sweet infant I caress,/At once I think Farewell!/To you my place on earth I yield:/For you shall bloom, while I decay. ... And at the entrance to the grave,/May youthful life laugh, romp and play,/And may unheeding nature there/ With everlasting beauty shine. As translated by Walter Vickery (Alexander Pushkin. Revised Edition. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992. 143-144.)
a book (in the same sense as suggested by Semenova—"pages of the book of life"). By the same token, the title "From an Old Copybook" implies "pages" on which thoughts are written down—in the form of poems. This title can be combined with the title of the first text: "Thoughts-Needles From an Old Copybook" ("Мысли-иглы из старой тетради"). All of these "needles-leaves-poems are contained within the protective confines of Annenskij's "cypress chest."³ I. P. Smirnov, as cited in Chapter I, sees CC as a "book of life."

Annenskij's collection, then, is an attempt to inscribe the "pages" with his self, to try and "invent himself," as he puts it in "Man" ("Человек"):

И был бы, верно, я поэт,
Когда бы выдумал себя.

And I would surely be a poet,
If I could only invent myself.

The groupings of poems in CC can thus be viewed as equivalents to "chapters" of his "life story," entries in a personal poetic diary or confession. The first type of "chapter"--the trefoil--is the subject of analysis here.

³In this light, Semenova's remark provides yet another justification for considering the 1987 edition of CC more valid, since it includes this prose-poem as an introductory piece.
Textual analysis was conducted in Chapter III (in the case of "Fiery Trefoil" and "Wedding Trefoil") to establish the validity of the 1987 edition of CC. At the same time, this analysis also indicated an essential aspect of the structure of the trefoil: its effectiveness as a compositional device. It was demonstrated that the poet exploits the tripartite grouping of texts, arranged in a carefully ordered series, to develop his basic theme in sequence as the gradual unfolding of a life story. This is equally evident in an examination of the remaining twenty trefoils—the focus of the present chapter. The thirteen trefoils considered in Chapter III will also come under additional scrutiny, since the goal here is to examine the entire set of thirty three trefoils. A first step in a clearer understanding of this device can be found in its origin. Indeed, the likely sources for Annenskij's trefoil reveal several fundamental principles of its structure, and thus serve as a logical point of departure.
ii. The Trefoil's Origins

One can first look to the poet's own work for precedents for this device. In *Quiet Songs*, there are two instances where three poems are arranged under one title: "Insomnia" ("Бессонницы") and "Lilies" ("Лилии"). In both cases the poems are numbered, and are clearly intended as a series. And, while they do not exhibit the same cohesiveness as the trefoils of *CC*, they can be considered as "proto-triads." But the tripartite structure was used by many other poets as well.

In his article on the composition of Annenskij's collection (cited in the above discussion of the publication history of *CC*) Timenčik also considers the question of the trefoil's origin. His observations are brief; a more detailed analysis of what he considered potential origins for the device is thus germane to the present discussion. One impetus mentioned by Timenčik is a triad of poems by Konstantin Bal'mont from his collection *Let Us Be Like the Sun* (Будем как солнце, 1903). These three poems are numbered, and are grouped under the title "Trefoil" ("Трилистник"). The three poems are: "The Kin of Kings" ("Из рода королей"), "In my Garden" ("В моем саду") and "The Sun has Moved Away" ("Солнце
удалилось"). An immediate justification of this text as a possible source is Bal'mont's generic title. The poems are a series of interrelated love lyrics. In the first text, the lyric persona speaks of a merger of himself, his beloved and his art:

Но едва перед тобою молвишь беглый вящий звук,
Тотчас мы с тобою вместе, мы в один замкнуты круг.

But barely do you pronounce the fleeting prophetic sound, you and I are immediately joined, we are in one closed circle.

In the second poem, "In My Garden," the persona continues the story of his relationship, describing a romantic interlude in his garden, the passing of which is poignantly noted in the final two stanzas:

С тобой познал я только раз, любимая,
То ярков, что счастьем называется, --
О тень моя, бесплотная, но зримая,
Любовь не забывается.

Моя любовь -- пьяна, как горьди спальные,
В моей душе -- звучат призывы страстные,
В моем саду -- сверкают розы белые
И ярко, ярко-красные.

I only knew you once, beloved,
That brightness, called happiness, --
Oh my shadow, incorporeal, but visible,
Love is not forgotten.

My love is heady, like ripened grapes,
In my soul passionate summons call,
In my garden white roses are flashing
And bright, bright red ones.
The third poem suggests the departure of the loved one as a parallel to the retreat of the sun:

Солнце удалилось. Я опять один.
Солнце удалилось от земных долин.

....
The sun has moved away. I am again alone.
The sun has moved away from the earthly valleys.

A definite thematic progression is evident: the two lovers are joined, experience a moment of ecstasy, and then part. Thus, the poems of Bal'mont's "Trefoil" are visibly interconnected, and, when read sequentially, comprise a chronological progression that develops a single theme. They also present a narrative, or "story."

This structure occurs in almost half of Annenskij's trefoils, suggesting that the poet may have drawn from Bal'mont's text. Additionally, Bal'mont's theme of love in terms of union ("we are in one closed circle") and separation ("I am again alone") would definitely have appealed to Annenskij's own aesthetic sensibilities.

Indeed, Annenskij's poem "They have Brought in a Candle" from "Twilight Trefoil" recalls the Bal'mont trefoil:

С тенью тень там так мягко слилась,
Там бывает такая минута,
Что лучами невидимы глаз
Мы уходим друг в друга как будто.
Interestingly, although Annenskij cites a number of poems from *Let us be like the Sun* in his exhaustive study of the poet ("Bal'mont as Lyric Poet"), he does not refer to Bal'mont's tripartite grouping of poems. Nevertheless, his thorough knowledge of Bal'mont's collection implies that he would have known of the latter's trefoil device. Since it clearly would have appealed to him
both structurally and thematically, it can be considered a source for his own use of the tripartite grouping of poems.

Timenčik also refers to the influence of an article from a collection of critical essays on various French symbolists, *Le Livre des Masques*, authored by the French critic Remy de Gourmont—whose works were known to Annenskij. Gourmont's influence on Annenskij has been noted in other areas of Annenskij's work. For example, the critic's impressionistic style, according to Podol'skaja, to a certain extent informs Annenskij's critical prose. In the essay in question, Gourmont examines a grouping of three poems by the French symbolist poet, Henri de Regniér. (Annenskij's mention of Regnier in his article "What is Poetry" is proof that he was acquainted with Regnier's work.)

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6 Gourmont states that these are parts of a longer poem, itself a fragment of a book, i.e., it is not clear whether they are individual poems. I will consider them tentatively as separate texts—either fragments or actual poems (since the meter and rhyme scheme of the three are different). Gourmont, Remy de. "Henri Regniér." *Le Livre des Masques. Portraits Symbolistes*. Paris: Mercure de France, 1921. pp. 40-46.
Timenčik emphasizes the following statement made by the critic concerning Regnier: "Simple épisode d'un plus long poème, lui-même fragment d'un livre, ce petit triptique a plusieurs significations et dit des choses différentes selon qu'on le laisse à sa place ou qu'on l'isole ici, image d'un destin particulier; là, image générale de la vie." Timenčik suggests that in this statement can be found a possible source for Annenskij's trefoil. Although the Russian critic takes Gourmont's statement somewhat out of context, a consideration not only of the French critic's statements, but of the actual poems he analyzes is useful in determining whether Annenskij drew from this specific source.

In Regnier's sequence of three poems, there is a clear chronological progression ("matin clair"--"midi"--"ce soir"). They share a common motif. In each poem, a young child ("l'Enfant") comes to gather plants or flowers. He changes in appearance, progressing from 1) a child with pure hands ("mains pures"), to 2) a handsome child dressed in purple and golden ("l'enfant qui vint était beau, / Vêtu de poupre et lauré d'or") before whom the flowers grow pale ("Une a une, saigner les pivoine leur sang / De

pétales au assage du bel Enfant." and finally to 3) a naked child ("L'Enfant qui vint ce soir était nu"). The child's actions also undergo a series of transformations in each text. In the first, the child gathers plants ("les herbes") in the morning. In the second, he gathers peonies ("les pivoines") at midday. The child gathers roses ("des roses") at dusk in the final poem. At this point he also cries, and retreats. The poet finds in this final image of the youth a symbol of desire. He identifies his own destiny with the crying lad and shares the latter's tragic recognition of self. There is a decidedly decadent cast to Regniér's work, a feature that would have appealed to the decadent side of Annenskij (who was well acquainted with the tragedy of self). In addition, the poet undoubtedly would have identified with the motifs of children and flowers; both are found throughout his oeuvre. In terms of structure, the chronological development of a single theme (similar to Bal'mont's) presents an approach to composition taken up by Annenskij in his trefoils.

Regniér's poems, then, in addition to Gourmont's statements about the same, represent possible sources for Annenskij's decision

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9 Annenskij likened his own verse to "sick children" more than once. Among other flowers, he frequently mentions lilies, chrysanthemums, and lilacs.
to employ a tripartite device. Although one can concur with Timenčik, who notes in regard to Gourmont's statement (cited above) that "here it was as if Annenskij was suggested a way of enriching a complete poem with additional meanings," Gourmont's observation does not literally refer to the tripartite structure, but instead the place of the "little triptych" within a larger context.\textsuperscript{10}

There is, however, another statement made by Gourmont in the same article that pertains more logically to Annenskij's approach to the trefoil device: "la poésie de M. de Regniér ... enferme une idée dans le cercle enguirlandé de ses métaphores, et si vague ou si générale que soit cette idée, cela suffit à consolider le collier; les perles sont retenues par un fil, parfois invisible, toujours solide [my emphasis].\textsuperscript{11} This type of "sometimes invisible, yet always solid thread" that connects Regniér's "idea" is an appropriate formulation when applied to Annenskij's collection. This is evident at the level of the trefoil in its various forms, where the unity of the three texts, while not always immediately discernible, is always present. Annenskij, then, may have drawn on both the poet and critic in arriving at his own version of the triptych, or trefoil. Other

\textsuperscript{10}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{11}Op. Cit. 45-46.
sources and influences are suggested in a consideration of Annenskij's own critical studies. Such is the case, for example, in his scholarship in the area of classical Greek literature.

In a study of the myth of Orestes, Annenskij discusses the issue of a tripartite structure, in this case the trilogy:

Триология может обладать истинным художественным единством лишь при одном условии, если действие просто, и если каждая трагедия, сохраняя самостоятельное значение, в то же время является естественной частью целого.\textsuperscript{12}

A trilogy can possess a true artistic unity under one condition—if its action is simple, and if every tragedy, preserving its own independent significance, at the same time is a natural part of the whole.

While Annenskij here discusses the unity of a trilogy of tragedies, his statement sheds light on his own notions of a tripartite arrangement of texts. Applied to his trefoil device, one can say that in order for there to be a "true artistic unity" each poem should not only function as an independent text but also fit naturally into a larger context, i.e., the text that consists of the sequence of three poems.

\textsuperscript{12}Annenskij, I. P., "Xudožestvennaja obrabotka mifa ob Oreste, ubijce materi v tragedijax Esxila, Sofokla i Evripida." \textit{Zurnal Ministerstva Narodnogo Prosvesčenija} 7-8 (1900): 2
Given Annenskij's vast erudition, there are certainly other potential sources and origins that inspired the poet in his decision to arrange such a large number of texts in tripartite groupings. The examples cited above, however, allow for certain general conclusions. These in turn lead us to a discussion of Annenskij's specific use of this device, and its aesthetic ramifications. In general terms, each example reveals a fundamental aspect of a tripartite arrangement of texts. With a clearly defined beginning, middle, and end (in Bal'mont's case the poems are actually numbered), this device has obvious potential for the chronologically progressive development of a theme. For much the same reasons, the potential for a narrative or plot-like arrangement is also clearly evident. Both Bal'mont and Regniér present the chronologically progressive development of a single theme, while at the same time telling a story. Annenskij's discussion of the Greek trilogy on one hand clearly can be related to this aspect of the trefoil device: the episodes of a story, retaining a certain integrity separately, combine to create an artistic unity. His comments reveal on the other hand another way in which a grouping of three poems may function as a unified text--not necessarily as a chronological sequence, but as a
group of independent, but interrelated texts, with a "thread," to use Gourmont's term (in the form of motif, theme, structure, or other element), that connects them.\(^{13}\)

Both of these approaches to a tripartite structure, suggested by the possible origins of the device were discussed in the preceding chapter. They were defined as chronologically progressive and associative. One other structural variation, termed "synthetic," was also established (see Chapter III, p. 87). Three basic structural archetypes, then, have been established. All thirty three trefoils of the collection fall into these three categories, and are divided below accordingly. The place of the trefoil within the 1987 collection is marked in parentheses; those that appeared in identical format in the 1910 edition are marked with asterisks.

1) Chronological/Progressive 2) Associative 3) Synthetic

1. From an Old Copybook (1)* 1. T. in the Park (6) 1. Phantom T. (16)*
2. Sideshow T. (2)* 2. T. of Anguish (9) 2. T. of Malediction (17)*

\(^{13}\)This connecting element has been formulated in different ways as well in general discussions of Annenskij's work; it is Brjusov's "strange analogies," or Ivanov's, and later Ginzburg's, "associations."
Each of these categories, the reader will recall, was discussed in connection with issues of textology. In the remainder of the present chapter, representative examples from these three categories are analyzed in depth. In each instance, I will demonstrate with varied emphasis the following: 1) the formal structure of the triad--how the texts "fit" together to create a larger text; 2) the trefoil's function as a reflection of Annenskij's basic theme; 3) the grounding of the text in reality and how this
augments a reading of the given poems. The trefoils discussed are examined under at least one of the three parameters, and are analyzed as categories in the order established above.

iii. The Chronologically Progressive Trefoil

The structure termed "chronologically progressive" is represented in fourteen trefoils. This type of structure permits a number of variations, and can be further divided into two subcategories: those with a definite narrative, or plot-like structure, and those in which there is a clear chronological development of a motif. In both types we find an unfolding of the poet's basic theme in the sequence of the three poems within.

The following chronologically progressive trefoils exhibit a plot-like structure: "From an Old Copybook," "Sideshow Trefoil," "Crimean Trefoil," "Moonlit Trefoil," "Trefoil of the Road," "Trefoil of the Railroad Car," and "Wedding Trefoil." In a sequential reading, there is the development of a kind of story. These plots are developed not through a precise narrative, but rather through the presentation of a series of telling details, in the manner of the
impressionistic short story. (In this Annenskij can be compared to Chekhov.14) Linked to actual episodes in the poet's life, these trefoils combine the autobiographical with the metapoetic, providing intimate glimpses into Annenskij's view of the world, and of art. "Trefoil of the Road" is representative of the chronologically progressive trefoil (with a plot-like structure) and is discussed below.

As the title of this trefoil suggests, the motif is that of the road. A metaphor for life's journey, the road immediately signals the presence of a plot or some form of narrative. In the initial poem, "Glittering" ("Сверкание"), the poet ponders the essence of the beautiful winter landscape around him. He is awestruck and tentatively joyful in the recognition of the world of Beauty. Nonetheless he is filled with a foreboding of his fate, which is not to share in this Beauty--the poet considers as a given that he will be abruptly separated from this enchantment by an untimely death. An anticipation and fear--of the approaching Muse is also evident.

The three, six-line stanzas of this poem structurally divide into two semantically separate halves. The dominant mood in the first

nine lines is tentatively optimistic:

If you love -- burn!
If you forget -- be oblivious!
Snow sweeps across my path.
I will be from day to the dawn
Amongst the wavy meadows
Today I am intoxicated by the glittering.

How many there are of them on the expanses of ice
How many shards of glass -- I will let myself,
I will let myself become intoxicated by each one...

The first two lines establish metaphorical parallels between nature and the poet's situation, according to two qualities of the snow: sparkle (in the sun--"If you love -- burn!") and the ability to cover everything ("If you forget -- be oblivious!). The latter nature of the snow is then confirmed in the third line, while its sparkle is named in the last line of the stanza. This sets the poem in a balanced tension between love and death, abandonment and oblivion.\textsuperscript{15} In allowing himself to become intoxicated by the beauty of the

\textsuperscript{15}As suggested by Frank Silbajoris, The Ohio State University.
scintillating winter landscape, in the glittering crystals of snow, the poet seems to be merging with the beauty of nature. This mood is carried over into the next stanza, where Annenskij focuses on the crystalline glittering of the snow, caused by intense sunlight. These ice crystals are likened to a multitude of "shards of glass." He is exhilarated at the beauty of the snowscape. Moreover, he is confident that this happy mood will continue unabated through the darkness of night (death) that ensues in the following poems of the trefoil. In the third line of the second stanza, the poet allows himself to be carried away by the beauty of each individual shard: "I will let myself become intoxicated by each one..." The poet is in control, allowing his fancy free reign, overcoming his fears of overpowering inspiration. But this line also marks a semantic turning point, and emphasizes the tension introduced in the first lines, as anxiety creeps in. In the final lines of the second stanza, a shift in mood can be discerned:

Лишь не смолкла бы медь,
Только вь онеметь,
Только медь нельзя не звонить.

If only the copper would not grow silent,
But it is impossible for it to go dumb
But the copper cannot help but ring.
A note of concern is voiced in the fourth line: "If only the copper would not grow silent". The semantic shift is carried by a conditional syntax: "Liš' by ... ne " ("Лишь бы ... не"). The poet would like something not to happen. Annenskij realizes that the bells, here symbolized by "copper," ("медь") potentially may grow silent (despite the "It is impossible" of the last line). One key to these lines is found in Annenskij's correspondence, in a letter to E. M. Muxina of May 19, 1906:

В Вологде очень много духовных лиц, и колокола звонят целый день... Колокола меня будят, они травожат меня... Моя черепная коробка не может вместить их медных отражений, но она не мирится, особенно с их разбитным, дробным звоном. Я чувствую, что этот звон хочет подлудиться ко мне, что он заигрывает со мной... Молчи, медный... Я не Бодлёр... И ты никого не проклиниваш... Ты просто ханжа, старый болтун...16

In Vologda there are very many people from the clergy, and the bells ring all day... The bells awaken me, they trouble me... My cranium cannot accommodate their copper reverberations, but it is not calmed, especially by their sharp, staccato ringing. I feel that this ringing wants to make up to me, that it is playing with me... Be silent, coppery one... I am not Baudelaire... And you are not cursing anyone... You are simply a canting hypocrite, an old chatterbox...

16While there is no date attributed to the poem "Glittering," two facts link it with Muxina's letter: 1) the bells described in Annenskij's letter are clearly echoed in the text of the poem; 2) Muxina possessed the original manuscript (Fedorov, A., 1959. Op. Cit. 612.). Thus it is reasonable to assume that the poem was dedicated to her, or at least written with her in mind.
In this letter, the poet is tormented by the bells, and eventually denigrates them. The question arises, then, as to why in "Glittering" he does not want them to grow silent. If we examine the remaining lines, however, the answer becomes clear. The poet senses the potential of the music, of the "copper reverberations," the inspirational qualities of the "sharp, staccato ringing." He also fears the inspiration that will sweep him away, since he is well aware that it will come at the cost of great spiritual effort. This is evinced in the use of the word "copper": the reader will recall that copper for Annenskij is an attribute of death.

In his frightened state he writes to Muxina that he is no "Baudelaire." In other words, he briefly denies his role as poet, fearing his all too great capacity to be swept away, to pour his heart out, "break" it and die. Hence, he is afraid of committing himself to the artistic act. For, in the final analysis, he is a poet, a Baudelaire. The French symbolist also hears his own bell, discerning in it, much like Annenskij, a hope and faith which he cannot have. In his sonnet "La Cloche sêlée," Baudelaire senses these unattainable qualities in the chiming bell, but knows that his own cannot accept their message:
Il est amer et doux, pendant les nuits d'hiver,  
D'écouter, près du feu qui palpite et qui fume,  
Les souvenirs lointains lentement s'élever  
Au bruit des carillons qui chantent dans la brume.

Bienheureuse la cloche au gosier vigoureux  
Qui, malgré sa vieillesse, alerte et bien portante,  
Jette fidèlement son cri religieux,  
Ainsi qu'un vieux soldat qui veille sous la tente.

Moi, mon âme est fêlée, et lorsqu'en ses ennus  
Elle veut de ses chants peupler l'air froid des nuits,  
Il arrive souvent que sa voix affaiblie  
Semble le râle épais d'un blessé qu'on oublie  
Au bord d'un lac de sang, sous un grand tas de morts,  
Et qui meurt, sans bouger, dans d'immense efforts.

In this poem, in contrast to the bell, which offers a sense of hope, Baudelaire realizes that the spectre of death awaits in the wings. Annenskij was aware of this aspect of Baudelaire's aesthetics; in fact, he translated this poem into Russian. The similarities in theme and the use of motifs and images (i.e. winter, "the copper throat") in Baudelaire's sonnet and Annenskij's "Glittering" are striking. Annenskij, too, doubts his own soul's attempts at responding to the chiming of the bell, for he perceives that his poetry is not only transitory, but also achieved at too great a cost, and that he is mortal.
Annenskij realizes that these bells ring in an inspiration linked to something removed from his own view of life and art. In this instance, they are the bells of a church, and their sound is thus the call to faith, a call to action (i.e., the "appeal" in the third stanza of "Glittering"). The sound contains a promise of immortality, but this is a religious notion that the secular poet has difficulty including in his own philosophy ("O, I am not the one, alas! who is impervious to the years," he states in his version of Baudelaire's poem). Indeed, the bells can at best convey only a call for aesthetic creativity, but the moment of inspiration in Annenskij's world is as transitory as man is mortal.

Returning to the second stanza, Annenskij is so intoxicated by the beauty of the moment, that he desires the bells ("медь") to continue to ring, in order that he might capture the moment through the inspiration they evoke. His initial enthusiasm, however, is tempered by the fact that the bells will continue to ring out their call to (religious) inspiration, independent of his will: "But it is impossible for it to go dumb / But the copper cannot help but ring." He also knows that, once having yielded to inspiration, he will lose self-control in transports that may carry him too far. Thus,
anxiety and fear of the torment and pain involved seep into his intoxicated revery. In the final stanza, his trepidation is explained:

Потому что порыв
Там рождает призыв,
Потому что порыв — это ты ...
Потому что один
Этих мертвых долин
Я боюсь белоснежной мечты.

Because a surge of inspiration
There engenders an appeal,
Because this surge of inspiration -- this is you... 
Because alone
I fear the snow-white dream
of these dead valleys.

The last line of this final stanza is preceded by a series of explanations as to why Annenskij "fears the snowy-white dream." The dream in question is linked to the intoxication and the woman-muse he calls "thou" ("ты") from the first half of the poem. Annenskij has abandoned his optimism in the face of such beauty, succumbing to his fear of the pain of the creative moment—painful, because he is unable to sustain it, as will be seen in the following poem, "Anguish of the Mirage."17

17 Annenskij frequently abandons a beautiful scene to embrace his pessimistic stance towards life; in the same letter mentioned, he describes a beautiful scene, only to state that "But for all that, they probably buried someone there once..."
perception of the landscape is striking; the glittering snow of the first is but a veil over the darkness of Annenskij's inevitable preoccupation with death. Of note in this respect is the similarity in the sound and grammatical structure of the two lines: "Ме́ж волнистых полей" / "Этих мертвых долин." The reasons given for his fear describe the arrival of the Muse: an "impulse" gives rise to an "appeal.". The "you" equated with the "impulse" in the structurally foregrounded third line (each third and sixth line is composed of anapestic trimeter--the remaining lines are anapestic dimeter) is enigmatic; it may be the Muse, but can also refer to the addressee of the letter cited (Muxina), since Annenskij gave this particular poem to her. Furthermore, the poet is "alone" ("один"), which is also a cause of his trepidation. In any case, this creative "impulse" makes a demand on the poet. It is an "appeal" that is a double-edged sword, as it were, for it contains the religious appeal inherent in the church bells, as discussed above, as well as the aesthetic appeal to take up his pen and create. In the former instance, Annenskij can only arrive at a despair in his conviction that death overcomes all. In the latter is the suggestion of the possible aesthetic union with the beauty of the landscape--the world of
beauty, of the "non-I." This sense of unity, though, is also doomed to but a fleeting moment, and for this reason he fears the ensuing "dream" that will take place in the second poem of the trefoil. There his path will continue, and eventually lead to the desired but feared "moment" of inspiration. Thus, the final line, in its syntactically inverted position at the end of the stanza not only shifts the entire tone and mood of the poem, but also effectively links this text with "Anguish of the Mirage."

