Sound repetition in Griboedov's 'Gore ot uma'

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SOUND REPETITION IN GRIBOEDOV’S 
GORE OT UMA

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Preliminary remarks
With regard to Gore ot uma, probably most people will not think in the first place of this play in terms of poetry, while Griboedov is considered as a dramatist who wrote his famous play in verse, rather than as a poet in his own right. This is also explained by the limited amount of other verse that Griboedov has left behind, as much of his poetic output has undoubtedly been lost. Since most of the verse that has been saved for posterity concerns Griboedov’s earlier dramatic efforts, the balance naturally shifts to Griboedov as a playwright, though we may safely state that the brilliance of Gore ot uma would outshine any other work in verse.

Certainly, the verse – as verse – of Gore ot uma has not been neglected and has become the subject of a number of excellent detailed studies with respect to metre, rhythm and rhyme. Throughout the nearly two centuries of its existence many readers have expressed their praise for Griboedov’s artistry as a verse writer, beginning with Puškin, whose well-known rather sour remarks on Griboedov, the play and its characters are fully compensated by his truly prophetic judgement about the verse: О стихах я не говорю: половина – должны войти в пословицу (I’m not speaking about the verses: half of them must become proverbial; 1978, X: 96-97). About a century later, Tynjanov spoke of Gore ot uma as a “сценическая поэма” (scenic poem), of its “поэтическая конкретность” (“poetic concreteness”) and the “лирическая сила Чатского” (“Čackij’s lyrical power”) (1969: 374), emphasizing its poetic qualities.

However, to the best of my knowledge, no special attention has been paid to one particular aspect of the text-as-poetry – the level of sound organization,
other than with respect to the canonical-systematic categories of metre, verse
rhythm and rhyme which have been analysed in the works just mentioned.3 In
this paper it is my aim to discuss this aspect of Gore ot uma which, as I hope to
demonstrate, plays a considerable role in the dramatic text.

In order to distinguish between different forms of sound organization –
which basically rests on sound repetition (further: SR) – I would first like to
present a brief typology of SR, which certainly does not lay claim to maximal
completeness or precision, but serves to define many of the terms used later in
the analysis of Griboedov’s play. It comprises both artistic-aesthetic phenomena
and some that seem far removed from this domain. Besides, not in all cases we
are dealing with repetition, but with substitution – though the latter is based on
(deletion of) repetition.

Conventionally, and formally, the following types can be distinguished:
assonance – loosely defined as vowel repetition, in the stricter sense – in consecu-
tive words; alliteration – loosely defined as consonant repetition in consecutive
words; in the stricter sense, as repetition of the initial consonants of consecutive
words; internal rhyme – defined as rhyme within one verse line, the sound repeti-
tion following the laws of end rhyme. Apart from these three canonical types
there are other forms of SR, which may have some formal traits in common
with these three canonical ones, but, on the whole, are less strictly organized. In
Russia, after the studies (and practice) of the Symbolists, a systematic approach
to less well-defined SR was initiated, starting with Osip Brik’s article of 1919
‘Zvukovye povtory’, which deals with repeated consonant clusters in classical
Russian poetry.

In recent times, research has resulted in the recognition of a specific type of
sound organization as formulated and defined by V.P. Grigor’ev and developed
by him, N.A. Koževnikova and others – the phenomenon of паронимическая
аттракция (“paronymic attraction”), which, according to Grigor’ev, is especially
caracteristic of modern Russian twentieth-century poetry where it becomes a
dominant organizing factor. In earlier poetry the phenomenon (e.g. in Puškin)
is seen as incidental, which applies to Griboedov as well.

Paronymic attraction /paronymy is defined by Grigor’ev as follows: 1) it im-
plies a semantic connection between the (two or more) words/lexemes involved: “возникают различные эффекты семантической близости, или, наоборот, противопоставленности паронимов” (there arise various effects of semantic closeness, or, by contrast, of opposition of the paronyms); 2) the lexemes involved share at least two identical consonants; 3) the lexemes are not connected by derivational proximity, i.e. do not share the (etymologically) same root (Gri-gor’ev 1979: 264). In this third condition Grigor’ev departs from the widespread use of the term паронимия (паронимия) in linguistics, where it does refer to different forms derived from the same root. Here it is distinguished from парономасия (парономасия) (cf. Grigor’ev 1979: 257), which is regarded by many as a “mistake”, as “folk” or “false” etymology. Thus the “linguistic” type of paronymy comprises such ancient forms of SR as polyptoton (the occurrence of one root with different cases, figura etymologica (annominatio – the occurrence of one root with different grammatical forms/affixes) and epizeuxis (“pure” word repetition). In order to reduce the danger of terminological confusion it is important to emphasize the following: Grigor’ev recognises that his “паронимическая аттракция” is basically concerned with traditional парономасия, however, he declares that the term паронимия is equally valid for describing the phenomena he investigates, we may surmise, for reasons of simplicity (262-263).

