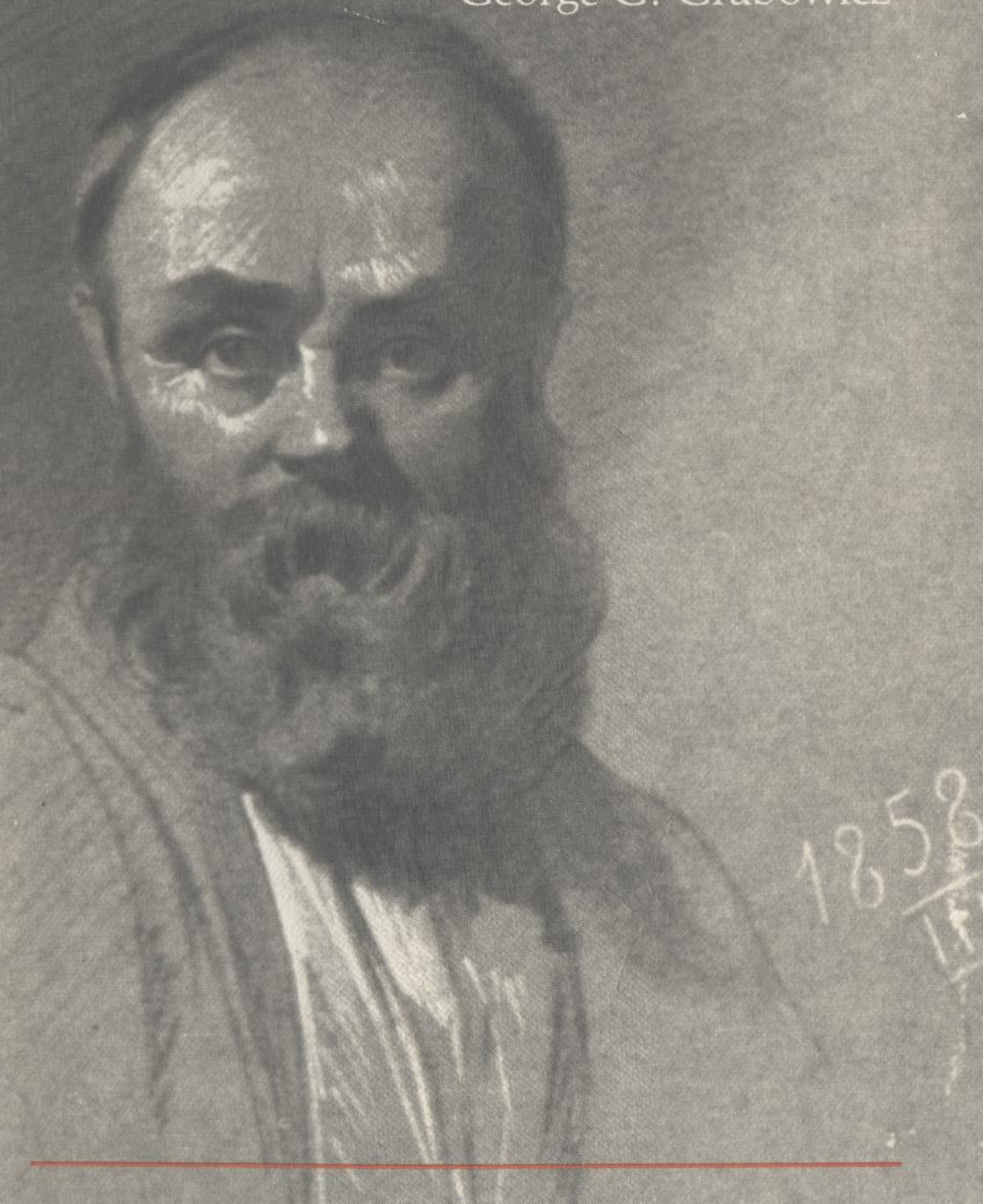


# The Poet as Mythmaker

*A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Ševčenko*

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George G. Grabowicz



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### A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Ševčenko

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Taras Ševčenko (1814-1861) is the central figure in modern Ukrainian literature, but despite the enormous attention that has been devoted to his person, his work, and his role in Ukrainian history and the Ukrainian national renaissance of the 19th century, the core of the Ševčenko phenomenon—the symbolic nature of his poetry—has hardly received any systematic analysis.