The subject of "Anguish of the Mirage," a night-time sleigh ride, is in Annenskij's world a moment of contemplation and reminiscence of the past. It is an event treasured by the poet, as was suggested in the prose piece "Andante" (discussed in Chapter II), and is rooted in the poet's reality. In this instance, it is a continuation of the journey begun in "Glittering," and thus our reading of this poetic experience is informed by that poem's theme: the poet's awareness of the "world of beauty" (to use Ginzburg's term) and his fear of being carried away by a poetic transport—the poet is well aware that once having achieved the desired "merger,"

18 See also his letter of December 31, 1908 to the singer Begičeva (another close female acquaintance, judging from the tone of the letter): "I was riding alone in a snowy fog, and my eyes burned from the tears" (Я ехал один в снежной мгле, и глаза мои горели от слез"), he writes, and then touchingly recalls her singing of the night before.
it will pass, and he will be separated from this beauty, returning once again to his own dreary existence. The sleigh-ride also suggests a spatial and temporal forward movement, supporting the reading of the poems in sequence. As the poet rides along the "wearisome path" of life, another sleigh, conceivably bearing his beloved, approaches and in their momentary passing, the poet experiences a moment of inspiration—the focal point of the poem.

The poem opens with the verb "extinguished," which has the figurative meaning of perishing, of dying:

Погасла последняя краска,
Как шепот в полночной молебне...
Что надо, безумная сказка,
От этого сердца тобо?

The last color has been extinguished,
Like a whisper in a midnight prayer...
O tale of madness, What do you want
From this heart of mine?

A decidedly pessimistic tone is immediately felt. Further, that which has gone out is the "last color," literally the colors of daytime, or possibly the colors of life itself, since "kraska" in Russian can also mean "blush." The headiness felt in the intense sunlight of "Glittering" has faded, and a sense of impending doom is conveyed.
Further, in the second line, this image is compared with a "whisper in a midnight entreaty." The "entreaty" here is of the kind that is not granted, implied by the combination of "whisper," "midnight" and "entreaty." It is whispered in the stillness and emptiness of the night, hence the person entreating doubts that his/her desire will be fulfilled. (An echo of the "appeal" in the first poem is also evident here.) The ellipsis also reinforces such a reading. This is not, however, the whisper of the lyrical persona, as we find in the final two lines of the stanza. It is rather the "fairy-tale of madness" of the third line. Linked to "color" ("kraska") by rhyme, this "fairy-tale of madness" becomes a metaphor for life. This is not the ugly life of banal existence, but instead the beautiful life experienced in the intoxicated revery of the first poem, where the images have a magical, "fairy-tale"-like quality. Here the opposition of a beautiful life and ugly life form a parallel to Ginzburg's opposition of the "beautiful" and "terrible" worlds. For Annenskij, beautiful life is attractive and dangerous, whereas ugly life is as disgusting as death. While death may be an escape from an ugly life (of the lonely "I") in other poems, it is also the end of a beautiful life (a merger with the "non-I"). Further, the poet answers the whispered
entreaty with a question: "O fairy-tale of madness, / What do you want / From this heart of mine?" The poet, then, faced with beauty, feels that something is required of him. We also feel fear in his question—the fear of the "snow-white dream." The next stanza and the first two lines of the third consist of four rhetorical questions:

Мои ли без счета и меры
По снегу не тяжки концы?
Мне ли дали пустые не сервы?
Не тускло звенят бубенцы?

Но ты-то зачем так глубоко
Двойшица, о сердце моем?

Are not my journeys over the snow
Oppressive beyond count or measure?
Are the empty distances that lie before me not gray?
Is the jingle of bells not dreary?

But you, my heart,
why are you so deeply divided?

The first three questions are in essence descriptions of the burdensome quality of life so deeply felt by the poet. All concern the poet's pondering on his own destination, or fate. This notion is emphasized by the subject of the poem: a sleigh ride is an equivalent of the journey of life, the ugly life that Annenskij perceives as being rooted in the "terrible world." When he
questions whether the "empty distances" are not "gray" to him, the poet voices his doubt in a future with no color or sense in it. Here the opening line is echoed, for where the last colors have faded all is gray. This monotony is further reinforced by the added question of the last line: "Is the jingle of bells not dreary?" The muffled sleigh bells, vestiges of the clear ringing of bells in "Glittering," but transformed into non-religious, purely aesthetic sounds, mark his pointless journey through life. The closing lines of the third stanza are significant, in that they suggest the onset of a creative moment. The poet's heart is "dividing in two," signifying the excitement and pain of inspiration, as well as the presence of another force within him: art. It also suggests his awareness of separation. These notions are revealed in the poet's answer to the questions he has posed:

Я знаю -- она далеко,
И чувствую близость ей.

I know--she is far away,
And I feel her nearness.

The feminine pronoun here is curious; it might refer to the "fairy-tale of madness", or the world of Beauty with which he desires so to merge. It also may refer to an actual person, a woman.
(Muxina), whom he anticipates meeting. This feminine entity, then, doubles as his beloved and the Muse. The paradox of these two lines also underscores such a reading. His Muse is elusive, far away, but nevertheless, he feels its/her nearness, a notion continued in the fourth stanza:

Уж вот они, снежные дымы,
С них глаз я свести не могу:
Сейчас разминуться должны мы
На белом, но мертвом снегу.

Here they are now, the snowy mists,
I cannot take my eyes off them:
In a moment we must pass each other
On the white, but dead snow.

Here the poet sense the nearness to "her"—symbolized by the approach of another sleigh, which raises "snowy mists" (the snow motif clearly carried over from the first poem, transformed yet again). Their inevitable union is reinforced by the rhyme of "dymy"/"dolžny my." The poet cannot take his eyes away from this image, for in it is contained that fleeting moment of ecstasy that will unite him with his Muse/beloved. At the same time, he is aware of the transitory nature of this moment: the perfective verb "to pass one another" together with "we must" reflects the poet's conviction that he and his Muse (or beloved) will meet only briefly
on the background of a tormenting reality: "On the white, but dead snow."

The next stanza structurally stands in the center of the poem, when the two omitted stanzas are counted. The anticipated meeting of poet and Muse is presented in a momentary climax:19

Сейчас кто-то саны нам сцепит
И снова расцепит без слов.
На миг, но томительный лепет
Сольется для нас бубенцов...

In a moment someone will silently couple,
And then uncouple, our sleighs.
For a single but tormenting instant
The bells' murmurs will merge into one for us...

The fleeting nature of the "moment" ("МИГ") of inspiration is emphasized through the word "now" and the close juxtaposition of the verbs "couple" and "uncouple" in the same sentence. Indeed, the transport of inspiration can only last for a moment, a "single, but tormenting instant." The merger of the bells' sounds symbolizes the negation of separation, the affirmation of a union with the "beautiful world." However, its transitory nature, and the poet's resignation to the moment's passing are emphasized by the

19Setchkarev briefly mentions this stanza as an example of Annenskij's notion of inspiration, which supports my reading (Op. Cit. 65.)
final ellipsis and the poet's omission of the sixth stanza, where he conceivably ponders the departure of his Muse. His deference to the vagaries of fate is underscored as well in the seventh stanza, where the merger of the "sleighbells" is finalized, but where separation is once again introduced:

Он слился... Но больше друг друга,
Мы в тусклую ночь не найдем....
В тоске безвыходного круга
Влачусь я постылым путем...

It has merged.... But we shall no longer
Find one another in the dim night...
In the anguish of a perpetual circle
I wander on my wearisome way...

After this merger, and upon the return of the torment of reality, the poet despairs, foreseeing that he and his Muse (or his beloved) will no longer find each other "in the dim night." The meeting and passing of two sleighs becomes an image of his love story and creative history. Once again, the poet finds himself back in the inescapable and dreary present: "In the anguish of a perpetual circle." It is under the sign of a perpetual circle that Annenskij perceives life. (The eternal recurrence of a tormenting existence is also suggested in the epanileptic repetition in the final stanza.) The
poet’s feeling of anguish lingers in the poet’s omission of the eighth stanza, and the reader too is forced to pause and ponder the separation. Finally, in the last stanza, the poet returns to his former situation—riding alone in the winter dusk, trapped in the prison-cell of his mind. And without the anticipated moment of creation that stands in the middle of the poem, the final question takes on a tone of despair. The first line of the final stanza, a repetition of the opening line ("The last color has been extinguished") now signifies that the last blush of the poet’s creativity has “gone out.” This line even more strongly symbolizes death: the last color of life has perished. The “fairy-tale of madness” (beautiful life) torments the poet now more than ever.

This poem, when read in its intended position within the trefoil’s sequence, clearly reflects Annenskij’s view of the moment of inspiration, and the creative act. Life, while tormenting and oppressive, nonetheless contains moments of fleeting beauty, as in the poignant moment where two sleighs meet in the night—that fleeting “moment” or “instant ("Миг") where poet and muse (or beloved) are united. However, in Annenskij’s poetry, this moment comes only at great cost to the poet, for he is painfully aware that it is doomed to pass; that the link with creation be made and just as
quickly severed is inevitable in the poet's mind. This same notion is also reflected in the title of the poem, "Anguish of the Mirage," which signifies the anguish that a mirage's beauty, just as life's beauty, is ultimately transitory. The poet cannot escape his awareness of separation—the status quo of his "I" in order to merge with the "non-I."

In the third poem of the trefoil, we find a completion of the narrative: the poet is once again alone, riding along on his lonely journey, the magical moment only a memory. At the same time, there is a reflection on the previous two poems. This can be attributed to the semantics of the final position of a text in a series: as a completion of something, it is obliged to look backward at what has come before, in order to conclude. The final poem, "A Desire to Live," reiterates the despair found in the last lines of "Anguish of the Mirage."

In this regard, it may be argued that here we have a "synthetic" trefoil. Indeed, the dividing line between the three categories of trefoils is not always clearly demarcated. In several instances, the final poem of a chronologically progressive trefoil, while completing the development of the narrative as such, can also be seen as a synthesis of the previous two texts. In any event, there is still a continuation of the plot. A synthesis can also occur on the stylistic level in a chronologically progressive trefoil; it is a feature, for example, of "Sideshow Trefoil."
In the first stanza of this sonnet, the first two lines in effect echo the images set forth in the first two poems. The opening line of the poem effectively returns us to images found in "Glittering" and "Anguish of the Mirage":

Колокольчика ль гулкие пени,

Whether it is the resonant reproaches of the bell,

Here, the musical quality of the beautiful snowscape is echoed, but the bell rings out not song, but "reproaches." Further, the copper of the first poem, metonymically symbolizing the bell, and the more poetic "sleighbells," which signal the approach of the creative act in "Anguish of the Mirage," become the somewhat more prosaic "bell."

There is a definite progression in the poet's use of this particular image. The adjective "reverberating, resonant" is also of note. The sounds can still be heard, but are now faint and distant, heard only through the prism of the second poem. The second line of "A Desire to Live" also connects this text with the first and second poems:

Дымной тучи ль далекие сны...

Or the distant dreams of a hazy cloud...
"Distant dreams," apart from signaling once again a spatial progression, also harken back to the "snowy-white dream" of "Glittering" -- a dream that the poet fears, for it involves the painful commitment the artist must make in his transport. These "distant dreams" also hint at the dreamlike quality of the central portion of the second poem, in which the poet merges with his beloved Muse, in which he captures one of life's "sparks of beauty". This notion is given credence by the source of these "distant dreams"--"a hazy cloud"--when we recall the "snowy haze" of "Anguish of the Mirage." These two lines form a complete sentence ending in an ellipsis. This open-endedness, coupled with the repetition of the particle "I"," suggest a sense of resignation and exhaustion. The poet is drained, and appears almost indifferent to the existence of one image or the other. Furthermore, he has once again entered the dark side of his soul. The brilliance of "Glittering" and the magical quality of "Anguish of the Mirage" are behind him:

Снова снегом заносит ступени.

Once again, snow covers the steps.

The snow now covers not the path before him, as it did in the initial poem, nor does it rise up to meet him in a "snowy haze," as in the
central poem, but now buries his "steps," or the entrance into his house. In this way, Annenskij reveals a spatial and temporal progression, further emphasized in the last line of this quatrain:

На стене полоса от луны.

On the wall is a strip of moonlight.

Night has arrived, and the source of light is now the moon, as opposed to the sun (daylight and twilight) in the first poems. The poet finds himself deprived of the freedom found in these texts as well; he is now confined within a room, where the world of wonder outside seems out of reach.21 The moon, the symbol of the night (as opposed to the glittering sun in the first poem), indifferently absorbs all:

Кто сениной играет в трюсинах,
Кто седой макушкой копны.
Что ни есть беспокойные тени,
Все кладбищем луна отданы.

Someone is playing with a blade of straw in the barn,
Someone with the top of a rick of hay.
However many restless shadows there are,
Every one is given up by the graveyard to the moon.

21Walls are frequently associated with restriction in Annenskij; for example, in the poem "Dying" ("Умирания"): "between old and yellow walls, / living out one's bitter confinement." ("между старых и желтых стен, / доживая горький плен"). This room is also an equivalent of the prison cell that Ivanov speaks of in his critical study of the poet (see Chapter I).
This moonlight is the receiver through death (the "graveyard"), of all beings in Annenskij's poetic universe, both those who involve themselves with trivialities, (a "blade of straw") and those who strive for the heights (the "top of a rick of hay"). In other words, darkness absorbs all, including the potentially beautiful world of "Glittering," as well as the momentary merger of the poet and his muse, as in "Anguish of the Mirage." Indeed, separation from the surrounding world of beauty and eventual death dominate in this poem, as seen in the tercets of this sonnet:

Свисту меди послушен дрожащей,
Вижу -- куст отделился от чаши
На дорогу меня сторожить...

Следом чаша послала стенанье,
И во всём безнадежность желания:
«Только жить, дольше жить, вечно жить ...»

Obedient to the singing of the trembling copper,
I see -- a bush has parted from the thicket
To come out onto the road to meet me...

And the thicket sends a moaning after it,
And in everything is the hopelessness of the desire:
"Only to live, live longer, live eternally..."

In the first tercet, Annenskij reveals the personal nature of his poetic quest. In the second he universalizes it, and thus the despair of the last line reverberates all the more forcefully. In the first
line, the image of the artist is presented in terms of music; someone (or, as it turns out, something) is "obedient to the singing of trembling copper." Once again the bell becomes the call of the muse. But at the same time, "copper," an attribute of death and its accoutrements, signals that doom is nigh. Further, by inserting the first-person verb at the beginning of the second line in an anaphoric rhyme ("вишу"/"svistu") Annenskij implies that the poet is the obedient one. However, it becomes clear that the poet is merely a witness; syntactical causality reveals that the bush reacts to the sound of the bell. The bush has separated from the thicket; the metaphor of the individual/poet and the crowd/life is clear. Further, this "bush" has come out "onto the road to meet" the witness (the poet). This in essence universalizes the image, which the poet perceives as a pattern that all must in some way follow, despite any hopes or desires to do otherwise. The "thicket" rejects this pattern of separation--an equivalent of death--in its "moaning" of the next stanza. The poet brutally underscores the futility of hope in the final lines of the poem: "And in everything is the hopelessness of the desire: / "Only to live, live longer, live eternally..." The title of the poem is echoed here three times (the
tripartite structure of the trefoil is thus repeated). The "desire to live" goes through a kind of transformation: from the simple "desire to live" of the title, to "just to live," "to live longer" and finally "to live eternally." This final "desire" becomes the most desperate and futile of all—and the most unattainable in Annenskij's world. In effect, the title of the poem is obviated, and a title from another poem is suggested: "Dying" ("Умираешь"), from "Sideshow Trefoil." Indeed, the process of separation from life—dying and death—is what ultimately consumes the lyrical I, and becomes the final focus in this trefoil. At the same time, however, the poet, while aware that he "perishes entire," succeeds in capturing a "spark of beauty" (in Miłosz's terms), as symbolized in "Anguish of the Mirage."

As can be seen from "Trefoil of the Road," the tripartite structure emphasizes the poet's basic theme in its "dialectic wavering" between alternating moods, conflicting options and stances. In addition, the three poems are linked to similar events in the poet's life, and thus their confessional, personal side emerges and comes to the fore to those who know or can guess. It is into the whole series of the trefoil that Annenskij encodes his aesthetics—in
this regard the poems are metapoetic.

The structure of this type of trefoil can also reflect Annenskij's pessimistic and ironic view of life. This is the case in "Sideshow Trefoil," in which the poet presents a clear story—a sequence of events that in their unfolding illustrate the despair of the poet. Or in "Crimean Trefoil," the poet reminisces about an actual journey to the Crimea, and reflects on the beauty of the scenery there in terms of his basic theme. He perceives in the beauty of the sea and its shores an inaccessible world of beauty, except for a few moments of inspired grace. "Moonlit Trefoil" narrates stages of a romantic, but unfulfilled tryst. Accordingly, the poet transforms this series into a poignant aesthetic construct, sublimating his desire. In every instance of this type of trefoil, the unfolding of an episode from the poet's life is structured so as to parallel the development of his basic theme. This is also the case in those trefoils that develop a single motif in a chronologically progressive manner.

Trefoils of this type are: "Icy Trefoil," "Spring Trefoil," "Autumn Trefoil," "Twilight Trefoil," "Stormy Trefoil," "Rainy Trefoil" and "Trefoil of Waning." As in those trefoils with a plot-like structure, this type of trefoil, when considered as a series illuminates the
poet's underlying thematic concerns. For example, in the first three mentioned here, the poet depicts the chronological progression of the various seasons—winter, spring and autumn. Each is conspicuously informed by his pessimistic view of life. Spring, for example, becomes a time of death, as seen in the following lines from "Black Spring," which refer to both the death of the season and that of a man:

О люди! Тяжек жити след  
По рывинам путей,  
Но ничего печальней нет,  
Как встреча двух смертей.

Oh, people! Life's footstep is hard  
Along the roads' ruts,  
But there is nothing sadder  
Than the meeting of two deaths.

The other seasonal trefoils are similar in the chronological development of the seasons in their titles. The structure of "Icy Trefoil" forms a parallel to that of "Trefoil of the Road." Just as in that trefoil, the moment of inspiration in "Icy Trefoil" is embedded in the central poem. As Borker observes, "Only in the central moment of transition does the lyrical subject achieve a brief, fleeting expression of affirmation and well-being."²² In "Autumn Trefoil," fall is seen as a time of true inspiration. But, as is inherent

in the season itself, it is also fraught with the approach of death. "Twilight Trefoil," discussed in Chapter III is representative of a trefoil that traces a motif through its transformations in time, while developing at the same time a clear vision of Annenskij's aesthetics. "Stormy Trefoil" also exhibits these qualities, and is analyzed below as an archetypal example of this type of trefoil.

The three poems of this triad portray in strict chronological order the approach, arrival, and departure of a spring storm. Annenskij perceives in the image of the storm an analogy of life as an existence fated to end tragically in death and oblivion. The poems in question are "May Thunderstorm," "Clouds," and "Anguish of the Now Silent Thunderstorm" ("Майская гроза," "Облака" and "Тоска отшумевшей грозы").

In "May Thunderstorm," the poet's portrayal of a spring storm presents a vision of the beautiful world, and is filled with original and concrete images. It is a vision filled with wonder and enchantment, but which, as seen in the final lines, is also penetrated by anguish. In the first stanza, the persona professes his love for the approaching thunderous fury of the storm, stating that he "loves to foretell" the storm "through its first symptoms":

...
Conveyed here is a state of suspension, as symbolized by the "cotton" clouds against the "turquoise" background of the sky. The time-frame--midday--is one of non-movement as well, signalled by the word "langour." This static quality, the calm before the storm is in direct contrast to the description of the dynamic images that follow. In the next two stanzas, the storm's approach and arrival are set forth in a series of original images that capture its elemental and powerful movement:23

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23The images of this poem also recall Tjutčev's poem "Spring Tunderstorm" ("Весенняя гроза").
On the dusty road the willows are bending,
The hurried ring of horseshoes has become clearer,
In a moment and the ovens will throw open their doors,
Among the darkened clouds.

And now a whirlwind, and a dimming,
And stuffiness, and blue-gray steam...
In a minute a flood will fall from the sky,
And in another minute, a fire will rage there.

As the storm draws near, its might is intimated in movement:
"willows are bending," preparing for its arrival. The sound of
horseshoes ringing becomes clearer (in the stillness before the
storm). The image of "ovens in the heavens" "flung open amongst
the dark clouds" gives a sense of the magnitude of the storm clouds,
their depth and darkness, as well as the flash of lightening. In the
third stanza, the clarity and static qualities of the third stanza are
stirred by the approaching storm. The ellipsis here signals the final
threshold, and finally the "foretold" storm arrives. The rain which
is about to fall is of biblical proportions: it is compared to a "flood"
from the sky. The "blue-gray steam" is transformed into "fire"
(reinforced by rhyme: "par"/"pożar"). The next stanza represents
the height of the storm, when the rain obscures vision, and forces
the poet to turn his gaze from the wonder of the heavens, to focus
on his immediate surroundings:

И из угла мой кибитки
В туманной сетке дождевой
Я вижу только лок накидки
Да черный шлык над головой.

And from the corner of my kibitka
In the misty network of rain,
I see only the shine of the mantle,
And the black kerchief overhead.

The image of the poet sitting in a kibitka, viewing the storm from his "corner," implies a separation from the enchanting natural phenomenon. The kibitka becomes a version of his "prison-cell," from which he can only be witness (as opposed to participant). Indeed, in this stanza he can only discern the details of his enclosed space. Only when the storm begins to dissipate can he return his attention to the world outside. The images suggesting the storms departure emphasize the abatement of the storm's fury, focusing as they do on small details:

Но вот уж тучи будто выше,
Пробились жаркие лучи,
И мягко прыгают по крыше
Златые капли, как мячи.

But now already the clouds seem higher,
Hot rays have pierced through,
And softly along the rooftops,
Golden drops play, like little balls.
This stanza is filled with a tentative joy, emphasized by the heat and the golden color of the rain drops which "softly along the roof, ... play, like little balls." This happiness is like a child's simple wonder at the images of nature. It is short lived, however, as is revealed in the next stanza, where all that is left is the "smoke of memory" on the "black oil-cloth" cover of the kibitka:

И так уж нет... В огне лазури
Закинут за спину один,
Воспоминаниям майской бури
Дымится черный вискатин.

And they are already gone... In the fire of azure
Flung over the back alone
With recollections of the May storm
The black oil-cloth smokes.

Here the ellipsis signals not the onset of the storm, but the return to an existence without such beauty. We have a pathetic fallacy here as well: the "black oil-cloth" is "alone" "flung behind the back," abandoned--a symbol of the poet condemned to remain behind in a "black" existence, rather than move forward with the passion and wonder of the spring storm--an image that he can only remember. Its beauty, however, not only is enchanting and magnificent, but fraught with danger and anguish, as is set forth in the final stanza. Like the storms of the heart and passion, creativity and life, this
one too contains the potential of destruction and death, as revealed in the final stanza:

Когда бы бури пролетали
И всё так быстро и светло...
Но не умчит к лазурной дали
Грозой разбито крыло.

If only all storms flew by so,
And all so quickly and full of light...
But a wing broken by a storm
Does not rush to azure distance.

Here the poet realizes that the storm he has witnessed and recreated (or "foretold," as he puts it) in a poem is, like anything of true beauty or passion, inherently dangerous and life-threatening. He wishes that "all storms could pass so swiftly and lightly," i.e., without damage to the witness. However, the poet realizes this is an impossibility, which is expressed grammatically in the irreal conditional "kogda by" ("когда бы..."). Indeed, in the raw elemental fury of the storm, or by analogy in the throes of passion (be it artistic or erotic), there is always some kind of irreparable damage. The disjunctive "but" of the final sentence of the poem causes a decisive break in the flow of the beautiful portrayal of the storm, and foregrounds the final image. Accordingly, this last image
reveals the aspect of the storm previously set aside, but which for Annenskij outweighs all others: the storm of passion and creativity are taxing, and even fatal to the poet. Annenskij's choice of image here is intriguing: a wing, broken by a storm, fluttering helplessly, is also a metaphor for a broken or weak heart (Annenskij's own). Broken by life's storms, and the awareness of a life ending in death, it is unable to fly off into the "azure distances."

