Lyrics of Home and Nation: The Poetic Geographies of Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko

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To my dad,
whose memory and undying faith in me
sustained me through the process.

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Introduction

Anna Akhmatova (Gorenko) (1889-1966) and Lina Kostenko (b. 1930) stand among the pre-eminent modern Russian and Ukrainian poets, respectively. Their verses have inspired, motivated, and entertained vast audiences at home and abroad. They have risen to great popularity, and have become voices for their own people, taking upon themselves the role of poet-prophet. These two women used their poetic voices to stand up against the various injustices of their respective societies, and they won the hearts of thousands of their countrymen. They are among the most popular, widely known, and studied poets of their respective countries.

The unique combination of similarities and differences between these two poets makes them fascinating candidates for an in-depth comparison. Akhmatova and Kostenko lived in different times and places, experiencing distinct cultural phenomena and social pressures; they grew up in different regions and countries; they wrote their poetry in different languages. Yet while they are separated by a generation, geography, and geo-political issues, they are united by several key factors that make the present study relevant. Both rose to prominence and popularity as the quintessential female poet of her respective time and country. Both were active in their social communities, writing about the issues of the day. They both experienced the oppressions of the Soviet Union, both of them being forced into periods of literary silence at the hands of the state. Both have been termed “internal exiles,” or people who did not support the government, but who nevertheless chose to remain loyal to their homeland and stay with their people. Finally, both of these poets have connections to both Ukraine and Russia, yet they ultimately choose to align themselves with one or the other nation.

The poets’ personal connections to both Ukraine and Russia present a vital foundation to this dissertation. Anna Akhmatova was born in Odesa, Ukraine to a Ukrainian father and Russian

mother. When she was an infant, the family moved to Russia, where she spent her childhood in Tsarskoe Selo. She was educated in both St. Petersburg and Kyiv, but she never embraced a Ukrainian national identity: she aligned herself with the Russian Empire and chose to write her poetry in Russian. Lina Kostenko was born just outside of Kyiv, Ukraine to Ukrainian parents. She was educated in Moscow, yet, while fluent in Russian, chose to embrace the Ukrainian language and culture. Commenting on the results of these poets' cultural and identity decisions, Michael Naydan writes, "Kostenko becomes for Ukrainian literature exactly what Akhmatova…would have become had the latter written in Ukrainian" (Naydan, "Echoes," 7). These two poets, as a result of their personal choices and familial and cultural influences, selected their own national identities, with Akhmatova aligning herself with the Russian Empire and Kostenko adhering to Ukraine.[1] As a result, they became, respectively, the famous Russian and Ukrainian poets that they are today.

Once the poets had chosen their national identities, they took upon themselves the role of spokeswomen for their people. In Akhmatova's famous cycle *Rekviem,* she describes her taking upon herself the mantle of poet-prophet and role of mouthpiece for her people.

> В страшные годы ежовщины я провела семнадцать месяцев в тюремных очередях в Ленинграде. Как-то раз кто-то 'опознал' меня. Тогда стоящая за мной женщина с голубыми губами, которая, конечно, никогда не слыхала моего имени, очнулась от свойственного нам всем оцепенения и спросила меня на ухо (там все говорили шепотом):
>
> - А это вы можете описать?

[1] Another Ukrainian connection shared by Akhmatova (Gorenko) and Kostenko is the -enko root in their surnames. This -enko suffix is the most prevalent marker (aka "onomastic formant") of a Ukrainian surname (Slavutych, 181). This suffix traces its roots to the Cossack days, as the majority of Cossack surnames bore the -enko suffix (Bilousenko).

И я сказала:

- Могу.

Тогда что-то вроде улыбки скользнуло по тому, что некогда было ее лицом (Akhmatova, 188).[2]

In the midst of the terrible suffering under Stalin's Terror, Akhmatova realized that hope could come to both her and her countrymen through her poetry. She assumed this role of poet-witness to record what she experienced and observed, in order to preserve memory for future generations and to speak out against evil. Her verses became a beacon and a lifeline to those suffering with her.

Much as in the way Akhmatova in her cycle *Rekviem* voices her commitment to being a voice for her people, Kostenko likewise declares her poetic duty to speak for her people.

Яка різниця—хто куди пішов?

Хто що сказав, і рима вже готова.

Поезія—це свято, як любов.

О, то не є розмовка побутова!

І то не є дзвінкий асортимент

метафор, слів,—на користь чи в догоду.

А що, не знаю. Я лиш інструмент,

[2] "In the terrible years of the Yezhov terror, I spent seventeen months in the prison lines of Leningrad. Once, someone 'recognized' me. Then a woman with bluish lips standing behind me, who, of course, had never heard me called by name before, woke up from the stupor to which everyone had succumbed and whispered in my ear (everyone spoke in whispers there):

'Can you describe this?'

And I answered: 'Yes, I can.'

Then something that looked like a smile passed over what had once been her face" (Hemschemeyer, 384).

в якому плачуть сни мого народу (*Nepovtornist'*, 116).[3]

Poetry is the powerful, indescribably tool by which Kostenko gives voice to the dreams of her people. She is not merely writing empty words for herself or stringing together intricate sounds for pleasure: she bears the mantle of a poet-prophet and she must give voice to the sorrows and hopes of her Ukrainian people. Both Akhmatova and Kostenko accepted the role of poet-prophet, and their people responded by entrusting their stories and perspectives to be told by the poets.

Despite the similarities—and intriguing differences—that these two women possess, very little research has been done comparing the two. Michael Naydan compares Kostenko and Akhmatova in his paper "Echoes of Other Poets in the Poetry of Lina Kostenko." He observes that, although Kostenko expresses a personal dislike for Akhmatova's poetry, it is undeniable that "Kostenko owes much to Akhmatova" (Naydan, "Echoes," 7). Unlike Akhmatova's Russian counterparts who consciously imitated her, Kostenko develops her own unique style that is nonetheless similar to Akhmatova in many ways. While there are not "significant or intentional direct borrowings" on Kostenko's part, there are elements of Akhmatova that appear in Kostenko's works, including "a distinctly feminine elegiac lyrical persona, a poetic voice grounded in clarity and a contemporary idiom, and an almost symbiotic bond of shared intimacy and immediacy that she imparts on her reader" (Naydan, "Echoes," 7). Their poetry also shares "'siuzhetnist'" (or the tendency to rely on plot in lyric poetry); the lyrical "I"; and brief detail intended to convey a past emotional moment (Naydan, "Echoes," 3-4). Thus, in their lyrical styles as well as their personal lives, the poets display significant similarities.

The other major work discussing Akhmatova and Kostenko in tandem is a 2014

[3] "What difference—who wrote where? Who said what, and the rhyme is ready. Poetry is a holiday, like love. Oh, it is not a household conversation! And it is not a tinkling assortment of metaphors and words—for favor or pleasure. But what it is, I don't know. I am only an instrument in which the dreams of my people cry."

dissertation by Iryna Tsobrova of the University of Alberta entitled “Women Poets and National History: Reading Margaret Atwood, Anna Akhmatova, and Lina Kostenko.” Her study explores the poets’ role as conveyers of historical memory, concluding that both Akhmatova and Kostenko write from a feminine perspective that is grounded in their own political and national ideology in order to perpetuate the true history of their people.

My dissertation will continue the exploration of this emerging discussion comparing the poetry of Akhmatova and Kostenko. One heretofore unexplored aspect of Akhmatova-Kostenko comparative poetry lies in the geographical references in their lyric works.

Geography of the poets

Across their collected works, Akhmatova and Kostenko frequently refer to specific geographic locations. They write about places they have lived in, traveled to, or merely dreamed about. They offer cultural insights on famous landmarks; they connect cities with the writers and artists who once lived there; they create landscapes of natural landmarks. In short, these poets have become geographers. Naturally, the poets are biased geographers, lending extra weight to those regions of the world about which they have the strongest feelings, and skewing every location through the lens of their own personal perceptions. Yet it is these very biases—these technical inaccuracies and descriptions lacking objectivity—that make the study of literary geography vibrant and important. Speaking of nature poetry, Michael Wachtel makes a similar observation about the necessary inaccuracies poets display:

> The term ‘nature poetry’ itself connotes two distinct yet related realms: the human subject and the natural object, the observer and the observed. Like landscape painters, nature poets do not simply reproduce what they see, but filter it through their own consciousness. The prominence of the observer varies considerably from painting to

> painting and from poem to poem. It may be foregrounded or reduced, but never obliterated. Even the photograph, that most mimetic of art forms, cannot offer an unmediated view of nature, if only because a photographer necessarily selects one piece out of reality at the expense of others. Of course, poets and painters rarely aspire to the degree of verisimilitude of a photographer. Nor do we expect them to render a scene 'precisely as it is'. It would be absurd to study the landscapes of Vincent Van Gogh or Caspar David Freidrich as a means of understanding the topology and climate of southern France or northern Germany. On the contrary: these works fascinate as much through their creators' strength of personality as through the scenes they depict. In a similar way, nature poetry tends to refract rather than reflect the landscape. These poems are often less pictorial than contemplative and associative (Wachtel, 110).

These same principles apply to geographic poetry—the poet describes geography not as it really is, but as she interprets it and as she wants the reader to view it. These interpretations are often more interesting than a more dry, objective study. They reveal a vibrant world beyond the simple delineation of national borders and landmark names.

This dissertation will study the complete lyric works of Akhmatova and Kostenko through the lens of geography. It will analyze and compile a "poetic geography" for each poet, elucidating and describing the various locations each poet discusses. It will analyze the seven hundred geographic references that span the collected works of the two poets, discussing locations from Vladivostok to Los Angeles; from Kyiv to Moscow.[4] Such a comprehensive analysis of the two poets' poetic geographies has not previously been undertaken. Much has been written on Akhmatova's Leningrad, and those who are familiar with Kostenko know that she is

[4] See the digital mapping project that accompanies the written dissertation for more details on each of the geographic data points.

grounded in her beloved Ukraine, but these analyses have not extended beyond homeland to reach the full geographic span of the two poets' collected works. Looking at the geographic references of their poetry in a contextualized whole will allow us to elucidate the worldviews and national identities of the poets, and it will shed light on the importance that place played in their works. It will also reveal the common historiographies of their time and place, providing a rough model for understanding the context in which they and their fellow poets were writing.

While I will be using geographical data from the poets' corpora to reach conclusions about their worldviews and national identity, it is important to note that not everything the poets write can be considered biographical. Akhmatova herself spoke on this matter, observing "Lyric verse is the best armor, the best cover. You don't give yourself away" (qtd in Reeder, 17). She did not want people interpreting her verses as autobiographical. This makes sense on one hand, as Akhmatova writes about various love experiences that may or may not actually be hers. In regards to her geographical tendencies, however, I argue that the careful reader can extrapolate Akhmatova's underlying geographic and national leanings from her collected works: her repeated discussions of the geography of Petersburg, Tsarskoe Selo, and other Russian locales, for example, reveal the importance of these places to her. The same holds true for Kostenko: while we cannot assume that each lyric is from her own perspective or voice, the analysis of the collected works reveals themes and underlying trends that point to the poets' true perspectives.

Women in Poetry

Although the two poets at the focus of this exploration are women, issues of feminism and women's studies are beyond the scope of this dissertation. The choice of two women poets puts the comparison on an equal footing, as it allows me to remove the underlying noise that could occur in a study comparing a woman with a man without delving deeply into the social and

cultural differences between male and female literature and reception. It is nonetheless necessary to mention, however, that the issue of gender is not unimportant for Akhmatova and Kostenko. Certainly, the gender of these poets affected the way that they were perceived, the opportunities they were given, and the way that they viewed the world around them. It influenced their relationships, their choices of poetic topics, and perhaps even their genre itself.

In their book *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar comment on some of the issues facing women poets. They write, "It is not surprising to find that when poetry by women has been praised it has usually been praised for being 'feminine' or, conversely, blamed for being deficient in 'femininity'" (Gilbert and Gubar, 543). Female poets have struggled to be studied and recognized as simply *poets*, without a gendered label. Both Akhmatova and Kostenko write world-class poetry that ought not to be limited in its interpretation or acceptance as "feminine" or "deficient in femininity." Thus, while I am aware of the social, generic, and cultural pressures and influences that make the poetry of women unique, this dissertation will focus on these poets as poets first and foremost, with only occasional gendered discussions.

Genre choice

Not all poems in Akhmatova's and Kostenko's *oeuvres* belong to the same genre. Michael Wachtel explains one major genre distinction in Russian poetry:

> Russians distinguish between "стихотворение" and "поэма," both of which are often rendered in English as "poem." The former is a relatively short, usually lyric poem with a minimum of plot, while the latter is a lengthier work—often tens or even hundreds of pages long—with strong narration tendencies (Wachtel, 62).

The present work looks primarily at the "стихотворение" (shorter, lyrical poems) of Akhmatova

and Kostenko. Both poets have written works of other genres, and the choice to here focus on solely the lyric verses does not imply that there are not valuable geographic insights in the poets' longer works. To the contrary, *Poem without a Hero* by Akhmatova and *Berestechko* and *Marusia Churai* by Kostenko (a *poema* and novels in verse respectively) are heavily grounded in place and geography and provide interesting insights into national identity and worldview. They are, however, beyond the scope of this present project. By excluding the *poemas* and novels in verse of these poets, I am able to grant the poets a measure of genre-equality and compare the generically more similar lyrics of the two. A few brief mentions will be made to Akhmatova's cycle *Rekviem*, as it is written in the lyrical style.[5] I will also briefly discuss *Marusia Churai* and its historical relevance. With these exceptions, however, my selections of poetry focus on the lyric verses of these poets.[6]

Quotations and translations

Translation of poetry is a difficult issue. Unquestionably, no foreign-language translation can ever do justice to a poem in its original language, for some element of form or meaning—and frequently both—will be lost in the process of finding roughly equivalent words in the foreign languages. Plain-text translations convey the overall meaning or narrative arc of a poem, but they do not capture the unique rhyme, rhythm, and word play of the original. As a result, such plain-text translations are usually flat, not fulfilling the readers' need for rhythm, and this

[5] Requiem itself presents a fascinating poetic geography in and of itself. Although the main action of the poem is taking place outside the prison cross in Leningrad, Basker observes that, in the cycle, "Locations shift, abruptly and disconcertingly, from Leningrad to Moscow and back again, from the Neva to the Don to the Enisei, but in a sense this is immaterial…All places coalesce undifferentiatedly into one, the only significant topography a 'blind red wall' which might itself be either Kremlin or prison" (quoted in Bailey, 334-335). Akhmatova extends her geographic references to embrace all of Russia, since the cruelties that are being committed against her homeland are not isolated to Leningrad.

[6] Diuzheva comments on the difficulty of always assigning a genre to a specific poem. "Переважна більшість творів Ліни Костенко не має чітких жанрових ознак, тому відносимо їх до загальної категорії під назвою «ліричний вірш»" (Diuzheva, 1). ["The vast majority of Lina Kostenko's works do not have clear genre traits, so they are classified into the general category called 'lyric poem.'"]

frequently renders the poem somewhat incomprehensible in the foreign language, as the reader does not grasp the mood and tenor in which the poem was intended to be read. On the other end of the spectrum, translations that seek to retain the original meter and rhythm of the poem run into a different set of problems, with translators forced to either create a rhyme by changing meaning, or be untrue to the original poem's form. Nevertheless, translations are important in order to broaden the range of a poet's influence and to help scholars make their findings accessible to others. To aid in comprehension, my dissertation will provide quotations in the original language, but will provide English translations in the footnotes.

In my study, I have used the Hemschemeyer translations of Akhmatova's works. Hemschemeyer understands the limits of translation and seeks to find a middle ground where the intricacies of form are somewhat preserved without sacrificing the original meaning of the poem (Hemschemeyer, 14-15).

Few translations of Kostenko's poetry exist in the English language. Michael Naydan has translated selected works into English.[7] Since not all of the Kostenko poems quoted here have published English translations, I have chosen to provide my own plain-text translations to maintain consistency throughout the dissertation.[8]

Quotes from secondary sources are shown in their original languages in the body of the text. My own English translations from Ukrainian and Russian sources are in the footnotes.

Textological Issues

Akhmatova and Kostenko each present their own set of textological issues. While many collected works exist for Akhmatova, it is difficult to find one that contains the entire extent of

[7] See his volumes *Selected Poetry: Wanderings of the Heart* (1990) and *Landscapes of Memory: The Selected Later Poetry of Lina Kostenko* (2001).

[8] A special thanks to Dr. Michael Naydan for his feedback and help with my translations from the Ukrainian.

her poetry: most collections omit at least a few poems.[9] I have selected for my dissertation the 1990 «Художественная литература» collection of Akhmatova's works. This version consists of two volumes: volume one is her poetry, while volume two contains her prose work, autobiographical material, and translations. While this poetry collection lacks a small number of verses (particularly from Akhmatova's early years), it is one of the most comprehensive Russian collections of Akhmatova's verses. Unless otherwise noted, Russian quotations from Akhmatova's poetry come from this 1990 «Художественная литература» collection. I supplement this volume with the Inter-Language Literary Associates collection from 1967-8, as well as Judith Hemschemeyer's comprehensive 1997 English translations.[10]

There is no complete collection of Kostenko's poetry. Rather, her poems are to be found only in the journals or individual volumes of poetry in which they were published. This dissertation seeks to utilize the complete lyrical poetry of Kostenko from her individually published collections. These collections are, *Prominnia zemli*: *Virshi* (1957), *Vitryla* (1958), *Mandrivky sertsia* (1961), *Nad berehamy vichnoi riky* (1977), *Nepovtornist'* (1980), *Sad netanuchykh skulptur* (1987), *Vybrane* (1989), *Madonna perekhrest'* (2011), *Trysta Poezij: Vybrane* (2012), and *Richka Heraklita* (2016).

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[9] Even Judith Hemschemeyer, who compiled what is considered the comprehensive English translation of Akhmatova's works appealed to multiple Russian originals in order to create a volume with all of Akhmatova's (known) poetry.

[10] It is also important to note that, with Akhmatova, it is sometimes difficult to know which version of a poem should be considered the most authoritative. Akhmatova herself would reword poems, and people who memorized them would frequently remember and recreate them with slight variations. Akhmatova's collection was thus continually morphing and changing, and different published versions display slightly different word choice, or even have entire stanzas missing. Michael Basker comments on this ambiguity of versions:

> The very existence of the differing published versions is nevertheless curiously in keeping with the ambivalence attendant upon so much else in the poem; while the lingering textological uncertainty is a telling reflection upon the fearful historical circumstances of what Akhmatova termed the 'pre-Gutenberg era' (Basker, 253-254).

It is difficult to ascertain which version of a poem should be considered the "final" or "authoritative" one. While it is outside the scope of this dissertation to determine which texts are the most "correct," I acknowledge the issue of different versions and recognize the danger of assuming one particular version is the final one.

Another issue in Kostenko's works is that most of her poems have been published without listing the date in which the poem was written. Kostenko herself has said that it would be an impossible task even for her to determine when she wrote each poem (Bellezza, 32). In most cases, the best that we can do to determine the time frame in which a certain poem was written is to look at the publication date of the collection in which it was initially published, knowing that it would have been written no later than that date.

Transliterations

This dissertation follows the Library of Congress transliteration rules for Russian and Ukrainian. I have chosen to use the Ukrainian transliterations of the names Kyiv, Dnipro, Kyivan Rus', and Odesa. When quoting from secondary sources, I leave transliterations as they appear in the original.

Chapter 1: Spatial Theory and Historiography

Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko write extensively about places of personal and cultural importance. Their collected lyric poetry creates a fascinating re-imagining of the geography in which they live. In order to understand both the purpose and the significance the geographical exploration of their, it is important to understand the theoretical framework governing spatial theory and how these theories apply to literature. This chapter will first explore the foundations of spatial theory before moving on to the recent spatial turn in literature and the importance of mapping in order to gain a better appreciation for the intricacies of a poetic geography. Finally, this chapter will address the geography of identity to ascertain how this geographic approach provides insights into the worldview and national identities of the poets being studied.

Theoretical framework of space and place

Over recent decades, numerous philosophers and theorists have written about *space* and *place*, parsing out the intricacies that govern mankind's existence within the spatial plane. Each of these writers proffers his own, slightly different definition of the concepts.[1] Some of these definitions bear exploration in the present work, and they shall lead to the adoption of definitions suitable for the scope of this study. While in everyday experience, "the meaning of space often merges with that of place" (Tuan, 6) the technical nuances of the two concepts prove enlightening when examining a text in regards to spatial theory. Throughout the various discussions on the topic, common threads emerge: scholars tend to agree that "space is a more

[1] Summing up decades of spatial research and debate, one scholar observes, "The terms space and place have long histories and bear with them a multiplicity of meanings and connotations which reverberate with other debates and many aspects of life" (Massey, 1).

abstract concept, while place is involved with embodiment: it is occupied and experienced" (Bassin, 11). [2]

The undifferentiated, abstract realm of space has less influence on human life than place. Space is not an active participant in the lives of mankind. Foucault's spaces are often mythic and amorphous, as in two examples he provides:

> space that is rigid and forbidden, surrounding the quest, the return and the treasure (that's the geography of the Argonauts and of the labyrinth); and the other space—communicating, polymorphous, continuous and irreversible—of the metamorphosis, that is to say, of the visible transformation of instantly crossed distances, of strange affinities, of symbolic replacements (qtd. in Philo, 146).

Foucault's ambiguous spaces are distanced from the regular, daily affinities of individuals, located somewhere beyond the reaches of the home.

In contrast to space, place—as frequently defined—bears profound and intimate meaning in regards to the individuals who inhabit it. Neal Alexander offers the succinct assertion that "place can be defined as a spatial location invested with human meaning" (Alexander, 5). The amorphous spaces of Foucault are given meaning and purpose to become "*place*." Yi-Fu Tuan explains the transfer of meaning to space as follows:

> What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and

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[2] While modern discourse almost universally distinguishes between the terms space and place, such was not always the case. Anthony Giddens writes,

> In premodern societies, space and place largely coincided, since the spatial dimensions of social life are, for most of the population... dominated by 'presence'—by localised activity...Modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between 'absent' others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. In conditions of modernity....locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them'" (qtd. in Massey, 5-6).

The modern society in which people can move and travel with freedom has resulted in the uncoupling of space and place. The familiar places of home can now become distant memories as someone enters the space of the larger world.

> endow it with value. Architects talk about the spatial qualities of place; they can equally well speak of the locational (place) qualities of space. The ideas 'space' and 'place' require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place (Tuan, 6).

In this sense, space is an open and potentially threatening spatial entity, but once humans become acquainted with it, it can become place which provides stability and rest. Robert Argenbright writes, "What distinguishes place most clearly is the human experience of living in it. Place is where the body is, and it is experienced by means of all the body's senses. Place is the world as we live it, personal and meaningful" (qtd. in Bassin, 11). This desire to locate oneself in a specific place, grounded in reality and meaning, is a universal human experience.[3] Alice Entwistle observes that, "Place(s) enshrine as well as help make sense of the space(s) in and of which they are constituted. It is chiefly in the capacity to locate, or fix, that the idea of place becomes entangled with questions of identity" (Entwistle, 4). The *places* in which a person develops an identity and finds meaning become central in the formation of an individual's identity.

Of all the spatial locations with profound human meaning, the home is the most intimate and primal of such places. Gaston Bachelard looks at the house itself as an exploration of the poetics of space, beginning with the most intimate and even natal space which human beings know. He writes, "For our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first

[3] As Hayden Lorimer observes, "the poetics of place are found in life. Having a 'sense of place' is a way of apprehending the world about us that we come by long before scholastic instruction or technical understanding" (Lorimer, 182).

universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word. If we look at it intimately, the humblest dwelling has beauty" (Bachelard, 26). Bachelard's "space" of the house becomes a place of profound meaning (one that some other writers would consider a "place"). Edward Said comments on Bachelard's analysis, saying,

> The objective space of a house—its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms—is far less important that what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel: thus a house may be haunted, or homelike, or prisonlike, or magical. So space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here (Said, 55).

The same is true not just of the intimate spaces of a house, but also for the larger spaces of a city or a nation.[4] The poetics we imbue a space with are what gives it meaning more than the cold hard angles or wide-open spaces. Humans create their own meaning for the spaces they inhabit.

Henri Lefebvre (once again using the term "space" where others would use the more meaningful "place") argues that space possesses a social character (Lefebvre, 27). He asserts that *"(Social) space is a (social) product"* (Lefebvre, 26, italics in original). Social spaces (or, in other words, *places*) are created by society and imbued with culturally and societally specific meaning. It is only with the interaction of humans that an undifferentiated space can obtain importance and meaning, whether that meaning comes through the building of a home, the

[4] The space of the house is also a traditionally gendered location. Women, in both their literature and daily lives, had historically been restricted to the house as what was termed a "woman's place." Gilbert and Gubar write, "Anxieties about space sometimes seem to dominate the literature of both nineteenth-century women and their twentieth-century descendants" as they grapple with their unwanted confinement to the home (Gilbert and Gubar, 83). Kostenko and Akhmatova transcend these anxieties, as well as the traditional confinement to women of the space of the house. While both Kostenko and Akhmatova write of "home," they overwhelmingly use this concept not to refer to a specific domicile, but to their broader homeland. They have exited the traditionally female space of the house to embrace the geography of the world and provide their commentary on places outside the confines of four walls.

development of patriotic fervor in a national capital, or the personal affinity for a forest. Commenting on Lefebvre, the scholar Harvey Molotch observes,

> humans create the space in which they make their lives; it is a project shaped by interests of classes, experts, the grassroots, and other contending forces. Space is not simply inherited from nature, or passed on by the dead hand of the past, or autonomously determined by 'laws' of spatial geometry as per conventional location theory. Space is produced and reproduced through human intentions, even if unanticipated consequences also develop, and even as space constrains and influences those producing it (Molotch, 887).

This social creation of space (or the transformation of *space* into *place)* indeed transcends the simple physical geography of a location, infusing it with a societally specific interpretation. While elements of physical geography (such as a mountain or river) can hold great sway on someone's emotions and inspire love, it is most often the social constructs that tie a person to their home. Human interactions in homes, buildings, in cities, and in the countryside lend an extra weight of meaning to the mere physical entities.

For purposes of this dissertation, we will consider *space* to be a broad, undifferentiated expanse of spatial locality to which the poets of study do not assign personal meaning. *Place*, on the other hand, will refer to the localities which the poets have imbued with personal experience and meaning in their poetry. (To indicate when a use of the word "place" or "space" corresponds with the definitions presented here, those words will be italicized.) In their respective poetic geographies, both Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko focus on the *places* which have influenced their lives. The *spaces* alluded to in their poetry do not receive the same warmth or fleshing out of location or meaning. These poets embody the spatial theory that *place* is the

world of meaning in which mankind moves.

Chronotope

Mikhail Bakhtin proposes a theory describing the connections between literary time and space (or, as we have defined it, *place*) in his concept of the chronotope. He writes, “We will give the name chronotope (literally, "time space") to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (Bakhtin, 84). Literary events and concepts are situated within this chronotopic framework that is grounded in time and place. Bakhtin continues,

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible, likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope (Bakhtin, 84).

Literary time and space are given life and meaning within their connections to each other, and they are separate from the outside world. In literature, a new entity is created at the interstices of written time and space that reveals a connection between narrative time and location. This classic definition of a chronotope applies specifically to prose literature. Yet while Bakhtin limits himself to prose, Joy Ladin argues that chronotopic constructions can be seen even in poetry. She writes, “the evanescence of chronotopes in non-narrative poetry can be as central to the vitality and meaning of those texts as the stability of chronotopes is to the vitality and meaning of prose narratives” (Ladin, 133). While there is no narrative in which to locate interstices between time and space, Ladin argues that non-narrative poetry often creates these chronotopic relationships through what she terms “micro-chronotopes” which can be found even within a sentence

fragment (Ladin, 133-135). In this microscopic view of chronotopes, a lyric poem can show elements of the interrelatedness of an implied time in an implied space within a single line.

While this micro-chronotopic approach to analyzing the poetry of Akhmatova and Kostenko could be interesting and fruitful, I propose a different method of identifying chronotopes in lyric poetry: taking the collected works of a poet as a whole and finding repeated creations of time-space (or time-*place*) within the entire oeuvre. For example, as will be discussed, Akhmatova creates a poetic geography for Tsarskoye Selo: This Tsarskoye Selo chronotope combines the longings for a lost childhood (grounded in a specific time) with a sorrowful love of the *place* of the town.[5] Kostenko likewise creates various chronotopes within her poetic geography, including her chronotope of Cossack Ukraine, in which she intertwines the wild, free *place* of the Ukrainian land with the unique time period in which Cossacks reigned. Each element of her poetic geography reflects a specific chronotope, intertwining the geography about which the poets are writing with the specific time that serves as the subtext for the poem. The majority of these chronotopes thus created in the poetic geographies reflect imaginative geography: a longing for a past time that cannot be recreated, or a depiction of a present or future that is either oppressive or elusive.

Spatial Turn

Analyzing literature through a spatial perspective has been a recent development in literary theory. In 1976 Foucault gave an interview with geographers of the French journal *Herodote* (Elden, 1). In this interview he stated that more focus had—up to that point—been

[5] For a different angle of chronotopic exploration in Akhmatova's poetry, see Merkel, who writes: "Rehabilitation of three dimensional spaces entailed also the rehabilitation of real time. That is why in the early collections of Akhmatova, we first find figuratively motivated embodiment of time and space, strikingly differing from similar reflection of these categories in symbolist onto-poetics; secondly, we can see the new design of chronotope. It is the "Acmeism" of early lyric of the poet with which this locative-temporal component is primarily linked, because the domestication of the world is implemented just within the chronotope design" (Merkel, 2).

given to time as a framework for analysis than was given to space: a "devaluation of space…has prevailed for generations… Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" (Foucault, "Geography", 177). In recent decades, however, space has risen to the forefront as a viable and valuable lens through which to view literature and history.

Post-modernism has facilitated this recent geographical and spatial approach to literature. Mark Bassin, speaking of history specifically, writes,

> This new line of [spatial] inquiry has been developing since the 1990s, heavily influenced by…the broad epistemological shift in the final decades of the twentieth century indicated by the catch-all designation 'post-modernism.' As a project, post-modernism has been devoted to questioning and 'destabilizing' the ways in which we structure and signify the world. One of the most important vectors of this destabilization has been geographical. Post-modernism stresses the fundamental significance of geographical boundaries of all sorts for providing order and meaning, but at the same time emphasizes—critically—that the boundaries in question are not necessarily objective and absolute. Very much to the contrary, they are often provisional and discursive: there to be respected but at the same time to be questioned and transgressed (Bassin, 3-4).

Post-modernism's challenging of geographic borders and restructuring of space has encouraged scholars in multiple fields to reexamine old questions through a new, geographic lens.[6] The application of these spatial theories to literature has proven particularly fruitful in recent decades.

[6] Foucault himself was somewhat ahead of his time in recognizing the importance of a spatial analytical approach. According to Chris Philo, Foucault presents "is a blueprint for a truly 'postmodern' geography: a postmodern geography in which details and difference, fragmentation and chaos, substance and heterogeneity, humility and respectfulness feature at every turn, and an account of social life which necessarily brings with it a sustained concern for the geography of things rather than a recall for the formal geometries of spatial science" (Philo, 159).

Literary geography is an emerging field that explores the interrelatedness of texts and space.[7] Analyzing the places discussed in a text, as well as how the text in turn affects the places it mentions, results in a new line of literary criticism. Neal Alexander writes,

> What is emerging, through deepening exchanges between literary studies and cultural geography, is a clearer and suppler understanding of how the affective and political aspects of space condition not only the content but also the languages and forms of literary texts. Equally and oppositely, literary texts are acknowledged to have an important role in constructing and reconstructing the meanings of place (Alexander, 1).[8]

Literature does not take place in a vacuum; it is important to recognize the space (and *places)* in which writers choose to situate their works.

This recent turn to analyzing literature through a geographic and spatial perspective has been termed a "spatial turn" in the humanities, which Jo Guldi defines as follows:

> The spatial turn represents the impulse to position these new tools [of GIS, Google Maps, etc.] against old questions....We remember that every discipline in the humanities and social sciences has been stamped with the imprint of spatial questions about nations and their boundaries, states and surveillance, private property, and the perception of

[7] The study of the use of language to create space or place is a logical approach, as Foucault insists that language and space are intertwined. Foucault writes, "language is (or has perhaps become) a thing of space. Nor does it matter whether it describes space or merely runs over it. And if space is the most obsessing of metaphors in today's languages, it is not because henceforth it offers the only possible solution; but it is in space that language, right from the start, unfurls, passes over itself, determines its choices and draws its figures and translations. Space transports language—and in space the very being of language is 'metaphorised'." (Foucault, "Language," 51-52). Space and language are connected. Language recreates space, both in a metaphoric way and in the depiction of actual spaces. It is in the actual depiction of spaces that this dissertation will primarily occupy itself.

[8] For example, this interplay of literature and geography can be seen in St. Petersburg. Russian writers throughout the centuries have address the "myth of St. Petersburg." The origin of the myth lies in historical events tied with the city's geography, and then the myth took shape in literature as writers depicted their own versions of St. Petersburg. The literary perpetuation was then applied to the real world, thus creating a spiral of influence that connected Petersburg the city with Petersburg the literary myth. Such an interplay between geography and literature can be seen in other cities and regions, too: The Ukrainian steppe is glorified in literature, and this creates a new framework for understanding the actual physical steppe.

landscape, all of which fell into contestation during the nineteenth century" (Guldi). With modern technology to assist scholars, the post-modern trend to study literature in light of geography has entered a new era: maps are more accessible to researchers and audiences, and new methods of analyzing spatial questions are available. Literature and history are richly imprinted with spatial references, and this modern spatial turn allows scholars to interrogate texts and events in regards to geography, resulting in novel conclusions about the interplay between space and culture. Yi-Fu Tuan writes, "A function of literary art is to give visibility to intimate experiences, including those of place...Literary art draws attention to areas of experience that we may otherwise fail to notice" (Tuan, 162). The places mentioned in literature bear relevance not just to the writers themselves, but to scholars of the humanities who seek to understand the relationship between space, place, and literature. An analysis of literary *places* will bring attention to concepts and frameworks that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.[9]

Space and poetry

While this spatial turn has been gaining momentum over recent years, the framework has primarily been applied only to prose works (Alexander, 1-2). The sparsity of geographic analysis of poetry leaves a wide-open field for poetry scholars. While poetry does not possess the same plot elements or narration that prose does, it is nonetheless grounded in space and place, whether specified or left to the imagination of the reader. My dissertation seeks to fill a gap in geographic analysis of poetry by using a spatial framework to reconstruct the poetic geographies of Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko.[10] These “poetic geographies” will be developed through a

[9] Franco Moretti provides the classic example of such geographic-literary analysis in his 1998 book, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900*. This work brings space and place to the forefront of analysis and reinterprets classic European novels with insights provided by a spatial analysis.

[10] I am borrowing the term “poetic geography” from Alexander and Cooper who define it as follows: “Poetic geography denotes the 'diagrammatic' elements of urban poetries which are founded upon detailed specificity; the textual moments in which the naming of particular sites is used in order to bring those actual places into imaginative

detailed analysis of these poets' lyric works which specifically mention a geographical element or *place.* Through compiling a comprehensive analysis of the places mentioned in these lyric works, I am able to create a figurative map of the places that are important to the poets and comments on the worldview and personal affiliations of the poets at hand.

Kostenko and Akhmatova both frequently refer to specific *places* within their lyric poetry. These references bear great significance, as

> the naming of a particular place can allow the poet to establish, in a characteristically Romantic way, his or her embodied situatedness within a specific material location. At the same time, such geographical specificity can be used to assert 'the cultural and artistic validity of erstwhile marginalised places and traditions' (Alexander, 8).

Such geographical name-dropping connects the reader to the poet in a way that geographic ambiguity cannot (i.e. if a poet refers only to an amorphous, unidentified space, the reader has less context for interpreting the poem than were the poet to locate the poem in a specific city or by a particular river). These specific geographic references tie the poet with the land and geography of the place. Perhaps the reader has been to St. Petersburg or visited the Dnepr, or at least seen pictures of the places being mentioned. This allows the reader to bring his or her own experience and understanding of geography to the poetic table and understand the poem in a new light. Each reader will come with preconceived notions of home, place, and geography to the specific poems, allowing a richer—or perhaps even contradictory—view of both the place and the poem. Kostenko and Akhmatova both intentionally refer to specific geographic locations throughout their poetry and by so doing create elaborate poetic geographies. These poetic geographies on one hand represent the actual world—as the places they are describing are

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being" (Alexander, 7). My use of the term varies slightly from theirs. I will define a "poetic geography" as the comprehensive geographical and spatial depiction of the *places* identified in a poet's oeuvre.

situated within the known world—while at the same time create a new, imaginative geography that is colored and interpreted by personal experience, longing, and conjecture.

Real and imagined geographies

Scholars and philosophers have helped us "come to appreciate that all historical actors—individuals or groups—possess a geographical imagination which helps them interpret the world around them" (Bassin, 8). This is true not just for historical figures, but for writers who seek to capture in writing their perceptions of the world around them. A poetic geography is by no means an accurate or realistic geography: poets lend weight to the places that are most important to them, and they reinvent the places that they discuss to reflect dreams, nostalgia, or personal biases. In this sense, although the poetic geographies of Akhmatova and Kostenko are grounded in reality—they refer extensively to actual locations—the poetic geographies are nonetheless partially imaginary geographies. These are not the cut-and-dried drawings of a cartographer, but rather the lyrical, personal musings of individuals. Alexander observes, "The poetic naming of a place, then opens up imaginative space for meditating on the interpenetrations of geography, selfhood and collective identity" (Alexander, 9). When Akhmatova describes St. Petersburg, she does not draw a map of impersonal city streets, but she rather creates a picture of a living, breathing entity that she calls her own.[11] Kostenko likewise does not scientifically map the miles of the Ukrainian steppe, but imbues them with a life and personal feeling that elevate them to the

[11] Some may argue that, since Akhmatova was an Acmeist, she creates a *real* geography, and not an imaginative one in her poetry. (See, for example, Merkel: "Anna Akhmatova as a representative of Russian Acmeism in her polemics with Symbolists and with their characteristic loci, both abstract and generalized, focused her attention on the concept of real life, on the image-motive embodiment of time and space. The external space in the lyrics of Akhmatova includes three areas – the space of home, of the city, and the nature, each of which is characterized by the materiality and the Artifact" (Merkel, 1).) I argue, however, that although Akhmatova grounds her depictions of space and place in reality, she nevertheless introduces too many elements of an imaginative geography for her poetic geography to be considered entirely real or unbiasedly accurate. These imaginative elements, however, do not revoke her claim to Acmeism, as she still remains in the realm of the real world, eschewing the symbolism from which she was dissenting.

realm of mythology. The places mentioned in the poems are real; the poets' interpretations and commentary on the places give the poetic geographies a life in the imaginary realm.

Edward Said acknowledges the discrepancy between the geography of reality and the social-spatial constructions people envision in their own minds. He introduces the term "imaginative geography" to describe the conceptualized worlds and societies that people create for themselves (Said, 49-55). These imaginative geographies can be a simple reinterpretation of the layout of a city center, or they can be as grave and serious as ethno-racial stereotypes. Akhmatova and Kostenko both create an imaginative geography in which they place cities, natural features, and other *places* into the cultural, social, and personal contexts that allow them to reinterpret the world and express their own understandings of the relationships between their beloved *places.* Both Akhmatova and Kostenko, to varying degrees, create arbitrary geographical distinctions in their poetic geographies. Said explains mankind's universal tendency to create such arbitrary, imaginative distinctions between places:

> A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, which they call 'the land of the barbarians.' In other words, this universal practice of designating in one's mind a familiar space which is 'ours' and an unfamiliar space beyond 'ours' which is 'theirs' is a way of making geographical distinctions that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word 'arbitrary' here because imaginative geography of the 'our land—barbarian land' variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for 'us' to set up these boundaries in our own minds; 'they' become 'they' accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from 'ours'" (Said, 54).

Central to the poetic geographies of both poets are these arbitrary distinctions between "ours"

and "theirs"—both poets express a clear preference for their homelands. While such a dichotomy of "us" vs. "them" can lead to prejudice, stereotypes, and even colonialism, both Kostenko and Akhmatova manage to retain a respect for the "other" even while expressing a preference for their homeland. Tuan writes, "Human groups nearly everywhere tend to regard their own homeland as the center of the world. A people who believe they are at the center claim, implicitly, the ineluctable worth of their location" (Tuan, 149). Both poets display this vision of their homelands as the center of their own worlds. Placing one's homeland at the geographic center of the world requires an extensive application of imaginative geography. This very preference for one place over another inherently creates an imaginative geography.[12]

Another element of the imaginative geography of these two poets arises from the simple reality of writing that a temporal separation from an event automatically necessitates an element of removal and diversion from reality. As Bakhtin said,

> If I relate (or write about) an event that has just happened to me, then I as the teller (or writer) of this event am already outside the time and space in which the event occurred....The represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary work is to be found (Bakhtin, 256).

Thus, some element of temporal separation—and likely nostalgia or distaste of the past and the place associated with it—will be imbued into virtually all of the poets' lyrics of place. The simple process of writing down a memory or a recollection of a place separates the writer from

[12] Tuan also notes that one's imaginative geography is not limited to simply one center: "'Center' (of the world) is not a particular point on the earth's surface; it is a concept in mythic thought rather than a deeply felt value bound to unique events and locality. In mythic thought several world centers may coexist in the same general area without contradiction. It is possible to believe that the axis of the world passes through the settlement as a whole as well as through the separate dwellings within it" (Tuan, 150). The presence of multiple "centers of the world" will be seen particularly in Akhmatova's poetic geography.

the reality and immediacy of the place and any events occurring there. Bachelard likewise discusses this element of the imaginative representation of space through the simple passage of time as it regards one's childhood home:

> Distant memory only recalls [facts] by giving them a value, a halo, of happiness. ...Something unreal seeps into the reality of the recollections that are on the borderline between our own personal history and an indefinite pre-history, in the exact place where, after us, the childhood home comes to life in us...Thus, on the threshold of our space, before the era of our own time, we hover between awareness of being and loss of being, And the entire reality of memory becomes spectral (Bachelard, 79).

Childhood homes—whether the literal four walls Bachelard discusses, or the broader concept of hometown or motherland—stand on the border of pre-history in one's recollection, and are by nature distorted. The poetic reflections of both Akhmatova and Kostenko on the *places* of their childhood reflect these elements of imaginative geography, as the poets' memories have imbued the facts with specific impressions and interpretations.

The concept of "home" is central in (imaginative) poetic geographies. Of all the places that are important to humans, perhaps none plays such an important role as "home." This concept extends beyond Bachelard's analysis of the physical home discussed above, and encompasses instead both the city, nation, and regions to which the writer holds affinity. Even when the reader and the poet do not share the same homeland, the evocation of the concept of home can cause a reader to resonate with the poet in a way not possible otherwise. No longer is something just a nondescript mass of concrete, or an unidentified river flowing through a field, but once it is endowed the with appellation of "home," the reader immediately begins to feel the same emotions that he associates with his own home. Thus "home" becomes simultaneously one of the

most specific and the most general geographic locations a poet could discuss. Both Akhmatova and Kostenko refer extensively to their homes; these references generally focus on a city or a country. The concept of homeland is vital to both of them. The vastness of a country or homeland necessitates an element of imagination in embracing a homeland as one's own. Tuan writes, "It is a characteristic of the symbol-making human species that its members can become passionately attached to places of enormous size, such as a nation-state, of which they can have only limited direct experience" (Tuan, 18). Imaginative geography allows the poet—or any citizen of a homeland—to extend her love to a vast stretch of *space* she has not seen in its entirety, and embrace it as a *place* beloved and known. Tuan asserts that this love of one's homeland spans the world:

> This profound attachment to the homeland appears to be a worldwide phenomenon. It is not limited to any particular culture and economy. It is known to literate and nonliterate peoples, hunter-gatherers, and sedentary farmers, as well as city dwellers. The city or land is viewed as mother, and it nourishes; place is an archive of fond memories and splendid achievements that inspire the present; place is permanent and hence reassuring to man, who sees frailty in himself and chance and flux everywhere (Tuan, 154).[13]

The longing for a homeland that has become a beloved and meaningful *place* transcends civilizations and time. Because no two people have the exact same interpretation of or experience with "home" or "homeland," elements of imaginative geography naturally come into play in this sphere: "homeland" is an imagined concept (Stockdale, 24).

A poetic geography is, by very nature, an imaginative geography. The poets create

[13] It is important to note, of course, that not everybody has a positive perception of their own homeland. Wars, political strife, or negative personal experiences can indeed darken one's view of homeland. Love or allegiance to one's homeland is not necessarily universal or a given fact, despite the frequent occurrence of love for homeland.

personal, arbitrary boundaries to represent their homes; they introduce elements of nostalgia or other emotions they associate with places; and they give preference to the places for which their own emotions are the strongest. Studying these imaginative, poetic geographies allows the scholar to elucidate personal, cultural, and historiographical leanings of the poets who created them while simultaneously creating a robust map of the geographical reaches of the poets' collected works.

Mapping project and theory of mapping

A discussion of poetic geographies would be incomplete without visible maps to support them and provide a springboard for analysis. The theory behind literary maps is relatively recent, brought about in the era of post-modernism, and facilitated by the advent of online mapping tools. These tools have allowed scholars to enter a field of "neogeography" (Young, 152) in which maps are readily available and can be easily manipulated and interrogated to serve the needs of literary studies. Franco Moretti argues for the need to create literary maps:

> [G]eography is not an inert container, is not a box where cultural history 'happens,' but an active force, that pervades the literary field and shapes it in depth. Making the connection between geography and literature explicit, then—mapping it: because a map is precisely that, a connection made visible—will allow us to see some significant relationships that have so far escaped us (Moretti, *Atlas*, 3).

Mapping literature indeed makes visible previously invisible elements of the work. Through a visual portrayal of the events in a story or the movement of a character, a map brings to light new ways of understanding literature. Maps do not merely provide new information, however; they also raise new questions and require new angles of analysis. Moretti continues, "A good map is worth a thousand words, cartographers say, and they are right: because it produces a thousand

words: it raises doubts, ideas. It poses new questions, and forces you to look for new answers" (Moretti, *Atlas,* 3-4). Maps "prepare a text for analysis" and "possess 'emerging qualities,'" which reveal elements of the text that were not visible without the map (Moretti, *Graphs,* 53). Naturally, the maps by themselves require analysis: they serve simply as a tool to allow the scholar to reach additional conclusions that may not have been visible without the visual—and often interactive—aid. Maps reveal that something *"needs to be explained"* in literature, and they impart new tools for carrying out that analysis (Moretti, *Graphs,* 39, emphasis in original). These maps fuse together the imagined and actual geography of a literary place by representing it in a "third, cartographic, form of knowledge" that allows "exploration of their intersections and incompletions" (Young, 155). Through mapping the poetic geographies of Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko, the imagined geographies of the two poets will be visualized against the background of actual geography, the cartographic representation serving as a vehicle for reconciling and interpreting the alternate versions of geography.

The powerful tools of literary maps must be used with a certain understanding of their limitations. As Barbara Piatti states, "The geography of fiction must be characterised as a rather imprecise geography" (Piatti, 182). There are spatial gaps in narratives, incomplete geographical information, and imprecise spatial relationships that cause difficulties in map-making (Piatti, 185). A scholar can only map locations given in the text, but if the author is silent on certain details, the map cannot be fully fleshed-out. Additionally, even when precise geographic information is given in the text, the nature of GIS-based mapping tools may introduce some elements of inaccurate specificity. As Sarah Young states,

> But if this technology enables, it also restricts. Its suppositions define its contours, which set limitations to its utility. The central paradigm is one of annotation, placing markers on

> a map, at a specific location, and relating text or images to that marker. However, a place is not necessarily one point, nor a collection of points, nor even a clearly demarcated area, and a text, even if it is mappable, may not be dissolvable into the discrete co-ordinates required by the technology (Young, 152-153).

For example, when a poet mentions a specific city in her poem, I am able to place a marker on the map on that city. Unlike a static, paper map, however, Google Maps allows the user to zoom into the map, visualizing unprecedented detail down to the square foot. If the poet, however, did not mention the specific geospatial coordinates to which her poem refers, any marker placed on Google Maps will inevitably falsely represent the actual location (i.e. if a marker intended to represent "Paris" as a whole happens to be placed on the Eiffel Tower, this has the possibility of misleading the map user to think the literature referred specifically to the tower and not to the city in general). For this reason, interactive GIS-based maps must be taken with a grain of salt, understanding that the mapping system itself demands a level of accuracy not provided by literature. This limitation, however, should not be considered detrimental, as with proper annotation within the map itself, any unintended specificity can be explained so as to help the user understand the map and the author's intentions.

The bulk of literary mapping projects undertaken and published to this point have largely been done with prose works. Moretti's maps, for example, are focused only on prose. He sets forth ideas on how to map movement within a novel, or look at where actions take place in relation to each other. Other online projects also look at prose works.[14] The tracing of narrative arc, character movement, and placement of action are elements of mapping that, while explored and explained in current mapping literature, are not relevant or applicable to the field of poetry.

[14] See Piatti and Young.

Poetry must use the tools of mapping literature, but apply them in a way that is unique to its genre. My maps of the poetic geographies of Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko seek to begin to fill this gap and make the mapping of poetry a more widespread practice in literary spatial studies.

My mapping of the poetic geographies of Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko relies on the Google Maps platform. Within this software, I have created a map consisting of three layers: 1) Places mentioned in Akhmatova's poems; 2) places where Akhmatova's poems were written; and 3) places mentioned in Kostenko's poems.[15] Various colors are used to differentiate between the layers, as well as levels of ambiguity within the layers. For example, in layer #3, specific places [such as "Kyiv" or "Arizona"] referenced in Kostenko's poetry are indicated by a yellow marker.[16] In that same layer, where a place reference is somewhat ambiguous [such as "our holy land" or the village "Katerynivka," of which there are many in Ukraine], the color purple is used. General geographic references [such as "steppe" or "Europe"] are indicated with green markers. A similar color scheme is used in layer #1 to indicate levels of exactness in Akhmatova's poetry (dark purple indicates specific; orange indicates ambiguity, and pink indicates general references). For poems written in multiple places or describing multiple places in the text, I have created multiple markers in the corresponding layers so that each place in the poem is represented on the map.

A user can navigate through the map by scrolling through the list of titles of poems on the left, or by panning through the map itself. When the user selects a particular poem, either by clicking its title from the list or by clicking its flag on the map, a dialogue box will appear with

[15] A fourth layer, places where Kostenko's poems were written, could not be created at this time, as the information of where Kostenko wrote her verses is not available.
[16] Obviously, this so-called "specificity" is marked with the above-mentioned understanding that the map requires more specificity than the poem can offer and thus ambiguities will be introduced.

information about the poem. For the poems depicting a geographic location, I have included the text of the poem,[17] as well as the source information of where the poem can be found. Where available, I also include the date the poem was written and where.[18] For the layer illustrating where poems were written, I do not include the full text of the poem (unless a geographic reference was made in the poem, in which case it is also cross-listed in the other layer), but simply list the title, reference, and date and place written, where available. Layers can be turned off and on as the user desires: for example, if I wish to compare the places written about by Akhmatova and Kostenko but do not want to see where the poems were written, I can open layers 1 and 3, and close layer 2.

As mentioned above, by the very nature of this mapping tool, there are some limitations. For example, even though I classify references to cities or other specific locations in the poems as "specific," there is a level of ambiguity and generality in anything less specific than a complete address (i.e. a marker intended to indicate "Kyiv" in general may fall upon a particular apartment building to which Kostenko had no connection, since a marker in Google Maps requires a precise location). To compensate for this unintentional specificity, I indicate within the dialogue box what locations are actually mentioned within the poetic text, helping the user understand when a marker really does indicate the specific address it is located on, or when it is meant to represent a larger neighborhood, city, or region.

This mapping tool has been invaluable in my analysis of the poetic geographies of the two poets. It has provided an interactive database and visualization of the complete geographical

[17] The majority of the poems display the complete text, while some (particularly the longer poems) display only the portion of the poem with the geographic reference. This project was intended to be accessible to a lay-audience, so I have used the English (Hemschemeyer) translations of Akhmatova's poems. Kostenko's complete works, however, have not been translated into English, so my mapping project displays the Ukrainian originals of her poems.

[18] This poetic metadata is much more available for Akhmatova's poems than Kostenko's, for whom virtually no dates or places of writing are known.

references of the two poets.[19] The poets display respective and distinctive concentrations of place references in their poetry, and the visual map helps to display and emphasize these differences.

This tool will hopefully prove not simply fruitful in my own dissertation, but will also bring the poetic geographies of the poets to a wider audience. This tool provides a visual representation of geography, making it easier for the reader to quickly grasp the geographic scope Akhmatova's and Kostenko's poetry.

Geography of identity

The poetic geographies of Akhmatova and Kostenko not only imaginative reinterpretations of *place,* but also "geographies of identity."[20] The places that the poets discuss, praise, censure, and repeatedly reference combine to create a picture of the national identity and personal leanings of the two women. As Akhmatova and Kostenko both have connections to Ukraine and Russia, the tensions existing between these two geographic and political entities is conveyed in their poetry.

In order to properly understand these poetic geographies of identity, a brief discussion of Ukrainian-Russian historiography and national identity will prove illuminating. This discussion is not intended to provide a comprehensive presentation of the history of Ukraine;[21] rather, this

[19] I will allow for the possibility that in my reading and re-reading of these poets' works, I inadvertently missed some geographical references. If so, those missed references obviously would not appear on the map. Even if there are such omitted references, the map nonetheless displays the vast majority of all geographic references in the poetry of Akhmatova and Kostenko.

[20] "Geography of identity" is a term used by Bassin et.al in their collection *Space, Place, and Power in Modern Russia*. They use this term specifically to refer to "sites of memory" or specific places associated with identity and culturally important events (Bassin, 11). In addition, they apply this term to interrogating the "immensely complex problem of boundaries, most fundamentally the existential question about the precise geographical contours of the Russian nation," since "the issue of Russia's perceptual geographical boundaries becomes intertwined with the question of its self-image as an empire" (Bassin, 12). I will be using the term "geography of identity" in a broad, literary sense, examining the ways in which Akhmatova and Kostenko convey their own national identities through their geographic depictions in their poetry.

[21] For those interested in a comprehensive examination of Ukraine's history, please see Magocsi, Subtelny, and Plokhy.

section seeks to present the reader with a few key points in Ukrainian history on which the Ukrainian-Russian relationship hinges and how the opposing sides have viewed these events, with the intent to orient the reader as to the context for the national leanings of Akhmatova and Kostenko.

Brief points of history

From its rise in the late ninth century to its downfall at the hands of the Mongols in 1240, the Kyivan Rus' was an important political and cultural power in what is now Eastern Europe (Subtelny, 26-41). This was the age of Volodymyr the Great, who Christianized the previously pagan inhabitants, and of Iaroslav the Wise who expanded Kyivan territory and created a sophisticated legal code (Subtelny, 32-36). The era of the Kyivan Rus' was seen as a Golden Age by the elites of the region; a time of great cultural, military, social, and territorial advancements. Even after Kyiv fell and power was transferred to cities further east, the Slavic nations desired to claim the legacy of the Kyivan Rus' in order to legitimize their own power and authority in the region. As Edyta Bojanowska observes,

> to this day the Kievan inheritance represents a contested ground for both Ukrainian and Russian historiographies since it has singular importance for both national identities. For Russians to allow Ukrainians a separate identity that derived its historical roots from ancient Kiev would mean to forego their own claims on it, thus truncating Russia's glorious history; The Russians preferred to view Ukrainians as schismatics from the monolithic ancient Rus identity. Ukrainians, however, claim Kievan Rus as their own origin (Bojanowska, 28).

The concept of the Kyivan Rus' lends an almost sacred weight of authority to whichever group can lay claim to that legacy. For this reason, historiographies of both Russians and Ukrainians

fight for uncontested claim to the inheritance of the Kyivan Rus'.