Paronymous attraction, as it is analysed and demonstrated by Grigor’ev, appears to be closely related to the principle of the anagram (diphones and poly-phones), which became the object of research of Ferdinand de Saussure – though the linguist himself was not satisfied with the results (cf. Grigor’ev 1979: 253; Starobinski 1971; Wunderli 2004). Paronymous attraction is also closely related to such well-known phenomena as calembour (pun) and wordplay, but in terms of poetic function these mostly have an either involuntary or intended humorous, or even comical effect. This is dependent on the poetic context, themes and diction, which are, with few exceptions, fully serious in such poets as Pasternak or Cvetaeva, and, we must presume, in Chlebnikov. More ambiguous in this respect is Majakovskij, whose paranomasias may also be intended at least to raise a smile.

In any case, the expressive, unexpected confrontation of two similar or identi-
cal sounding words is, in a sense, fraught with the danger of being unintentionally comical, or worse.

Having arrived halfway this brief typology, we turn to its following, “bottom” half, which ranges from the humorous to the unethical, not to say, criminal: The *calembour* (pun) is halfway between (positive) sound organization and sound “disorder” (“disorganization”), as it may be either intentionally funny or undesirable, unintentional, and, from the viewpoint of maximum efficiency regarded as an “assembly error”, impairing efficient communication.

Structurally speaking, from here onwards, both the “correct” and the “incorrect” members of the paronymic couple may be jointly present in the utterance (explicit doubles, or what may be called “sound parallelism”), but more often the “correct” form is deleted and replaced by the “incorrect” form in the utterance. Here either the speaker or the listener (or both) may be unaware of the “mistake”, whereas a third (observer, witness) may notice it. In the latter case the calembour (pun) can be classified as a *malapropism* or *false etymology*, whereas *Spoonerisms* may be both intended and involuntary. Unambiguously negative are *slips of the tongue* and *typo’s* (which can be regarded as *Fehlleistung* in a Freudian framework).

Certainly intentional, however on behalf of the intended *receiver* of the message, is a recent unethical, or even criminal development: *typosquatting* – the use of domain names on the internet that are very similar to “real” sites (e.g. “goofle”, or “yahoi”). These speculate on users’ typing errors to direct them to a site with all kinds of dubious purposes. Admittedly, such a phenomenon is determined by pragmatic function, rather than form, but it serves to illustrate the potential dangers of paronymy. Thus, the members of this brief typology form a continuum, sometimes it is difficult to draw a sharp distinction, when regarded out of context, as the aesthetical borders on the pathological (and even the criminal).

However, at this point we may recall the warning issued by Willem Weststeijn in his article “Poets are not Aphasics” (Weststeijn 1983). Here, as his title shows, he strongly objects to a pathological view of literary construction – in this case with regard to metaphor and metonymy which, from a point of view of “normality”, are by some regarded as speech deficiencies. By the same token, almost all
SR listed in this typology can in some way function fruitfully in the construction of artistic texts. This is connected with the above-mentioned basic tenet of all theories of SR phenomena which can be called structural, that repetition on the sound level results in attention being drawn to various possible semantic relationships—in its ultimate form a (quasi-)onomatopoeic view, establishing, suggesting or “recovering” the motivatedness of the poetic signifier. This is basically a matter of artistic parole, but for a poet like Chlebnikov the full motivatedness of any linguistic sign governs all of the langue.

In a discussion of sound repetitions it should be recognised that their (artistic) effectiveness is dependent on a number of factors that, taken together, determine what may be called their (relative) “strength” or “weakness”. Of great relevance are the following factors:

1) The number of identical sounds in the units (words) involved in the repetition: cf. Grigor’ev’s criteria for “paronymous attraction”, defined by a minimum of two consonants, whereas three or more strengthen the SR; in Grigor’ev’s terms, the “glubina” (“depth”) of the paronymous relation (1979: 266, 275n.).

2) The distance between the paronyms. Grigor’ev distinguishes between “kontaktnye” (contact) and “distantnye” (distant) “povtory”; cf. also e.g. Koževnikova (1988: 183-184). Obviously, close proximity is the strongest, whereas a critical distance may exist (also depending on other, contextual factors) where the repetition is hardly perceived, or not at all.