It was noted above that this poem is an Annenskian echo of Tjutčev's "Spring Thunderstorm" ("Весенняя гроза"). In Tjutčev's poem, the storm is seen as a glorious event. Many of his images appear in Annenskij's poem, although the latter's treatment is decidedly more concretized. For example, Tjutčev's "pearls of rain" ("Перлi дождевые") become "golden drops" which "play softly along the rooftops." Indeed, Annenskij focuses on many more details than does Tjutčev, who presents a more idealized storm. And in "Spring Thunderstorm," the last stanza describes the storm in mythological terms, poured out by Hebe, the goddess of eternal youth:

Ты скажешь: ветреная Геба,  
Корня Зевса орла,  
Громокипящий кубок с неба,  
Смейся, на землю пролила.
You will say: the windy Hebe,
Feeding Zeus' eagle,
Laughing, has poured a
Cup filled with boiling storms from the sky.

This is in contrast to Annenskij's final stanza, which emphasizes not the refreshing quality of the spring storm, but its destructive nature, and old age, rather than eternally laughing youth.24

The theme of "May Thunderstorm" is illuminated by "Lilac Mist" from "Twilight Trefoil," (which immediately precedes "Stormy Trefoil in CC). In "Lilac Mist," it will be recalled, the "lilac mist" is a symbol of beauty which also threatens—it will wait for the poet only "Where over the whirlpool the thin ice shows bluely" ("Где над омутом синеет тонкий лед"). In both poems the poet sits in his corner (Ivanov's "prison-cell"), viewing the enchanting but dangerous world of beauty. In "Lilac Mist" the poet enjoins the personified mist: "Come stay with me a while in my corner"

24 At the same time, Tjut'cev investigates similar philosophical problems presented by the beauty of nature and spring in other poems. For example, as Sarah Pratt notes, "In the final stanza [of "Spring"--T. P. A.], in which the narrator returns to the problem of man's personal life, the image of the boundless ocean becomes a true metaphor as it comes to symbolize the universal-godly life by which man can achieve reunification with nature. ... Then he urges the person addressed to leave this life and become his own master by immersing himself in the life-giving waters of the ocean of spring--if only for a moment." (Pratt, Sarah. Russian Metaphysical Romanticism. The Poetry of Tjut'cev and Boratynskii. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984. 74.)
This is comparable to the vantage point of the poet in "May Thunderstorm": "And from the corner of my kibitka." In both poems the poet states that, in any merger with the world of beauty, the poet is taxed to the extreme, even to the point of death. "Clouds," the next poem of "Stormy Trefoil," presents a chronological and thematic continuation of the storm motif.

The focus in this poem is on the clouds after the storm (i.e., that which occurred in "May Thunderstorm"). This poem is similar to the first, in that there is an image that at first seems radiantly beautiful, but which is subsequently transformed into one that reveals the tragic side of beauty. In the first stanza, the poet immediately presents an ambiguity:

Пережиты ли тяжкие проводы,
Иль в глаза мне глядят, неизбежные,
Как тогда вы мне кажетесь молоды,
Облака, мои лебеди нежные!

Is the hard parting outlived,
Or is the inevitable looking into my eyes?
If so, how young you seem to me
Clouds, my tender swans!

The first two lines have a double meaning. Firstly, the poet is referring to the parting of the spring storm in the first poem
(textually supported by the first line of the second stanza).

Secondly, death has already arrived, or is staring him in the eyes. It doesn't seem to matter, however, for in this moment the poet is enthralled by an image of beauty--the clouds which he metaphorizes as "tender swans." In the second stanza, he continues this metaphor (anthropomorphizing the clouds, as he did the storm in the first poem), and describes their carefree existence:

Те не сняты ушедшие грозы вам,  
Все бы в небе вам плавать да нежиться,  
Только под вечер в облаке розовом  
Будто девичье сердце зарождается...

You do not dream those far-off thunderstorms  
You would like always to swim and luxuriate in the skies,  
Only towards evening in a pink cloud  
It is as though a maiden's heart were beginning to gleam...

These clouds do not "smoke with reminiscence" as did the black oil-cloth in the previous poem. Indeed, they are the of the same stuff as the spring storm. They too are free souls, inhabitants of the world of beauty--a realm so sought after by the poet.²⁵ There is a color contrast that operates intratextually between the two poems

²⁵Here Lermontov's poem "The Cliff" ("Утес") comes to mind, where the "cliff" is left behind to lament his loneliness (like the poet in "May Thunderstorm"--the broken wing can not "rush" ("умчить") into the "azure distance") while the "little golden cloud" (i.e., the clouds of Annenskij's "Clouds") which had spent the night "merged" with the rock, dances off into the azure.
that is important in this regard: the blackness of the poet’s “corner,” contrasted in “May Thunderstorm” to the magnificent palette of the storm, is now compared to the virginal whiteness of the clouds in the second poem. As such, the clouds present a similar dilemma to the poet: they inspire him to “sing,” i.e., write verse, but are also fickle and elusive, and do not respond as he desires. Furthermore, they are ephemeral and transitory, ultimately dissipating (even as they try to stay together), at precisely the moment the poet commences his “singing”:

But you are not friends with ringing songs,
If I let myself go, you will become misty,
Hopelessly, in slender streaks, swimming asunder,
All the time you reach towards one another...

Even the clouds that are left by the thunderstorm of the first poem of the trefoil will not remain. In the final stanza, he laments their fading, and at the same time the flight of his own “timid songs”: 
That his timid songs have "flown away" suggests another interpretation of the poem: his poetry--in the final analysis captured "sparks of beauty"--is also ephemeral (or at least the "stormy" inspiration that begets them), and it too deserts the lonely poet. In other words, his verse is analogous to the clouds--as a testimony to beauty. The poet, abandoned by his poetry, is left only with repentance in his heart, in place of the joy that he had felt previously. Emotion is expressed by the "clouds" as well: they are "jealous" and "seem to weep in a smoky dissolving." They are no longer pure, but tainted, no longer white, but gray, and ill-defined. This final ambiguous image is clarified by the first poem as well: the "lonely black-oil cloth" also "smoked with reminiscence," i.e., the sorrow and anguish that is felt by the poet are perceived in the objects and scenery around him.26 This is

26Setchkarev observes, "Transitory as they are, the changing shapes of the clouds and the lighting in which they appear seem to be a mirror of the poet's
evidenced in another poem in which Annenskij describes his perception of clouds, "Thirteen lines" ("Тринацать строк"), from Posthumous Verse. In this poem, the poet states that he would love the evening clouds, but is only reminded of their "Death" when they dissipate (just as they do in "Clouds"):  

Я любить бы их вечер хотел,  
Когда, редя, там гаснут лучи,  
Но от жертвы их розовых тел  
Только пепел мне снится в ночи.

I would like to love their evening,  
When, glowing, the rays are extinguished there,  
But from the victim of their pink bodies  
I dream only of ashes in the night.

Thus, in the image of the clouds, we find a similar dilemma as that found in the first poem of the trefoil. Annenskij reveals his moments of failure at a lasting merger with the world of beauty, but returns again and again to its paradox. What begins as something joyful and wonderful, often miraculous, inevitably finishes on a note of despair and resignation. The poet always remains in his drab little corner of existence. By the same token, there is a world of beauty and wonder which the poet always

soul." (Op. Cit. 93)  
attempts to reach, but which always remains elusive. The chronological sequence of "Stormy Trefoil" is brought to a logical end in the final poem, as suggested in the title: "Anguish of the Now Silent Thunderstorm."

The first stanza connects this poem with "May Thunderstorm," describing in lines one and two the mood found in the first lines of that poem:

Сердце ль не томилося
Жаланнем грозы,
Сквозь вспышки бело-алые?
А теперь влюбилось
В бездонность бирюзы,
В ее глаза усталые.

Did one's heart not languish
With desire for the thunderstorm,
Through the white-scarlet flashes?
But now it has fallen in love with
The turquoise's fathomlessness
With its weary eyes.

Here the heart (echoing the broken wing) which had longed for the beauty of the storm, and then had sung in vain to the white clouds in the second poem, now turns its attentions to the "fathomlessness of turquoise"--the endless expanse (abyss) of the sky, which symbolizes the unfathomable nature of the beauty perceived in the first poems. The meter of this poem, "dvusložnik"
with a positionally regulated anacrusis (unique in Annenskij's verse), suggests the unsteady beating of a fragile and overwrought heart.\textsuperscript{28} The use of "turquoise" to denote the sky echoes its similar usage in "May Thunderstorm." In the second stanza, the poet describes the force and beauty of the "azure," of "unstorminess":

\begin{align*}
\text{Все, что есть лазурного,} \\
\text{Излилось в лучах} \\
\text{На зыби златошвейные.} \\
\text{Все, что там безбурного} \\
\text{И с ласкою в очах, --} \\
\text{В сады зеленовейные.}
\end{align*}

All that there is of azure
Has poured itself into the rays
On gold-embroidered ripples,
All that there is of unstorminess
And with a caress in its eyes has
Poured itself into green-waving gardens.

He describes this other world of beauty in order to foreground the central theme of this poem: the anguish of the "now silent" thunderstorm. Relentless time has affected even the powerful storm from the first stanza. In this sense, Annenskij constructs a

\textsuperscript{28}Lotman defines the meter of this poem as the only one of its kind in Annenskij's oeuvre. (Lotman, Ju. "Metrîcheskij repertuar I. Annenskogo (materialy k metrîcheskomu spravochniku)." \textit{Trudy po russkoj i slavjanskoj filologii XXIV: Literaturovedenie}. Tartu, 1975. 122-147.)
kind of vicious circle. All things of beauty die, but at the same time may cause death (by inspiring the artist). First the storm breaks the wing/heart of the poet. The poet then causes the dissipation of the delicate cloud/swans with his singing (and his timid songs flee as well), and finally, the endless expanse of blue destroys the storm, or in any event blots it out. In this way, the final stanza is easily comprehended: The storm has exchanged sternness for sorrow (as the poet exchanged joy for regret), and only "looks into the turquoise panes from the outside, from an abode foreign to it" (an interesting reversal: nature now looks in from the outside, as opposed to the usual situation, where the poet looks out). In this way, the "anguish" of the "now-silent thunderstorm" exhibits the fundamental character of Annenskij's own "toska": the storm is acutely aware of its demise, displaying a knowledge of death. The final lines of the poem are rich in semantic potential:

Больше не суровые,
Печальные глаза,
Любили ли вы, простите ли?

No longer stern,
Sorrowful eyes,
Did you love, will you forgive?

29This is similar to the "perpetual circle of anguish" in "Anguish of the Mirage."
There are two possible interpretations here. Firstly, the "you" ("Бы") can refer to the "no longer stern, sad eyes of the storm." In this case the poet, addressing the storm (now anthropomorphized nature), rhetorically inquires whether the storm loved (i.e., fulfilled its passion), and whether it will forgive (life's pain and its own demise). Another possibility, given the theme of passion and love found in so many of Annenskij's lyrics is that the "now silent thunderstorm" is one brought on by passion. In this regard, the eyes are not those of the storm, but perhaps those of a beloved woman, to whom he poses these same questions—whether she loved (the poet), and whether she will forgive him (because the poet could not/would not respond to her passion).

As can be seen, in this trefoil the motif of the storm is carried through the three poems. Taken together, they present, in the chronological progression of a spring thunderstorm, a clear exposition of Annenskij's main thematic concern, with an emphasis on the futility of retaining the elusive moment of beauty, and the inevitability of final destruction and death. The theme of frustrated desire also surfaces.
The other trefoils of this type function in much the same way. For example, "Rainy Trefoil" develops the motif of rain. "Trefoil of Waning" was discussed in Chapter III. While there is some variation, the examples discussed above demonstrate the standard features of this sub-category. Of note is the fact that in both sub-categories of the chronologically progressive trefoil, a sequential reading is essential. The three poems as a series or unified text in the second sub-category discussed reflect the clear development of a single motif, at times almost introducing a "plot," blurring the border between poem and "story" (particularly of the short story type). In the first sub-category, a definite narrative is discerned, merging poetry to a certain degree with prose. In both types, this development in turn functions as a structural development of the poet's basic theme. While the next category of trefoils, termed here "associative," do not exhibit a chronological development, sequence plays an equally important role, as does context. By presenting a variety of perspectives on a single motif or theme, Annenskij once again encodes into the triad a comprehensive view of his aesthetics.
The Associative Trefoil

The "associative" trefoil is a carefully structured device which develops the Annenskian theme in a different, but related manner. There are thirteen associative trefoils. Although each poem of this type can ostensibly stand individually as a discrete text, when considered in isolation they are only partial representations of Annenskij's dominant thematic concern, and comprise only a facet of the poet's aesthetics. When read as a whole and in sequence, the three poems create a more complex, semantically rich, single text. This unified "poem" that is the trefoil functions much like the "magical, three-sided crystal" described in the poem "Into the Magic Prism," the final stanza of which, it will be recalled, is the epigraph of the present chapter. When "turned" this "crystal" reveals ever-changing but related aspects of a single image. The associative trefoil, in other words, is a "crystal" that Annenskij holds up to his most innermost perceptions on art and reality. Like a crystal, one must position the trefoil accurately in order to attain a clear view through to the "other" side that is Annenskij's aesthetics. Each of the three "facets," or poems, when considered in the order and
relationship intended by the author combine to form a complete representation of his aesthetics. Many of this type of trefoil were discussed in the previous chapter. Of those remaining, "Trefoil of Oblivion" can be considered an archetypal example of an associative trefoil.

The three poems of "Trefoil of Oblivion," "Decrescendo" (the title is given in Latin script), "Links Not Unfastened" ("Нерасцепленные звенья") and "Fraternal Graves" ("Братские могилы") were originally published separately. By restoring the poems to their intended position in a trefoil, however, as was accomplished in the 1987 edition of CC, or to use Annenskij's own metaphor once again, by reuniting the facets of his "magic crystal," the poet's aesthetics becomes eminently more comprehensible.

The title of this trefoil presents the common motif of the three poems within. Hence, "oblivion" is the "thread" that can be traced through all three texts. In each poem, a different kind of oblivion is described. The first poem, "Decrescendo," as the title suggests, concerns an oblivion associated with sound--in this instance the sound of the sea.
"Decrescendo" is a musical term denoting a gradual fading of sound. Here the poet is similar to a conductor, except that he directs not the music produced by an orchestra, but instead the music of life. In this poem the "decrescendo" is perceived in nature, in the sound of a stormy sea, and a wave that thunders to shore, only to fade away in the end. The meter of this poem, alternating lines of iambic tetrameter and dimeter, reflects the undulation of the sea. In the first stanzas, the poet personifies the elemental force of nature:

Из тучи с тучей в безумном споре
    Родится шквал, --
Под ним зыбучий в пустынном море
    Вскакивает вал.

Он полон страсти, он мчится гневный,
    Грозя брегам.
А вслед из пастей за ним стозванный
    И рев и гам...

From a wild dispute between cloud and cloud
    A squall is born,
Beneath it a surging roller is churned up
    On the deserted sea.

Full of passion, it hurtles on angrily,
    Threatening the shore.
And it leaves in its wake as though from a hundred jaws
    A roar and a din... 30

30 The translation of "Decrescendo" is taken from Obolensky (Obolensky, Dmitri. The Heritage of Russian Verse. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976. 228-229.)
The squall is "born" from the "wild dispute" of the clouds, which in turn cause a "roller," or "swell" ("бал") in the "deserted sea." Related through rhyme—"skval"—"val"—it is the child begat from the storm. The second stanza continues the personification, this time imbuing the swell with life. It is "full of passion" and "hurts on angrily, threatening the shores." Annenskij effectively describes the deafening roar produced by the swell: it is a "roar and din" from a "hundred jaws" ("стохвостный"). The ellipsis that ends the sentence formed by the last lines of this stanza adumbrates a gradual fading, or fall.31 In this way the poet undercuts the force and raw energy depicted in the following stanza:

То, как железный, он канет в бездны
И роет муть.
То, бык могучий, нацелит тучи
Хвостом хлестнуть...

Now as though made of iron, it sinks into the abysses
And churns the soething water,
Now, a mighty bull, it takes aim
To lash the clouds with its tail...

The roller is first compared to "iron," an element that in terms of composition is diametrically opposed to water. In this form, the

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31 The ellipsis is ubiquitous in Annenskij's verse. In the thirty-three trefoils alone, it occurs more than 250 times.
The first line of the fourth stanza (connected to the first and third lines of the second through anaphoric rhyme: "to"-"to"-"no") begins with the word "but." This signals a shift, in this case a decrease in force and the inevitable fading of the roller, implying
the beginning of its "decrescendo." The poet employs punctuation to accomplish this as well: the first line is segmented by yet another ellipsis. This device retards the dynamic movement produced in the preceding lines, and more importantly awakens in the reader a feeling of doubt in the wave's power. The "roar" and "din" are also softened in this first line through the rhyme and the repetition of soothing affricate consonants, which onomatopoeically suggest a whispering: "No bliże... bliże i val už niže." The second line affirms the presentiment of the first: there is no more strength in the roller. The "mighty bull" has been tamed. The roller's "crest" (a continuation of the bull metaphor as well: "xrebet" can also mean "spine") is no longer powerful, rising to the heights and crashing to the depths, but is now obedient, and "bows" to the "aerial ship." The last is a metaphor for the clouds, and in this sense, the personification is continued: the "child" of the clouds is now obedient to its "parents." Finally, Annenskij once again uses an ellipsis to contribute to the decrescendo effect. The reader is now certain that the beast will be tamed, that the awesome and mighty wave is now playing itself out, no longer presenting a threat. In the fifth and final stanza, the roller has been reduced to but a splash:
Once again, the poet utilizes sound repetition to emphasize this effect: the affricative consonants in "plekšet," "čut, is and "kruža" create the sensation of a whisper. The deafening roar, then, has grown quiet. The roller has furthermore lost its "anger," which has "dried up." The choice of the perfective verb—"to dry up"—applied to a description of a wave (which is, of course, wet) aids in underscoring its demise. The second line ends with the fifth ellipsis of the poem. Here the punctuation signifies one last effort on the part of the now subdued roller. Its final movements are now only a series of ripples, lapping at the hot sand as the roller now falls upon the shore—a final movement before it seeps into the sand. The penultimate line of the poem, in which the shore is described, presents a foil or counterbalance to the roar of the sea. In contrast to the sound patterns of previous lines, in which a soothing and
fading (decrescendo) are evident, Annenskij here presents a series of plosives and velars in vocalically rounded words, and thus infuses the sand with a merry but insidious quality: "Pesok tak mjagok, prinek tak gladok" ("Песок так мягок, припек так гладок"). The roller, finally, has fallen into the "oblivion"--the theme named in the title of the trefoil. This specific type of oblivion calms the soul--as does a decrescendo in music. The final verbs reinforce this notion. The last line ("One lap, and lie down!") suggests a final repose, a sweet oblivion.32 Furthermore, this type of oblivion has an inherently eternal, or immortal quality: another roller will eventually undergo the same movement. The musical term used to describe the entire event is also significant. It indicates that the poet views the event described as ultimately pleasing, since he derived great joy from music.33 The use of a musical term also links this poem with the symbolist notions derived from Verlaine’s famous call: "De la musique avant toute chose... / De la musique encore et toujours!"34

32This "sweet oblivion," given Annenskij's frequent focus on the longing for passion, might also be interpreted as a metaphor for sexual union, where there is an analogous building of energy, a climax, and subsequent "decrescendo" as well.
33See Ch. 1, p. 34.
34As quoted in: Donchin, Georgette. The Influence of French Symbolism on Russian Poetry. S'Gravenhage: Mouton & Co., 1958. 106. Donchin notes that Verlaine’s call "was another of those much quoted slogans which influenced
This poem, if considered in isolation, might lead the reader to interpret the poem as an affirmation of life's eternal quality (in the image of a recurring, natural oblivion). Although such an interpretation is ostensibly valid, it is only one aspect of Annenskij's view of this state. The next poems of the series present different aspects of the motif of oblivion. In the end they reveal a comprehensive vision of Annenskij's aesthetic perception of reality.

The second poem of this series, unlike the first, directly addresses the issue of oblivion. (Its first title, in fact, was "Oblivion.") That there is more than one kind of oblivion (i.e., other than that described in "Decrescendo") is indicated in the third line of the first stanza:

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Нерасцепленные звенья,
Неосиленная тень, --
И забвенье, но забвенье,
Как осенний мягкий день.
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Links not yet unchained,  
Unsubdued shadow--  
And oblivion, but the oblivion  
Like a soft autumn day.
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In the opening two lines, the poet names two objects. He first speaks of the "links" of the poem's title, which have not yet been symbolist aesthetics and had much wider consequences than the original intention presupposed."
"unchained." He then mentions a "shadow that has not yet been subdued." In both cases, the adjectives used imply a potential for the action which has not yet taken place. There is a suggested border, and the reader is on a kind of threshold. The transitory quality introduced reflects the ephemeral quality of the oblivion to be described. The poet is about to reveal what can be termed an aesthetic oblivion—the oblivion that Annenskij associates with the creative act. In other words, the poet describes the moment he always desires, a moment when he achieves the merger of his "I" with the world of the "non-I." This moment of aesthetic oblivion is described in the last line of the first stanza, and in the entire second stanza:

К как полудня солнце в храме
Сквозь узор стекла цветной, --
С заметанною листами,
Но горящую волной...

Like noon's sun in a temple
Through the colored pattern of the glass,
With a wave covered with leaves,
But burning...

Annenskij uses a series of similes to describe the moment in which the "links" are "not yet unchained," the "shadow" not yet subdued. He likens it to a "soft autumn day," and to the "noonday sun." In
the latter instance, however, it is not the direct light of the sun (which can agonize the poet, as in the poem "Silvery Noon," from "Sideshow Trefoil"). Instead, the sunlight is refracted through a stained-glass window, into the soothing confines of a temple, a sanctuary for the soul. The light of the sun, filtered by the colorful pattern is not static, but moves. The poet perceives the light as simultaneously glowing and subdued, likening it to a wave that is covered in leaves (the darker shades of color), but which also "burns" (the lighter shades of color). The use of the dynamic wave metaphor, a textual echo from the first poem, implies a transitoriness. That the colored pattern of filtered light will pass—as will the "soft autumn day of the first stanza"—is emphasized by the rhyme of "volnoj"/"cvetnoj." The ellipsis that closes this stanza also implies movement, but at the same time indicates a hesitancy. The images employed all portray an ephemeral moment of beauty that, while captured on a threshold, is doomed to pass. They also reflect Annenskij's notion of oblivion experienced in the moment of inspiration. This moment gives the poet only a fleeting pleasure. The third stanza "unfastens the links" that had connected the poet with the world of beauty:
Here the poet reveals the disengagement of his "I" from the realm of the "non-I," emphasizing the separation of the creating poet from the retreating world of beauty. In the first lines he achieves this by using the dative form "us" ("нам"): he implies the existence of a corresponding "them," or "other" (i.e., the "non-I"). In this instance, after the aesthetically pleasing and soothing images retreat into the past and are removed from our experience, we are left with only "reproaches" and "weariness." The reproaches are for attempting the ultimately futile merger. The weariness is a result of the immense effort required in the creative act. The oblivion, referred to in the second line ("ит"--"оно") will "depart, like smoke." It is now only a shadow of its former glory. It has undergone a transformation, its wave of burning colors now reduced to a wisp of smoke. In the third line, however, the use of the disjunctive "but,"
suggests that this (inspirational) oblivion leaves something behind, something that retains its youth and beauty. The oblivion of the creative moment remains "on the portrait youthful." The portrait metonymically portrays art as arresting time. In this sense, Annenskij affirms art. Whatever is left from the experience described in the preceding lines, what has been created in the throes of creative passion is a work of art--in this case a poem. The creative output of the artist, then, has an underlying eternal quality. At the same time, the poet-man in Annenskij's universe, while allowed to partake of the sweet oblivion of sublime inspiration, is also fated to a different, fatal oblivion: death. This is revealed in the final poem of the trefoil, "Fraternal Graves."

The title of this poem states the universality of death. It also links this text with the preceding poem: the "us" there is now doomed to a common fate:

Волны тяжки и свинцовые,  
Казат темным белый камень,  
И кует земле оковы  
Позабытый небом плахень.