A second "Golden Age" in Ukraine's history was the period of Cossackdom (Wilson, 193). These Slavic Cossacks came into being in the late fifteenth century, but it was in the sixteenth century that they became prominent, and they would remain the powerful leaders of Ukraine until the late eighteenth century (Subtelny, 108, 175).[22] For the most part, Ukrainian historians regards these rulers and defenders of the steppe as bearers of a bright moment in Ukrainian history, and they "consider that Cossackdom embodied the best characteristics of Ukrainians, which are supposedly reflected in the Cossack desire for freedom, independent, and a democratic way of life" (Magocsi, 188). Andrew Wilson claims that during the peak of Cossackdom,

> Kiev was once again the centre of learning for the whole of Eastern *Slavia Orthodoxa* and its main window on the Western world. A uniquely national style of architecture and religious art flourished to a greater extent than in neighbouring Belarus, and Church traditions were modernized and 'Europeanized'. In fact, many Ukrainians would argue that Kiev was then more 'advanced' than Moscow, and that without the strong southern influence the later Petrine revolution would have been impossible (Wilson, 193).

Culture, art, and education thrived under Cossackdom. The Cossacks were not only a military force, but also preservers of the Orthodox faith (Magocsi, 201). This second "Golden Age" for Ukraine creates a glorious history, one that subsequent Ukrainian idealists and nationalists would turn to in order to ground their claims at pre-eminence and independence.

In the first half of the 1600s, during the Cossack period, Ukraine was under Polish rule (Magocsi, 213). The Poles enserfed peasants, and burdened their subjects with restrictions and

[22] The Zaporozhian Cossacks built the first *sich* in 1552 on an island in the Dnipro River (Magocsi,193).

extortion (Subtelny, 124-125). As a result, in 1648, Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky led the largest of the Cossack uprisings, which "inaugurated a lengthy period of wars that set the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth on the road to partition in the late eighteenth century" (Plokhy, *Cossack*, 2-3). As the fighting and uprisings by the Cossacks continued, Khmelnytsky came to understand that he needed foreign help to defeat the Poles (Subtelny, 133). Khmelnytsky selected the Russian tsar as the best candidate to protect the Ukrainians and drive the Poles from Ukraine (Subtelny, 134). The negotiations of what came to be known as the Pereiaslav agreement (or Treaty of Pereiaslav) did not proceed as Khmelnytsky anticipated, and the agreement has become the subject of much historiographic reinterpretation. The tsar's representative, boyar Vasilii Buturlin, refused to swear a mutual oath to the people he considered his "subjects," thus disappointing Khmelnytsky's expectation that the oath would be bilateral, "With the Ukrainians swearing loyalty to the tsar and the latter promising to protect them from the Poles and to respect their rights and privileges" (Subtelny, 134). This angered Khmelnytsky, and he walked out of the discussions (Hosking, 24-25). Khmelnytsky was so desperate, however, that he returned and accepted the boyar's "assurances of the Tsar's good faith instead of an explicit oath" (Hosking, 25). The signing of this agreement represented a "turning point in the history of Ukraine, Russia, and all of Eastern Europe" because formerly "isolated and backward, Muscovy now took a giant step toward becoming a great power. And, for better or for worse, the fate of Ukraine became inextricably linked with that of Russia" (Subtelny, 134).

Unfortunately, however, these mere "assurances of good faith" on the part of the tsar's envoy led the agreement to be understood very differently by the two parties. According to Bojanowska, "The Russians took it as a unilateral submission, while the Ukrainians considered it a contractual agreement of equals" (Bojanowska, 29). The Ukrainian understanding, however,

insists that Khmelnytsky only “signed the treaty on condition that Ukrainian autonomy be recognised by the Muscovite Tsar” (Kuzio, *Historiography*, 118). This treaty was interpreted by Moscow, “as the first step in the permanent incorporation—or reincorporation—of the territories of what it called ‘Little Russia’ into the empire, as part of the ‘gathering of the Russian lands’” (Hosking, 25). In 1954, at the 300th anniversary of the signing of the Pereiaslav Agreement, the communist party of the Soviet Union affirmed that the agreement "was the natural culmination of the age-old desire of Ukrainians and Russians to be united” while also claiming that “the union of the two peoples had been the prime goal of the 1648 uprising” (Subtelny, 135).

The war between Peter I’s Russia and Charles XII’s Sweden in the early 1700s became another pivotal moment in Russia-Ukrainian relations (Magocsi, 253-261). Ivan Mazepa was the Hetman of the autonomous Ukrainian Hetmanate, and in 1708 he learned that Peter I would not spare any troops from defending Moscow to come to aid the Ukrainians (Hosking, 25). Mazepa saw this as a breach of the Treaty of Pereiaslav, since the overlord was not willing to provide protection, and he subsequently decided to turn to the side of the Swedish army (Hosking, 25). Mazepa’s defection caused Ukrainians to be viewed in the 18th century as unreliable in the Russian empire (Kappeler, 162).

Other Cossack rebellions in the 18th century helped contribute to the eventual downfall of the Ukrainian Hetmanate. The Bulavin Rebellion, waged by the Don Cossacks against Peter I from 1707-1708, was brought about by tensions over serfdom and the police state. Pugachev’s Rebellion, the largest of the Cossack rebellions, followed in 1773-75, as Don and Iaik Cossacks, seeking for better conditions for the serfs, fought against Catherine II’s forces. These rebellions contributed to Catherine the Great’s desire to exercise greater control over the borderlands,

including the Zaprorozhian Sich (Magocsi, 284).[23] In the late 18th century, Catherine the Great abolished the Ukrainian Hetmanate, bringing much of the Ukraine territory into the Russian Empire and revoking independent Cossack rule (Kuzio, *Historiography*, 118 and Subtelny 172-173).[24] Thus, at the end of the eighteenth century, the "vibrant, multifaceted cultural epoch" of Cossackdom concluded (Subtelny, 198), but it would be long-remembered in Ukrainian historiography and myth-making as an important second Golden Age of Ukrainian might and power.

Historiography

Russian (and later Soviet) and Ukrainian interpretations of historical events have led to a stark divergence in accepted historiographies between Ukraine and Russia. Understandably, both Russian and Ukrainian historiographies sought to claim for their own nations the legacy of the Kyivan Rus' in order to strengthen and glorify their own "foundation myths" (Magocsi, 14). Their interpretations of their shared histories were developed in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and they remain fundamentally unchanged to the present day (Magocsi, 23 and Kuzio, *Nation*, 49-50). A brief summary of these respective historiographies will prove helpful in foregrounding the national identities of Akhmatova and Kostenko.

Russian historiography rests upon the unbroken line of inheritance from the Kyivan Rus' through the Muscovy period to Russian empire (Kuzio, *Nation*, 49-50). This interpretation, according to Paul Magocsi,

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[23] For more on these uprisings, see Longworth, Philip. "The Last Great Cossack-Peasant Rising." *Journal of European Studies* 3, no. 1 (March 1973): 1–35, and Trefilov, Evgenii, and Julia Leikin. "Proof of Sincere Love for the Tsar: Popular Monarchism in the Age of Peter the Great." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 18, no. 3 (Summer 2017): 461–85.

[24] Subsequently, however, Cossacks were integrated into the Russian nobility and they regained some degree of trust within the empire. This "gradual acculturation of the Cossack nobility to the Russian nobility meant, however, that the molorossy were no longer regarded by the center as an independent ethnic group…. If they were accepted as an indigenous ethnic group, they descended to the lowest level, that of a peasant people ruled by a foreign (Russian) elite" (Kappeler, 168).

> stresses a pattern of steady political growth, which begins in so-called Kievan Russia in medieval times and subsequently is continued by the displacement of political centers and population to the north—first to Vladimir-na-Kliazma, then to Moscow and St Petersburg, and finally back to Moscow under the hegemony of the Soviet state. In such a framework, Ukraine has no independent historical existence" (Magocsi, 23).

Russia is seen as the sole inheritor of the legacy of Rus', and Ukraine is written out of the picture. According to this interpretation, the thirteenth-century inhabitants of Kyivan Rus' took their leadership and culture with them to begin the new period of Muscovy. Taras Kuzio asserts that,

> Ukraine's primary links to Kyiv Rus and its development outside Russian influence were ignored. This Russian imperial historiography, which was later adopted in different ways by Western historians, ignored the low level of cultural unity that existed between Ukrainian and Muscovite lands in the eleventh–thirteenth centuries. By the seventeenth century, when Ukraine and Muscovy held negotiations in Pereyaslav, their cultural and linguist differences had grown even further apart (Kuzio, *Nation*, 49-50).

Russian historiography (which, as Kuzio notes, was dominant and adopted by Western historians) created an illusion of continuous inheritance from the Kyivan Rus' to modern Russia, while simultaneously asserting that Ukrainians were too similar to Russia to warrant their own separate history. This pro-Russia narrative contended that,

> Animated by the primordial urge to restore the lost Kievan unity, Great Russia and Little Russia (Ukraine) returned to the common fold in 1654, when in the Treaty of Pereiaslav the Cossacks—led by Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytskyi—recognized the suzerainty of the tsar (Wolczuk, 673).

Russia thus claimed for itself not only the exclusive right to the legacy of Kyivan Rus', but also portrayed itself as furthering the ostensibly mutual desire to reunite all Slavic nations.

The Soviet historiography adhered to the previous Russian perception that Kyivan Rus' was "the cradle of all the East Slavs, although the Russian branch was depicted as the elder protector of the other two (the Belarusan and the Ukrainian)" (Magocsi, 24). This historiographical approach of portraying Ukraine as part of Russia and not a separate entity "cannot be divorced from nationality policies which sought to prevent the development of a Ukrainian modern nation and national identity by maintaining them as 'Little Russian' regional branches of the Russian people (Rus'kii narod)" (Kuzio, *Historiography*,109). Both tsarist and Soviet efforts sought to undermine Ukrainian nation-building projects, which were seen as a threat to imperial or Soviet unity, and by writing the Ukrainians out of the accepted historiography, the Russians and Soviets were able to claim for themselves sole authority over the Eastern Slavs.[25] This pro-Russian "representation of history played a paramount role in the process of diluting the national identity" of Ukraine (Wolczuk, 672).

Ukrainian historiographies have found themselves fighting against the more widespread Russian, Soviet, and Western historiographies in order to "disentangle a national myth of descent from traditional Russophile historiography" (Wilson, 183). Kuzio observes that Russian, Soviet, and Western schools condemned "non-Russian historiographies (i.e. Ukrainian and Belarusian) in a derogatory and cursory manner as 'nationalist,'" (Kuzio, *Historiography*, 110) giving Ukrainian historians a disadvantage in finding widespread Western acceptance.

Ukrainian historiographies celebrate "a lost 'Golden Age' before forcible incorporation into the Russian sphere of influence…demonstrating that, in contrast to autocratic and "Asiatic'

[25] In fact, "In Soviet writing the demonization of all forms of Ukrainian nationalism has a long tradition" (Shkandrij, 274).

Russia, their [nation is] naturally democratic, demotic and 'European'" (Wilson, 183). They claim for themselves the legacy of the Kyivan Rus'[26] and argue that they did not seek to be part of the Russian Empire, but felt such incorporation to be oppressive. In contrast to the Russian interpretation of the Treaty of Pereiaslav, which portrays it as the glorious reunion of brothers, Ukrainian historians see it as Russia subjecting Ukraine to itself as a colony in an imperial effort, both under the tsars and during the Soviet Union (Wolczuk, 677-678).

Ukrainian national historiography and nationalism took shape during the eighteenth century, as the intelligentsia began spreading their national ideas through newspapers and other media (Magocsi, 377). This intelligentsia-inspired nationalism corresponds with Myroslav Hroch's Phase A and Phase B of nation-forming (Hroch, 23).[27] As the eighteenth century progressed, however, the Russian center felt threatened by the rise of Ukrainian nationalism on the periphery, the level of trust between Ukraine and Russia dropped, establishing the stereotype of Ukrainians as traitors "in order to delegitimize representatives of the Ukrainian national movement" (Kappeler, 164). As Ukraine sought to define itself as different from and independent of Russia, the structural integrity of the entire empire was threatened. Ukraine represented the largest non-Russian ethnic group in the empire, and if they left, the fabric of the

[26] Ukrainian historian Mikhailo Hrushevs'kyi, among others, even portrays a Ukrainian heritage founded in pre-Kyivan times, thus surpassing even Russia's claim to primacy (Magocsi, 21).

[27] Hroch's three phases of the rise of a nation are: "Phase A (the period of scholarly interest), Phase B (the period of patriotic agitation) and Phase C (the rise of a mass national movement)" (Hroch, 23). The intelligentsia proves central in the early stages, as they are the ones engaged in the scholarly interest, and they are the ones who begin the agitation of their fellow people, helping others to become patriots in Phase B. The pivotal phase is B, where the movement gains traction and either progresses to Phase C (where a nation can begin to develop), or else fervor will peter out and the movement will die away before a nation can be conceived (ibid). In Phase B, "the agitation of the patriots sooner or later influenced a growing number of members of the oppressed nationality, who began to consider their membership in the nation as more than a simple natural fact or a political consequence of subjection to a particular monarch" (ibid). This "agitation" was carried out by the Ukrainian intelligentsia, who sought to establish a new fervor in their fellow citizens. Thanks to the work of activists and intellectuals, the idea of nationalism spreads from being a mere academic pursuit to something accessible and important to the general population. If the concept of the nation gains sufficient traction, the mass national movement in Phase C can lead to the rise of the nation. Ukraine has passed through each of these stages (often multiple times) in order to reach its modern-day independent status where the tides of nationalism still run strong.

empire would begin to decay (Kappeler, 172). This fear of losing Ukraine to nationalism and independence was the reason for the linguistic and cultural persecution of Ukrainian, and the 1863 and 1876 bans of the Ukrainian language (Kappeler, 172). The Russian Empire wanted to stamp out any real or perceived differences between Russians and Ukrainians.

During the nineteenth century, the Russian government was determined "to impose a Russian identity on Ukraine, which was now officially known as 'Little Russia,'" and these efforts had reduced Ukrainian national feeling (Hosking, 378). The relatively weak sentiments of a separate Ukrainian identity were continued "mainly by intellectuals and professional people in the smaller towns. Large numbers of peasants spoke variants of Ukrainian, but they had no wider national consciousness, and their colloquial tongue was viewed by most Russians as a farmyard dialect Russian" (Hosking, 378). In other words, Ukraine was still stumbling through Phase B of its nation-forming, relying heavily on its intellectuals to sustain the movement while Russia sought to impose its own historiography and national identity on the Ukrainians. These Ukrainian intellectuals were committed to the spread of nationalism, and they turned to books to help spread the Ukrainian national consciousness and Ukrainian language (Subtelny, 225). This heritage-gathering stage of national development in Ukraine was inspired by a desire to revive the Cossack past (Magocsi, 378).[28]

Key to this period of nation-forming and Ukrainian historiographical development was a mysterious text that emerged in the early 1800s entitled *Istoriia Rusov* (Magocsi, 19). This text depicted the Cossacks as a separate nation from Russia, valorizing the Cossacks and their victorious nation (Plokhy, *Cossack*, 3). The text was more political than scholarly, written with

[28] At this time, "the Cossack historical myth became central to the modern Ukrainian national project, which revolutionized the East Slavic nation-building process and helped establish the present-day distinction between the three East Slavic nations" (Plokhy, *Origins*, 353).

an anti-Russian tone, contesting "that it was Ukraine and not Russia that had a primary claim to the heritage of Kievan Rus'" (Subtelny, 227).[29] While the text was written in Russian (albeit with many Ukrainianisms), it was nonetheless influential in helping to popularize a Ukrainian national identity and claiming Ukraine's heritage as inheritor of Rus' (Luckyj, 18). The document proved to be a profound influence on the development of the Cossack myth and a separate Ukrainian identity, fulfilling the original author's intent to "give the heroic Cossack nation the recognition it deserved" (Plokhy, *Cossack,* 3). The ideas espoused and propagated in *Istoriia Rusov* became foundational for the national historiographies that have been continued to be embraced by Ukrainian historians until the present day.[30] Despite the prevalent—and sometimes overpowering—Russian (and later Soviet) historiographies, Ukraine developed its own historiography which writes itself into the center of Eastern European history as the rightful inheritor of Rus' and as the heirs of the glorious Cossack legacy.

Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko were exposed to the historiographies common to the time and place of their birth. Akhmatova, as we shall see from her poetic geography, largely embraced the Russian imperial historiography, in which she viewed Ukraine as integral to the empire. She did not see a disconnect between her own birth in Odessa, Ukraine, and her choice to call herself a Russian and write in the Russian language. For her, the legacy of Rus' was associated with the city of Kyiv, but Kyiv was an integral part of her own Russian Empire. Lina Kostenko, on the other hand, subscribed to the Ukrainian historiography, which asserted that

[29] This text was dangerous to the Russian Imperial historiography. "From the perspective of the Russian Empire, this text putting forth a separate Cossack nation was destructive to imperial integrity (Plokhy, *Cossack,* 3).
[30] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the nationalism movement had spread from the intellectuals to the lay people of Ukraine. During this time, "Mass political processes would emerge first in the city of Kiev—the center of culture, politics, and industry in the region—and would soon expand beyond city limits" (Hillis, 112-113). The common people accepted the historiography presented by the intellectuals. The national movement would grow, leading to the Ukrainian War of Independence, until by 1918, Ukraine was recognized internationally as an independent state (Hirsch, 66).

Ukraine was a distinct nation from Russia and was the rightful inheritor of the glory of the Kyivan Rus'. Her poetic geography glorifies the Golden Ages of the Kyivan Rus' and the Cossack Hetmanate.

Conclusion

Spatial theory, digital mapping, and Russian and Ukrainian historiographies all prove valuable in the analysis of the poetic geographies of Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko. These two poets recreate the world in which they live, poetically describing spaces and *places* in a manner laced with imaginative interpretation. Both poets are influenced by the historiographical context in which they are living, and their descriptions of geography reflect the national histories of Russia and Ukraine respectively. In sum, Akhmatova and Kostenko create imaginative poetic geographies of identity which we shall now explore in detail.

Chapter 2
A heart in Leningrad and a soul in Russia: The poetic geography of Anna Akhmatova

Akhmatova's Place in the Empire

Anna Akhmatova (born Gorenko) is widely regarded as the quintessential Russian woman poet. She was born by the sea near Odesa, Ukraine, and shortly thereafter moved with her family to Tsarskoe Selo in Russia. She would return to the sea and Ukraine many times throughout her life, but she never developed a Ukrainian national identity. She instead wrote about the geography of those places as if they are all part of the same entity: the Russian Empire. With this predominantly Russian imperial historiographical mindset, she did not see the need to view Ukraine as anything other than a region of her homeland. Her father was of Ukrainian origin (Reeder, 17), but she did not align herself with his heritage. On her mother's side, Akhmatova was a descendent of Russian nobility (Hemschemeyer, 790) and the Tatars (Akhmatova, vol. 2, 269). It was from her maternal great-grandmother's family that Akhmatova took her pseudonym when her father forbade her from tarnishing his family name with poetry (Haight, 6-7). This rejection of her (Ukrainian) family name was more than just symbolic, as it separated her from association with her Ukrainian heritage. It is noteworthy that Akhmatova chose a name that is not distinctively Ukrainian, nor Russian, but a third, outside, Tatar entity. Given her mother's descent from Russian nobility and the Tatars, combined with her Ukrainian blood, it seems that Akhmatova did not see these ethnicities as mutually exclusive—she could be both part of the Russian nobility and tied to her Tatar roots, while cursorily acknowledging the presence of Ukraine but minimizing its direct relevance to her life. While Akhmatova completed part of her education in Kyiv, Russian was the current *lingua franca* of the city, and she did not

study Ukrainian at school.[1] Without familial or social influences guiding Akhmatova to embrace the part of her heritage that was Ukrainian, she naturally found herself inclined to adopt the majority, Russian identity and language preference. Akhmatova generally embraced a Russian Imperial identity and historiography, although with some nuance, ambiguity, and inconsistency.

It is important to discuss briefly the ambiguity present in Akhmatova's poetic geography regarding the concept of "Russia." As can be expected of a poet, her geography is inexact, and she uses the term "Russia" at times broadly and at other times specifically, embracing Russia proper or the entire Russian Empire by turns. She applies the term "homeland" to both her somewhat ambiguous concept of "Russia," and also to specific regions of the Russian Empire that are technically outside of Russia. This usage conflates the concepts of Russia in particular and the Russian Empire in general, providing the reader with a tension between specific geographic names and a poet's ambiguous usage. Many of Akhmatova's uses of the terms "Russia" and "native land" appear in her poetry of the war years (including the revolution, civil war, and especially WWII), and this wartime usage tends to emphasizes an inclusiveness and patriotism that Akhmatova extended to the entire empire. While Akhmatova spent more of her lifetime in the Soviet Union than the Russian Empire, she did not accept the Soviet government as her own. Even after the Bolshevik revolution, she continued to write about "Russia" as if it was still the Russian Empire—she did not once speak of the "Soviet Union" in her poetry, thus emphasizing her more imperial mindset.

Regardless of her varying definitions of Russia, Akhmatova did not enjoy a peaceful or

[1] Documents at the State Literary Archives in Kyiv (Tsentral'nii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv-muzei literatury i iskusstva Ukrainy) show Akhmatova's grades while she studied at the Fundukleevskaya Gymnazium from 1906-1907, as well as her course registration cards from the Kyiv Faculty of Law in 1908-1909. She took courses in religion, Russian language, math, geography, history, German, Russian law, Roman law, and other subjects. She did not take any courses in Ukrainian language, literature, history or culture, nor were there any such courses listed as available to her ("Reistratsinna Karta" and "Atestat Akhmatovoi").

easy existence there. Not only was Russia touched by revolutions, civil war, and world wars, but Akhmatova herself experienced personal and familial repressions because of the Soviet Union. Akhmatova had no home of her own for thirty years because she refused to give in to party ideology (Anderson, 49). She moved from friend to friend, often living in destitute and ragged conditions. She became what is referred to as an "internal exile." She did not agree with the ideology of the Soviet Union, but nevertheless felt a deep patriotism to Russia and wanted to remain in her homeland. She was forced into a period of literary silence, and did not publish from 1925-1940 (Reeder, 174). In 1946, Akhmatova was criticized by Communist Party leader Andrei Zhdanov, and this resulted in her loss of pension and ration card (Feinstein, 222). Even though her means of scraping out a living during the Soviet Union was essentially stripped from her when she was rejected by the state-run writers' union, Akhmatova did not desert her homeland. She earned what she could through translating other's poetry.[2] These repressions naturally influenced her poetry and her perceptions of the places where she lived and worked. She did not ignore the suffering that she and others underwent in her beloved homeland, yet she still felt deeply about the *places* dear to her heart and remained loyal to Russia in her life and poetry.

Poetic Analysis and Intro

Much of Akhmatova's early poetry focuses on so-called smaller themes—personal relationships, love, and private life. As she and her poetry matured, she gradually began embracing larger themes. Starting with her 1917 collection (*White Flock),* Akhmatova began "to speak for all the Russian people caught up in the suffering war had produced...Akhmatova felt she had been appointed by God to sing of this suffering and she continued to reject a world of

[2] She translated poems from Lithuanian, Estonian, Armenian, Yiddish, Georgian, Korean among other languages (Khrenkov, 169).

warm, ordinary joys" (Feinstein, 73). Subsequent to the 1924 declaration against her and her later return to writing, Akhmatova became “the moral voice of her people and witness to the horrors of her time. Hers became ‘people’s poetry’ without ever becoming officially accepted, and certainly had much greater truth value because it was never officially accepted” (Clowes, 7-8). This shift to become a poet-witness for her nation also loosely corresponds to an increase in her geographic mentions: While there are many geographic references in her earlier poetry, the majority[3] are found in her later poetry. This later time period is when she fleshed out her poetic geography and displayed her deep patriotism, love of homeland, and more mature perspectives on the world. As she took upon herself the role of the voice of her people and moved away from smaller themes, geography took on a new importance in helping her to create the poetic geography that represented her own personal experience and that of her fellow Russians.

Akhmatova was one of the founders of the Acmeist movement. Like other schools of thought in Russian poetry, Acmeism focused on the power of the word. Unlike Symbolism however, Acmeism focused more on the “conception of the word in its original, primary denotation” and not on the “Symbolist connotation and acoustical suggestion” (Driver, 153). The word was valued for its actual meaning, and not for the representations of other things that it had the power to convey. The style of Acmeist poetry sought to parallel real life, and in fact to make real life even more real by “making the very stone breathe and the star palpitate” (Rusinko, 502). Thus, truth and reality in words was of the utmost importance to the Acmeists. They sought to return the word to its original stability, and not let it continue in the symbolic ambiguity that was the trend of the time (Driver, 151). Three-dimensional, real-world space (or, we might say, *place)* also became important to the Acmeists (Merkel, 2). As Haight observes, “At the core of

[3] Roughly 200 of her 290 geographic references come from her later period of writing.

Acmeism was a refusal to escape into another world, a conviction that God can be found through the here and now on earth, that life is a blessing to be lived" (Haight, 19). This grounding in the real world illustrates the importance that Akhmatova placed on geography and on the places in which she was living and working. Akhmatova did not seek to escape to another realm, nor to write poetry that was focused on a fantastical world: she sought to depict the world around her as she saw it to be. This concreteness of words is visible as Akhmatova describes scenes, feelings, and *places* in a realistic manner. Yet while her geographic references in some measure reflect reality, she nonetheless creates an imaginary geography, laced with her own memories and estimations of various *places*.

Geography in her poetry: Concentric circles of home

Akhmatova's poetic geography can be envisioned broadly as a series of concentric circles, with the innermost circle representing her primary level of love and allegiance, and further out circles indicating progressively less personal affiliation. These circles are representative both in sheer numbers of her poetry and in the tone in which she writes. Her innermost circle is her beloved Leningrad, the city she claims as her cradle and the place that she became a poet. Her next circle comprises the entirety of the Russian Empire.[4] These references to the rest of the Russian empire include discussions of Moscow, Tashkent, and Ukraine. Akhmatova's poetic geography displays allegiance to her entire homeland, censuring those who would dare to leave Russia, and extolling the beauty and importance of the Russian language. Yet she nevertheless frequently maintained a distinction between her beloved Leningrad and the

[4] Due to Akhmatova growing up during the Russian Imperial period and the fact that she never really considered herself a Soviet writer, I have decided to use the term Russian Empire instead of Soviet Union to refer to Russia and the surrounding nations.

rest of the empire. She intellectually understood the Russian Empire as a whole to be her home (and she at times writes with great warmth about places such as Tashkent or Moscow), yet she gave her primary allegiance to her beloved Leningrad. Her final level of allegiance is the world outside of the Russian Empire: she wrote with some praise of Europe and the Biblical lands, but these places nevertheless remained far-removed from her heart and home.

Leningrad/Petersburg[5]

For Akhmatova, St. Petersburg was her home both socially, politically, and culturally. She drew strength and purpose from her associations with other poets as they gathered in the Stray Dog café or walked the streets along the canals. Akhmatova even referred to St. Petersburg as her cradle, despite the fact that she was not born there (Feinstein, 4).[6] Leningrad is at the center of Akhmatova's life and her poetic geography. According to T.A. Pakhareva,

> Всеми нитями своей судьбы и творчества А.А. Ахматова связана с Петербургом—Петроградом—Ленинградом. Даже находясь вдали от Города (например, в Ташкенте, во время эвакуации), она пишет о Ленинграде, все её "ташкентские" строки пронизаны мыслью о нем, о ленинградцах. Понять отношение Ахматовой к Городу, значит, понять что-то очень важное в ее мироощущении и творчестве

[5] Modern-day St. Petersburg has undergone multiple name-changes throughout its history. It was called St. Petersburg until 1914, at which point the name was changed to Petrograd. In 1924 the name was changed to Leningrad. It was changed back to St. Petersburg in 1991. Akhmatova uses the appellation "Petersburg" until 1941, at which point she acquiesces and begins calling her city "Leningrad," entirely bypassing the "Petrograd" interlude (Ketchian, 125). In my discussion of her poetry, I have chosen to use the historically appropriate name of the city that corresponds to the year in which Akhmatova wrote the poem being discussed. Thus, the names Petersburg/Petrograd/Leningrad will appear throughout the dissertation: they refer to the same city, but will indicate the time period to which Akhmatova's poems belong.

[6] This choice by Akhmatova to claim Leningrad as her own is not something unique to her. As Lisa Kirschenbaum writes, "People call a city home, even if they come from elsewhere, when they are able to see its ghosts. Urban ghosts inhabit not buildings or courtyards, but the minds of city dwellers, for whom the city's spaces are 'lived and living' places haunted with stories—individual, shared, imagined, fictive, and real. Registering transformations of the cityscape, locals map them onto the city of memory...Their mental maps include the present and the absent, the real and the remembered city" (Kirschenbaum, 243). Because Akhmatova had spent so much time in Leningrad throughout her life, it had become her native home, replete with "ghosts" of bygone friends and eras.

(Pakhareva, 464).[7]

Akhmatova's life and works are inextricably connected to Leningrad. Her poetic geography begins and is centered in her beloved city. Akhmatova loved her city and wrote about it in detail from an insider's perspective. Taken as a whole, these poems give insight into the culture, history, and geography of Leningrad. As Dmitri Khrenkov concludes,

> Внимание к подробностям, деталям пейзажа, приметам времени и места станет отличительнейшей особенностью стихов Анны Ахматовой. Их можно рекомендовать всем, кто хочет изучать Ленинград. Вспомним слова В.М. Жирмунского, в числе первых писавшего об Ахматовой. Он заметил: "Петербургский пейзаж...был ее поэтичестким открытием (Khrenkov, 64).[8]

Akhmatova portrayed the city in a unique, poetic light. Akhmatova was a self-declared student of the architecture of Petersburg, and herself wrote, ""Примерно с середины двацатых годов, я начала очень усердно и с большим интересом заниматься архитектурой старого Петербурга" (Akhmatova, v. 2, 268).[9] *Place* and architecture were very important to her, and her attention to detail is made manifest in her poems. It is evident that she cared a great deal about the appearance and the realia of the city she called her home.

Akhmatova cared not just about the physical appearance and architecture of her city, but also about its social and humanistic aspects. In a radio address to the inhabitants of Leningrad in

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[7] "A.A. Akhmatova is connected to Petersburg—Petrograd—Leningrad—with all the threads of her fate and work. Even while located far from the city (for example, in Tashkent during her evacuation), she writes about Leningrad; all her "Tashkent" lines are pierced with the thought of it [Leningrad] and about the Leningraders. To understand Akhmatova's relationship to the city means to understand something very important in her worldview and creativity."

[8] "Attention to details, the details of the landscape, to the signs of the time and place will become the distinctive feature of Anna Akhmatova's poems. They can be recommended to everyone who wants to study Leningrad. We recall the words of V.M. Zhirmunsky, among the first to write about Akhmatova. He remarked: 'The Petersburg landscape…was her poetic discovery."

[9] "Around the mid-twenties I began to study very diligently and with great interest the architecture of old Petersburg."

September, 1941, during the German occupation of her city, Akhmatova emphasized her love for Leningrad. She stated, “Вот уже больше месяца, как враг грозит нашему городу пленом, наносит ему тяжелые раны.... Вся жизнь моя связана с Ленинградом... Я, как все вы сейчас, живу одной непоколебимой верой в то, что Ленинград никогда не будет фашистским” (Akhmatova, vol. 2, 247).[10] Her patriotism ran deep for Leningrad, and she sought to defend it from outside enemies.

Akhmatova likewise valued the cultural heritage of Leningrad. In this same radio speech, she called Leningrad «Город Петра, город Ленина, город Пушкина, Достоевского и Блока» (Akhmatova, vol. 2, 247).[11] Akhmatova saw her beloved city as not just a place of buildings and streets, but as the inheritor of much of Russia’s highest culture. For her, Leningrad was a reminder of the literature and the great minds of Russia. For her, home was not just about a certain collection of bricks or streets, but rather the relationships forged in those locations and the memories (both personal and cultural) that they hold. The *space* of the Neva’s banks had become for Akhmatova the most important *place* in the world.

In writing about Leningrad, Akhmatova joined a literary discussion focused on the myth of St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg has been personified in literature, creating the “отрицателный миф” of Petersburg (Ustiugova, 28). One of the social roots of this myth—subsequently depicted in literature—is the image of a city that is indifferent to its inhabitants (Ustiugova, 28). This literary myth was based on the historical reality of Peter the Great building Petersburg by the means of what was essentially slave labor. Tens of thousands of lives were lost in this pet project of the emperor. The subsequent natural disasters (flooding in particular) were seen as a natural

[10] “It has already been over a month since the enemy has threatened our city with captivity, inflicting severe wounds on him…My whole life is connected with Leningrad...I, like all of you now, live by the one unshakable faith that Leningrad will never be fascist.”
[11] “The city of Peter, the city of Lenin, the city of Pushkin, Dostoevsky and Blok.”

consequence of Petersburg's inauspicious beginnings. This appears in literature with Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman," in which the protagonist Evgenii is chased by the animate Bronze Horseman on the banks of the overflowing Neva (Pushkin, "The Bronze Horseman," 59-71).[12] Pushkin's Peter is a mighty, yet terrible force that is indifferent to the loss of human life. Gogol continues this trend with his Petersburg tales, which focus on the lurking evil of St. Petersburg. Dostoevsky and Bely also discuss this myth in their works, as do Merezhkovsky, Blok, Annensky, and others (Struve, 141). Akhmatova partially subscribed to this myth: she acknowledged the ominous presence of Peter the Great and referred to Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman." Some of her poems allude to a lurking, mysterious force. In other ways, however, she presented an alternative view of the city: in the majority of her poems she portrayed a very realistic city (consistent with her Acmeist tendencies) where people live, fall in love, and suffer. It is a *place* of war, peace, history, and culture. The mysterious demons and compulsions of the Petersburg myth do not play heavily into Akhmatova's perception or depiction of her city, although there are many elements of oppression and sorrow.

Akhmatova's feelings for Leningrad and depictions of it were rich, varied, contradictory, and abundant. Her verse «Петроград, 1919»[13] serves as a worthy starting point to parse out some of these various aspects of Akhmatova's city. During the difficult years of the Russian civil war, Akhmatova chose to remain in her beloved Petrograd. While the suffering was fierce in Petrograd, Akhmatova did not want to abandon her land.

И мы забыли навсегда,

Заключены в столице дикой,

[12] Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman" was written in response to Adam Mickiewicz's Russian "digressions" in *Forefathers' Eve,* in which Mickiewicz depicts Petersburg as "a city of tears and abuses" (Struve, 141). Thus, the literary tradition of the negative myth of St. Petersburg appears to have originated in Polish literature.
[13] "Petrograd, 1919"

Озера, степи, города

И зори родины великой (Akhmatova, 136).[14]

The initial lines of this verse establish a distinction between Petrograd and the rest of Russia. Akhmatova describes Petrograd as a wild or savage capital, while there is elsewhere a wide "native land" with lakes, steppes, and cities. All of Russia is embraced as the native land, and it is beautiful and vast. (In this case, Russia could be considered a *space,* since it is vast and its reaches are not fully known.) The speaker almost seems wistful that the expanse outside of Petrograd is now unavailable to her. The outside reaches of Russia beyond Petrograd have been forgotten, as the speaker is secluded in the city. The negative depiction of her city continues:

В кругу кровавом день и ночь

Долит жестокая истома... (Akhmatova, 136).[15]

The fighting and suffering taking place in Petrograd result in it becoming a "bloody circle." At this point, the reader is led to question why the speaker would still be in Petrograd if doing so results in isolation in a violent city. The poet explains:

Никто нам не хотел помочь

За то, что мы остались дома,

За то, что, город свой любя,

А не крылатую свободу,

Мы сохранили для себя

Его дворцы, огонь и воду (Akhmatova, 136).[16]

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[14] "And confined to this savage capital,/We have forgotten forever/The lakes, the steppes, the towns,/And the dawns of our great native land" (Hemschemeyer, 259).

[15] "Day and night in the bloody circle/A brutal languor overcomes us..." (Hemschemeyer, 259).

[16] "No one wants to help us/Because we stayed home,/Because, loving our city/And not winged freedom,/We preserved for ourselves/Its palaces, its fire and water" (Hemschemeyer, 259).

These lines introduce an intriguing distinction between the concept of "home" and "native land." Akhmatova earlier described all of Russia as her native land, but here emphasizes that there can be levels of allegiance even within one's native land: Akhmatova did not want to abandon "город свой" even for a place within the rest of her native land. Her clear preference for Petrograd is thus established within her poetic works. Her innermost concentric circle of home is Petrograd: this is the *place* for her that is imbued with the most meaning, despite the love that she holds for both the *space* and *place* of the rest of her native land. The first sixteen lines of this poem sit together in one stanza. The final quatrain stands alone, perhaps emphasizing the "different time" that is approaching and the entering of a new era.

Иная близится пора,

Уж ветер смерти сердце студит,

Но нам священный град Петра

Невольным памятником будет (Akhmatova, 136).[17]

Even in the face of impending death, Akhmatova remained stoic, convinced that it was preferable to die in her beloved city than to abandon it for a different place elsewhere in Russia. The phrase "священный град Петра" ties Akhmatova to the tsarist and Russian Orthodox history of Russia. The use of the old Slavonic "град" instead of the modern "город" lends an extra weight of history and culture to her claim. She is appealing to the myth of Petersburg in this comment, tying her fate with Peter the Great and perhaps even Evgenii and the rest of Petersburg's sufferers.

In this poem, Akhmatova describes Petrograd itself as a «дикая столица», «круг кровавы», «город свой», and «священный град Петра». In this manner she connects

[17] "A different time is drawing near,/The wind of death already chills the heart,/But the holy city of Peter/Will be our unintended monument" (Hemschemeyer, 259).

Petersburg to three separate entities: it is the wild capital of the bloody revolution, it is her own city and home, and it represents the legacy of Peter the Great. This multi-faceted view of Petrograd necessitates that we examine Akhmatova's relationship to the city in a few different categories: her personal relationship with the city; the legacy of Peter the Great; and the city as the bed of revolution and battleground in war.

Personal relationship with the city

In her poetic geography, Akhmatova consistently referred to Leningrad as her city: she claimed the capital as her own place, and she remained faithful to it through personal and national tragedies. In a 1929 poem, she described Leningrad as "Тот город, мной любимый с детства" (Akhmatova, 175).[18] Although she was born near Odessa and spent time in various cities throughout her childhood, it is Leningrad that was dearest to her heart. Another poem from 1914 also emphasizes Akhmatova's nascent attachment to Leningrad: simultaneously praising and censuring her city, Akhmatova writes,

> Был блаженной моей колыбелью
>
> Темный город у грозной реки (Akhmatova, 85).[19]

While her native cradle was blissful, it was nonetheless a dark city on a terrible river. Akhmatova did not shirk from the negative legacy of Petersburg, but embraced all aspects of her city.

Akhmatova had lived in other cities and had the ability to move elsewhere if she desired, but she felt compelled to remain in Petrograd. In a 1915 poem, Akhmatova explained her decision to choose Petrograd as her own. The poem conjectures about the easy life that two lovers would have in a village, sweetly murmuring to each other across a fence. This pastoral scene is then followed by Akhmatova's description of the challenges she and her lover face in

[18] "This city, beloved by me since childhood" (Hemschemeyer, 375-376).
[19] "My blissful cradle was / A dark city on a menacing river" (Hemschemeyer, 183).

the city:

А мы живем торжественно и трудно

И чтим обряды наших горьких встреч,

Когда с налету ветер безрассудный

Чуть начатую обрывает речь (Akhmatova, 92).[20]

The wind is an active element in the story (perhaps a supernatural force), forcing the two lovers apart and hampering their ability to communicate. Despite these Petrograd challenges, however, the poet asserts,

Но ни на что не променяем пышный

Гранитный город славы и беды,

Широких рек сияющие льды,

Бессолнечные, мрачные сады

И голос Музы еле слышный (Akhmatova, 92).[21]

The speaker expresses the commitment that she and her beloved share to the city, even while acknowledging the negative aspects of the city: it is difficult to hear the Muse; the gardens are gloomy, and it is a city of calamity and supernatural wind. But the couple is devoted to the splendid city and will remain in it regardless of glory or suffering.

In a poem from 1914 also connecting love and Petrograd, Akhmatova recounted how an angel betrothed her to another person, and is now watching over them.

Ангел, зимним утром

Тайно обручивший нас,

[20] "But we live ceremoniously and with difficulty / And we observe the rites of our bitter meetings, / When suddenly the reckless wind / Breaks off a sentence just begun—" (Hemschemeyer, 191).
[21] "But not for anything would we exchange this splendid / Granite city of fame and calamity, / The wide rivers of glistening ice, / The sunless, gloomy gardens, / And, barely audible, the Muse's voice" (Hemschemeyer, 191).

С нашей жизни беспечальной

Глаз не сводит потемневших (Akhmatova, 92).[22]

The angel seems at times benevolent and at times menacing: He set the two lovers together, but the darkness in his eyes as he watches the carefree lovers bears an ominous weight. Perhaps the lovers are aware that their time is limited before the mysterious forces of Petrograd tear them from one another. Despite this subtle fear, however, the couple is happy in their love and city.

Оттого мы любим строгий,

Многоводный, темный город

И разлуки наши любим,

И часы недолгих встреч (Akhmatova, 92).[23]

The city—and its supernatural forces—have brought the two lovers together. They are tied to not just each other, but to the city. This love is so deep that they do not mind the separations and the too-brief meetings. Petrograd has won their love by betrothing them to each other despite the ominous, silent threatening of the supernatural angel and the austere, dark city.

Even after the revolution commenced in 1917, Akhmatova remained firm in her devotion to Petrograd. She described the city in glowing and condemning terms, as both "the city of the gatekeeper of paradise," and "the city of the dead tsar" (Hemschemeyer, 650). The tension between Petrograd's two extremes—paradise and regicide—emphasizes the mental conflict that raged in the poet as to whether it was right to give allegiance to the city. The city is also a place of nature and human ingenuity—boats and churches are intertwined with an endlessly deep river and beautiful gardens with their May sunrises. The contradictions of the city seem to flow into

[22] "The angel of God, having secretly / Betrothed us one winter day, / Watches over our carefree lives / With fixed, darkening eyes" (Hemschemeyer, 191).
[23] "Because of this we love the stern / Dark city with its many waterways. / And we love our partings, / And our brief meetings" (Hemschemeyer, 191).

one another, creating a multi-faceted geography of the *place*. In the last four lines of the poem, Akhmatova provided her final assessment of the city she described: “I chose this marvelous city of my own accord, / This burning heart of earthly delights, / And it always seemed to me that I was singing / My latest song in paradise” (Hemschemeyer, 650). Akhmatova held Petrograd in highest esteem, asserting that she chose this “marvelous” city of her own will, regardless of the bloodshed that occurred there. To Akhmatova, to be in Petrograd was to be in paradise, yet it is interesting to note that her paradise was a place of earthly delights (such as the boats on the river and the May sunrises), once again emphasizing the opposing tensions existing in the enigmatic Petrograd.

Akhmatova’s patriotism was not blind to the shortcomings and sufferings of her capital; nevertheless, she displayed a very clear preference for her home city. Despite those who were calling for her to leave her city in these times of war and suffering, she decided to remain true to it. In the fall of 1917 (or perhaps in 1918, as Roberta Reeder argues) Akhmatova wrote,

Когда в тоске самоубийства

Народ гостей немецких ждал,

И дух суровый византийства

От русской Церкви отлетал (Akhmatova, Inter-Language, 185)[24]

The event discussed in the first few lines “may refer to the Brest-Litovsk Treaty of March 1918, in which the Bolsehviks capitulated to the Germans” (Reeder, 147). The entire Russian nation stands in distressed anticipation of the German “guests” taking over lands once belonging to the Russian Empire. Akhmatova’s Petrograd was complicit in this fall, as the tradition of Byzantium had left the church—the Bolsheviks abandoned the Orthodox faith. The fallen city is even

[24] “When in suicidal anguish / The nation awaited its German guests, / And the stern spirit of Byzantium / Had fled from the Russian Church” (Hemschemeyer, 253).

described as a drunken prostitute (Hemschemeyer, 253). Petrograd, passing through the hands of various governments and engaged in its own forms of worldliness, had forgotten its own greatness, betraying the historical and cultural legacy left to it by the tsars and poets. This fickleness and faithlessness on the part of the capital resulted in its fall from grace and subsequent suffering. At this moment of observing her fallen capital, the poet hears a voice.

Мне голос был. Он звал утешно,
Он говорил: «Иди сюда,
Оставь свой край глухой и грешный,
Оставь Россию навсегда.

Я кровь от рук твоих отмою,
Из сердца выну черный стыд,
Я новым именем покрою
Боль поражений и обид» (Akhmatova, 135).[25]

The faraway voice calls to Akhmatova, entreating her to leave sinful Petrograd. The voice speaks comfortingly, promising to take away the poet's shame. He acknowledges that the poet's hands are bloody, but that this blood can be washed through leaving behind the sinful city and country. While this voice speaks externally, it echoes the poet's inner feelings: the speaker knows that there is shame in the poet's heart and that the sins of her country are known to her. Akhmatova does not debate the speaker in this regard (especially since she herself had already termed her capital a prostitute), but she instead bases her defense of Petrograd on a different understanding

[25] "A voice came to me. It called out comfortingly, / It said, 'Come here, / Leave your deaf and sinful land, / Leave Russia forever. / I will wash the blood from your hands, / Root out the black shame from your heart, / With a new name I will conceal / The pain of defeats and injuries' (Hemschemeyer, 254).

of morality and worthiness.

Но равнодушно и спокойно

Руками я замкнула слух,

Чтоб этой речью недостойной

Не осквернился скорбный дух (Akhmatova, 135)[26]

While the voice had classified Russia as being sinful, Akhmatova labels the speech of her interlocuter as «недостойной» ("unworthy"), and closes her ears so as not to hear it. The fight between good and evil that both sides are employing in defense of their respective decisions strengthens the dichotomy between the two positions—leaving Russia or staying—and makes it an issue of morality, not merely of personal taste or safety. Akhmatova argued that morality lies on the side of remaining in one's homeland. She was firm in her own decision to remain in Petrograd and Russia, and she would not be swayed by the arguments of those who tried to lure her away in the name of righteousness. While Akhmatova was not ignorant of the atrocities committed in and by Russia, she—unlike many of those who left—was able to distinguish between the government and the nation. It was her nation that she was staying with—her nation of Orthodoxy and culture and beauty. The poem is written in (imperfect) iambic tetrameter, perhaps as a nod to Pushkin, who favored this meter. By writing in this traditional form, Akhmatova is tying her decision to stay back to a rich culture, and one in which even Pushkin himself was persecuted by an unjust government. The imperfections in the rhythm indicate an internal struggle as the speaker decides which of the two sides to heed.

In 1917, Akhmatova wrote her poem «Теперь прощай, столица» as she was preparing

[26] "But calmly and indifferently, / I covered my ears with my hands, / So that my sorrowing spirit / Would not be stained by those shameful words" (Hemschemeyer, 253).

to leave the city for the summer.[27] This leaving was not the permanent departure that she condemned in the previous poem, but rather a yearly relocation during the summer months. In this verse, the speaker calls the capital «весна моя»,[28] implying that it was the early home of much personal growth, as well as the joy and life of her existence. The oriole, «подруга моих безгрешных дней»[29] has returned from the south just yesterday. The indication that the speaker spent "sinless days" in this city implies that it is the home of her youth—she had not grown up enough yet to sin before this bird and this city became hers. She describes the capital itself in positive, organic terms:

Поля и огороды

Спокойно зелены,

Еще глубоки воды

И небеса бледны (Akhmatova, 132).[30]

Akhmatova's capital is peaceful and enrobed in nature. Tying her city to the folkloric traditions of Russia, Akhmatova write:

Болотная русалка,

Хозяйка этих мест,

Глядит, вздыхая жалко,

На колокольный крест (Akhmatova, 132).[31]

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[27] Akhmatova wrote of her yearly exodus: «Каждое лето я проводила в бывшей Тверской губернии, в пятнадцати верстах от Бежецка. Это неживописное место: распаханные ровными квадратами на холмистой местности поля, мельницы…» (Akhmatova, vol. 2, 268). ["I spent each summer in the former Tver province, fifteen versts from Bezhetsk. It is a non-picturesque place: plowed up like even squares on the hilly terrain, fields, mills."]

[28] "my spring" (Hemschemeyer, 249).

[29] "a friend / From my sinless days" (Hemschemeyer, 249).

[30] "The fields and vegetable gardens / Are peacefully green, / The waters are still deep / And the heavens pale" (Hemschemeyer, 184).

[31] "The water nymph of the marshes, / The mistress of those places, / Stares, sighing piteously, / At the bell-tower cross" (Hemschemeyer, 249).

This introduces a supernatural element to Akhmatova's Petrograd, but it is not the oppressive, negative force of the Petersburg myth but rather the accepted and benign sovereign of the water. It seems that the speaker wants to stay and is only with reluctance leaving her beloved capital, listening to the oriole who says,

Что стыдно оставаться

До мая в городах,

В театре задыхаться,

Скучать на островах (Akhmatova, 132).[32]

While Akhmatova does not appreciate this advice from her bird friend, she nevertheless observes that she will leave the following day. This departure almost seems to be a farewell to life, as she concludes the poem with the words, «Страна Господня, / Прими к себе меня!» (Akhmatova, 133).[33] This appeal implies that, for the poet, any departure from her beloved Petrograd (even if it is temporary and annual) is akin to death itself. The poem is divided into seven quatrains with alternating feminine and masculine rhymes; the lines are three-foot iambs. The regularity and the structure of such a form emphasizes the regimented nature of the poet's yearly departure against her wishes.

One important location for Akhmatova within Leningrad was Fountain House. She lived here with some interruptions from 1918-1952, splitting her time between the north wing (1918-1920) and the south wing (1920-1952) (Popova and Rubinchik, 6). Akhmatova experienced difficult times while living in this house, including her tempestuous marriage to Shileiko, and the uncomfortable later years when Lev joined his mother, putting a strain on all in the Punin

[32] "That it's shameful to stay / In the cities till May, / Stifle in theaters, / Mope on these islands" (Hemschemeyer, 249).
[33] "Land of our Lord, / Take me in!" (Hemschemeyer, 249).

household (Popova and Rubinchik, 19-20, 67). Despite these challenges, however, Akhmatova made many good memories in this house and viewed it as an important location. This *place* was significant not just for its own merits, but for its legacy: Pushkin had also lived in Fountain House, and Akhmatova and Shileiko felt his influence there (Popova and Rubinchik, 34-35). Reflecting on this house in 1952, Akhmatova wrote,

> Особенных претензий не имею
>
> Я к этому сиятельному дому,
>
> Но так случилось, что почти всю жизнь
>
> Я прожила под знаменитой кровлей
>
> Фонтанного Дворца… Я нищей
>
> В него вошла и нищей выхожу… (Akhmatova, 346).[34]

In this humble admission, Akhmatova alludes to the poor circumstances in which she lived in the former palace. She shared the apartments of others, living in cramped quarters and suffering greatly. Despite her own humility, however, she recognized the greatness of Fountain House itself, calling it both "illustrious" and "celebrated." Not only the living inhabited these cramped, illustrious quarters, however: Akhmatova wrote in another poem about the spirits of the Fountain House.

> Что там — в сумраках чужих?
>
> Шереметьевские липы...
>
> Перекличка домовых...
>
> Осторожно подступает,

[34] "I don't have special claims / On this illustrious house, / But it happens that almost my whole life / I have lived under the celebrated roof / Of the Fountain Palace...As a pauper / I arrived and as a pauper I will leave..." (Hemschemeyer, 701).

Как журчание воды,

К уху жарко приникает

Черный шепоток беды (Akhmatova, 177).[35]

Fountain House is haunted by the spirits of *domovoi,* or the mythological house spirits that inhabit homes in the Slavic traditions (Ivanits, 51).[36] While *domovoi* are generally positive entities, the spirits in the Fountain House bring discomfort and darkness, portending evil. This presence of spirits once again ties Akhmatova to the myth of St. Petersburg, creating a picture of Leningrad that is not entirely comprehensible through mortal logic. The traditional house spirits become objects of madness, darkness, and fear, creating a picture of Leningrad in which humans are not entirely in control of their lives and emotions.

Leningrad is frequently the setting for Akhmatova's vignettes of life and love, and she depicted the city as a reflection of the action that occurring in her and others' lives. As she recounts either negative or positive elements of her experience, the city seems to respond to and resonate with what she is feeling. Leningrad lives and breathes in her, showing an animation and personality that elevate the city from inanimate status. Recounting one meeting with a lover, Akhmatova wrote,

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[35] "What's there—in the strange gloom? / The Scheremetev lindens... / The roll call of the spirits of the house... / Approaching cautiously, / Like gurgling water, / Misfortune's black whisper / Nestles warmly to my ear" (Hemschemeyer, 379).

[36] Linda Ivanits writes, "The image of a spirit-protector of the house and farmstead was one of the most deep-rooted and long-lasting heritages of Russian paganism. Throughout the nineteenth century collectors noted the steadfastness of folk belief in this personage, usually designated domovoi from the Russian word for 'house' (dom), and they collected numerous accounts of his activities, many from people who claimed to be eyewitnesses. A study of a village in Iaroslavl' Province carried out in the middle of the nineteenth century by the Imperial Russian Geographic Society indicated that there was hardly a peasant who did not claim some firsthand experience of this spirit. On the verge of the twentieth century, when a rudimentary education was beginning to penetrate into rural areas and one encountered some skepticism regarding the existence of the devil and nature spirits, most peasants still retained their faith in the obligatory presence around the homestead of one or more spirit-protectors. Notions about the domovoi were fairly consistent throughout Russia. Peasants viewed him as an overseer of domestic activities whose benevolence was essential to the proper functioning of the farmstead and family unit. His place of residence was within the confines of the individual farmstead: sometimes within the dwelling itself, near the stove, under the threshold, or in the attic; sometimes in the cattle shed or, more often, the stable" (Ivanits, 51).

Пар валит из-под царских конюшен,

Погружается Мойка во тьму,

Свет луны как нарочно притушен,

И куда мы идем — не пойму (Akhmatova, 179).[37]

The purposeful dimming of the moon insinuates that Leningrad is at least cursorily aware of this meeting between the lovers and seeks to create the ideal, mysterious, and somewhat ominous ambience. As the couple wanders, the city continues to paint itself in the same dark hues of oppression.

Меж гробницами внука и деда

Заблудился взъерошенный сад.

Из тюремного вынырнув бреда,

Фонари погребально горят.

В грозных айсбергах Марсово поле,

И Лебяжья лежит в хрусталях...

Чья с моею сравняется доля,

Если в сердце веселье и страх (Akhmatova, 179-180).[38]

From the gardens to the terrible icebergs, all of Leningrad has conspired to appear ominous and threatening. The foggy uncertainty of the couple's relationship and intentions is reflected in the obfuscated oppression of the city. In the final stanza of this verse, however, the tone suddenly

[37] "Steam pours from the stables of the tsar, / The Moika is plunged in darkness, / The light of the moon, as if on purpose, is dimmed, / And where we are going—I don't understand" (Hemschemeyer, 381).
[38] "The garden, gone wild, wanders / Between the tombstones of grandfather, grandchild. / Emerging from feverish imprisonment, / The streetlights burn funereally. / There are menacing icebergs on the Field of Mars, / And the Lebyazhya Canal in crystal lies... / Whose fate can be compared with mine, / Since joy and horror both are in my heart" (Hemschemeyer, 381).

changes.

И трепещет, как дивная птица,

Голос твой у меня над плечом.

И внезапным согретый лучом

Снежный прах так тепло серебрится (Akhmatova, 180).[39]

These first words uttered by either person—notwithstanding the fact that they are withheld from the reader—bring a sudden lightness and hope to the poem. The gloom is dispelled not just between the two lovers, but also in the city itself as it mirrors the emotions of the couple. Akhmatova's Leningrad is an outward representation of her inner life: the city responds to her feelings and experiences and mirrors her expectations.

Akhmatova's relationship to Leningrad was deeply personal and multi-faceted. She claimed the city as her own: it was her blissful cradle and the place of her love and sorrow. Her loyalty to the city ran deep and transcended any shortcomings she saw in her beautiful, mysterious, and responsive city.

Nature in Petersburg—Summer Garden and the Neva

While nature is relatively rare in Akhmatova's geographic poetry without some sort of human-made structure in it (such as a bridge or apartment building), two main features of Petersburg stand as exceptions: The Summer Garden (albeit a cultivated piece of nature) and the Neva River. Akhmatova's descriptions of nature are always charged with emotion and are generally the backdrop for some personal conflict or story that she shares. These depictions of nature are not always positive. Such negativity is frequently a subtle nod to the legend of St. Petersburg and the legacy of Peter, as building on the river delta was a brash move, setting man

[39] "And pulsating like a marvelous bird, / Your voice hovers over my shoulder. / And illuminated by a sudden ray, / The snowy powder becomes warm silver" (Hemschemeyer, 381).

against the nature of the place they were building in.