3) The type of units involved in the repetition. It makes a difference if whole words are repeated (as in epizeuxis, or in epanalepsis), or roots, or grammatical forms (affixes).

Word, root or morpheme repetition has sound repetition as a corollary. And though the repetition of whole words may seem trivial and “unoriginal”, it is a factor that works, though at a different level, and its lack of “inventiveness” does not diminish its great poetic-artistic potential. Whereas the structural significance of lexical (root-)repetition has traditionally been acknowledged in rhetorical devices (flexion, as in polyptoton, and derivation, as in figura etymologica), it does not appear as the most “original” SR. However, morpheme (affix) repetition seems problematical with respect to
its participation in SR. Even though grammatical end rhyme has always been accepted as valid in Russian poetry (to my knowledge, in classical Russian poetry it has never seriously been considered as a too easy way of making a rhyme), at first sight it seems trivial that grammatical repetition (e.g. concordance) entails sound repetition. The occurrence of repeated /im/ in e.g. этим своим новым знакомым does not strike one as a particularly salient SR. Nevertheless, if combined (at short range) with other (e.g. lexical) repetitions of /im/, they could surely play a supporting role, joining in with an already effective paronymous pair or series.

Making mention of accidental or intentional typo’s we have entered the field of graphic representation. This leads us to a second general point to be considered – as in all discussions concerning various kinds of sound organization – viz. the status (hypostasis) of what is repeated: Are we dealing with phonic or with graphic substance? On which plane do we consider repetition (e.g. on which plane does it work)? Are we dealing with “sounds” or “letters” and from which perspective? On this issue most structuralists recognise the primacy of phonic substance. It is noteworthy that de Saussure considered calling his “anagrams” “anaphonies”, as he wished to maintain the priority of the phonological principle (Starobinski 1971: 27).

But in this case, are we to adopt a phonetic or a phonemic/phonological approach? In both cases there are different schools and opinions. Without going any deeper into this matter, let us note, however, that a phonic approach may consider either phonetic/perceptual, or phonemic/phonological units as a basis of analysis. In the latter case we must further take into account that there are different phonological approaches and schools, some examples of which are noted in the following.

Against this general tendency, Grigor’ev, in his treatment of paronymous attraction, shows himself to be a champion of the (ortho)graphic principle (1979: 264), following Brik’s 1919 study where he states that e.g. hard and soft consonants are not distinguished (Brik also speaks of “bukvennye povtory”, “letter repetitions”), and relying on statements from Russian poets that what they have in mind is first of all graphic form (265). An objection to Grigor’ev’s
statement is that this leads to a certain inconsistency: if we assume that “laws” for SR follow those of Russian end rhyme, this does not apply to Russian (non-eye) end rhyme (Grigor’ev is aware of this [265]), which often shows a perfect phonetic identity (e.g. an accepted rhyme like лёг/рок) or phonological identity (e.g. лить/быть), while differing graphically. Thus Grigor’ev’s thesis ignores some phonologically/phonemically relevant phenomena which are not graphically reflected in Russian such as, to name a few: 1) word-final devoicing, 2) vowel reduction and 3) palatalization, reflected in a “misleading” way: as hard/soft indicated by a following vowel (or soft sign), rather than the consonant grapheme itself.

Nevertheless, confronting these contrary views with each other, we must take into account that listening/watching a play like Gore ot uma on stage is a different activity from silent reading. The dramatic text is essentially synaesthetic in the sense of having an auditory (plus visual) hypostasis (characters’ text) and a graphic hypostasis (including paratext). Both hypostases can interact and complement each other, especially if the reader is familiar with both. Generally speaking, this also holds for any reading/declamation of poetry. Without going into all aspects of the matter, and recognising the fundamental primacy of the phonic substance for Russian poetry (if only on the grounds of the laws of classical end rhyme) I would defend the view that both hypostases of the poetic/dramatic text should be taken into account in dealing with what I would still call “sound repetition”. In a situation of a (silent) reading of a poem, the reader may perceive graphic repetition as sound repetition, especially in the case of Russian, where there is a relatively high concordance between grapheme and phoneme (when e.g. compared with English with its abundance of homographs and homophones). Yet, when reading poetry, both the graphic and the phonic principle can be “active” in different degrees, as the reader makes a (how ever minimal) mental representation of the text’s potential phonic concretization. This also depends on context and reading/hearing experience. For example, those who have heard Brodsky read his own poems, are quite likely to recall and co-re-enact this declamation when re-reading these poems and possibly many others by the same poet. Of course this also holds for any impressive
declaration, say, of Puškin by a good čtec on a literaturnyj večer. Besides, in recent years the availability of “resounding” poetry has also increased by means of new media and data-carriers.