As this book argues, myth serves as the underlying code and model of Ševčenko's poetic universe. By examining the structures and paradigms of Ševčenko's mythical thought we can find answers to various crucial and heretofore intractable questions, such as those concerning the relation of his Ukrainian poetry to his Russian prose, his sense of a transcendent "curse" and "guilt" in the Ukrainian past and present, the interrelation of his revolutionist fervor with his apparent providentialism, or of the tension between the nativism and the universalism of his poetry. Moreover, it is through the structures of his mythical thought that we can understand Ševčenko's "prophecy," in effect, his millenarian vision. In this framework, too, the author focuses on the religious tenor of Ševčenko's poetry, in which the poet is both expiator and carrier of the Word, and, finally, on the reception—indeed the cult—of Ševčenko among generations of Ukrainians.

By virtue of its method of symbolic analysis this book will be of value not only to Slavists, but to all who are interested in a rigorous study of literary myth in its broader cultural context.

Wiktor Weintraub comments that "George Grabowicz's book is a major and exciting reassessment of the great Ukrainian poet. It presents Ševčenko as a far richer, more complex, and more interesting personality than the one traditionally depicted, and it does so in a convincing way."





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# The Poet as Mythmaker

*A Study of Symbolic Meaning  
in Taras Ševčenko*

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To the memory  
of my father,  
Julius Grabowicz





## *Preface*

By general consensus, Taras Ševčenko (1814–1861) is the central figure in modern Ukrainian literature. He is the Ukrainian writer who has undoubtedly attracted the greatest and most varied attention. At the same time, Ševčenko presents the critic with an ineluctable paradox: the ever greater accumulation of biographical data and documentation about the writer and the ever more minute analyses of his work only seem to make him more distant and somehow incommensurate with his manifest impact. Conversely, the emotional and metaphorical (and often blatantly ideologized) readings of Ševčenko do occasionally intimate, their skewed and hazy perspectives notwithstanding, a sense of his essential meaning. But even though the critic or scholar may intuitively accept it as true, it is a meaning that he despairs of capturing with the traditional analytical tools available to him.

The writer as paradox or conundrum is not altogether rare, of course, especially not in the Romantic period, or among the Slavs. Yet, in the modern European context, Ševčenko appears to be quite specific, indeed *sui generis*, for the degree to which he—as a poet and as a poetic and historical legacy—expresses himself in a language that his critics, and perhaps literary critics in the main, have not yet become fully adept at deciphering. As this book argues, this language or code is myth.

In a manner characteristic of all mythical thought, Ševčenko communicates “universal truths” through a model which he constructs out of the building blocks of culture-specific elements, including very prominently his own biography. This model, which is coterminous with his poetic universe, is a remarkably coherent and highly symbolic system. To be sure, critics and sophisticated readers alike have long understood that despite its great emotional immediacy, Šev-

čenko's poetry is far from being simple and straightforward. The key to its complexity, however, is not to be found in its "external" relations and "causes." When approached through such conventional critical categories as intellectual influences, historical sources, folklore, literary conventions, political ideas or personal reminiscences, the resultant picture, for all its detail, can hardly give a sense of the *total*, that is, *systematic meaning* of Ševčenko. That meaning, as I undertake to show in this study, can only be elicited by focusing on the immanent and textually given structures of his thought. The level on which these structures are couched is predominantly that of symbol and metaphor. Of course, Ševčenko's poetic universe can be (and historically has all but exclusively been) examined for a rational, "syntagmatic" order—a "philosophy." Such an order, however, cannot be reconstructed with any coherence. Ševčenko's "historical," "social," and "political" views, and his overall "world view" invariably break down into "inconsistencies," which are then made to serve as grist for ideological mills. The answer, in short, is to be found in the symbolic and "paradigmatic" order of his poetry, the overarching model of which is myth.