Akhmatova recounts an argument with a lover that takes place against the backdrop of an oppressive Petersburg spring:

И глядит мне в глаза сухие

Петербургская весна.

Трудным кашлем, вечерним жаром

Наградит по заслугам, убьет.

На Неве под млеющим паром

Начинается ледоход. (Akhmatova 90-91).[40]

The nature of Petersburg is thus associated with intensely negative words: cough, fever, death, shivering. Akhmatova invokes these negative aspects of Petersburg's nature as heralds of the suffering she claims to deserve. The oppressive and negative natural elements of Petersburg mimic and respond to the internal and interpersonal strife Akhmatova is experiencing: the relationship, Akhmatova's negative self-assessment, and the nature of Petersburg are all stifling.

Akhmatova frequently alludes to backstories that the reader does not have as she discusses events and occur in Petersburg. For example, in a short quatrain, she recounts throwing thousands of bell-towers into the Neva and henceforth being known as the queen of insomnia (Hemschemeyer, 718). The Neva River thus becomes a place associated with sleepless aggression. Another short poem backgrounded by the Neva captures only the very end of a meeting as the man leaves Akhmatova:

От меня, как от той графини,

[40] "And into my dry eyes / stares the Petersburg spring. / It will give me what I deserve, / A heavy cough, night fevers, death. / On the Neva, under the shivering mist, / The ice is beginning to drift" (Hemschemeyer, 189).

Шел по лесенке винтовой,

Чтоб увидеть рассветный, синий

Страшный час над страшною Невой (Akhmatova, 373).[41]

The Neva is not a neutral entity in these lines, but something terrible. The subtext of this poem is likely Pushkin's "Queen of Spades," and Akhmatova recounts a man rushing from her as he did from the dead countess. There is an air of terrible mystery and foreboding in this poem, yet it is interesting to note that the "dreadful" hour is dawn. This implies that the meeting has taken place all night. Instead of bringing hope, however, the new day dawns in a terrible hour over the terrible Neva.

Yet the Neva River is not exclusively an entity of horror: Akhmatova portrays the Neva waters as possessing healing powers. In a poignant 1942 patriotic poem about a wounded youth asking the speaker for help, Akhmatova writes,

Принеси же мне горсточку чистой,

Нашей невской студеной воды,

И с головки твоей золотистой

Я кровавые смою следы (Akhmatova, 206).[42]

Although the speaker admits to being beyond a high mountain now (this verse was written while Akhmatova was in Tashkent), she will always hear the cry of the young boy. Her medicine of choice for healing the young man is water from their native Neva river. Even while located far away from the Neva, Akhmatova thinks of it as the means of healing the innocent youths who have been injured in their fighting. She claims the Neva river as her own (наш), elevating it to a

[41] "Away from me, as from that countess, / He went down the spiral staircase, / To witness the dawning, dark blue, / Dreadful hour over the dreadful Neva" (Hemschemeyer, 714)

[42] "Bring me in your cupped palms / Some of our cool, pure, Neva water, / And I will wash the bloody traces / From your golden hair" (Hemschemeyer, 429).

position of national and cultural importance. The Neva becomes a symbol for the healing of the entire nation.

The Neva is also a representation of immortality: it connects the world of the living with life after death. In a 1957 verse dedicated to her friend Osip Mandelstam, Akhmatova juxtaposes the friends' earthly steps near the Neva with the possibility of eternal life.

Это наши проносятся тени

Над Невой, над Невой, над Невой,

Это плещет Нева о ступени,

Это пропуск в бессмертие твой (Akhmatova, 251).[43]

Akhmatova connects the Neva river both to life and death; the shadows of their former, mortal experiences are above the Neva, while the Neva also represents Mandelstam's gateway to immortality. The flowing nature of the river allows it to poetically connect both realms.

Another important element of nature in Akhmatova's Petersburg poetry is the Summer Garden. The garden, as beautiful as it may be, is nonetheless an artificial and cultivated piece of nature.[44] This garden is refined, cultured, and self-contained.

Я к розам хочу, в тот единственный сад,

Где лучшая в мире стоит из оград,

Где статуи помнят меня молодой,

А я их под невскою помню водой (Akhmatova, 241).[45]

This garden is a place of Akhmatova's childhood. She maintains a personal relationship with it

[43] "Here are our shadows rushing by, / Over the Neva, over the Neva, over the Neva, / Here is the Neva splashing against the steps— / Here is your pass to immortality" (Hemschemeyer, 418)

[44] The cultivation and refined artificiality of the nature in Summer Garden is a far cry from the untamed nature of the steppe that Kostenko glorifies, as will be seen in the next chapter.

[45] "I want to visit the roses in that unique garden, / Fenced by the world's most magnificent fence, / Where the statues remember me as young, / And I remember them under the Neva's waters" (Hemschemeyer, 477).

and implies that the garden likewise remembers her. Her memory of the place is not entirely joyful, however, as it is a testament to friends and enemies she has lost.

И замертво спят сотни тысяч шагов

Врагов и друзей, друзей и врагов (Akhmatova, 241).[46]

This is a *place* where she has been connected with friends and enemies. The high life of St. Petersburg has passed through these garden paths with her, and she feels connected to her personal and national history in this location. She also alludes to the white nights and the mysterious love affairs often associated with them. Even in this cultivated, well-described location, there is still some element of mystery and the unknown. Expounding upon Summer Garden as a *place* of memory, Akhmatova invokes it in the name of friendship, suggesting that "misty, magic" mirrors of the past can bring back the imagery and memories of previous relationships.

В тот час, как рушатся миры,

Примите этот дар весенний

…

И сада Летнего решетка,

И оснеженный Ленинград

Возникли, словно в книге этой

Из мглы магических зеркал,

И над задумчивою Летой

[46] "And sleeping there, like the dead, are hundreds of thousands of footsteps / Of friends and enemies, enemies and friends" (Hemschemeyer, 477).

Тростник оживший зазвучал (Akhmatova, 173).[47]

The Leningrad thus described is a mystical place of longing for past friends and relationships. The poet hopes to return to this imagined *place* of memory where she enjoyed the beauty of Leningrad and the association of friends.

The nature of St. Petersburg in Akhmatova's poetic geography focuses on the cultivated, mysterious Summer Garden and the untamed, threatening—yet healing—Neva River. These natural elements of the city have nevertheless been touched by the hand of man, reflecting some amount of artificiality (the cultivation of a garden, with its gates separating it from the rest of the world, and the encroaching city built on the delta of the river putting itself at risk for flooding from the river). In Akhmatova's poetic geography, Petersburg is an urban cityscape with elements of nature that are by turns ominous and healing; mysterious and beloved.

Legacy of Peter

Akhmatova's poetry engages with the literary myth of St. Petersburg, providing its own version of supernatural events that occur in Petersburg, as well as oppressive and mysterious forces which rule the city. In addition, several of her poems refer directly or indirectly to Peter the Great and the complicated legacy he left for his city. In 1913, Akhmatova wrote a verse directly engaging with Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman," in which she painted a negative view of the angry emperor surveying his city from atop his rearing steed.

Вновь Исакий в облаченье

Из литого серебра.

Стынет в грозном нетерпенье

[47] "In that hour when the worlds collapse, / Accept this springtime gift / And the grilles of the Summer Garden / And snow-sprinkled Leningrad / Might arise, as in this book, / From the dark mist of magic mirrors / And over pensive Lethe / The reed, revived, might start to sing" (Hemschemeyer, 373).

Конь Великого Петра.

Ветер душный и суровый

С черных труб сметает гарь…

Ах! своей столицей новой

Недоволен государь (Akhmatova, 72).[48]

As is the case in Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman," this verse depicts an angry Peter who has power to control the elements. Peter stands on his rearing horse amid the icy wind that it is implied he caused. Although this statue does not come alive as it did for Pushkin, it nevertheless stands as an active participant in the affairs of the city. Peter is able to observe, respond to, and grow angry over his capital. This poem emphasizes that the capital belongs to Peter, an important note in light of the myth of St. Petersburg, as the negative myth portrays the city as oblivious to its inhabitants: the regular citizens are too small to be noticed, and the city is actually ruled and reigned over by Peter himself.

In part two of the previous poem, Akhmatova recounts a reunion with a lover after years of separation. As the two stand under Galernaya arch, they enjoy a "блаженный миг чудес, / В миг, когда на Летним Садом / Месяц розовый воскрес" (Akhmatova, 72).[49] They rejoice in their freedom and in the hope that their lives will improve. The peace of this quiet, intimate moment is shattered, however, by the ever-present gaze of the Emperor Peter.

Ты свободен, я свободна,

[48] "Once more St. Isaac's wears robes / Of cast silver. / And frozen in fierce impatience / Stands the horse of Peter the Great. / A harsh and stifling wind / Sweeps soot from the black chimneys... / Ah! His new capital / Displeases the sovereign" (Hemschemeyer, 160).

[49] "blissful miraculous moment, / The moment of the resurrection of the rose-colored moon / Over the Summer Garden" (Hemschemeyer, 160).

Завтра лучше, чем вчера, —

Над Невою темноводной,

Под улыбкою холодной

Императора Петра (Akhmatova, 73).[50]

The form of this poem provides insights into Akhmatova's conclusions about Peter. The first four stanzas of this poem are each written in trochaic tetrameter with alternating feminine and masculine rhymes. This final stanza initially follows that same pattern, both in form and tone: the positivity of the couple's reunion continues into the first two lines of the final stanza, along with the regular rhythmic and rhyme schemes. The third line, however, destroys the positive approach of the poem (the waters of the Neva are dark), and provides only a slant rhyme to the first line. The fourth line continues the negative tone introduced by the third line—describing a cold smile—and entirely changes the rhyme scheme by rhyming exactly with the third line. The final line of the poem introduces a fifth line into what the reader expected to be a quatrain. The entirety of this line is "Императора Петра" ("Of Emperor Peter"), leaving the name of the sovereign standing conspicuously, ominously, and irregularly by himself. He represents the dark conclusion of the poem, where the love of a couple is threatened by his presence. Akhmatova leaves the rest of the story untold, allowing the reader to fill in the blanks with the negative outcome of Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman" where the happy couple is maliciously destroyed by Peter the Great and his supernatural city. Akhmatova ascribes to Petersburg this same supernatural power, wielded by its founder.

Akhmatova also invokes the image of Peter and "The Bronze Horseman" in a 1922 verse discussing an impending flood in her city. The situation in the city is dire, and the land's native

[50] "You are free, I am free, / Tomorrow will be better than yesterday— / Over the Neva's dark waters, / Under the cold smile / Of Emperor Peter" (Hemschemeyer, 161).

swamp is encroaching everywhere. Akhmatova personifies the waters, enduing them with the supernatural power that allowed them to destroy Evgenii's fiancé. The waters whisper to one another, saying "We'll leave the crypt, stir up everyone, / It's clear, the time for our blue waves / To rule the city has come'" (Hemschemeyer, 660). The negative myth of Petersburg is seen in the chilling self-surety with which the waters address one another: they are prepared to do whatever it takes to rule the city, regardless of how many lives are loss. This cold-hearted calculation to reign echoes Peter's own initial rise to power. While Peter is not directly controlling the elements in this verse, he has passed on his legacy of seeking for power at all costs. The waters in the city have taken upon themselves the role of carrying out Peter's work while he is gone, and the inhabitants of the city are in danger.

In a 1942 poem about the siege of Leningrad, Akhmatova describes the inhabitants of the city as "Petersburg's orphans." This reference to orphans implies an absent father-figure, who is most likely Peter the Great. Peter should have been a father to the inhabitants of his city, but he left them to the horrors of war and natural disasters in his city.

Щели в саду вырыты,

Не горят огни.

Питерские сироты,

Детоньки мои!

Под землей не дышится,

Боль сверлит висок,

Сквозь бомбежку слышится

Детский голосок (Akhmatova, 206).[51]

The tone is tender toward the inhabitants of Leningrad—although they are Petersburg's orphans, the poet claims them as her own little children. In this verse, Peter is not seen as an actively ominous or supernatural force, but is instead implicated in the abandoning of his people. Leningrad's orphans were left alone in the face of an encroaching enemy.

Akhmatova's Leningrad is a place where the reign of Peter the Great is still keenly felt. At times he is an ominous force watching over the city and smiling coldly as if about to destroy his citizens. Elsewhere he is the indirect cause of the supernatural uprising of the elements; he has bestowed his ability to rule and oppress on the waters that flood his city. Akhmatova summed up her image of Peter as a father who has abandoned his children. Under Peter's influence—and because of his neglect—according to the negative myth of Petersburg, the city is a place of mysterious and fearful oppression.

Place of revolution and war

In addition to the negative, supernatural elements of the myth of Petersburg, Akhmatova's Petersburg is a dangerous and tumultuous place for natural, human reasons. As the location of the revolution and as the victim of a cruel siege during WWII, Leningrad suffered greatly under war and strife. Akhmatova described this bloody landscape of Leningrad in stark and heart-wrenching language as she mourned for her fallen friends and suffering city. Despite this suffering—and at times, perhaps even because of it—Akhmatova remained faithful to her city and wrote with pride of its ability to withstand. Her Leningrad may suffer, but it always conquers. Akhmatova's poetry of the World Wars and the blockade of Leningrad are imbued

[51] "Trenches have been dug in the garden, / No lights shine. / Peter's orphans, / Oh, my children! / It's hard to breathe underground, / Your temples throb, / Through the bombardment is heard / The voice of a child" (Hemschemeyer, 429).

with a “patriotic pathos” which show that “the courage of Leningraders became the key to overcome the devil’s delusions” and the negative myth of Petersburg (Merkel, 5-6).

In 1915, writing of Russia’s entry into WWI, Akhmatova penned a verse about speaking with her brother before he joined the Black Sea Fleet to fight in the war (Hemschemeyer, 800). The siblings walk along the streets of their capital, wondering how the declaration of war could have changed everything.

И в город печали и гнева
Из тихой Корельской земли
Мы двое — воин и дева —
Студеным утром вошли.

Что сталось с нашей столицей,
Кто солнце на землю низвел?
Казался летящей птицей
На штандарте черный орел.

На дикий лагерь похожим
Стал город пышных смотров,
Слепило глаза прохожим
Сверканье пик и штыков.

И серые пушки гремели
На Троицком гулком мосту,

А липы еще зеленели

В таинственном Летнем саду (Akhmatova, 166).[52]

The declaration of war had transformed Petrograd: it was now a city of "sorrow and wrath" where the sun in heaviness drooped to the earth. Although no physical destruction has occurred in the city, the presence of bayonets and cannons has altered the capital from a place of "splendid vistas" to a "savage camp." Only the green trees in the Summer Garden are oblivious to the change that has altered the rest of the city. Petrograd responds to the human experience occurring within it, mirroring the emotions of its inhabitants. The city responds to the swells of human feeling, painting itself in dark hues in mourning for Akhmatova's imminent separation from her brother, and for the impending sorrow of the entire nation at war.

A few years later, war once again touched her Petrograd and Akhmatova recounted the start of the February revolution. She grounded the events squarely in the cityscape of Petrograd, stating that she was in a particular church listening to the traditional Lent Canon of Andrey Drutsky. Once Lent had begun, the revolution became intertwined with the religious celebration; for the seven weeks until Easter, the Lent bells "merged with chaotic shooting" (Hemschemeyer, 650). The Petrograd of the revolution was at once chaotic, religious, and matter-of-fact. The bells tolled simultaneously with the shooting of the guns. Lent was observed to the accompaniment of bloodshed. Akhmatova recounted that "Everyone parted provisionally, / Never to meet again…" (Hemschemeyer, 650). Despite the intermingling of Easter bells and gunshots, people seemed to not be aware of the enormity of the revolution, and they assumed their partings were only

[52] "And into this city of sorrow and wrath / From the quiet Karelian earth, / We two—a soldier and a maid— / On one chill morning walked. / What had happened to our capital? / Who had lowered the sun to the earth? / The black eagle on its standard / Seemed like a bird in flight. / This city of splendid vistas / Began to resemble a savage camp, / The eyes of the strollers were dazzled / By the glint of bayonet and lance. / And gray cannons thundered / Across Trinity Bridge, / As the lindens greened / In the mysterious Summer Garden" (Hemschemeyer, 293-294)

temporary. This bloodshed and severed relationships caused Akhmatova to long for the time before the revolution. In a verse from January 1917, Akhmatova extolled the beauty of Petrograd's snowy winter and its significant *places*.

Белее сводов Смольного собора,

Таинственней, чем пышный Летний сад.

Она была. Не знали мы, что скоро

В тоске предельной поглядим назад (Akhmatova, 101).[53]

The chaos and destruction brought about by the revolution injured the city that Akhmatova loved, and she yearned for the days when her capital was whole.

The suffering of Akhmatova's city did not end with the revolution, however: during World War II, Leningrad was held under siege by the Germans and hundreds of thousands of people perished. Akhmatova, who was evacuated to Tashkent during the siege, keenly felt the pain of her sorrowing city, and she wrote tenderly of it in 1944. The poem is entitled "Причитание" ("Lamentation") invoking both Biblical imagery and a sense of profound sorrow.

Ленинградскую беду

Руками не разведу,

Слезами не смою,

В землю не зарою.

За версту я обойду

Ленинградскую беду.

Я не взглядом, не намеком,

Я не словом, не попреком,

[53] "Whiter than the vault of the Smolny Cathedral, / More mysterious than the splendid Summer Garden / It was. We didn't know that soon / We would be looking back at it in exquisite pain" (Hemschemeyer, 200-201).

Я земным поклоном

В поле зеленом

Помяну (Akhmatova, 335).[54]

The poet recognizes that the suffering of her city is a greater grief than her meager tears or hand-wrenching can assuage. In a typically Akhmatovian fashion, she appeals to a higher power, and promises that she will pray for her city. This poem is written in rhymed couplets (although two couplets share the same rhyme) with the exception of the final word: Помяну ("I will pray"). This word, while ending in a -y as the first three couplets do, stands alone; the first three couplets have feminine rhymes, while this word has the stress on the final syllable. The lack of a rhyming partner, as well as the visual indentation, marks the final word of the poem with particular importance. Prayer was inconsistent with the Soviet ideals of the time Akhmatova has been writing, but she recognized that it, unlike the other things she has mentioned, had the power to do something on behalf of her Leningrad.

Leningrad continued to suffer throughout WWII and the German occupation. In 1941, at what Akhmatova characterized as the zenith of death in Leningrad, she asked who would rescue the city.

Птицы смерти в зените стоят.

Кто идет выручать Ленинград? (Akhmatova, 205).[55]

The situation is grim for the city, and it seems that all hope has fled. Akhmatova personifies Leningrad as a wounded, yet still-breathing parent. The resilience of the city despite its personal

[54] "I won't throw up my hands / At the anguish of Leningrad, / I won't wash it with tears, / I won't bury it in the ground. / I'll go a mile beyond / The anguish of Leningrad. / And not with a glance, not with an allusion, / Not with a reproach, not with a word, / But with a bow down to the ground / In a green field / Will I pray" (Hemschemeyer, 688).

[55] "The birds of death are at the zenith. / Who will rescue Leningrad?" (Hemschemeyer, 427).

pain and familial losses provides a sliver of hope during this dark time for the city.

Не шумите вокруг — он дышит,

Он живой еще, он все слышит:

Как на влажном балтийском дне

Сыновья его стонут во сне,

Как из недр его вопли: «Хлеба!»

До седьмого доходят неба...

Но безжалостна эта твердь.

И глядит из всех окон — смерть (Akhmatova, 205).[56]

In its darkest hour, Leningrad is depicted as a mother who is afflicted in the sufferings of her children. Hope has fled from the city, as the children lie at the bottom of the sea and there is no bread to feed those who remain. In January of 1944 (while in Tashkent), Akhmatova termed Leningrad the supreme sufferer:

Последнюю и высшую награду—

Мое молчанье—отдаю

Великомученику Ленинграду (Akhmatova, 335).[57]

This brief tercet underscores Akhmatova's promise of silence on the subject, as she does not wax

[56] "Be quiet—it is breathing, / It's still living, it hears everything: / How at the bottom of the Baltic Sea / Its sons groan in their sleep, / How from its depths come cries: 'Bread!" / That reach to the firmament... / But this solid earth is pitiless. / And staring from all the windows—death" (Hemschemeyer, 427).

[57] "....The last and highest award— / My silence—I bestow / On the supreme sufferer / Leningrad" (Hemschemeyer, 683).

verbose in this discussion of Leningrad. (Although, given that she had already devoted so many verses to Leningrad, such a promise of rewarding silence seems ironic.) It is also an interesting claim from a poet that silence is the highest reward—Akhmatova understood the worth and cost of words so deeply that she was willing to recognize the limitations words have in accurately capturing suffering. She recognized that not even her poetic pen could capture the suffering of her city.

In a 1946 poem, Akhmatova described her tears for her those who have been lost during the war, and how this affected Akhmatova's perception of her beloved Petersburg. Although the war had ended and she and her city were victorious, the sting of deep losses had not been assuaged.

Еще на всем печать лежала

Великих бед, недавних гроз,-

И я свой город увидала

Сквозь радугу последних слез (Akhmatova, 221-222).[58]

Akhmatova mourned the loss of those she loved in the war, and she would from then on only ever see Leningrad in this light. Her city—Leningrad—had been altered in her vision because of her tears for those who have given their lives in the war. This changed perception of Leningrad implies that Leningrad itself has been a participant in the lives and events of those who have been in the city. The war affected not simply the inhabitants of the city, but also the living entity of the city itself.

Akhmatova's Leningrad is a place of revolution, war, and suffering. In the poems of war, Akhmatova frequently painted Leningrad as a martyr: the city suffers at the hands of cruel

[58] "Everything still bore the marks / Of the recent, great calamity— / And through the rainbow of my last tears / I looked at my city" (Hemschemeyer, 451).

enemies, yet overcomes the challenges. Patriotism runs deep in these poems, emphasizing that despite the suffering of the city, it will rise triumphant.

Place of culture

Not all is negative in Akhmatova's Petersburg, however: it is also a place of culture that bears a rich heritage of bygone and contemporary artists and writers. It is in this city that Akhmatova came into her own as a poet, and also forged lifelong and important connections with other poets. Living in the shadows of history and culture, Akhmatova and her milieu inspired each other and helped with each other's creative endeavors, developing their own contemporary culture (and Stalin underground) as they created art for their day. Petersburg's great writers make their own appearances in Akhmatova's geography of the city.

Pushkin, the father of Russian literature, made Petersburg his home. Akhmatova revered Pushkin, and mourned his death, which occurred in Petersburg as a result of a duel. She wrote that, a century after Pushkin's death, the city would be called "Pushkinian Petersburg" and "the entire province can be called / 'This martyr'" (Hemschemeyer, 724). The entirety of Petersburg is Pushkin's monument, and the city mourns his loss. Akhmatova extended this memorial beyond the physical Petersburg into her own poetic geography of the city, granting Pushkin yet another monument.

While Petersburg would not be Petersburg without Pushkin's legacy, Akhmatova also recognized the cultural importance of her contemporary poets. In 1914 she recounted a visit to her dear friend Mandelstam and remembered fondly the time they spent together near the Neva.

Но запомнится беседа,

Дымный полдень, воскресенье

В доме сером и высоком

У морских ворот Невы (Akhmatova 75-76).[59]

Although the poem does not disclose what memorable truths were discussed that day between the two poets, Akhmatova has framed in her memory the moment of this interaction on the banks of the Neva. This verse has no regular rhyme scheme and is written in trochaic tetrameter, both of which represent lyrical anomalies for Akhmatova, perhaps setting this poem in formal italics to emphasize the importance of this relationship.

Blok was another important Petersburg poet for Akhmatova. Upon returning from Tashkent, Akhmatova commented that it was time to forget her home in Tashkent and return to the land of Blok. Referring to one of Blok's most famous poems, Akhmatova wrote,

Он прав – опять фонарь, аптека,

Нева, безмолвие, гранит…

Как памятник началу века,

Там этот человек стоит

Когда он Пушкинскому Дому,

Прощаясь, помахал рукой

И принял смертную истому

Как незаслуженный покой (Akhmatova, 247).[60]

Pushkin House connects both Akhmatova and Blok to the original great Petersburg poet, Pushkin. Akhmatova did not write her literary geography in a vacuum, but rather relied heavily on the poetry and experiences of her contemporaries and predecessors. For her, Petersburg was a

[59] "But I will recall the conversation, / The smoky noon, Sunday / In the tall, gray house / By the sea gates of the Neva" (Hemschemeyer, 164).

[60] "He is right—once again streetlight, drugstore, / The Neva, silence, granite... / Like a monument to the beginning of the century, / There this man stands— / When he said farewell to the Pushkin House / He waved his hand / And assumed a mortal weariness, / Like an unmerited peace" (Hemschemeyer, 486).

place of rich cultural and literary heritage.

As part of a lengthy dramatic cycle, Akhmatova wrote a geographical description of what she termed "Dostoevsky's Russia," contrasting contemporary Russia with the country that her literary predecessor would have known (Akhmatova, 259-260). Aside from some architectural introductions, Petersburg had not changed much between Dostoevsky and Akhmatova, and it still even resembled old lithographs. Petersburg served as the connection between Akhmatova and her literary predecessors: she was able to walk these streets and see their plaques and remembrances here.[61] The city still bears the stink of Semyonovo Square, about which Akhmatova's Dostoevsky writes late into the night, emphasizing that both poets are connected by their respective suffering in Leningrad.[62]

Akhmatova's Petersburg is inextricably connected with the writers who lived in that city. The cultural heritage forged and left by her predecessors and contemporaries is essential to Akhmatova's love for and understanding of Petersburg.

Negative depictions and hope for redemption for Leningrad

While Akhmatova loved Leningrad and the cultural and personal attachments she held to it, she was aware of the shortcomings of the city and the suffering it has imposed on its residents. Many of her poems depict Leningrad in harsh and scathing terms, and she termed it "мрачнейший из столиц" (Akhmatova, 95).[63] As Sharon Leiter writes,

> For Akhmatova, hardship, obstruction, are inseparable from the structure which lies at the root of beauty. Residence in 'the splendid granite city of glory and misfortune,' where life and death are inseparable and the voice of the Muse is overheard only at great cost, is

[61] Not only does Petersburg connect her with Dostoevsky, but also with Pushkin: her epigraph for the poem is from Pushkin. «Я теперь живу не там…» (Akhmatova, 259).
[62] Semyonov Square is where Dostoevsky suffered a mock execution from which he was spared at the last minute.
[63] "the gloomiest of capitals" (Hemschemeyer, 224).

> a superior fate to ‘the simple life,’ Akhmatova's contrasting vision of easy, ‘normal’ happiness (Leiter, 194).

Akhmatova, while recognizing and confronting the challenges of Leningrad, nonetheless viewed it as a supreme privilege—and inescapable responsibility—to claim the city as her own. Even in Akhmatova’s negative descriptions of Leningrad is often found a glimmer of hope and redemption: from natural beauty to the presence of God to the hope of a better future, Leningrad finds redemption in Akhmatova’s verses.

In 1916, Akhmatova described the capital as a captive, inhabited by those who are both mad and luminous. This juxtaposition of insanity with the positive quality of light underscores Akhmatova’s multi-faceted relationship to the city.

> И воистину ты — столица
>
> Для безумных и светлых нас (Akhmatova, 89).[64]

The ambiguous nature of Leningrad is reflected in its inhabitants: only people who are somewhat insane would be willing to live in Leningrad, yet there is a measure of light in them. The poem then describes the city as if it is a captive sinner, looking longingly on freedom.

> Но когда над Невою длится
>
> Тот особенный, чистый час
>
> И проносится ветер майский
>
> Мимо всех надводных колонн,
>
> Ты — как грешник, видящий райский
>
> Перед смертью сладчайший сон… (Akhmatova, 89).[65]

---

[64] “And verily you are the capital / For us who are mad and luminous” (Hemschemeyer, 231).

[65] “But when that special, pure hour / Lingers over the Neva / And the May wind sweeps / Past all the columns lining the water, / You are like a sinner turning his eyes, / Before death, to the sweetest dream of paradise...” (Hemschemeyer, 231).

Despite the beauty of this particular hour, the city is trapped as if by its own sin and the threat of death that hangs over it. Even in this deathly moment, the hope of paradise is presented. Although Leningrad may be the home of sinners—and be a sinner itself—there at least remains a dream of a better place.

In a 1922 poem, Akhmatova described the oppressive nature of Petrograd as she discussed an unusually warm autumn in the capital. Some aspects of this unexpected season are pleasant, such as the emerald water in the muddy canals, or the absence of cold, humid days. For the most part, however, this turn of events is seen as unwelcome.

Было душно от зорь, нестерпимых, бесовских и алых,

Их запомнили все мы до конца наших дней.

Было солнце таким, как вошедший в столицу мятежник,

И весенняя осень так жадно ласкалась к нему (Akhmatova, 152).[66]

The very beauty of the sunrise is stifling and demonic. Akhmatova's choice of the word "бесовских" (demonic) shifts the entire narrative of the poem: This element of the unearthly creates an image and feeling that not everything in Petrograd is ruled by reason, and it ties Akhmatova to the negative myth of St. Petersburg. Perhaps in another city a warm spring could be considered a normal and even pleasant occurrence, but in Petrograd, the air of mystery and supernatural powers lends a sense of uneasiness to the natural world.

The theme of oppression in Leningrad is seen not just in its own weather, but in its relationship to its inhabitants. In 1937, Akhmatova wrote a scathing verse about Leningrad entitled "A Little Geography." Dedicated to Osip Mandelstam, another "Petersburg poet," this

[66] "It was stifling from sunrise, unbearable, demonic, vermilion dawns, / That we would remember to the end of our days. / The sun was like a rebel entering the capital, / And the springlike autumn caressed him so greedily" (Hemschemeyer, 279).

verse equates Leningrad with the same suffering one would experience in exile or in the Gulag.

Не столицею европейской

С первым призом за красоту —

Душной ссылкою енисейской,

Пересадкою на Читу,[67]

На Ишим,[68] на Иргиз безводный,

На прославленный Атбасар,

Пересылкою в лагерь Свободный,[69]

В трупный запах прогнивших нар, —

Показался мне город этот

Этой полночью голубой,

Он, воспетый первым поэтом,

Нами грешными – и тобой (Akhmatova, 330).[70]

Not only does Leningrad rank below the beautiful European capitals Akhmatova has visited, but it is as stifling as exile to far-off reaches of the Empire. The poem refers to negative historical periods in Russia's past ranging from the Decembrists to the contemporary Gulag of Stalin. The poet thus implicates Leningrad in all the evil that has ever occurred within the Russian Empire: being in her native city is as if she is experiencing all the combined suffering of her people throughout the centuries. Leningrad symbolically represents the backwardness and inhumanity of the entire Russian Empire. Despite this oppression, however, Akhmatova once again provided a

[67] Chita—a city in eastern Russia where Decembrists were exiled.
[68] Town in Siberia that was the location of a bloody uprising against the Bolsheviks in 1921-1922.
[69] A camp in the Gulag system.
[70] "Not like a European capital / With the first prize for beauty— / But like stifling exile to Yeniseysk, / Like a transfer to Chita, / To Ishim, to waterless Irgiz, / To renowned Atbasar, / To the outpost Svobodnyy, / To the corpse stench of rotting bunks— / So this city seemed to me / On that midnight, pale blue— / This city, celebrated by the first poet, / By us sinners and by you" (Hemschemeyer, 664)

glimmer of redemption for her city by alluding to its poets: Leningrad has been sung by the first poet (Pushkin), by Akhmatova, and by the poem's addressee, Mandelstam. The culture of Leningrad serves to redeem it from the oppressive historical past of the city itself and the empire at large.

A couple decades earlier (in May 1915), Akhmatova made a similar negative comparison between Petrograd and the West.

И пришел в наш град угрюмый
В предвечерний тихий час,
О Венеции подумал
И о Лондоне зараз (Akhmatova, 113).[71]

The "gloomy city" welcomes the traveler who is in search of his beloved. Yet while the initial comparison between the two seems negative—the gloomy Petrograd immediately makes him think of Venice and London with the implied conclusion that the European capitals are superior—the poem concludes on a positive note for Petrograd. The man enters a church and, with elation, senses that his beloved is here.

А над смуглым золотом престола
Разгорался Божий сад лучей:
"Здесь она, здесь свет веселый
Серых звезд - ее очей" (Akhmatova, 113).[72]

Petrograd is redeemed through the presence of God in its churches and the hope of mortal love. This appeal to the idea of "Holy Russia" connects Akhmatova's poem to centuries of Russian

[71] "And he arrived in our gloomy city / In the quiet, early evening hour. / He thought of Venice / And London as well" (Hemschemeyer, 214-215).
[72] "And over the altar's tarnished gold / Flared God's garden of rays: / "She is here, here is the joyous light / of those gray stars—her eyes" (Hemschemeyer, 215).

Orthodoxy and the redemption believed to come through remaining true to the faith of one's homeland. While Leningrad may be gloomy, it nonetheless has the truth faith that is absent from the European capitals.

Near the end of her life, Akhmatova revisited the theme of Leningrad's standing against the capitals of Europe. In 1965, after returning from a trip to Europe where she received the Etna Taormina Literary Prize, Akhmatova compared her native Leningrad to the Venice she had just visited (Hemschemeyer, 868). She addressed her city directly, giving Leningrad a female persona. With eyes newly attuned to the beauty of Europe and the differences between her native land and the West, Akhmatova wrote scathingly of Leningrad. The verse initially depicts a cold and monstrous Leningrad. Speaking to her native city, Akhmatova writes, "in the muddy, damp, December darkness / You appeared in all your magnitude: / Disgraceful, criminal, monstrous" (Hemschemeyer, 754). Leningrad is cold, distant, and supernatural. This image of the capital is representative of the myth of St. Petersburg: the city does not care about its inhabitants, but is governed by a distant and supernatural power. The conclusion of the poem, however, provides a glimmer of hope for the monstrous capital. Akhmatova promises, "The one now in gloom tomorrow will bloom / Like Venice—the treasure-house of the world— / I cried: 'It's your turn, take it all, / I no longer need lyre nor laurel'" (Hemschemeyer, 754). The poem indicates that there is hope for Leningrad (also a city of canals and bridges like Venice) to soon attain the glory of its European counterpart: Leningrad can bloom like Venice itself. This acknowledgment simultaneously provides hope for Leningrad's future progress, while also admitting that the current Leningrad falls short of the splendor of modern-day Venice. The poet recognizes Leningrad's shortcomings, but nonetheless retains hope in the future of her city. She is willing to sacrifice even her own poetic gift and recognition (laurel and lyre) for the success of her city.

The poem's initial disappointment and condemnation are turned to hope through the promise of the poet's self-sacrifice.

Akhmatova's cycle *Rekviem* is one of her most prominent poetic discussions of Leningrad, and one which highlights the supremely negative aspects of the city.[73] In these verses, she recounted her deeply personal—and shared national—suffering as she stood for hours in prison lines, hoping to receive news of her son who had been wrongly imprisoned at the hands of the Soviets. Leningrad is the place of "крепкие тюремные затворы, / А за ними "каторжные норы" / и смертельная тоска" (Akhmatova, 188).[74] These walls appear impenetrable and because of them, inescapable sorrow has filled the hearts of those in the suffering city. In her writing, Akhmatova speaks not just for herself, but for all those who have experienced the anguish of Leningrad's oppression by these prison walls.

И я молюсь не о себе одной,

А обо всех, кто там стоял со мною

И в лютый холод, и в июльский зной

Под красною ослепшею стеною (Akhmatova, 194).[75]

The blind prison walls represent the government's blind eye it turned to its citizens, allowing the Leningraders to suffer. The *place* of the prison cross is metaphorically expanded to embrace even the furthest reaches of the empire, extending to all those who suffer under the oppressive

[73] Sharon Bailey characterizes Akhmatova's portrayal of Leningrad in *Rekviem* as follows: "the city becomes savage (Dedication) and train whistles sing songs of farewell (Prologue). Leningrad in the Prologue is described as hanging uselessly from its prisons and filled with people being marched to the trains that will take them into exile. In V the city is reduced to tracks that lead from somewhere to nowhere, suggesting that all of Russia has been transformed into a prison. The epigraph implies that Russia should and normally would protect its citizens...However, throughout the cycle, Leningrad and Russia are the homeland which has been made impotent by the terror and forced to share in the suffering" (Bailey, 335).

[74] "the prison gates hold firm, / And behind them are the 'prisoners' burrows' / and mortal woe" (Hemschemeyer, 385).

[75] "And I pray not for myself alone, / But for all those who stood there with me / In cruel cold, and in July's heat, / At that blind, red wall" (Hemschemeyer, 392).

Soviet regime.

Yet despite the suffering that Akhmatova experienced in Leningrad—and perhaps even because of it—she felt more deeply connected with Leningrad than with any other geographic location. At the end of her *Rekviem* cycle, she asked that, if a monument is ever raised to her name, it stand not in the places of her childhood or young life,

А здесь, где стояла я триста часов

И где для меня не открыли засов.

…

И пусть с неподвижных и бронзовых век,

Как слезы, струится подтаявший снег.

И голубь тюремный пусть гулит вдали,

И тихо идут по Неве корабли (Akhmatova, 195).[76]

Akhmatova wanted to be remembered as an inhabitant of and sufferer in Leningrad. While she wrote warmly of many other places within the Russian Empire and the world, it is Leningrad that possesses her enduring love and to which she gave her lasting affinity. She suffered greatly in Leningrad, yet she found redemption and hope as well, and created for herself a poetic monument firmly grounded in her city.[77]

Akhmatova's Petersburg is the focal point of her poetic geography. Containing a plurality of her geographic references and a wide range of topics and opinions, the city was Akhmatova's poetic muse. She loves the city, yet acknowledges the atrocities committed to it and by it.

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[76] "But here, where I stood for three hundred hours, / And where they never unbolted the doors for me. / And may the melting snow stream like tears / From my motionless lids of bronze, / And a prison dove coo in the distance, / And the ships of the Neva sail calmly on" (Hemschemeyer, 394).

[77] Akhmatova's description of her future monument as "bronze" could "arguably be interpreted as a polemical remodeling of the statue of Peter as Bronze Horseman, and as an implicit indictment of the entire era of Russian history, instigated by Peter the Great, of which the Ezhov Terror was the culmination and final dislocation" (Basker, 295).

Despite the suffering she experiences in Leningrad, however, she is whole-heartedly committed to her city and views any attempt to leave it as treachery. Leningrad is at once a mysterious place that inherited the legacy of Peter the Great and now must suffer according to his myth, and an entirely modern, concrete location where people fall in love and wars are fought. Leiter concludes, "Inheriting the tormented Petersburg myth of the nineteenth century, and given ample opportunity to affirm its dark message, she nonetheless transformed Petersburg-Leningrad into a triumphant metaphor of survival" (Leiter, 202). Akhmatova loved her city in all of its manifestations, and ultimately believed that its suffering and sins could be redeemed through high culture, self-sacrifice, and religious devotion.

Suburbs of Leningrad

In addition to the city of St. Petersburg proper, the surrounding towns are important *places* in Akhmatova's life and poetic geography.[78] This geographic region clearly represents Akhmatova's cultural, personal, and poetic life. Since there are some important distinctions made in Akhmatova's poetry between Leningrad proper and the surrounding suburbs, these outlying towns merit a separate exploration.

Tsarskoe Selo

The home of Pushkin and the place where Akhmatova spent her formative, youthful years, Tsarskoe Selo, is an important *place* in Akhmatova's poetic geography. Tsarskoe Selo (now known as Pushkin and part of the federal city of St. Petersburg) is located 24 kilometers south of central St. Petersburg and was the location of tsarist palaces. Akhmatova's earliest memories were from Tsarskoe Selo, and she lived in one home for fifteen years, and even years

[78] If we include the suburbs of St. Petersburg/Leningrad proper into one larger category, we find that 42% of Akhmatova's geographic references are centered within 50 km of St. Petersburg.

later she was able to describe her childhood home in great detail (Khrenkov, 29-31). Akhmatova not only had fond memories of her childhood in the location, but she felt connected to Pushkin through the shared geography of their childhoods.[79] Dmitri Khrenkov writes that, “Пушкин называл Царское Село Отечеством—и не только для одного себя, а для всех, кто пробует перо" (Khrenkov, 28).[80] Akhmatova shared this profession of Tsarskoe Selo as a beloved fatherland and the native home of her poetry.

Akhmatova’s poetic description of Tsarskoe Selo presents a city enveloped in the tsarist past where both Akhmatova and Pushkin experienced their childhoods. Akhmatova tempers positivity for Tsarskoe Selo with deep sorrow and mourning that permeate most of her verses about this city. While Tsarskoe Selo is not party to the negative aspects of the myth of St. Petersburg, but is a beloved place of memory, literature, and childhood, it nevertheless is rife with its own suffering. This Tsarskoe Selo sorrow is focused on the loss of loved ones and the irretrievability of the past.[81] In her later years, Akhmatova tempered this sorrowful view of Tsarkoe Selo with a more quotidian assessment of Tsarskoe Selo’s daily life and residual shortcomings.[82]

Tsarskoe Selo was dear not just to Akhmatova for her own youthful experiences there, but even more so because of the literary legacy and history of that place. Akhmatova’s Tsarskoe Selo is a place where the shadow of Pushkin still lingers and where his voice and influence

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[79] Akhmatova extensively studied Pushkin in her later years and wrote many essays about him.
[80] “Pushkin called Tsarskoye Selo “the Fatherland”—and not just for himself alone, but for all who attempt to write” (translation my own).
[81] Andrei Ariev writes that, in Akhmatova’s poetry, “Tsarskoe Selo confronts the individual with death and tests him with non-existence” (Ariev, 72).
[82] Wendy Rosslyn writes, “Whereas for Pushkin Tsarskoe Selo is synonymous with the palaces and park, in which the lycee was situated, for Akhmatova it was indeed these things, but also the town outside, with its alleyways, wooden fences, luxuriant growth of weeds, taverns, station, racecourse, soldiers and tradespeople. Thus her ode to Tsarskoe Selo eschews the parks and grand halls and declares polemically that she will describe the town as Chagall described Vitebsk: with an eye to the mundane, commonplace, and provincial” (Rosslyn, 151).

saturate the air. In 1911, Akhmatova wrote,

Смуглый отрок бродил по аллеям

У озерных глухих берегов.

И столетие мы лелеем

Еле слышный шелест шагов (Akhmatova, 24).[83]

Even after all the intervening years since Pushkin's 1837 death, his footsteps still echo through Tsarskoe Selo. Akhmatova wrote this verse in her characteristic dol'nik, separating herself poetically from Pushkin (whose meter of choice was iambic tetrameter) at the same time she is connecting herself with him geographically. The tension between the metrical separation and the geographic connection allows Akhmatova to forge new poetic territory while at the same time remaining connected to her Russian literary roots.

Akhmatova also connects her poetry of Tsarskoe Selo to Pushkin through referencing the statue of the maid with the broken pitcher. Pushkin wrote about this statue in one of his poems, emphasizing the perpetual sadness of this maid (Pushkin, *Sobranie,* 175). Akhmatova's poem is dedicated to Nikolai Nedobrovo, but the "you" addressed is, on one level, Pushkin:

Я чувствовала смутный страх

Пред этой девушкой воспетой.

Играли на ее плечах

Лучи скудеющего света.

И как могла я ей простить

Восторг твоей хвалы влюбленной...

[83] "A dark-skinned youth wandered along these allees, / By the shores of this lake he yearned, / and a hundred years later we cherish / The rustle of steps, faintly heard" (Hemschemeyer, 82).

Смотри, ей весело грустить,

Такой нарядно обнаженной (Akhmatova, 96).[84]

Akhmatova and Pushkin are united through their writing about this milkmaid; the statue has remained through the decades, perpetually sad and a poetic muse. Pushkin's legendary praise has elevated the milkmaid to a stature that causes Akhmatova to feel somewhat uneasy in the statue's presence. Despite this seeming reverence for the statue, however, Akhmatova also seems to fault the milkmaid for being unreal and not knowing what true sorrow is: it is fun for the milkmaid to be sad, yet for those who are alive, suffering is real and poignant.

Not only the paths and statues resound with Pushkin's influence, but so do the modern-day inhabitants of Akhmatova's Tsarskoe Selo.

В тени елизаветинских боскетов

Гуляют пушкинских красавиц внучки (Akhmatova, 171).[85]

This connection with Pushkin does not mean that Akhmatova is praising these women, however: These "granddaughters of Pushkin's beauties" live luxuriously with their lapdogs and parasols, far removed from and oblivious to the battles raging in other regions of the world.

И рушилась твердыня Эрзерума,

Кровь заливала горло Дарданелл…

Но в этом парке не слыхали шума,

Хор за обедней так прекрасно пел;

Но в этом парке тихо и угрюмо

[84] "I felt uneasy / Before this celebrated maid. / On her shoulders / Beams of fading light played. / And how could I forgive her / The delight of your enamoured praise... / You see, for her, so fashionably nude, / It's fun to be sad" (Hemschemeyer, 195).

[85] "In the shadow of eighteenth-century thickets / The grand-daughters of Pushkin's beauties stroll" (Hemschemeyer, 505).

Сверкает месяц, снег алмазно бел (Akhmatova, 171).[86]

The tranquility of Tsarskoe Selo is unhampered by the destruction of faraway battles and bloodshed. The isolated (and sometimes superfluous) lives of the inhabitants allow them to remain in ignorance about suffering in the rest of the world. This peace does not last, however, and the threat soon penetrates even the peaceful town.

На Белой Башне дремлет пулемет,

Вокруг дворца гусарские разъезды,

Внимательные северные звезды

(Совсем не те, что будут через год),

Прищурившись, глядят в окно Лицея,

Где тень его над томом Апулея (Akhmatova, 172).[87]

The encroaching destruction from war has finally reached Tsarskoe Selo, and Pushkin is a witness to this threat to his beloved town. This theme of destruction encroaching on Tsarskoe Selo is seen in another of Akhmatova's poems: upon returning to her childhood home, she finds only a stump of the eternal willow that she used to love. As a youth, Akhmatova loved the beauty and solitude of Tsarskoe Selo:

А я росла в узорной тишине,

В прохладной детской молодого века (Akhmatova, 181).[88]

The death of the willow she had loved serves as a reminder that this time and *place* remains only in Akhmatova's memory of childhood. The imaginative geography of Tsarskoe Selo mourns the

[86] "And the Erzerum Fortress was destroyed, / The throat of the Dardanelles poured blood, / But here in this park the noise was not heard, / The choir sang so beautifully at services; / But here in this park, darkly and gloomily / The moon shines, the snow is diamond white" (Hemschemeyer, 506).
[87] "On the White Tower the machine gun drowses, / Around the palace—the mounted hussars, / And the attentive northern stars / (Not the same ones that will be here in a year) / Squint through the Lycee window, / Where His shadow bends over Apuleius" (Hemschemeyer, 506).
[88] "And I grew up in patterned tranquility, / In the cool nursery of the young century" (Hemschemeyer, 397).

passing of Akhmatova's ties to childhood.

И – странно! – я её пережила.

Там пень торчит, чужими голосами

Другие ивы что-то говорят

Под нашими, под теми небесами.

И я молчу… как будто умер брат (Akhmatova, 182).[89]

This stump represents more than a literal tree: it represents those friends she has lost as a result of the war and Terror (Reeder, 26-27). In addition to friends, Akhmatova's loss also consisted of the passing of time itself and the loss of childhood illusions: she could never return to the Tsarskoe Selo she had once known. This theme ties Akhmatova with Pushkin, who also wrote about the loss of friends from his beloved Tsarskoe Selo.[90] Neither poet was immune to grief and loss, particularly that carried out by an unjust government.

After WWII, Akhmatova was somewhat afraid to return to Tsarskoe Selo, fearing that the good news of the war's victory could not actually be true, and that not everything would be in order at this place that was so dear to her (Khrenkov, 29). The city had undergone extensive destruction during the war, and Akhmatova mourned her childhood home.

О, горе мне! Они тебя сожгли...

О, встреча, что разлуки тяжелее!..

Здесь был фонтан, высокие аллеи,

Громада парка древнего вдали,

Заря была себя самой алее,

[89] "And—strange!—I have outlived it. / There the stump stands; with strange voices / Other willows are conversing / Under our, under those skies. / And I am silent…As if a brother had died" (Hemschemeyer, 397).
[90] The epigraph of this poem is even a line from Pushkin: "И дряхлый пук дерев" ("And a decrepit handful of trees" [Hemschemeyer, 397]).

В апреле запах прели и земли,

И первый поцелуй... (Akhmatova, 242).[91]

Akhmatova's affection for Tsarskoe Selo is apparent, and her longing for the *place* is more acute upon seeing it than it was when she was merely separated from it. Even though she can never return to the city as she remembered it, she vows to always hold the city dear.

Я в беспамятстве дней забывала теченье годов, -

И туда не вернусь! Но возьму и за Лету с собою

Очертанья живые моих царскосельских садов (Akhmatova, 243).[92]

Akhmatova's memories of her youthful Tsarskoe Selo can be relived only through poetry—her own and that of Pushkin. Although the city has been irreparably altered by time and war, Akhmatova will always cherish the city of her youth and will cherish the imagined geography she has created.[93] Despite the loss and destruction Tsarskoe Selo has undergone, however, the glory of the place lives on in Pushkin's words.

Этой ивы листы в девятнадцатом веке увяли...

Чтобы в строчке стиха серебриться свежее стократ,

Одичалые розы пурпурным шиповником стали,

А лицейские гимны все так же заздравно звучат (Akhmatova, 243).[94]

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[91] "Oh, woe is me! They have burned you down... / Oh meeting harder to bear than separation!.. / Here was the fountain, the lofty allees, / The immensity of the ancient park in the distance; / The very dawn was more crimson here, / In April there was the smell of mold and earth, / And the first kiss..." (Hemschemeyer, 479-480).

[92] "I forgot, in the unconsciousness of days, how the years flow— / And I can't return! But even beyond Lethe I will take with me / The living outlines of my gardens at Tsarskoye Selo" (Hemschemeyer, 479-480).

[93] Speaking of people who watch their city undergo destruction in war, Lisa Kirschenbaum writes, "The city of memory remained visible beneath both the bomb damage and the postwar repairs. For natives, perhaps especially for those who have seen their city destroyed, the city's streets are a palimpsest" (Kirschenbaum, 243). This palimpsest is visible in Akhmatova's poetry of Tsarskoe Selo as she mourns the present destruction that mars an irretrievable childhood.

[94] "The leaves of this willow withered in the 19th century, / So that it could be a hundred times more freshly silvered in lines of poetry. / The roses gone wild became purple sweetbrier, / And hymns from the Lycee raised toasts all the while" (Hemschemeyer, 479-480).

Even though Pushkin has died and the leaves of the symbolic trees have withered, Tsarskoe Selo is immortalized in the verses of the esteemed poet. Akhmatova's verses add to this poetic collection, giving Tsarskoe Selo a fuller poetic representation.

In a poem entitled "Первое возвращение," Akhmatova recounts the sorrow she felt on returning to Tsarskoe Selo in 1910 after a period of absence. The place is filled with heaviness, and Akhmatova is cast down by the darkness of the city.

На землю саван тягостный возложен,

Торжественно гудят колокола,

И снова дух смятен и потревожен

Истомной скукой Царского Села.

Пять лет прошло. Здесь все мертво и немо,

Как будто мира наступил конец.

Как навсегда исчерпанная тема,

В смертельном сне покоится дворец (Akhmatova, 22).[95]

This verse exhibits none of the redeeming qualities of Tsarskoe Selo that Akhmatova expresses elsewhere (such as literary greatness, joyful childhood memories, etc.). This first return brings with it only sadness and sorrow. In a more revealing verse, Akhmatova confesses both her love of the city and the inherent sadness it brings her:

О, пленительный город загадок,

Я печальна, тебя полюбив (Akhmatova, 23).[96]

[95] "The heavy shroud is placed on the ground, / The solemn bells are droning, / And once again my spirit is troubled and oppressed / By the weary tedium of Tsarskoye Selo. / Five years have passed. Here everything is dead and dumb, / As if the end of the world had come / Like a forever exhausted theme, / The palace comes to rest in its mortal dream" (Hemschemeyer, 116).

[96] "Oh enchanting little town of riddles, / though I love you, I am mournful" (Hemschemeyer, 81).

Love and sorrow are intertwined in all of Akhmatova's interactions with and memories of Tsarskoe Selo. This sorrow is particularly evident as she remembers those she has lost.

Все души милых на высоких звездах.

Как хорошо, что некого терять

И можно плакать. Царскосельский воздух

Был создан, чтобы песни повторять (Akhmatova, 221).[97]

Akhmatova takes comfort in the fact that Tsarskoe Selo allows her to mourn for those whom she has lost. She observes that she is not the first bard to have hung her lyre on the trees after singing in mourning, and she finds solidarity in the shared mourning of Tsarskoe Selo.

In 1961, near the end of her life, Akhmatova wrote one final reflective verse about Tsarskoe Selo. She entitled this verse "Tsarskoe Selo Ode: The 1900's," a reference to Derzhavin and the odes that he wrote to Catherine the Great (Felitsa), whose palace was in Tsarskoe Selo. Unlike the balance of Akhmatova's Tsarskoe Selo verses, this ode does not bear the same degree of sorrow and heaviness, but rather provides a look at the poverty and harsh realities of life in Tsarskoe Selo.

Настоящую оду

Нашептало... Постой,

Царскосельскую одурь

Прячу в ящик пустой.

В роковую шкатулку,

В кипарисный ларец,

А тому переулку

[97] "All the souls of my loved ones are on stars high above. / How good it is that there is no one left to lose / And one can weep. The air of Tsarskoye Selo / Was created for the echoing of songs" (Hemschemeyer, 450).

Наступает конец (Akhmatova, 255).[98]

Akhmatova promises to conceal the so-called "Tsarskoe Selo torpor," and instead focus on the more positive, mundane aspects of her city.

Здесь не Темнк, не Шуя -

Город парков и зал,

Но тебя опишу я,

Как свой Витебск – Шагал (Akhmatova, 255-256).[99]

Tsarskoe Selo is not the terrible place of a Stalinist gulag, as were Tyomnik and Shuya. This contrast sets the bar fairly low for Akhmatova's subsequent depiction of Tsarskoe Selo: in order to be worthy of praise, the city needs merely to not be the home to profound evil. Akhmatova promises to give a description of Tsarskoe Selo that parallels Marc Chagall's paintings of his native city Vitebsk. Akhmatova seems to parallel Chagall in multiple ways in regards to their relationships to Vitebsk and Tsarskoe Selo respectively. Before leaving for Paris where he would become a successful artist, Chagall held a negative view of his native Vitebsk, and in his paintings from Paris, he frequently depicted his native city as a ghetto with suffering and oppression (Zeltser, 226 and Bohm-Duchen, 55-56). Yet Vitebsk would feature prominently in his painting, and he has become famous for his retrospective depictions of his Vitebsk (Bohm-Duchen, 55). Akhmatova promises to paint a similar picture of her Tsarskoe Selo: from her retrospective vantage point of Slepnyovo, Akhmatova recalls the positive and negative elements of the day-to-day aspects of her Tsarskoe Selo childhood. The profound sorrow of some of her earlier Tsarskoe Selo poems has been dampened, and the focus is on a more muted suffering

[98] "This ode / Was whispered...Wait, / I will conceal the Tsarskoye Selo torpor / In an empty drawer, / In a fatal coffer, / In a 'Cypress Box,' / For the end of that lane / Is coming" (Hemschemeyer, 492).
[99] "This is not Tyomnik, not Shuya— / This is a town of parks and halls, / Which I will describe to you / As his Vitebsk—Chagall" (Hemschemeyer, 492).

grounded in the struggles of day-to-day living. She remembers fondly the horses and carriages and streetlights with the distant view of Petersburg in the background. Over this pleasant town, however, hangs the reality of poverty. A young Akhmatova seeks to make her way telling fortunes, and the dissatisfied soldiers turn to alcohol and smoking to drown their suffering.

Шепелявя неловко

И с грехом пополам,

Молодая чертовка

Там гадает гостям

Там солдатская шутка

Льется, желчь не тая..