Admittedly, it is doubtful whether this works the other way around to the same extent. Usually a graphic representation does not arise in our minds when listening to a poetry reading, except perhaps when we know a poem’s special graphic form, such as e.g. Apollinaire’s ‘Il pleut’, or e.e. cummings’ lower-case poetry, or Majakovskij’s lesenki.

This leads to the recognition that, in a reading process, phonological oppositions may be (temporarily) ignored, in favour of recognising the significance of graphically identical units, and that, in accordance with specific circumstances, “letters” may be on a par with “sounds”.

One final preliminary remark on the phonic/graphic issue: If we recognise the validity of graphic alongside phonic form, it remains a matter of contention (but of great importance for assessing the strength of sound repetitions in Russian), in how far unstressed vowels take part in SR. Obviously, unstressed a and o “suffer” from their qualitative change in reduction, whereas unstressed e, i, (merging in [i]) retain more similarity to their stressed counterparts (this does not hold for unstressed ja (я)). Even more so unstressed u does not lose much of its quality, in comparison to its stressed counterpart.

Returning to the semantic aspects of SR adumbrated above, let us very briefly consider the possible functions or effects of sound repetition on the semantic level: in all formalist and structuralist views SR are regarded as emphasizing, establishing, or suggesting a special semantic relation between the units involved in the sound repetition, often formulated as a matter of “sense” (смысл) rather than “meaning” (значение). This applies to all more or less systematic repetitions, but with increasing significance (strength) from alliteration, via assonance and paronymy, to full rhyme. Generally speaking, categories of semantic relationship are based on metaphor or metonymy, but also other, more specific relations between units are possible, e.g. oxymoron, or synaesthesia. Metaphor basically entails two opposed possibilities (“sound metaphor”):
a) a suggestion of synonymy, of identity in meaning, equation; b) an emphasis on opposition (e.g. день – тень, already existing at the level of the langue).

Metonymic relations may be of various kinds, e.g. an unexpected causal, or spatial relation may be intimated between the units involved. Actually, the coexistence of both a metaphorical and a metonymical suggested linkage is quite possible (e.g. грёзы – розы, where dreams may be like roses (sweet, abundant) or be evoked by roses). Obviously, semantic relations arising from sound organization are inexhaustible as poets again and again appear to explore and exploit its possibilities.

**Gore ot uma**

Taking into account the preceding preliminary considerations, here we list a number of various sound repetitions in *Gore ot uma*. This inventory cannot be exhaustive within the limitations of this paper, but nevertheless attempts to demonstrate the rich and effective use of various SR by Griboedov. First, let us note some examples of the traditionally recognized SR:

Griboedov widely uses *assonance* (in which he generally shows a predelection for o-o, a-a – also in his earlier dramatic writings). Sometimes the assonance is triple or even quadruple, as in: Ви́нь, прихоти каки́е завели́сь! (1-1, 56, Ф); Грех не беда, молва не хоро́ша (1-5, 63, Л); Хотел объехать це́лый свет (1-10, 73, Ч). Cf. also the morphological, but very effective assonance: А кем из них я дорожу, / Хочу – люблю, хочу – скажу (2-11, 94, С).

*Alliteration* (in the strict sense of initial letters/sounds of consecutive words) is less frequent, but with Не снм, покудова не схватишься со стула (1-1, 54, Л) Griboedov shows straightaway that he likes sound effects, the alliteration proper being reinforced by the repetition of к and т, which in fact amounts to a case of paronymous attraction. In Играем и шумим по сту́лям и столь (1-7, 68, Ч) a metonymical relationship is put into relief. We may also note Скажи скорее (2-8, 89, Ч), which comes close to alliterations in the already given form of colloquial idioms and sayings, which in many languages favour alliteration, such as вкривь и вкось (2-3, 81, Ф; 3-1, 102, С). Combinations of vowel and consonant repetition, of assonance and alliteration in the less strict sense, occur...
regularly. A striking example, combining both vowel and consonant repetition, is the hero’s name, which figures not only in the list of dramatis personae, but is spoken several times by other characters: Александр Андреевич Чайкин – a case of (linguistic) paronymy between first name and patronymic (etymologically from the same root: Gr. andr-) – whereas Griboedov establishes an assonance with the hero’s surname. Cf. also Сергей Сергеич, an *annominatio* of father and son which, after Griboedov, will have a long tradition in Russian literature. A more subtle interplay of assonance and consonant repetition: У девушек сон утренний так тонок (1-1, 57, Λ). Here we find an instance of the relatively weak vowel reduction of *y*: only one of the *y*’s is stressed, yet the assonance is perceptible. Cf. also Вчера был бал, а завтра будет два (1-7, 68, Χ), and a complex sequence like У покровителей зевать на потолок / Явиться помолчать, понабраться, пообедать, / Подставить стул, поднять платок (2-2, 78, Φ) and the well-known lines: Тебя уж упекут, / Под суд, как пить дают (2-3, 80, Φ) with под суд repeated in the following lines, and the internal rhyme added to the identical end rhyme. These last two examples to a great extent rely on grammatical repetition, which does not, however, diminish their impact. Occasionally we find “pure” *internal rhyme*: Богат, и на богатой был женат (2-1, 75, Φ), which is reinforced by additional “linguistic” paronymy, in this case a *polyptoton*. Additional cases of “linguistic” paronymy: Попал или хотел попасть? (1-4, 61, Φ) and К любящим, к гвардии, к гвардейским, к гвардейцам (2-6, 88, Ск). A related figure is the *figura etymologica* (which is not especially inventive, but belongs to the idiom of the language): будешь горе горевать (4-14, 153, Φ).