The paradox of Ševčenko's critical reception can thus be said to arise from the fatal disjunction between critical approaches, that is, between those who recognize only the metaphoric or only the metonymic dimension of his poetry. The "empiricists," by their very choice of criteria and methods, find only fragmentary and often trivial answers, while the "ideologues," who are attuned to metaphoric meaning and who seek (or rather believe that they have already found) the total picture, the intuitively given "true meaning," are quite uninterested in systematic symbolic analysis and relentlessly trim Ševčenko to their various extra-literary needs. To this day, between the reductiveness of the former and the intuitionism of the latter, *tertium non datur*. It seems clear that a resolution of this impasse lies in an approach that redraws the basic criteria and provides a new focus for studying Ševčenko.

This book is divided into five chapters. The first one briefly treats the basic and still unanswered question of Ševčenko as a symbolic writer and suggests a conceptual framework for dealing with the whole of his creativity, including the coded nature of his poetry. The second chapter serves as a transition to the analysis of Ševčenko's mythical thought by examining the actual, symbolic structures of an area of his poetry—his treatment of history, or his "historical theme"—

which in the critical tradition has uniformly been approached in terms of the poet's putatively rational historicism or historiosophy. Chapter Three, divided into five major sections, is the heart of this study. It begins with an operant definition of myth and proceeds to analyze the structures and paradigms of Ševčenko's poetic world as they appear in the manifest thematic levels of his poetry. The fourth chapter focuses on Ševčenko's resolution of the conflicts and oppositions subtended by his myth. The last chapter recapitulates the argument concerning the nature of Ševčenko's mythopoesis and touches upon some of its cultural ramifications.

My approach to Ševčenko does not exhaust the subject, nor does it obviate the need for further extrinsic and intrinsic investigations. I do not wish to imply that Ševčenko's poetry is determined only by mythical thought; clearly, it also resonates with other levels of meaning. What I do argue is that myth constitutes a fundamental code of Ševčenko's poetry, and its structures provide one of the two deepest and innermost determinants of his symbolism. Thus, by examining Ševčenko's mythical thought, we can find answers to various crucial and heretofore intractable questions, such as those concerning the relation of his Ukrainian poetry to his Russian prose, the interrelation of his ostensibly revolutionary views with his apparent providentialism, his true judgment on the Cossack past, his understanding of history, or, most concretely, the seeming opaqueness of some of his last poems. The other basic symbolic code, one that extends to all of Ševčenko's creativity and not only his poetry, and which deserves a separate study, is the psychological.

Quite obviously, too, focusing on the code and the underlying structures necessitates for the most part a bracketing of the concrete aesthetic object and with it a frequent suspension of aesthetic judgment. Given the manifold structural, formal, and aesthetic complexities of even the minor poems, this self-limitation is as inevitable as it is regrettable. By way of compensation, however, one may hope that as a result of this investigation future examinations of Ševčenko's artistry will be able to draw on a far richer understanding of his poetry.

Although I did not set out to follow any one particular school of analysis, it was my belief that the multi-faceted nature of Ševčenko's thought required an analytical model that would be equipped to deal with all its specificity and complexity and to do so as coherently and rigorously as possible. To this end, my approach draws in various

crucial respects on the theoretical and methodological contributions of structural anthropology, particularly from the area of the interrelation of culture and symbolism and the domain of symbolic analysis. In this regard, too, I owe a singular debt to my wife, Oksana Grabowicz, for introducing me to some key analytical concepts and for her invaluable advice in formulating their applicability to this study. Without her help and insights, and without her consistently rigorous criticism, this book could hardly have been written.

I also wish to thank Omeljan Pritsak, Wiktor Weintraub, and John-Paul Himka for their valuable comments on a late draft of the manuscript. I am grateful to Bob Magocsi for the special effort and care that he devoted to the publication of this book.

Unless otherwise noted, all the translations, especially of Ševčenko's poetry, are my own. So, too, are any errors in reasoning or infelicitous formulations.

Somerville, Massachusetts  
October 1981

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Un mythe se rapporte toujours à des événements passés: "avant la création du monde," ou "pendant les premiers âges," en tout cas, "il y a longtemps." Mais la valeur intrinsèque attribuée au mythe provient de ce que ces événements, censés se dérouler à un moment du temps, forment aussi une structure permanente. Celle-ci se rapporte simultanément au passé, au présent et au futur.