The waves are heavy and leaden,  
The white stone seems dark,  
And a flame forgotten by the sky  
Is forging fetters for the earth.
The wave that was so powerful in "Decrescendo" and which was composed of light in the second poem is now "heavy" and "leaden." All has been transformed into the imagery of Annenskij's dark ruminations on a universal mortality. Oblivion takes on a different meaning in this poem. In "Decrescendo" the oblivion is soothing, and had a reassuring effect—it also recalls the oblivion of passion fulfilled. In "Links Not Yet Unchained," oblivion is associated with the creative act. In "Fraternal Graves," the oblivion is that of the grave. This is emphasized in several ways.

The use of water imagery in this final poem functions as a connecting element in the trefoil. Here, it is no longer a seascape, nor a metaphorical wave of light, but is now associated with the river of death, or the river Lethe—rendered in Russian literally as the "river of oblivion" ("река забвения"). The final lines of the first stanza reinforce the connection: the "flame forgotten by the sky (or heaven)" forges fetters for the earth." The fetters are equivalent to the "links" of the second poem that, when unchained,

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35 Annenskij wrote this poem in Sevastopol; according to Bogomolov (Op. Cit. 352), these fraternal graves are the actual graves of Russian soldiers and sailors who perished in the war of 1854-1855. Thus the lead here is conceivably a reference to the bullets used in the battles. In any event, as is evident, Annenskij frequently focuses on a concrete object, event, setting, etc., and transforms his perceptions into a poetic reflection.
will release us from our earthly existence—but only to cross the threshold into the underworld. This downward movement (into the darkness of death), hinted at in the first stanza, is continued in the second:

Clouds are hanging from the heights,
They are dimmed -- and weakened,
Like the grayish-white branches of a cypress
Hanging over the grave.

The clouds that are "hanging from the heights" are no longer able to beget vital storms, but are now "dimmed" and "weakened." They are subsequently compared to a traditional symbol of death—the cypress—thus pulling us ever further downward into the chasm of an all-embracing death. Indeed, this imagery confirms beyond doubt that the oblivion here is that of death. This notion is finalized in the last stanza, where all is likened to the "fraternal graves" of the title, that place which all must enter, where all are equal:
The air is soft, but without strength,
The spruce trees, the mossy stones...
These are fraternal graves,
And there is no oblivion more complete.

The first two lines suggest an almost peaceful oblivion in the
textures of the images: "soft air," "mossy stones" and "spruce trees."
But it is the bed of death--a common grave, as set forth in the
penultimate line of the poem. The last line of the closing poem,
"and there is no oblivion more complete," indicates that the poet
has constructed a "hierarchy" of oblivion in the three poems of the
trefoil. While the poet acknowledges that oblivion may have
positive aspects (i.e., as in the first two poems), in the end he
concedes that all ends in death: we will all be totally merged only
in the grave, the final destination of life's journey, no matter how
enriched we are by the beauty of life or art.

The poet, then, utilizes the tripartite structure of the
associative trefoil to present various facets of his aesthetics--in this
case he portrays three types of oblivion. In the first text he
wonders at the beauty of nature, and the natural, generic oblivion that occurs there. In the second he ponders aesthetic oblivion—the oblivion of inspiration, and art's role in linking us with the world of beauty. In both of the first poems he observes the eternal change of dynamics and statics, energy and entropy in nature and art, their interplay and balance. When the "magic crystal" of this trefoil is shifted to view the final poem (in the context established by the first two), we are disabused of notions of immortality, and reminded that however we may try, we cannot completely lose ourselves in the oblivion portrayed in the first poems. The third type of oblivion—that of the totality of death—supersedes all others, and Annenskij's pessimistic Weltanschaung is emphasized. At the same time, in showing us the gradation of oblivion, its hierarchy, the redeeming nature of Art is implied.

As can be seen in the example of "Trefoil of Oblivion" and others discussed in the previous chapter, the associative trefoil allows the poet to focus on various aspects of his theme. The three poems of "Trefoil of Oblivion," as in others of this type, are also interconnected intratextually by a wealth of factors: the theme of oblivion, the motif of water, and the clear hierarchical arrangement.
Other trefoils of this type function in similar manner. For example, in "Trefoil in the Park," a series of poems related by the motif of the statue, Annenskij constructs a metapoetic dialogue with Puškin, fully understood only in a reading of the three as a single "text," or micro-cycle. Or in "Trefoil of Anguish," as is suggested by the title, Annenskij presents various perspectives of his view of "toska." "Funereal Trefoil" is a representative trefoil of the associative type, dealing as it does with various perspectives on death--focusing on a corpse in one poem, the mourners in the next, and finally on himself as witness at a funeral in the last poem. As has been established, the poems of an associative trefoil are frequently enigmatic as individual texts, or at the very least incomplete representations of Annenskij's aesthetics. When this type of trefoil is considered as a unified text, however, the poems within complement and inform each other, redeeming the "ungrammaticalities," to use Riffaterre's term, perceived in an isolated reading. Finally, similar to the chronologically progressive trefoil, the associative type is a device that allows the poet to conceal himself. But the associative trefoil offers more

36 Riffaterre's theories are invaluable in the analysis of related texts, and, as mentioned in Chapter I, inform to a large degree my reading of Annenskij's poems.
possibilities to "hide": the code, or "grammar" is much more complex. At the same time, when read in sequence, the trefoil is decoded, and we are shown the poet's innermost thoughts. This is equally true of the synthetic trefoil, examined below.

V. The Synthetic Trefoil

In Chapter III three trefoils were classified as "synthetic" ("Nightmare Trefoil," "Trefoil of Malediction" and "Phantom Trefoil"). There are three more of this type, which gives us a total of six. The other three are "Momentary Trefoil," "Smoky Trefoil" and "Trefoil of Loneliness." The synthetic trefoil is structured in such a manner as to allow the poet to present two sides to a given theme, problem or motif in the first two poems. In the third poem, the poet probes issues and themes raised in the first texts, ultimately presenting a synthesis of the two. The final poem also develops the themes begun in the first two poems, uniting, or synthesizing them into a full representation of Annenskij's basic theme. For this reason, the final poem in a synthetic trefoil represents a more complete picture of Annenskij's aesthetics than
the first two poems, or an individual poem from another trefoil type. Hence, it might more easily be considered as a discrete text. At the same time, these final poems are extremely complex. Without the context established by the first poems, they remain to a large degree enigmatic.

It might also be argued that this type of trefoil appears to overlap with the chronologically progressive, given the occasional occurrence of a narrative element in the first two poems. Its structure fundamentally differs from that of the chronologically progressive trefoil, however, in that there is no clear presence of plot or narrative that progresses throughout all three poems. Nor are there the same clearly defined temporal and spatial progressions. While these features may occur in the first two poems, they are not drawn to a *narrational* conclusion in this type of trefoil. This is the case in "Momentary Trefoil," which is analyzed in this section as representative of the synthetic trefoil.

The primary concern in "Momentary Trefoil" is the passage of time in relation to art—as suggested by the title. The poet considers on one hand the "moment" ("миг") during which inspiration strikes and the artist is able to create. He ponders, on
the other hand, that other moment, i.e., ordinary, prosaic time, that inevitably intrudes, chasing the inspirational instant away. These two aspects of time are examined in the first two texts.

The first stanza of "A Moment" signals an awareness of the inability of the heart to say all it feels:

Столько хочется сказать,
Столько в сердце услыхало,
Но лучам не пронизать
Частых перьев опахала, --

There is so much that I want to say,
And so much the heart would hear,
But the rays cannot penetrate
The dense feathers of the fan,--

The implication in the first two lines is that, although there is "so much" that the poet "wants to say," and "so much the heart would hear," he in reality is not or will not be able to do either. And indeed, the third line, beginning with "but" ("но") confirms this. The "rays" [of the sun] cannot penetrate the "dense feathers of the fan," a metaphor for the leaves of the trees under which the poet sits.

The first two lines of the next stanza further describe the setting:

И от листьев точно сеть
На песке толкуются тени...
Все, -- но только не глядеть
В том, упавший на колени.
And from the leaves, like a net
Shadows knock about on the sand...
Anything--but only not to look
In the volume that has fallen in my lap.

The "shadows" which "knock about on the sand" in a "net"-like pattern are caused by the sun penetrating the leaves. The movement is conceivably created by both the movement of the foliage and of birds, given the mention of feathers. The entire setting is one of excitement, an almost secret moment of poetic ecstasy. Shadows, as will be recalled, are for the poet aesthetic substitutes for objects of desire, images that can be safely joined in a sublime union, or in the poet's own words, a "resplendent merger." (i.e., as in his experiences with Muxina, Borodina, or Xmara-Barščevskaja). The final ellipsis, however, elicits a sensation of fear and trepidation, which is increased in the last two lines of the second stanza, where the poet reminisces about the enchanting atmosphere and an agitated meeting with a woman (ostensibly Muxina, as indicated below), and how wonderful it was. The memory will remain, provided the poet not look in the "volume that has fallen on his lap." This book is a metaphor for the "book" of the poet's tedious life. As long as the poet does not read from it, time
will stand still, and the moment will remain. These lines can be linked to letter to Muxina of June 20, 1908, where he describes his image of her in a manner reminiscent of this poem.

You look at the waves from the balcony... It's hot... and you don't feel like going to look at the sweet lemons, just beginning to appear between the low white walls along the road into town... A book -- English, small, square, in fine print--slips into your lap, and you don't want to notice this...

Earlier in the same letter, the poet writes that he does not want to burden Muxina with the "sad tale" ("грустная повесть") of his life. Thus, Annenskij perceives his own life as a kind of text that in "A Moment" need not be read, indeed should not be read, if the magic moment is to stay. The third stanza reveals, however, that the poet cannot hold onto the moment of enchantment:

Чу... над самой головой
Из листы вспорхнула птица:
Миг ушел -- вще живой,
Но ему уж не светиться.

[^37]: That this is an English novel suggests a reference to Tolstoj's *Anna Karenina*, where Anna reads an English novel on the train from Moscow, the day after the ball where she and Vronski become enchanted by one another. Interestingly, the novel's presence in Tolstoj's work, as does the book in the poem under analysis, takes on a mysterious significance.
Hark... just overhead
A bird has taken wing from the foliage:
The moment has departed -- still alive,
But no longer able to shine.

The first word, "Hark..." ("Ψύ...") is pivotal, recalling Romantic
tradition (eg., Puškin's use of the word in his famous poem on
inspiration, "Autumn"--"Осень"). Annenskij uses it to suggest that
the moment is truly one of inspiration, and that the theme is
centered on Art. On the other hand, "Hark!" serves as a warning
that this same instant is on the verge of disappearing. The poet
uses the image of the bird (adumbrated in the fan image from the
first stanza) to create a sensation of the moment's precipitate
truncation. To add to this feeling, he utilizes the perfective verb
"take wing" ("вспорхнуть"). The bird abruptly bursts out from the
leaves. The "moment" is in reality as elusive and fleeting as a bird.
From another perspective, the bird is a metaphor for the poet's
heart, which beats in trepidation at the onset of passion or
inspiration. Held in check, his weakened and fluttering heart can
not bear the pain and effort required by the Muse. Driven to the
breaking point, it takes flight, figuratively bursting from the poet's
breast. This would imply the death of the poet. Indeed, in the
penultimate line the fact that the "moment" (a symbol of Art) departs, but remains "alive" indirectly implies the "death" of something else, i.e., the memory of the passionate meeting. While it still exists, it no longer shines to the exhausted and spent—"dead"—poet. The poet remains alone. There is a similar development in the second poem of the trefoil, entitled "A Minute" ("Минута").

The setting here is essentially the same as that of the preceding lyric. The poet finds himself beneath an opaque canopy of trees on a sunny day. (In Annenskij's poetry, it will be recalled, sunlight must be refracted in some way, otherwise it is oppressive.) There is the similar presence of a feminine entity in this second poem, as suggested in the first stanza, signalling that here too is a recollection of a treasured moment:

Узорные тени так зыбки,
Горячая пыль так бела, --
Не надо ни слов, ни улыбки:
Останься такой, как была;

The patterned shadows are so unsteady,
The host dust so white --
Neither words nor a smile is needed:
Remain the same as you were;

Judging from the title of the poem, and its context within the trefoil, the initial reaction is to link the final line with the feminine word
"minute" ("минута"). Here the minute might be seen as an equivalent of the "moment" ("минута"). In this respect, the line spells out the Goethian theme of "stay the moment": "Remain the same as you were." Into the enchanted scene of "patterned shadows" and "hot, white dust" (a scene similar to that described in the preceding poem) the poet introduces the image of his beloved. This is suggested in the first stanza in the word "smile" ("улыбка"). It is made clear in the next stanza:

Останься нежной, тоскливой,
Осеннего утра бледной
Под этой поникшей ивой,
На сетчатом фоне теней...

Remain unclear, melancholy,
Paler than the autumn morning
Under this drooping willow,
On the reticular background of shadows...

The poet here adds to the image of a smile a paleness—the paleness of a woman who is standing under a drooping willow tree (a traditional image of sadness). It is an image of passion transmuted into an aesthetic construct. The poet, then, is in a revery or poetic trance, recalling a wondrous and poignant moment in his life. The minute, related to the moment (as a unit of time) in this poem, however, turns out to be of a quite different nature. It is a symbol
of time as destroyer:

Минута -- и ветер, метнувшись,
В узорах развевает листы,
Минута -- и сердце, проснувшись,
Увидит, что это -- не ты...

In a minute -- and the wind, flinging itself,
Scatters the leaves in the patterns,
In a minute -- and the heart, having awakened,
Will see, that this is not you...

Time, as can be seen in this stanza, disturbs the magical pattern of the leaves, bringing with it the wind. It also causes the poet's heart to "awaken." Metonymically symbolizing the poet, the heart "sees" that the image of the woman which he has conjured up and desires to remain is in reality not she, but only a "phantom." The poet, now desperate, wants to hold on even to the vestiges of the image that is destroyed by time:

Побудь же без слов, без улыбки,
Побудь точно призрак, пока
Узорные тени так зыбки
И белая пыль так чутка...

Stay a moment without words, without a smile,
Stay a moment as a phantom, while
The patterned shadows are so unsteady,
And the white dust is so keen...

The poet has several times succeeded to sink into pleasant reveries, to conjure up pleasant memories of "her." Each time this
has been interrupted—by noise or time, i.e., by the banalities of life. In the third and final stanza, he pleads that he may be visited again by her image, or that it at least to continue to exist—even as a shade ("phantom") of its former beauty. The penultimate line, an exact replica of the opening line of the poem, implies a possible reoccurrence of the moment, suggesting an immortal, or timeless quality. Altered slightly, the last line of the poem with its final ellipsis suggests this as well. The "white dust"—no longer "hot," is now "keen," or "sensitive," i.e., receptive to another such recollection. Nature remains a possible setting for future creative moments, despite the intrusion of time. Both versions of time, i.e., as the "moment" (of inspiration) and the "minute" (time as destroyer) are united and synthesized in the final poem, "Steel Cicada," in "anguish" ("τόσκα").

This final poem of the series, in keeping with the structural strategy of a synthetic trefoil, presents a synthesis of the notions presented in the first two, where there was no "narrative" or "chronological" progression—just two similar, recollected moments in the same setting. In "Steel Cicada" the poet considers the magic of the moments of remembrance and the issue of time as destroyer.
In reflecting on the two aspects of time portrayed in the first poems, the poet sums up his conviction that all he can hope to gain from either is "anguish." This is evident in the opening stanza:

I knew that it would return
And be with me -- Anguish.
It will twinkle and shut
With the door of the watchmaker.

The statement "I knew," links the third poem with the first two. As the poet "knew" would happen, happy recollections are replaced by the return of anguish. The enigma here is in the "watchmaker," who has opened the door to this anguish. On one hand, this can be seen as a symbol of the Creator of time, who opens the door to death, or the knowledge of our fate--hence the "anguish" experienced by the poet. There is however a "linking and unlinking" ("сцепит" and "расцепит") which recalls the poem "Anguish of the Mirage." In that poem, the reader will recall, the poet states that "someone" ("кто-то") was responsible for "linking and unlinking" the two sleighs along the perpetual circle of anguish. In other words, there are moments, or sparks of beauty on this
same circle. In "Steel Cicada" the entity who joins and separates the poet with the Muse (via the cicada), is referred to as "that one" ("тот"), a reference to the watchmaker (a masculine entity "часовщик"). The watchmaker "links and unlinks" the "trembling of the steel heart" with the "chirring of wings." What we have here, then, is a revelation of the paradoxicality of time in Annenskij's aesthetics. It brings with it sweet memories, but also takes them away (as described in the first poems). In "Steel Cicadas" the watchmaker (the Creator of time) also opens the door to death, but he also lets the Muse in, allowing the poet to join the beating of his heart with the music of the cicada. That the poet communicates with his Muse here is borne out in his use of the cicada image, which is conceivably a reference to Plato's myth of the cicadas (from Phaedrus).38

In the myth, the cicadas arose from humans ravished by the appearance of the newly-born Muses. Needing no physical sustenance (hence the adjective "steel" in the title of Annenskij's poem), they can sing incessantly and, what is most important here,

these insects report to the Muses. The steel cicada is a messenger from Annenskij's Muse, a symbol of inspiration. The pounding of the poet's heart (also made of steel, implying a rigidity and lifelessness) is joined with and separated from the chirping of the cicadas' wings.\textsuperscript{39}

\begin{verbatim}
Сердца стального трепет
Со стрекотаньем крыл
Сцепит и вновь расцепит
Тот, кто её дверь открыл...

That one, who has opened the door to it
Will link and again un\-link
The palpitation of the steel heart
With the chirring of the wings...
\end{verbatim}

Here we find the merger and separation of poet and the Muse (via the messenger of the cicada). During the brief moment of union, the poet questions the insects' eternal singing:

\begin{verbatim}
Жадным крылом цикады
Нетерпеливо бьют:
Счастью ль, что близко, рады,
Муки ль конец зовут?..

The cicadas beat impatiently
With their eager wings:
Are they glad of the happiness that is near,
Or are they calling for the end of their torment?
\end{verbatim}

\textsuperscript{39}It might be argued that the "steel heart" refers to that of the cicada. However, it can also double as the poet's heart, which is a mechanism that the Muse-Watchmaker may play with at will.
The poet wonders at the purpose of their impatient and ceaseless song: are "they glad that happiness is near, or are they merely "call[ing] for the end of their torment"? In this stanza we also find the paradoxical nature of art in Annenskij's aesthetic. Creation causes great ecstasy and happiness, but only at immense effort and cost to the artist. The next stanza reveals that the poet perceives himself as inferior to the cicada--he is mortal, whereas they, the harbingers of the Muses are immortal:

`Столько сказать им надо,
Так далеко уйти...
Разно, увы цикада,
Нашии лежат пути.

There is so much they need to say
So far to go...
Alas! cicada, our paths
Lie separate.

The first line here can be interpreted in two ways: "There is so much they need to say" or "There is so much to say to them."40 This implies a reciprocal relationship. (It should also be added that this line echoes the first line of "A Moment": "I feel like saying so much.") At the same time, Annenskij knows that he cannot continue to "sing," or compose poetry forever, as can the Platonic

40 As observed by Janet Tucker (Op. Cit. 45-46).
cicadas. In other words, the watchmaker (time) will appear, and close the door to inspiration, and open it to "anguish." He is saddened by this fact—hence the "Alasl" of the third line. In the next stanza, however, he returns to the moment of merger, or that instant when he and the cicada were one. It is analogous to the magical moment described in the first poem of the trefoil:

Here you and I are only a miracle,
You and I only have a minute
To live together -- until
The door has been thrown open...

The poet recognizes the miracle of creating art and the miracle of the inspirational moment, while at the same time realizing its transitory nature. He knows that it will perish at the hands of a different kind of time, i.e., in the same "minute" that dissipated the wondrous image of beauty in the second poem of the trefoil. The final line brings us back to the initial image of the watchmaker. The final stanza (structurally echoing the last stanza of the second poem in a partial epanilepsis) reveals once again that the tragic fate of the poet is to always return to a state of anguish:
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Звякнет и запахнется,
И будешь ты так далека...
Молча сейчас вернется
И будет со мной -- Тоска.

It will twinkle and shut,
And you will be so far away...
And now silently, returning
To be with me, will be -- Anguish.

As is evident, this series clearly exhibits a "synthetic" structure. The first and second texts describe two aspects of time in relation to art. In "A Moment" Annenskij focuses on the moment of inspiration; in "A Minute" he implores the moment to stay. In "Steel Cicada" the eternal change of blissful moments of remembrance, creativity, with stretches of anguished time are accepted as a pattern that will only be broken by death. The entire process in the end results in "anguish," a feeling ubiquitous in his verse, and we are left with a feeling of melancholy and hopelessness.

In the present discussion of the trefoil device, it has been shown that Annenskij exploits its tripartite structure in a number of ways, as is evident in the three categories of trefoils (a typology that, while useful as an approach for analysis, should not be
considered restrictive). In each category, the individual trefoil is a unified micro-cycle that comprises a more complete representation of the poet's thematic concern than if the poems are considered individually. Indeed, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. By the same token, the thirty-three groupings of poems taken together as a larger cycle of poems also combine to create a clearer picture of Annenskij as poet. They comprise a major "compartment" of Annenskij's "chest" of poems, a major part of his "book of life." Other compartments are "filled" with "hinged icons," and "scattered leaves," and other poems. The texts in these sections, although functioning quite differently, are linked to the trefoils by the common thread of Annenskij's basic thematic concern—the dilemmas of self as man and poet. In these other groupings, much less dominated by the structural artifice of the trefoils, Annenskij's theme comes to the fore. The following sections are less coded, the confessional poet overtaking the reticent. For this reason, in examining the remaining structures in Chapter V, the poet's theme, and his poetic collection as lyric confession will be emphasized.
CHAPTER V

OTHER STRUCTURES IN THE CYPRESS CHEST

i. Hinged-Icons

The section of poems immediately following the thirty three trefoils consists of nine texts called "hinged-icons." One key in understanding the nature of this device is to investigate its creative and original title. According to the Slovar' russkogo jazyka, the Russian word "skladen'" ("складень") has two meanings. Firstly, it can be any object that folds: "the name of folding objects." Secondly, it is the name of a type of folding icon: "a folding icon made of two, three, or several sections." The Sovetskij enciklopedičeskij slovar' gives the following definition of the same word: "a folding icon made of two (diptych), three (triptych), or several (polyptych) parts."1 As is shown below, Annenskij has in

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1 An initial impulse, considering Annenskij’s tendency to identify his poetry with actual events and objects, might be to link the name of these sets of poems to an actual folding icon in the poet’s possession. However, despite a number of detailed descriptions of Annenskij’s study, there exists no actual inventory of his
mind a metaphorical "hinged-icon": the nine texts are each constructed out of two "panels" or sections--represented either by two internally opposed images or motifs within one poem, or two separate poems. The two panels of his verbal hinged-icon, in addition to facing outward, also face each other, becoming a kind of observable dialogue or polemic. Furthermore, the reader is informed by the artifice of the trefoils: Annenskij’s complex tripartite arrangements in the preceding section cause the reader to consider structure and arrangement in the hinged icons as well. It should also be emphasized that the connection with the "leaf"/"page" motif is continued. The folding panels ("творки") in addition can be seen as symbolic "pages" of the poet’s "book of life."

The first four hinged-icons consist of single poems. The second five are sets of two poems grouped under a single title. As Timenčik notes, all nine "hinged-icons" have a binary structure:

belongings. (See the various reminiscences in: Lavrov, A. V. and Timenčik, R. D. Op. Cit.)

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In the critical literature, the hinged icon is often understood incorrectly—as only a cycle of two poems. [Xmara-Barščevskaja's] published plan shows that Annenskij did not only call two-part micro-cycles hinged icons, but also those texts in which the "bipartite hinged quality" is realized in the unfolding of an antithesis within one poem: "He and I," "To the Other," "Two Loves," "Two Sails of One Boat."