In a number of cases the SR satisfies the conditions of *paronomasia* (paronymy, as defined by Grigor’ev), and we may venture to speak of “paronymous attraction” (however, we repeat the proviso made above concerning its exclusive occurrence in Russian modern poetry): Right at the beginning of Gore ot uma we find [...] беда. / Запла плеса ваши за ночь (1-1, 54, Λ), and a little later Счастливые часов не наблюдают (1-3, 58, С), followed by И свет и грусть. Как быстры ночи (1-3, 58, С). Famusov’s tirade against fashion and literature receives additional expressiveness by the concluding [...] И книжных и бис-
китных лавок (1-4, 59, Ф). Especially inventive is: Мне нравится, при этом смете / Искусно как коснулись вы / Предубеждения Москвы (2-6, 88, Ск), which in fact forms an almost complete anagram. Other examples: Вишки ей уксусом потри / Опрыскивая водой (2-8, 90, Ч) and Скажите лучше, почему / Вы с барышней скромны, а с горнишной [sic] повесы? (2-12, 96, Л). Here we may even assume that Griboedov changed the spelling (in accordance with old alternative pronunciation) from ч to ш in order to enhance the depth of the paronomasia. Not quite meeting the standards but certainly remarkable is Повышки вдоль из головы (1-4, 63, Ф).

To a certain extent some of the preceding examples can be regarded as wordplay. Again we must emphasize that the poet Griboedov is responsible here, rather than the characters, though perhaps Famusov and Čackij may be interpreted as consciously producing such effects. In the following I will discuss the specific wordplay – and SR in the wider sense – on the components of the title “Горе от ума” and their occurrence in the text. It can be seen as a “thematic” title, in the sense that it captures the global content and moral of the play, expressing a paratextual authorial comment (cf. Clayton 1987: 9). These are put forward as the pivotal words of the text that follows, though they need not necessarily occur in the characters’ speech – which, actually, is the case.

The wordplay on the most intriguing and problematical component, ūм, has become the subject of J. Douglas Clayton’s excellent study of its semantics (1987). However, I would like to add to his findings, which remain within the (semantic) domain of the inherent ambiguity (polysemy) of ūм and the play with this root in compounds and cognates based on “linguistic” paronymy. In the following I will go beyond this and examine those specific sound repetitions in which горе and ūм are involved, that belong to the field of “paronomasia”, i.e. with units that are not cognates or compounds.

Горе

Actually, горе is not very frequent in the text (its derivative, the “linguistic” paronym горький also appears only once), though towards the end it occurs a few times in Čackij’s speech and acquires more significance, as the hero increasingly
becomes aware of his situation. Ironically, it also occurs in Famusov’s speech, when he tells Čackij that if he moves to a provincial town he will горе горевать (4-14, 153, Φ; the figura etymologica already mentioned above), whereas for Čackij Moscow is the town (город) that means горе for him.