Claude Lévi-Strauss  
*Anthropologie structurale*

Я не знаю другого поэта, кому бы так поклонялись—  
в массе, словно святому, обливаясь слезами, как в церк-  
ви, заскорузлые мужики, перед иконой-портретом, в  
полотенцах, на потайном юбилее, в каптерке, хором,  
как Отче наш: — Батьку! Тарасе!..

Abram Terc  
*Golos iz xora*



## Introduction: Ševčenko's Duality

THE IMPACT OF Taras Ševčenko on modern Ukrainian consciousness can hardly be overstated: he is Bard and Prophet, the inspired voice of his people, and the spiritual father of the reborn Ukrainian nation. It is also hardly possible to exaggerate, let alone assimilate, the mass of words—critical and scholarly, polemical and panegyrical, ideological and propagandistic—that has been devoted to his person and to his work.<sup>1</sup>

Although the phenomenon of the writer as culture hero is found in many societies, no writer, in all probability, occupies that "office" so firmly and with so fervent a consensus on the part of his countrymen as does Ševčenko. In this respect he stands preeminent even in the context of Slavic Romanticism, where he is frequently bracketed with such acknowledged bards as Mickiewicz and Puškin. It is now a commonplace that not only Ukrainian literature, but Ukrainian

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<sup>1</sup> The most comprehensive bibliography on Ševčenko is the two-volume *T. H. Ševčenko: bibliohrafiya literatury pro žyttja i tvorčist', 1839–1959*, ed. I. Z. Bojko et al. (Kiev, 1963) and its updating *T. H. Ševčenko: bibliohrafiya juvilejnoji literatury, 1960–1964*, ed. F. K. Sarana (Kiev, 1968). See also the synthesizing *Ševčenkoznavstvo: pidsumky i problemy*, ed. Je. P. Kyriljuk (Kiev, 1975) and the two-volume dictionary of Ševčenkiana, *Ševčenkivs'kyj slovnyk*, ed. I. Ja. Ajzenštok et al., vol. 1 (Kiev, 1976), vol. 2 (Kiev, 1977). Other Soviet bibliographies of Ševčenko are given in D. I. Hol'denberh's *Bibliohrafičini dжерела ukrajins'koho literaturoznavstva* (Kiev, 1977), pp. 123–135. Ševčenko, too, alone among Ukrainian writers, has a bibliography of bibliographies: I. Z. Bojko's and H. M. Himel'farb's *Taras Hryhorovyč Ševčenko: bibliohrafiya bibliohrafiiji, 1840–1960* (Kiev, 1961). All of these Soviet sources are in varying degrees incomplete in that they delete works or authors considered to be unmentionable. A partial corrective, carried up to 1960, is given in *Taras Ševčenko: povne vydannja tvoriv*, vol. 14, ed. Volodymyr Dorošenko (Chicago, 1961).

cultural and political life, and the national renaissance of the nineteenth century as such, were decisively molded by Ševčenko. It has also become clear, however, that his far-reaching influence bespeaks not only the power of his poetry but also the needs and, indeed, the political powerlessness of the group for which he became a spokesman. In short, the historical phenomenon that is Ševčenko is also predicated on the cultural readiness of his audience as well as his ability to resonate with its collective experience, emotions, and expectations. It is precisely this, and not merely his formal and modal recourse to folk and oral poetry, or the fact of his peasant origins, that lends content and credence to the oft-argued notion of his national character (*narodnist'*).

