

Title: Music of Silence: The Creative Potential of Silence in Mandelstam's Poetics
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The theme of silence, prominent in the Russian literary tradition, plays an important role in poetry and prose – Pushkin finishes his *Boris Godunov* with the line, “narod bezmolvstvuet”; Gogol’s *The Inspector General* culminates in a silent scene; Griboedov’s *Woe from Wit* introduces a character, whose speaking name Molchalin invites an immediate association with silence; the Romantics Batiushkov and Zhukovsky link silence to the idea of the inexpressible, which Tiutchev’s “Silentium!” complicates by adding the notion of the incommunicable; Chekhov fills his plays with meaningful pauses and moments of silence. In the 20th century, Akhmatova, Blok, Briusov, Ivanov, Mandelstam, Merezhkovsky, and Tsvetaeva revisit the concept of silence to explore its aesthetic, philosophic, and religious aspects. Silver Age poets view silence as that which stimulates verbal expression and brings the poet closer to uncovering the mysteries of being on the one hand, and that which signifies oppressive silencing on the other. For Mandelstam silence in its various manifestations – muteness, tongue-tiedness and calm becomes a central theme in his early works. Specifically, the collection *Stone* (1916) captures the creative power of silence, which unites word, music, nature, and poetry. The theme of silence in Mandelstam’s oeuvre has been addressed by a few researchers (Brown, Pollak, Segal, Taranovski). However, this paper examines in detail the philosophy of silence as it applies to a single collection *Stone*. By analyzing a number of poems from the collection I will demonstrate how Mandelstam elaborates the concept of silence and enacts it on the structural level. As a technique, silence in *Stone* is evident in the phonological effects (which transform sound into echo and non-sound), “broken” rhythm, ellipses, and strophic organization. Thematically *Stone* establishes an ambivalent nature of silence – it is both mute and eloquent in that it precedes and simultaneously reveals poetic art.