Indeed, the first group of single poems contains a definite binary opposition (already suggested in the titles). It takes the form of an antithesis, as Timenčik states, in the first two poems of the section, "He and I" ("Он и я") and "To Another" ("Другому"). In the third and fourth poems, "Two Sails of One Boat" ("Два паруса лодки одной") and "Two Loves" ("Два любви"), the binary nature is reflected in the opposition inherent in Annenskij's theme: the separation of self from other. In the second group of hinged-icons, the five that consist of two poems each, the "bipartite hinged quality" mentioned by Timenčik is realized in the relationship between the two poems, the folding "panels" of the "icon"—indeed, it is the "folding" quality that is important in this section of CC. As in the first group, this "folding" is developed in various ways. In the first, "Virtue" ("Добродетель"): 1. "The Work Basket" ("Рабочая корзинка") and 2. "A Current of Mignonette in the Dark Car" ("Струя резеды в..."
the poet presents two opposing visions of a woman. In the second, "Counterfeits" ("Контрафакции"): "Spring" ("Весна") and "Autumn" ("Осень"), there is the antithesis of youth and age in the seasonal opposites of spring and autumn. In the third such hinged-icon—"Ego" (in Latin script): "My Verse" ("Мой стих") and "When it was let down, the hair looked thinner" ("Развившийся волос поредел")—the poet opposes divine, immortal inspiration to the mortal poet. In "The Sadness of a Patch of Light" ("Печаль просвета"), consisting of the poems "Poetry" ("Поэзия") and "Patch of Light" ("Просвет") a similar opposition is set forth: the "creative spirit" is contrasted to the "circumstance of life."

Finally, in "Romantic Hinged-Icon"—("Романтический складень"): "The Sky is [Not Yet Blooming] with Stars..." ("Небо звездами в тумане...") and "Dear One" ("Милая")—the poet creates a complex binary opposition in which the first poem is an encoded memory, the second a veiled speculation on the ramifications of the first poem.

The binary structure, then, is obvious, and can easily be reduced to various types of oppositions. Indeed, Annenskij gives us the key in the title of the device: the two "panels" must be "folded,"
or read together, whether they consist of two images or motifs (as in the first group mentioned), or separate poems (as in the second group). Further, there is a logical structural division in this section as well: 1) single poems, and 2) hinged-icons consisting of two poems. As can be seen, in this second section of CC, the poet substantially decreases his use of artifice. Indeed, the hinged-icon is decoded with much less difficulty than the elaborate structures of the trefoil. In this way, by placing less emphasis on form, Annenskij foregrounds the content of his poems, i.e., his major thematic concerns. It becomes increasingly evident that what we have in CC is a masked confession, a lyric diary. Hence, in this chapter, instead of a break-down by structure, the division of the hinged-icons is defined by the thematics of the poems: 1) those which are metapoetic, and 2) those which are autobiographical, i.e., which clearly exhibit personal and confessional features. It should also be noted that, while thematics are the emphasis in this discussion, the structure, as the device by which the poet develops the theme, is also addressed. In addition, as more revealing "pages" of the poet's "book of life," more of the hinged-icons are examined here (in contrast to the previous Chapter, where analyses were for
the most part limited to representative examples of the various types of trefoils). The first to be discussed are the metapoetic hinged-icons. There are four of this type.

"He and I" opens the section of hinged icons. Annenskij opposes himself to another, idealized poet—the "he" of the title, an opposition which emphasizes his perception of separation from others. Also implied is his own self-doubt as artist. This is evident in the opening lines:

Давно меж листьев напились
Истомой розовой тюльпаны,
Но страстно в сумрачную высь
Уходит рокот фортепьяный.

Among their leaves the tulips long ago
Spread out their roseate languor,
But the murmur of a piano is passionately
Departing to the twilight heights.

This ideal artist is at one with his forceful and passionate music (a symbol of pure art in the symbolist aesthetics). There is a self-abandonment implied in the piano’s "rokot." That the art created is ideal is also shown in the music’s upward movement into the "twilight heights." Combined with this magical time of day, the image represents the realm of beauty so desired by the poet. In the next stanza, Annenskij describes through diametrically opposed features the paradox that he perceives in Art:
In this stanza, the pronoun "on" refers to the "murmur" ("ропот") of the piano, on one hand, but can also signify the idealized poet. Thus the notion of a merger is given credence, since the Russian pronoun "on" can refer to "he" or "it." In either case, it/he belongs to no one, or in other words is free. At the same time, Annenskij addresses the readers ("you"), stating that, while the artist is free, his art makes us its "captives" (as in the captivated audience). We like this captivity, for in this case it is another instance of a merger between "I" and "non-I," or a moment where one can revel in the products of inspiration. Hence, our "consciousness" of this is, according to the poet, "sweet." The next stanza marks a shift, dividing the poem into two symmetrical halves, underscoring the binary nature of the text, as well as structurally representing the poet's separation:
The poet's self-doubt is immediately apparent in the "But" that begins this quatrain. He senses that he is engaged in a related, but significantly different activity, seeking the "rays of a different star." Furthermore, his efforts are fraught with doubt. In the second two lines of the stanza, the poet compares himself to a piano-tuner who is only able to pick out beautiful, but individual notes or harmonies. He thus implies that he himself is unable to "merge" these notes to create a pure and complete harmony—a symbol of perfect art. He senses his inferiority to the idealized poet again in the final stanza:

Темнеет... Комната пуста,
С трудом я вспоминаю что-то,
И безответна и чиста,
За нотой умирает нота.

It is growing dark,... The room is empty,
With difficulty I recall something,
And without answering, though clear,
Note after note dies away.
There is no longer an opposition here; the poet is alone. The fall of darkness with the following ellipsis suggests this, and the fact that his room is now empty underscores his isolation. He no longer hears the strains of passionate music, a symbol for ideal art. In the second line he emphasizes the passing of the moment. He can only recall "with difficulty" "something," the pronoun "on" having been transformed into the indefinite "čto-to." And all that remains are the poet's poignant attempts as "piano-tuner" to recapture it, as in the last line, where "note after note dies away." This last line introduces a tone of despair, and the opposition of ideal artist versus the impotent one is brought home. This almost tragic, even decadent, tone suggests another, less evaluative opposition as well: the spontaneous (romantic) artist versus the analytical (modernist) artist. "Beethovenesque" self-assurance and titanic strength are contrasted to the self-conscious, "decadent" impressionistic artist of our times. (That the latter is not entirely impotent is shown in the "purity" of the notes that he so carefully picks out as "piano-tuner."
In this metapoetic poem, then, we find an exposition of Annenskij’s perception of himself as poet. In keeping with the binary structure of the hinged icon device, this is achieved through the opposition of self and other, of idealized and self-doubting poet, or the romantic poet of the past versus a contemporary, modernist poet. The next metapoetic hinged icon, "To Another" is a single poem. Nevertheless, a similar binary opposition is observed.

The basic opposition pits Annenskij against other, contemporary poets. In this instance, the "other" is not idealized. Instead, Annenskij simply defines what he perceives as fundamental differences between their aesthetics. What is of note here is, as in the previous poem, the "other" is not always clearly defined. Analyzed frequently in the critical literature, the "other" of the title has been named a Romantic poet, a Dionysian symbolist, and an Ideal poet. The multiplicity of interpretations is evidence of the success of this device according to Annenskij's own view of the multivalent and independent nature of the poetic text. Just as in "He and I," all the oppositions are valid to some

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4This notion is emphasized in his article "Bal'mont as Lyric Poet: "The poem
degree. Here, though, the opposition hinges more on a comparison of differing aesthetic approaches. This opposition continues throughout the text. Consider, for example, stanzas three through seven:

Твои мечты — манады по ночам,
И лунный вихрь в сверкании размаха
Им волны кос взметает по плечам.
Мой лучший сон — за тканью Андромаха.

На голове её эшадофаж,
И тот прикрыт кокетливо платочком,
Зато и где мой строгий карандаш
Не уступал своих созвучий точкам.

Ты весь — огонь. И за костром ты чист.
Испепелишь, но не оставишь пятен,
И бог ты там, где я лишь моралист,
Ненужный гость, наловок и навнятен.

Пройдут года... Быть может месяца...
Иль даже дни, и мы сойдем с дороги:
Ты — в лепестках душестого венца,
Я просто так, задвинутый на дроги.

Наперекор завистливой судьбе
И нищете убого-слабодушной,
Ты памятник оставишь по себе,
Незыблемый, хоть сладостно-воздушный...

Мой мечты бессильно минет день...
Как знать? А друг с душой, подвижней моря,
Другой поэт полюбит тень
В нетронуто-торжественном уборе...

Полюбит, и узнает, и поймет,
И увидав, что тень проснулась, дышит, —
Благословит немой её полет
Среди людей, которые не сляшат...

*is not the creation of the poet, it does not, if you like, even belong to the poet* [Annenski]'s emphasis[“Стих не есть создание поэта, он даже, если хотите, не принадлежит поэту”). Annenski, I. F. 1987, Op. Cit. 301.
Your reveries are Maenads in the night,
And the lunar whirlwind in a sparkling sweep
Will fling up waves of tresses across their shoulders...
My best dream is Andromache at the spinning wheel.

On her head is a quaint, high coiffure,
Covered coquettishly with a kerchief,
And still my austere pencil has nowhere
Yielded its harmonies to the dotted lines.

You are all fire. And beyond the bonfire you are pure.
You will reduce to ashes, but will not leave marks,
And you are a god there, where I am only a moralist,
A useless guest, awkward and inarticulate.

Years will pass... perhaps months...
Or even days, and we shall leave the road:
You, in the petals of a fragrant wreath;
I, simply pushed onto a hearse.

In spite of envious fate
And wretchedly faint-hearted poverty,
You will leave a monument behind you,
Immovable, though sweetly airy....

The day of my dream will pass without trace...
How to know? But what if, with a soul more lively than
The sea, another poet will love her shadow
In the untouched, triumphant headdress?..

Will love, and recognize, and understand,
And seeing that-the shadow has awakened,
And is breathing, will bless her silent flight
Among people who do not hear...

As can be seen in the stanzas cited, the poet opposes his own art to
that of "another" poet (whoever he may be). It should be stressed
that in this poem, in contrast to "He and I," there is no self-
abasement. The poet believes in his art, not discounting its
immortality (even though he will leave the road of life "simply pushed onto a hearse"), when he states that there may come a poet who will love his poetry ("love her shadow / In the untouched triumphant headdress") and that this poet will be one who knows how to listen—in contrast to people "who do not hear." Here we have a similar faith in future generations as in "Thoughts-Needles," the programmatic prose-poem that opens CC. The future poet from "To Another" who will understand Annenskij's art is one of the "green sprouts" that surround the "decrepit spruce." In this light, "To Another" is a poem of affirmation: the poet recognizes the worth of his own art, and reveals a belief in its immortality.

The two texts just presented are thematic hinged-icons, as it were, built out of two contrasting images in each. Opposition is contained only within one poem ("To Another"), however. The theme is clearly metapoetic. There are in addition metapoetic hinged icons that are comprised of two, interrelated poems. Such is the case with the hinged-icon "Ego."

The personal nature of "Ego" is suggested in its title; that it is metapoetic is revealed in the title of the first poem: "My Verse." Here the poet ponders on the source of his "verse," of poetry. He
perceives that his "verse" (poetry) has long existed:

Недоспевшем поле сжато;
И холодный сумрак тих...
Не теперь... давно когда-то
Был загадан этот стих...

Not guessed, only lived through,
Even, perhaps, more than once,
It wants, but no longer can
Overcome the eyes' drowsiness.

There is a mysterious, rebus-like quality attributed to verse: it can only be "solved" with a great amount of effort. At the same time, his "verse" belongs to no one, and is also fickle, as suggested in the third stanza:

Я не знаю, кто он, чей он,
Знаю только, что не мой, --
Ночью был он мне навяз,
Солнцем будет взят домой.

I don't know who it is, or whose,
I know only that it is not mine--
During the night it was blown in to me,
And by the sun will be taken home.
Also of note here is the time-frame suggested by the nocturnal poet: he composes his poetry at night, alone in the darkness. The sun—already established in previous analyses as an oppressive force in Annenskij's poetic universe—dispels his inspirational mood, and takes the independent verse with it. The poet, however, in this text is indifferent, even oblivious:

Пусть подразнит -- мне не больно:
Я не с ним, я в забытьи...
Мук с меня и тех довольно,
Что, наверно, все -- мой...

Let it tease me -- it does not cause me pain:
I am not with it, I am in oblivion...
There is enough torments demanded of me,
That, probably, all are mine...

In the final stanza, the poet reveals the transitory nature of art (his verse), but at the same time enjoins us not to be sad, for he knows that Art does not belong to him—or anyone else:

Видишь -- он уж тает, канув
Из серебряных лучей
В зыби млечных туманов...
Не тоскуй: он был -- ничей.

You see, it is already melting, having sunk
From the silver rays
Into the milky ripples of the mists...
Do not mourn--it belonged to nobody.

His verse, now "lived through" ("прожит") will remain, and will conceivably visit its enchantment on other poets. The next poem of
the hinged-icon "Ego" is informed by, and in direct opposition to, the first. Here the poet is no longer indifferent, but is filled with a sense of regret and despair.

This second poem of "Ego" is untitled and is the persona's tragic reflection on the past. More specifically he regrets his decision to follow the Muse. The first stanza creates an opposition of old-age and youth:

Разыгравшись, волос поредел.
Когда я молод был,
За столом жить мой ум хотел,
Что сам я жить забыл.

When it was let down, the hair looked thinner.
When I was young,
My mind desired to live for so many others,
That I myself forgot to live.

The first line represents the lyric persona's present, and his perception of his advancing years. The poet's hair is growing thin, and he is no longer young. What follows is a series of reminiscences, as signalled in the second line. He then goes on to discuss his youth, and his role as poet. He so identified with others' experiences that he ultimately lost his own life, or, as is set forth in the text, "forgot to live." In devoting himself to Art (and

5This line is misquoted by Timenčik and K. M. Černyj. ("Annenskij, Innokentij Fedorovič." Russkie pisateli 1800-1917, biograficheski slovar'. A. P. Nikolaev,
conceivably his many other intellectual pursuits) and constantly trying to access the world of Beauty, he neglected all else. He considers his life as poet (and scholar) as an abstraction, and is filled with a regret that he has squandered his youth:

Любить хотел я, не любя,
Страдать -- но в стороне,
И сжег я, молодость, тебя
В безрадостном огне.

I wanted to love, not loving,
To suffer, but on the side,
And I cremated you, my youth,
In a joyless fire.

In the final two stanzas, the perception of the poet returns to the present. Here the poet looks to the future, pondering his fate, which in Annenskij's poetry is always death. This is conveyed through a complex image introduced in the penultimate stanza:

Так что ж под зиму, как листы,
Дрожишь, о сердце, ты...
Гляди, как черная грудь
Под саваном тверда.

So that, towards winter, like leaves,
You tremble, oh heart...
Look, how the black frozen clump of dirt
Under the shroud is so hard.

ed. Moscow: Sovetskaja ënciklopedija, 1989. 87.) Their version reads "That I myself am tired of living" ("Что сам я жить устал"), significantly altering a reading of the poem.
Once again Annenskij describes his fragile heart, likening it to the trembling leaves. The season is "towards winter"—an obvious metaphor for old-age approached by death. In the next lines, he rhetorically enjoins us to observe an initially puzzling image: a "frozen clump of dirt" covered by a "shroud." Considered in the context of the poem, however, it becomes clear that this is a double metaphor. On one hand it is a symbol of a grave covered with snow. At the same time, it is the poet's own stiffening corpse, suggested in the phonetic affinity of "gruda" with "grud'," or "breast." In other words, the poet's heart trembles in a body that shows signs of rigor mortis, and which is covered with a funereal shroud. This same shroud is described in the first lines of the final stanza:

А он уж в небе въ готов,
Сквозной и луковой...
На поле белом меж крестов --
Хоть там найду ли свой?...

And the shroud is already prepared for it in heaven
Transparent and downy...
On the white field among the crosses --
Will I at least find my own?..

He implies that his death-shroud is already being prepared above, "in heaven" ("в небе"). This last stanza hints at the actual setting of
the poem: a graveyard in late Autumn. But even in his death he is tormented by doubt, wondering whether among the "white crosses" he will find his own. This doubt extends to his role as poet: has he earned a place, a monument to a life devoted to Art? The poem effectively conveys Annenskij's despair. Gone are the merrier moments described in the first text, where the poet described his life's work in much less gloomy terms.

The two poems of this hinged icon, then, clearly inform one another; the full semantic potential is realized only when they are "folded," as it were. The hinged-icon device allows the poet to construct various oppositions in which he can discuss both sides of the paradoxes of life and Art. Similar to the trefoil, they comprise a "single text." This hinged-icon, when considered as a single "poem," synthesizes the paradoxicality of Annenskij's aesthetics: Poetry is a wondrous calling, but it is also one which extracts a terrible price. A similar opposition is present in the final metapoetic hinged icon, "Sadness of the Patch of Light."

The first of the two poems is "Poetry." Presented are a series of coupled images that describe Annenskij's specific notion of the
nature of poetry. The first line of "Poetry" in addition draws a line between the two texts of the hinged-icon:

Творящий дух и жизни случай

Creative spirit and the chance occurrences of life

The first poem is devoted to the "creative spirit," while "Sadness of the Patch of Light" focuses on the "chance occurrences of life." This dichotomy is a fitting description of the stuff of Annenskij's poetry as established in this study: reality as perceived through the prism of poetic constructs. The final lines of "Poetry" return us once again to Annenskij's personal relationship with his demanding, but enchanting, indeed, beloved Muse:

Так неотвязно, неотдумно,
Что, полюбив тебя, нельзя
Не полюбить тебя безумно.

So persistently, so unchangingly,
That, having fallen in love with you, one cannot
Help falling in love with you madly.

This poem, then, focuses on a description of the "creative spirit," which the poet is powerless to ignore, but must love. At the same time, the poet is always aware of reality, of the "perpetual circle of anguish," or, as he puts it here, "the circumstance of life." It is a poem about his loneliness and sadness, experienced acutely in the absence of the "creative spirit." This is expressed in the second part
of the hinged-icon, "Sadness of a Patch of Light."

This second poem is dated, a rare occurrence in Annenskij's oeuvre, revealing a connection with reality. The first lines describe a garden setting, guarded and protected from the May heat. But it is not the magical moment portrayed in other poems with a similar setting, but one of strangeness and isolation, where the poet is filled with puzzlement, as seen in the next lines of the poem:

Не знаю, о чем так унылы,
Клубясь, мне дымы твердят,
И день ли то пробует силы,
Иль это уж тихий закат,

Где грезы несбыточно-дальней
Сквозь дымы злется следы?..

I do not know what the haze affirms to me
Swirling so despondently,
And whether it is the day that tries my strength,
Or if this is already the quiet sunset.

Where are the traces of the unattainably distant dream,
That shine golden through the haze?..

The poet is unable to fix the time (of day) and his exact location. It is not the approach of his Muse that causes this state, but his

6Furthermore, dated May 17, 1906, the text can be linked to a letter already cited in this study. As the reader will recall, in a letter of May 19 of the same year, addressed to his close friend E. M. Muxina, the poet wrote the lines that form an epigraph to Chapter II: "Lord, but for a moment of freedom, fiery freedom, madness..."
loneliness—indeed, gone are his powers of artistic perception. The "golden dream of our soul" (as described in the letter to Borodina cited in Chapter II) that the poet strives to convey, is nowhere to be found: "Where are the traces of the unattainably-distant dream that shine golden through the haze? [my emphasis]." Annenskij in essence questions his own poetry—the same poetry with which he had so "madly fallen in love" in the poem "opposite" in the hinged icon. The dream also alludes to dreams of love—a love that is as unattainable as the muse in this poem. The final line is telling in this regard:

Как странно... Просвет... а печальной  
Сплошной и туманной гряды.

How strange... A patch of light... but sadder  
than the thick ridge of mist.

Here the word "patch of light," as in a glimmer of light shining through the darkness, can also mean a "ray or glimmer of hope." However, it does not bring with it the light of hope, but instead is "strangely" "sadder" than the "thick ridge of mist." The final word "гриада" here can also mean "flower-bed"—the garden as the site of the poet’s isolation also evokes associations to the poet being "planted" there (i.e. buried). His poetry is seen as insufficient in the
end. The two poems, then, read as a binary opposition, confirm on one hand his devotion to poetry, but at the same time reveal his underlying doubt, both in his role as poet, and in Art.

As is demonstrated, in these metapoetic hinged icons, the poet sets forth a variety of oppositions. In some of these texts, Annenskij compares himself with both idealized poets, and to poets who create under a different Muse. In others he focuses on his own paradoxical attitude towards poetry, revealing both his love for it, and his doubts and fears in relation to his chosen calling. In all of the poems analyzed he achieves this through binary structures, which again, as in the case of the trefoils must be considered as unified texts, which only when synthesized release their full semantic impact. In the other sub-category of hinged icons--those of an autobiographical, nature, the poet sets forth his theme in more binary oppositions. As mentioned, these poems are highly personal and confessional. The majority are linked to Annenskij's concept of love, and his tragic situation as defined in Chapter I. Subject to intense passionate desire for more than a spiritual union with close female acquaintances, he is painfully aware that they must be denied. This is nowhere more succinctly expressed than in
the first such confessional hinged icon, "Two Sails of One Boat," which consists of a single poem.

In this text, Annenskij uses the sail as a metaphor for himself and another. He describes, as indicated in the title, two sails of one vessel. The "sail" opposite in this case is a symbol of the object of his passionate desire. We can consider this an abstraction of all the women whom he desired in life, but would not—or could not, in good conscience—allow himself to pursue in anything but an aesthetic manner. In keeping with the structural principles of the hinged icon, the poem is divided structurally into two symmetrical halves. The "folding" principle here is based on the tragically ironic situation of the "two sails": permanently close, they can never join. The first half (the first six lines) shows that the two are together in all of life's vagaries:

Нависнет ли пламенный зной
Иль, панься, расходятся волны,
Два паруса лодки одной,
Один и дыханьем мы полны.

Нас буря желанья слила,
Мы свиты безумными снами,

7 One is reminded of the Lermontovian "lonely sail"; Annenskij's "sail" is also alone, but is not searching "rebelliously" for "peace in the storms," instead resigned to a fate of loneliness. The important difference here is also the one between one sail and two: Lermontov's sailor has fled his beloved on shore, opting for solitude, while this poet yearns to be with his love, to overcome his loneliness.
Whether blazing heat hangs there
Or foaming waves dissolve,
We are two sails of one boat,
And filled with the one breath.

A tempest has merged our desires,
We are wound round with mad dreams.

The two sails endure together the desolation of a calm sea, as well
as the waves of a storm. They breathe the same air. Clear is the
closeness of the two; they are soul-mates. The first two lines of the
next stanza continues this notion, and emphasizes their mutual
desire, brought on by the fury of the elements, a storm. The two
sails are united by their mad dreams (of passion). The opening two
lines of the second stanza (the second half of the poem), while
connected to the preceding lines through rhyme ("snami"/"nami;
"slila"/"provela"), mark a semantic and tonal shift, introducing the
second side of the hinged-icon, with its dominant theme of
separation:

Но молча судьба между нами
Черту навсегда провела.

But fate has silently
Drawn a line between us forever.

There is a finality here: "fate" has drawn a "line" between them, as
it did for Tristan and Isolde, divided on the very bed of love by the
sword of separation. Acting "silently," it is an insistent and unrelenting fate, indifferent to the desires of the "sails." The poet underscores his powerlessness to act upon his feelings. Indeed, it is presented as an impossibility in the image of the two sails. In the final stanza, the poet's desire and frustration is set forth simply:

И в ночи беззвездного юга,
Когда так привольно-темно,
Сгорая, коснуться друг друга
Одним парусам не дано.

And on a night of the starless south,
When it is so free and dark,
Only to sails is it not granted
To touch each other, burning....

As a ship's sails, which are in reality permanently and irrevocably separated, affixed to their assigned positions on the ship of life, so too are Annenskij and the object of his desire. And in an atmosphere that is magical—the dark, warm night of a southern sea—the two sails "burn" with a passion that is not to be. (One is reminded of a line from "The Threesome" discussed in Chapter III: "He looked at her and burned away,/Burned away from untasted blisses.") They are not fated ("не дано") to "touch each other." We find in this poem, then, a clear reflection of the poet's own personal quandary. On a more abstract level, it also serves as a symbol of the rift between the poet's "I" and the world of beauty, the "non-I."
The next hinged icon that touches on a personal reality is "Two Loves." This poem, consisting of two quatrains, is dedicated to a journalist and literary critic, the brother of Annenskij's son's first wife, S. V. von Stein. It defines the two types of love named in the title:

There is a love like smoke:
If cramped, it stupefies,
Give it freedom, and it will be gone...
To be like smoke, but eternally youthful.