Полосатая будка

И махорки струя (Akhmatova, 256).[100]

This town is mundane, filled with soldiers and youths going about their lives. Yet there is also something mysterious and other-worldly:

Ворон криком прославил

Этот призрачный мир... (Akhmatova, 256).[101]

Echoing Chagall's depictions of Vitebsk that focus on the quotidian and slightly negative aspects of the city, Akhmatova creates a mundane, yet ghostly picture of Tsarskoe Selo. The memories of the past are illusory, mingling joy with sorrow. Akhmatova's retrospective view of Tsarskoe Selo presents a city of muted suffering amidst everyday joys. She has come to peace with the intense mourning she previously associated with the city. Additionally, it has become a *place*

[100] "And lisping self-consciously, / Barely scraping by, / The little sorceress / Is telling fortunes to the guests / There the soldiers' jokes / Pour, not hiding their bitterness... / Striped sentry booth, / And a stream of cheap tobacco smoke" (Hemschemeyer, 492).
[101] "A crow croaked the praises / Of this phantasmagorical world..." (Hemschemeyer, 492).

entirely her own: this poem does not allude to Pushkin, who featured prominently throughout her earlier Tsarskoe Selo poems.

In Akhmatova's poetic geography, Tsarskoe Selo is a *place* inseparably connected with her own childhood and with Pushkin. It is a city of sorrow and mourning lived in the shadows of tsarist history. In her later years, Akhmatova amended this depiction, giving Tsarkoe Selo a new life as an illusory city of her childhood home where the painful mourning had been replaced by a tempered sorrow and acknowledgment of quotidian life against the backdrop of an otherworldly town.

Komarovo

Another Petersburg suburb that features in Akhmatova's poetic geography is Komarovo. Modern-day Komarovo is a district in the city of St. Petersburg and is located less than 50 km north of downtown Petersburg. Here Akhmatova was given a government-sponsored dacha and spent the later years of her life. Her view of this region displays a sense of slowness, resignation, and acceptance. She acknowledged that she was not at home in this place, while at the same time professing an appreciation for it.

Земля хотя и не родная,

Но памятная навсегда (Akhmatova, 265).[102]

Akhmatova immediately separates herself from Komarovo, saying it is not her native land. Despite the town's proximity to central Petersburg, it is located in Karelia, a formerly Finnish territory that was ceded to the Soviet Union in the 1940s (Korpela). To Akhmatova, this acquisition of land was too recent for her to feel that Karelia or Komarovo were integral parts of her native land. Her exclusion of Komarovo as part of her native land emphasizes the importance

[102] "This land, although not my native land, / Will be remembered forever" (Hemschemeyer, 496).

that Leningrad proper plays in Akhmatova's poetic geography: although Komarovo is physically near her beloved Leningrad, it does not share the same political, cultural, and personal history as the city she loves.

Akhmatova's Komarovo poems tend to be reflective in nature, expressing a measure of sadness at what Akhmatova has lost in life, while also expressing content resignation. In a pensive tribute to three of her fellow poets (Mandelstam, Pasternak, and Tsvetaeva), Akhmatova reflects on her life in Komarovo.

…И отступилась я здесь от всего,

От земного всякого блага.

Духом, хранителем «места сего»

Стала лесная коряга.

Всé мы недолго у жизни в гостях,

Жить — это только привычка (Akhmatova, 253).[103]

Akhmatova's acknowledgement that she gave everything up here—or retreated to this place from everything else in the world—is followed by the philosophical assertion that humans are only guests on earth. Komarovo represents for Akhmatova both a retreat from the sorrows of life, and also an embracing of deprivation. It is here that she was able to come to terms with the sweetly sorrowful nature of life.

Я от многого в жизни отвыкла,

Мне не нужно почти ничего,—

[103] "...And I gave up everything here, / All the blessings of the earth. / The snag in the woods became / The spirit, the guardian of 'this place.' / We are all a little like guests in life, / To live—is only habit" (Hemschemeyer, 493-494).

Для меня комаровские сосны

На своих языках говорят

И совсем как отдельные весны

В лужах, выпивших небо—стоят (Akhmatova, 384).[104]

The natural beauty of Komarovo is almost mystical in Akhmatova's depiction: the pines speak in their own language and live in their own pools of springtime. Akhmatova embraces this beauty while simultaneously acknowledging that she does not require much in life. She has reconciled herself to the many sorrows and losses of her life with a newfound resignation amidst the natural beauties of Komarovo.

Akhmatova's Komarovo is a *place* dear to her heart, but still separate from her native land. She does not feel that she is spending these last years of her life in an isolated exile, but she nonetheless makes a sharp distinction between Komarovo and Leningrad proper. She appreciates the quiet beauty of this location, and it is here that she learns to resign herself to the vicissitudes and losses she has experienced in life.

The Russian Empire

While the plurality of Akhmatova's poetic geography focuses on Leningrad and its suburbs, 27% of Akhmatova's geographic references are to places elsewhere in the Russian Empire. These references range from Ukraine to Crimea, to Tashkent, to other cities in Russia and former Soviet republics. This portion of Akhmatova's poetic geography is enlightening, as it reveals the relationship in which she holds the center to the peripheries of the empire. For

[104] "I gave up many things in life, / There is almost nothing that I need anymore— / For me, Komarovo's pines / Speak a language all their own, / And like entirely separate springtimes / They stand, each in a pool that has drunk up the sky" (Hemschemeyer, 749-750).

Akhmatova, her home is comprised of the entire Russian Empire, yet she sees and writes about varying levels of foreignness or allegiance to the various regions of the Empire.

Ukraine

Despite being born in Ukraine and having a Ukrainian father, Akhmatova did not consider herself to be Ukrainian.[105] She studied in Kyiv at the Fundukleevskaia Gymnaziia, and then entered the Faculty of Law at the Kyiv College for Women. Her time in Ukraine, however, was an unhappy period of her life. She was homesick and lovesick, and her relationship with her father was in turmoil (Feinstein, 26). She struggled to fit in with her aunt's family, with whom she was staying (Reeder, 21). In her mind, Kyiv was associated with loneliness, separation from family, and the initiation of an ill-fated marriage. Roberta Reeder observes of Akhmatova's school years in Kyiv,

> At this time, her letters reflect her unhappy state, as she compares herself to Cassandra: 'I have murdered my soul, and my eyes are created for tears, as Iolanthe says. Or do you remember Schiller's prophetic Cassandra? One facet of my soul adjoins the dark image of this prophetess, so great in her suffering. But I am far from greatness' (Reeder, 18).

Perhaps Akhmatova was somewhat overdramatic in her depiction of her own sorrow, but nevertheless she felt very deeply unhappy during her time in Kyiv.[106] Due in part to these negative personal experiences while in Kyiv, as well as to her personal lack of affiliation to her Ukrainian roots, Akhmatova never developed a strong affinity for the city, nor did she claim for

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[105] Akhmatova wrote, "все считают меня украинкой. Во-первых, оттого, что фамилия моего отца Горенко, во-вторых, оттого, что я родилась в Одессе и кончила Фундуклеевскую гимназию, в третьих, и главным образом, потому, что Н.С. Гумилев написал: "Из города Киева,// из логова Змиева//Я взял не жену, я колдунью..." (1910) А в Киеве я жила меньше, чем в Ташкенте (1941-1944, во время эвакуации). Одну зиму, когда кончала Фундуклеевскую гимназию, и две зимы, когда была на Высших женских курсах. Но невнимание людей друг к другу не имеет предела" (Akhmatova, vol. 2, 173).

[106] It was in Kyiv that Akhmatova married Nikolai Gumilev, yet this marriage would prove to be unhappy and short-lived. Akhmatova and Gumilev were married 25 April, 1910 in the Nikolaevsky Church on the Dnipro river. Akhmatova's family did not attend (Feinstein, 30).

herself a Ukrainian identity. This personal choice to remain aloof from any deep connections to Kyiv (and Ukraine in general) is reflected in Akhmatova's poetry. A mere 3% of her geographical references are to Ukraine.[107] The majority of Akhmatova's Ukraine poetry is centered in the city of Kyiv, with a couple verses venturing beyond the city's border to honor personal friends.[108] Akhmatova wrote about personal experiences she had in Kyiv, while also acknowledging the city's religious and cultural import, but when she was not physically visiting Ukraine, she remained essentially silent on the topic of Ukraine. The few poems that she did devote to Kyiv and Ukraine are enlightening in elucidating her poetic geography of Ukraine.

The co-called "Kyiv text" in Russian literature (seen in Gogol, Bulgakov, Kuprin, among others) presents two versions of Kyiv: "sacred Kyiv" and "demonic Kyiv" (Shurupova, 44-57). Elsewhere the "Kyiv text" is described as a personification of the city as the mother city of Russia and a spiritual city (Burago, 35). Akhmatova joins into this dialogue, presenting her own view of the city. Her Kyiv is indeed the mother city of Russia and a sacred place, and she gives a brief nod to the idea of a demonic Kyiv. Beyond this confirmation of the widely accepted Kyiv text, however, Akhmatova's Kyiv is also a place of personal love affairs and profound emotional experiences against the backdrop of some of the most sacred places in the former Kyivan Rus'. Akhmatova's Ukraine is a place of beautiful nature, and historical and religious significance. While her Kyiv and Ukraine do not hold the same cultural and literary importance to Akhmatova as does Leningrad, she nevertheless writes in a mostly positive vein about Ukraine.

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[107] Nine of Akhmatova's verses mention Ukraine. This number excludes Akhmatova's poetry about Crimea, which will be explored separately.

[108] One of these, discusses below, is dedicated to Vladimir Narbut, who was from Chernihov. The other, not discussed here, provides a eulogy to her friend Grigory Feigin, who went to war in a so-called death battalion and died in 1917 (Hemschemeyer, 793-4).

"Я знаю: это ты, убитый, / Мне хочешь рассказать о том, / И снова вижу холм изрытый / Над окровавленным Днестром" (Akhmatova 128-129).

"I will know: it is you—killed— / Wanting to tell me about it, / And again I'll see the pockmarked hill / Over the Dniestr's bloody swirl" (Hemschemeyer, 244).

Akhmatova emphasizes the historical and cultural legacy of Kyiv as the birthplace of Rus'. While visiting her mother and sister in Darnitsa, a district of Kyiv, in 1914, Akhmatova penned the following lines (Hemschemeyer, 788):

Древний город словно вымер,

Странен мой приезд.

Над рекой своей Владимир

Поднял черный крест (Akhmatova, 87-88).[109]

The ancient city of Kyiv is identified through Prince Vladimir's statue overlooking the Dnipro River. Akhmatova assumes that her reader will understand the historical and cultural references of Prince Vladimir's statue and river: Ukraine is the home of the baptizer of Rus, and his statue still stands over the city. By acknowledging this history of Kyiv, Akhmatova indicates that she views Kyiv and Ukraine as an important part of the history of Rus'. Yet this very acknowledgement of the greatness of Ukraine and Prince Vladimir is tempered by the confession that the city seems to have perished, and her arrival is strange. Kyiv seems to have lost some of its former glory, if only in Akhmatova's eyes. While the city is not what it once was, Akhmatova observes that nature is still present and beautiful.[110]

Липы шумные и вязы

По садам темны,

Звезд иглистые алмазы

К богу взнесены (Akhmatova, 87-88).[111]

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[109] "The ancient city seems deserted, / My arrival is strange. / Over its river, Vladimir / Raised a black cross" (Hemschemeyer, 186-187).

[110] As will be discussed in the following chapter, Lina Kostenko's poetry of Ukraine focuses on nature; it is interesting to note that Akhmatova also has a tendency to write about the natural elements of Ukraine.

[111] "The rustling lindens and the elms / Along the gardens are dark, / And the diamond needles of the stars / Are lifted out toward God" (Hemschemeyer, 186-187).

Darkness surrounds the trees, but the stars light the sky and point to a higher power. This religious connotation echoes the legacy of Vladimir as the baptizer of Rus'. Akhmatova's Kyiv is a spiritual place, surrounded by a muted nature that points to God. With this background description of the city, Akhmatova turns to her personal relationship with Kyiv.

Путь мой жертвенный и славный
Здесь окончу я,
Но со мной лишь ты, мне равный,
Да любовь моя (Akhmatova, 87-88).[112]

This poem is likely addressed to Nedobrovo, who was Akhmatova's love interest at the time and whom she saw on this visit to Kyiv (Hemschemeyer, 788). She claims to be finishing her sacrificial and glorious path in the city of Kyiv, together with her lover. This indicates an acceptance of the city, along with its history. The meter in this poem is trochaic tetrameter/trimeter (the odd-numbered lines have four feet, while the even-numbered lines have three feet). Trochees are often associated with movement and marching, and their moving rhythm in this poem echoes the pilgrim-like aspect of her journey—she has come here on some glorious and sacrificial journey. There is movement in this poem—forward movement—even though the very first line claims that the city seems to have perished. Akhmatova seems to have found the conclusion of her journey not exclusively in the city of Kyiv, but with her lover.

In another verse dedicated to Nedobrovo, Akhmatova once again combines the personal elements of Kyiv with their religious and cultural significance (Hemschemeyer, 853). Akhmatova has deep affection for Nedobrovo, and she views the St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv as an extension of him.

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[112] "My sacrificial and glorious journey / I will finish here, / And with me only you, my equal / And my lover" (Hemschemeyer, 186-187).

И в Киевском храме Премудрости Бога,

Припав к солее, я тебе поклялась,

Что будет моею твоя дорога,

Где бы она ни вилась.

То слышали ангелы золотые

И в белом гробу Ярослав.

Как голуби, вьются слова простые

И ныне у солнечных глав.

И если слабею, мне снится икона

И девять ступенек на ней.

И в голосе грозном софийского звона

Мне слышится голос тревоги твоей (Akhmatova, 325).[113]

In this verse, Akhmatova is inside St. Sophia's Cathedral, seemingly worshipping Nedobrovo as if the cathedral is no longer consecrated to the Christian God, but to the poet's friend. The cathedral is transformed into a personification of her lover: the great bell of Sofia's cathedral is transformed into Nedobrovo's voice. The rich and long history of Kyiv is alluded to as Akhmatova approaches Yaroslav the Wise's grave in the cathedral. The historical and religious greatness of the city speak become part of the daily realities of Akhmatova's life.

[113] "And in the Kievian church of Divine Wisdom, / On my knees before the solium I bowed to you— / That your road be mine / No matter where it winds. / The golden angels heard / And even Yaroslav in his white sepulcher. / How the simple words of the dove hover / Even now in the sunny cupolas. / And if I weaken, I dream of an icon, / And the nine steps leading up to it, / And in the terrible voice of Sophia's bell / I hear the voice of your uneasiness" (Hemschemeyer, 646).

St. Sophia's Cathedral appears in another of Akhmatova's prominent Kyiv verses. Unlike the verse dedicated to Nedobrovo a few years earlier, however, this 1921 poem paints a dark and ominous picture of the cathedral square.

Широко распахнуты ворота,

Липы нищенски обнажены,

И темна сухая позолота

Нерушимой вогнутой стены (Akhmatova, 164).[114]

The wall around the cathedral square is formidable and imposing, graced only by bare lindens which stand as though they are the city's naked beggars congregated around the edifice. Akhmatova continues this stark description with a discussion of Mazepa's bell, which hangs in the bell-tower at the front of the square.

Гулом полны алтари и склепы,

И за Днепр широкий звон летит.

Так тяжелый колокол Мазепы

Над Софийской площадью гудит.

Все грозней бушует, непреклонный,

Словно здесь еретиков казнят (Akhmatova, 164-165).[115]

This bell does not have a pleasant sound, as it shakes the cathedral to its foundations. The sound carries over the Dnipro river, as if alerting people that executions are taking place near the

[114] "The gates are thrown wide open, / The lindens are naked beggars, / And there is dark dried gilding / On the impregnable, concave wall" (Hemschemeyer, 292).
[115] "The altars and crypts are rumbling, / And beyond the Dnieper the wide sound rolls. / Thus the heavy bell of Mazepa / Over Sophia Square tolls. / Ever more dreadful it thunders, inexorable, / As if they were executing heretics here" (Hemschemeyer, 292).

church. The bell of Mazepa hangs in the prominent bell tower at the front of the cathedral's square. Mazepa was regarded as a liberating hero by the Ukrainians, and as a rebellious traitor by the Russians (Subtelny, 164; 575). Akhmatova's portrayal of the bell of Mazepa as ominous and threatening casts a negative shadow on the legacy of Mazepa, thus perhaps aligning Akhmatova more closely with the Russian interpretation of Mazepa as a traitor. This terrible scene conveys Akhmatova's version of the "demonic Kyiv." Amidst this negativity, however, Akhmatova acknowledges that the bell is not universally perceived as ominous:

А в лесах заречных, примиренный,

Веселит пушистых лисенят (Akhmatova, 164-165).[116]

Only nature remains unperturbed by the tolling of this bell, and the foxes laugh at the sound. In this confession that nature appreciates the sound of the bell, Akhmatova leaves open the possibility that Mazepa was not an entirely negative figure, but concedes that some entities—specifically Ukrainians—may perceive him as a positive hero. In this manner, Akhmatova glorifies the city of Kyiv by referencing its greatness, while simultaneously alluding to a time at which Russia and Ukraine were at odds. Akhmatova's reference to Mazepa indicates that her own personal viewpoints of Russian Imperial vs. Ukrainian historiography were perhaps more complicated than a simple acceptance of the standard Russian view. She acknowledges the tension between Ukraine and Russia, but subtly, without taking a strong stance on either side.

In a 1912 Kyiv poem, the city stands as the witness and background to Akhmatova's personal experience and anguish. She painfully describes the healing she has undergone after a heartbreak, rejoicing that she no longer dreams as often about a certain man and that healing has come to her soul:

[116] "And in the woods across the river, mollified, / It amuses the fluffy young foxes" (Hemschemeyer, 292).

Исцелил мне душу царь небесный

Ледяным покоем нелюбви (Akhmatova, 228-229).[117]

It is in this emotional state of healing through newly acquired indifference that the poet hears the sound of the bells echoing from the Jonah Trinity Monastery in Kyiv (Hemschemeyer, 792).

И весь день не замолкали звоны

Над простором вспаханной земли,

Здесь всего сильнее от Ионы

Колокольни лаврские вдали (Akhmatova, 228-229).[118]

The relentless tolling of the bells accompanies her efforts to return to her former life.

Подстригаю на кустах сирени

Ветки те, что нынче отцвели,

По валам старинных укреплений

Два монаха медленно прошли (Akhmatova, 228-229).[119]

The image of the monks strolling along the monastery is juxtaposed with the poet's literal and symbolic removal of the wilted lilacs: the ancient monastery fortress is a witness to her purging from her life of the memories of a love gone sour. In contrast to the ominous ringing of Mazepa's bell, the bells from Jonah's monastery are not the heralds of fear and death: they are the heavenly accompaniment of healing and change.

Ukraine in Akhmatova's poetic geography is inextricably connected with nature and the nascent beauty of the land. She describes a solitary walk she takes by the river: "On the right, the

[117] "The heavenly king has already healed my soul / With the peace of unlove, icy cold" (Hemschemeyer, 228-229).
[118] "And the ringing goes on all day. / Over the endless expanse of ploughed fields, / Ever louder sound the bells / From Jonah's monastery far away" (Hemschemeyer, 228-229).
[119] "I am clipping today's wilted branches / From the lilac bushes; / On the ramparts of the ancient fortress, / Two monks stroll" (Hemschemeyer, 228-229).

Dnieper, on the left, maple trees, / Overhead, warm skies. / It was a cool, green day" (Hemschemeyer, 646-647). Ukraine is depicted as a beautiful, open land with flowers, trees, and the river. The only living creatures aside from the speaker are plants and insects. With her final words of the poem, however, Akhmatova indicates that she and the insects are not alone in Kyiv: "And the praying mantises marveled / At the blue domes" (Hemschemeyer, 646-647). This image brings the reader immediately back to the center of Kyiv, surrounded by the towering Orthodox churches. Instead of focusing on the history and culture of the churches, however, they are shown through the eyes of a humble insect. This approach reveals a new view on the city: a place of pure beauty and peace. The speaker herself states that she is brought to this place by an unknown voice of longing, suggesting that something is calling her to this city. In this poem, it seems to be not the historical legacy of Kyiv that is calling to her, but rather the natural and peaceful elements of the city. Even in the middle of the city, one can find nature and peace in Kyiv.

In her Kyiv poetry discussed above, Akhmatova includes natural elements (such as rivers, trees, fog, etc.) while still focusing on, or at least alluding to, the cityscape. In one verse, a 1940 poem dedicated to her friend Vladimir Narbut, a Ukrainian poet who wrote in Russian (Cheloukhina, 80-83), Akhmatova moved entirely away from the cityscape and focused exclusively on nature. This verse, entitled «Про стихи» ("Concerning poetry") makes a series of comparisons between poetry and everyday entities.

Это - выжимки бессонниц,

Это - свеч кривых нагар,

Это - сотен белых звонниц

Первый утренний удар...

Это - теплый подоконник

Под черниговской луной (Akhmatova, 199).[120]

This poem creates an image of a poet who has been struggling all night to compose a verse, leaning on the windowsill and gazing out at the Chernigov moon. By dedicating this poem to Narbut and referencing his native Chernigov, Akhmatova draws parallels between herself and Narbut. They shared the same creative poetic forces, as well as the unique perspective that comes from a Ukrainian heritage combined with a choice to write in Russian. The Ukraine of Narbut and his Chernigov moon is a place of bell towers, nature, and poetry. There is no cityscape, no religious or cultural history: nature and poetry reign supreme in this region of Akhmatova's Ukraine.

Akhmatova's most decisive commentary on Ukraine can be found in her cycle *Rekviem*, in which she states that she no longer is attached to the land of her birth. She requests that, if a monument someday be erected to her «в этой стране»[121] it should stand

Ни около моря, где я родилась:

Последняя с морем разорвана связь (Akhmatova, 194).[122]

This confession is two-fold: First, Akhmatova does not lay claim to Odesa or Ukraine as her native home. Her ties there have been severed, and she identifies herself as a person of Leningrad. She does not consider herself to be Ukrainian. Second, by referring to her birthplace as merely a place near the sea, she avoids using the term "Ukraine" at all. This reveals that in her mind, Ukraine is not necessarily distinct or separate from the rest of the Russian Empire. Odesa was merely a region of the Empire, and one which, it just so happens, Akhmatova does not

[120] "It is—insomnia's husks, / It is—the soot of crooked candles, / It is—the first morning stroke / From hundreds of white bell towers... / It is—the warm windowsill / Under the Chernigov moon" (Hemschemeyer, 418).
[121] "in this country" (Hemschemeyer, 393).
[122] "Neither by the sea, where I was born: My last tie with the sea is broken" (Hemschemeyer, 393).

choose to claim. She does not engage in a discussion of national or ethnic identity, but simply views Ukraine as another region of her homeland. She indeed even labels these regions—Odesa and Leningrad—as part of the same *country* («в этой стране»). In Akhmatova's understanding, Ukraine is not a separate nation, but is part of her own home "country" of the Russian Empire/Soviet Union.

Akhmatova's poetry about Ukraine focuses mainly on the city of Kyiv, creating her own textual interpretation of the city. Her Kyiv is a place that inherited the religion and weighty history of Vladimir, Yaroslav, and the other great leaders of Rus'. Yet it is also a place where modern life is lived in the shadows of history. Akhmatova viewed Ukraine as an extension of Russia and part of the Russian Empire: her poetry does not begrudge Kyiv its claim to Prince Vladimir, as it portrays Ukraine as simply a part of the entire Russian Empire. Her comparison lies not so much in Ukraine vs. Russia as it does in Leningrad vs. Kyiv. Akhmatova's overall assessment of Kyiv seems to paint a more positive picture of that city than her portrayal of Leningrad: Leningrad labors under the burden of Peter's oppressive legacy, while Kyiv stands under the protective guard of the baptizer of Rus'. Kyiv is holy while Leningrad is secular. Neither city is without its sins, which Akhmatova acknowledges, but Kyiv is the purer of the two, the cradle of Christianity in Eastern Europe. Ukraine does not provide as much literary or artistic culture for Akhmatova to comment on: her observations are limited to personal experience, religion, and landscape (and the brief reference to the poet Narbut). Leningrad is clearly the cultural powerhouse of the two cities, while Kyiv remains a more secluded, natural, and religious city. Kyiv and Ukraine are part of Akhmatova's larger homeland. She does not claim a Ukrainian identity, but she does not condemn the Ukrainian countryside or cities. In her poetic geography, Akhmatova shows Ukraine to be an integral part of the Russian Empire. Her

affinity and identity remain with the Empire at large and with Leningrad in particular.

Crimea

Akhmatova spent a great deal of time in Crimea, particularly during the early years of her life when her family traveled to Crimea in the summers, and for the entire year in which her parents separated when she was sixteen (Temnenko, 57-58). While this location has passed through the hands of both Ukraine and Russia over the centuries, during the early 1900s, it was under Russian control. (It would in 1921 become an autonomous Soviet republic, later returning to Russia, then in 1954 becoming part of the Ukrainian Soviet republic.) Regardless of which government retained control of the peninsula at any given moment, however, it seems that for Akhmatova, Crimea was simply a peripheral part of her empire associated with her childhood. Akhmatova's Crimean experiences were not always positive, and Akhmatova even attempted suicide in Evpatoriya around 1906 (Reeder, 21). With one exception,[123] her poems of Crimea are all verses written in the 1910's, most of which are nostalgic longings for a past childhood from which she now feels disconnected.

Akhmatova's 1915 *poema* "At the edge of the sea" takes place in Crimea and encapsulates Akhmatova's farewell to childhood (Hemschemeyer, 521-529).[124] In this work, she scorns a young boy who wants to be her lover, and awaits a foreign prince she was promised by a gypsy. When her prince finally arrives by boat, however, Akhmatova discovers that he has already died. The youthful innocence of Akhmatova's Crimean childhood is lost as she becomes acquainted with the adult world of death and sorrow. The poem mourns a lost childhood in a

[123] There is a passing reference to Crimea in Akhmatova's 1940 verse "The way of all the earth" in which she laments the tragedy of war and the darkening of Crimea's coast.

[124] While this dissertation is limiting itself primarily to the lyrical poetry of the two poets, this particular *poema* is similar enough to Akhmatova's lyrical verses to be included: "The work, according to Zhirmunsky, is not a departure from Akhmatova's lyric poetry, but reflects 'the maturation of the youthful poetic consciousness, the awakening of love and grief' (Reeder, 21).

beautiful location, while at the same time implicating Crimea—specifically the sea—in the death of Akhmatova's prince. Akhmatova thus connects death with her childhood and with the sea itself.[125] The lost paradise of her innocent childhood cannot be regained, and the once Eden-like Crimea has been marred by the advent of death.

Another verse (from 1913) likewise touches this theme of a lost paradise in Crimea. Akhmatova recognizes that things have changed irreparably and she can never return to her paradisiacal Crimea, yet she still mourns for this lost childhood and innocence. She wistfully laments,

Стать бы снова приморской девчонкой,
Туфли на босу ногу надеть,
И закладывать косы коронкой,
И взволнованным голосом петь.

Все глядеть бы на смуглые главы
Херсонесского храма с крыльца
И не знать, что от счастья и славы
Безнадежно дряхлеют сердца (Akhmatova, 65).[126]

Crimea thus becomes a symbol for Akhmatova's carefree and blissful childhood. Akhmatova longs to return not so much to a geographic location, but to what that location represents: an unspoiled childhood that has not yet known the wearing down of the spirit. In her adult life, she

[125] Perhaps this could indicate why she later asserts that her last ties with the sea have been broken (*Rekviem*)—she felt betrayed as a child by the sea and cannot forgive it the death that it caused

[126] "To become that seaside girl again, / With sandals on my feet, / And to heap my braids up in a crown, / And to sing in a troubled voice. / To be gazing still from the porch / At the dark cupolas of the Khersones church, / And not to know that from happiness and fame / The spirit inevitably wears away" (Hemschemeyer, 151).

feels disconnected from the girl by the seaside, as she has tasted of the realities of maturity.

In another nostalgic verse, Akhmatova remembers a golden time in her youth where she spent time in Crimea with a beloved person.[127]

Вновь подарен мне дремотой
Наш последний звездный рай
Город чистых водометов,
Золотой Бахчисарай (Akhmatova, 97).[128]

Bakhchisarai is pure and paradisiacal; the place of dreams. The appeal to visions and paradise separates Bakhchisarai temporally and physically from the rest of the empire: this place is almost foreign in its beauty and unattainability. Yet even while the lovers are in this beautiful place by the sea, their thoughts are directed back to Tsarskoe Selo:

Там, за пестрою оградой,
У задумчивой воды,
Вспоминали мы с отрадой
Царскосельские сады (Akhmatova, 97).[129]

This connection in memory between Tsarskoe Selo and Crimea serves to bind the periphery of the empire (Crimea) with the center (a town near Petersburg). Through these deeply personal memories, Akhmatova illustrates that her Bakhchisarai, while beautiful, is separated from the rest of the empire and not part of the center: lovers in Crimea cannot help but think about Tsarskoe Selo.

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[127] It is likely that Akhmatova addresses this verse to Nedobrovo, whom she saw on this 1916 visit to Crimea (Hemschmeyer, 789).
[128] "Drowsiness takes me back again / To our last starry paradise— / City of pure fountains, / Golden Bakhchisarai" (Hemschemeyer, 195-196).
[129] "There beyond the gaudy fence, / By the pensive waters, / We remembered with delight / The gardens of Tsarskoye Selo" (Hemschemeyer, 195-196).

While Akhmatova's nostalgic verses about Crimea depict a positive location, when she wrote about contemporary visits to Crimea, she displays a much more negative view of the region. In 1916, Akhmatova was treated for tuberculosis in Crimea, and while there she wrote a poem expressing her dislike of the city and her personal discomfort while there (Hemschemeyer, 787). This poem does not express any of the nostalgic longing for a bygone childhood, but rather focuses on the discomfort of the present.

В немилый город брошенное тело

Не радо солнцу. Чувствую, что кровь

Во мне уже совсем похолодела (Akhmatova, 84).[130]

Akhmatova's chief complaint is that she can no longer commune with her Muse, and her conscience is tormenting her. She does not rejoice in the beauty of Crimea nor reflect on happy memories. The Sevastopol' of this poem is an unpleasant and unpoetic location. Akhmatova's sole positive connection with Crimea seems to be remembering a golden past that cannot be returned to her.

Akhmatova's poetic description of Crimea depicts a *place* inseparably connected with the poet's childhood and early life. It is a beautiful location when remembered nostalgically, but it can be a painful and confining place in the present. Crimea is part of Akhmatova's perceived homeland, but it is nonetheless separated from and subservient to the center.

Tashkent and Asia

During WWII, Akhmatova was evacuated from her beloved Leningrad as part of the group of artists and other important people whom the government considered important enough to evacuate. The three years that Akhmatova spent in Tashkent were bittersweet. While she was

[130] "The body, flung into this hated town, / Does not rejoice in the sun. I feel that my blood / Has gone completely cold" (Hemschemeyer, 182).

appreciative of her safety and the opportunity to become acquainted with new people and places, she nevertheless felt isolated from the cultural center of her homeland. She grew to love her temporary home, but she still longed for Leningrad. In her autobiographical writings, Akhmatova said,

> В конце сентября [1941], уже во время блокады, я вылетела на самолете в Москву. До мая 1944 года я жила в Ташкенте, жадно ловила вести о Ленинграде, о фронте. Как и другие поэты, часто выступала в госпиталях, читала стихи раненым бойцам. В Ташкенте я впервые узнала, что такое в палящий жар древесная тень и звук воды. А еще я узнала, что такое человеческая доброта: в Ташкенте я много и тяжело болела (Akhmatova, vol. 2, 268).[131]

Her poetry reflects the somewhat mixed feelings that she holds for her temporary home.[132] At times she lauds Tashkent and "Asia" as a home away from home and a place that she feels is connected to her homeland. Yet she always maintains a sense of distinction between the two, never specifically referring to Tashkent as "Russia," but as "Asia." This perhaps reveals the underlying feelings Akhmatova held toward the relationship of the periphery to the centers in general—she seems to include Tashkent as part of her larger "homeland" or the Russian Empire, but when it comes to her true home, she limits that to Leningrad. This is once again a reflection of the concentric circles of home and homeland that Akhmatova displays.[133]

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[131] "In the end of September [1941], already during the blockade, I flew on an airplane to Moscow. Until May 1944, I lived in Tashkent and eagerly caught news about Leningrad, about the front. Like other poets, I frequently performed in hospitals and read poems to wounded soldiers. In Tashkent I first learned what the scorching heat, the wood shade, and the sound of water are like. And I also learned what human kindness is: in Tashkent I was many times and seriously ill."

[132] Her poetic geography devotes 4.4% of its geographic mentions to Tashkent.

[133] This view of Tashkent as simultaneously part of her homeland and yet distinct form it can be extrapolated to include the rest of the empire: the peripheries of the Russian Empire were part of Akhmatova's home in the largest understanding of home, but still remained distinct from her primary affection of Leningrad. This is likely the relationship she held Ukraine in to the rest of the empire—a quaint, unique part of the periphery of homeland that nevertheless is somewhat alien and separated from her true concept of home.

For Akhmatova, Tashkent is inseparable from nature. In contrast to her poetry of Leningrad, which is largely focused on the cityscape and cultivated aspects of nature, Akhmatova frequently lauds and praises the sublime beauty of Tashkent's nature. Tashkent introduced her to a new type of beauty she had not experienced before.

Не знала б, как цветет айва,

Не знала б, как звучат слова

На вашем языке,

Как в город с гор ползет туман (Akhmatova, 370).[134]

Nature and civilization flow together in a comprehensive whole: the flowering quince tree is followed by the native language of the locals; the fog moves from the mountain to the city, connecting and uniting the two entities. The flowers and fogs of the region are seen again in another Tashkent verse:

Над Азией весенние туманы,

И яркие до ужаса тюльпаны

Ковром заткали много сотен миль (Akhmatova, 336).[135]

A carpet of flowers continuing for miles is not feasible within the confines of Leningrad, but in the vast and open regions surrounding Tashkent, such beauty is not only possible, but a stunning reality. The poppies of Tashkent also amaze Akhmatova:

Увидеть, как красен мак.

…

И как твой тополь высок...

[134] "I wouldn't have known how the quince tree blossoms, / I wouldn't have known how words sound / In your tongue, / How the fog crawls down the mountain to the city" (Hemschemeyer, 695).
[135] "Over Asia—the mists of spring, / And tulips bright to the point of terror, / Woven as a carpet for hundreds of miles" (Hemschemeyer, 678-679).

Шехерезада

Идет из сада...

Так вот ты какой. Восток! (Akhmatova, 209).[136]

This reference to Tashkent as part of "the East" emphasizes the boundaries of imaginative geography that Akhmatova has set up between Tashkent and the western regions of Russia: she is willing to praise the natural beauty of Tashkent, but she still views it as "other." This mental and cultural separation from Tashkent perhaps added a heightened element of awe to her verses describing the beauty of Tashkent.

Но, верно, вспомню на лету,

Как запылал Ташкент в цвету,

Весь белым пламенем объят,

Горяч, пахуч, замысловат,

Невероятен... (Akhmatova, 211).[137]

Coming from her cold northern city, Akhmatova finds it difficult to believe that such beauty can exist in the "East." This awed discussion of the flowers in Tashkent continues in Akhmatova's verse «Ташкент зацветает» ("Tashkent in bloom").

Словно по чьему-то повеленью,

Сразу стало в городе светло —

Это в каждый двор по привиденью

Белому и легкому вошло (Akhmatova, 214).[138]

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[136] "To notice how red the poppy is. / … / And how tall your poplar tree... / Scheherazade / Comes from the garden... / So this is you, the East!" (Hemschemeyer, 434).

[137] "But I'll remember, fleetingly, / How Tashkent flared into bloom, / Completely consumed by white flame, / Hot, fragrant, intricate, / Unbelievable..." (Hemschemeyer, 438).

[138] "As if on someone's command, /The town became suddenly bright— /In every courtyard an apparition, /Light and white, appeared" (Hemschemeyer, 440).

The sudden appearance of blossoms is likened to light; the city becomes bright as the trees blossom. Akhmatova continues her depiction, this time tying the human aspect of the city with nature.

Я буду помнить звездный кров

В сиянье вечных слав

И маленьких баранчуков

У чернокосых матерей

На молодых руках (Akhmatova, 214).[139]

The sky filled with stars serves as a roof for the mothers and their children. Tashkent is inextricable from nature. While Leningrad possessed two main relatively natural elements (Summer Garden and the Neva River), Tashkent is almost entirely comprised of the natural world. Roofs do not separate families from the nighttime stars, and carpets of flowers cover the ground.

Akhmatova's «Третью весну встречаю вдали»[140] establishes her imagined relationship between Tashkent and Leningrad. Even this poem which is about Tashkent describes Tashkent in relation to the city of Leningrad: the two cities are connected in her mind because her heart remained in Leningrad even while she was physically in Tashkent. Leningrad is the center of her universe, and other geographic locations receive their significance in their relationship to Leningrad.

Третью весну встречаю вдали

От Ленинграда.

[139] "I will remember the roof of stars/In the radiance of eternal praise, /And the little baranchuks /In the youthful arms /Of mothers with black braids" (Hemschemeyer, 440).
[140] "I am greeting my third spring far" (Hemschemeyer, 435).

Третью? И кажется мне, она

Будет последней.

Но не забуду я никогда,

До часа смерти,

Как был отраден мне звук воды

В тени древесной.

Персик зацвел, а фиалок дым

Все благовонней.

Кто мне посмеет сказать, что здесь

Я на чужбине?! (Akhmatova, 210).[141]

Despite her obvious love and longing for her native Leningrad, she nevertheless defends the place that she is in and recounts the positive aspects of it, vowing to never forget the distinctive beauties she observed there. She dares anyone to tell her that she is in a foreign land, insisting that her new home has become an important *place* to her. While she seems pleased that it will be her final spring there, she nonetheless expresses her love for this new place with one of the highest honors Akhmatova is able to bestow—the epithet of homeland. She refutes the implication that she is in a foreign land. This poem has lines that alternate in length between 4-foot and 2-foot dol'niks. This transition back and forth between the two lengths of lines perhaps illustrates the dual nature of Akhmatova's feelings—recognizing that she misses her beloved Leningrad, but also realizing that there is much good and home-like in her current locale.[142]

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[141] "I am greeting my third spring far/From Leningrad./Third? And I think that it/Will be the last./But I will never forget,/Till the hour of death,/How delightful to me was the sound of water/In leafy shade./The peach tree has bloomed and the haze of the violets/Is sweeter and sweeter./Who would dare tell me that/I am a stranger here?!" (Hemschemeyer, 435).

[142] There is no regular rhyme scheme in the poem, which is somewhat unusual for Akhmatova's poetry. Perhaps this lack of rhymes mirrors the lack of resolved, completed feelings about leaving part of her homeland.

Another of Akhmatova's Tashkent poems begins with the elevated praise, «Ты, Азия, родина родин!» (Akhmatova, 339).[143] Asia represents the global, historical motherland from which numerous motherlands evolved. While this reference to homelands does not necessarily indicate that Akhmatova is calling Tashkent her own homeland, she nonetheless endues Central Asia with a preeminence in claiming the loyalties of many lands and peoples. Her love for Tashkent implies at least some level of affiliation with this historical, Asian homeland. Yet Akhmatova's very designation of the Tashkent region as "Asia" indicates that she views Tashkent as somewhat peripheral to the center of Russia . The influence of Asia permeates Akhmatova's perception of Tashkent.

Невиданной сказочной ширмой

Соседний мерещится край,

И стаи голубок над Бирмой

Летят в нерушимый Китай (Akhmatova, 339).[144]

To Akhmatova, the lands and regions of Asia are mystical and all connected to each other, even if there are many different languages still spoken there.

И новая правда звучала

На древних твоих языках» (Akhmatova, 339).[145]

Akhmatova acknowledges that the people and languages of Asia are rich and varied: Asia is the motherland of many distinct motherlands—including the Tashkent she has come to love.

Some of Akhmatova's Tashkent poems display her tendency of relating a personal anecdote with a background in a particular location. In one she talks about a night with another

[143] "You, Asia, motherland of motherlands!" (Hemschemeyer, 685).
[144] "The neighboring region gleams/Like an invisible fairy-tale screen./And a flock of doves over Burma/Flies to impregnable China" (Hemschemeyer, 685)
[145] "And a new truth resounded/In your ancient tongues" (Hemschemeyer, 685).

person: “В ту ночь мы сошли друг от друга с ума” (Akhmatova, 245).[146] She gives few details about the conversation or actions between the two people, but she does provide commentary on the location in which this is taking place.

И Азией пахли гвоздики.

И мы проходили сквозь город чужой (Akhmatova, 245).[147]

The city is referred to as foreign and part of Asia: this is not the familiar Leningrad of Akhmatova’s youth. The setting up of the place as different from Russia continues in the subsequent stanza:

То мог быть Стамбул или даже Багдад,

Но, увы! не Варшава, не Ленинград,

И горькое это несходство

Душило, как воздух сиротства (Akhmatova, 245).[148]

In the midst of this night with a companion, Akhmatova comments on the foreignness of Tashkent: it felt different enough from her familiar Leningrad that it could have been the foreign Istanbul or Baghdad.[149] The difference between their previous experience and their current surroundings creates a stifling dissonance.

Akhmatova confesses that she learned and changed a great deal during her evacuation in Tashkent. She refers not exclusively to Tashkent itself, but also to Termez, a city in present-day Uzbekistan. Asia had the power to see into her soul and bring out a previously undiscovered

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[146] “That night we drove each other crazy” (Hemschemeyer, 482-483).
[147] “And the carnations smelled of Asia./And we passed through the alien town” (Hemschemeyer, 482-483).
[148] “It could have been Istanbul or even Baghdad,/But alas! Neither Warsaw nor Leningrad,/And this bitter difference/Was stifling, like the air of orphanhood” (Hemschemeyer, 482-483).
[149] Akhmatova’s reference here to Warsaw is interesting. She seems to be setting Warsaw on the same plane of familiarity as Leningrad, although her affinity for Leningrad far exceeds her essentially nonexistent personal relationship with Warsaw. It may be a commentary on the cultural similarities: Warsaw is more similar culturally to Leningrad than either Baghdad or Istanbul. Or perhaps she is using Warsaw as a stand-in to represent all of Europe.

aspect of herself.

Это рысьи глаза твои, Азия,

Что-то высмотрели во мне,

Что-то выдразнили подспудное,

И рожденное тишиной,

…

Словно я свои же рыдания

Из чужих ладоней пила (Akhmatova, 213-214).[150]

Akhmatova acknowledges that she was able to learn and grow in ways that she could not have while still in Leningrad. This realization was somewhat painful, causing her to confront her own sorrows, but she nevertheless sees the importance of it.[151]

Upon leaving Tashkent, Akhmatova experienced feelings of deep loss but also gratitude for the city she had spent three years in. She uses the native language of the region (Uzbek) to bid farewell and express gratitude to those she has been with in Tashkent.

Теперь я всех благодарю,

Рахмат[152] и хайер говорю

И вам машу платком.

Рахмат, Айбек, рахмат, Чусти,

Рахмат, Тошкент! - прости, прости,

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[150] "Those lynx eyes of yours, Asia, / Spied out something in me, / Teased out something latent / And born of silence, /… /As if I were drinking my own sobs /From a stranger's palms" (Hemschemeyer, 440).

[151] The reference to the lynx eyes of Asia seems to perpetuate a racial stereotype about Asian eyes. Such use of a racial stereotype presents the modern reader with a sense of discomfort. Despite her use of this negative stereotype, however, Akhmatova did not dislike the peoples of Central Asia, and in this same poem praises the people for reaching her and helping her in ways she did not expect.

[152] The phonological similarities between this Uzbek farewell (rakhmat) and Akhmatova's own name is noteworthy. Perhaps Akhmatova felt a sense of discovering her own mythologized roots in Tashkent and in the Uzbek language.

Мой тихий древний дом (Akhmatova, 370-371).[153]

This use of Uzbek in her poetry (rakhmat means "thank you" and khaier means "goodbye") highlights the distinction Akhmatova sees between Tashkent and western Russia, admitting that they are separated by a language barrier. At the same time, however, using Uzbek words illustrates Akhmatova's embracing of Tashkent as a place of her own: she understands the importance a native language holds, and she extends to Tashkent the dignity of having its own language. She claims Tashkent as her own, calling it "*my* quiet ancient home." The use of the possessive pronoun «мой» as well as the assertion that it is her ancient home indicate a sense of personalization and cultural acceptance. Tashkent is not merely another location to Akhmatova, but rather a *place* she calls home. She sums up her time in Tashkent with the couplet,

Я восемьсот волшебных дней

Под синей чашею твоей (Akhmatova, 370-371).[154]

The epithet "magical" to describe Akhmatova's 800 days under the turquoise domes of Tashkent emphasizes both the foreignness of the place (it is not something common or usual), as well as the poet's love for Tashkent (only an otherworldly term can describe Tashkent). The phrase "800 magical days" also evokes images of the Tales of 1001 Nights and Orientalist exoticism, further emphasizing the foreignness Akhmatova perceived in Tashkent. Despite these foreign elements, however, Tashkent undoubtedly won Akhmatova's heart, and she viewed it simultaneously as her home and as an Eastern part of her beloved Russia.[155]

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[153] "Now I thank everyone / Rakhmat and khaier I say, / Waving my scarf. / Rakhmat, Aibek, rakhmat, Chusti, / Rakhmat, Toshkent! Good-bye, good-bye, / My quiet, ancient home" (Hemschemeyer, 695).
[154] "I was 800 magical days / Under your deep blue cup" (Hemschemeyer, 695).
[155] R.G. Kulieva suggests that Akhmatova's love of the "East" is a reflection of her own blood connections to the Genghisids: "Как видим, в поэзии Анны Ахматовой юг России (Одесса), Средняя Азия,
библейский Восток, причудливо переплетаясь, создают особый образ Востока,
как бы подчёркивая принадлежность Анны Ахматовой по крови чингизидам.
Восток в её поэзии проявляется не в формах её стихов, а в особом мироощущении и пронзительно точных образах-деталях" (Kulieva, 296).

In Akhmatova's geographic poetry, Tashkent is part of her larger homeland, and it has won a place in her heart, but it is nevertheless separated from the center of the Empire and not truly Akhmatova's home. Tashkent is a beautiful, wild, natural place where people live in harmony with nature. The only suffering experienced here is a longing for her Leningrad (where, ironically, Akhmatova experienced greater suffering), and the poet finds herself loving her temporary home.

Moscow

The fondness with which Akhmatova wrote of Tashkent reveals the poet's ability to imbue a new *space* with meaning in order to create *place*. Yet despite the love she developed for Tashkent, she still longed for her native Leningrad and the surrounding regions of western Russia. As Akhmatova was on her way home from her three-year evacuation in Tashkent, she stopped in Moscow to visit some friends before continuing on to her beloved Leningrad. Margarita Alger wrote of seeing her friend Akhmatova about to return home, "...Я никогда не видела ее такой радостной. Она была оживленная преображенная, молодая и прекрасная.....ее сын был жив и здоров, ее город был свободен, и ее там ждали" (Popova and Rubinchik, 100).[156] Akhmatova was clearly excited to finally be returning to the home she had not seen in three years. While Moscow was merely a stepping stone on the way home to "her city" (Leningrad), Akhmatova's relationship with Moscow is nevertheless important.

For Akhmatova, Moscow was part of the western Russia she loved; a place of culture and history. She wrote at times warmly about Moscow, while at other times she censured its tsarist past. While she displayed greater affinity to the two capitals than to the rest of the empire,

[156] "I had never seen her so joyful. She was lively, transfigured, young and beautiful…her son was alive and healthy, her city was free, and she was awaited there."

Moscow does take second place to Leningrad.[157] Each of these poems referencing Moscow was written in 1935 or later; her earlier poetry is essentially silent in regards to Moscow. These references focus primarily on the cultural aspects of Russia (referencing other poets) or on the historical legacy of Moscow. In addition, some of Akhmatova's poetry of Moscow indicates her personal relationship to the city as well as a hue of death that shrouds the city.

Although Akhmatova had grown to love Tashkent, she was nonetheless excited to be returning to western Russia. Upon her arrival in Moscow in May 1944, she wrote:

Дома, дома — ужели дома!

Как все ново и как знакомо,

И такая в сердце истома,

Сладко кружится голова…

В свежем грохоте майского грома —

Победительница Москва! (Akhmatova, 215).[158]

Akhmatova's classification of Moscow as "home" emphasizes her view of home as layered. While she had regarded Tashkent as part of her larger homeland, returning to Moscow made her feel that she had returned to a more personal home—western Russia. This "home" she claims in Moscow is not her beloved Leningrad, yet it is more personal and native to her than Tashkent was. She expresses patriotic pride in Moscow as the victor at the close of WWII, and perhaps this political fervor allowed her to be more accepting of Moscow as a home outside of Leningrad.

In another poem in which she retrospectively (between 1944-50) discusses her return

[157] References to Moscow comprise slightly more than 5% of Akhmatova's geographic references (16 out of 290).
[158] "Home, home—I am really home! / How new everything is, and how familiar, / And in my heart such languor, / My head spins with delight... / With a crisp clap of May thunder— / Here is Moscow, the conqueror!" (Hemschemeyer, 441).

from Tashkent, she displays a significantly more muted love for Moscow than she showed in her initial poem.

Пора забыть верблюжий этот гам

И белый дом на улице Жуковской.

Пора, пора к березам и грибам,

К широкой осени московской.

Там всё теперь сияет, всё в росе,

И небо забирается высоко,

И помнит Рогачёвское шоссе

Разбойный посвист молодого Блока… (Akhmatova, 247).[159]

This retrospective poem does not laud Moscow as either "home" or a conqueror, but the description is nevertheless positive: Moscow is depicted as a beautiful place, and one with connections to the great poet Blok. Akhmatova's poetry about Tashkent is lacking in references to other poets and artisans, but her poetry of Moscow is connected with the great Russian artists. Her relationship with Moscow in this poem is a warm one, as the city is a cultured place connected with Blok.

One of Akhmatova's earliest poems about Moscow (1936) is also connected with a Moscow poet: Boris Pasternak. She describes the poetic prowess of the great writer who is able to make even puddles shine like diamonds. Yet in this Moscow, death is a frequent visitor.

Опять пришел с каких-то похорон.

И снова жжет московская истома,

[159] "It's time to forget the uproar of camels / And the white house on Zhukovsky Street. / It's time, time to go to the birches and mushrooms, / Out to the wide Moscow autumn. / There everything is shining now, everything in dew, / And the high sky has flown off, / And the Rogachev Highway remembers / The bandit whistle of the young Blok" (Hemschemeyer, 485).

Звенит вдали смертельный бубенец...

Кто заблудился в двух шагах от дома,

Где снег по пояс и всему конец? (Akhmatova, 178).[160]

Despite Pasternak's ability to transform everyday objects into poetic masterpieces, looming death and "Moscow weariness" remain in his city. Akhmatova's juxtaposition of poetic life and the inescapable threat of death shows Moscow as a city possessing great beauty, yet also subject to the common sufferings of life.

Akhmatova dedicates a poem to another Moscow poet, Marina Tsvetaeva, and once again describes Moscow as a place of poetry and death.[161]

Мы сегодня с тобою, Марина,

По столице полночной идём,

А за нами таких миллионы,

И безмолвнее шествия нет…

А вокруг погребальные звоны

Да московские хриплые стоны

Вьюги, наш заметающей след (Akhmatova, 252).[162]

The hushed funeral procession of millions marches to the sound of Moscow's wild moans. Poets in Moscow are subjected to suffering and death. This death legacy of Moscow death is also seen in *Rekviem,* in which Akhmatova claims to be like the wives of the executed Streltsy as she

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[160] "After some kind of funeral / /And once more, Moscow weariness burns the throat, / Far off, a deadly little bell is ringing... / Who lost his way two steps from the house, / Up to the waist in snow and no way out?" (Hemschemeyer, 379-380).

[161] This poem was written in 1940, one year before Tsvetaeva's death by suicide in 1941. Tsvetaeva's suicide, then, is not a subtext of this poem, but the poem does prove strikingly foreboding in light of the subsequent death.

[162] "We are together today, Marina, / Walking through the midnight capital, / And behind us there are millions like us, / And never was a procession more hushed, / Accompanied by funeral bells / And the wild, Moscow moans / Of a snowstorm erasing all traces of us" (Hemschemeyer, 670).

weeps over her imprisoned son.

Буду я, как стрелецкие женки,

Под кремлевскими башнями выть (Akhmatova, 189).[163]

By appealing in this manner to the bloody history of Moscow, Akhmatova ties her present-day, Leningrad sufferings with Moscow. Neither city is innocent of blood: the two "emperors," Peter and Stalin, enforced their rule with iron hands.

Akhmatova continues this juxtaposition of poetry and death in a 1963 verse taking place in Moscow.

Все в Москве пропитано стихами,

Рифмами проколото насквозь.

…

А в ночи над ухом смерть пророчит,

Заглушая самый громкий звук (Akhmatova, 383).[164]

Even though Moscow is steeped in poetry, this cannot shield the city from the ever-present reality of personified death. She also observes that stillness "волшебный замыкает круг" (Akhmatova, 383).[165] This reference to a magical occurrence in Moscow seems to reimagine the Petersburg myth in a new city: Moscow is now a dark realm of death with supernatural events occurring.

This description of an eerie and otherworldly Moscow continues in a 1940 verse that is grounded in history.

Стрелецкая луна.

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[163] "I will be like the wives of the Streltsy, / Howling under the Kremlin towers" (Hemschemeyer, 386).
[164] "Everything in Moscow is steeped in verses, / Riddled with rhyme. / And at night death prophesies in my ear, / Drowning out the loudest sound" (Hemschemeyer, 742).
[165] "closes the magical circle" (Hemschemeyer, 742).

Замоскворечье. Ночь.

…

В Кремле не надо жить,

Преображенец прав.

Здесь древней ярости

Еще кишат микробы:

Бориса дикий страх,

И всех Иванов злобы,

И Самозванца спесь

Взамен народных прав (Akhmatova, 332-333).[166]

By appealing to the bloody and cruel aspects of Moscow's history, Akhmatova creates a negative image of the capital city. The people's rights have been curtailed by the monarchy, and this legacy is inseparable from the city of Moscow. The microbes of the past horrors still infest Moscow, leaving a city that is haunted by its past and unsafe for present inhabitation. This depiction of a bloody, dangerous Moscow infested by microbes strengthens Akhmatova's "myth of Moscow" by depicting the city as a place touched by the supernatural and where people cannot live peacefully.

Despite this focus on death in Moscow, Akhmatova also expresses some positive sentiment about the city. In a quatrain professing her love for Moscow, Akhmatova expresses devotion to a city that she calls her own.

...За ландышевый май

[166] "Archers' moon. Beyond the Moscow River. Night. / You had better not live in the Kremlin, the Preobrazhensky Guard was right; / The germs of the ancient frenzy are still swarming here: / Boris Godunov's wild fear, and all the Ivans' evil spite, / And the Pretender's arrogance—instead of the people's rights" (Hemschemeyer, 669).

В моей Москве стоглавой

Отдам я звездных стай

Сияние и славу (Akhmatova, 378).[167]

The use of the possessive pronoun “my” ties Akhmatova with Moscow. She would trade glory for the beauty of May in Moscow, creating a positive view of the city.[168] Her nuanced love of Moscow, however, is outdone by her devotion to Leningrad, and this comparison between the two cities appears in some of her verses relating personal anecdotes.

Случится это в тот московский день,

Когда я город навсегда покину

И устремлюсь к желанному притину,

Свою меж вас еще оставив тень (Akhmatova, 235).[169]

Akhmatova is prepared to leave Moscow forever in favor of her desired refuge, Leningrad. She will leave her lover behind “Среди морозной праздничной Москвы,”[170] yet despite their separation, “с тобою мы в этом краю!”[171] The lovers are in the same «край» (land), even if they are in different cities and their love is not as it once was. By contrasting separation with togetherness in this manner, Akhmatova simultaneously argues that while Moscow and Leningrad are very distinct places, they are nevertheless part of the same land.

In another poem that indicates longing for Leningrad while in Moscow, Akhmatova

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[167] “...For the lily-of-the-valley month of May / In my Moscow of a hundred domes, / I will relinquish the shining and the glory / Of the starry flocks” (Hemschemeyer, 687).