This brings us to the paronomastic wordplay on the string гор (горь), entailing some potential paronyms: гора, город, гореть (горячий), гордый. The case for intentional wordplay on these different roots in Gore ot uma seems rather weak, but two factors seem to strengthen it:

1) the remarkable coincidence of two characters’ names: Загорецкий and Горичевы (Горичи in other variants of the play). What matters is that these occur in characters’ speech, not just in the stage directions or list of dramatis personae, though reading these names (in graphic form) increases their presence. Semantically the names are indeterminate, but if we would be made to choose a meaning, we might think of за горой (over the hill, mountain) in Загорецкий (cf. Загорский), in the case of Горичевы probably of гореть (burn). In any case, it seems that the paronymic attraction of горе was so strong, that these names are motivated rather than fully arbitrarily chosen.10

2) There are some interesting combinations, in relatively close proximity, of the roots гор and горь with ум, that allude to their (causal) linkage in the title: В нем Загорецкий не умрет (3-13, 121, Ч); [Загорецкий:] В горах изранен, в лоб, сошел с ума от раны (3-18, 125, З); Ах! голова горит, вся кровь моя в волненьи. / Явилась! нет ее! неужели в виденьи? / Не впрямь ли я сошел с ума? (4-10, 146, Ч). Here the effect is reinforced by the alliteration in the first line and the continuation a few lines later in which the “real” горе appears: [...] Уж коли горе пить / Так лучше сразу (ibid.). In these last two passages, it seems, there is a pun on the title as a whole, including a suggestion of the causal relation, via в горах (in the mountains) and горит (is burning), respectively.

Ум

However, most striking are sound repetitions containing the central root (and word) ум. It differs from гор in that it cannot enter into a paronymous relation, according to Grigor’ev’s criteria, lacking a second consonant. Nevertheless the
wordplay on it and other (“weaker”) forms of sound repetition are a prominent feature of Gore ot uma.

But first, let us briefly consider the semantics of ум and its compounds and derivatives, which has defied the efforts of translators\textsuperscript{12} into all languages, but, and this may serve as some consolation, is far from unambiguous for Russians. It is sufficiently complicated to require a special study of its use and meanings (including умный) in NOSSRJa (1997: 447-456).

However, there is also the diachronic factor: One has to take into account that ум in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century usage may have had some different meanings, or connotations, for Griboedov’s contemporaries (cf. Il’ev 1994). Clayton, apart from the general meaning of ум, discusses its concrete meaning(s) in the play, which, for different characters, amounts to something different (especially Faminov vs. Čackij), which yields, according to Clayton, three meanings of ум (1987: 8). Closely connected to this, and further increasing its intricacies, are the derivatives such as умный and a range of set expressions, the most important of which are не в (своем) уме, сойти с ума/сумасшедший, на умё which result in wordplay. This actually leads to the misunderstanding (Sofija’s Он не в своем уме; 3-14, 121, C) and the following exaggeration and spread of rumour (Он сопел с ума), which proves to be central – and fatal – in the development of the plot (cf. Clayton 1987: 10).

However, Griboedov’s paronymic play with ум on the lexical-semantic level (word/root repetition implying sound repetition) is enhanced by play on the level of sound organization – more elaborate than in the case of горе – by means of various forms of sound repetition: internal rhyme, anagram and paronomasia. A few of these have been pointed out by Clayton – in his words: “‘folk etymology[ies]’ on Griboedov’s part”: умудрились, мудрено, премудрого, суматоха (1987: 7).

Ум occurs in various combinations with other words, containing this sound sequence ум but also its reverse ам.\textsuperscript{13} Here we list some of these (partial) anagrams and internal rhymes (some occur as end rhymes in the text) with some notes on the resulting semantic relationships:

a) ум ∼ ам (almost a “false etymology” on a metonymical basis – contiguity) ∼ аум (basically a semantic contrast, cf. Repetilov’s repetition in 4-4, 138) ∼ чума
(turning out to be a “synonym”, or a “result” of ум); ~ умереть and ~ умерли (“results” of ум).

b) anagram/reverse: ум ~ (с)мутить ~ музы ~ музыка ~ мудрый ~ умурились ~ амура ~ мундир ~ муж (замужем) ~ мазурки ~ жмурки ~ ему мир ~ румянец ~ кутерьму ~ тюрьму ~ тыму. Some of these may not seem very significant and do not quite engage in direct contact with ум. However, we may add one salient case, the name Фамусов (on its possible meaning and derivation cf. Tynjanov 1969: 373), which contains ум in reverse, but more importantly, the anagram с ума, in fact a palindrome. This is strengthened by the fact that his name is spoken in the text, though quite late (twice, in 4-1 and 4-2) and thus is not merely a matter of a reading of Gore ot uma.

The relative strength of these SR is proportionate to their proximity in the text. Thus contact (“kontaktnye”) SR are more effective than distant repetitions, especially if they occur in clusters. In Gore ot uma there are a number of such clusters which I list in the following: For reasons of space, despite their proximity the fragments containing these clusters are not all quoted in full, but their distance is indicated. Other SR occurring in the vicinity of these clusters are also noted, as they reinforce the basic SR.