There is a love like shadow:
By day it lies at your feet, it heeds you.
At night it embraces you soundlessly...
To be like shadow, but together night and day...

The first love described here is compared to smoke. This implies that it is fleeting, ephemeral, and will eventually disappear. Further, there are several signals that this love is not desired by the poet: it "stupefies" if "cramped," if it is too ardent. And if not loved enough, or if allowed freedom, then it will disappear. In this regard, this first stanza can be taken as a kind of warning, as

\footnote{Podol'skaja, I.I. 1987, Op. Cit. 532.}
partially suggested by Setchkarev, who states that this poem cautions that love leaves only smoke behind, "so it is better not to kindle this flame." The poet did not allow himself this kind of love, opting instead for an aesthetic, sublime love. As the reader will recall, this love is a sublime merger—not of the two lovers, but of their images. In many cases the poet chooses the merger of shadows to symbolize his aesthetic union. In this light, the second stanza obviously deals with a type of love desired by the poet: it is compared to a "shadow." Hence, the second type of love described is entirely positive. This love does not stupefy, nor flee, but "listens to you in the daytime," and "quietly embraces you in the night." In other words, this is a lasting love, as opposed to the deceptive and fleeting love portrayed in the first part of the hinged-icon. The opposition principle, then, is basically antithetic. Shade-love is, once more, the sublime love that accompanies you everywhere without ever tiring you. The first type of love can further be equated with earthly, physical love that burns you to ashes, while sublime love nourishes your spirit night and day: "To be like a

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9 Setchkarev, V. Op. Cit. 101. Setchkarev issues this statement about the entire poem, but in my opinion it is applicable only to the first quatrain. The critic also notes similar themes in "I thought that my heart was made of stone" ("Я думал, что сердце из камня") and "Awakening" ("Пробуждение"). (Ibid.)
shadow, but together night and day." The theme of love and desire is continued in other of the confessional hinged icons.

"Virtue" is the next such text. It is composed of two poems, "The Work Basket" and "A Current of Mignonette in a Dark Car." These poems as well can be linked to actual events. (The first was attached to a letter to E. M. Muxina.\(^1\)) The opposition here is based on two hypostases of a woman: one is a virtuous domestic, the other a seductive stranger from a train. The metonymical symbols of the work basket and the knitting needles in the first poem recall the poet's "favorite dream" of Andromache at the loom (from "To Another") and her incessant toil, while the perfume in the second poem evokes the image of Blok's seductive "stranger" ("neznakomka").

In "The Work Basket" the poet shows how he finds in the pedestrian image of a woman knitting a beauty and mystery. There is also a note of anguish that this woman, called "Virtue" continues to go about her work, even in the dark and dead night. This image of "Virtue" is contrasted to a seductive beauty in the opposite poem in the hinged-icon, "A Current of Mignonette in the

\(^1\)Podol'skaja, I. I. Ibid.
This second poem of the hinged-icon, composed of free anapestic lines (as is the first), is linked to an actual event, as related by Usol. Apparently the poet once saw a woman in a train, who trailed behind her perfume with the scent of mignonette. It is a good example of how Annenskij takes a glimpse of reality, and transforms it into an aesthetic image. Here he composes for the woman a dream:

Не буди его в тусклую рань,
Поцелуем дремоту согрей...
Но сама -- вся дрожащая -- встань.
Ты одна, ты царишь... Но скорей!
Для тебя оживил я мечту,
И минуты её на счёту...

Don't disturb him in the dim early hours,
Warm his sleepiness with a kiss...
But yourself -- all shivering, rise!
You alone, you reign... But faster!
For you I animated a dream,
And its minutes are numbered...

Annenskij describes in the remainder of the poem an imagined tryst, a dream romance. Consider, for example, the following lines:

Всё, что можешь ты там, всё ты смешь теперь,
Ни мольбой, ни упреками не верь!

Пока свечи плавут
И легко живут,
Пока дышит во сне певца
Эдесь ни мук, ни греха, ни стыда...
Ты боишься в крови
Своих хлёбных ног.

11Ibid.
Everything you can do there, all you can dare now,
Believe neither in entreaties nor in reproaches!
While candles gutter
and gillyflowers live,
While in a dream mignonette breathes--
Here is neither torment, nor sin, nor shame...
You fear your well-groomed feet in blood,
And for the white garland
In your disordered plait?
Oh, be silent! Do not call!

While the woman is "there," an allusion to the world of beauty, or in this case of passionate desire, she may do anything. Although this is only a dream, she need not believe "either entreaties, or reproaches." (The latter were possible outcomes in the poet's own reality, had he acted upon his own desire.) That it is a tryst is evidenced in the "disorderliness of the plait," a symbol of physical passion fulfilled. But the final lines reassure us that what has happened has only been a dream--the only safe place for passion in Annenskij's world:

Ты очнувшись — свежа и чиста,
И совсем... о, совсем!
Без смущенья в лице,
В обручальном кольце

You will wake—fresh and pure,
And quite so... Oh, quite so!
Without confusion in your face,
In your wedding ring...
The woman can now awaken, "fresh and pure," without any of the pain and confusion that would accompany an actual illegitimate union. She is still secure: in the "wedding ring." The final line reveals that all has indeed been but a dream:

Стрелка будет показывать семь...

The hand will show seven ...

This hinged icon, then, is highly personal in nature, presenting two images of women. Various antithetical oppositions are suggested: reality as opposed to dream, peacefulness versus danger, or the legitimacy of the woman's situation described in "Virtue," as contrasted with the illegitimacy of the dream of his "neznakomka" in "A Current of Mignonette in the Dark Car." Since the structure of the hinged icon is that of a binary opposition, a form of dialogue, another interpretation presents itself: the romantic dream is obliquely directed at the woman in the first poem. In any event, the two poems together are clearly linked to the poet's reality, and reveal another variation of his transposed desire.

In "Counterfeits," the two poems are seasonal opposites: "Spring" and "Autumn." In "Spring," a romantic rendezvous of two young lovers is witnessed by a decrepit birch tree, a symbol of the
poet himself, who, as the reader will recall, has called himself a “sickly spruce” elsewhere. In the poem opposite in the hinged-icon, the death of the poet-witness is suggested. The titles reflect this as well. Spring represents the pleasures and fertility of youth, as in the following lines:

В майский полдень там девушка шляпу сняла,
И коса у нее распустилась.
Ее милый дорезал узорную вязь,
И на ветку березы, смеясь,
Он цветистую шляпу надел.

In a May noon there a girl took off her hat,
And her plait fell loose. Her dear one completed cutting
the patterned open-work
and on the branch of the birch, laughingly,
He hung a floral hat.

The time-frame here is noon, always oppressive to the poet. And the scene he witnesses in his guise as tree is as well--because he himself is eternally alone, and cannot participate. The girl "takes off her hat", and her "plait" "falls loose" symbolizing here the erotic. And the poor tree, witnessing the entire scene, is caused to suffer, while they indulge: the happy lover "engraves" his happiness on the tree's "flesh." Thus, the poet-tree is being "inscribed" in the most literal sense; it is painful to be "inscribed" as opposed to participating. There is also a mockery in their sensuous

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12See Chapter IV, p. 125.
playfulness—the woman’s lover laughingly hangs her hat—
patterned with spring-time flowers—on the lonely birch tree, which
is characterized as "dark and dry as dejection." The poet-tree
undergoes intense torment, symbolized in the omitted eighth line of
the poem. In the final lines, a personified May "looks" on from its
"blue heights," and wonders at the absurdity of the scene:

Это май подглядел
И дивился с своей голубой высоты,
Как на мертвой березе и ярки цветы...

May spied this
And from its blue height wondered how
There were bright flowers on the dead birch.

Here the opposition of the "dead" poet and the freshness of youth is
foregrounded in the incongruous image of the "dead birch-tree"
hung with "bright flowers." The same birch appears in the other
poem of the hinged-icon, "Autumn." However, it is "adorned" with
something quite different than a flower-patterned hat.

In "Autumn," the action takes place in a setting temporally
transformed. No longer a May noon, the time-frame is of an
autumn night (i.e., a time that is diametrically opposed to that of
the first poem). The first line is omitted, structurally echoing the same occurrence in "Spring." There it indicated torment; here, together with the omitted fourth line, it frames the first image presented: that of a man dozing on a bench:

And all night there hazes meandered across the moon,
And all night someone pitifully sensitive dozed
On the seat there, his derby hat pulled down low.

The "someone" is "pitifully-sensitive"—the poet is describing himself. He dozes, perhaps dreaming of the torment of having to witness the scene portrayed in spring. That he suffers is borne out in the disturbing image of the next lines, in which the poet describes a "black pod" hanging on the tree, "as long as a man's height":

А к рассвету в молочном тумане
 повис
На березе искривленно-жуткий
И мучительно-черный стручок,
Чуть пониже растрепанных гнезд,
А длинной -- в человеческий рост...
And towards daybreak, in the milky fog,
  hanging
On the birch there was a twistedly horrible
  And torturingly black pod,
Slightly below the disheveled nests,
  And as long as a man’s height...

The "twistedly horrible and torturingly black pod" is a macabre image of a man who has committed suicide. Indeed, the poet does not hang his hat, but himself on the tree. This is emphasized graphically in the placement of the verb "hang" ("повис"), as can be seen. And this scene of self-inflicted death is witnessed here not by May, but by a "bluishness" which looks on "late Autumn which has given birth," i.e., the birth of a dead man, as it were. There is then a clear opposition of youth and vitality and old-age and death. The poet who as witness feels mocked in the first poem, is so tormented by his sense of "otherness," of loneliness, that in the second poem he symbolically commits suicide. In this way, the hinged-icon "Counterfeits" is another variation of the poet’s theme of separation and isolation.

"Romantic Hinged Icon," the last of the confessional texts, commences with a poem that once again touches on the issues of personal desire. The opening stanza of "The Sky [is not Blossoming]
with Stars in the Mist" portrays a dark, winter evening:

The sky is not blossoming with stars in the fog,
The timid evening has not kindled them today...
Only the languid fir trees are gleaming through the windows, and the whirling light snow is covering us.

A patina of mystery covers everything. The stars are shrouded by the fog, and the poet and his companion are covered with a "light snow." The only source of light comes from "fir-trees" in the windows, suggesting that the time is Christmas. Normally a time of familial joy, this time may have been burdensome for the poet so torn by desire, and so tempted to leave the family hearth. In the second stanza, the persona appears to be meeting with his beloved. There is a tone of pain and frustration. The tears are no longer the "cold tears of desire" encountered in a similar context (i.e., in a rendezvous with Xmara-Barščevskaja), but now show a resignation:

The snowflakes showered on the fur of your eyelashes
Will not let you look into my eyes;
Like tears, but not burning up my heart,
Like stars, but such as have grown tired of shining...

---

These tears obscure the reflection of the shining stars, providing a clue to the opening line of the poem, where "the stars do not blossom in the mist." The addressee cannot look into the poet's eyes, ostensibly because of the snow covering the "fur of her eyelids." But in the final stanza, it becomes clear that the woman cannot return his gaze because of her tears, shed out of a passionate, but frustrated love:

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Это их любви безумной обидой
Против воли твои звезды залиты...
И мучительно снежинкам я завидую,
Потому что ими плачешь ты...
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Your stars are flooded against their will
With the mad hurt of their love...
And I painfully envy the snowflakes
Because it is with them that you are crying...
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The poet is also in torment, and he envies the snowflakes that have merged with her tears. The entire poem is a testament to frustrated desire, presented in a series of complex, interrelated images. In the second text, "Dear One," there is an oblique parallel to the story told in the first panel of the hinged-icon. In terms of a binary "unfolding," this second poem presents an encoded speculation, as mentioned, of the events of the first.

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14 Setchkarev refers to Annenskij's "complicated system of correspondences" in this text (eyes/stars/snowflakes/tears), Op. Cit. 133. This is a common feature of his work, and was discussed above in connection with the poem "When it was let down, the hair looked thinner..."
"Dear One" can be read as the poet’s projection of the possible outcomes of seduction and an illegitimate affair. Fedorov notes a link to the Gretchen theme from Faust. This specific episode, is intimately linked with folkloric traditions, and involves the seduction of innocence. Annenskij’s poem is composed in the form of a dialogue in a form that, as Podol’skaja notes, is “consciously written in a Russian folk spirit.” Together with the poem’s story (a woman, obviously the participant in an illegitimate affair, commits infanticide), the link to Gretchen is indeed evident. In essence, Annenskij obliquely reflects on his own potential role in seduction:

«Милая, милая, где ты была
Ночью в такую метелицу?»
«Горю и ночью дорога светла,
К дяде ходила на маленьку».

«Милая, милая, я не пойму
Речи с словами притворными.
С чем же ты ночью ходила к нему?»
«С чем я ходила? Да с зернами».

«Милая, милая, зерна-то чьи ж?
Жита я нынче не кашивал?»
«Зерна-то чьи, говоришь? Да твои ж...
Впрочем, хозяин не спрашивал...»

15 Podol’skaja notes that Fedorov, on the basis of a rough draft of "The Dear One," with good foundation observes the Faustian connection. Op. Cit. 533.
16 Podol’skaja. Ibid.
17 Clearly, the links between Annenskij’s poem and the episode from Faust warrant an in-depth examination; however, the relationship between Annenskij’s and Goethe’s poetry remains outside the scope of the present study.
"My darling, my darling, where have you been
At night, in such a snowstorm?"
"To grief, even at night the road is bright,
I went to the old one at the mill."

"My darling, my darling, I don't understand
A speech with false words...
With what did you go to him in the night?"
"With what did I go?"—"Why with the grain."

"My darling, my darling, whose grain?
I haven't been harvesting barley lately!"
"Whose grain, you ask? — Why, yours...
But the miller did not inquire...

"My darling, my darling, where is the flour?
The sack that was under your apron?"
"At the wheel where the water is deep...
The Bald One today has an heir..."

Whereas in most poems, as has been demonstrated, the poet merges with the lyric persona, the poet is here far-removed from this text. This is seen in the nature of the characters (peasants), and the conversational, folk language in which they speak. Indeed, this language is deliberately "alien," and the poet hides behind it. The poet thus further conceals his situation, obscuring his own potential role in a similar situation. At the same time, in placing the poem within the structure of the hinged icon, he reveals that he
is not merely recounting the popular theme of seduction and illegitimacy, but is instead pondering a personal dilemma. This is even more evident when we consider the first text, where he is an obvious participant. As readers we are informed by the previous context, and once again, the poetics of confessional reticence come to the fore.

In this second section of CC, Annenskij employs a considerably different structural device (binary as opposed to tripartite in the previous section) in order to advance his basic theme. It is yet another chapter in his book of life, containing both metapoetic statements and confessional reminiscences. As in the case of the trefoil, it is a device that requires some decoding--but again, in this section, we are supplied the keys to these codes at every step, as is shown above. In other words, the poetics of confession begins to outweigh the poetics of reticence. In the third section, "scattered leaves," we find another approach used by the poet in espousing his basic theme. As will be shown, it is the most personal. In this respect, the artifice of complex structures is de-emphasized, and the poet lets fall the most intimate "leaves" of his "tree," the most personal pages of what Annenskij called the "sad tale of his life."
ii.

Scattered Leaves and Other Structures in *The Cypress Chest*

The section entitled "Scattered Leaves" offers a poetic inventory of the multiple influences on Annenskij's highly intertextual art. Here biography and literary sources meet. As the title of the section implies, the arrangement of the texts contrasts with the more complex, carefully arranged structures of the trefoil and the hinged-icon. Fedorov observes in this connection that

не случайно, по-видимому, ускользает и возможность уловить объединяющий принцип, вернее, впрочем, этим принципом является сама «разметанность», разомкнутость...18

apparently, it is no coincidence that the opportunity to catch the unifying principle is elusive; or more precisely, though, this principle is its very "scatteredness," its openness...

The "scattered" quality stated by the title of the section can be linked to the opening prose poem "Thoughts-Needles," discussed, the reader will recall, in the previous chapter. In this poem Annenskij describes the "needles" or "leaves" (the "pages" of his life's story--the poetic texts--of *CC*) "scattered" there as composing a kind of "humus" ("перегной") that is both the ground from which

the poet has grown, as well as the ground from which other poets will issue forth. In other words, the various poems from "Scattered Leaves" are analogous to the fallen leaves from "Thoughts-Needles." From a variety of "trees," or influences, together they comprise some of the "humus" that has nourished the Annenskian "tree." This notion is supported by the seemingly haphazard arrangement of the poems and their diverse nature. While a combination, for example, of a poem recalling a French symbolist, "From Verlaine" ("Из Вэрлейне"), and a translation of the German poet Goethe, "Over the Mountain Height" ("Над вершиной горной"), might appear incongruous at first glance, when one considers the nature of Annenskij as poet and scholar, and the many sources he had at his disposal, the choices can be seen as guided by a certain, specifically Annenskian logic. It is this multi-facetedness that aids the poet in hiding himself, since he appears to speak in the name of other poets. Here we have an analogy to the case noted by Vološin, who observed that to be active in so many areas was to assure one's own anonymity. Speaking in the name of many also assures anonymity. The poet turns, as it were, into Nik. T-o. Of course, anonymity also allows for greater openness. Thus we find the poet
as usual balancing between hiding and disclosing himself. As is demonstrated, in this section he reveals more than he conceals.

In addition to literary concerns, Annenskij also alludes to the various personal inspirations of his poetry: several poems are dedicated or connected to women close to him, including Borodina, his sister-in-law, the singer Bigačeva, and perhaps most importantly, his soul-mate, Ol'ga Xmarabarshevikaja. Thus, the section “Scattered Leaves” can be read as a kind of abbreviated, or condensed literary and personal history of the poet—his own specific version of his “creative journey.” This notion attains additional credence in the fact that there are also a number of clearly metapoetic texts, devoted to the issues of inspiration and art, and finally, several poems revealing his thoughts on death. Indeed, the section of "scattered leaves" clearly displays the entire spectrum of his philosophy of life and art. The principle of structure in this section is the absence of structure. Hence, the thematics of the poems are emphasized—here even to a greater degree than in the hinged-icons. Thus, thematics is emphasized in the analysis of these poems. Several representative poems of each thematic type are discussed. The first to be examined are those of
a personal nature—those that are linked to the women mentioned.

"Impossible" ("Невозможно") opens the section. This poem was enclosed in a letter to Borodina of January 12, 1907. As will be recalled, this letter is a description of the mystical union with the surrounding world, one "beyond words." Interestingly, this poem is a meditation on a single word—"impossible":

Есть слова — их дыхание, что цвет,
Так же нежно и бело-травожно.
Но меж ним ни печальнеев нет,
Ни нежнее тебя, невозможно.

There are words, whose breath is like a flower,
So tender and whitely disquieting,
But among them there is nothing sadder
Or tenderer than you, impossible.

The poet senses in this word something tender and provocative; it is the necessary "impossibility" of art. Contained within this word are a number of images that Annenskij associated with art, for example "sounds departing into velvet," "the shining of graves," and "whitening hands." All found in the second stanza, these sounds and images are encountered elsewhere in his poetry. The "sounds departing into velvet" are a symbol of music (as also described in the poem "The Bow and the Strings," from "Trefoil of Temptation"). "Graves" are ubiquitous in his poetry as obvious signs of death, a
tragic aspect of life, and hence art. The hands can be linked to
desire and the renunciation of desire. All are contained in the word
"impossible," the sound contours of which enthrall the poet. This is
adumbrated in the first stanza, in the sound repetitions of the first
and last sounds of the actual word ("nevozmožno"). The "ne" of that
word and the sound combination of "ž" and "n" are each repeated
five times before the actual word is introduced: "dyxan'ët;" "nežno;"
"pečal'neer" and "nežnee;" ("ne"), and "že nežno;" belotrevožno;" "mež
nix;" and "nežnee" ("žn"). The allure of the rest of the word's
phonetic texture is stated directly in the following stanza:

Но лишь в белом венце хризантем,
Перед первой угрозой забвенья,
Эти эй, эти эй, этх эм
Различить я сумел дуновенья.

But only in the white garland of chrysanthemums,
Before the first threat of oblivion
Was I able to distinguish the breathings of
These ems, these esses, of these ells.

The mention of the "threat of oblivion" is significant here: it is only
on the threshold of the seemingly impossible moment of
inspiration. The fourth stanza presents an image that can be
associated with desire; the adornment of a spring bride. The poet,
however, is once again a witness from outside:
All of these images are, in the poet's mind, dominated by "impossible," just as it is impossible for him to repeat the magical moment he describes in the cited letter to Borodina:

And you know, when the heart is excited, then the word sometimes seems not only ridiculous, but almost sacrilegious. If only I could have a second night like that I sometimes think... And suddenly I begin to pity that distant, irretrievable and once-in-a-lifetime night. And indeed, would it not be too much for one human heart to bear two such nights: the walls of the heart would probably not be able to withstand it...

At the same time, he considers this notion of the "impossible" the most moving and alluring of all. It is the saddest of "words," compared in the final lines to falling flowers. It is for this "word" that the poet reserves his love: for the impossibility of life, art,
love and desire:

Если слово за словом, что цвет,
Упадает, белая травожно,
На печальных меж павшими нет,
Но люблю я одно — невозможно.

If word after word that is like a flower
Is falling, disquietingly turning white,
There is none among the fallen ones who is not sad,
But I love only — impossible.

The poet was inspired in this poem by a relationship with a woman, an event that he cherishes in the recesses of his memory. The "leaf" dedicated to Ol'ga Xmara-Barščevskaja, "Stanzas of the Night" ("Стансы ночи") is similar in this regard. As the reader will recall, Annenskij and this woman, his daughter-in-law, experienced an intense mutual desire. In the poem, the poet reveals the intense internal conflict he experiences in his relationship with his daughter-in-law.

In the first stanza, the scene is the garden, a customary setting in Annenskij's oeuvre; it is a place where the poet is often visited by his Muse:

Меж тенью погасли солнца пятна
На песке в загражившем саду.
Все в тебе так сладко-напомнятно,
Но твое запомнил я: «Приду».
Among the shadows the spots of sunlight are
Extinguished in the garden that has begun to dream.
Everything in you is so sweetly incomprehensible,
But I remember your: "I will come."

The tell-tale signs of a magical, poetic moment are encoded into these first lines: shadows, evening, a "garden lost in dream." The impression is given that the poet has arranged an assignation there, since he focuses on a "sweetly-incomprehensible" "I will come"—clearly the voice of a woman. In the next stanzas the poet retreats, as it were, removing himself from the action of the poem:

Черный дым, но ты воздушный дым,
Ты нежней пушисток у листа,
Я не знаю, кем, но ты любим,
Я не знаю, чья ты, но мечта.

Black smoke, but you are airier than smoke,
You are tenderer than the down of a leaf,
I do not know by whom, but you are loved,
I do not know whose, but you are a dream.

This wavering is a sign of an identity crisis experienced by the poet (suggested in the initial image of "black smoke"—that obscures and confuses the poet's perceptions). Annenskij claims not to know "who loves her," or for whom she is a "dream." He projects his more proper side, ruled by convention—the man who would not dream of anything as indecent as an illicit affair. The other poet is quite
different: he loves and dreams of this woman he cannot have. The final stanza shows another attempt to distance himself from the tryst:

Эту ночь я помню в давней грезе,
Но не я томился и ждал:
Сквозь фонарь, забытый на березе,
Талый воск и плакал и плыл.

I remember this night in a long-past dream,
But it was not I who pined and longed:
Through the lantern forgotten on the birch tree,
The melting wax both wept and blazed.

But his knowledge of the details creates an ambiguity: he may indeed be a participant, as opposed to witness (as in the poem "Autumn"). The final line, moreover, is a metaphor for frustrated passion, which is the underlying current of this and so many other poems on love: "The wax both wept and blazed."

These poems are directly connected with women; others which are not linked overtly to any person, but nonetheless involve similar aspects of reminiscence and desire are "Second Tormenting Sonnet" and "Anguish of the Garden." The latter poem is another instance of a retreat from passion, an effort to escape his dilemma of desire. This is suggested in the title, the garden functioning in Annenskij's poetry as the setting for inspiration and love:
The leaves puffed up sensitively to the cold,
The garden rustled with such anguish,
--If only I was able to love
just as freely as you.