[168] Some online versions of this poem have the word «кровавой» instead of «стоглавой» (see, for example, https://stih.pro/za-landishevij-maj/ot/ahmatova). This changes the meaning of the poem considerably: a hundred-domed Moscow has connotations of history and beauty, while a bloody Moscow renders the entire tone of the poem somewhat sardonic. There are likely elements of both versions at play in the meaning of the poem itself. Akhmatova reveres both the beauty and history of Moscow while not being oblivious to the sufferings inflicted by the tsars.

[169] “It will happen on that Moscow day, / When I forsake the city forever / And rush to my longed-for shelter, / Leaving you my shade” (Hemschemeyer, 468).

[170] “In frosty, festive Moscow” (Hemschemeyer, 468).

[171] “we're together in this land!” (Hemschemeyer, 468).

contrasts the Moscow and Neva Rivers.

Переулочек, переул…

Горло петелькой затянул.

Тянет свежесть с Москва-реки,

В окнах теплятся огоньки (Akhmatova, 141).[172]

The side street in Moscow is compared to a noose, which seems to strangle to Moscow river. In this manner, Moscow is depicted as an oppressive location, where the old, winding streets threaten even the river. The speaker then observes that her time has come (likely a reference to death or to another long, treacherous journey) and makes a few final requests: a little icon, her black scarf, and a swallow of Neva water.

Мне бы тот найти образок,

Оттого что мой близок срок,

Мне бы снова мой черный платок,

Мне бы невской воды глоток (Akhmatova, 141).[173]

At this moment of near-crisis, the Moscow River is no longer enough: the speaker needs the native water of the Neva. She needs not merely to see the Neva, but to partake of it and to make this river part of herself as she is preparing to depart. Akhmatova thus sets up an interesting juxtaposition: both the Moscow and the Neva Rivers represent her homeland and both are desirable. Yet a hierarchy is made very clear, in that the Neva River is more soul-sustaining and

[172] "A side street, a side str... / Stretched like a noose around your neck. / It drags coolness from the Moscow River, / In its window little lights glimmer" (Hemschemeyer, 266).
[173] "I wish I could find that little icon, / Because my time is near. / I'd like my black shawl again, / I'd like a drink of Neva water" (Hemschemeyer, 266).

able to provide comfort at a time of crisis, while the Moscow River is being strangled. This once again emphasizes Akhmatova's preference for Leningrad above even the rest of her beloved Russia. There is a religious element to the speaker's last requests: an icon, a scarf (presumably in order to enter an Orthodox church). Adding a swallow of Neva water to these requested religious symbols lends a measure of holiness to the Neva River itself. This holiness stands in opposition to the more frequent image of the Neva river as an entity of destruction and supernatural power.

Akhmatova held a nuanced view of Moscow. It is one of the capitals in western Russia, and as such is superior to Tashkent. It possesses a rich literary and cultural history which Akhmatova valued, yet inextricable with this culture and poetry is the omnipresent specter of death which broods throughout the city. Akhmatova rejoiced in Moscow's history as a victor in WWII, while also lamenting and condemning the bloody tsarist past. Akhmatova's Moscow takes on the supernatural persona as a place where streets can strangle rivers and the microbes of past fury still reign. Akhmatova discussed a great deal about Moscow in her mere 16 references to it in her poetry, but it is clear that Leningrad was much dearer to her heart.

Other regions of the Russian Empire

In addition to the places previously discussed (Leningrad and its suburbs, Ukraine, Crimea, Tashkent, and Moscow), Akhmatova's poetry contains many references to other places in the Russian Empire/USSR. Many of these references discuss her entire native land, and others mention specific cities. This bird's eye view of Russia through Akhmatova's lyric poetry paints a picture of Russia as a beautiful and beloved homeland, but one which has suffered greatly and caused the suffering of others.

A frequent motif in Akhmatova's poetry of Russia is suffering. A participant in numerous wars as well as oppression from its own various governments throughout history, Russia has

been the victim of much suffering throughout its history. Akhmatova touches upon this suffering, highlighting different locations and different time periods in which Russia suffered. This breadth of time and geography in her depictions emphasizes her claim that Russia is a suffering nation, and one which inflicted suffering. In the voice of a bereaved woman during the Russian Civil War, Akhmatova writes,

Любит, любит кровушку

Русская земля (Akhmatova, 161).[174]

The diminutive form of the word "кровь" renders the style of the poem to be in the colloquial voice of a common Russian woman. It also implies tenderness towards those who have been lost, emphasizing the injustice of Russia's love of blood. While this poem is written against the specific background the Civil War, Akhmatova's comment holds true for much of Russian history: there has frequently been blood spilled on the Russian land, both by foreign entities and the land's own government. The Russian land has been the unfortunate and frequent recipient of its children's blood before their due time. By indicating that Russia *loves* this blood, Akhmatova implicates her entire homeland in the sufferings it has undergone. Russia is not merely a victim in the blood being shed, but is instead an active and willing participant.

This suffering took place long before Akhmatova's day, and she appealed to the once-powerful city of Novgorod to illustrate Russia's legacy of suffering. During a visit to Novgorod in the fall of 1914, Akhmatova reflected on the suffering and downfall of the once-great city. She creates a picture of a cold and solemn nature, accompanied by the singing of a religious procession.

Сентябрьский вихрь, листы с берёзы свеяв,

[174] "The Russian earth loves, loves / Droplets of blood" (Hemschemeyer, 288).

Кричит и мечется среди ветвей,

А город помнит о судьбе своей:

Здесь Марфа правила и правил Аракчеев (Akhmatova, 99).[175]

The cries of the wind serve as a substitution for the cries of the people during Ivan the Terrible's massacre of Novgorod. Akhmatova admires the beauty of the city, yet mourns for the history the city suffered.[176]

The Russian land has also suffered as a result of the Soviet regime. Akhmatova also references this suffering in regard to the gulag and Soviet oppressions. This is seen clearly in her cycle *Rekviem* where not just the prison cross in Leningrad is seen as the offender, but also the rest of Russian in general. In this cycle she refers to the Don River, the Yenisey (a river in Siberia where many gulag camps were located), and the Streltsy execution in Moscow. Through these geographical references, Akhmatova implicates all of Russia as sharing in the sufferings of the Soviet oppression.

Russia oppresses its people not just through shedding their blood, but also repression of its poets. In 1959, in regards to her own poetic repression, Akhmatova wrote:

Это и не старо и не ново,

Ничего нет сказочного тут.

Как Отрепьева и Пугачева,

Так меня тринадцать лет клянут.

…

[175] "A September gale, stripping the leaves from the birches, / Shrieks and hurls itself into the branches, / And the city remembers its fate: / Here Martha governed, and Arakcheyev ruled" (Hemschemeyer, 199).
[176] Akhmatova claimed Novgorod noble blood through her mother who descended from the Stogov family (Hemschemeyer, 790). This personal connection with Novgorod likely strengthened her own love of the city and mourning at its downfall.

От Либавы до Владивостока

Грозная анафема гудит (Akhmatova, 350).[177]

Akhmatova understands that it is the legacy of great political and cultural figures to be oppressed and discriminated against. She is referring to her own period of forced poetic silence (1925-1940) because the state organs would not allow her to be published. She describes her understanding of the breadth of the Russian empire with the observation that she is anathematized from Libava (Liepaya in modern-day Latvia) to Vladivostok—from the west edge of the empire to the east. Akhmatova's claim that the repression she experienced was not new is emphasized in her discussion of other poets—both prior and contemporary—who were persecuted by Russia. In Kislovodsk she penned the words:

Здесь Пушкина изгнанье началось

И Лермонтова кончилось изгнанье (Akhmatova, 174).[178]

She then describes a beautiful, albeit somewhat ominous, sunset scene where Lermontov's demon looks through the trees. This resplendent region of the Russian Empire is inseparable from the poets who spent time here. Pushkin and Lermontov are geographically connected through their government-imposed exile. In Akhmatova's verse, a new generation of poets stands at the same location where bygone poets have received their punishment from the state. These three poets are bound together through not just their poetry, but through the geography of the Caucasus and the oppression they experienced under the Russian (or Soviet) government.

After visiting Osip Mandelstam during his exile in Voronezh, Akhmatova dedicated a verse to him entitled "Voronezh." The picture she paints of this city is simultaneously that of a

[177] "This is neither old nor new, / Nothing like a fairy tale. / Just as they curse Otryopov and Pugachev, / For thirteen years they have been cursing me / … /From Libava to Vladivostok / The never-ending anathema rings out" (Hemschemeyer, 717).
[178] "Here the exile of Pushkin began, / And Lermontov's exile ended" (Hemschemeyer, 375).

victorious land and one which has been oppressed by its leaders.

А над Петром воронежским — вороны,

Да тополя, и свод светло-зеленый,

Размытый, мутный, в солнечной пыли,

И Куликовской битвой веют склоны

Могучей, победительной земли (Akhmatova, 179).[179]

The statue of Peter gazes over the city, implying a connection with St. Petersburg where another statue of Peter stands. By focusing attention on this statue, Akhmatova implies that Peter is oppressing not just the people in Petersburg, but throughout all of Russia. Against the background of Mandelstam's exile, Peter stands as a screen for Stalin: Akhmatova implicates the government in causing the suffering of Russia's people. The land, however, is depicted as victorious, and Akhmatova reminds her readers about the military success Russia enjoyed at the battle of Kulikovo. This combination of oppression and victory represents Mandelstam himself: he is an accomplished poet (and one that the very poplar trees in Voronezh seem to be celebrating), yet he has been cast out by the government of his homeland. Akhmatova ends the poem on a dark note, emphasizing Russia's oppression of one of its great minds:

А в комнате опального поэта

Дежурят страх и Муза в свой черед.

И ночь идет,

Которая не ведает рассвета (Akhmatova, 179).[180]

Mandelstam's exile isolates him from Petersburg and the center of Russia. In Voronezh, he

[179] "And over the Peter of Voronezh—crows, / Poplar trees, and the dome, light green, / Faded, dulled, in sunny haze, / And the battle of Kulikovo blows from the slopes / Of the mighty, victorious land" (Hemschemeyer, 381).
[180] "But in the room of the poet in disgrace, / Fear and the Muse keep watch by turns. / And the night comes on / That knows no dawn" (Hemschemeyer, 381).

experiences both negative and positive aspects of Russia: the nature is beautiful and there is the legacy of the battle of Kulikovo, yet he is subject to the oppression of unjust rulers. For Akhmatova's poetic geography, Voronezh is a representation of both the good and evil present in Russia, with heavy emphasis on oppression.

In many of her poems about Russia, Akhmatova emphasizes the beauty of the nature and landscape of her native land. She praises Kolomna, where the Moscow River flows and the forest is dense.

Этот сад

Всех садов и всех лесов дремучей,

И над ним, как над бездонной кручей,

Солнца древнего из сизой тучи

Пристален и нежен долгий взгляд (Akhmatova, 220-221).[181]

The ancient sun gazes down on the beauty of Kolomna, as if giving its approbation to the land. This beauty is also seen farther north in Vyborg where once again nature is personified in silent reverence of the Russian landscape.

Безмолвна песня, музыка нема,

Но воздух жжется их благоуханьем,

И на коленях белая зима

Следит за всем с молитвенным вниманьем (Akhmatova, 265).[182]

The silent songs cause of the air to burn, which contrasts with the coldness of the winter landscape. Winter standing on its knees evokes religious imagery, as if a sacred ritual is being

[181] " gardens, all other forests, / And above it, as if over a bottomless ravine, / From out of a gray thundercloud comes / The fixed and tender gaze of the ancient sun" (Hemschemeyer, 449).
[182] "Song falls silent, music is dumb, / But the air burns with their fragrance, / And white winter, on its knees, / Observes everything with reverent attention" (Hemschemeyer, 496).

enacted on the silent landscape. Holy Russia is beautiful.

This beautiful description of Russia is continued in Akhmatova's poem "Bezhetsk," dedicated to the town in Tver near Slepnyovo where Akhmatova spent many summers.[183] Akhmatova masterfully intertwines images of nature, family, and Russia's history in her description of the city.

Там белые церкви и звонкий, светящийся лед,

Там милого сына цветут васильковые очи.

Над городом древним алмазные русские ночи

И серп поднебесный желтее, чем липовый мед (Akhmatova, 136).[184]

This positive assessment is contrasted with an earlier depiction of Slepnyovo in which Akhmatova claims the region is stifling in its isolation from the rest of Russia: "Ты знаешь, я томлюсь в неволе" (Akhmatova, 63).[185] She feels that she is constantly being judged by the inhabitants in Tver, and she resents the "осуждающие взоры / Спокойных загорелых баб" (Akhmatova, 63).[186] Even nature is weary in this "Тверская скудная земля" (Akhmatova, 63),[187] bearing none of the beauty that she would later attribute to the region. These two contrasting descriptions of Tver indicate that Akhmatova's views of specific regions of Russia could be relatively fluid, reflecting the nuances of time and personal experience.

Akhmatova's poetic geography discusses many specific locations in Russia aside from the capitals and Tashkent. This wealth of geographic mentions shows Akhmatova's ability to

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[183] "After her marriage to Nikolay Gumilyov in 1910, Akhmatova spent almost every summer through 1917 at her mother-in-law's estate at Slepnyovo, near the town of Bezhetsk in the province of Tver. Her son Lev was raised there" (Hemschemeyer, 781).
[184] "There are white churches there, and booming, luminous ice. / There the cornflower blue eyes of my dear son are blooming. / Over the ancient town are Russia's diamond nights, / And the sickle of the skies, yellower than the linden's honey" (Hemschemeyer, 260).
[185] "You know, I languish in captivity" (Hemschemeyer, 149).
[186] "the condemning way / Those quiet, sunburnt peasant women look at me" (Hemschemeyer, 149).
[187] "Tver's barren, meager earth" (Hemschemeyer, 149).

embrace various parts of the empire as part of her homeland. Referring to specific cities allows her to emphasize the local history and culture of specific places. She is able to connect her own life and poetry with that of other poets and historical events. Russia is a beautiful land, but also one which has suffered and caused suffering in its inhabitants.

Russia as beloved homeland

In addition to naming specific locations within Russia, Akhmatova also devoted many of her poems to the entirety of Russia.[188] These references to Russia or her native land often seem to be referring to the entire Russian Empire/USSR, emphasizing the geographic ambiguity of Akhmatova's terminology and personal allegiance. When it comes to talking about her country or homeland in whole, Akhmatova's poetic geography presents an overwhelmingly positive depiction. She was not blind to the failures and shortcomings of her native land, but she displayed a resilient love and patriotism to her country that cannot be deterred by wars or suffering. She frequently spoke of her determination to remain with her people no matter the suffering they undergo, and she prayed for the success of her homeland.

Akhmatova loved her homeland so deeply that she professed a willingness to sacrifice her most precious possessions for the salvation of Russia. Her deeply patriotic verse, «Молитва» (written in 1915) reads

Дай мне горькие годы недуга,
Задыханья, бессонницу, жар,
Отыми и ребенка, и друга,
И таинственный песенный дар —
Так молюсь за Твоей литургией

[188] These references to "Russia" or "native land" or "motherland" appear 19 times out of 290 geographic references, or in 6.6% of Akhmatova's geographic poetry.

После стольких томительных дней,

Чтобы туча над тёмной Россией

Стала облаком в славе лучей (Akhmatova, 102).[189]

Akhmatova stands willing to relinquish her health, child, lover, and even her poetic gift if it would help her beloved homeland. Her devotion to her son, lovers, and poetry is evident throughout the subject-matter of her poetry in general, yet her love for these entities combined does not exceed her patriotism. Russia is superlative for Akhmatova.

As the revolutions began occurring in Russia, many of Akhmatova's friends began to leave in order to find safety and freedom. Akhmatova felt compelled to remain with her country, and stood up against the voices that were calling for her to abandon her homeland. In Slepnovo in the summer of 1917, Akhmatova wrote a passionate and scathing in which she condemned her friend Boris Anrep for abandoning his country and fleeing to Great Britain.

Ты — отступник: за остров зеленый

Отдал, отдал родную страну (Akhmatova, 123).[190]

Akhmatova associates loyalty to one's native land with remaining in it no matter the circumstances. She is willing to sacrifice everything for her homeland, and she looks down on anyone who would not do the same. Akhmatova claims cultural kinship with Anrep, and censures him for betraying "наши песни, и наши иконы, / И над озером тихим сосну" (Akhmatova, 123).[191] Akhmatova identifies three elements that are essential to a Russian identity and which Anrep has betrayed by leaving: songs (representing poetry and literature), icons

[189] "Give me bitter years of sickness, / Suffocation, insomnia, fever, / Take my child and my lover, / And my mysterious gift of song— / This I pray at your liturgy / After so many tormented days, / So that the stormcloud over darkened Russia / Might become a cloud of glorious rays" (Hemschemeyer, 203).
[190] "You are an apostate: for a green island / You betrayed, betrayed your native land" (Hemschemeyer, 237-238).
[191] "Our songs and our icons / And the pine above the quiet lake" (Hemschemeyer, 237-238).

(indicating Russian Orthodoxy), and nature. These are elements of Russia that Akhmatova herself has dedicated many poems to. Akhmatova then lends patriotism a strongly religious weight, implying that Anrep has not merely betrayed his homeland, but has blasphemed against God:

Так теперь и кощунствуй, и чванься,
Православную душу губи,
В королевской столице останься
И свободу свою полюби (Akhmatova, 124).[192]

Akhmatova's Russia is not merely a geographic or political entity: it is a holy place whose betrayal results in damnation. Neither freedom nor worldly success can compare with the worth and importance of Russia.[193]

In 1922, Akhmatova insisted, "Не с теми я, кто бросил землю / На растерзание врагам" (Akhmatova, 139).[194] She did not want to be counted among those who had left their land for personal gain and contributed to the vulnerability and suffering of their homeland. Despite the hardships that she faced by remaining in Russia, Akhmatova did not pity herself, but rather felt that those who left are the greater sufferers.

Но вечно жалок мне изгнанник,
Как заключенный, как больной.

---

[192] "So now blaspheme and swagger, / Destroy your Orthodox soul, / Stay in the city of royalty / And rejoice that you are free" (Hemschemeyer, 237-238).

[193] Akhmatova's commitment to remaining in her suffering homeland can be seen elsewhere in her poetry, including in her lines in *Rekviem* Akhmatova frequently talks about her willingness to remain with her homeland even when it is suffering and others are abandoning it for freedom and safety.
"Нет, и не под чуждым небосводом, / И не под защитой чуждых крыл, / Я была тогда с моим народом, / Там, где мой народ, к несчастью, был" (Akhmatova, 188).
"No, not under the vault of alien skies, / And not under the shelter of alien wings— / I was with my people then, / There, where my people, unfortunately, were" (Hemschemeyer, 384).

[194] "I am not with those who abandoned their land / To the lacerations of the enemy" (Hemschemeyer, 263).

Темна твоя дорога, странник,

Полынью пахнет хлеб чужой (Akhmatova, 139).[195]

Akhmatova does not want to be an eternal wanderer, uprooted from her profound connections to home and geography. Even remaining "здесь, в глухом чаду пожара" where they "ни единого удара / Не отклонили от себя,"[196] Akhmatova and those with her take comfort that they will be rewarded in the final accounting.

И знаем, что в оценке поздней

Оправдан будет каждый час...

Но в мире нет людей бесслезней,

Надменнее и проще нас (Akhmatova, 139).[197]

The eternal justification of remaining with her homeland as well as the earthly connection to the *place* she loves are strong enough motivations for Akhmatova to remain at home in the face of war, oppression, and personal loss. The invocation of a heavenly judgment paints the decision of whether to stay or leave in a moral and philosophical light: in Akhmatova's mind, the only moral option is to remain in her native Russia, despite any earthly sadness that may ensue.

As Akhmatova returned from her evacuation in Tashkent back to Moscow in 1944, she wrote,

Как в первый раз я на нее,

На Родину, глядела.

Я знала: это все мое –

---

[195] "But to me the exile is forever pitiful, / Like a prisoner, like someone ill. / Dark is your road, wandered, / Like wormwood smells the bread of strangers" (Hemschemeyer, 263).
[196] "here, in the blinding smoke of the conflagration"…"We have not deflected from ourselves / One single stroke" (Hemschemeyer, 263).
[197] "And we know that in the final accounting, / Each hour will be justified... / But there is no people on earth more tearless / More simple and more full of pride" (Hemschemeyer, 263).

Душа моя и тело (Akhmatova, 214).[198]

Akhmatova looks with love and awe at the recently victorious Russia (USSR) and embraces the entirety of the empire as her own: it is *all* hers—not just Petersburg. All of Russia is her soul and body, and she rejoices in the end of the siege of Leningrad. Once she lands in Moscow, Akhmatova exclaims, "Дома, дома - ужели дома!" (Akhmatova, 215).[199] Her use of the word "home" in this context is complex, revealing her many layers of home. While she had been in Tashkent, she viewed it as part of her homeland, albeit a remote, somewhat foreign region thereof. The view from the airplane had revealed an entire expanse of Russia that she claimed as her own homeland; her own soul and body. Yet it is only upon the ground in Moscow that she uses the term «дом». Even this designation of Moscow, as home, however, does not seem to penetrate entirely to the center of Akhmatova's concentric circles of home, as she has not yet returned to her Leningrad, yet she feels enough at home to designate this city of her homeland «дом».

In 1961 Akhmatova wrote her verse «Родная земля», providing her definition of one's homeland (Akhmatova, 257). Akhmatova observes that people do not even remember their homeland, or think about her or write verses about her. She describes a homeland of suffering; one that does not seem to be worthy of the withheld praise.

Не кажется обетованным раем.

…

Хворая, бедствуя, немотствуя на ней,

О ней не вспоминаем даже.

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[198] "As if for the first time, I / Looked at her, the Motherland. / I knew: all this is mine— / My soul and my body" (Hemschemeyer, 441).
[199] "Home, home—I am really home!" (Hemschemeyer, 441).

Да, для нас это грязь на калошах,

Да, для нас это хруст на зубах.

И мы мелем, и месим, и крошим

Тот ни в чем не замешанный прах.

Но ложимся в нее и становимся ею,

Оттого и зовем так свободно — своею (Akhmatova, 257).[200]

Akhmatova lived and worked and suffered in her homeland. Contrary to her own claim that people do not remember their homelands nor write verse about them, Akhmatova thought and wrote extensively about her own homeland and sought to remain faithful to it her whole life. Even though Russia was not the promised land to Akhmatova, but brought her suffering and sorrow, Akhmatova still called Russia her own and was deeply devoted to her. One's last act in regards to homeland is to lie down in her earth in death and become part of her. Through remaining true to Russia throughout her life and refusing to leave, Akhmatova was able to perform for herself that last rite of existence in her homeland.

To Akhmatova, no other country—no matter how green or free—could ever be as good as Russia. Akhmatova felt it to be her sacred duty to remain in her homeland despite the hostility it was showing towards her. For her, life, existence, and meaning were found squarely within the borders of the Russian Empire.

The rest of the world

While the majority of Akhmatova's poetic is located inside the Russian Empire, she does

[200] "Nor seem to us the promised paradise. / … / Suffering, sick, wandering over her, / We don't even remember her. / Yes, for us it's the mud on galoshes, / Yes, for us it's the grit on our teeth. / And we grind, and we knead, and we crumble, / This clean dust. / But we lie in her and we become her, / And because of that we freely call her—ours" (Hemschemeyer, 493).

venture outside the boundaries of her homeland. [201] She herself traveled to Europe on three occasions: in 1910 and 1912 after marrying Gumilev, and again in 1965 to receive a literary prize (Leiter, 3). Thus, some of her commentary on Europe comes from personal experience, while others are based on conjecture. Some of these poems referencing the outside world are condemning, censuring those who would dare to leave Russia. Other poems, however, praise the cultural and historical legacy of Europe and other regions of the world. Akhmatova's poetry returns to ancient Rome and Greece and the lands of the Bible, extolling their various historical figures.[202] Her descriptions of modern geography reveal a worldview that embraces the high culture of Europe while also recognizing her own place as separate from the outside world. She expresses a shared suffering with Europe in regards to WWII.

Some of Akhmatova's geographical references reflect a cultural understanding of the world, such as a reference to Sophocles' beloved city (Athens),[203] or the creation of Rome.[204] These references to historical or classical lands tie her poetry with those who have proceeded her. Akhmatova makes various geographical references to places in history or Classicism, or the Biblical lands. One of these references centers on Alexander the Great's destruction of ancient Thebes. Despite the leader's desire to completely destroy the city, he orders that the poet Pindar and his household be spared.

Все, все предать огню! И царь перечислял

И башни, и врата, и храмы - чудо света,

Но вдруг задумался и, просветлев, сказал:

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[201] Europe receives 10% of her geographic mentions; the world outside of Europe and the Russian Empire receives 9% of her geographic mentions.
[202] These references range from the Athens of Sophocles to Lot's Sodom. See the appendix for a full listing of these references.
[203] Akhmatova, 248
[204] Akhmatova, 231-232

"Ты только присмотри, чтоб цел был Дом Поэта" (Akhmatova, 248).[205]

Akhmatova felt it was important to highlight this period from history in which a poet's house was exempt from otherwise-indiscriminate destruction. Thebes is a cultural symbol, and also a symbol of a suffering city. The untold comparison between Akhmatova in the Soviet Union and Pindar in Thebes speaks to both the danger and the prestige of being a poet in those respective locations.

In 1937, Akhmatova praised the beauty of Europe, condemning her own Leningrad as oppressive and nothing compared to the beauty of a European capital.

Не столицею европейской

С первым призом за красоту (Akhmatova, 330).[206]

Leningrad is stifling and a place of great suffering imposed by the government, but Europe is beautiful. Decades later, in 1965, Akhmatova compared Leningrad to Venice and came down strongly on the side of Venice: while Leningrad is "disgraceful, criminal, monstrous," Venice is "the treasure-house of the world" (Hemschemeyer, 754). Akhmatova entitles one verse "Venice" in which she speaks very highly of that city (Akhmatova 73-74). She sets up a series of contrasts to express how Venice transcends one's expectations of the city: Although the people there are «странные» (strange, or foreign) they are «нежные» (tender), and although the streets are crowded, it is not stifling (Akhmatova, 74). Leningrad is a clear subtext of this poem, as Akhmatova refers to the waterways and the lions that are integral to both cities. Venice and Leningrad are sister cities in Akhmatova's estimation, yet she is clear in her understanding and portrayal that Venice is the original and Leningrad merely strives—and often fails—to be like its

[205] "Everything, everything committed to the flames! And the king enumerated: / Towers and temples and gates—the wonder of the world, / But suddenly he became thoughtful, and, brightening, said: / 'Just be sure that the House of the Poet is spared'" (Hemschemeyer, 488).
[206] "Not like a European capital / With the first prize for beauty" (Hemschemeyer, 664).

European counterpart.

Akhmatova emphasizes the literary and cultural importance of Europe. Florence was the home of Dante, and Akhmatova writes about this poet's relationship to his native city and his exile from it.

Он и после смерти не вернулся

В старую Флоренцию свою.

Этот, уходя, не оглянулся,

Этому я эту песнь пою (Akhmatova, 180).[207]

In contrast to Lot's wife,[208] Dante did not look back at his beloved city when he was exiled from it. Akhmatova creates a construct of Dante in both heaven and hell, and how even in this afterlife he does not return to his beloved city.

Он из ада ей послал проклятье

И в раю не мог её забыть, — (Akhmatova, 181).[209]

His love for Florence is thus eternal, mirroring Akhmatova's own love for Leningrad. Akhmatova implies that the pull of home is profound and real, and this is seen through Dante. Yet despite his love of his city, Dante does not walk

По своей Флоренции желанной,

Вероломной, низкой, долгожданной… (Akhmatova, 181).[210]

Florence is simultaneously desired and faithless; base and long-awaited. Thus, as Akhmatova, Dante is able to see both the sublime and the evil within his native city. Akhmatova's portrayal

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[207] "Even after his death he did not return / To his ancient Florence. / To the one who, leaving, did not look back, / To him I sing this song" (Hemschemeyer, 395).
[208] See "Лотова жена" (Akhmatova, 147). In this verse, Akhmatova expresses solidarity with the Biblical Lot's wife who gave her life for a single look back at her native city. This poem is reflective of Akhmatova's own self-sacrifice of staying in Russia rather than leaving her homeland.
[209] "From hell he sent her curses / And in paradise he could not forget her—" (Hemschemeyer, 395).
[210] "Through his Florence—his beloved, / Perfidious, base, longed for..." (Hemschemeyer, 395).

of Florence is as a home that exiled one of its own poets.[211]

A 1913 poem describes an emotionally charged—yet silent—meeting between lovers in Paris. While the couple sits in silence with their emotions, Paris looks on.

Безветрен вечер и грустью скован

Под сводом облачных небес,

И словно тушью нарисован

В альбоме старом Булонский Лес (Akhmatova, 50).[212]

The Parisian air feels the tension between the two people and responds with its own solemn sadness. The iconic Bois de Boulogne looks on as if from a distance, captured in time and space like a drawing in an album. This view of Paris reveals a city that is both a participant and a distant observer of the two lovers. The beauty of the park makes it seem unreal.

In addition to being beautiful, Europe is also somewhat unobtainable in Akhmatova's estimation. The outside world remains distinct, foreign, and separate, from Akhmatova's home, although she does acknowledge its occasional positive qualities. In 1963 she wrote,

Все, кого и не звали, в Италии,-

Шлют с дороги прощальный привет.

Я осталась в моем зазеркалии,

Где ни Рима, ни Падуи нет (Akhmatova, 371).[213]

Akhmatova acknowledges her separation from the outside world. But this elusive nature of Europe is at least partially due to Akhmatova's own choice—she does not want to be party to

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[211] This poem was written in 1936, as was "Voronezh;" a possible interpretation of the poem reveals a reference to Mandelstam and his exile as well as Dante (Hemschemeyer, 807).

[212] "The evening was windless and fettered by sadness / Under the firmament's vault of clouds, / And the Bois de Boulogne looked as if it were drawn / In India ink in some old album" (Hemschemeyer, 134).

[213] The Hemschemeyer translation is incomplete for this poem. The following is my translation: "Everyone, even those who weren't invited, was in Italy, / They send their farewell greeting from the road / I stayed behind my mirror, / Where there is neither Rome nor Padua."

those who abandoned her country. She admits that "охоты мне странствовать нет" (Akhmatova, 372).[214]

WWII features prominently in Akhmatova's poetry about Europe. She expresses kinship with and compassion for her fellow-sufferers in Europe. In this WWII poetry, Paris is not depicted as foreign or separated from Akhmatova's home; rather the poem expresses a sense of camaraderie and mutual sorrow at the fate of Paris. WWII would prove to be a unifying element in Akhmatova's poetry between her Russian home and the foreign lands of Europe. She likens the German invasion of Paris to the end of the world.

Когда погребают эпоху,

Надгробный псалом не звучит.

Крапиве, чертополоху

Украсить ее предстоит

…

Так вот – над погибшим Парижем

Такая теперь тишина (Akhmatova, 201-202).[215]

The silence of the world at Paris' suffering foreshadows the end of the world. She appeals to gruesome imagery, such as a corpse floating down a river, to emphasize the terrible situation Paris is in. The civilized world unites in Akhmatova's verse as it stands in shocked and respectful silence at the tragedy of Paris.

In a brilliant interweaving of literary references and the reality of WWII, Akhmatova writes a verse entitled "To the Londoners." This verse creates a collective "we" comprised of

[214] "I do not desire to wander."
[215] "When they come to bury the epoch, / Not with psalms will they mourn it, / But with nettles, with thistles, / They will have to adorn it / …. / And so it is—over ruined Paris / There is now such a silence" (Hemschemeyer, 422-423).

Russians, Europeans, Londoners, and literature-lovers everywhere. Akhmatova ascribes to Shakespeare another play,[216] this one more terrible than his others.

Двадцать четвертую драму Шекспира
Пишет время бесстрастной рукой.
Сами участники чумного пира,
Лучше мы Гамлета, Цезаря, Лира
Будем читать над свинцовой рекой;
Лучше сегодня голубку Джульетту
С пеньем и факелом в гроб провожать,
Лучше заглядывать в окна к Макбету,
Вместе с наемным убийцей дрожать, —
Только не эту, не эту, не эту,
Эту уже мы не в силах читать! (Akhmatova, 202).[217]

The worldwide audience recoils in horror at this drama of the bombing of London. Any of Shakespeare's tragedies are preferable to the reality of WWII.

Akhmatova's poetry occasionally ventures beyond the Europe, but these verses are relatively sparse and somewhat negative. In a poem reflecting on her childhood, Akhmatova juxtaposes the far-off shores of Tsushima with Tsarskoe Selo. The bloody battle at Tsushima was

[216] Hemschemeyer comments that it is unclear why Akhmatova would call this the 24th drama, as Shakespeare's canon has 35 plays (Hemschemeyer, 813). It seems, however, that Akhmatova is likely counting Shakespeare's histories (11 [including Pericles as a history, not a comedy]) and tragedies (12), but not comedies, thus arriving at 23 "dramas" that are similar in genre to the tragedy in London.

[217] "Time, with an impassive hand, is writing / The twenty-fourth drama of Shakespeare. / We, the celebrants at this terrible feast, / Would rather read Hamlet, Caesar or Lear / There by the leaden river; / We would rather, today, with torches and singing, / Be bearing the dove Juliet to her grave, / Would rather peer in at Macbeth's windows, / Trembling with the hired assassin— / Only not this, not this, not this, / This we don't have the strength to read!" (Hemschemeyer, 423).

a tragic loss for the Russians, and it impacted Akhmatova deeply as a child.[218]

И облака сквозили

Кровавой цусимской пеной,

И плавно ландо катили

Теперешних мертвецов... (Akhmatova, 182).[219]

She continues her poem, describing the summer concerts in Tsarskoe Selo, and her house there which has been long-since silent. The native concerts and celebrations stand in stark contrast to the foreign bloody battle, yet they are connected in the mind of the young Akhmatova.

America is a region of the world removed from Akhmatova's consciousness. It receives one mention in her lyric poetry.[220] In an early poem, she writes that her husband loved three things:

Он любил три вещи на свете:

За вечерней пенье, белых павлинов

И стертые карты Америки (Akhmatova, 43).[221]

This poem has an irregular rhyme scheme, and "Америка" (America) rhymes three lines later with "истерики" (hysterics). This poetic connection between the two words perhaps indicates

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[218] "The debacle of the Russian fleet at Tsushima during the Russo-Japanese War (1905) produced an enormous impression on the young Akhmatova—her father, Andrey Gorenko, was a naval engineer—and always remained for her a tragic precursor of future historical shocks."

[219] "And the clouds glowed / As bloody Tsushima foam, / And smoothly rolled the landaus / Of people long since dead..." (Hemschemeyer, 397-398).

[220] She also refers to America once in "Poem without a hero." While this *poema* is explored in this dissertation, her reference to America bears a brief mention. She writes:

"And that happy phrase—at home—
Is known to no one now,
Everyone gazes from some foreign window.
Some from New York, some from Tashkent,
And bitter is the air of banishment—
Like poisoned wine" (Hemschemeyer, 575).

New York is a place of foreign banishment; an exile from one's homeland that Akhmatova mourns. She laments the friends who have abandoned Russia in favor of America or other regions of the world.

[221] "He loved three things in life: / Evensong, white peacocks / And old maps of America" (Hemschemeyer, 105).

Akhmatova's view of America: some contempt and lack of understanding.

Near the end of her life, Akhmatova penned a verse which succinctly encapsulates her poetic geography. Each of the four cardinal directions represents a different area of the world to which she has a relationship. Of the West (referring to Europe) she says, "Запад клеветал и сам же верил" (Akhmatova, 353).[222] Akhmatova looked down on those who left Russia for the lands of the West, and she views this region as a place of deception. The East (Asia and the eastern regions of the Russian Empire) is no better: "И роскошно предавал Восток" (Akhmatova, 353).[223] Akhmatova condemns the superfluous betrayal of these regions where many gulag camps were located. The south of Akhmatova's childhood is also condemned:

Юг мне воздух очень скупо мерил,

Усмехаясь из-за бойких строк (Akhmatova, 353).[224]

The stingy south seems to taunt Akhmatova, smiling from behind its hiding place, pretending to embrace and welcome her by giving her hardly enough air to breathe, yet stifling her slowly. Only the north (her beloved Leningrad and its suburbs) receives a positive estimation:

Но стоял как на коленях клевер,

Влажный ветер пел в жемчужный рог,

Так мой старый друг, мой верный Север

Утешал меня, как только мог (Akhmatova, 353).[225]

While the other corners of the globe taunt, betray, and stifle Akhmatova, the North comforts her. Even this praise, however, is not unequivocal: Akhmatova emphasizes that the clovers are

[222] "The West slandered and believed itself" (Hemschemeyer, 748).
[223] "And the East luxuriously betrayed" (Hemschemeyer, 748).
[224] "The South doled out air for me stingily, / Grinning from behind clever lines" (Hemschemeyer, 748).
[225] "But the clover stood as if on its knees, / The damp wind blew into a horn of pearl, / Thus my old friend, my true North, / Comforted me as well as it could" (Hemschemeyer, 748).

kneeling and the wind is cold, yet the North did its best to comfort her. The poem concludes on a somber note, emphasizing that not even the north can fully comfort Akhmatova:

В душной изнывала я истоме,

Задыхалась в смраде и крови,

Не могла я больше в этом доме...

Вот когда железная Суоми

Молвила: 'Ты все узнаешь, кроме

Радости. А ничего, живи!' (Akhmatova, 353-354).[226]

Akhmatova's allusion to Finland is a reference to Komarovo, which was formerly Finnish territory and is not far from Leningrad (Hemschemeyer, 825). Akhmatova lived in Komarovo for the last years of her life in a government-sponsored dacha.[227] The North does not lie to Akhmatova: it frankly tells her that there will be suffering and pain and that even when there is clover it will be on its knees. Far from rejecting this life of suffering, Akhmatova embraces it and accepts the honesty of her true friend the north. In the other regions of the world, Akhmatova senses a measure of insincerity and betrayal. While nowhere is exempt from suffering, it is in her true northern home—Leningrad and its suburbs—that Akhmatova is able to find meaning and belonging.

Conclusion

Akhmatova's poetic geography reveals her worldview and the love and allegiance she holds towards the *places* she experienced throughout her life. St. Petersburg is the focal point of

[226] "I languished in stifling lassitude, / I suffocated in stench and blood, / I couldn't bear this house anymore... / That's when iron Finland / Declared: "You will know everything except / Joy. Even so, live!" (Hemschemeyer, 748).
[227] Akhmatova wrote elsewhere about her acceptance of suffering in Komarovo. See comments in the Komarovo section above.

her poetic geography, and she speaks at length about the nuanced suffering and rich culture of the city she claims as her native cradle. This city is the center of Akhmatova's world, and the rest of her poetic geography finds itself in a subservient position to Leningrad. Akhmatova did regard the entirety of the Russian empire as her home, but to a different degree than she considered Leningrad to be so: the peripheries of the empire have their own charm and positive qualities that they bring to the table, but they do not compete with her primary love and allegiance. Akhmatova extends her poetic geography beyond the Russian Empire to touch Europe and the lands of the Bible. While she acknowledges positive qualities—particularly culture and history—in these regions, she nevertheless views them as foreign, and she censures those who would dare to defect form Russia to these foreign lands. Akhmatova's love for her homeland runs deep in her poetry, spanning all periods of her writing and unifying her entire lyrical corpus. She remained loyal to her land in deed by refusing to abandon it, and she also remained true in word by creating a rich poetic geography exalting her native Russia. Akhmatova was not blind to the suffering and atrocities in Russia, and she expresses these in her poetic geography. Rather than undermining her love for Russia, however, this open discussion about the flaws of the land she loves serves to add credibility to her poetic geography, indicating to the reader that she has explored all the aspects of her native land and all the regions of the world, and has still concluded that Russia will forever be her holy and beloved home.

Chapter 3
The Ukraino-centric Poetic Geography of Lina Kostenko

Historical Context

In order to understand Lina Kostenko's location in Ukrainian history and national identity, a few brief historical points will be important. Under both the Russian Empire and Soviet Union, the Ukrainian language and culture went through periods of institutional repression and endorsement. In 1863, the notorious Valuev Circular banned most Ukrainian publications (the exception to this ban was belles-lettres, but all religious, pedagogical, and popular literature was banned) and insisted that Ukrainian was not a real language (Magocsi, 393-394). Subsequently, the 1876 Ems Ukaz from Alexander II banned all new publications in Ukrainian, the importation of Ukrainian publications from abroad, and public plays or lectures in Ukrainian as well as Ukrainian instruction in schools (Magocsi, 395-397). After the 1905 Russian Revolution, the Ukrainian-language bans began to be lessened, and Ukrainian began to be used in newspapers and even some schools and churches. This freedom only lasted for a few years, however, as in 1910 the Ems Ukaz was once again enforced (Magocsi, 406). Following the 1917 February Revolution and the subsequent formation of the Ukrainian People's Republic (or Ukrainian National Republic), Ukrainian culture and language were freely proliferated in Ukraine. When Ukraine became a Soviet republic in 1922, there was a period of tolerance for Ukrainian. As part of Bolshevik policies of nation-building and *korenizatsiya*, Ukrainian language and culture were encouraged. Ukrainian was prevalent in the schools, with nearly 94% of Ukrainian elementary school students in 1927 were being instructed in Ukrainian (Slezkine, 432). This period of relative freedom drew to a close in the late 1920s as the policy of Ukrainianization was reversed. Ukrainian elites were arrested and executed (writers and artists in particular were targeted in what has been termed the "Executed Renaissance"), and Stalin's 1933

forced famine ravaged Ukraine. Kostenko was born during this period of Ukrainian repression and Russification, and she witnessed persecution against her friends, her father, and even herself. From 1953-1964, Ukrainian repression was lessened as the Soviet Union enjoyed Khrushchev's Thaw. In the early- to mid-sixties, however, another period of Ukrainian repression began, lasting until the Soviet Union began to crumble.[1]

Biography[2]

Lina Kostenko was born on 19 March 1930 in Rzhyshchiv, a city on the Dnipro River in the Kyiv Oblast. She was raised in the countryside by her grandmother until she was six, then in 1936 moved to the Rusanivka district of Kyiv, also known as the "Kyvian Venice" (Bellezza, 31-32 and Dziuba). Kostenko's father was repressed by the state, arrested, and sentenced to ten years of prison (Bellezza, 32-33).[3] It would only be later, however, that she would come to fully comprehend the implications of this arrest and the true meaning of being a Ukrainian.

As a student, Kostenko attended the Kyiv Pedagogical Institute then, in 1952, entered the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow, where she obtained a higher education firmly rooted in Russian literature. It was at the Gorky Institute that she met students of various nationalities, including her Polish husband. Witnessing the great patriotism and national loyalty the Poles expressed, "Kostenko began wondering about her own national identity" (Bellezza, 34). As she continued to learn more about Stalin, the Terror (and its connections to her own father's arrest), and Ukrainian history, Kostenko came to develop a sense of her identity as a

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[1] For further study of the history of the Ukrainian language, see: Grenoble, Lenore A. *Language Policy in the Soviet Union*. New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003. And Kirkwood, M. *Language Planning in the Soviet Union*. London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1989.

[2] Published information on Kostenko remains relatively rare. She and her daughter (both of whom are still living at the time of this writing) are protective of information regarding the poet, and as a result, the amount of biographical material available is limited. Kostenko is somewhat of a private person.

[3] According to Simone Bellezza, Kostenko "remembers that when the NKVD agents came to their home to arrest her father in 1936, they asked him to show them his weapons. He pointed at his daughter and declared, 'That is my weapon!'" (Bellezza, 33).

Ukrainian (Bellezza, 34). Upon returning to Ukraine, she embraced the Ukrainian language, something that was not always popular in Kyiv. She was once asked by another woman, "'Why do you, a member of the intelligentsia, speak this language of the Red Indian tribes?" (Bellezza, 35). This experience was influential in Kostenko's life, and she sought from then on to promote and defend Ukrainian culture and language at home (Bellezza, 35).

Kostenko wrote and published her poetry in Ukrainian, gaining a "vast cult following" by the early 1960s (Naydan, "Vybrane. By Lina Kostenko," 729). She was a member of the *shistdesiatnyky* (Sixtiers), a group of Ukrainian poets that fought against the state literary policy of socialist realism and censorship of the Soviet Union (Naydan, Intro, "Wanderings"). She described this circle as "a group of friends," and while the *shistdesiatnyky* became a political movement, Kostenko herself never became actively involved in politics (Bellezza, xii-xviii). The entire group of the *shistdesiatnyky* came under political attack, and no poet escaped Soviet persecution (Naydan, Intro, "Wanderings"). Some were imprisoned and exiled, while others were forced into poetic silence (Nazarenko and Zurowsky, 142).[4]

Despite Kostenko's abstention from political activity, she nonetheless was repressed by the authorities. She was "frequently charged by official critics with 'formalism' and 'detachment from Soviet reality'" (Plyushch, 390). Anriy Skaba, a leader in the Ukrainian Communist Party, labeled Kostenko's works as displaying "формальні викрутаси зі словом неодмінно

[4] Kostenko was loyal to her fellow members of the s*histdesiatnyky,* and sought justice on their behalf, signing "petitions and letters defending her colleagues against the authorities. She was particularly vocal in the defense of Vyacheslav Chornovil at his trial in Lviv in 1965" (Naydan, "A poet on the shore," 19). She was not afraid to stand up for what she saw as right, even if that could potentially put herself in danger. She was in favor of the rights of writers and all people. In 1966, Kostenko sought to attend the trial of several Ukrainian intellectuals (Alexander Martynenko, Ivan Rusyn, and Yevheniya Kuznetsova). After a farcical interaction with court authorities that Kostenko sarcastically referred to as Kafka's "The Trial," she and three others were allowed inside (Plyushch, 83). When she tried to take notes, her notebook was confiscated. At that point, "without hesitating, she threw a bouquet of flowers to the accused. The court officials and militiamen dropped to the floor as if it were a bomb" (Plyushch, 84). She was willing to take these personal risks in order to stand up for what she felt was right, not just in poetry, but in deed.

приводять до викривлення і затуманення ідейно-художнього змісту творів" (Dziuba).[5] These attacks were politically motivated and "quite spurious, especially in light of the fact that of all the poetry of the Writers of the Sixties, Kostenko's was the least offensive from even a politically conservative standpoint," as most of her poetry of this period centered on love and nature (Naydan, "Intro" *Wanderings*, 3).

While Kostenko was never arrested or sent to prison, "she eventually reacted to pressure from the Soviet government with a self-imposed hiatus" and did not publish from 1963-1977 (Naydan, "A poet on the shore," 19 and "*Vybrane*. By Lina Kostenko", 729). She did not speak out against Marxism-Leninism, but "her love of truth and freedom of expression were enough to induce the Soviet authorities to silence her" (Bellezza, 40). Kostenko's popularity among the people and her choice to write in Ukrainian (instead of the more politically acceptable Russian) also contributed to the Soviet authorities forcing her into silence (Naydan, "A poet on the shore," 19). Kostenko's views on the importance of the Ukrainian language were dangerous and threatened to destroy her career despite the relatively innocuous topics of her early poetry. Yet it was also her very choice to write in Ukrainian that allowed her to become the voice of her people and to express their suffering through her poetry.[6] Rather than be forced to write a Soviet realist watered-down version of literature, Kostenko resolved to remain true to her conscience and write

[5] "Formalist tricks with the word invariably lead to the blurring of the ideological and artistic content of the works."
[6] As Michael Naydan writes: "Poets throughout Ukraine's tumultuous history have been carriers of the Ukrainian myth and the focal point of the striving for political and creative freedom. That is why Kostenko and many other of her contemporaries, the so called Shistdesiatnyky, the Writers of the Sixties, were often harassed and persecuted by the Soviet state. Some, like the poet Vasyl Stus, suffered arrest and died in prison camps. Accomplished poetry written in Ukrainian in Soviet times, even when penned on apolitical themes, was dangerous to the state, for, apparently, it challenged the cultural hegemony of Russian as the imperial language of discourse. In her emotionally charged, elegant Ukrainian poetry and in an aesthetically beautiful language accessible to a vast readership that ranged from common folk to the cultural elite, Kostenko managed to capture the collective consciousness, the soul of her time. She distilled and transformed her personal suffering and the collective anguish of her people to become an articulate voice for her entire nation. Fittingly, this has led to her being highly revered by her reading public as just such a poet who embodies the essence of her epoch" (Naydan, *Landscapes of Memory*, 8-9).

only what she felt was true, literary, and self-representative, even if that meant she could not be published for a matter of years. Mykola Ilnytsky observes the following about Kostenko's literary silence:

> She has upheld the right of an artist to express her views and to remain silent when it was impossible to do so. Her 15-year silence became an example of a fitting civic position and moral maximalism under the conditions of a totalitarian regime when peoples' destinies and souls were being destroyed… [Her silence] sustained the prestige of Ukrainian literature, for it denied the posture of acquiescing to the state and demonstrated a rebellious creative spirit opposed to totalitarianism (Ilnytsky, *Landscapes of Memory*, 21).

Kostenko showed that a poet has power not just in the word, but in silence. By choosing when and about what to write, Kostenko controlled her poetic narrative in the face of pressure from the state. During these years she spent "out of the mainstream of officially sanctioned Ukrainian cultural life" she wrote poetry on her own and waited for the time she could be legally published; she did not publish her works through *samizdat* or *tamizdat* (Naydan, "Vybrane. By Lina Kostenko", 729). The two collections of poetry she had assembled during that time ("Зоряний інтеграл" and "Княжа гора") remained unpublished.[7]

In 1977, Kostenko was able to once again join the ranks of publishing writers with the advent of her collection *Nad berehamy vichnoi riki*. Despite attempts from the censor to alter her works, Kostenko fought to retain her creative authority over the book, even starting a hunger

[7] Kostenko understood the weight of the repressions she was experiencing, and even anticipated that she could be arrested like her father and colleagues had been. She seriously prepared herself for arrest, and this was such an overwhelming presence in the family around 1967, that Kostenko's daughter would play "arrest" by herself (Shestak). The role of a poet was not an easy one to bear. It is significant that she did not relinquish her chosen role, no matter the repressions she faced.

strike to ensure the censor would not prevail (Naydan, “Vybrane. By Lina Kostenko”, 729). Ukrainians eagerly awaited the publication of this collection and appreciated “the stylistic refinement of precise imagery and the emotional intensity of Kostenko's poetic vision” (Nazarenko and Zurowsky, 143). Despite the publishing hiatus, Kostenko’s poetry after her period of silence is not markedly different from her earlier poetry, although it does display “an increase in emotional tension,” more precise images, and “deep psychological dramatism” (Ilnytsky, *Landscapes of Memory,* 21). Since her return to active publishing in Ukraine, Kostenko has produced many volumes of poetry, as well as historical novels in verse. In 1989, she published *Vybrane,* “the first volume over which Kostenko has exercised total creative control without interference from censors” (Naydan, “Vybrane. By Lina Kostenko”, 729).

Kostenko currently experiences widespread popularity in Ukraine, as well as in the Ukrainian diaspora. She is the Pushkin of her day, and people look to and respect her. She is central to the Ukrainian school curriculum, and she is a living classic in her own time" (Naydan, “A poet on the shore”, 19). She not only “played a significant role in the evolution of Ukrainian literature and culture from the 1960s onward,” but she has also become “a symbol of professional integrity, moral inflexibility and high spirituality” (Nazarenko and Zurowsky, 142).

Introduction to Kostenko’s poetry

Scholars widely agree that Kostenko’s poetry is emotional, intellectual, and easily accessible to the lay reader. Kostenko’s poetry displays a profound “synthesis of intellectualism and emotion” (Yermolenko, 408-409). She writes in a manner that is accessible to the reader, while also filled with allusions to profound and significant pillars of culture. her poetry “lacks the prevalence of abstract metaphor that is so typical of modern poetry and relies on more traditional poetic expression” (Struk, 148). This makes her poetry widely accessible and relevant

to her Ukrainian audience. Not only is the language more understandable than much modern poetry, but Kostenko writes with "intensity and sincerity of feeling" that draws in her readers (Struk, 148). Unlike much lyric poetry that relies almost exclusively on feeling, however, Kostenko's poems are laden with rational and intellectual substance. This reliance on rationality does not detract from the genre of the lyric, however, and Briukhovets'skyi argues that the "sharp, insightful thought in the lyrics only strengthens and enriches the feeling" (Briukhovets'kyi, 60).[8] Kostenko thus appeals to the intellect, emotions, and cultural understanding of her audience. Her poetry shows "purity of word, clarity of the transparent metaphor, and most importantly—intellectual tension which arises from the artistic comprehension of the spiritual treasures already acquired by mankind" (Briukhovets'kyi, 130).[9]

Kostenko joins a rich tradition of Ukrainian culture and consciousness in her poetry. One scholar observes: "The poetic flow in the linguistic-national consciousness of Ukrainians is undeniable. They are sensitive to the reception of poetry of nature, the beauty of life, the high poetry of human relations, which finds expression in the language of folk songs, in the Ukrainian artistic word" (Yermolenko, 425).[10] Kostenko is writing within this Ukrainian context, speaking of the nature and poetic beauty of her native land. She distinguished herself in the poetry of the *shistdesiatnyky* with her intimate lyrics depicting the past and present of her people (Briukhovets'kyi 48).

In her poetry, Kostenko creates a vivid picture of her native Ukraine. *Marusia Churai* (not explored in depth in this dissertation, but the seminal historical novel in verse written by

[8] "Гостра, проникliва думка в ліриці тільки посилює і збагачує почуття" (Briukhovets'kyi, 60).
[9] "чистота слова, добірність прозорої метафори, і головне — інтелектуальна напруга, яка виникає внаслідок мистецького осмислення вже набутих людством духовних скарбів" (Briukhovets'kyi, 130).
[10] "Незаперечним є поетичний струмінь у мовно-національній свідомості українців. Вони чутливі до сприймання поезії природи, краси побуту, високої поезії людських взаємостосунків, що знаходить вираження в мові народної пісні, в українському художньому слові" (Yermolenko, 425).

Kostenko), is revealing of her political ideology and historiographical slant, and provides an insightful background for analysis of these themes in her lyric poetry. In the novel in verse, Kostenko chooses to write about the period of the Khmelnitsky uprising, not to focus on the unification of Russia with Ukraine (as was the common Russian historiography and expectation), but rather to subtly portray an alternate interpretation of the events. In this work she "communicates a strong anti-colonial message, re-establishing the importance of Ukrainian culture" (Tsobrova, 10-11). Although the Khelmintsky period was frequently interpreted by Russians as a time of unification, Kostenko "has avoided completely the theme of 'unification' with Russia, and has in fact written the whole work without mentioning Russians or the tsar even once" (Struk, 155). This trend of shifting attention from Russia to Ukraine can also be seen in Kostenko's lyrical poetry. Although Kostenko lives and writes in a world tied very closely with Russia, she mentions Russia much less frequently than Ukraine, Europe, or even the rest of the world. It is clear that she holds the Ukrainian historiographical perception of the Treaty of Pereislav, and she consistently perceives Ukraine as an ethnically and culturally separate from Russia. Despite this preference for Ukraine, however, it is important to note that Kostenko is not hostile toward Russia, and "the affirmation of her own nationality through the use of Ukrainian did not conflict with the appreciation she had for other nationalities" (Bellezza, 41). She loves Ukraine first and foremost, but values other places and cultures, including Russia.

Kostenko's poetic geography is centered squarely within Ukraine. She writes with seeming reverence about the steppe, the villages, the rivers, and masterfully ties modern geography with the legends and history of the ancient Rus' and the glory of the Cossack Hetmanate. For her, Ukraine is the microcosmic center of the universe. The poems that exude the greatest warmth and beauty are inevitably those depicting her beloved Ukraine. She does expand

her concentric circles of home outward to mention the other lands and people she has visited in her travels (as she was the first woman poet to be allowed to extensively travel outside of the Soviet Union), and even beyond the confines of this world into the universe at large (Naydan, "A poet on the shore," 19). She devotes a handful of poems to Russia, revealing a complicated, yet positive, relationship with this nation that had colonized her homeland. Europe features prominently in her poetic geography, and she praises the high culture of Europe, while also castigating the environmental destruction that has occurred there. America is likewise negatively portrayed by Kostenko, as a land where the native peoples were exterminated and the environment is being destroyed. Kostenko speaks with warmth about the universe as a whole: she devotes many poems to the place that the world holds in the universe and seeks to unite the peoples and cultures of the world. Yet wherever she travels in life or through her written word, Kostenko remains grounded in the *place* of Ukraine.