A strong cluster occurs quite early: Мать умерла: умел я принять / В в адам Розье вторую мать / ... / УМНА была ... (range 4 lines; I-4, 60, Ф); Подумай, как счастье свое правильно! / ... / Когда ж печальное ничто на ум нейдет, / Забылись музыкой ... (range 4 lines; I-5, 64, С); ... Что стали умны хоть куда. / Пускай в МОЛЧАНИИ ум бойкий, гений смелый, / Но есть ли в нем та страсть? то чувство? ныкость та? / Чтоб, кроме вас, ему мир целый / Казался прах и суета? (range 4 lines; 3-1, 99, Ч); Не засижусь, войдя, всего минуты две, / Потом, подумайте, член Английского клуба, / Я там дни целине пожертвую молва / Про ум МОЛЧАНИИ, про душу Скалозуба (3-2, 103, Ч). These last four lines may seem rather weak (in passing we note what is almost a pun, the (semantically) antithetical молва ~ МОЛЧАНИИ), however, across the boundary between scene 2 and 3 there is a strong continuation, as Čackij orates: Aх! Софья! Неужли Молчалин избран ей! / А чем не муж? УМА в нем только мало; / Но чтоб иметь детей, / КОМУ УМА недоставало?
Beginning with 3-14 the rumour of Čackij’s “madness” spreads, which entails the regular and insistent (paronymic) repetition of с ума, сумасшествие, полоумный, безумный, which also dominates the SR in the second half of the play: А му же мо ему совет дал жить в деревне / | Б е з у м ный по всему. | Я видела из глаз/ | По матери пошел, по Анне Алексеевне / Покойница с у ма сходила восемь раз. / | На свете дивные бывают приключения! / В его лета с у ма спрыгнул! ... (3-21, 127-128, НА/3/Гв/Ф/Х). Cf. also the famous У ч е н ь е — вот чума, ученость — вот причина, / Что иначе, пуше, чем когда, Безумных развело людей, и дел и мнений / | И впрямь с у ма сойдешь ... (3-21, 128, Ф/Х).

However, it appears Griboedov saved the best for last, as Čackij’s final tirade contains a number of clusters: Подумайте / ... / М у ж-мальчик, муж-слуга, из женских пажей — / Высокий идеал московских всех мужей (4-14, 155, Ч) and 16 lines later: ... М у ч и т е л е й толпа, / ... / Нескладных умников, лукавых простяков, / Старух зловещих, стариков, / Дряхлеющих над вы-дуками, вздором, — / Безумных вы меня прославили всем хором.

And his famous final words: Где оскорбленному есть чувство уголок! — / Карету мне, карету! (4-14, 156, Ч). The series is rounded off by F amino, who has the final word in the play: Ну что? не видишь ты, что он с у ма сошел? / Скажи сурьезно: / Безумный! что он тут за чепуху молол! Низкопоклон-ник! тесь! и про Москву так грозно! / А ты меня решилась уморить? ... (4-15, 156, Ф).

Thus Griboedov reinforces his brilliant (paronymic) wordplay with some
highly significant (paronomastic) sound effects. A final point to be considered
is the distribution of these sound patterns among the characters. Though
Čackij's, Famusov's and Liza's speech styles have been appreciated for their
juicy expressiveness, it turns out that none of them are really “privileged” in
this respect. We might especially note that one of the less “expressive” charac-
ters, Skalozub, produces a paronomasia like the one mentioned above: Искус-
но как коснулись вы (2-6, 88, Ск). SR occur in the speech of all characters, and
in this respect the poet Griboedov makes himself felt. Like metre/rhythm and
rhyme, his use of these SR testifies to the double articulation of dramatist and
dramatis personae, which is obscured by the accepted convention of “ordinary
people” speaking in verse, both in reading and in hearing/watching Gore ot uma.

It would be something of an exaggeration to regard Griboedov as a direct
forerunner of poets like Bal’mont, Cvetaeva, Pasternak, and Chlebnikov. The
latter took sound (repetition) to its farthest consequences, welding sound/letter
and meaning together in an attempt to accomplish the full motivatedness of the
word. Nevertheless this incomplete inventory of various types of SR in Gribo-
edov's comedy shows that he did not just exploit some additional expressiv-
ness of sound organization, but by means of sound- and wordplay also un-
covered so far hidden semantic linkages. By their frequency and occurrence at
crucial moments, they appear to contribute to the fact that half of the verse
lines have indeed become unforgettable, as predicted by Puškin.