In the first two lines, the poet projects his feelings onto the surroundings. The "leaves" (in Annenskij's poetic vocabulary equivalents of poems) are as morbidly sensitive as the poet himself, who constantly feels the chill of uneasy doubt. The sounds of the garden voice his own sense of anguish. In the second two lines the poet reveals the thought behind his trepidation and unease: he bemoans his own inability to love "as freely" as the unnamed addressee. In the second stanza, the poet continues with the analysis of his capacity for feeling love, here questioning his love for life, represented by the sun:

A ray penetrated its thicket...
--Oh sun, do I love you?
If only I could love you
And in loving did not languish.
The first line introduces a light that penetrates the darkness and chill of the first stanza. It warms the garden (the "thicket"), but, as is evinced in the following lines, does not sufficiently warm the poet, but only causes him to ponder further his feelings. In any attempt to love, he finds a weariness and anguish. The final stanza introduces yet more heat—here the "flame of desire":

Тускло по в зеленой крови
Пламень жажды зажог,
Только раздумье и сон
Сердцу отрадней любви.

Even if dimly in the green blood
The flame of desire is ignited,
Only meditation and sleep
Are more delightful to the heart than love.

Once again the garden is attributed with human feelings—the "green blood" (of the garden), is ignited with the "flame of desire." Despite the potential for love suggested in these two lines, the poet senses that there is something greater than desire: "Meditation" and "sleep." These two activities signify here the intellectual process of creating art and death (i.e., the sleep of death). Thus, only Art and Death can overcome desire. The poet implies that there are only two ways to solve the dilemma described in the preceding lines: to transpose desire into an aesthetic construct, or to sleep the sleep of death.
The themes of art and death are the focus in a number of "scattered leaves." They represent the two "worlds" as discussed by Ginzburg: the "terrible" and the "beautiful." This opposition is strikingly represented in two poems, "Black Silhouette" and "Mirages." The first text focuses on the poet's "I," the prison-cell of his pessimistic worldview, while the second takes us through the window into the other side, into the realm of the "non-I," of Art.

The "black silhouette," named in the title of the first poem, is an image of the poet's own death. The entire poem re-emphasizes Annenskij's obsession with mortality. It is a poetic rendering of his ironic statement quoted in Chapter I: "My place is in the graveyard." The sonnet's first quatrains laments the fate of man as an existence of deception:

Пока в тоске растущего испуга
Томиться нам, живя, еще дано,
Но уж сердцам обманывать друг друга
И лгать себе, хладя, суждено;

For the time being it is still granted to us, while living,
To pine in an anguish of increasing dread,
But already it is decreed that hearts shall deceive
Each other and lie to themselves while growing cold;

Of note here are the poet's directness and unambiguous vocabulary: in the four lines he introduces "anguish," "dread," "decreed," "deceive," and "lie." The only concrete image—that of hearts
"growing cold"--is a metaphor for loss of feeling, as well as death. Indeed, he leaves no room for doubt as to the theme of the poem. The second quatrain is a statement on the oppressiveness of life, a variation on what Annenskij terms in another poem ("Anguish of the Mirage from "Trefoil of the Road") the "perpetual circle of anguish":

Пока прильнув сквозь мерзлых окно,
Нас сторожит ночами тань недуга,
И лишь концы мучительного круга
На сведены в последнее звоно, --

For the time being, clinging to the frozen window,
The shadow of infirmity watches us by night,
And only the torturing circle's ends
Are not joined in the final link.

Annenskij emphasizes this notion in the rhyme scheme of the first two stanzas (AbAbAbbA), with the feminine rhymes of "ispuga"/"druga"/"neduga"/"kruga" and the masculine rhymes of "dano"/"suždeno"/"okno"/"zveno." The feminine rhymes emphasize the notion of oppressiveness, while the masculine rhymes underscore a dreaded, inescapable fate. Each set contains the image of a circle. In the second quatrain, death, the fated last "link" in the "tormenting circle" has not yet been closed. It is in this last moment of life that the poet desires to understand the world of the
"non-I," here described as "that world," a phrase that emphasizes the poet's separation from the same:

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Хочу ли понять, тоскою пожирая,
Тот мир, тот мир с его миражным разом...
Уж мига нет -- лишь мертвый брезжит свет...
```

When I, consumed by anguish, wish to understand
That world, that moment with its mirage-like paradise...
The moment is no more--only a dead light gleams...

In the first line of the tercet the poet is "consumed by anguish."
"That world" is the place of beauty, of art, as is set forth in its description as "that moment, with its mirage-like paradise." The rhyme here creates another association as well--"požiraem"/"raem" reveals that the poet is consumed not only by anguish, but also by the "paradise" he can obtain for only a moment. In the final line of the tercet, Annenskij ends the moment, and signals the closing of the final link in the circle of an oppressive fate. The moment is no more, and only a "dead light gleams." This "dead light" casts a shadow in the last tercet, which describes the death of the poet:

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А сад заглох... и дверь туда забита...
И снег идет... и черный силуэт
Захолодел на зеркале гранита.
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And the garden has grown wild... and the door thence is Nailed shut... And it is snowing... and a black silhouette Has grown cold on the granite's mirror.
Firstly, the garden which has "grown wild" is significant. The poet's enchanted setting, a place where he has so often engaged in creating, and from where he has been able to access "that world" is no longer inviting. Further, he is permanently denied entrance: the "door is nailed shut." "Snow falls," indicating the onset of winter, a metaphor for death in Annenskij's poetic calendar. And finally, a "black silhouette" "grows cold." And not only is it dying, but it is reflected in the "mirror of granite." Cast by "dead light" (rhyme reinforcing this opposition: "svet"/"siluet"), this mirror-image is the poet in his grave, the mirror of granite metonymically representing a gravestone. Rhyme once again comes into play: "zabita"/"granita" implies the irrevocability of death in Annenskij's world. The door in this regard becomes a symbol of the coffin lid which has been "nailed shut." Amongst the diverse poems scattered in this section, this text is powerful in its bleak and disquieting imagery. It is a convincing description of his "terrible world," of his dark view of life. The poet, however, does not completely believe in this darkness: immediately after this poem follows "Mirages," a poem filled with the light of the "beautiful world," despite its gloomy beginning.
The first stanza of "Mirages" ponders on a weariness experienced in the sharp colors and lines of first midday, and then dawn:

To полудня паменъ синий,
To рассвета паменъ альный,
Я ль устал от чётких линий,
Солнце ль самое устало --

First the blue of noon's flames,
Then the scarlet of daybreak's flames,
Am I tired of the clear-cut lines,
Is the sun itself tired?

Not the favored times of this poet of twilight and the night, there is a starkness that is unpleasant to the poet. The "flames" are too vivid, and are not filtered, but glare in a bright blue and scarlet. The next stanzas reveal, however, that the persona is shielded by a protective foliage of trees which refracts the light. This garden, then, is still the abode of the poet, his sanctuary from the "clear lines" of the "terrible world." It has not yet "grown wild":

Но чрез полог темнолистый
Я дождусь другого солнца
Цвета мальвы золотистой
Или розы и червонца.

But through the dark-leaved canopy
I await another sun,
the color of the golden hollyhock,
Or of the rose, and the gold ducat.
The poet, not in fear or dread, but in anticipation "awaits another sun," which will create a pleasing and desired palette of more subdued tones and colors. They are not the "flames" of daylight, but the enchanting and beckoning colors of flowers (roses and hollyhocks) and reddish-gold ("červonec"). The next stanza conveys his pleasure and delight:

Будет взорам так приятно
Утопать в сетях зелёных,
А потом на темных кленах
Зажигать цветные пятна.

It will be so pleasant to the eyes
To sink into the green nets,
And then to kindle colored spots
On the dark maples.

Here we find a metaphoric description of the creative act, implied in the verb "to sink," i.e., to sink into aesthetic oblivion, and in the image which follows: "to kindle colored spots on the dark maples" in the "green nets." (Indeed, the garden here functions like the temple in the poem "Links Not Unfastened" from "Trefoil of oblivion," where aesthetic oblivion is the emphasis; there the light is also filtered, creating a pleasing and soothing atmosphere where art is possible.) Notably absent in this stanza is the ever-present despair and doubt that usually accompanies the onset or retreat of
such a moment. Indeed, in the context of Annenskij's poetry, one might anticipate in the closing lines a dissipation of mood, and the approach of an all-embracing blackness. But this is decidedly not the case:

Пусть миражного круженья
Через миг погаснут сваты...
Пусть я -- радость отраженья,
Но не то ли и вы, поэты?

Even if the lights of the mirage-like swirling
Should be extinguished in a moment...
Even if I am the joy of reflections,
Are you not also the same, poets?

"The lights of the mirage-like swirling" is the enchanted moment of inspiration so sought after, the merger of the poet's "I" with all that surrounds him, the world of the "non-I." And while he recognizes that it will pass, that the "lights" will "go out," he is filled not with dread, but calm resignation and peace. What he accepts here is that the moment is but a moment, and that, even if he is only the "joy of reflection," that is the essence of all poetry. Hence he poses the final, rhetorical question: "Are you not also the same, poets?" He finally finds a self-confidence lacking in other poems. Furthermore, in the sequence of the "scattered leaves" this poem occurs towards the end, after the many other texts that deal with both death and inspiration. "Mirages" in this way functions as a final word, leaving
behind a tone of hope, and leading us out of the "terrible world," and into the "beautiful world" of art.

The final two poems of the "scattered leaves" are both translations of German poets, Heine and Goethe, respectively. As mentioned, these poems are part of the "literary humus" (together with "From Verlaine") from which Annenskij's own "tree" grows. They are not merely translations, however, but can be seen as original texts as well. This is evidenced in the Heine poem, "Ich grolle nicht," about which the poet writes in a letter to the singer Begičeva:

Это не Гейне, милая Нина, это -- только я. Но это также и Гейне. Я посылаю эти 8 строек той, чьи люблю четыре первых серебренных ноты... Они нитью пробираются по черному бархату. Бархат их нажит, но он душиет их... А они хотят на волю... Бедные, они хотят на волю... Зачем? Зачем? 19

This is not Heine, dear Nina, this is only me. But it is also Heine. ... I am sending these 8 lines to the woman whose first four silver notes I love... They feel their way in a thread along the black velvet. The velvet caresses them, but it suffocates them... And they want to be free. The poor things, they want to be free. Why? Why?

It is clear from this passage that the poet appropriates Heine's poem for his own purposes. In the letter above, he dedicates these lines to the singer. Her music for him is another emanation of the

beautiful moment that cannot be retained ("They want to be free... Why? Why?"). This poem also has a tone of resignation to the passing of the moment, as symbolized in his understanding that every song must end. In the context of the letter, this can be seen as a reference to a regret that the woman’s beautiful song is, like every inspirational moment, forever threatened:

Я все простил: простить достало сил,
Ты больше не моя, но я простил,
Он для других, алмазный этот свет,
В твоей душе ни точки светлой нет.

I have forgiven everything: to forgive I found the Strength. You are no longer mine, but I have forgiven.
It is for others, this diamond light,
In your soul, there is not even a point of light.

The poet who "has forgiven everything" (the German translates as "I do not harbor anger"), realizes that "this diamond light" (or "world") is now for others, and no longer exists for him. In the next stanza, there is a suggestion of irony in that the poet states that the addressee, rather than the poet, is in torment:

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20 This is demonstrated in his letter to her of January 31, 1908, where he describes her singing of the previous night: "You know, there was a minute when, not listening to you, no, but remembering later, how you sang, I cried." ("Вы знаете, что была минута, когда я, — не слушая Вас, нет, а вспоминая потом, как Вы пели, плакал.") Further in the letter he compares her to a poet: "You did not sing. Yesterday you created." ("Вы не пели. Вы творили вчера.")

21 As Kelly observes, "irony is dominant in Annensky’s own versions of Heine." Kelly, Catriona. "Not in the Footsteps of the Divine Goethe": Innokentij
This final image has a definite Annenskian cast to it: it reads as a testimony to frustrated desire (the image of a "greedy snake" confirms this; Xmara-Barščevskaja also refers to a snake in her passionate missive, as quoted in Chapter I). Indeed, the poet notes the following in connection to Heine:

Есть пафос, которому Гейне не только всегда и беспрекословно верил, но к которому он относился болезненным состраданием, -- это был пафос сердца, раненого безнадежной или обманутой любовью. [my emphasis]

There is a pathos which Heine not only always and unquestioningly believed, but to which he related with an ill compassion; this was a pathos of the heart, wounded by a hopeless or deceived love.

It is not difficult, then, to understand Annenskij’s decision to include this poem within the collection: this same pathos--


especially that of a "hopeless love" -- is evident throughout Annenskij's own work.

The final poem is taken from Goethe, but as Catriona Kelly suggests, in Annenskij's translation, the "wholesomeness of Goethian personality, its control over the outside world, has become a breakdown of identity, perhaps death."\(^{23}\) This "outside world" is not the world of beauty, then, but the poet's own tormented existence:

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\begin{align*}
\text{Над высью горной} \\
\text{Тишь.} \\
\text{В листве, уж чёрной,} \\
\text{Не ощутишь} \\
\text{Ни дуновенья.} \\
\text{В чаще затих полёт...} \\
\text{О, подожди... Мгновенье --} \\
\text{Тишь и тебя... возьмёт.}
\end{align*}
\]

Above the mountain heights
Silence.
In the foliage, already black,
You feel
Not a breath.
In the grove the flight of birds has grown quiet...
Oh, wait!.. In a moment --
The silence will also take ... you.

Kelly also notes that "the effect is of pastoral vision as nightmare."\(^{24}\) Indeed, what Annenskij describes is far removed from the mountain scenery in Goethe's poem. It is instead another

\(^{24}\) Ibid.
version of his garden, this time in the form of a "grove." The only color is black; the movement of birds—a signal of the moment—has "grown silent." The preponderance of ellipses represents a forbidding. In the end, the nightmarish "quiet" will also take "you," i.e. the poet, or all men.25 The final note is sounded in this section, and it is one of resignation and quiet despair. At the same time, Annenskij distances himself somewhat from this disturbing note in the fact that this and the Heine poem are translations. Although they are, by his own admission, "only him," he also states that they are the province of the poet in question. In other words, he hides behind the figures of these poets. Their positioning is thus justified, for they form barriers between the poet and his literary and personal history. But again, his own perception of life and art are nonetheless dominant, and his attempt at concealment results once again in a revelation of the underlying concerns of his poetry.

The section of "scattered leaves," as has been demonstrated, consists of a variegated assortment of poems that reflect the many dimensions of Annenskij's poetic universe, from his personal

25Lermontov's version of this poem more closely adheres the Goethe poem; compare, for example, the final line of his translation ("And you too shall rest..."—"Отдохнёшь и ты...") with the original ("ruhest du auch."). In Annenskij's rendition, the persona is the object, and not the subject in the final line: "The silence will also take... you."
dilemma of frustrated desire, to his specific view of poetry and inspiration. The characteristic theme of an all-consuming death is also present in a number of poems—but tempered, as in "Mirages"—with the notion that art can lead us out of despair. They reveal far more than they conceal, and as such are the most confessional "chapter" of Annenskij's "book of life." And, taken together, they indeed form the "humus" at the base of the Annenskij's "sickly spruce" (from "Thoughts-Needles"). At the same time, they are part of his legacy. Indeed, in this regard, art here is affirmed more clearly than in any other section.

The following three sections are comprised of nine poems. At first glance, one might consider these lyrics—five "romances" ("романсы"), two "songs to music" ("Песни под музыку") and two "songs with stage-setting" ("Песни с декорацией")—to be somewhat out of context: there is not an immediately discernible connection, for example, with the "leaf" motif. Furthermore, the number of texts in each of these last three sections is not a factor of three, thereby seemingly upsetting this aspect of arrangement. However, taken together, all three sections contain nine poems; if considered as a single unit, they adhere to the numerical motif.
In his study of the 1910 version of *CC*, Fedorov describes the rise, culmination and fall of tension as a general principle of construction. Although Fedorov's examines the edition that as demonstrated does not completely follow authorial intent, at the same time, his notion is useful in determining the motivating factor behind the final sections of the 1987 version of *CC*: they can be considered a way in which the poet decreases the tension created in the preceding sections of the collection. These poems also form a textual barrier to the preceding sections, i.e., they are part of Annenskij's hide-and-seek game. Due to the constraints of space, observations are limited here to those of a general character.

First, Annenskij introduces music in the "romances," a series of five poems: "Why, When Dreams Have Betrayed" ("Для чего, когда сны изменяли..."), "Spring Romance" ("Весенний романс"), "Autumn Romance" ("Осенный романс"), "Winter Romance" ("Зимний романс") and "Melody for Harp" ("Мелодия для арфы"). These are followed by the "songs to music": "Cake Walk on Cymbals" ("Кэк-юк на цимбалах") and "Little Bells" ("Колокольчики"), both experiments in sound and rhythm. Finally, we have "songs with stage-setting":

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"Sighs of the Accordion" ("Гармонные вздохи") and "Without Beginning and Without End" ("Без начала и без конца"). In the first of these sections, his lyric persona is present. In the second, the lyrical "I" is obscured. Finally, in the "songs with stage-setting," the poet is virtually absent, for these two texts are miniature dramas, with individual actors that in no way resemble the poet (a sailor, an old woman, and a baby). The final poem, "Without Beginning and Without End"—an appropriate title for the final poem in Annenskij's cyclical collection—in which an old woman is trying to sing a baby to sleep, is comprised of a series of lines in the register of a soothing lullaby.

In removing his persona from the texts, Annenskij in effect separates himself from the work, effectively concealing his "I." This can also be seen as a reflection on his own feelings of separation from the surrounding world. At the same time, by introducing other, more common characters, he simultaneously universalizes his text. Finally, the function of these final poems in the collection (most markedly in the last one mentioned) is to decrease the tension created in the previous sections of the book.
All six sections of CC, together with the introductory prose poem, can be considered as a unified text. Annenskij's specific version of a "book of life." Furthermore, their arrangement in sections is done with a purpose. The sections clearly evolve: from the artifice and complexity of the trefoils, where the poet conceals more than reveals, to the hinged-icons, where he balances between reticence and confession. He then proceeds to his scattered leaves, where he fully reveals his aesthetics, and affirms the role of art. And finally, in the last three sections he decreases the tension, and "removes" himself as the focal point. Yet another key to the unity and arrangement of the texts can be found in its original and enigmatic title. A complex device, it acts as a frame, illuminating the over-all structure of the book and reinforcing many of the notions discussed above. As such, it deserves separate mention in the final part of the present chapter.
Annenskij’s title has an impetus in reality. The poet collected and stored his poems in an actual cypress box: "The Cypress Chest, as everybody now knows, indeed exists; it is a small box, in which Annenskij preserved his manuscripts." Although it was an actual object (and is—apparently it is stored in the archives), Annenskij, who transformed so much of his own reality into aesthetic constructs, certainly would have sensed the wide range of potential symbolic interpretations.

Given Annenskij’s obsession with death and mortality, one significance is found in the nature of the wood itself: the cypress is traditionally the tree of death. Furthermore, a "chest" ("папеи") or "small box" ("шкатулка") can be a metaphor for a coffin (one translation of both Russian words in English is the word "casket"). For Annenskij, a coffin-like box symbolically provides a kind of protection from the outside world, sheltering the delicate sensibilities of the refined poet. By the same token, the chest is a

container in which valuable possessions can be protected and preserved. Indeed, according to the *Slovar' russkogo jazyka*, a "larec" is a "little box for the preservation of valuables, any kind of small objects, often with a finish, decorations; a small box."

Annenskij's cypress chest in reality contained poetic treasures, the "leaves" of his poems. Ostensibly they would have been divided into various sections or piles, depending on importance or current significance, etc. His collection structurally mirrors such an arrangement. It is neatly partitioned into symmetrical sections, each "compartment" (of his poetic box) containing his precious poems. The most intimate, treasured poems—the scattered leaves—are in effect structurally "concealed" in this arrangement. In other words, they are shielded by the "compartments" coming before and after them in the collection. The other sections thus become an elaborate frame within a frame. The programmatic prose-poem, "Thoughts-Needles" is to a large extent an abstraction, and introduces the most complex of the structures of the collection, the trefoils. The thirty-three trefoils "conceal" the hinged-icons, which, as the reader will recall, are less dominated by artifice, and hence more easily decoded. Coming after the most intimate "pages" of
Annenskij's poetic diary, the scattered leaves, are the three sections which are least "valuable" (i.e., those which least of all can be considered a personal or metapoetic statement). They are a kind of textual barrier, as mentioned, a protective layer of "leaves." Returning to the substance of the chest, consisting of cypress, a wood impervious to decay, Annenskij's "cypress chest" is a fitful repository for his poetry, for his art, in that it will preserve his poems, assuring them a kind of immortality.

Indeed, the collection, united under this semantically loaded title, becomes Annenskij's version of a "monument not made by human hands" ("некотворный памятник"). The words "cypress chest" might be inserted into a line from Puškin's famous poem "I raised a monument to myself not made by human hands": "my cypress chest" [instead of 'my dust'] will endure, and escape decay." This "monument," as has been demonstrated, is in virtually every respect a unified text, with a central theme. In this respect, The Cypress Chest can be considered a lyric cycle. An examination of this aspect of Annenskij's magnum opus comprises the final stage of the present study.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

1. The Cypress Chest as Lyric Cycle

Annenskij as poet senses a profound separation and isolation from the surrounding world, and through his poetry tries to solve this dilemma. This is on one level a philosophical stance, rooted in a decidedly modernist conviction that there exists a tragic rift between the self and all others. Annenskij's tragic stance is further founded on an acute awareness, even obsession with human mortality. Hence, his poetry resounds with a deep-seated pessimism. At the same time, however, the poet considers Art as a possible way to bridge this gap between self and other, or the "I" and "non-I," to stave off the horrors of death, and bask in Beauty— if even for a fleeting moment. In this regard, he affirms art. On yet another level this philosophical and aesthetic stance finds a basis in the poet's reality. Indeed, Annenskij's despair stems to a great

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degree from actual circumstances in his life. His obsession with death is clearly based on reality—he was afflicted with an ultimately fatal heart disease. As has also become clear in the discussion of other relevant biographical data conducted in this study, Annenskij’s sense of separation and isolation is also very real. Annenskij the man was tormented by an intense, repressed desire for a woman or women that he could not (or chose not) to fulfill. Involved in a number of relationships with various women, he denied their physical fulfillment. However, just as he finds in art a solution to his philosophical dilemma, so too did he see in poetry a way to attain an aesthetic transformation of his frustrated passion, achieving in the process a sublime spiritual merger of himself with the “other” (i.e. a woman). Thus, he again affirms art as the means to overcome the tragic rift between self and other. To reactivate Ivanov’s metaphor, the poet in the end escapes his “prison-cell” of the “I,” the world of disgusting “byt,”—through his art—into the outer world, the realm of beauty and the “non-I.”

As has been demonstrated, when we read CC as a single text, we understand more clearly Annenskij’s complex and elusive poetics, as well as his view of existence. Both levels of his basic
theme as discussed above are fully developed in the scope of the work as a whole. It is on one hand a metapoetical and philosophical statement of his approach to art, while on the other an autobiographical lyric confession. *CC* is indeed a tale of Annenskij's life—as poet and man. A clearly unified text, it can be considered a lyric cycle, fulfilling the criteria of this genre as defined in various studies.

The critic Neil Fraistat offers a definition of the "special qualities" of the genre of lyric cycle in English literature, coining the term "contexture," a word which can also be used to define Annenskij's "poetic collection":

> Perhaps no single word adequately conveys the special qualities of the poetic collection as an organized book: the contextuality provided for each poem by the larger frame within which it is placed, the intertextuality among poems so placed, and the resultant texture of resonance and meanings. I have recently proposed, however, that the word "contexture" be used for such a purpose because of its utility in suggesting all three of these qualities without being restricted to any one. A contexture might thus be seen as the "poem" that is the book itself. [Fraistat's emphasis].

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Following Fraistat's definition of a cycle, then, it is possible to view 
CC as a "contexture," or a "poem" that is the "book itself."
Contextuality is provided in Annenskij's work in the way in which 
the poems are arranged, placed as they are into both a sequence 
and a hierarchy of frames. For example, each of the three poems of 
a trefoil are placed in the context or "framework" of the trefoil. 
When read in sequence, as a micro-cycle, the three poems combine 
into a larger "single text," i.e. the "poem" that is the trefoil--as was 
shown in Chapters III and IV.

In terms of intertextuality, the many poems of CC are clearly 
interrelated. Of course, it can be said that any two poems by a given 
poet are in some way intertextually interrelated. However, as 
Fraistat suggests, in a poetic cycle this intertextuality is influenced 
by the arrangement of the poems within. David Sloan, in his 
seminal study of Blok's lyric cycles clarifies this aspect of the genre:

As separate texts all poems in a cycle are correlated intertextually. 
There may exist between them significant ties (e.g., a common 
motif, a reminiscence, a polemic), but to the degree that they are 
discrete compositions their interrelationship is no more privileged 
than that between any other texts. By selecting particular poems 
and enclosing them within a cycle, however, the poet changes the 
nature of their interrelationship. They can no longer be seen only 
as separate entities. They must also be perceived as members of a 
single text. Their interaction becomes contextual as well as 
intertextual. 2
Annenskij indeed selected "particular poems" and "enclosed them within a cycle." Hence, the poems of CC should not be considered as "separate entities," but must be "perceived as members of a single text." And in this manner, the intertextual, or more precisely, their intratextual relationship is affected. In other words, arrangement and sequence become essential factors in determining the relationship between the poems and structures contained within. An intratextual relationship (even between seemingly disparate poems) is created by placement—much as a unique relationship is created when, for example, two incongruous words are placed together in a single poem. This is illustrated in the arrangement of the first and second texts of CC, "Thoughts-Needles" and "From an Old Copybook."

As will be recalled, the titles of the prose-poem and trefoil, placed in sequence, can be combined. Read together, they signal that the work to be read is an equivalent of the poems-pages from Annenskij's book of life. And if we consider their placement in terms of the entire collection, there is another intratextual relationship—one that would not have existed without the context.

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in which they are placed. As an introductory text, the opening prose-poem functions as a preface to the work. And in fact, "Thoughts-Needles" is a metapoetic programmatic statement. Here the poet sets forth his notions of art and its organic, immortal nature. The second "text," the trefoil "From an Old Copybook," contains a chronologically developed narrative of an episode from the poet's life, a poetic reminiscence, signaling the other, more autobiographical and confessional nature of the work. Timenčik observes that the trefoil "From an Old Copybook" sets the tone of the collection as one of the road, or journey. However, it must also be considered intratextually with the opening prose poem, i.e., contextually. In other words, read sequentially, the two texts together set the tone for the work as both metapoetic statement and journey (life's tale). Sequence is a major factor at every level of the work. As has been amply demonstrated, it is essential in a reading of the individual trefoils; it is also important in the entire grouping of thirty-three.

The positioning of "From an Old Copybook" as opening trefoil is clear. Following this trefoil in the collection is "Sideshow Trefoil," in

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which the poet again focuses on an episode in his life, presenting what he perceives as the irony of existence. "Icy Trefoil," "Spring Trefoil," "Autumn Trefoil" and "Trefoil in the Park" are the next poems, and, in addition to the obvious seasonal sequence suggested by the titles of the first three, when considered intratextually and contextually combine to form a metapoetic response to Puškin's poem "Autumn" ("Осень").\textsuperscript{4} The next three trefoils are also linked into a series. "Twilight Trefoil," Stormy Trefoil" and "Trefoil of Anguish" are all meditations on the poet's sense of separation and isolation (both philosophical and actual), of the rift between the "I" and the "non-I" in the myriad forms it takes in Annenskij's collection. The tenth triad, "Fiery Trefoil," as discussed in Chapter III, is devoted to the inspirational moment. Next is "Moonlit Trefoil," in which the theme is frustrated passion. Further in the collection are "Trefoil of the Road" and "Trefoil of the Railroad Car," where the poet again chronicles brief episodes from his life, reflecting along the way on issues of art and inspiration as well as the problems of existence. As can be seen from a cursory review of just the first fourteen trefoils, there is some variation in terms of

\textsuperscript{4}This topic is beyond the scope of the present study, and is addressed in a forthcoming study by the author of this dissertation ("Annenskij in the Shadow of Puškin: 'nekuda plyt'").
theme, motif, setting, structure, and thematic emphasis. In addition, they are presented, apart from small series, in no immediately discernible sequence. Indeed, there is a studied lack of sequence, the poet opting instead for an impressionistic meandering through the various aspects of his life as poet and man. While it falls beyond the scope of the present study to examine in detail the entire sequence of thirty-three trefoils, several distinctive features of this section can be established.

These particular "pages" from Annenskij's "book of life" do not comprise a chronologically ordered narrative of the events of his life. The sequence and arrangement of the trefoils (and to a large extent the other sections) in this respect can be defined in terms of "fabula" and "sujet," i.e., the poet has structured his "life's story" not in any chronological order ("fabula"), but rather has rearranged the episodes and impressions in accordance with a specific aesthetic goal ("sujet"). In the case of the trefoils, the poet's goal is on one level to reveal his complex view of art and life. In its extreme artifice, it is on another level a way in which the poet can conceal his highly personal and intimate lyric confessions.
Sequence and structure are also factors on the level of the entire work. Indeed, the arrangement of the poems and sections of poems changes their interrelationship, as in Sloan's definition, requiring that we read them in the context of the work as a unified text. The prose-poem introduces the rest of the work as the "pages" ("leaves") of the poet's life. The first section of trefoils, as discussed, represents the most highly encoded statements on life and art. The second section, hinged-icons, while also combining the metapoetic and confessional, does so in a less complex manner, and is thus more easily decoded. Indeed, even the sequence of the nine texts is clearer, exhibiting a movement from the metapoetic to the confessional. The third section of "scattered leaves" is most revealing, containing as it does a number of individual lyrics that most clearly define his aesthetics, in addition to offering a poetic inventory of the many influences in his art. The final sections, as mentioned, serve to obscure the personal quality of the work, and ease the tension of the preceding poems. All is informed by the poet's basic theme, which is fully developed only when all the poems are considered in their specific arrangement together as a single "text"--as intended by Annenskij.
Fraistat observes further in his study that the lyric cycle rests on a fundamental assumption—"that the decisions poets make about the presentation of their works play a meaningful role in the poetic process and, hence, ought to figure in the reading process." As has been shown in the present study, Annenskij's decisions in terms of the arrangement of CC do play a "meaningful role," and indeed should "figure in the reading process." At the same time, however, it might be argued that in assuming authorial intent in the arrangement of his collection (as is done here), one enters the realm of intentional fallacy. Sloan addresses this issue:

... one should not overlook that critical judgements about any work assume some level of intentionality. It would be an idle exercise to analyze Crime and Punishment, for instance, if we could not assume that the author intended the chapters contained therein to be a part of the same novel. Here I am saying only that when a poet creates a cycle he intends the poems he includes to comprise a specific grouping, he outlines a context within which the poems are to be read. Once created, of course, the cycle may be interpreted in different ways, and the reader is at liberty to infer meanings which the author did not necessarily intend.

In a similar spirit, I submit another response: the poet, in arranging his poems in a certain order or sequence is simply doing on a larger level what he does within a single poem. The sequence

5Ibid.  
6Ibid.
of lines in a given poem, or of the words in a single line is not questioned. Further, each line or word is almost automatically considered contextually and intertextually within the given text. In essence, the poet, in arranging his poems in a collection, and moreover in a specific sequence, is merely composing on a larger scale—creating a larger, "single text" or "poem."  

In connection with the notion of a "single text," Sloan faults those definitions of lyric cycles that "exclude from consideration groupings in which internal unity is apparently absent; ... preclud[ing] the possibility that the internal unity has simply not yet been discovered." In the course of this dissertation, the "internal unity" of CC has been revealed: the entire work is a balancing act in which the poet engages in what can be termed the poetics of confessional reticence, i.e., where he conceals and at the same time reveals his specific approach to art and life. Indeed, Annenskij's CC offers a good example of a lyric cycle by any definition. Yet, it is never mentioned in general discussions of the lyric cycle in Russian literature. This is due to several factors.

And, as Sloan points out, this does not preclude other interpretations, just as arranging words or lines within a poem does not restrict the reader to one response. (Ibid.)


Fomenko mentions that he based his study on 82 lyric cycles, but does not
Firstly, his poems, taken as they often are out of their intended context, in general remain complex and enigmatic, texts not easily decoded. As a consequence, they are frequently difficult to interpret and/or classify. Secondly, as mentioned above, some portions of the collection, for example many of his trefoils, did appear as "contrived" or "pretentious" (as Brjusov termed them) in the 1910 edition due to their incorrect arrangement. On the basis of the 1987 edition of CC, however, in which the composition of the collection appears as the author had originally planned, the work no longer appears as an unnatural grouping of unrelated poems. It is instead a unified body of texts, a lyric cycle, which, as it unfolds in all its complexity of form and content, fully reveals Annenskij’s aesthetics.

In order to fully comprehend Annenskij’s poetic universe, a complete, contextual and intratextual reading of his major work is essential. Just as an individual poem removed from its context in, for example, a trefoil is only a partial representation of a given theme or motif, when any poem or grouping of poems is removed

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from the context of the entire collection, it does not reveal a complete understanding of the poet's aesthetics—and the poems thus analyzed are also "incomplete," as it were. As Fraistat observes,

Because reading is a process of patterning, to read an individual poem in isolation or outside its original volume is not only to lose the large retroactive sweep of the book as a whole—with its attendant dynamics and significance,—but also to risk losing the meanings within the poem itself that are foregrounded or activated by the context of the book.10

Xodasevič characterized Annenskij as a poet obsessed only with death. His poems on mortality, however, when read in the context intended, in the framework of CC, are tempered by the poet's increasing belief in the immortality of his verse. This aspect of his theme is found in a large number of the poems, as well as in the notion of his collection as a poetic legacy. Indeed, to read his cycle without "Thoughts-Needles," to cite another example, is analogous to reading a novel without having read the preface. Although there will be an impression, it will lack in information vital to an understanding of the work and by extension the poet's aesthetics. And by the same token, the prose-poem will lose much of meaning imparted to it by the collection.

That Annenskij's work is a lyric cycle, then, is beyond doubt. And read as such, we gain a comprehensive understanding of his aesthetics. His choice of genre is also significant—it is a form that allows the poet to most effectively tell his "story," to convey the many complexities and paradoxicalities he perceived in life and art. Rosenthal and Gall, discussing the genre in English literature, describe the lyric cycle (what they term the "modern sequence") as the decisive form toward which all the developments of modern poetry have tended. It is the genre which best encompasses the shift in sensibility exemplified by starting a long poetic work "I celebrate myself, and sing myself," rather than "Sing, Goddess, the wrath of Achilles." The modern sequence goes many-sidedly into who and where we are subjectively; it springs from the same pressures on sensibility that have caused our poet's experiments with shorter forms. It, too, is a response to the lyrical possibilities of language opened up by those pressures in times of cultural and psychological crisis, when all past certainties have many times been thrown chaotically into question. More successfully than individual short lyrics, however, it fulfills the needs for encompassing disparate and often powerfully opposed tonalities and energies.¹¹

*CC* exemplifies many of these notions; it is Annenskij's "song of self." As a unified text it "goes many-sidedly into who and where" Annenskij is "subjectively." Furthermore, it is an appropriate form for an exposition of the poet's complex aesthetic, fulfilling the

“needs for encompassing disparate and often powerfully opposed tonalities and energies.” In this regard, Annenskij, then, in composing a lyric cycle, was conforming to modern aesthetic trends in literature—not only in Western, but Russian literature as well. Indeed, Russian poetry—which at the time was undergoing profound transformations—was also moving toward the modern version of the lyric cycle, specifically in the era of Russian symbolism.

The first steps in the modern cyclic tradition in Russian literature, according to the Russian critic I. V. Fomenko, can be attributed to Puškin and Baratynskij.12 Developed throughout the nineteenth century, in the poetry of fin de siècle Russia and the Silver Age, there was already an obvious penchant for the cyclization of verse in the poetry of the symbolists. Fomenko further observes:13

Между тем введенное в литературный обиход в начале XX в. данное понятие [цикла--Т.Р.А.] обладало реальным терминологическим содержанием: обозначало жанровое образование, окончательно сформировавшееся к этому времени.

Meanwhile, the given concept [of the lyric cycle] introduced into literary practice at the beginning of the Twentieth Century took on a practical terminological content: it signified a genre formation that had completely taken shape by that time.

Sloan also observes this trend in symbolist poetry:14

In the Symbolist era, the lyric cycle becomes something of an obsession. Beginning with Konstantin Bal'mont's collection V bezbrežnosti and Valerij Brjusov's Chefs d'oeuvre, both of which appeared in 1895, nearly every major volume of lyric poetry is composed of cyclic groupings from cover to cover, and the rubric "Miscellaneous Poems" all but disappears. Continuous cyclization, which had been the exception to the rule, now becomes common practice and leads(...) to a more consistent exploitation of the cycle for esthetic aims.

Profoundly knowledgeable of the broad spectrum of Russian poetry at that time, Annenskij certainly would have drawn on the works of his contemporaries in his decision to compose his own collection.15 For example, his derivation of a complex, intertextual title for his collection of poetry is a conscious device employed by most of the symbolist poets (Brjusov, Bal'mont, Blok, etc.). CC could even be described according to poetic theory of the day. For example, in an introduction to his collection Urbi et Orbi, dated in the summer of 1903, the symbolist Brjusov remarks on the importance of

15There are a number of possible Western influences as well (a topic worthy of further critical attention), but this remains outside the scope of the present study.
composing a book of poems as a kind of integrated sequence or cycle of verse:

A book of poems should be not a coincidental collection of heterogeneous poems, but precisely a book, an enclosed whole, unified by one thought. As in a novel or treatise, a book of poems reveals its content consecutively from the first page to the last. A poem, extracted from a common connection, loses just as much as an individual page taken from a coherent discourse. The sections in a book of poems are nothing more than chapters, explaining one another, which cannot be arbitrarily re-arranged.

As can be seen, Annenskij, responding to both internal and external forces and circumstances, found in the developing lyric cycle an appropriate genre for his own aesthetics. Furthermore, as has been shown in this study, he created his own original and complex

version of the cycle, devising and arranging in sequence a number of multifaceted and intricate poetic structures in order to examine all the complexities that he perceived in life and art.

Annenskij's "poem" that is CC is a highly complex and modern work, focusing as it does on the dilemma of the self, and the role of art in addressing this dilemma. The collection also reflects trends specific to Russian literature of the time, representing the prosaization of poetry (which the acmeists would continue), as opposed to the earlier trends in symbolism, where, in response to the dominant realist prose, the poeticization of prose was emphasized. In this respect, it can be considered not only Annenskij's most important work, but one of the most significant works of early Twentieth-Century Russian poetry. As such, another area of importance suggests itself: the impact of this collection on future Russian poetry, and its place in the continuum of its development. Indeed, this is an area in Annenskij scholarship that warrants further critical attention. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to delve into this issue in detail, some general comments on Annenskij's impact on future Russian poetry are deemed germane here, and are intended to raise questions for further study.
The Impact of *The Cypress Chest* as Lyric Cycle

Anneneskij's impact on and relationship with various poets and poetic movements have been well-documented. However, the study of his influence is for the most part considered on the level of stylistics, imagery, motif, intertext and in some cases thematics. While the details of his poetry have been put under scrutiny, never has his major collection as a whole, or, as can be stated with assuredness at this juncture, as a *lyric cycle* been considered in terms of poetic influence. That Annenskij's admirers themselves, however, considered his work (albeit the 1910 version) as a whole, can be seen in their comments about CC. Gumilev, for example, proclaimed the collection as the "new catechism" of Russian poetry. Two of the most important poets of Russian literature, Blok and Axmatova, as the reader will recall, both admitted having discovered something about themselves and their own poetry after

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a reading of Annenskij's collection.

Evidence is lacking that Blok was influenced in his poetry by Annenskij. Indeed, given his stature in the Russian poetry of that time, as well as the fact that he was Annenskij's contemporary (despite their difference in age), Blok more likely influenced Annenskij. In any event, Sloan's discussion of Blok's lyric cycles, a landmark work in both the study of the poet and the genre of lyric cycles, ought to be expanded to include the works of Innokentij Annenskij. (The first steps of such a study have been attempted here.) The case of Axmatova and her indebtedness to Annenskij is an area that has been addressed, but which should be expanded to include her reception of CC.

Axmatova was a self-proclaimed student of Annenskij's poetry. There are a number of contemporary studies that examine Axmatova's poetic relationship with her "mentor." For example, Sonja Ketchian discusses the poet's indebtedness--through Annenskij--to Puškin. Ketchian also states that Axmatova "gives poetic acclaim to Ejxenbaum's early discovery dealing with her syntax and intonation." 18 Both Ketchian's and Ejxenbaum's studies

focus on issues of stylistics and poetic craft. What is of interest to us here is another feature of the two poets’ relationship, i.e., the manner in which Annenskij’s cycle of poems as a whole might have influenced Axmatova. I contend that, in addition to the important issues of stylistics and craft or motif and intertext, the cycle as a “book of life” influenced Axmatova, especially in her earlier verse, where the poems are miniature novellas which taken together tell the story of frustrated love. Indeed, as in Annenskij’s verse, aesthetic constructs are everywhere used to ponder the dilemmas of the poet’s personal life. Anna Lisa Crone in her illuminating study of the two poets indirectly suggests this aspect of Axmatova’s connection to Annenskij.

Crone notes the presence of Annenskij’s influence in Axmatova’s early verse (Evening—Вечер and Rosary—Четки), noting among other things a multitude of “intertextual allusions,” and the “understatement that was a hallmark of Annenskij’s diction.”19 In her analysis of Annenskian subtexts in Axmatova’s poems, she also observes that critics will be “perhaps surprised” to

find that Annenskij's treatment of the theme of frustrated love is
decisive for what is traditionally viewed as Axmatova's "feminine"
one.20 On the basis of the present study, where the theme of
frustrated love is shown to be a major thread in Annenskij's
thematic bundle, this comes as no surprise. In a manner clearly
reminiscent of Annenskij's poetry, most notably CC, Axmatova's
early collections are made up of series of poems that resemble
impressionistic short-stories, episodes from her own experience.
Further, Axmatov's life story is in many ways similar to Annenskij's
own, i.e., both poets suffered from frustrated love.21 Taken
together, they begin to form a more complete picture of her views
of life and art. Briefly, then, Axmatova exhibits a similar approach
to cyclization in her early collections, and was conceivably
influenced in her tendency towards cyclization by CC (from which
she had gained a better understanding of poetry, as mentioned in
Chapter I).22 Indeed, the modern version of the lyric cycle as

20Ibid.
21Żirzmunskij observes the narrational quality in Axmatova's verse,
emphasizing its impressionistic features. (Żirzmunskij, V. "Tvorčestvo Anny
Axmatovoj" Anna Axmatova, Tri Knigi. Ann Arbor; Ardis. 381.)
22Axmatova recognized Annenskij's profound influence on later Russian
poetry; see, for example, her later statements to that effect in her reminiscences.
(“Innokentij Annenskij.” Axmatova, Anna. Sočinenija v dvux tomax. Moscow:
Xudožestvennaja literatura, 1986. 202-203.)
realized by Annenskij presented the young Axmatova a method in which to embrace all the complex elements of her experience as woman and poet. In her later years she also looks to her mentor; indeed, a direct example of Annenskij's influence in terms of cyclization can be found in Axmatova's "Moscow Trefoil" ("Трилистник московский"), where the device is obviously derived from Annenskij's own tripartite structures.

The theme of her trefoil (written in 1961-1963) is developed in the Annenskian manner, as might be expected: in the sequential arrangement of three poems intended to be read as a single text. Its theme of intense longing and forced separation also calls to mind Annenskij's poetry, as does the presence of a definite narrative. The poet describes a situation where two lovers must forever remain apart, even though they still live in the same city (recalling Annenskij's "Two Sails of One Boat"). The last line of "One More Toast" ("Еще тост"), the third poem in Axmatova's trefoil, "toasts" the efforts of the two to continue to remain apart, closing the text on a decidedly Annenskian note:

За то, что нам видеть друг друга нельзя.

Let us drink to the fact that we can never see one another
That the acmeist poet was aware of the significance of the poetic collection as a unified text—and specifically Annenskij's collection—is suggested by the fact that, after reading CC, she began to refer to "poetry and collections of poetry as boxes or chests."²³ It is reasonable to assume that Axmatova sensed the multivalency of the symbol as conceived by Annenskij. Indeed, in her "Poem without a Hero" ("Поема без героя") she uses the box motif to explain the complexity her art: "The box has a triple bottom." ("У шкатулки ж тройное дно").²⁴ And while this work is of a completely different genre, it is also similar in terms of one of its dominant features, i.e., as an intimate poetic reminiscence, a kind of lyric diary.

Mentioned here are only a few of the possible areas of impact that Annenskij's collection may have had on Axmatova's work. Undoubtedly there are many more. Indeed, the study of the influence of Annenskij's realization of the lyric cycle both on Axmatova and other poets is an area that warrants further study.

²³Crone, Op. Cit. 82.
Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, in this dissertation I have attempted to present a new perspective on the poetry of Innokentij Annenskij—necessary in Annenskij scholarship for several reasons. Firstly, new evidence has come to light that reveals many aspects of this poet's approach to life and art that were until recently shrouded in obscurity, or simply unknown. A major aspect of this part of the study hinged on an examination of primary sources, which revealed the highly personal and confessional nature of the poet's oeuvre. These same sources also made it possible to establish the validity of the 1987 version of *The Cypress Chest*. The textual analyses based on the specific structures and poems contained in this version revealed that his magnum opus is in effect a lyric cycle, meant to be read as a single, unified text, or to use Fraistat's term, as a "poem" that is the book. And as has been demonstrated, this "poem" is the tale of Annenskij as poet and man. Several issues regarding Annenskij's place in the continuum of Russian literature can also be resolved, and serve as the closing remarks here.
Annenskij in the end can indeed be considered a "borderline" poet—not in an evaluative sense, i.e., as a marginal figure—but rather in a more literal sense: as a transitional figure who provides a necessary continuity in literary development. As such, he spoke in many of the voices of the poetic heteroglossia that marked the era. In some respects he can be considered a voice from the past. His often morbid fascination with the tragedy of self reveals him as a decadent. He is also a symbolist, most notably in his focus on the role of poetry in achieving an aesthetic moment of sublime, even spiritual merger of self with other, an escape from a dull and drab existence to a world of beauty. However, this is not a "higher" reality in the traditional symbolist sense, but is instead the world of beauty that surrounds us, but which almost always seems inaccessible because of the tragedy of a futile everyday existence ending pointlessly in death. An aesthetic merger was also a way for the poet to sublimate a very real desire for a physical union; in this light, Annenskij becomes eminently more human, as does his poetry. His poetic voice also hailed in the future, and was heeded by the "green sprouts" of the acmeists, who valued him for his clarity and focus on the concrete stuff of life, and for his ultimately
human approach (Axmatova being the most attentive in this regard). Furthermore, by composing a lyric cycle as a story of self, portrayed in a series of metapoetic statements and lyric confessions, Annenskij displayed a modern approach to art, and in this regard too his affinity to future poets, specifically Axmatova and the acmeists, is suggested. Indeed, these young poets, so at odds with the aesthetics of symbolism, could find in the poet an intermediary, and by claiming him as their teacher, by “listening” to his “voice,” they could retain those elements of the outmoded poetic movement that they perceived as worthy of the new art.

Finally, Annenskij himself perceived his borderline status, in both senses mentioned above. He was tragically aware of his separateness from the mainstream of literature. At the same time, he also perceived his vital role as transitional figure. Conveyed metaphorically in the opening prose-poem in CC, it is also revealed in a small verse written on a copy of Quiet Songs given to the then young acmeist Gumilev:
In this short dedication, an important aspect of Annenskij's aesthetics is foregrounded. Despite his numerous classifications as a profound pessimist, a poet of death and despair, there are also glimpses in his poetry of a glowing affirmation of the immortality of art—and hence of the poet. In the end, knowing that through his art he would live on in future poets, Annenskij could indeed allow himself to look "with delight at the dawn."
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