Ukraine in Kostenko's poetry

Just as Akhmatova displayed a series of concentric circles of home in her writings, so, too does Kostenko, who discusses the various *places* with varying degrees of warmth and familiarity. While Akhmatova held closest to her Leningrad-Petersburg, Kostenko does not limit herself to a single city in her primary depiction of home. Rather she includes the entire country of Ukraine as her homeland, with a particular emphasis on nature. For this reason, the latter frequently depicts a non-identified location in Ukraine, referencing a mountain range or a river to provide context, but otherwise allowing the Ukrainian landscape to speak for itself. The overwhelming feeling exuding from these Ukraine-focused poems is positivity. Kostenko's "profound emotional attachment to her land" is expertly portrayed in her poetic descriptions of home (Znayenko, 174). The reader is left with no doubt that Kostenko reveres her homeland and

holds it in the highest esteem. Whether describing her native land in general, a specific city in particular, or a river, Kostenko devotes nearly half (42%) of all her geographic references in her lyric poetry to Ukraine.

In her 1958 collection, *Vitryla,* Kostenko observes that not even the allures of travel can distract from the close connection she feels with her home.

О друзі мої!
Із рідних домівок
вітрила ввижаються
дальніх мандрівок...
А в дальніх мандрівках
ввижається в млі
коріння дерев у рідній землі! (*Vitryla,* 11).[11]

Kostenko juxtaposes the love of home with the love of traveling. She understands that both are needed, yet somehow home pulls more strongly. For all the other places that Kostenko travels, it will always be Ukraine that will be her home. This poem is revealing of Kostenko's general approach to geography within her poetry: she herself has traveled widely, and she writes about geographic locations the whole world over, yet her heart and roots always remain in Ukraine.

Another poignant verse in the same 1958 collection also discusses the pull of home conquering the lure of traveling:

Заведіть мене, дороги,
у моє кохане місто.
А щоб ві не заблудились,

[11] "Oh my friends!/From native homes/The sails of long journeys/Are appearing…/And in the long journeys/Appear in the haze/The roots of trees in the native land." (All translations from Ukrainian are mine unless otherwise noted.)

дам прикмету дорогу:

там хлоп’ята босоногі

продають лілеї білі,

продають важку брунатну,

придніпровськую кугу (*Vitryla,* 12).[12]

Kostenko tells the road to guide her, but so that it does not lead her astray, she dictates to it the place that she desires to go, describing it as her “beloved city.” While the city itself is not called by name, Kostenko’s biography and poetic focus on Kyiv, as well as the reference to the Dnipro River naturally point to the Ukrainian capital as her “beloved city.” Much as Petersburg was Akhmatova’s poetic cradle and muse, Kyiv for Kostenko is her central and beloved city. Kostenko continues this poem:

Я візьму лілею в руки,

розгорну її пелюстки.

Думать буду про мандрівки,

спокій ляже на чолі.

Не оплакуйте розлуки!

Я напевно повернуся...

Навіть плаваючі квіти

мають корінь у землі. (Vitryla, 12).[13]

The lily becomes a symbol for her of both her homeland and the occasional travel that must pull her away from it. She observes that even a floating flower has roots in the ground. This seems to

[12] “Lead me, roads, to my beloved city. And so you do not get lost, I’ll give you a dear sign: there the boys sell white lilies, sell the heavy, brown, Dnipro bulrushes.”

[13] “I will take the lily in my hands, open its petals. I will think about travels, peace lying on my forehead. Do not weep over the separation! I will surely return…Even floating flowers have roots in the earth.”

be a metaphor for all of Kostenko's life and works. Despite the fact that she traveled fairly extensively, Kostenko always felt that she was firmly rooted in Ukraine. This metaphor provides a perfect analogy for Kostenko's poetic geography: she may float around in regards to the specific places she discusses in her poetry, but her roots are grounded in her homeland of Ukraine. Just because she moves from one place to another in her writings does not mean she is at heart a wanderer or lacks allegiance to one particular location.

Kostenko never moved away from Ukraine, only leaving it temporarily for her four years of study at the Moscow Literary Institute, for six months on an invitation to the U.S. in 1989-1990, and for other short-term trips. She devotes a poignant verse to a farewell to her fatherland in one of her poems (published in 2012, but likely written much earlier). She writes,

Я прощаюсь з рідним краєм
У мовчанні.
В побожній тиші…
…
Сонце, сонце, освітлюй тіні!
Не заходь почекай хвилину!
Я ще раз
у твоему промінні
озирнусь на свою батьківщину" (*Trysta Poezij*, 364).[14]

She poignantly captures the love of her native land in these words, expressing a deep reticence to leave the place she loves. Although never having personally emigrated, she imagines to herself the profound ache and pain that would be caused if she had to abandon the land that she loves.

[14] "I say farewell to my native land in silence, in pious silence… Sun, sun, illuminate the shadows! Don't set; wait a minute! I once more in your shining look around at my fatherland."

Kostenko once again describes her role as a patriotic poet, this time taking on a male persona: "Я лицар і поет, .../Я не служу чужому королю" (*Vybrane,* 204).[15] The poet-knight is loyal to his king and country, although he alludes to the turmoil of his inner conflict with the king and observes that he is the only one who has not written an ode to the king. Despite this distaste for the current king of his land, the poet-knight professes complete loyalty to his country:

І хоч на світі сторони чотири,

я тут живу, бо я цей край люблю (*Vybrane,* 204).[16]

This sentiment reflects a devotion to homeland that extends far deeper than loyalty to a government. This poem was published in her 1989 collection *Vybrane,* the first after her period of silence and the first she published without government censorship. In this context, the poem emphasizes Kostenko's own experience with censors and repressive governments; these experiences instilled in her the reality that one's homeland is not synonymous with government. She was able to see herself as a true knight of her Ukrainian homeland, despite Soviet oversight and oppression. As Akhmatova also expressed repeatedly, freedom found in another country is not worth the price of leaving one's homeland. Kostenko likewise would rather live in the land she loves than any other place on the globe.

One of Kostenko's most famous poems was intended to be published in the 1963 collection *Зоряний інтеграл,* but as that book was banned by the censors, this poem was published in 1989. The vibrant Ukrainian patriotism makes it clear why this poem would not have pleased the Soviet censors. In this work, she addresses Ukrainian poetry and the role that her nation and its language play. She writes,

Я скоро буду виходити на вулиці Києва

---

[15] "I am a knight and a poet…I do not serve a foreign king"

[16] "Although there are four cardinal points/corners of the earth, I live here, because I love this country."

з траурною пов'язкою на рукаві—

умирає мати поезії мого народу!

Все називається Україною—

універмаг, ресторан, фабрика….

І тільки мова чужа у власному домі (*Vybrane*, 152-157).[17]

Kostenko points to the grave irony that even in the country of Ukraine, where everything was called Ukrainian, the language was foreign. The people were not being allowed to be true to their inner and cultural identities. While it is difficult to date this poem exactly or identify the specific historical events to which it is tied, its intended publication date of 1963 suggests that Kostenko was speaking of Russification policies in Ukraine that were in place from the 1930s to the1950s. These pre-Thaw conditions relegated the Ukrainian language to a secondary status, while Russian language and culture were promoted.

In her love of Ukraine and the Ukrainian language, Kostenko follows in the footsteps of Ukraine's foremost female poet, Lesia Ukrainka (1871-1913). Ukrainka was also a political activist, and she wrote glorifying Ukrainian culture and promoting Ukrainian independence. Because the 1876 Ems *ukaz* banned publications in Ukrainian, Ukrainka was forced to publish in western Ukraine and smuggle her works into Kyiv (Himka, 326, and Bida). She was arrested in 1907 for anti-tsarist endeavors, and she fought against Russian oppression of Ukrainian.[18] While Kostenko rarely mentions Ukrainka directly, it is obvious that there are deep parallels between the two, with Kostenko almost holding Ukrainka in a position of reverence (Briukhovets'kyi, 46). In one poem, Kostenko uses an epigraph from Ukrainka to foreground a piece about her love

[17] "I'll soon go out on the streets of Kyiv/with mourning bands on my arm/the mother of the poetry of my people is dying!/Everything is called Ukraine—/the mall, the restaurant, the factory./…Only the language is foreign in your own home."

[18] For more on Ukrainka, see Bida, Constantine. *Lesya Ukrainka.* University of Toronto Press, 1968.

of Ukraine. The quote from Ukrainka reads,

Слово, моя ти єдиная зброє,

Ми не повинні загинуть обоє (*Trysta Poezij*, 210-211).[19]

Both Ukrainka and Kostenko used their words as a weapon to stand up against the injustices that have been levied against the Ukrainian language. While Ukraine has been oppressed and has been claimed by various polities, Kostenko observes,

Шматок землі,

ти звешся Україною.

Ти був до нас.

Ти будеш після нас (*Trysta Poezij*, 210-211).[20]

Ukraine is an entity more eternal than the span of a single human life. And regardless of the power governing over this "piece of land," Kostenko affirms that Ukraine has always been and will always be Ukraine:

Коли ти навіть звався—Малоросія,

твоя поетеса була Українкою! (*Trysta Poezij*, 210-211).[21]

Again Kostenko appeals to the idea of irony that there are names or entities (such as language) being imposed from the outside, while those things that are real and authentic to the people are still termed with the famous poet's name which was derived from the word for a "Ukrainian woman."

Kostenko devotes another poem to Lesia Ukrainka, parroting the language and structure of the poet's earlier verse. As a young girl, Ukrainka penned the following words, speaking in

[19] "Word, you are my only weapon, we must not both die."
[20] "A piece of land, you are called Ukraine. You were before us. You will be after us."
[21] "Even when you were called "Little Russia," your poet was Ukrainka."

the voice of her politically oppressed and exiled aunt:

Ні долі, ні волі у мене нема,

Зосталася тільки надія одна:

Надія вернутись ще раз на Вкраїну,

Поглянути ще раз на рідну країну,

Поглянути ще раз на синій Дніпро

Там жити чи вмерти, мены все одно (Ukrainka, 41).[22]

This poignant plea from a young girl is one of the most famous poems in the Ukrainian language, speaking to the love of homeland and freedom central to a Ukrainian national identity. In a poem published in her 2011 volume, Kostenko speaks to this tradition of calling for freedom using essentially the same structure and even some of the same words as her poetic grandmother. In this manner, Kostenko seals for herself the role of spokeswoman for her people, emphasizing her literary heritage and the importance that she places on her homeland:

Ні щастя, ні волі, ні чуда,

ні часу, хоч би про запас…

Ні честі, ні мови, ні згоди,

самі лише смутки і пні.

Коханий мій рідний народе,

ти збудешся врешті чи ні?! (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 35).[23]

Kostenko questions whether the hopes and dreams she has for her homeland will ever come to

[22] "I have neither destiny nor freedom, only one hope remained: the hope to return once more to Ukraine, to look once more on my native country, to look once more on the blue Dnipro, to live there or die there, it is all the same to me." Ukrainka continues this verse, speaking about the steppe and the Cossack graves there. In this imagery praising Ukraine and its Cossack heritage, Ukrainka is following in the footsteps of Taras Shevchenko.

[23] "Neither happiness nor freedom, nor miracle, nor time, although for the supply…Neither honor, nor language, nor agreement, only sorrow and stumps. My beloved native nation, will you finally come to be, or not?!"

pass, or if the negativity she expresses will continue in Ukraine. For Kostenko, her country is everything, and she hopes that someday her beloved nation will be able to provide the safety, happiness, and linguistic freedom that she envisions.

Kostenko's references to Ukraine are rich and varied. She speaks of her land as a whole—as her native home—yet she also speaks specifically about individual locations, generally rooted in the Ukrainian countryside. She evokes the peaceful idyll of Ukrainian villages, conjures the strength of the mighty Dnipro River and ties the glory of Ukraine to its rich history in the Hetmanate and Kyivan Rus'.

Kostenko's Ukrainian Childhood

A poet's childhood frequently becomes a source of inspiration, resulting in nostalgic verses reminiscences on the writer's early years. When Kostenko engages in this remembrance of her childhood, Ukraine plays an integral role in the setting, context, and understanding of the poems. Kostenko viewed her childhood as "paradisal," and she engages in therapeutic anamnesis as she recounts her childhood years (Naydan, "Anamnesis," 120). This paradise she lovingly returns to is Ukraine—the countryside, the Dnipro River—and the transcendent undiluted joy of her home. Her childhood memories cannot be separated from the *place* of Ukraine. Hers was a thoroughly Ukrainian childhood, and she remembers it through the lens of her mature Ukrainian national identity. Memory can generate a form of patriotism (and imagined geography) as the poet recalls the setting in which various events occurred. As Kostenko describes her idyllic childhood, she infuses the innocence of youth with the love of home and nation that still burns bright in the mature poet.

In a poem published in 1957, Kostenko describes the various natural aspects of her childhood home. She begins each of the first four stanzas with a statement of where she grew up,

followed by a sensory depiction of that location:

Я виростала у садах,

Де груші достигали теплі.

…

Я виростала у полях,

Де сонця схід - неначе спалах.

...

Я виростала у лісах,

Де сосни рожевіли станом.

…

Я виростала на Дніпрі,

Де височіють сині кручі (*Prominnia zemli*, 5).[24]

The four initial quatrains create a cohesive picture, describing Kostenko's beloved childhood home as a place of gardens, fields, forests, with the Dnipro River nearby. She focuses on the silent regality and peace of nature. While the first three locations are relatively abstract—gardens, fields, and forests—they are nonetheless distinctively Ukrainian to Kostenko. The invocation of the Dnipro River firmly grounds this poem in Ukraine, adding a sense of vitality and realness to the surrounding fields of Kostenko's memory. The final quatrain brings the imagery from the recesses of memory to the present day:

І барви тих далеких літ—

[24] "I grew up in gardens, where the warm pears ripened…I grew up in the fields, where the sunrise is like a flash…I grew up in the forests, where the pines turned to a pink state….I grew up on the Dnipro, where the blue cliffs tower…"

куди б не ділася тепер я,

що б не писала,—як відсвіт,

лежать на білому папері (*Prominnia zemli*, 5).[25]

No matter where she goes or what she writes, the reflections of Kostenko's childhood memories and experiences—firmly rooted in her Ukrainian *places*—are on the paper before her, and, consequently, they become visible to the readers of her poetry.

Another important *place* from Kostenko's childhood was Trukhaniv Island (termed the "Kyivan Venice"). Located in the Dnipro River, with the Desenka River on one side, Trukhaniv Island was razed under the German occupation. In a verse published in 1980, Kostenko remembers, "Я виросла у Київській Венеції" ("I grew up in the Kyivan Venice") where the acacia trees blossomed (*Nepovtornist*, 150). This connection of Ukraine with the universally revered city of Venice serves to strengthen the position of Ukraine's prominence in Kostenko's mind: the beauty of Venice can be found within her own Dnipro River. Into this peaceful and majestic setting, a flood suddenly comes: "А повінь прибувала по інерції/і заливала всі комунікації" ("And the flood came by inertia/and overflowed all communications"). While this may at first seem like a catastrophe, Kostenko remembers that during this flood, the inhabitants of the Kyivan Venice rejoiced and enjoyed themselves:

О, як було нам весело, як весело!

Жили ми на горищах і терасах.

Усе махало крилами і веслами,…

коли ми повертались зі школи,

дзвеніли сміхом, сонцем і гітарами

[25] "And the colors of those distant years—wherever I go now, whatever I write—lie like a reflection on white paper."

балкончиків причалені гондоли (*Nepovtornist*, 150).[26]

The ringing sound of song and laughter serves as a background to the congeniality and camaraderie that the inhabitants of the Kyivan Venice are experiencing. As island dwellers, the influx of water does not seem to bother them, and they carry on with their school and work despite the flood. Imagery of the European Venice is evoked through the reference to the gondolas peacefully moving along the flood. Viewed through the golden lens of childhood, the Kyivan Venice becomes something mystical, magical: a *place* where even in the midst of catastrophe (a flood), the inhabitants rejoice and sing and come together in community. At this point in the poem, the reader is lulled into a sense of security, enjoying the lighthearted memory of a flood that entertained a young girl. Yet into this peaceful memory, Kostenko suddenly inserts the fate that befalls her beloved Trukhaniv Island:

А потім бомби влучили у спокій…

А потім повінь позмивала попіл

моєї дерев'яної Венеції (*Nepovtornist*, 150).[27]

The bombs destroy the serenity of the island paradise, bringing a halt to the joviality of the poem's earlier lines. The anaphora in these concluding lines ("а потім"/"and then") sets the advent of the bombs on parallel with the new flood—both are outward actions over which the island has no control. The flood this time serves not as a means of minor destruction mixed with jollity—as it appeared earlier in the poem—but a source of cleansing a destroyed city. The fire and ash of the foreign-sent bombs is washed away by the native waters of the Dnipro River. The destruction by bombs and fire and the subsequent washing by the Dnipro leave Kostenko's

[26] "Oh, how fun it was for us, how fun! We lived on lofts and terraces. Everyone waved wings and oars... And on the boats, flooded by blocks, when we returned from school, sounded of laughter, sun, and guitars of the gondola berths of the balcony-dwellers."

[27] "And then bombs shot into the serenity. /And then the flood washed away the ash/of my wooden Venice."

childhood Kyivan Venice destroyed. This nostalgic poem emphasizes that time itself, just as much as the bombs, have resulted in the loss of Kostenko's childhood home.

Despite the loss of her beloved Kyivan Venice, Kostenko continued to remember fondly her childhood experiences on Trukhaniv Island. Nearly two decades after writing the previous poem, Kostenko once again uses this island and the surrounding Dnipro River as the backdrop to capture some of her beloved childhood memories. Kostenko describes the ice-laden Dnipro River ("Труханів острів. Крига, крига, крига./Напровесні дрейфуючий Дніпро")[28] and the children daring each other to jump from one ice floe to the next (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 78). She recounts the childlike abandon with which they play, embracing the fear and reveling in the "Веселий час" ("happy hour"). She hears her mother's yearning call for her to come home, and with childish abandon replies "Та йду!" ("Yes, I'm coming!"). This poem displays many instances of enjambment, the technique of which potentially serves to emphasize Kostenko's childhood during the time—the lines separate and run into one another nearly in a stream-of-consciousness, reflecting how a child would think and tell a story. It also encourages the reader to look beyond convention and rules, perhaps much as the young girl is doing in the poem by defying her own sense of caution and fear to dare the mighty Dnipro. This snapshot is brief, capturing in a few words the power of a childhood memory. Kostenko invokes the mighty Dnipro River here to become a representation of something personal—a captured moment of childhood. Kostenko was likely not thinking about nationalism or the baptism of Rus' at the time she was jumping along the ice with her friends, but was rather enjoying a familiar location within the *place* she called home. This pattern is likely representative of how Kostenko's thoughts and feelings evolved—she first learned to love a place because of memories, associations,

[28] "Trukhaniv Island. Ice. Ice. Ice./The Dnipro spring ice floes."

experiences, and only later did she learn the history and associate it with those same locations. An imagined geography is created first for one's childhood/personal experiences, then for one's national consciousness.

This nostalgia and love for the Dnipro of her childhood continues in the poem "Watercolors of Childhood" (*Sad netanuchykh*, 24). Once again, Kostenko's memory is inextricably connected with the *place* she calls home, and she paints a vivid picture of the Dnipro River as it existed in her three-year-old mind. She begins with a metaphor of the Dnipro as a mighty lion:

Дніпро, старенький дебаркадер, левино-жовті береги
лежать, на кігті похиливши
зелену гриву шелюги (*Sad netanuchykh*, 24).[29]

This instance of enjambment in the poem's initial line echoes the stringing together of memory and the rushing of the years that are discussed in this poem. The image that she chose of the wild lion to represent the Dnipro river emphasizes the childhood imagination of a toddler, as well as the power of the river itself. Kostenko then ties the Dnipro River of her childhood with the world at large:

В Дніпрі купається Купава. Мені ще рочків, може, три.
А я чекаю пароплава
із-за трипільскої гори (*Sad netanuchykh*, 24).[30]

The young child eagerly awaits a steamship from Trypillian (a village 25 miles south of Kyiv on the Dnipro River). The river connects her to the larger world. Kostenko then reflects on how this

[29] "The Dnipro, the old landing stage, lion-yellow shores/lie, on the bent claw of the green mane of willows."
[30] "In the Dnipro, Kupava is bathing. I am about three years old./And I am waiting for the steamship/from behind the Trypillian mountain."

moment was fleeting:

І ті роки, що так промчали,

і пароплав той, і гора...

Це вже невидимі причали

в глибокій пам'яті Дніпра (*Sad netanuchykh*, 24).[31]

The sense of nostalgia and respect in this poem is tangible; the years have flown quickly, yet she still clings to her memories of the Dnipro. By incorporating these geographic locations in her retrospective poetry, putting them into the mouth of a child, the connection of modern Ukraine with its history seems even more real and authentic. Even as a child, Kostenko was firmly grounded in the geography of her homeland, and she appreciated how the mighty Dnipro River connected her with the rest of Ukraine.

In the Rzhyschivsky region of Ukraine there is a small tributary to the Dnipro called the Lehlych River, which figures prominently in one of Kostenko's earliest childhood memories:

Чомусь пам'ятаю, що річка звалася Леглич.

Було в ній каміння — як сто бегемотячих спин (*Nepovtornist'*, 87).[32]

This childlike understanding of stones in a river creates an authentic image of this Dnipro tributary. Kostenko understood the river as a place of wonder and discovery. This peaceful remembrance, however, is disturbed by a token of death in the river:

Чомусь пам'ятаю, як плив між камінням шуліка,

Убитий шуліка чомусь між камінням плив…(*Nepovtornist'*, 87).[33]

---

[31] "And those years that raced/and that steamship, and the mountain./These are already invisible wharfs/in the deep memory of the Dnipro."

[32] "For some reason I remember that the river was called Lehlych./ There were stones in it—like the backs of a hundred hippos."

[33] "For some reason I remember how a kite bird floated between the rocks. /A dead kite bird for some reason was floating between the rocks."

The young girl's observation of death in her fanciful hippo-like rock-filled river brings a sobering element to the poem, almost as if childhood has been betrayed too early by death. Mimicking the child's shocked attempts to grasp what is happening, the poem repeats itself in the last two lines of the poem, as the young Kostenko wonders why the dead kite bird is in her river. The shock and betrayal experienced in the imaginative, joyful river would not be the first time that Kostenko found her peaceful childhood disturbed: WWII was a difficult time for Ukraine and for Kyiv, and Kostenko felt that keenly. She writes, metaphorically, that her first poem was written in the trenches ("Мій преший вірш написаний в окопі") and her childhood was killed in the war ("моє дитинство, вбите на війні") as she crossed through the fire and water of the Dnipro (*Vybrane*, 31). Ukraine was a *place* of sweet and bitter memories.

Experiencing both joy and sorrow in her Ukrainian childhood along the Dnipro, Kostenko continues to embrace the good and bad seasons of life. She recounts an experience of returning to a *place* she loved in childhood, and expresses her willingness to remain with that place no matter the challenges:

> Виходжу в сад, він чорний і худий….
>
> В цьому саду я виросла, і він
>
> мене впізнав, хоч довго придивлявся.
>
> ...
>
> Чужі приходять в час твоїх щедрот,
>
> а я прийшла у час твойого смутку (*Vybrane*, 342).[34]

Kostenko had come to know the seasons of her childhood garden. She did not feel the need to be like the strangers who would only come in the time of harvest: she loves the garden even in the

[34] "I enter the garden, it is black and skinny, /I grew up in your garden, and it/recognized me, although he had given up/…strangers come in your time of bounty/I came in your time of grief."

winter of its sorrow. Just as Kostenko chose to remain faithful to her childhood garden through joy and sorrow, she likewise in her life and poetry was devoted to her native Ukraine through times of peace and hardship.

The Ukrainian countryside features prominently not just in Kostenko's poetry of childhood, but in her works in general. Sometimes these references to it are vague, by speaking simply of the steppe or an unnamed village. Other times, these references are highly specific, mentioning a particular village or one of Ukraine's many rivers. This fluidity of specificity allows Kostenko's poems to be grounded in the Ukrainian countryside while still focusing on the main narrative arc of her poems.

Kostenko invites her reader to follow her into the beautiful—and often sorrowful—world of the Ukrainian countryside:

Ходім, я напою тебе Дніпром.

Я нагодую очі твої степом.

Могили України покажу (*Vybrane,* 195).[35]

Kostenko seeks to share with her reader the poetic geography of Ukraine, showing the land and rivers and nation that she holds dear. Kostenko's appeal to the "mohyly" of Ukraine is likely a reference to the Cossack burial mounds located in the steppe. These burial mounds are profound national symbols for Ukraine, representing the sacrifice of the Cossacks.[36] The Ukrainian countryside is inextricably tied with the legendary history of the Cossacks and deeply symbolic of Ukrainian heritage.

[35] "Come, I will give you drink from the Dnipro. I will fill your eyes with the steppe. I will show you the graves of Ukraine."

[36] Taras Shevchenko writes about these cultural symbols of the Cossack burial mounds and their destruction at the hands of Russian occupiers in his 1843 verse "Rozryta mohyla" ("The Plundered Grave") (Shabal', 175-176).

Villages

Ukrainian villages play an important role in Kostenko's poetry, creating a peaceful, idyllic setting that allows both the poet and the reader to seemingly turn back the time and find a slower pace of life. Some towns and villages the poet references include Chabans'ke[37], Berezivka[38] Lemeshi[39], and Pochaiv.[40] Kostenko's choice to locate her poems in a known village gives a sense of reality to the creation of her idylls. For example, the mention of Berezivka alludes to the future of Ukraine and the world that is yet in infancy:

А десь в Березівці чи в Чучинці
чучикає баба майбутнє народу…
летять космонавти на крилах лелек (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 108).[41]

The dreams of a woman in this small village focus on the future not just of the tiny infant she rocks in the cradle, but of the entire world—perhaps this Ukrainian child will someday become an astronaut, and represent the human race beyond the confines of the earth. The internal rhyme and consonance in this poem, with a heavy emphasis on -ch sounds, imitate the soothing sounds of a lullaby, sung by a Ukrainian grandmother to the bearer of future.

In a poem published in 1977, there is a classic example of one of Kostenko's references to a general, unnamed village.

У селі одному на Поділлі—
все життя, я й досі не знайшов—
дід Карпенко ходить щонеділі

---

[37] "Ой, із загір'я сонечко, з загір'я" (*Vybrane*, 63).
[38] "Майбутні злочинці іще в личинці" (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 108).
[39] "Стара Церковця в Лемешах" (*Sad netanuchykh skul'ptur*, 37-39).
[40] "'"Отак, як зроду, потаємно, з тилу" (*Nepovtornist'*, 71).
[41] "And here in Berezivka or in the Chuchina (River) the grandmother rocks the people's future…the astronauts fly on the wings of storks."

у степу шукати бозна й що.

Бо якийсь там гетьман чи отаман

закопав нечувані скарби—(*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 59).[42]

The intentional vagueness of the village underscores the ambiguity of the treasure and where it may be located even if it does exist. Yet by naming a region for this quiet village with the dedicated treasure-hunter, Kostenko grounds the poem in the reality of Ukraine. This episode thus becomes representative of all villages and all grandpas who seek to remember and pursue the glory days of the Hetmanate (or at least the treasure they left behind).

Yet another poem depicting a small village describes a mother.

Вона була красуня з Катеринівки.

Було у неї п'ятеро вже вас (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 66-67).[43]

While this village is given a specific name (Katerynivka), there nevertheless remains a large degree of ambiguity as to the location of this village, as there are numerous Ukrainian villages with this name.[44] The poem's focus on a large family underscores the centrality of hearth and home in traditional depictions of the Ukrainian countryside. Kostenko continues the poem, saying that this particular mother, stands out in that she desires to have the sky painted on the ceiling of her home. Kostenko thus suggests that, even as peaceful, idyllic, and in-touch with nature as Ukrainian villages are, more can always be done to fully embrace Ukrainian nature.

Kostenko continues her glorification of the Ukrainian village idyll in her poem «Українське Альфреско», published in 1987. The title of this poem immediately indicates to

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[42] "In one village in Podillya—all my life I still haven't found it—Grandpa Karpenko goes every Sunday to the steppe to look for God knows what. Because there a hetman or an ataman buried unheard of treasures."
[43] "She was a beauty from Katerynivka. She already had five before you."
[44] This technique of partially revealing a village's location could be a parallel to the trend often seen in Russian literature of giving only the first letter of a town or village; it communicates to the reader that he or she should assume the place is grounded within the reality of Russia, although there is no technical specificity of place.

the reader an interesting juxtaposition: a Ukrainian depiction of something originally Italian. In this manner, Kostenko is placing her poem within Ukraine, while also tying Ukraine to the larger world. What follows is a quintessentially Ukrainian depiction of a small village. A grandma and a grandpa live together with their hen who "мабуть, несе їм яєчка золоті" (*Sad netanuchykh,* 27).[45] This down-to earth poem is thus tied into the superstitious and mythological elements of culture that are frequently associated with older generations in Ukraine. The use of the folktale manner of expression "біла-біла" further helps remove this idyllic scene from the modern day, while also grounding it more fully in the Ukrainian folkloric tradition. The scene is quintessentially Ukrainian, but the Italian appellation *alfresco* nearly undermines the core claim to Ukrainianess. This linguistic reminder of the outside world acknowledges that the depicted authentic Ukrainian idyll cannot actually still be obtained and must be depicted and understood through the lens of a modern, foreign word. There is a hint of sadness in this poem, as the grandchildren are not there. The new generation has moved on from their peaceful village home and are perhaps off learning Italian. Nevertheless, the realm depicted is like the last of bygone fairytale worlds. It is relatively untouched by the outside world. The only connections to the wider world are the Italian words, people peering through the gate at the end, and the fact that it comes to the reader in the form of a published poem.

Остання в світі казка сидить під образами.

Навшпиньки виглядають жоржини через тин... (*Sad netanuchykh,* 27)[46]

The poem ends in ellipsis, leaving the ending to the reader's imagination. It is clear that even the grandparents cannot cling to the idyll for too much longer, as they too will pass away. This final fairy tale is found in the quintessential Ukrainian countryside, but even its purity and beauty

[45] "Would maybe lay them a golden egg."
[46] "The last fairytale in the world is sitting under the icons. On tiptoe people peek through the fence at the dacha."

cannot last forever, and Kostenko marks it as a chronotope that is quickly fading from existence.

In contrast to the ambiguity of a specific village location in the preceding poems, Kostenko also writes poems firmly grounded in very specific Ukrainian villages. For example, she dedicates a poem to Ivan Mikolaychuk, a Ukrainian actor and producer who filmed his first movie, «Вавилон XX», in Khalep'ia ("Kostenko napysala virsh pro mykolaichuka u khalep'i"). In this verse she connects Mikolaychuk's Ukrainian roots and creations with the rest of the world:

> Тебе чекають різні дивовижі.
>
> Кореспонденти прагнуть інтерв'ю.
>
> Москва. Гран-прі. Овації̈ в Парижі!
>
> Іван косив у Халеп'ї траву (*Nepovtornist'*, 13).[47]

Khalep'ya thus becomes the starting place for worldwide fame. Kostenko appeals to the very mundane and stereotypically rural activity of cutting grass to describe what Mikolaychuk had accomplished in Khalep'ya. What started in the village expanded to be of interest to interviewers from all over the world.

One of Kostenko's poems about the village of Lemeshi conjures up the image of home through an appeal to the Biblical wife of Lot (*Sad netanuchykh skul'ptur*, 37-39). Akhmatova dedicates an entire poem to this Biblical woman who turns into a pillar of salt for turning to look back at her home city as she flees destruction with her family. It is clear that Akhmatova has sympathy for the woman who sacrifices everything for one look back. Kostenko's reference is much briefer, tucked into the middle of her poem «Стара церковця в Лемешах». In this poem, Kostenko refers to the Razumovsky family, which is connected to the village of Lemeshi

[47] "Various wonders await you. Correspondents want interviews. Moscow. Grand-Prix. Ovation in Paris! Ivan used to cut the grass in Khalep'ya."

(Ohlyblyn). Kostenko depicts Countess Natalia Razumovskaia at her husband's funeral with a comparison to Lot's wife: «стояла в церкві дивна тишина./…і озиралась Лотова жона» (*Sad netanuchykh skul'ptur*, 37-39)[48]. Kostenko appeals to the imagery of the Biblical story to convey the love and longing for home that the Countess experiences. This particular family held an important place in the Cossack Hetmanate, so Kostenko here combines the legends of Ukraine with the profound emotions of a woman who had lost her unfaithful husband.

In a poem published in 1980, Kostenko depicts a classic Ukrainian idyllic scene in the countryside, comparing it with the more technologically advanced way of life in Europe. The title "Слайди" ("Slides") evokes a retrospective feeling, as if a family is looking at photographic images of memories long past. Kostenko writes, "У нашому саду була розкішна флора"[49] and roosters lived and apple trees bore fruit (*Nepovtornist'*, 113). In this beautiful and cultivated garden,

Індустріальний подиїх п'ятирічки

до нас у сад тоді ще не проник[50]

and the great-grandfather and great-grandmother take care of their land (*Nepovtornist'*, 113). The speaker then recounts a personal awakening, realizing that

В Європі вже був млин, двигучий, паровий.

І прадід мій ходив, як Ной після потопу (*Nepovtornist'*, 113).[51]

The Ukrainian village shows a time that has not changed since the Biblical days: while Europe boasts its steam-powered mills, Ukrainians still worked the land with their own hands. This snapshot in time captures an idyll separate from the advancements of western Europe and the

[48] "There was a strange silence in the church/…and Lot's wife looked back."
[49] "In our garden was gorgeous flora."
[50] "The industrial five-year-plans had not yet penetrated our garden."
[51] "In Europe there already was a steam-powered mill. And my great-grandfather walked like Noah after the flood."

five-year-plans of the Soviet Union. The retrospective speaker asks,

Ідилія? Кажіть. Архаїка? Не треба.

У закутку душі хай буде трохи сад (*Nepovtornist'*, 113).[52]

The speaker, upon learning that her great-grandparents' method of life is idyllic and archaic, decides to embrace that and let the memory become something more than just a slide. While this village idyll is something far-removed from city life, the poet argues that it is important and beautiful.

Another poem entitled "Хутір вишневий" also discusses this long-past village idyll in Ukraine:

Там, за порогами, в степах,
де землі щедрі і розлогі,
сидять лелеки на стовпах
і ріллі дихають вологі,

там що не впало—проросло,
шляхи—як рокіт на бандурі,
там як зривались чорні бурі—
чорнозем тоннами несло,—

Вишневий Хутір…Ні душі (*Vybrane*, 188-189).[53]

The speaker initially creates an image of an idyllic hamlet nestled in the steppe. The imagery is

[52] "Idyll? It says. Archaic? No need. In the corner of the soul, let there be a small orchard."
[53] "There beyond the rapids, in the steppes, where the land is generous and spacious, sit storks on poles and the damp tillable land breathes, there where didn't fall—where the path blooms—like a boom on a bandura, there how black storms carried black soil by the tons—There is Cherry Farmstead"

peaceful and positive: a generous and spacious land inhabited by storks.[54] At the beginning of the third stanza, however, immediately after revealing the name of this beautiful place (Cherry Farmstead), the speaker reveals that there are no people here anymore. The people are gone, as are the cherries. The dreams have also left and all that remains is an empty house and a "мертвий хутір стереже / могилу матері твоєї..." (*Vybrane*, 188-189).[55] The past idyll has departed, leaving only a shell of a formerly joyful place. Both "Хутір вишневий" and "Слайди" both exhibit a sense of sadness at the loss of the Ukrainian village idyll—there is no returning to the past. It is impossible to return to childhood or to bring back those who have once lived. While the grandparents are still alive in "Слайди," it is clear that they are the only lingering vestiges of a lifestyle that is part of a bygone era; the dead mother in "Хутір вишневий" is confirmation of the reality that all things must pass and the idyll will be lost. Both poems end in ellipsis, leaving it to the reader to determine exactly what will happen in these now-dead villages that once housed the perfect Ukrainian idyll.

The Carpathian Mountains

The Carpathian Mountains are an important *place* in many of Kostenko's poems. The reference to them combines specificity with ambiguity in a poetically flexible manner, giving the reader a general framework to understand the poem's location, while simultaneously not revealing the exact coordinates or particular mountain where the poem is occurring: clearly the "Carpathian Mountains" is a reference that is neither completely specific nor completely vague, but something in between. This ambiguity allows Kostenko the liberty of grounding her poem in Ukraine, giving it a specific location, while also leaving it broad enough to allow for freedom of movement and interpretation in the poem and its meaning.

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[54] Stork nests on poles or thatched-roof houses are signs of good-fortune in Ukraine.
[55] "dead farmstead guards your mother's grave."

For Kostenko, the Carpathians are a *place* of exalted beauty and profound solitude. Speaking of her first trip to the Carpathians, Kostenko writes,

Потоки гірські і Карпати в тумані...

Я вперше бачу таку красу (*Prominnia zemli*, 18).[56]

The breath-taking beauty of the Carpathians is exhilarating to Kostenko, and she feels profoundly connected to the mountains. In an act of linguistic possession and endearment, Kostenko exclaims "Ой, круто ж ви стали, мої Карпати!" (*Vitryla*, 31-32).[57] This implies a deep love for and a claim of possession for the mountains, as well as a long-term association with them that has enabled her perceptions to change over time. She likewise wants her relationship with the Carpathians to be reciprocated, and upon a return to the mountains she asks,

Агов, Карпати і геологи!

Чи пам'ятаєте мене? *(Madonna perekhrest'*, 69).[58]

She desires to be remembered by them and have a personal connection with them. Her relationship with the mountains is personal, and she embraces the solitude and beauty she finds there:

Йду в Карпатах крізь летючі хмари,

де світанки сонце надпили

...маю тільки небо над собою,

маю тільки душу при собі (*Nepovtornist'*, 68).[59]

The profound solitude of nature is not broken by the song of humankind. The speaker is alone

[56] "Mountain streams and the Carpathians in fog…I see such beauty for the first time."
[57] "Oh, you have become steep, my Carpathians!"
[58] "Hey, Carpathians and geology! Do you remember me?"
[59] "I walk in the Carpathians amid flying clouds, where the sun breaks the dawn. I have only heaven above me; I have only my soul with me."

with her own thoughts and soul, transported above the lower world to a realm of the sun and sky.

In addition to being a place of profound solitude and personal connection, the Carpathians also have the ability to connect people with each other. She also speaks of a "sorrowful mountain song" that will be heard in Chornohora[60] (*Vitryla*, 31-32). This song has the power to reach solitary hikers and make them no longer lonely. Thus, for Kostenko, the Carpathians are a place to which she has a unique relationship, yet they also belong to everyone in the region. In the nature and mountains of Ukraine, one is not alone despite the peaceful and silent character of nature. The Carpathians unite individuals with nature and with their common humanity. People are able to communicate with each other and express their contentment with life.

У Карпатах,
гірському краю,
на питання:
—Як ви живете?
кожен мовить:
—Добре жию. *(Prominnia zemli*, 19)[61]

The call-and-response of this poem (along with the colloquial "zhyiu" instead of the more literary "zhivu" for "I live") captures a moment of authentic, idyllic life in the Carpathians. The tone of the poem is frank and straightforward, lacking extended metaphors or elaborate imagery. The simplicity is emphasized by the line breaks and format of the poem. There is nothing elegant or contrived about life in the Carpathians: it is simply good and authentic. Travelers in the Carpathians are united by mountain songs or friendly conversation.

[60] The highest mountain range in the Carpathians.
[61] "In the Carpathians,/ in the mountain land,/to the question:/'How are you?'/everyone answers:/ 'I'm well.'"

The Steppe

The steppe comprises an integral *place* in Kostenko's poetic geography. This temperate grassland running through Ukraine consists of the historic and legendary home of the Cossacks; it is a place of beauty; it is representative of the countryside that Kostenko so deeply loves. Her poetry rejoices in the steppe and wishes for its continuation: "хай буде степ, хай буде ліс і гори" (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 124).[62] She describes the steppe as "свобода і жага" or ("freedom and thirst") and emphasizes the vastness of the steppe and the untamed nature of its Cossack heritage (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 22). She categorically expresses her love for the steppe: "Люблю твій степ і подих твого степу" (*Trysta poezii*, 67).[63] It is depicted in Kostenko's poetry as rich, boundless region where the Cossacks ruled and where farms and villages thrive to this day.

Kostenko entitles one poem "Степи" and therein describes the beautiful and idyllic Ukrainian steppe.

Зелений степ—ні дерева, ні нивки.
Блакитний степ—ні хмар, ні голубіч.
Червоне сонце
незастиглим зливком
пливе повільно поміж двох степів.
А ти за ним
до вечора мандруєш.
Втомився?—ляж горілиць у траві
і слухай-слухай,

[62] "Let there be the steppe; let there be the forest and mountains."
[63] "I love your steppe and the breath of your steppe."

поки не почуеш,

як тихо дишуть квіти степові (Vitryla, 47).[64]

There are no trees here, or hills, just the sky and the red sun. The imagery is vivid, with the first three lines each beginning with a color present in the steppe: green, blue, red. The last three lines seem to sing a lullaby to the weary traveler, repeating the sounds kh- and sh- as the poet exhorts the reader to simply listen. Breath lends life to the flowers of the steppe, effectively creating a personified steppe in Kostenko's poem. Kostenko urges the traveler to listen "until" he hears the breath of the flowers. This suggests that it is not easy to hear the faint sounds of the living steppe initially, but it requires effort on the part of the listener. Kostenko clearly has already put in the effort to realize the living nature of the steppe, and she encourages the reader to realize this as well and to see Ukraine and its countryside as more than just dead entities. For this reason, this poem is not simply a depiction of nature, but also a social statement urging people to grasp the need to care for the environment as it is something that lives and breathes like people.

In addition to being the actual subject of Kostenko's poems, the steppe also provides the backdrop for many poems. In one such poem she recounts a dream she had in which she sees a road—nothing but a road—and she does not know where it goes or where it came from. Yet even in the midst of this openly admitted geographical ambiguity, Kostenko nonetheless centers her understanding in Ukraine: it seems as if the road is located in the steppe.

Мені снилась дорога. Дорога—і все.

Ні куди, а ні звідки,—не знаю, не знаю...

[64] "Green steppe—no trees, no fields. Azure steppe—no clouds, no doves. The red sun, like an unburnt ingot floats slowly between the two steppes. And you travel after it until evening. Have you grown tired? Lie face-up in the grass and listen—listen until you hear how quietly the flowers of the steppe breathe."

Тільки десь ніби вогник далеко в степах (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 105).[65]

The imagined geography of the dream somehow finds itself within the context of the Ukrainian steppe.[66] This passive vision of a simple road is transformed in the poet's mind to a vision of Ukraine, as represented by the steppe.

The Dnipro River

The Dnipro River is the lifeblood of Ukrainian geography and is unsurprisingly essential to Kostenko's understanding and depiction of Ukraine. Kostenko holds the river in high esteem and "З Дніпром пов'язано багато поетичних відкриттів Ліни Костенко. Це й не дивно, адже виросла вона на його берегах, скупана в його водах" (Briukhovets'kyi, 20).[67] While she paints her native lands in very warm and endearing terms, the Dnipro River holds a central place in her poetics:

Спинюся я

і довго буду слухать,

як бродить серпень по землі моїй...

Ще над Дніпром клубочиться задуха,

ще пахне степом сизий деревій (Vitryla, 50).[68]

Kostenko claims possession of this land, and takes the time to listen to the simple things many people would not think to consider. The lines increase in length until the reference to the Dnipro River, at which point they decrease in length again, as if echoing the rise and fall of a wave against the Dnipro's shore. The central place held by the Dnipro River in the poem reflects the

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[65] "I dreamed of a road. A road—and that's all. Not from anywhere or to anywhere—I don't know, I don't know…Only somewhere as if a light far off in the steppes."
[66] The Ukrainian grammatical construction "to dream" is a passive form: "it appeared to me in a dream."
[67] "many poetic discoveries of Lina Kostenko are connected with the Dnipro. This is not surprising, as she grew up on its banks and used to swim in its waters" (Briukhovets'kyi, 20).
[68] "I will stop and listen for a long time to August wandering my land. Above the Dnipro oppressive heat still rises, dove-colored yarrow still smells like the steppe."

importance that the river holds in Kostenko's understanding and portrayal of geography.

The Dnipro is a place of abundance and joy, but also a place where calamity can occur. In a poem warning of the latter, Kostenko observes: "І сходить над Дніпром гірка зоря-полин" (*Sad netanuchykh skul'ptur*, 47).[69] This is both a Biblical reference of destruction, and a nod at Chornobyl' (alluded to with Kostenko's word choice of "wormwood"), which poisoned the Dnipro's waters. Kostenko published this poem in 1987, just a year after the devastating nuclear disaster at Chornobyl', when the tragedy was still a fresh and bitter reality for her people.

The bitter sorrow the Dnipro sees is sometimes personal loss: Kostenko foregrounds her poem about the loss in the war of a young man she had known and looked up to as a child along the Dnipro River ("Фото у далекий вирій" *Nepovtornist'*, 197-203). At other times, the Dnipro witnesses widespread sorrow inflicted by war, as in this 1977 poem:

Пам'яті безсмертна дірама.
Осінь. Вечір. Вулиця. Гора.
Полум'я однесене вітрами,
хилиться у сторону Дніпра….
Тільки—бомба з дужкою відра....
В пам'яті вогненні кипариси
хиляться у сторону Дніпра. (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 13)[70]

Nature itself collides with human influence in a catastrophic way as the bombs fall and the Dnipro River becomes witness to the destruction of Kyiv.

[69] "And above the Dnipro rises the bitter star-wormwood."
[70] "An immortal hole in memory. Autumn. Evening. Street. Mountain. Flames carried by the winds lean in the direction of the Dnipro…Only a bomb with a bucket handle…In the memory the fiery cypress trees lean toward the Dnipro."

Chornobyl’

Chornobyl’ plays an important and tragic role within Kostenko’s poetic geography. Kostenko feels very strongly about the terrible implications of the Chornobyl’ disaster and the grave irresponsibility of people in bringing it about. Kostenko’s concern with Chornobyl’ extends even beyond her written words, as she has traveled to Chornobyl’ many times, conducted tours in the dead zone, and sought to raise awareness about the disaster (Chekan). She mourns the loss of once-beautiful nature and condemns the careless disregard by humans that led to the eternal contamination of part of her native land.

In her 2016 collection *Richka Heraklita,* Kostenko affirms that so-called “Chornobyl’ melancholy” permeates all those affected by the disaster (*Richka Heraklita,* 207). Those who once knew the forests around Chornobyl’ mourn their loss and beg not to be forgotten by the now-destroyed nature they once loved:

Поховані чорнобильські ліси!

Не забувайте наші голоси (*Richka Heraklita*, 208).[71]

Nature was something alive and beloved, and Kostenko mourns its contamination as she would a lost family member. Chornobyl’ is desolate, with the wind of oblivion or non-being: “У Зоні віє вітер небуття” (*Trysta Poezij,* 250)[72] Kostenko emphasizes this emptiness and desolation in another poem, writing:

Недавно в Чорнобилі дикий кабан

переходив вулицю біля аптеки.

Людей нема, а яблуні цвітуть.

[71] “Buried Chornobyl’ forests! Don’t forget our voices.”
[72] “In the Zone blows a wind of nothingness.”

І мертва річка зблискує, як ртуть (*Richka Heraklita*, 151).[73]

The eerily abandoned town is devoid of people, and while the apple tree is in bloom, nobody is there to see it, except the misplaced wild boar. The Pripyat River is now dead, shining with a glint of deadly mercury.

Emptiness and desolation are two elements frequently seen in Kostenko's descriptions of Chornobyl'. Nature has been violated, and the contaminated region has been abandoned by (the majority of) its former inhabitants.

Не половіють в полі колоски.

Не ходять люди. М'ячики не скачуть.

В Чорнобиль повертаються казки.

Самі себе розказують і плачуть (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 60).[74]

This depiction of a wasteland bereft of inhabitants, where children do not throw balls, and where the only one present to hear the sad tale is the land itself, illustrates the destruction the land has undergone. Through appealing to emotions and showing the disaster from the perspective of a land that can never fulfill its previous purpose again, Kostenko encourages the reader to think more carefully about the disaster. She encourages a sense of outrage that mankind could have caused such a tragedy in something as innocent and helpless as her beloved Ukrainian land. Kostenko's emphasis on people in this poem seems to indicate that Kostenko is not advocating for people to stop existing—she recognizes that people need the land and that, conversely, the land needs humans in order to not be alone or abandoned. She is rather indicating that people

[73] "Not long ago in Chornobyl' a wild boar crossed the street near the pharmacy. There are no people, but the apple trees bloom. And the dead river glimmers like mercury."

[74] "The ears of grain don't turn yellow in the field. People no longer walk. Balls no longer bounce. Fairytales return to Chornobyl'. They tell the tales of themselves and weep."
This poem was written in 1991, five years after the disaster itself in 1986.

need to be more careful with their stewardship of the earth in order to avoid similar tragedies in the future. The Ukrainian land is there in order to provide a harvest and to allow children to run and play.

In two poems, Kostenko uses biblical and mythological imagery to create a legend around Chornobyl'.

Жив-був народ над Прип'яттю—і зник.

В Рудому лісі виросли поганки,

і ходить Смерть, єдиний тут грибник (*Trysta Poezij*, 259).[75]

The initial "Жив-був" ("Once there lived") identifies this verse as a fairytale. Death personified is the only inhabitant of this desolate land that had once been beautiful and populated. This mythical imagery of a destroyed Chornobyl continues in another poem:

На березі Прип'яті спить сатана,

…

І сниться йому в ореолі ворон

вже вся Україна, вже вся Україна... (*Trysta Poezij*, 260).[76]

The devil dreams that all of Ukraine will be reduced to the fate of Chornobyl'. The environmental destruction of Chornobyl' is thus seen to be a moral evil, and one which the devil himself rejoices over. By creating a myth of Chornobyl', Kostenko is able to elevate the technogenic disaster to a legendary status and emphasize that such a disaster is inappropriate and out-of-place in the modern age.

The immediate vicinity of Chornobyl' was not the only casualty of the disaster. In one of

[75] "There once lived a people above the Pripyat—and they disappeared. In the Red Forest, toadstools grew, and death walks, the only mushroom-hunter here."
[76] "On the bank of the Pripyat Satan sleeps, and he dreams, that all of Ukraine is in a halo of crows, all of Ukraine."

her longer poems, Kostenko describes a perfect, beautiful countryside and idyllic Ukrainians going about their business: meadows are blooming, a goat grazes on a pasture, machines are working in the fields. This initially appears like one of her descriptions of Ukraine's beauty, but a biting couplet destroys this illusion:

Малина спіє... І на все, на все

лягає пил чорнобильської траси (*Vybrane*, 544).[77]

While outwardly it may seem that everything is as it should be in the Ukrianian countryside, the reality indicates that the peace and beauty of Ukraine are being covered in a dangerous and contaminated dust from Chornobyl'. Just as the reader does not initially understand that something is amiss, so to the inhabitants go about their common occupations, paying no heed to the effects of a technogenic disaster that threatens their health. This poem perhaps paints an even darker picture of the Chornobyl' disaster than the previous one: not only was the land around the reactor rendered desolate, but the surrounding lands are contaminated, but not enough to drive the people away, thus perpetuating the damage and danger from the disaster.

Kostenko's focus on Chornobyl' in her poetic geography of Ukraine highlights the pain caused to her native land by this disaster. She mourns the desolation caused by the unhallowed hand of man's destruction in combination with the devil's machinations. In the Chornobyl' region, Ukraine has lost its peaceful, idyllic charm, and has become an empty place bereft of humanity, where death, the devil, and overgrown nature rule.

Kyiv

While Kostenko does not limit herself to a single city in her many and deep discussions

[77] "The raspberry sings…And on everything, on everything lies the dust of the Chornobyl' highway."

of Ukraine, when she does mention a city, it is almost always Kyiv.[78] As the capital of her homeland and the place where she herself spent most of her life, Kyiv holds a very special place in Kostenko's poetry. She refers to Kyiv as "my city," and while she does not focus on Kyiv to the same extent Akhmatova focuses on Leningrad, she nevertheless prefers Kyiv to all other cities (*Sad netanuchykh,* 50). In the context of Ukrainian literature, Kyiv holds a similar place in the hearts of its poets as Petersburg holds for Russian writers:

> Киевский текст украинской культуры, подобно Петербургскому тексту русской культуры, — это парадигматическое явление, по своей природе аналогичное мифу, в том числе и своей коллективностью, и даже анонимностью, ибо никто из авторов отдельных текстов не может считаться автором сверхтекста. Авторов сверхтекста Киев нами обнаружено более двухсот (Burago, 39).[79]

Kostenko enters the ranks of those who discuss this Kyiv supertext, depicting it as one of the world's great eternal cities, and the mother of Russian cities (Burago, 40).

It is impossible to discuss Kyiv without delving into the historical and legendary roots of the great city and the empire that arose in its name, Kyivan Rus'. Prince Vododymyr/Vladimir is recognized as one of the most important rulers of the Kyivan Rus', and the man responsible for baptizing Rus' into Christianity. A large statue in his honor can be found on the bank of the Dnipro in Kyiv. Kostenko describes it:

> Блискоче ніч перлиною Растреллі.

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[78] One exception to this is her poem "Львівські голуби" ("Lviv pigeons") which muses on the adventures of a pigeon in Lviv, wondering what it does and thinks about (*Vybrane,* 70). This city setting is necessary to capture the emotion of an urban pigeon, and Kostenko's embracing of Lviv illustrates her ability to incorporate all the regions of Ukraine in her works.

[79] "The Kyiv text of Ukrainian culture, like the Petersburg text of Russian culture, is a paradigmatic phenomenon, similar in nature to a myth, including in its collectivity and even anonymity, because not one of the authors of the individual texts can be considered the author of the supertext. We have discovered more than two hundred authors of the Kyiv supertext."

З гори збігає Боричів узвіз.

І солов'ї, пташині менестрелі,

всю ніч доводять яблуні до сліз.

Цвіте весна садами молодими,

шумлять вітри, як гості з іменин.

В таке цвітіння, князю Володимире,

тобі не важко бути кам'яним? (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 45).[80]

"Rastrelli's pearls" refers to St. Andrew's church in Kyiv at the top of Andrievsky Descent overlooking the Podil district. The Borychiv Descent is likewise in this neighborhood of Kyiv. In this historic artistic neighborhood of Kyiv, Kostenko depicts a beautiful Ukrainian night. The birds and the flowers and the lustrous night all combine to create a feeling of pity for Prince Volodymyr/Vladimir, who is made of stone and cannot enjoy his surroundings. On one hand, this appeal to him connects the current beauty of Ukraine to the historical and legendary founder of Rus'. On the other hand, however, it makes the comment that Ukraine is living in the present, and the Grand Prince is no longer a living entity in modern-day Kyiv. Although the history of Vodoldymyr/Vladimir is a real and ever-present part of the city, he is in actuality no longer a participant of the weather and other events occurring in the place where he once reigned. He is now stone and thus unable to enjoy (or conversely suffer) the weather.

Kostenko discusses the final concert of a performer in Kyiv in her poem "Останній концерт Ойстраха у Києві" (*Nepovtornist'*, 23).[81] The concert-goers are depicted as moving through the rainy streets of Kyiv in cars that resemble slow hippos, or in any other mode of

[80] "The night shone like Rastrelli's pearl. From the mountain runs the Borychiv descent. And nightingales, bird minstrels, all night bring the apple trees to tears. Spring blooms like a young garden, the winds roar, like guests to a party. In such blooming, Prince Volodymyr/Vladimir, don't you find it hard to be stone?"
[81] "The final concert of the orchestra in Kyiv."

transportation that can get them out of the rain. The concert is depicted as a beautiful event, yet one laden with the impending death of the performer, David Oistrakh, as the poet muses on eternity and mortality. Kostenko recounts a very real experience in the concrete *place* of Kyiv as she philosophizes on the meaning of life. The presence of a renowned violinist—who was born in Odesa and thus also had claim to Ukraine—elevates Kyiv as a city of culture where the inhabitants enjoy evening dresses and classical concerts.