Notes
1 Cf. E.V. Chvorost'janova, 'Lirika Andreja Bitova', Russian Literature, LXI (2007), p. 425, who,
though in a quite different context, chooses Griboedov as an example of an author whose one
field of literary output is given priority over another in literary reference works.
2 Cf. e.g. Tomaševskij (1946), and more recently Šapir (2000), who pays special attention to the
distribution of particular metrical-rhythmic features among the main characters and provides
statistical analyses. For a brief but comprehensive analysis of the play see Kośny (1988).
3 Scherr uses the terms “sound repetitions” (1986: 267), “sound correspondences” (267), and
“sound texture” (268). Wachtel uses the terms “sound organization” (2004: 42), “sound patterning”
(43), “sound texture” (43). These largely correspond to “эвфония” (euphony) and “инстру-
ментовка” (instrumentation). The latter two and the more general “sound organization”, “sound
texture” would also encompass such “large-scale” phenomena as the lipogram and lipogrammatic
selection (avoidance), or, in contrast, “positive” selection out of predilection for particular pho-
nemes or phonological features (as in the poetics of the Batjuškov-Žukovskij early Romantic
Of course, the existence of such semantic connections has been claimed in most structuralist and semiotic theories with regard to the most canonical form of SR, end rhyme.

Here I just touch upon the problem of intentionality, without attempting to solve it. Cf. Scherr "[...] instances of sound correspondence [...] may well be due as much to intuitive processes as to a conscious effort" (1986: 269). To what degree are SR (whether poetic or quotidian) involuntary, subconscious, or simply accidental? One might catch oneself writing автор прав, which equally accidentally can be translated as "the writer is right"; just like we can catch ourselves speaking in rhymes.

In no way I intend to suggest that root repetition is inherently trivial, "unoriginal" or artistically inferior. One need only think of Chlebnikov's 'Заклятие смехом' as an example of the contrary, actually one huge combination of polyptoton and figura etymologica.

Opinions on /i/ diverge; they are seen by some as phonologically different vowels, Cf. e.g. Tomaševskij, who, no doubt on the ground of perceptual difference, stated that Russian has six vowels: a, e, o, u, i, and y (1925: 55). Against this stands the view in favour of regarding [y] and [i] as realizations of one phoneme /i/, on the grounds of their complementary distribution (after soft and hard consonants respectively), whereas the very fact that the rhyme has always been accepted as valid in Russian classical poetry is adduced as proof of this phonemic identity of [i] and [y].

Cf. Tynjanov’s term "звуковаia metafora", the theories of Mukavský, Lotman, and others. More recently V.P. Grigor'ev (“тоzдение smysla iz zvuka”; 1979: 271) and N.A. Kožen'nikova (in a series of studies in Problemy strukturnoj lingvistiki) have been concerned with a typology of semantic relations. Grigor'ev, with regard to paronymic attraction distinguishes between the members of a SR in terms of attractor (attraktant) and attracted, for establishing the direction of the attraction, which, however, cannot always be done unambiguously (275).

This whole field of paronomasia was to be exploited later by Marina Cvetaeva, in her 'Позма ропa', though with the exception of гореть or горячий, which she appears to have avoided. Clayton notes the presence of both in Sofija’s speech (1-5, 64, C). Here ум and горе occur in the space of five lines. This is no matter of wordplay, but it strengthens the bond between the two pivotal words of the play.

In the context of sound repetition, it remains remarkable that what we may call "alliterative attraction" has influenced the traditional English translation “Woe from Wit” and even more so the less frequent “Wit Works Woe”.

It is a matter of debate whether grammatical -я and -му (masc./neut. dative of pron./adj., masc. root ending in stress, or unstressed dative unstressed) have some validity as members of sound repetition. This repetition seems trivial, however, again it must be noted that grammatical rhyme is also accepted. Here we repeat our observation that unstressed [u] also participates in SR (cf. also Wachtel 2004: 44). The sequence written ыу is also taken into account in some cases. Some words containing both [у] and [м] are also included, e.g. минута.

4 References to Gore ot uma are to Act-Scene, page number of Griboedov (1987), and initials of character: Ч = Чачкин, Ф = Фамусов, С = София, Л = Лиза, М = Молчалин, Ск = Скало-зуб, З = Загорецкий, НД = Наталья Дмитриевна, Х = Хлестова, Гв = Графиня внучка. The sign | indicates turn-taking.

5 Clayton notes the presence of both in Sofija’s speech (1-5, 64, C). Here ум and горе occur in the space of five lines. This is no matter of wordplay, but it strengthens the bond between the two pivotal words of the play.

12 In the context of sound repetition, it remains remarkable that what we may call "alliterative attraction" has influenced the traditional English translation “Woe from Wit” and even more so the less frequent “Wit Works Woe”.

Literature