Kostenko, as a true insider of Kyiv, does not always focus on the positive aspects of her native capital. She is aware of stereotypes and weaknesses that her city displays. The poem "Концерт Ліста" ("The Liszt Concert"), published in 1977, seems to almost hold the city of Kyiv in contempt, comparing it negatively to the capitals in the rest of Europe where Liszt and high culture are more understood and appreciated. While everybody in Europe ostensibly knew who Liszt was, in Kyiv "Але тут мер не знає Ліста" (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 42-43).[82] The pianist, who seems to be visiting from Europe, thus condemns the philistinism of Kyiv's inhabitants. The concert is taking place on Contract Square (Контрактова площа), which is a cultural and economic hub in the Podil region of Ukraine, but the audience is more focused on money than on culture. Even during the concert, the citizens cannot be distracted from their money-making:

Вони підписують контракти,

а потім шумно аплодують (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 42-43)[83]

The inhabitants of Kyiv are materialistic, too preoccupied with business and money to completely enjoy a concert (or even know who Liszt is). Their applause seems to be more for themselves and their successful monetary transactions than for the music being performed for

[82] "But here the mayor does not know Liszt"
[83] "They sign a contract and then applaud loudly"

them.

In another poem, published in 1987, Kostenko again focuses on some of Kyiv's shortcomings, painting a relatively negative view of an urban settlement that is only a shadow of what it should be.

Місто, премісто, праміcто моє!

Стійбище людське з асфальту й бетону.

Як там не буде, а все-таки є

той силует у вікні золотому! (*Sad netanuchykh skul'ptur*, 50).[84]

Kostenko has great hopes for her city, yet recognizes that it is not yet living up to its potential. She appeals to the device of *остранение*, or "making it strange," in which a familiar object is described in a new way. She depicts the city of Kyiv, with its churches, streets, and architectural feats, as a "human camp of nomads [or cattle pen] of asphalt and concrete." This reduction of Kyiv's grandeur to a simple, cold camp emphasizes the shortcomings Kostenko's beloved city still has. Her negativity toward the city of Kyiv emphasizes a trend in her poetry of preferring nature to urban settings.

Kyiv was also a witness to the horrors of WWII. In a poem published in 1980, Kostenko describes the burial of a native son of Ukraine during the so-called Great Patriotic War:

У Медвині, де київські князі

меди тримали встояні в медушах

де все і всі записані у душах,—

він три доби лежав у пилюзі.

Над ним стояло горе, як туман.

---

[84] "City, grand city, ancient city of mine! A human camp of nomads [or cattle pen] of asphalt and concrete. As it will not be, but still is, that silhouette in the golden window!"

…

З усіх очей дивилась Батьківщина.

Вона впізнала. Це був її син (*Nepovtornist'*, 191-192).[85]

In the very place of Kyivan rule and abundance, the motherland mourns the loss of a native son. The plenty implied in the presence of honey is contrasted sharply with the reality that this soldier was left, unnoticed and unburied, for three days. The poem begins with lengthy syntactical units and rich descriptions. At its close, however, it turns to terse statements, with all superfluity forgotten as the motherland recognizes its fallen son.

History, Myth, and Ukrainian Geography

Many of Kostenko's poems containing geographical references speak to the historical and cultural relevance of these *places*. It is clear from her poetry that Kostenko subscribes to the Ukrainian historiographical narration of nation. She appeals both to Rus' and to the Cossack Hetmanate in order to give her claims of Ukrainian sovereignty weight. She views the history and descent of power from Rus' to flow not through Muscovy or to have been reunited at the Treaty of Periyaslav, but rather to have been given to Kyiv and Ukraine directly from the Kyivan Rus' itself.

Kostenko appeals to the mythical legends of Kyiv to show her patriotism and link her literature into a long line of culture and glory. She begins one poem with the words, "По цьому Дніпру пливли човни з Візантії" (*Trysta Poezij*, 86).[86] By connecting the present with the past through a very physical, distinctly Ukrainian symbol (the Dnipro River), Kostenko seals her homeland together in time and place with the glories of bygone days. She is claiming

[85] "In Medvin, where the princes of Kyiv kept honey standing in honeycombs, where everything and everyone was written in souls, he lay for three days in the dust. Above him stood grief like fog….The motherland beheld from all eyes. She recognized him. It was her son."

[86] "Along this very Dnipro boats from Byzantium used to sail."

preeminence for her homeland as the bearer of Rus'. Kostenko recounts the story of the Byzantine princess Anna who married Prince Volodymyr/Vladimir after his conversion. The Dnipro River is thus presented as the cradle of both Christianity in Rus', as well as of Rus' itself. Kostenko then returns to the present day, informing her reader that:

І Київ стоїть. І стоїть кам'яний Володимир.

І в пам'яті їхній царівна пливе і пливе (*Trysta Poezij*, 86).[87]

These historical memories of Kyiv still remain immortal, even though time has passed. With the claim that Kyiv still stands, Kostenko is reminding her readers that the logical inheritor of the authority of Vladimir is the still-standing city of Kyiv, through which passes the constant, seeminly eternal Dnipro River.

Kostenko continues the discussion of the baptism of Rus' and introduces the legendary river Pochaina. This river is thought by some to be the place where the baptism of Rus' occurred, not the Dnipro, and Kostenko addresses that tradition in a poem about the fleeting nature of life.

Мені відкрилась істина печальна:
життя зникає, як ріка Почайна.

Через віки, а то й через роки,
ріка вже стане спогадом ріки.

І тільки верби знатимуть старі:

[87] "And Kyiv stands. And the stone Volodymyr/Vladimir stands. And in their memory the princess sails and sails on."

киян хрестили в ній, а не в Дніпрі (*Nepovtornist'*, 16).[88]

While Kostenko emphasizes that Ukraine was the place of the baptism of Rus', she presents the alternate theory that Pochaina was the location, and not the Dnipro. She dismisses the concrete reality of a still-existing river in order to emphasize the mythical and legendary aspect of Ukraine's history. In this manner, Kostenko asserts that whether or not a specific geographical element even still exists is not necessarily relevant in perpetuating the cultural history of her nation. Some aspects of life are fleeting, like the Pochaina, while others are more stable, like the Dnipro. Kostenko emphasizes this connection through her rhymed couplets. The epithet "pechal'na" (sorrowful) rhymes with "Pochaina," underscoring the sadness of human mortality compared to the forgotten river. "Roky" (years) and "riky" (rivers) constitute a rhyming couplet, emphasizing the opposite fates the two rivers experience through the years. The final rhyme puts "stari" (old) and "Dnipri" (Dnipro) together. This progression of rhymes effectively tells the story of the two rivers: the sad truth is that the Pochaina disappears like mankind's mortal lives. The two rivers have different fates over the years, and the Dnipro survives as the old, still-existing river.

Kostenko calls Ukraine the "камінний щит готичної Європи,"[89] referring to the historical encroachment of the Mongols who could penetrate no further westward than Ukraine (*Nepovtornist'*, 163). This strong historical position of Ukraine is marked by Kostenko's subsequent description of the native instruments from the mountain border of her country: "казковий край денцівок і трембіт!"[90] The protective nature of Ukraine as a buffer zone for

[88] "A sad truth was revealed to me: life disappears, like the river Pochaina. Through the ages, and that even through years, the river already becomes the memory of the river. And only the old willows will know: the Kyivans were baptized in it, and not in the Dnipro"
[89] "the stone shield of Gothic Europe"
[90] 'the fairy tale land of the dentsivka and trembita" (native musical instruments from the Carpathians).

Gothic Europe is marked by the idyllic and bucolic imagery of flutes and long Carpathian mountain horns. Ukraine embraces both of these identities.

Kostenko discusses legends of ancient Rus', many of which appear in the Primary Chronicle. She addresses the Drevlian lands in her poem "Древлянський триптих" (*Nepovtornist',* 135-143), and focuses on the village Liutizh in "Лютіж" (*Nepovtornist',* 143).[91] Kostenko also describes the legends of Marusia Bohuslavka and Prince Vassily of Kyiv (*Nepovtornist'*, 143, 144). These numerous discussions and retellings of famous Rus' legends occurring in present-day Ukrainian lands emphasizes Kostenko's claim for preeminence for Ukraine. Kyiv and Ukraine have been playing an important role in the history of Eastern Europe for longer than Moscow has been a city, and Kostenko appeals to these stories and legends in order to crystalize her claim of Ukrainian identity.

One such example of Russian legends tied with geography is found in Kostenko's poem "Я хочу на озеро Світязь" about Lake Svitiaz, the deepest lake in Ukraine (*Nepovtornist',* 88). The strength of the deep lake is contrasted with the thin cry of the river Alta. This river holds significance both in the Primary Chronicle and in Ukrainian national history. At the Alta River, Saints Borys and Hlib (in Russian known as Boris and Gleb) were killed by men sent by their brother Sviatopolk. It was also the site where in 1630 the Polish hetman was defeated by Zaporozhian Cossacks. The Alta River thus symbolizes the very beginnings of Rus', as well as its growth and the eventual rule of the Cossacks. Lake Svitiaz, and the Alta river are personified, calling to the poet and voicing the longing that the speaker feels toward her homeland:

—Я Світязь, я Світязь, я Світязь!

Невже ти не чуєш мене?!...

[91] The name of this poem is an old appellation for the city where the Drevlian (also known as Derevlian) prince Oleh killed Liut.

Я річку побачила раптом.

Питаю: —А хтож ти така?

—Я Альта, я Альта, я Альта!

тонесенько плаче ріка (*Nepovtornist'*, 88).[92]

The power of the deep lake is contrasted with the weak cry of the river. Kostenko glorifies the natural beauty of Ukraine, while also tying it to the history that occurred in those places. Ukraine is a living place, strongly connected to its historical past.

The Cossack Hetmanate was a golden age in Ukrainian history and it frequently appears in Kostenko's poetry. She discusses Sich and the Cossack fortress, defended in the name of the homeland:

О скільки тут було пролито крові

за всі віки на кожен міліметр!

Хто славен був, хто, може, і забутий.

Земля Вітчизни, квітни і живи! (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 14).[93]

The Cossacks used physical force to defend and maintain their lands. Regardless of their own glory, they constantly fought for the perpetuation of their homeland. Elsewhere Kostenko describes how the Cossacks fought against the Mongols in the "Стара фортеця" ("old fortress") on behalf of the "Земля Вітчизни" ("fatherland") (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 14). One poem is dedicated to the Cossack fortress Chyhyryn, which was once the capital of the Hetmanate. Kostenko speaks in elevated language about blood of her people and the holiness of the place,

[92] "I am the Svitiaz, I am the Svitiaz, I am the Svitiaz! Do you not hear me?!.. I saw a river suddenly. I ask: —And who are you? –I am the Alta, I am the Alta, I am the Alta! Weakly cried the river."
[93] "Oh, how much blood was spilled here for every millimeter! Who would be glorified, who, perhaps, would be forgotten. Motherland, flourish and live."

concluding her poem with the plea: “Навчи мене, навчи, о Чигирине!” (*Nepovtornist'*, 170).[94] This is ostensibly the request of not just the poem’s speaker, but of the entire Ukrainian people. They want to be taught about the *place* of Chyhyryn, which represents the history and culture of their people. As a poet, Kostenko is responsible for bearing the historic and geographic heritage of her people, and part of that truth to be acknowledged is a longing to learn more. In this manner, Kostenko ties together the glorious past of the Cossacks with the locations that are still well-known to modern Ukrainians. The idea of homeland applied to the Cossacks, and it is still very much present and alive among the current generations of Ukrainians who are reading Kostenko’s poetry.

In another historical poem, “В маєтку гетьмана Івана Сулими,”[95] Kostenko once again speaks of the Golden Age of Cossackdom (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 61). She depicts what is happening in the modern day on the estate of the Cossack hero, Ivan Sulima who was Hetman in the 1620s and 30s. Here Sulima is alluded to with longing, and young men are depicted at his place, perhaps inferring that they will be the ones to carry on the torch of rebelling against injustice:

> В маєтку гетьмана Івана Сулими,
> в сучасному селі, що зветься Сулимівка,
> до кінських грив припадені грудьми,
> промчали хлопці—загула бруківка—
>
> і тільки гриви...курява...і свист...
> лунких копит оддаленілий цокіт...

[94] “Teach me, teach about Chyhyryn!”
[95] “In the estate of the Hetman Ivan Sulima”

і ми… і степ... і жовтий падолист...

і цих дворів передвечірній клопіт...

І як за сонцем повертає сонях,

так довго вслід чомусь дивидись ми.

А що такого? Півдітки на конях...

В маєтку гетьмана... Івана Сулими…(*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 61). [96]

The image of youth on horses represents a return to Cossack vigor and the willingness to fight once again for Ukraine. This poem has eleven ellipses, including one at the very end of the poem. This abundance of ellipses creates a feeling of incompleteness and longing for the bygone days when Ivan Sulima ruled the steppe, and it also indicates to the reader that much is still left to the imagination. Kostenko elsewhere mourns the fact that under Catherine the Great, "Січ розбита" ("Sich was destroyed"), yet optimistically observes "край той перекраяний" ("the land is cut out again") (*Trysta Poezij,* 154-155). This is the underlying message of Kostenko's geographic poetry of the Hetmanate period: although that particular golden age has passed, the land itself remains and will be restored and reimagined by those Ukrainians who inherit it.

Kostenko's attachment to her native land suggests a strong link with the national bard of Ukraine, Taras Shevchenko. Shevchenko is considered the first Ukrainian "national intellectual," and his poetry was influential in Ukrainian nation-building (Finnin, 31). Shevchenko's influence is readily seen throughout Kostenko's poetry. Shevchenko is for Kostenko what Pushkin is for

[96] "In the estate of the hetman Ivan Sulima, in the modern village which is called Sulimivka, with chests pressed to the horses' manes, rush boys—a paving stone—and only manes…dust…and whistling…the sonorous hoofs, withdrawn clatter… and us...and the steppe...and the October leaf-fall…and the pre-evening ado of these courtyards…And as the sun returns sunshine, so long after for some reason we watch. And what is it? Adolescents on horses…In the estate of the hetman…Ivan Sulima…"

Akhmatova, and possibly more so, since both Shevchenko and Kostenko engage in Ukrainian nation-building. In 1847, Shevchenko was exiled and forced into military service for writing poetry in Ukrainian that spoke out against the tsarist regime. Shevchenko's exile took him to Orenburg and the Sea of Aral, and it was only after ten years that he was finally able to return to Petersburg (Franko, 114). Shevchenko had hoped to return to his native Ukraine and settle in Kanev on the Dnipro River, but he died in Petersburg in 1861 and his body was returned to Kanev for burial (Franko, 115). Kostenko writes about the exiled Shevchenko, depicting the geography of his childhood, the Dnipro River and Kniazha Hora, and expressing the longing he had to return to his Ukrainian home:

> По довгій неволі хотів тут віку дожити,
>
> на Княжій горі, над коханим своїм Дніпром
>
> Вже так натомився за карєм своїм тужити,
>
> що вірші, здавалось, ридають уже під пером (*Nepovtornist',* 168).[97]

Shevchenko felt keenly the pain of separation from his beloved Ukraine and the hill and river he held so dear. In his exile, his "poems seemed to weep under the pen" and he longed to return home. The words "Дніпром" ("Dnipro") and "пером" ("pen") rhyme in this verse, thus emphasizing the connection between the Ukrainian land and a poet's ability to write meaningfully. Kostenko aligns herself with Shevchenko in this regard, with both poets relying heavily on Ukraine for their poetic sustenance. Any time away from Ukraine is seen as a burden, and Kostenko's Shevchenko writes:

> І вже в Петербурга буду пити листами

[97] "After my long captivity I've wanted to live to my old age here, on Kniazha Mountain, above my beloved Dnipro. He had already so grown weary of his punishment to yearn, that his verses seemed to weep under his pen."

той спогад, ту мрію—жити на рідній землі! (*Nepovtornist'*, 168).[98]

Despite the cultural offerings of St. Petersburg, Shevchenko's heart remains back home with his people. He is sustained by letters, and he lives on the hope of returning. Ukraine is depicted as a peaceful, friendly place in positive terms: my holy river, these friendly people in the village. By poignantly depicting Shevchenko's longing for his Ukrainian home, Kostenko is able to align herself with the father of Ukrainian literature and emphasize the importance of the geography and culture of their mutually native Ukraine.

It is impossible to discuss the geographic history of Kyiv without addressing World War II. In one poem, Kostenko recounts a young German sentry stationed in Korchuvate near Kyiv in 1942. The night is cold and it is boring for the German soldier to stand aiming his gun (*Nepovtornist'*, 109). This poem sets up a striking comparison between the beloved homeland of Ukraine and the presence of an enemy force. But the enemy himself is depicted in a somewhat mocking way—he is bored, even while holding an instrument of destruction in his hands. The sacred homeland has been invaded by someone who does not appreciate its beauty, but only wants to destroy it or to entertain himself.

The destruction of WWII did not end with the armistice, and Kostenko poignantly describes lives lost in a minefield in Ukraine in her "Пастораль XX сторіччя" (published in 1977).

Як їх зносили з поля!

Набрякли від крові рядна.

Троє їх, пастушків. Павло, Сашко і Степан.

...

[98] "And already in Petersburg I will drink that memory through letters that hope, that dream to live in my native land!"

Гарні діти були. Козацького доброго кровю.

Коли зносили їх, навіть сонце упало ниць (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 18).[99]

Ukraine bore the burden of remnants of the war for years to come, with mines still killing children who had never known the war. Kostenko does not talk about her own children or family in her works, yet she is still able to appeal to this universal human sentiment in order to bring home how devastating the effects of war, even after the fact, can be. The senselessness of these deaths is not lost on the reader, nor is the fact that they occurred within the safety of the steppe and home. The children were not at the front lines, as those older than them had been, but rather were in Kostenko's beloved homeland in their own neighborhoods. The effects of war reached far beyond the duration of the war.

Kostenko's poetic geography of Ukraine creates a *place* of deep patriotism, beautiful nature, and a rich cultural legacy. She recreates a bygone idyll of the Ukrainian countryside while also mourning tragedies such as WWII and Chornobyl'. She subscribes to the Ukrainian historiography, and extols the Kyivan Rus' and Cossack Hetmanate and their unbroken connection to modern Ukraine.

Russia

Despite the fact that Kostenko is a staunch Ukrainian patriot and focuses the bulk of her geographic poetry on her homeland, occasional references to Russia do appear. These comprise 6% of all of Kostenko's geographical references. These reflect perhaps the time that Kostenko studied in Moscow, as well as the deeply integrated and shared history of Ukraine and Russia. Even given the infrequency of references to Russia, it is clear that Kostenko's relationship with

[99] "How they were taken off the field! The bandages had swollen from blood. Three of them, shepherds. Pavel, Sasha, and Stepan…They were good children. Of good Cossack blood. When they were destroyed, even the sun fell down."

and understanding of Russia is complex. Her verses of Russia range from scathing and sarcastic to warm and nostalgic. She holds a very nuanced view of the country she sees both as oppressor and beloved neighbor. Kostenko did not hate Russians, and she herself had learned to speak and read Russian while living in Kyiv, as it was an important and prevalent language throughout the Soviet Union (Bellezza, 33, 40). She did not consider Russian a foreign language, and she loved Russian culture and literature which she studied in Moscow (Bellezza, 33). Kostenko did not claim either Russia or the USSR as her motherland (even though "she never directly questioned Marxism-Leninism" [Bellezza, 41]), but she did praise and embrace many aspects of Russian geography and culture. She did not claim the USSR as her homeland either,

Kostenko's poem «Повернення Шевченка» (published in 1987) highlights both negative and positive aspects of Russia, while also praising the revered Ukrainian bard (*Sad netanuchykh skul'ptur*, 43). Her poem crosses geographic boundaries as she describes Shevchenko's return to St. Petersburg from his exile.

Заслання, самота, солдатчина. Нічого.
Нічого—Оренбург. Нічого—Косарал.
Не скаржився. Мовчав. Не плакав ні від чого.
Нічого, якось жив і якось не вмирав.

Вернувся в Петербург, і ось у Петербурзі—
після таких років такої самоти!—
овацію таку йому зробили друзі!—
коли він увійшов.
І він не зміг іти.

Він прихилився раптом до колони.

Сльоза чомусч набігла до повік.

Бо, знаєте... із каторги в салони...

не зразу усміхнеться чоловік... (*Sad netanuchykh skulptur*, 43).[100]

As Shevchenko returns from exile, he experiences the warmth and beauty of connection in a city far from his native Ukraine. While Ukraine is not specifically mentioned in this poem, and only the locations of his exile (Orenburg and Kosaral) and his release from exile (Petersburg) are referenced, Ukraine is nonetheless present as an unspoken reality: the national hero of Ukraine has been released. In recounting the warm reception he receives, as well as his inability to immediately return to the normal sociality of home right away, Kostenko paints in vivid color the human reality of exile. The line «І він не зміг іти» is set by itself—although it completes the rhythmic requirements of the preceding half-line—emphasizing Shevchenko's separation from society while in exile. Even now, upon his return, he finds himself bound and separated not by the law and government, but rather embraced and bound by his friends and their love and support so that he does not want to depart from such a warm reception. His confinement is now self-imposed and he breaks down in tears at the realization, likely of both what he has lost and of what he has gained. In these poignant words, Kostenko speaks to the human side of unjust imprisonment, showing a small measure of the psychological effect it can have on individuals.[101] Kostenko paints a picture of a poet as one who suffers on behalf of his nation and who cannot

[100] "Exile, solitude, camp. Nothing. Nothing—Orenburg. Nothing—Kosaral. Didn't complain. Kept silent. Didn't cry about anything. Nothing, that once lived and once had not died. He returned to Petersburg, and there in Petersburg—after such years of such solitude!—his friends gave him such an ovation!—when he went in. And he could not leave. He bowed down suddenly to the column. Tears for some reason ran to his eyelids. Because, you know…from hard labor to the salons…a person doesn't immediately laugh."

[101] This poem is reminiscent of some of Akhmatova's works, including Requiem, which focus on the negative psychological impact of oppression and imprisonment.

always enjoy the common pleasures associated with it.

In a verse written in the voice of the dying Pushkin, Kostenko represents (and perhaps reimagines) his feelings about life, poetry, and Petersburg. These lines are written in imperfect iambic pentameters, almost approaching Pushkin's classic iambic tetrameter, but purposely remaining distinct from the stereotypical form of Pushkin. Much like the verse about Shevchenko's return, the poem simultaneously praises and condemns St. Petersburg. This is the place where Pushkin died at the hands of his rival Dantes, yet it is also a place of great cultural depth and beauty. Pushkin himself expresses his longing to return to Petersburg. In the middle of his musings about immortality, Pushkin exclaims:

Не хочу я ні вічності, ні слави.

В безсмерті холодно. Я хочу в Петербург (*Nepovtornist'*, 52).[102]

In his dying thoughts, the poet wishes for Petersburg, the cultural capital of his country and the place he held dear. Yet as his musings continue, he reveals that his own relationship with Petersburg is complicated.

Я хочу волі, волі!.. А царі?

Я хочу жити, жити!.. А Дантеси? (*Nepovtornist'*, 52).[103]

His desire for freedom is hampered by the monarchy, just as his desire for life is threatened by Dantes.

Я сто поем ще маю на меті,

а я дивлюсь у вічі пістолету...

В безсмерті холодно. І холодно в житті (*Nepovtornist'*, 52).[104]

---

[102] "I don't want eternity or glory. It's cold in immortality. I want to go to Petersburg."
[103] "I want freedom, freedom!...But kings? I want to live, to live!...But Dantes?"
[104] "I still want to write a hundred long poems, but I am looking into the eye of a pistol. It's cold in immortality. And it's cold in life."

Pushkin's existential crisis in the face of death reaches an apogee in this second admission of immortality's coldness: instead of being followed by a confession of longing to return to Petersburg, this repeated refrain is followed by the despairing statement that it is also cold in life. The desire for Petersburg is thus tempered with the understanding that life itself—even in and despite of Petersburg—is still unwelcoming. Petersburg, while the beloved cultural home of Pushkin, was nonetheless the place of the tsars who had inhibited his freedom and created the culture and society in which he would be killed in a duel.

In other poems, Kostenko strips away the potentially positive aspect of St. Petersburg and focuses exclusively on the negative.

І жах, і кров, і смерть, і відчай,

І клекіт хижої орди…

Це звір огидної породи,

Лох-Несс холодної Неви.

Куди ж ви дивитесь, народи?!

Сьогодні ми, а завтра—ви (*Trysta Poezij*, 248).[105]

Petersburg is depicted as a dark, bloody place with a lurking monster. The rhyme of "vy" ("you") with "Nevy" ("the Neva River") makes an ominous connection between the two: The Loch Ness of the Neva may be coming for "you." This poem was written in 2014, a significant year for the political situation in Ukraine and the Ukrainian relationship with Russia when Russia annexed Crimea and began its proxy war in Eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian patriots frequently saw Russia as the aggressor in this situation, and not looking out for the inhabitants of Ukraine. This depiction of a Loch Ness of the Neva enters into the long tradition in Russian literature of the myth of St.

[105] "And horror, and blood, and death, and despair, and the squawk of the predatory horde…This is a beast of a loathsome breed, the Loch Ness of the cold Neva. Where are you looking, people!? Today us, and tomorrow—you."

Petersburg. This myth began with the creation of Petersburg itself, with Peter using forced labor to create his new capital, leaving many people dead. The ominous, dark, mysterious, and unfeeling elements of Petersburg have continued to be portrayed in literature from Dostoevsky down to Bely, with Akhmatova providing her own version of the myth. Petersburg is rarely depicted as a positive place, but rather one where vice dwells and inexplicable events occur. Kostenko aligns her poem with the supernaturally evil connotations of the city. Petersburg is neither the wholesome countryside of Ukraine, nor the cultured and historical city of Kyiv, but rather a place from whence comes evil and where people need to be fearful.

In her poem "Графиня Разумовська," published in 2011, Kostenko writes in the voice of a countess who is tired of Petersburg and ready to return home to Lemeshi, Ukraine (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 80-81). Kostenko discussed this Razumovsky family in a previous poem, in which she also focused on their connections to the village Lemeshi. Perhaps by these repeated references, Kostenko hopes to emphasize Ukraine's superiority to Russia, if even this noble family longs for Ukraine. This poem recounts a (relatively one-sided) argument between a son who apparently has brought his mother to Petersburg, and the countess herself who does not want to be there. The opening line, "—Ти що, здурів? Куди мене привіз?"[106] sets the tone for a poem that is less-than-flattering of Petersburg.

Мені ж тут тісно, в цьому Петербурзі.

Мені—щоб поле, щоб ставок, щоб ліс (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 80-81).[107]

St. Petersburg's crowdedness is contrasted with the open spaces of Ukraine. Yet it not simply the physical surroundings that cause the countess to long for her home: "Тут все чуже. І мова тут

[106] "Are you crazy? Where did you bring me?"
[107] "It's crowded here in this Petersburg. I want a field, a pond, the forest."

не наша."[108] The Ukrainian language is something held dear by Kostenko in particular and Ukrainians in general. The emphasis on the pronoun «наша» emphasizes the importance that the countess places on her community of Ukrainian speakers. Contrary to Akhmatova, who did not describe Kyiv as "foreign" for all that she disliked the city, Kostenko's countess views Leningrad as «чужа» and not her own. The Russian Empire cannot be conflated as homogenous. For the countess, the differences between Ukraine and Russia are too great to be ignored, and she has a clear preference for her native Ukraine. In an almost humorous follow-up to her complaint about the language, the countess laments that "І сиро тут. Багато комарів" ("and it's damp here. Lots of mosquitoes"). This complaint almost seems to undermine the weightier discussions the countess addresses, casting a petty light on the disagreements between the two locations. She returns home to Lemeshi: the longing for home is so great as to render her unable to endure Petersburg any longer. Petersburg is muggy and there are mosquitoes, but most importantly, it is not home. Only Ukraine can fulfill the need for home. Kostenko's negative depictions of St. Petersburg echo the myth of Petersburg seen in Pushkin, Gogol, and others. Having never lived in Petersburg, however, Kostenko's negative Petersburg verses are not tempered with the underlying love for the city as seen in Pushkin and Akhmatova: Kostenko's unequivocally prefers Ukraine to Petersburg.

Having spent her university days in Moscow from 1952-56, Kostenko devotes some of her poetry to her time in that city. Moscow receives a warmer reception in Kostenko's works than does Petersburg. Her "Підмосковний етюд" is a prime example of such a poem, written (probably in retrospect) about her experiences in Moscow and published in 1977 (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 21-22).

[108] "Everything is foreign here. And the language is not ours."

Там Пастернак, а там живе Чуковсьский,

а там живе Довженко, там Хікмет....

Ще всі живі. Цитуємо поетів.

Ми ще студенти, нам по двадцять літ.... (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 21-22).[109]

She spends the snowy day enjoying the Moscow weather with her fellow students, discussing the poets who are important to them. To her, Moscow and Russia are connected with their literature. Yet not all the cultural figures she mentions are Russian: Chukovsky was raised in Odesa by his Ukrainian mother; Dovzhenko was a Ukrainian film-maker and writer who moved to Moscow in the 1930s; Nazim Hikmet was a Turkish poet and writer who had been exiled from Turkey for his political activism. Even in this discussion of Moscow and the culture of her student days, Kostenko finds it difficult to focus entirely on Russia. She values the diversity of these writers' national heritages. Kostenko continues her discussion of Nazim Hikmet in another poem about her student days, recounting an interaction with the prolific writer.

Ішов Хікмет. Ішов на зустріч з нами.

А ми були тоді Літінститут…

О, ми були великі полеміст!...

на всі питання зразу відповісти,

усі проблеми зразу розв'язать. (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 24).[110]

The young students philosophize and think they have answers to all the questions. Yet Kostenko finds that she cannot comprehend or solve the longing of a man for his homeland.

Хікмет сказав:

---

[109] "There is Pasternak and Chukovsky lives there, and there lives Dovzhenko, and there Hikmet…All still alive. We quote poets. We are still students, we are twenty years old…"

[110] "Hikmet came. He came to meet with us. And we were then in the Lit Institute…Oh, we were great polemicists!..answering all the questions immediately, solving all the problems right away."

— Там зараз передача.

Будь ласка, хтось зловіть мені Стамбул (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 24).[111]

As a television broadcast carries the writer's thoughts back to his homeland, and his students long to be able to help him.

Туреччино! Чого ж ти не озвалась?

Він так тужив за голосом твоїм! (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 24).[112]

Kostenko here deeply relates to the importance of homeland, as well as the powerlessness and sadness of someone who has been exiled. While the poem takes place in Russia, Kostenko's focus is not on her present geography, but on the isolation of a man from his distant homeland. Russia is thus portrayed as something foreign to the longed-for homeland of Turkey. Even in her poetry about her student days, Kostenko focuses more on nationalities and geography separate from Russia.

Despite certain neutral and negative depictions of Russia, Kostenko still writes in glowing terms about it. She depicts her deep love for Moscow in a tender poem, describing a heart-wrenching farewell from the trees and lakes and city she has come to love. This poem was published in 1957, so it is likely Kostenko wrote it about her departure from Moscow when she finished her education in 1956.

Найрідніше моє Підмосков'я,

я сходила твої гаї.

Там спіткала свою любов я,

не таїла від тебе її (*Prominnia zemli,* 33).[113]

---

[111] "Hikmet said: 'There is a broadcast right now. Please, somebody catch Istanbul for me."
[112] "Turkey! Why did you not answer? He so longed for your voice!"
[113] "My beloved Moscow, I went down to your groves. I found my love there, I did not hide it from you."

This mode of addressing the poem directly to a geographic location is generally done when she has warm feelings toward a place.[114] She is not blind to the beauty and culture of other places, including Moscow. She feels a deep kinship with this city, and a desire to return after this painful parting. She again expresses this love for Russia and Moscow in another poem:

Знову чую російську мову,

мову рідкісної краси... (*Prominnia zemli*, 55).[115]

This acknowledgement of Russian as a beautiful language is initially surprising, as Kostenko writes exclusively in Ukrainian and has a clear preference for her homeland. Yet she loves and appreciates the Russian language, which she regarded as native to her. Kostenko reveals a soul that is deep enough to stretch beyond her own national identity in order to embrace goodness and beauty where she sees it, regardless of nation or origin.

Perhaps Kostenko's most euphoric poem of Moscow describes her arrival in the city as she is about to embark on her studies at the Gorky Institute. She writes,

When I walked out of the railway station

I forgot all lofty words

and wholeheartedly exclaimed:

'Greetings, Moscow, mother of mine!'

I'd traveled a long time from home

and my head is buzzing from the journey,

but do I care that I'm tired

when I'm in Moscow itself?

[114] She directly addresses Warsaw and the Carpathian Mountains and speaks highly of them.
[115] "I again hear the Russian language, a language of rare beauty."

It's no matter that the evening is getting cold
and the autumn rain is pouring—
I'll promptly seek out Red Square
amid Moscow's other plazas.

So I went where my eyes led me—
onto boulevards, thoroughfares, and bridges—
and searched for it until night fell
in that great city, Moscow.

I asked no one the way
and no one drew me a map:
that road in Moscow is the kind
that everyone discovers alone (qtd. in Bellezza, 33-34)

Kostenko is thrilled to have finally reached the city she has clearly been dreaming of for a long time. She honors Moscow with the appellation "mother," expressing a deep kinship with this Russian city, while at the same time acknowledging that she has "traveled a long time from *home*" to reach this city. Moscow holds an important place in Kostenko's heart and poetic geography. It is not her home, but it is a beloved and honored *place.*

It is clear that Kostenko has a deep and multi-faceted relationship with Russia. She both praises the beauty of the Russian language and—through the lips of a countess in one poem—condemns it for being "foreign." She views Petersburg negatively, but loves and praises

Moscow. While Russia is not as dear to her as is Ukraine, she nevertheless appreciates the culture, language, and *places* of Russia.

Other (Post-) Soviet Republics

Kostenko occasionally mentions other geographic locations in the (post-) Soviet space, but these comprise only 2% of all her geographic references. The majority of these references allude to other poets, illustrating Kostenko's connection to the cultural aspect of these lands more than the political or geographical entities themselves.

Kostenko describes the call of home as experienced by another poet, Lidia Koidula (1843-1886), an Estonian poet who loved her homeland but moved to Russia with her husband. In Koidula's voice, Kostenko writes of the longing for her homeland:

> Стояла самотня жінка,
>
> на березі моря стояла.
>
> Схилялася в ноги хвиля,
>
> неначе трава зів'яла.
>
> І плакала жінка:
>
> —Еесті!
>
> Країно моя чудесна!
>
> Не бідала я безчестя,
>
> бо ти споконвіку чесна (*Vitryla*, 14).[116]

As two women poets of Soviet states, it is understandable that Kostenko and Koidula would resonate with each other and seek to speak for their marginalized and colonized homelands. Far from being unfaithful to her native Ukraine, Kostenko's vicarious patriotism to Estonia further

[116] "A solitary woman stood on the seashore. A wave bowed at her feet, as if the grass had faded. And the woman cried: —Estonia! My wonderful country. I did not suffer disgrace because you, from time immemorial, are faithful."

establishes her own right to love her country: Kostenko acknowledges the universal pull of love for one's homeland. While she personally does not feel the same pull toward Estonia that Koidula does, Kostenko nonetheless understands what it is to love a marginalized nation. This poem was published in 1958, and was likely influenced by Kostenko's interactions with her Estonian roommate at the Gorky Institute, whose indifference to Stalin's death (when everybody else was mourning) left a strong impression on Kostenko (Bellezza, 34). In both the Estonian poet and her Estonian roommate, Kostenko witnessed a love and loyalty to homeland.

In multiple poems, Kostenko mentions Kosaral Island. As Taras Shevchenko was sent to this island to serve in the tsarist army, it plays an important role in Ukrainian cultural heritage and memory. The portion of the sea in which Kosaral Island was located has since dried up, but the present-day lake is located in what are now Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In a verse published in 1961, during the Thaw when censorship was somewhat lessened, Kostenko wrote,

Кобзар співав в пустелі Кос-Аралу,
у казематах батюшки-царя.
Кайдани, шаленіючи, бряжчали,
щоб заглушити пісню Кобзаря.

А пісня наростала у засланні.
А пісня грати розбивала вщент...
Правдивій пісні передзвін кайданів—
то тільки звичний акомпанемент (*Madrivky sertsia,* 16).[117]

[117] "The Kobzar sang in the Kosaral desert, in the cells of the father-king. Shackles, rampage, clinking, in order to drown out the Kobzar's song. But the song grew in exile. And the song completely smashed the gratings…To the true song the ringing of shackles—the only usual accompaniment."

Kostenko mocks the "father-king" that would send one of his own sons into exile, forced to write his songs against the backdrop of clinking chains. Despite this opposition, however, Shevchenko continues his poetic endeavors. Kosaral is seen as a place of oppression, yet one where the poet is able to create a unique and vibrant literary and artistic output. In a different poem, published in 1989, Kostenko extrapolates that Schevchenko, had he lived during the Soviet regime, would have been sent to the Gulag:

Що писав би Шевченко
в тридцять третьому,
в тридцять сьомому роках?
Певно, побувавши в Косаралі,
побував би ще й на Соловках (*Vybrane*, 163-164).[118]

She thus ties the father of Ukrainian literature with the horrors of the Soviet Gulag, wondering what would have happened to Shevchenko if he, like so many, had been sent there. If Kosaral resulted in such a great literary output, what would Shevchenko have produced under the harsher conditions of the Gulag?

Depictions of the rest of the world

While Akhmatova only dedicated 21% of her geographic mentions to the world outside of the Russian Empire, Kostenko devotes 44% of her own poetic geography to the world beyond the Russian Empire. In this regard, the latter seems to cast a much wider net than Akhmatova. Despite her intense patriotism and her deep love of her own homeland, Kostenko nevertheless is willing to embrace other locations and cultures in her poetic works. For Akhmatova, the entire Russian empire is home, but there is not much else outside of it. For Kostenko, Ukraine is home

[118] "What would Shevchenko have written in '33 or '37? Certainly, having been in Kosaral, he would have also been in Solovki."

and the primary *place* of all that is good, yet she expands her interests to include other locations. In this manner, Kostenko is simultaneously more limited than Akhmatova (in that she regards Ukraine as her home and does not generally view the entire empire as a united whole), and much broader in her scope of geography (in that she embraces other places as worthy of poetic discussion). She does not describe these other locations as home or homeland, but by acknowledging their presence, she indicates that her understanding of the world reaches beyond the borders of her own home. It is clear that true devotion and personal preference are what make her faithful to Ukraine—it is not because she does not acknowledge or recognize other places as being of value. Part of this difference in depiction of places outside of the immediate homeland is likely due in part to the respective travels that each of the poets were able to undergo. Akhmatova was, for many years, more limited in her international travel than was Kostenko, as she was only able to travel to Europe in 1910, 1912, and 1965. Kostenko, however, experienced more freedom, beginning in the period of the Thaw (1953-1964), and she was thus able to spend more time outside the USSR than Akhmatova.

Europe

After Ukraine, Europe has the second most geographic mentions in Kostenko's poetry, with 22% of the total geographic references. Europe represents a *place* of enlightenment and culture and receives a largely positive appraisal in Kostenko's *oeuvre*. In Kostenko's poetry, Europe represents culture. While sometimes Kostenko speaks negatively of the frantic nature of city life in Europe, her depictions frequently focus on high culture, such as writers, artists, and museums. In addition to the cultural importance of Europe, Kostenko discusses WWII in her European poems, emphasizing the shared suffering that Ukraine underwent with the rest of Europe.

In a verse published in 1977, Kostenko gives a bird's eye view of Europe in one less-than-flattering assessment of the region. Her use of the literary technique of *остранение* ("making it strange") as she describes a trip to Europe allows the reader to view Europe through new eyes:

Ми прилетіли вранці у Європу.
Блискучий лайнер випустив шасі.
І кинув міст сталеву антилопу
в ласо доріг,
тунелів
і таксі—
Все зарябіло, як газетні шпальти.
Бетон, гудрон і пляжна пастораль.
Тісні двори, запечені в асфальти,
…
Гігантське місто витискає штанги—
гуп-гуп, гуп-гуп, гуп-гуп, гуп-гуп!!!
Мигтять в очах рекламні балагани,
світ закидає вудлища антен…. (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 96).[119]

Kostenko seems to condemn the rush and buzz of Europe with its concrete pathways and night-time noises. Perhaps there is a twinge of nostalgia for her native Ukrainian countryside where no giants lifted barbells all night and where the yards were not cramped and not baked in asphalt.

[119] "We flew to Europe in the morning. The shiny liner released the chassis. And the bridge threw a steel antelope in a lasso of roads, tunnels, and taxis—everything rippled like newspaper covers. Concrete, tar, and beach pastoral. Cramped yards baked in asphalt….The giant city squeezes barbells—hup-hup, hup-hup, hup-hup, hup-hup. Advertising carrousels flash in the eyes, the world is tossing antenna rods…"

Elsewhere she describes Europe as "перенаселена" ("overpopulated"), emphasizing the image of mankind overstepping the bounds of nature that should have been respected (*Nepovtornist'*, 26-27). These challenges of city living are not isolated to Europe (she even wrote negatively about her own city of Kyiv), emphasizing that Kostenko's poetic geography favors nature over urban centers. These negative urban aspects can also be seen in Kostenko's poem "Ластівки тікають із Європи (*Nepovtornist'*, 28)."[120] This verse begins with a beautiful image of the birds, but quickly turns to a negative description:

> Чад, бензин, вібрації, галопи—
>
> птиці мертві падають з дерев (*Nepovtornist'*, 28).[121]

The birds are dying in crowded, polluted Europe. Europe is an overpopulated, bustling hub of human activity.

Not all the human activity in Europe is negative in Kostenko's estimation, however, and she recognizes and lauds it for its cultural advancements. When not focused on the evils of cities, most of Kostenko's Euro-centric poetry discusses the art, literature, and high culture for which Europe is famous. Consistent with Kostenko's tendency to write about other writers, she devotes two poems to Victor Hugo and his native Paris. As an exile in Guernsey from his homeland, Hugo is a prime candidate for Kostenko's poetic attention. He understood the profound love for homeland and the desire to write. One verse, "Гюго в старому маяку,"[122] discusses Hugo's exile (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 82-83). She speaks with condescension about Paris and concludes that it is better for Hugo to be enjoying the peace and nature of his exile instead of being in the chaos and restrictions of Paris. In his exile, Hugo "нарешті зможе втілить себе в слові!"[123] Only

[120] "Swallows are fleeing Europe,"
[121] "Fumes, gasoline, vibrations, gallops, —the birds are falling dead from the trees."
[122] "Hugo in the old lighthouse"
[123] "can finally translate himself into words!"

away from the pressures of the metropolis is he able to listen to the sea crashing by the lighthouse and watch the ships slowly pass. Paris, by contrast, is a place of oppression:

А у Парижі ніяк і ніяк.

Прихильники, політики, рідня, -

все хтось тебе затуркує щодня (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 82-83).[124]

Paris is a bustling city, and one which Hugo is not upset about leaving. When the carriage comes to take him away, he does not protest, as those around him plead with him to do; rather, he silently embarks for his exile in a land of quiet. The onlookers shake their heads and, "поїхали, - куди ж? /Розносити сенсацію в Париж" (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 82-83).[125] This observation underscores the previous one that you cannot find peace from other people in Paris: the city is a place of gossip and sensation. The writer can only truly find himself in exile.

Kostenko's other poem about Victor Hugo and Paris takes on a more somber tone. She begins with the arrival of a train in Paris from Orlean station, then observes, "а в поїзді хлопця привозять/хлопця, що вмер від ран" (*Vitryla*, 20).[126] In this time of loss and mourning, the travelers are returning back to their home. Behind the coffin walks a "глибокий старик"[127] with a bowed head. After creating this silent and somber image in Paris, Kostenko reveals the identity of the deceased:

То безсмертний Віктор Гюгю

проводжає сина свого (*Vitryla*, 20).[128]

Unlike the previous poem, this verse does not make a direct commentary on Paris, but rather uses

[124] "But in Paris, no way and no way. Patrons, politicians, family, —everybody bothers you every day."
[125] "They left, —where to? To deliver the sensation to Paris."
[126] "And in the train, they bring a boy who died from wounds."
[127] "deep old man"
[128] "This is the immortal Victor Hugo, escorting his son."

the city as a backdrop for the exploration of a profoundly personal grief. Kostenko thus exposes the shared humanity of Parisians and Ukrainians: all will suffer and experience loss.

In addition to Victor Hugo, Kostenko also references Van Gogh in one of her Paris poems. Speaking in Van Gogh's voice, Kostenko writes about the painter's descent into madness:

Добрий ранок, моя одинокосте!

Холод холоду. Тиша тиш.

Циклопічною одноокістю

небо дивиться на Париж (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 38)[129]

In contrast to the bustling Paris of Hugo, Van Gogh's Paris is stiflingly lonely. The depressed painter recounts his insecurities and other people's assessment of his craziness. Paris for him is a silent, churning existence where he cannot find peace or companionship.

Dante and his native Florence are also important in Kostenko's European poetry. In one verse, Kostenko personifies the city crying out for its beloved and deceased son:

Під вечір виходить на вулицю він.

Флоренція плаче йому навздогін.

Ці сльози вже зайві. Минуло життя.

Йому вже в це місто нема вороття.

Флоренція плаче: він звідси, він наш! (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 46).[130]

The Florence of this poem is inseparable from its favorite son. Florence is not an unfeeling city, but a living entity with the ability to understand and appreciate literary genius. In personifying

[129] "Good morning, my loneliness! Cold of cold. Silence of silence. With cycloptic loneliness the heaven looks at Paris."

[130] "In the evening he goes outside. Florence cries after him. These tears are already superfluous. Life has passed. There are already no gates for him in this city. Florence cries: he is from here, he is ours!"

the Italian city, Kostenko also gives voice to the literary world and its admiration and love for Dante. Kostenko's Florence is one of literary importance.

Among her other European cultural references are an Italian pianist,[131] the Prado and Louvre museums,[132] Greek sculptures,[133] and Venetian gondoliers.[134] She discusses the beautiful island of Sicily, which God created and dropped into the sea.[135] Multiple times she refers to Mt. Olympus and Mt. Parnassus, rich symbols of high culture, tradition, and intellectual pursuits.[136] Kostenko's Europe is thus a highly cultured one and closely connected with great artists and literary figures.

In addition to focusing on the cultural importance of Europe, Kostenko also devotes many of her poems to the effects of WWII on Europe. While these poems convey a sense of shared humanity and mutual suffering, there are nevertheless patriotic elements and a sense of separation between Kostenko's native Ukraine and the other nations that suffered under the war. Kostenko praises Poland, yet still distances herself somewhat from it:

Варшаво,

я знала, що ти вродлива.

Варшаво,

я чула, що ти пісенна.

…

Ще біль не пройшов.

Ще руїни—як шрами.

---

[131] *Nepovtornist'*, 18
[132] *Nepovtornist'*, 50
[133] *Sad netanuchykh*, 31
[134] *Richka Heraklita*, 281
[135] *Richka Heraklita*, 167
[136] *Trysta poezii*, 255 and *Trysta poezii*, 324

Але на обличчі—веселий спокій...

Гояться довго глибокі рани.

А рани воїнів—завжди глибокі. (*Mandrivky sertsia*, 54)[137]

Kostenko feels kinship with Warsaw and conveys the pain of the city as a result from its scars from WWII. She praises this European city and offers comfort and solidarity.[138] This kinship with Poland in regards to WWII can be seen again in a poem in which Kostenko describes the mass grave of some of her fellow Ukrainians:

Скільки гинуло хлопців!

…

То якби ж хоч лежати

у рідну землю загорненим!

Чужина... Чужина...

Носять квіти чужі матері.

Місто Щецін. Костьоли.

Європейські готичні споруди.

В центрі—братська могила.

Могила моїх братів. (*Mandrivky sertsia*, 55-56)[139]

Kostenko mourns her fallen countrymen. Yet it is not merely their deaths that she mourns, but

[137] "Warsaw, I knew that you were beautiful. Warsaw, I heard that you were singing…The pain has not yet passed. These ruins are like scars. But on the face—a cheerful countenance…Deep wounds are long in healing. And the wounds of warriors are always deep."
[138] As Kostenko's first husband was Polish, it is likely Kostenko would have visited Warsaw with him.
[139] "How many boys have died!...If only they were lying wrapped in their native land! Foreign country…Foreign country. Foreign mothers bring flowers. The city Szczecin. Churches. European Gothic structures. In the center is a mass grave. The grave of my brothers."

also the fact that they are buried in a foreign land. While Kostenko highlights the services of the mothers who bring flowers to the graves, she emphasizes the fact that these mothers are foreign. Flanked by European Gothic architecture is a mass grave of Ukrainian soldiers. The wordplay with "mass grave" ("братська могила") and "grave of my brothers" ("Могила моїх братів") juxtaposes the impersonal nature of a mass grave in a foreign land, with the nearness of beloved brothers. The entire poem is filled with mentions of foreign vs. near ("рідну землю" vs. "Чужина"; "чужі матері" vs. "моїх братів").[140] The Ukrianian nation is thus portrayed as a family, and while the efforts of members of other (Polish) families are appreciated, they cannot compensate for the absence of one's own family and homeland.

Kostenko continues this discussion of WWII in Europe in her poem "Здивована пісенька" (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 106).[141] She rhymes "свастика" ("swastika") with "головастика" ("tadpole"), simultaneously mocking the idea of swastikas by equating it with something small and squirmy, while also emphasizing its stature and danger, as these particular tadpoles grow into dragons. She once again ties Europe with literary culture, asking

Який диктатор, вилитий в металі,

порадився з Вергілієм старим? (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 106).[142]

It seems difficult for Kostenko to reconcile the horrors of Nazism and swastikas with the high culture of Virgil and Europe as a bearer of that world culture.

While she still blames Nazi Germany for the tragedies of the war, she nevertheless is able to speak civilly to the German woman to whom she addresses one poem. She admits that she does not know exactly whom she is addressing, as her poem begins, "Старенька жінко, Магдо

[140] Native land vs. foreign land; foreign mothers vs. my brothers
[141] "Astonished song"
[142] "What dictator, forged in metal, consulted with ancient Virgil?"

чи Луїза!"[143] and this ambiguity allows Kostenko to address the country as a whole while simultaneously bringing the reader's attention to the reality of specific individuals (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 31). In this open address, Kostenko refers to the high culture of Germany, but then juxtaposes it with the atrocities of the war:

Ну, як там вальси—чи гримлять у Відні?

Як доктор Фауст—бореться зі злом? (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 31).[144]

These questions contain a hint of irony and also frustration at the fact that a nation as cultured as Germany could descend to the evil against which Dr. Faust should have ostensibly been fighting. Kostenko then removes the mask of pleasantries, setting aside the discussion of culture in order to address the crux of her argument:

Я не скажу ні слова тобі злого.

Твій, може, теж загинув на війні.

За що він бився, Магдо, проти кого?!

Він не кричить "Хайль Гітлер!" на стіні? (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky,* 31).[145]

While she attempts to connect with the woman, first on a cultural level, and then on the personal, womanly level of having lost a loved one in war, the frustrated question "What was he fighting for?!" bursts out, with a combined question mark and exclamation point for emphasis. While Kostenko respects the culture of Germany and understands her shared humanity with other women, she cannot understand the atrocities committed by Hitler.

Europe plays a vital role in Kostenko's poetic geography. It is a place of profound and beautiful art and culture. It represents a shared suffering and humanity. Yet it is also a place

[143] "Old woman, Magda or Luisa!"
[144] "Well, and how are the waltzes there—are they resounding in Vienna? How is Dr. Faust—fighting against evil?"
[145] "I won't say an evil word to you. Yours may have also succumbed in the war. What was he fighting for Magda, against whom?! Wasn't it he who shouted "Heil Hitler!" on the wall?"

different than Ukraine; one seen as "other" and occasionally evil.

Africa, the Middle East, and Asia

Kostenko writes a few poems referencing Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, and most of these focus on longing for home and a desire to perpetuate one's culture, setting forth universal principles that extend beyond the borders of the places she discusses.[146] In one verse, Kostenko refers to a caged lion, and she wonders what the creature is thinking:

Який там сон, який там апетит?

Він, може, хоче в Африку додому (*Richka Heraklita*, 39).[147]

In this discussion, Kostenko highlights the painful separation of an individual from his homeland. In the case of the lion, Africa is the home calling to him. Kostenko understands the deep call of homeland, and seeks for it herself, and prompts the reader to sympathize with this lion who is separated from his home. This longing for home is also seen in some of Kostenko's poems discussing classical Troy: "Кассандра плаче на руїнах Трої" (*Nepovtornist'*, 183).[148] This longing for home is a universal pull, and one that Kostenko highlights the world over.

Kostenko also talks about the Toda lands in the Nilgiri Mountains in India, creating a subtext that speaks against the Russian colonization of her native Ukraine. The East India Company has come to the Toda lands and destroyed the bounties of nature with "залізні кігті шахт у глибину" (*Trysta poezii*, 136-137).[149] In addition to this destruction of the land, Kostenko points to a cultural destruction that is perhaps more damaging:

Вже все іде у стерлінгах і в центах,

---

[146] Kostenko makes a few references to the lands of the Bible, including Golgotha, Sodom, and Gomorrah. These poems comment more on culture and religion than the specific geographic locations in which they are set. See, for example, *Nepovtornist'*, 166 and *Vybrane*, 366, *Trysta poezij*, 233.
[147] "What dreams are there, what appetite? Maybe he wants to go home to Africa."
[148] "Cassandra weeps over the ruins of Troy."
[149] "the iron claws of mines in the depth"

і плем'я тода—це вже не народ,

і безтурботна молодь без акценту

вже розмовляє мовою заброд (*Trysta poezii*, 136-137).[150]

The native monetary system has been replaced with British denominations, and the youth have begun to be assimilated into the language of the colonizers. Kostenko uses the native Indian language as a subtext for the oppressed Ukrainian language, calling upon her countrymen not to let Russian cause them to forget or reject their own culture. Kostenko does not want the Ukrainian language to be forgotten or dismissed as less important than Russian: Ukrainian is precious to her and needs to be perpetuated in order to preserve the memory, culture, and identity of her historically oppressed people

Kostenko turns also to Armenia for a discussion of cultural transmission and language preservation. The Armenian refugees seek to preserve their language for their children, even when their villages have been burnt and they are forced to leave their homelands.

Згоріли їхні селища, пропали їхні мули.

Бредуть, бредуть вигнанці в дорогу неблизьку.

Щоб мову свою рідну їх діти не забули,

їм літери виводять вірменки на піску (*Trysta poezij*, 142-143).[151]

These refugees leave their native land, images of their burnt villages likely still coursing through their minds, yet they are determined to preserve their culture wherever they may end up. Language is an inextricable part of identity, and when individuals are separated from their homeland, they cling with even more fervency to their native tongue.

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[150] "Everything is already going in sterling and cents, and the Toda tribe is already not a nation, and the carefree youth already speak the language of the wanderers without an accent."

[151] "Their villages were burned, their mules disappeared. The exiles wade, wade in the faraway road. So that their children do not forget their native language, the Armenians march letters in the sand."

The Americas

Kostenko visited the United States from December 1989 through May 1990 as a writer-in-residence at The Pennsylvania State University and The University of Michigan. While there, she gave readings in Cleveland, Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and elsewhere. Kostenko's poetry about the Americas is largely of a condemnational nature, focusing on the destruction of both the native peoples and the environment. This emphasis on the injustice of destroying the Native Americans resonates with Kostenko's common themes of longing for homeland and speaking out against colonization.

She looks down upon the colonial heritage of America, writing an ominous verse about Columbus:

> ...І вийшов Колумб на берег Америки вранці.
>
> Ступив на траву невідомої досі землі.
>
> І вийшли з вігвамів наївні стрункі індіанці,
>
> вітали його і крутили на пальцях брилі. (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 78).[152]

Kostenko's emphasis on the naivete of the Native Americans portends the conclusion of her poem and the outcome that every student of history knows. After celebrating, feasting, and singing together, Columbus and the indigenous people part ways:

> А діти смагляві,
>
> ще поки що вільні діти,
>
> довірливо й довго махали Колумбові вслід... (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 78).[153]

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[152] "…And Columbus went out on the shore of America in the morning. He stepped onto the grass of the still-unknown land. And the naïve, graceful Indians came out of their wigwams, welcomed him and twisted straw hats on their fingers."

[153] "And the dark-skinned children, who were still free children, trustingly and for a long time waved after Columbus…"

Kostenko contrasts the innocence of these people—particularly the trusting children—with the ominous conclusion of the poem, leaving the reader to fill in the blanks of what happened after Columbus left. Kostenko effectively captures the joy of the first meeting between Columbus and the Native Americans, with only the reader knowing what will shortly happen to the innocent Native Americans. Without once mentioning colonialism or annihilation, Kostenko condemns Columbus for betraying the trust of the innocent people he met.

Kostenko continues this theme of the destruction of the native peoples of America in a poem taking place in Ann Arbor, Michigan.[154]

В Енн-Арборі, де осінь—наче храм,
де мчать студенти, як мустянґи, вранці,
зчиняючи несвітський тарарам
гортаннми криком, наче індіанці,— (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 86).[155]

The bustling university town is repainted as a vision from the American west: students gallop to class like wild mustangs while letting out war cries. Yet this imagery is only an illusion, for these Native American tribes have been gone for a long time; they have been shrouded in the fog of history.

а вже ж давно немає тих племен.
Історія пряде свої тумани (*Madonna perekhrest'*, 86).[156]

The Native American tribes no longer inhabit the lands they once did, and they have been replaced by the students rushing to their university classes. Kostenko does not openly chastise

[154] She spent a month in Ann Arbor during her visit to the United States in 1989-1990. There was a conference dedicated to her at the University of Michigan in the spring of 1990. This poem was dated November 15th 1989, prior to her trip there, so perhaps it was written in anticipation of the trip.
[155] "In Ann Arbor, where fall—as if a temple, where students rush like mustangs in the morning, letting out an unearthly noise, a throaty cry, like Indians, —"
[156] "And for a long time, there have been no such tribes. History spins its mists."

any specific entities for the destruction of the Native American peoples; she simply observes that they are gone, leaving it to the reader to reflect on the circumstances that replaced the indigenous peoples with a university. This ambiguity is similar to that seen in her poem about Columbus: Kostenko wants her reader to fill in the ellipses regarding the destruction of these people.

In another poem referencing the Native American tribes, Kostenko writes about a strong Sioux warrior who was given the name "Rain-in-the-face."

Великий воїн знищених племен,

в Америці, в минулому столітті (*Nepovtornist'*, 176).[157]

The use of the verb "знищити" ("wipe out/destroy") emphasizes the needless suffering that the Sioux tribe underwent at the hands of a more powerful nation. Again, consistent with Kostenko's style, the oppressors and exterminators are not specifically mentioned, but the reader is aware that the American settlers are at fault. This warrior has overcome many of his enemies before, but the new foreign enemies prove to be a different matter:

І ті орлині пера на чолі,

той знак звитяг його над ворогами...

Але було вже рідної землі—

ото лиш та, що зараз під ногами.

А завтра, завтра!.. Сивіє волосся.

Чужинські кроки б'ють у груди площ (*Nepovtornist'*, 176).[158]

While this warrior has conquered enemies, they were of his native land: they observed the same

[157] "A great warrior of an exterminated tribe, in America in the previous century"
[158] "And these eagle feathers on his brow, That mark of victory over his enemies…But they were already of the native land—only from that which is now under his feet. But tomorrow, tomorrow!... Hair turns gray. Foreign footsteps strike in the heart of squares."

traditions and bore the same weapons. They were connected by their land, and the fights were fair. But now “foreign footsteps” arrive and result in the extermination of the tribe. Kostenko condemns colonization in this poem, illustrating that even native enemies are better than foreigners.

The Inca tribe shared the same fate as the Sioux, and Kostenko condemns the loss of this entire nation:

Було на світі плем'я—інки.

Було на світі—і нема (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 81).[159]

The anaphora of these two lines (“Було на світі”/”there was in the world”) sets up a contrast between existence and extinction. The Incas were once on the earth, but they no longer are. Lives have ended, and only physical artifacts remain to tell the story:

І тільки храми, древні храми,

стоять по груди в кропиві. (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 81)[160]

The nettles growing around these ancient temples represent the neglect shown not just to the physical buildings, but also the disregard that was shown to human life when the Incas were annihilated.

The generalities of mass extinction become personal in Kostenko’s verse “Картинка з американської віставки” (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 79).[161] By giving her poem this title, Kostenko implies that the following scene is not unusual, but something understood, known, and accepted by those who are acquainted with America. The poem tells the story of an American officer who shoots and scalps a Native American chief. Even as he is lying in his blood, the chief

[159] “There was a tribe in the world—the Incas. It was in the world—and is not”
[160] “And only temples, ancient temples, stand to the chest in nettles.”
[161] “Picture from the American Exhibition.”

says “Hello, brother!” The poem questions,

Чия душа ще має такий скарб?

І хто кому тут може бути братом?! (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 79).[162]

The poet is astounded that even while lying assaulted in such a state, the wounded chief would still refer to his assailant as a brother. The chief is depicted in overwhelmingly positive terms: he had once ministered to the officer’s wounds; he has a soul large enough to still call that man a brother when he betrayed and attacked him. The officer, however, is depicted in an entirely negative manner: he seeks wealth for his own pleasure; he is a lover of whiskey and bars; he betrays the man who saved him from death. The final lines of the poem are written as if from the perspective of the bleeding chief, recounting that the officer had once promised never to forget the kindness shown to him by the chief. The biting final line reads, “Тобі дадуть багато за мій скальп” (*Nad berehamy vichnoi riky*, 79).[163] The officer has repaid kindness not just with cruelty, but a self-serving barbarism in order to further his own financial ends. This bleak and brutal depiction of a scene in America highlights the negative place that America holds in Kostenko’s poetic geography.

In addition to these scathing poems about America’s destruction of its native peoples, Kostenko shows how, in more recent history, America once again held human life in disregard and destroyed countless lives. With some condescension she observes that

У Америці є, наприклад,

Музей атомної бомби.

Вона там висить, як брелоки,

[162] “Whose soul still has such treasure? And who here can be a brother?!”
[163] “You will be given a lot for my scalp.”

і все опивано курсивом—

і перший крик, і перші кроки

і німому небі Хіросіми (*Nepovtornist*, 204).[164]

Kostenko condemns the nonchalance with which America regards the atomic bomb that destroyed so many innocent lives: the bomb hangs like a trinket, with the moments of the bomb's falling inscribed in italics on placards. The poem does not leave open the possibility that the museum could represent a type of remorse for the destruction, but rather condemns not just the action but also the trite remembrance of it. America is guilty not just for dropping the bomb in the first place, but also for memorializing it.

In addition to her condemnation of America's disregard for human life, Kostenko also decries the environmental destruction caused by the country. She describes the highly urbanized, synthetic, and polluted city of Los Angeles.

Одкам'янійте, статуї античні,

одкам'янійте і кричіть на гвалт!

В Лос-Анжелес пальми синтетичні

уже вростають коренем в асфальт (*Nepovtornist'*, 115).[165]

The palm trees that are native to Los Angeles have been replaced by artificial ones rooted in asphalt. She rhymes "античні" ("ancient") with "синтетичні" ("synthetic"), thus setting up a juxtaposition between something established and reliable with something new and artificial. This comparison emphasizes Kostenko's condemnation of the loss of nature. She continues her description of the polluted city:

[164] "In America, for example, there is an atomic bomb museum. It hangs there, like trinkets, and everything is done to excess in italics—the first cry and the first step and the silent sky of Hiroshima."
[165] "Turn to stone, ancient statues, turn to stone and cry for violence! In Los Angeles, synthetic palm trees are already growing with their root in asphalt."

Там смог навис, і сонце тяжко гріє,

потік машин тісніший череди,

і алігатор міста – алергія –

виходить із асфальтів, як з води (*Nepovtornist'*, 115).[166]

Nature has been replaced by smog and concrete. Even natural predators have been replaced by artificial ones. Even the sun is oppressive in this verse, beating harshly on the city that has enshrouded itself in smog. Kostenko then observes that there is one tree left: a single maple tree with a single, concrete leaf on it. The desolation and oppression of this poem is tangible. In a sardonic conclusion, Kostenko offers a wish for the trees in the concrete jungle:

Ліси мої, гаї мої священні!

Пребудьте нам вовіки незнищенні! (*Nepovtornist'*, 115).[167]

The language of this final couplet invokes Biblical language to plead for the eternity of the forests. This very plea for longevity, however, is twofold: on one hand, Kostenko is mocking the fact that the natural trees have already been destroyed and thus cannot live forever; on the other hand, Kostenko is speaking to the strong nature of concrete, praying that the concrete trees can last forever since the natural ones did not.

Although Kostenko had positive personal experiences in her travels to America, the place that the Americas hold in her poetic geography is a highly negative one. She focuses on the extermination of the indigenous people of the Americas and condemns the complete disregard for human life and for the environment that she observes.

The Earth and Universe

[166] "There smog hangs, and the sun burns oppressively, the flood of cars in a narrow herd, and the alligator of the city—allergy—comes out of the asphalt as if from water."
[167] "My forests—my holy groves! Remain for us forever indestructible."

Kostenko's love for the environment can be seen throughout her poetic geography, from her discussions on Chornobyl', to commentary on urbanization and environmental destruction in Europe and America. This environmentalism extends beyond geographical boundaries to embrace the entire planet. Ten percent of Kostenko's poetic geography mentions either the world as a whole, another celestial body in the universe, or the universe itself. She speaks of the earth as one great whole, bound together by common humanity and by the environment. This devotion to the world unites all people and nations in an effort to recognize their own humanity and to preserve their home planet. These poems of the world and the universe tend to be unifying—they connect humanity in wonder for the universe, and in the need to protect their earthly home. These poems all also are published in the 1980s or later, so it is likely that they were written either during the space age, with images of rocket ships and astronauts fresh on humanity's mind.

Kostenko asserts that, "І Всесвіт цей—акваріум планет" (*Nepovtornist',* 83).[168] The earth itself is simply part of a much larger whole, and the differences between peoples and nations melt away in this perspective. In a poem published in 2016, she writes:

> І Всесвіт в лупу дивиться на нас.
> Хто ми йому? І що він бачить звідти?
> Чумацький Шлях чи зоряну чалму?
> Земля, що крутить хула-хуп орбіти,
> мабуть, ще зовсім дівчинка йому (*Richka Heraklita*, 194).[169]

Through this personification of the universe as a wise and ancient entity, Kostenko emphasizes

[168] "And this universe is an aquarium of planets."
[169] "And the Universe looks at us in a magnifying glass. Who are we to him? And what does he see from there? The Milky Way or a starry turban? The earth, which spins in a hula-hoop orbit, maybe, is still a just a little girl to him."

the relative youth and naivete of the earth itself. For all that the combined wisdom of the world may claim to know, there is a great wealth of existence beyond the earth's atmosphere.

Kostenko gives voice to the questions and wonder that frequently confront people gazing into the sky, wondering what lies beyond the known reaches of space.

Той, що створив нас, був дуже розумний:

ввімкнув нам тільки ближнє світло свідомості.

Мчимося по космічній трасі,

так і не знаючи—

а що ж там в кінці Чумацького Шляху? (*Nepovtornist'*, 20).[170]

In this, she acknowledges a higher power than herself and the world on which she stands. This recognition of things beyond her ken causes her to wonder what may lie at the end of the galaxy. This poem throws into question the ultimate location of the world and Kostenko's poetic geography within it, since it is unclear where earth's cosmic track is leading it and what lies at the end of the Milky Way. An appeal to the heavens transcends all geographic borders, for it does not matter if one lives in Kyiv or Moscow or America—the stars are still visible and the philosophical questions they raise are still imposing themselves on all people.

Mankind's yearning for the heavens is ancient, as for millennia people have been staring into the skies and wondering about the distances and what exists beyond the world upon which we stand. Yet Kostenko's is a very modern approach, as aliens and science make their appearances. It is evident she is being influenced by the space race and interest in science fiction that is occurring during the time of much of her writing. Speculating on alien life, she observes,

[170] "The one who created us was very wise: he turned on in us only the near light of consciousness. We race along the cosmic highway without knowing—and what is there at the end of the Milky Way?"

Гарний хлопець з іншої планети,

може, завтра в гості залетить (*Nepovtornist'*, 107-108).[171]

The nonchalant manner in which the poem addresses the possibility of alien life reveals Kostenko's willingness to embrace extraterrestrial civilizations in her understanding of the universe. She does not limit herself to a poetic geography about simply this world and its people and nations. Kostenko transcends the interplanetary nature of this potential interaction by asking: "Я спитаю: — Є у вас поети?" (*Nepovtornist'*, 107-108).[172] Of all the information she might want to obtain from an alien, her first inquiry is as to whether or not this faraway planet has poets. Poetry has the power to reach beyond individuals and nations to unite people, and Kostenko sets forth the proposition that perhaps even other planets have their own form of poetry. Poets are the voices for their people, and if there is a civilization on another planet, it stands to reason that they would also have poetry. In this manner, Kostenko immediately humanizes the alien and brings him into her worldview: to her, a shared poetic heritage is more important than planet of origin. Yet while immediately ready to accept her interplanetary guest, Kostenko juxtaposes the broad terms of the universe with uniquely Ukrainian concepts, thus reiterating that her primary object of geographic affection is Ukraine. As Yermolenko observes about this verse, Kostenko "майстерно переплітає поняття про космос, галактику, міжпланетні мандри, туманність Андромеди із звичними українськими реаліями: хліб-сіль, макогін, журавлі, яблука" (Iermolenko, 405).[173] Ukraine is her point of reference from which she communicates with her interplanetary guest. While the things specific to Ukraine indicate her native land, they likewise also speak to the connectedness of people and the

[171] "A lovely boy from another planet may fly in tomorrow as a guest."
[172] "I will ask, do you have poets?"
[173] "masterfully interweaves the concepts of the cosmos, galaxy, interplanetary travel, the Andromeda nebula with customary Ukrainian realia: bread and salt, a rolling pin, cranes, apples."

universality of the human experience. She even leaves herself open to the possibility of traveling to visit this alien's native planet:

—Добре, я коли-небудь заскочу.

Ти в якій галактиці живеш? (*Nepovtornist',* 107-108).[174]

While home is an entity firmly rooted in one's heart, Kostenko is not averse to travel, even if that is to different planets in order to observe someone else's home. She simultaneously displays an abiding love for her native planet and nation while also expressing a willingness to accept other people (or aliens) and visit their homelands.

In a poem that speaks to the core of Kostenko's poetic geography, the poet discusses the idea of a "cosmic homelessness." Perhaps it is this very notion Kostenko seeks to stave off through her extended discussion of home and *place* in her poetic geography:

Хто я?

Стеблинка гравітаційного поля.

Клаптик інших галактик

залетів у мою свідомість.

Вогник земного дому

прихистив мою космічну бездомність (*Madonna perekhrest',* 24).[175]

As the thoughts of other galaxies rush to mind of the earth-bound poet, the speaker's own insignificance is almost overwhelming, leaving her feeling homeless and small within an incomprehensible universe. It is only the fire of the earthly home that is able to ground the speaker and remind and witness of the earth as a steady home amid the vast expanse of the

[174] "Good, I will drop by someday. What galaxy do you live in?"
[175] "Who am I? A small stalk of a gravitational field. A tiny patch of other galaxies flew into my consciousness. The tiny light of the earthly home gave refuge to my cosmic homelessness."

incomprehensible universe. Kostenko thus asserts that the earth is the home of all mankind—this is the place in the universe where we belong. This speaks to Kostenko's extended discussion of home and place within her poetic works: she understands that the universe is a vast expanse, and she seeks to ground herself squarely within the fire of the earthly home. She creates a poetic geography in order to describe her home: her native Ukraine is her beloved homeland, yet she also embraces the entirety of the world as her own. Hers is a very generous poetic geography, allowing her to simultaneously be a fiery Ukrainian patriot, a world traveler who embraces high culture wherever she finds it, and an advocate for the entire planet earth.

Conclusion

Kostenko's poetic geography focuses heavily on her native Ukraine. For her, Ukraine is the center of her life and world. She discusses the Dnipro river, the steppe, and rural Ukraine with particular affinity. She poeticizes the idealized countryside of her first six years of life in Rzhyshchiv and after that the Kyiv of her childhood and of the present. She frequently ties her geographic references to the legends and heroic history of Ukraine, thus connecting her modern geographic perceptions with the history of bygone years. This serves to create a tight connection between Ukraine and Kyivan Rus', arguing that Ukraine is not only separate from Russia but also has a distinct claim to the legacy of ancient Rus'. While Kyiv does play a prominent role in her poetry, and it is clear that she loves the city of her childhood, Kostenko does not focus on a single city in her poetry to the same extent that Akhmatova does, but rather embraces the entire nation of Ukraine as her beloved homeland.

For Kostenko, the ideal Ukraine is found in the idyllic setting of a rural Ukrainian village, where an old grandma and grandpa can live out their lives together, where legend is remembered and loved, and where nature thrives undisturbed by mankind. She prioritizes the preservation of

nature and the memorializing of important places such as the Dnipro River for the historical significance they bear. In this manner, much of Kostenko's depiction of Ukraine represents an imaginary geography: she writes in glowing nostalgic terms about former days that can no longer return, whether they be from her childhood or the time of the baptism of Rus'. She creates an almost surreal picture of Ukraine, glorifying her homeland and setting it up as a standard for the rest of the world—and even universe—to attain.

While Kostenko focuses the bulk of her lyric poetry of place on Ukraine, she does extend her poetic reach to embrace the whole world and universe. These poems reaching past Ukraine are not always as warm or positive on their geographic subjects. Sometimes she speaks with condescension of other localities, while in other instances she praises them. Her relationship with Russia, in particular, is fraught, revealing competing sentiments of aversion to colonialism and nostalgia for a place she once lived and a literary and artistic culture she appreciates. Even Europe, while mostly receiving positive comments from Kostenko, is occasionally censured for its environmentally unsound practices. America is soundly condemned in Kostenko's poetry, and she decries both the genocides of indigenous peoples and the environmental destruction caused there.

Despite her clear preference for Ukraine, however, and the negative descriptions she sometimes gives of other nations, she views the entire planet as her home. Her environmental poems can be seen as a bridge between her love of Ukraine and her love of the entire world. Environmentalism is incredibly important to Kostenko, and this theme permeates many of her geographic works, regardless of what place she is referencing. She clearly views it as important to be a good steward of the entire world, regardless of one's national affinity. Kostenko even extends her vision to embrace the stars, galaxies, and universe in which the earth is located. This

broad picture of the entire known existence likewise serves to emphasize the humanity shared by all people—all are small in comparison to the stars and the sky, and mankind is inextricably connected. She thus seems to draw a set of almost contradictory lines: Ukraine is her homeland and the *place* she views as prominent and the best; yet at the same time, she advocates for a sense of shared humanity in our tiny corner of the universe, and calls for all humans to engage in environmentally conscious behavior.

Conclusion

Anna Akhmatova and Lina Kostenko both create extensive, imaginative poetic geographies that span the corpora of their lyric poetry. Each seeks to make sense of the world's *space* by describing the *places* that bear great meaning to them on personal, national, and humanitarian levels. They reinterpret *place* through the lens of nostalgia, longing, or regret, and recreate the cities and villages of the world in a manner that is both unique to them and reflective of their national historiography. These poetic geographies reveal creative re-interpretations of actual physical spaces, and provide insight into the poets' national identities and worldviews.

Anna Akhmatova centers her poetic geography in the city of St. Petersburg/Leningrad. This city was her personal, poetic, and cultural cradle. More verses are dedicated to Leningrad than to any other single *place* in Akhmatova's collected works. Her relationship with Leningrad is not straightforward, however: she speaks with a native's insights on the shortcomings of her city and the suffering of its inhabitants. She acknowledges the negative myth of St. Petersburg, writing Peter the Great into her poetic geography and discussing supernatural, oppressive elements that still govern the city. She decries the war and suffering present in her city—both from without and within—and writes poignantly of her own Leningrad sorrows. Yet Akhmatova's Leningrad is not entirely negative: she lauds the rich and storied cultural history of Leningrad, connecting herself to her fellow Russian writers; she praises the courage of the Leningraders who stand by their home; she describes the beauty of the buildings and natural elements. Akhmatova's Leningrad becomes a living entity that responds to the suffering or joy of its inhabitants. Just as an individual person displays many moods and traits, so too does Akhmatova's living Leningrad display a diversity of characteristics. Through the pain, suffering, and joy, Akhmatova actively chooses to remain physically and emotionally in Leningrad. This

place is the dearest to Akhmatova's heart, and the one which she most consistently refers to as her home.

Leningrad is not the only important *place* to Akhmatova: her next concentric circle of home comprises the entire Russian Empire. She speaks of her "native land" and "Russia" with warmth and love, professing devotion to this *place* that extends beyond Leningrad's borders. Akhmatova's understanding of "Russia" parallels the Russian Imperial/Soviet historiography, in which Ukraine, the Baltics, the Caucasus, and central Asia belong to the larger understanding of "Russia." Akhmatova writes of Kyiv as if it is merely a different city than Leningrad, not part of a different nation. She claims the heritage of the Kyivan Rus' as her own, and sees no contradictions in her own mixed Ukrainian/Russian/Tatar heritage: these all represent part of the same, Russian Imperial entity.

Akhmatova's final concentric circle of home contains references to the rest of the world, ranging from Europe to America to the Middle East. These geographic discussions are much rarer in her works than her depictions of the Russian Empire: she acknowledges the presence, importance, and culture of the surrounding world, but her heart and soul are located primarily within Russia.

Akhmatova's terminology of "home" and "native land" is fluid and changes from one poem to the next. She sometimes refers to "Asia" as her homeland (speaking of Tashkent, a city of Russia that happens to be in Asia, therefore making Asia itself her homeland), while elsewhere refers to a suburb of St. Petersburg as a foreign land. This fluidity of affiliation underscores the imaginative nature of poetic geographies: poets create (and recreate) their own definitions and boundaries of home and homeland. Despite these terminological inconsistencies throughout Akhmatova's poetic geography, she nonetheless ascribes her overarching affinity to

Russia in general as her homeland, and Leningrad in particular as the center of home.

Kostenko's designation of "home" and "homeland" is not nearly as fluid as Akhmatova's. For Kostenko, Ukraine is her one true homeland. She does speak with warmth of other locations,[1] but she does not claim any region outside of Ukraine as her native land. Her poetic geography is centered on Ukraine. Unlike Akhmatova, Kostenko does not limit herself to a single city when bestowing her primary allegiance: while Kyiv does play a prominent role in her poetry, and it is clear that she loves the city of her childhood, Kostenko embraces the entire nation of Ukraine as her beloved homeland. Kostenko's Ukrainian verses focus on the countryside, villages, and natural features of her land. She recounts with nostalgia the *places* of her Ukrainian childhood, and mourns the destruction that occurred in Ukraine as the result of wars and Soviet occupation. She masterfully ties modern-day *places* with the historical events that occurred there during the Kyivan Rus' or Cossack Hetmanate, emphasizing a continuity of history from Ukraine's Golden Ages to the present day. In this manner, she contributes to the national mythology of Ukraine, embracing a Ukrainian historiography and raising awareness of the cultural legacy of her country.

Kostenko embraces other regions of the world outside of Ukraine in her poetic geography, but she does not term them her "home." She displays a complex relationship with Russia, at times negatively depicting the country that occupied her native land, and at other times praising the beauty and culture of Russia. She feels kinship with the Russian nation and language, yet she did not focus her poetic attention on Russia: only 6% of Kostenko's poetic geography is devoted to Russia. Europe, in contrast, receives 22% of Kostenko's geographic mentions, revealing that the culture, traditions, and *places* of the West perhaps occupied

1 She even refers to Moscow as her "mother" at one point. See Bellezza 33-34.

Kostenko more than her relationship with Russia. She at times praises Europe and its cultural legacy, while at other times laments the overpopulation and environmental destruction present there. The Americas receive perhaps Kostenko's harshest criticism, as she condemns the destruction of both the environment and the indigenous peoples there.

Kostenko's poetry of the entire world and the universe serves as a reconciliation between her nation-building poetry and her depictions of other regions of the world: she recognizes the entire planet as the true, native homeland of humanity, and all people are connected in preserving and sustaining it. Regardless of national or linguistic differences, all humans live on the earth and are united as they gaze into the stars at the heavens, wondering what is above their orbiting sphere. Kostenko recognizes that while her personal home is Ukraine—and she will fervently build and defend it—she shares a common humanity with the rest of the world. Each person on the planet is seeking to stave off "cosmic homelessness" through the creation of their own imaginative geography.

These two poetic geographies represent creations of geographic mythology. Akhmatova creates a mythology of St. Petersburg (but not Russia), while Kostenko creates a mythology for Ukraine (but not Kyiv). Because Akhmatova is writing from the Russian Imperial/Soviet perspective, she does not need to engage in nation-building: Russian/Soviet historiography was already widely accepted, and Russia was recognized as a powerful nation. When she does stand up in defense of Russia, it is in the face of German aggressors, or to those who would abandon their land because of internal political oppressions: she does not need to persuade the world and her countrymen to recognize Russia as a legitimate power. For these reasons, Akhmatova's focus is centered on developing her own myth of St. Petersburg, building on the works of previous writers and historians, and creating a new, poetic depiction of her city that is by turns

supernatural and mundane, heavenly and oppressive. For Kostenko, however, the need to participate in the creation and perpetuation of a national mythology and to engage in nation-building was paramount. The Ukrainian historiography and worldview were not widely accepted, and she sought to speak out against the oppression of her people and standardize a Ukrainian view of history. Kostenko is explicit in her discussions of Ukrainian historiography, highlighting the direct link between the Kyivan Rus' and modern Ukraine, as well as emphasizing the Cossack Golden Age (including the Khmelnytsky period, absent of unification with Russia). Her poetic geography furthers Ukraine's nation-building project begun in the nineteenth century, and gives modern Ukrainians a symbol to rally around.

It is important to note that, despite their patriotism and obvious preference for their own nations, neither Kostenko nor Akhmatova displayed hatred toward other nationalities or regions of the world. Even when Kostenko writes with great fervor about her Ukrainian home, she still praises other cities and cultures around the world. Akhmatova likewise feels a deep connection to her homeland, and while she censures Russians who abandon their land, she nevertheless admires the culture and progress of other regions and nations. Both poets, then, emphasize the importance of home in their works. Home becomes the *place* for each of them that must be praised, extolled, defended, and—when necessary—reprimanded and encouraged to improve. Akhmatova does not ask the entire world to become Russian citizens: she simply encourages those who are Russians to remain true to their land as she does. Kostenko likewise invites Ukrainian solidarity among her compatriots, but she does not intend to convert the entire world to a Ukrainian national identity. This reality of personal affiliation represents the peculiarities of *place* and home: for each poet (and each reader), the meaning of home and the importance of *place* varies by perspective and point of reference. In speaking for their people, Kostenko and

Akhmatova each create a poetic geography that is representative of the time and place in which they are living. In other words, many Ukrainians contemporary to Kostenko will resonate with her poetic geography and feel that she has accurately depicted Ukrainian *places* and home; many Russians of Akhmatova's circle will feel that Akhmatova's geography accurately represents the relationships between home and *places.*

In light of these likely underlying similarities in worldview between members of the poets' respective milieus, the frameworks created by Kostenko's and Akhmatova's poetic geographies could be useful as a springboard to study the poetic geographies of other Ukrainian and Russian poets. For example, how does Blok's understanding of Russia manifest itself in his poetic geography, and how does that differ from Akhmatova's? Do other members of the *shistdesiatnyky* embrace Kostenko's Ukraino-centric poetic geography? Further studies comparing poetic geographies among similar milieus could elucidate individual and personal differences, while also revealing the broader cultural embrace of Russian/Soviet historiography vs. Ukrainian historiography as depicted in poetry.

This digital humanities, spatial exploration of poetic geographies joins the ranks of other literary-spatial projects that have been performed in recent years. It illustrates that poetry is a rich ground for applying spatial frameworks to texts. The analysis of lyric poetry is unique in its geographic discussion, as it does not generally provide a narrative arc through which to follow a character among geographic locations; rather the geographic scholar of poetry must identify seemingly isolated geographic references that are frequently removed from a known protagonist or a larger context. This challenge results in a large set of data points which must be identified and reassembled in order to create a comprehensive geography of all the places mentioned by that poet. While each geographic mention in and of itself may seem irrelevant, when taken

together, the hundreds of geographic references found in the works of Akhmatova and Kostenko reveal not only the fact that *place* is prevalent in—and even vital to—lyric poetry, but also provides meaningful insight into how the poets interpreted these *places.*

My interactive map allows user to engage with the poetry of Kostenko and Akhmatova in a new way. By visualizing the complete geographical lyrics of these poets, the user will be able to explore the various locations described by the authors and make new connections about the similarities of poems that may have previously seemed unrelated, but are now visually united by geography. This cartographic comparison of Akhmatova and Kostenko reveals insights that were not readily visible at the outset of the undertaking. For example, while it is common knowledge that Akhmatova favors Leningrad and Kostenko prefers Ukraine, the specific distribution of their geographic mentions had not previously been explored. The data and analysis from my project allow us to visualize the actual spatial distribution of these poets' geographies, which in fact reach far beyond their own homelands.

While the spatial exploration and mapping of lyric poetry is a new and emerging field, this dissertation asserts that spatial frameworks are valuable tools for both visualizing a poet's geographic works and for making conclusions about the underlying historiography and political trends of the day. The hundreds of geographic references in Akhmatova's and Kostenko's poetic works yield fascinating insights about the poets in particular and their societies at large, while also indicating that the geographical exploration of lyric poetry is only beginning.

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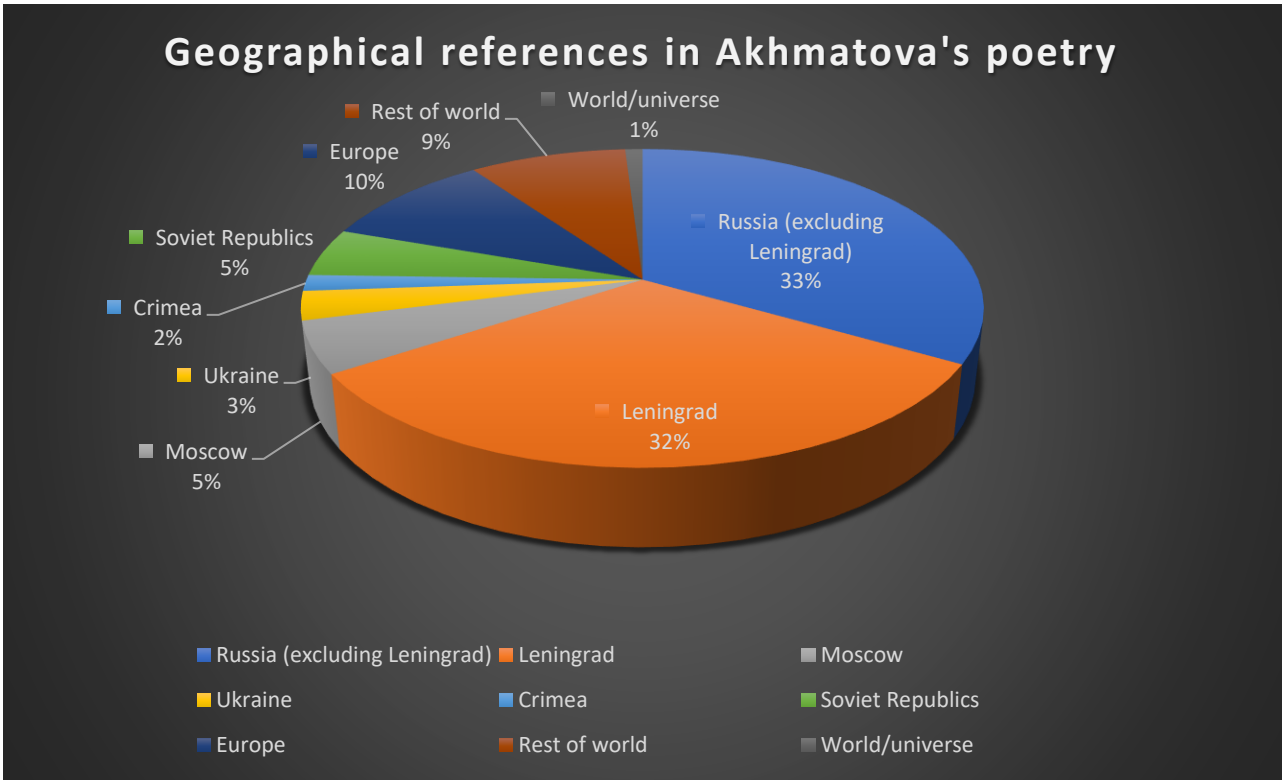
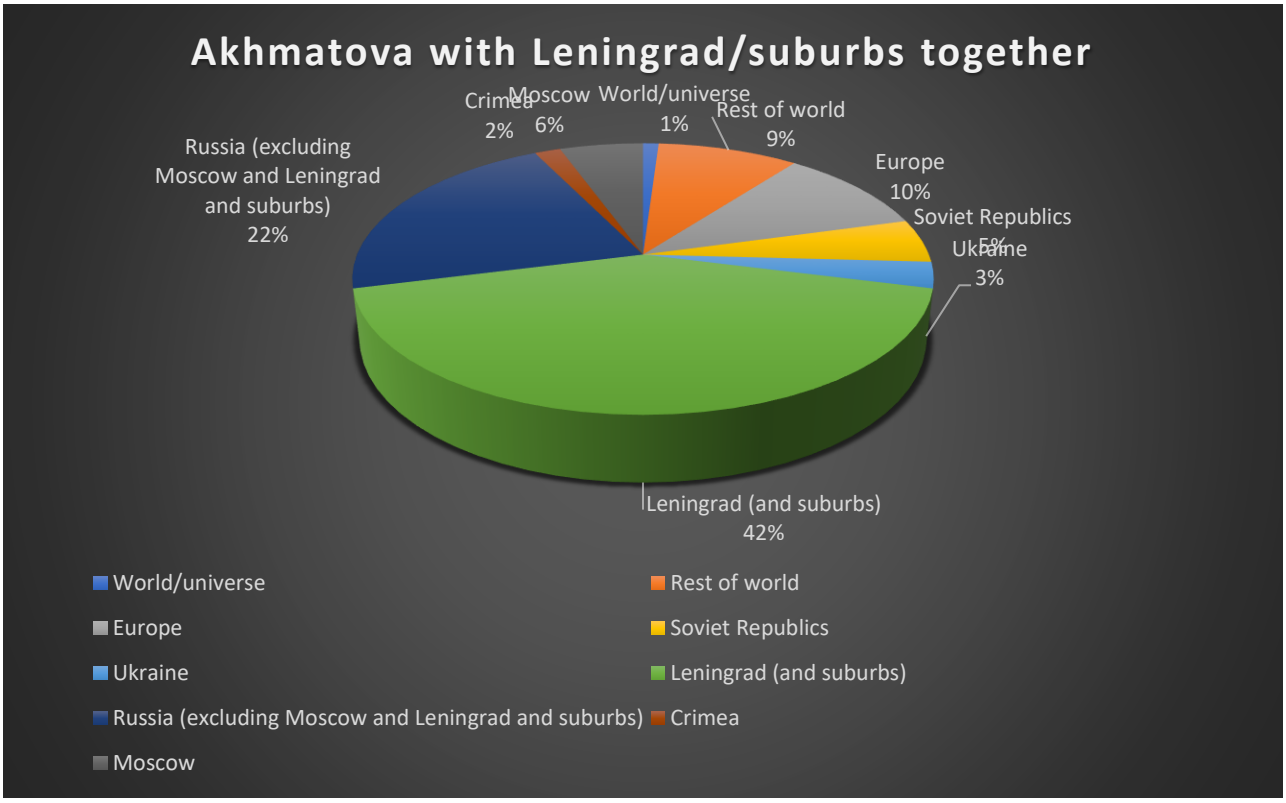
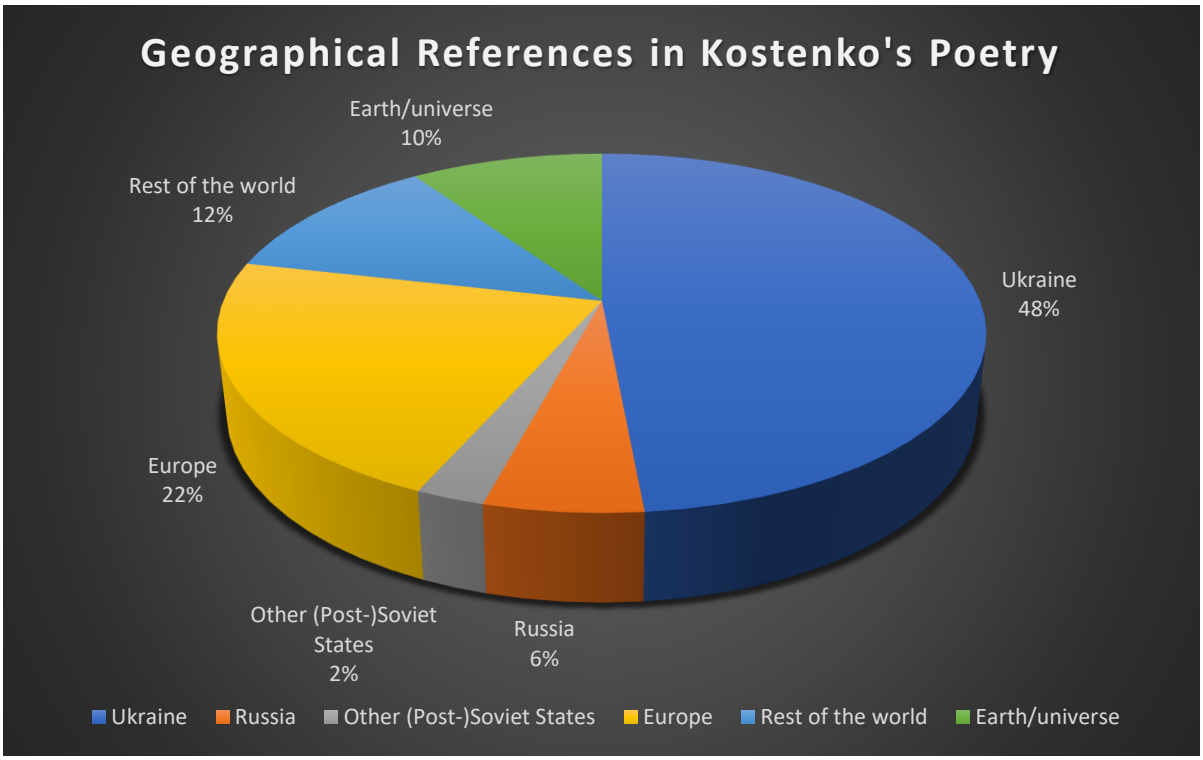
Appendix I: Charts






Geographical References in Kostenko's Poetry
Earth/universe
10%
Rest of the world
12%
Ukraine
48%
Europe
22%
Other (Post-)Soviet
States
2%
Russia
6%
Ukraine
Russia
Other (Post-)Soviet States
Europe
Rest of the world
Earth/universe

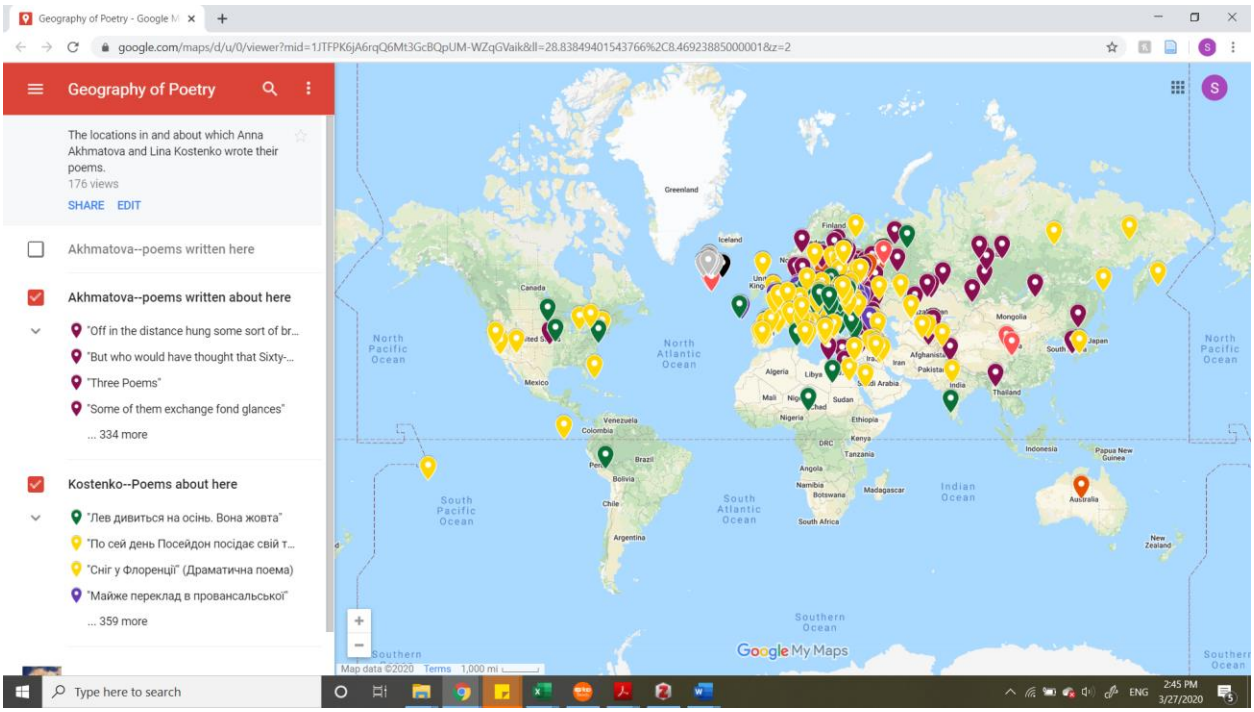
Appendix II: Mapping project reference and screenshots

The mapping project that corresponds with this dissertation can currently (March 2020) be viewed at:

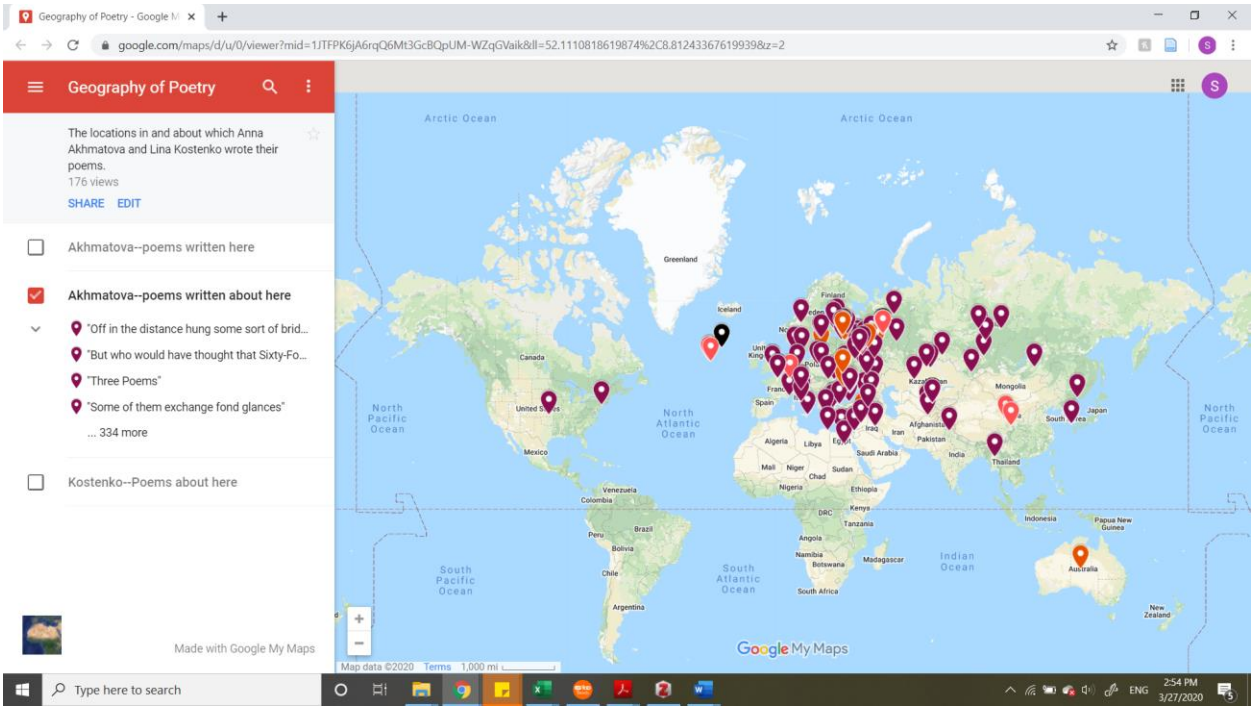
https://drive.google.com/open?id=1JTFPK6jA6rqQ6Mt3GcBQpUM-WZqGVaik&usp=sharing

Sample screenshots taken from the mapping project are shown below.

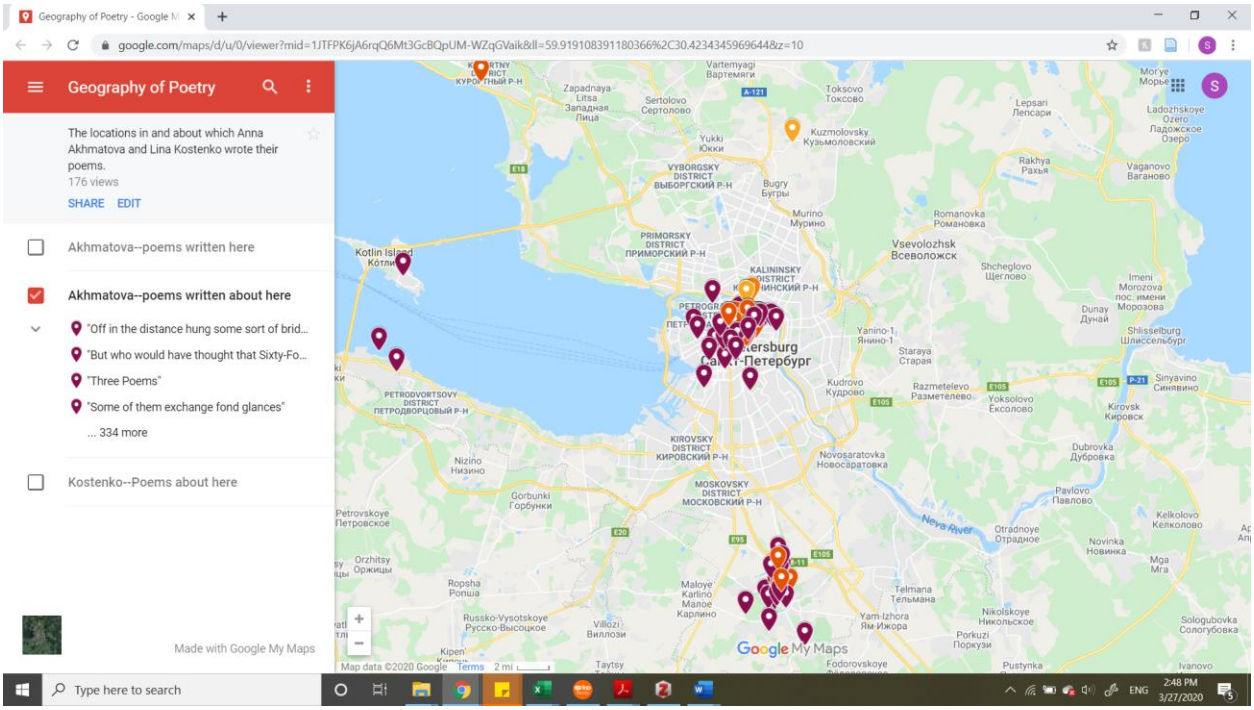
Whole-world view with layers open for places Akhmatova and Kostenko wrote about.



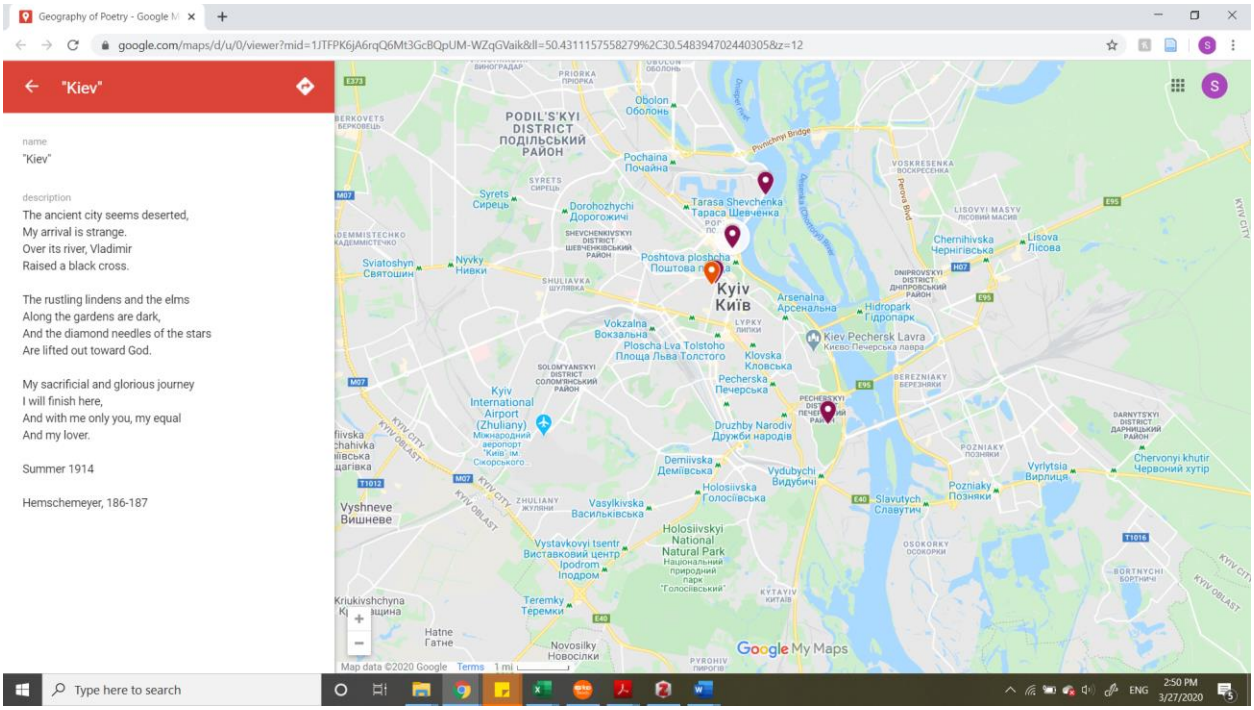
Whole-world view with layer open for places Akhmatova wrote about.



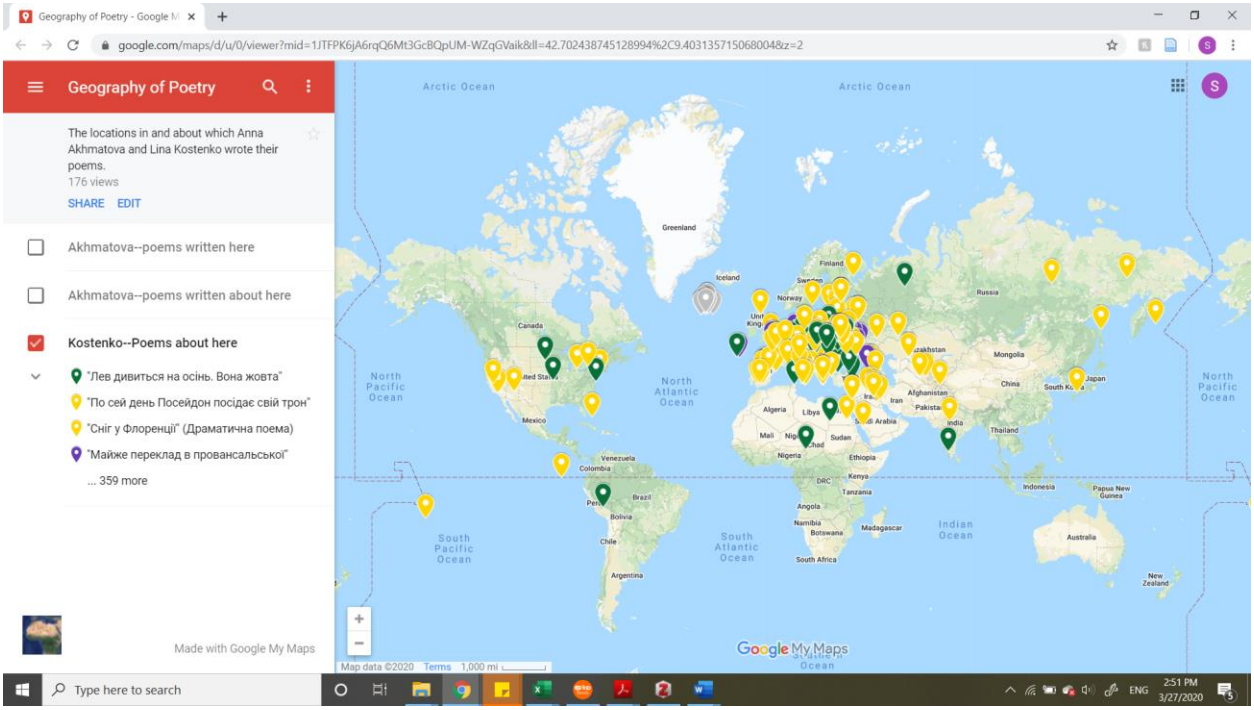
St. Petersburg region—Akhmatova.



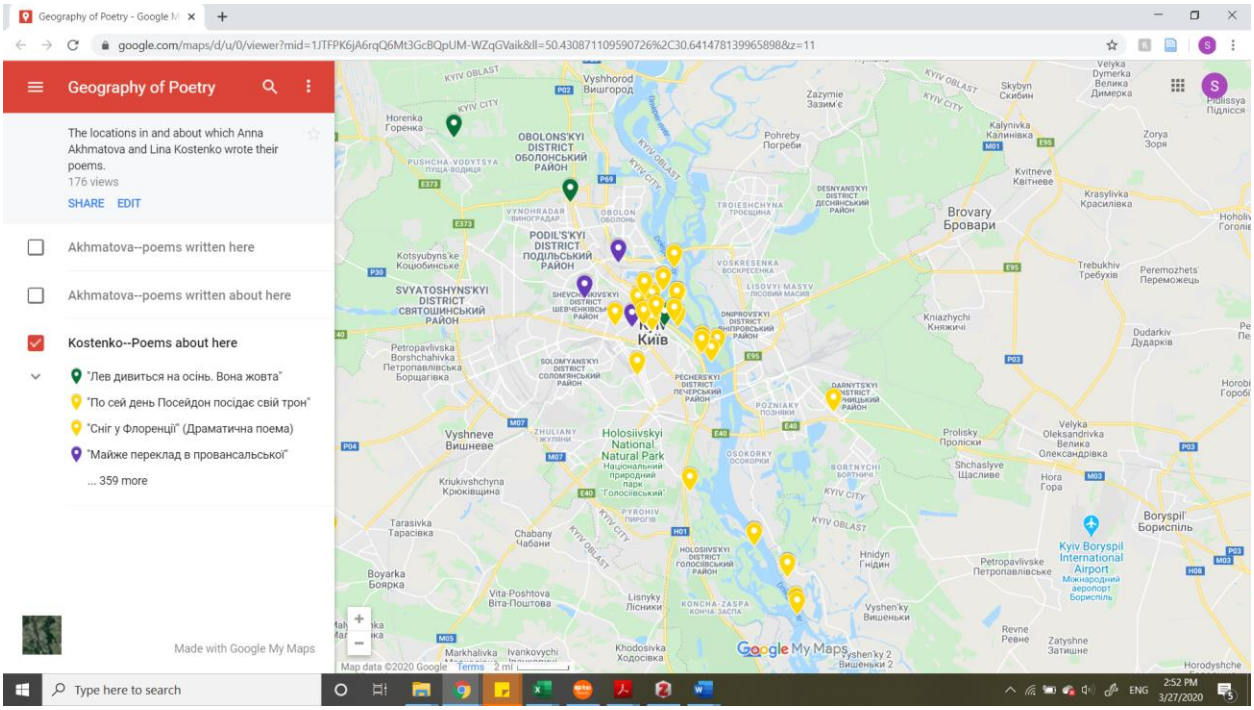
Sample poem opened: Akhmatova.



Whole-world view with layer open for places Kostenko wrote about.



Kyiv—Kostenko.



Sample poem open for Kostenko.