The popular cult of Ševčenko which reached its apogee at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century was already countered soon after the poet's death in 1861 by cooler critics, initially by Pantelejmon Kuliš, who was first friend and editor, later exegete and self-anointed continuator, and finally rival and opponent of Ševčenko, and then by the outstanding Ukrainian thinker of the nineteenth century, the scholar, political theorist, and publicist, Myxajlo Drahomanov.<sup>2</sup> The cult was not dispelled, of course, and continues in various forms to this day, in both Soviet and non-Soviet Ukrainian societies, but the critical attention that began with the initial, ambivalent reactions in the Russian press to Ševčenko's first collection of poetry, the *Kobzar* of 1840, developed in time into a distinct and many-faceted sub-field in Ukrainian literary scholarship. The achievements in this field, *ševčenkoznavstvo*, have been considerable, particularly in textual criticism (including publication of the entire canon of Ševčenko's works, much in facsimile), in historical, biographical, and bibliographical documentation, in studies of literary and intellectual influences, contacts and sources, in matters of prosody, poetic language, and some formal analyses. At the same time, however, within this large and diverse body of criticism and scholarship the central issues remain undeveloped and even largely unidenti-

<sup>2</sup> See Kuliš's "Čoho stojit Ševčenko jako poet narodnij," and "Slovo nad hrobom Ševčenko" (English translation in *Shevchenko and the Critics: 1861-1980*, ed. George S. N. Luckyj [Toronto, 1981], pp. 55-64). Drahomanov's most important work on Ševčenko is "Ševčenko, ukrajinojly j socializm," in M. P. Drahomanov, *Literaturno-publicystyčni praci*, vol. 2 (Kiev, 1970), pp. 7-133 (excerpts translated in *Shevchenko and the Critics*, pp. 65-90).

fied. The meaning and the broader social, historical and, need one add, political implications of Ševčenko's work, specifically his poetry, have been and remain the source of acrimonious dispute. The ideologically polarized interpretations of the present day not only reflect the peculiarity of the Ukrainian political situation, but in fact are also a logical culmination of the entire critical legacy. In a still deeper sense, however, these polar divergences flow from the very nature of Ševčenko's poetry.

It is a poetry that touched the innermost core of the Ukrainian experience. In the words of his contemporary, the poet and historian Mykola Kostomarov, "Ševčenko's muse sundered the veil of national life. It was terrifying and sweet and painful and fascinating to peer inside."<sup>3</sup> Pantelejmon Kuliš, himself a painful and fascinating individual, put it even more directly in his eloquent graveside oration in St. Petersburg. "None of us is worthy," he said, "to speak our native Ukrainian word over the grave of Ševčenko: all the power and all the beauty of our language were revealed to him alone. And yet it is through him that we have the great and precious right to proclaim the native Ukrainian word in this distant land."<sup>4</sup> It was Kuliš who said that

Ševčenko is our great poet and our first historian. It was Ševčenko who was the first to ask our mute burial mounds what they are, and it was to him alone that they gave their answer, clear as God's word. Before all others Ševčenko realized what is the glory of our antiquity and for what it will be cursed by coming generations.<sup>5</sup>

As eloquent and true as these statements were, their implicit thesis—swelled in time by various less profound commentaries—soon gave rise to a mass of misconceptions. In a word, because of its unprecedented emotional directness and immediacy, Ševčenko's poetry, and his core "message," was seen as essentially straightforward, indeed simple. Hand-in-hand with the growing cult of Ševčenko, his poetic oeuvre came to be viewed as a convenient repository of handy bits of sentiment:

<sup>3</sup> M. I. Kostomarov, "Vospominanie o dvux maljarach," *Osnova*, vol. 4 (St. Petersburg, 1861), pp. 48–50, cited in T. G. Ševčenko v vospominanjax sovremennikov, ed. S. N. Golubova et al. (Leningrad, 1962), p. 151.

<sup>4</sup> "Slovo nad hrobom Ševčenko," in *Tvory Pantelejmona Kuliša*, vol. 6 (L'viv, 1910), pp. 495–496.

<sup>5</sup> "Čoho stojit' Ševčenko jako poet narodnij," *ibid.*, p. 490.

Село! і серце одпочине,  
Село на нашій Україні —  
Неначе писанка село. . .

(A village! and the heart will rest,/ a village in our Ukraine—/ a village like an Easter egg. . .); or of pious pedagogic injunctions:

Учітесь, читайте,  
І чужому научайтесь,  
Й свого не цурайтесь. . .

(Study, read,/ learn foreign subjects,/ but do not deny your own. . .); or of political prescriptions:

Коли  
Ми діждемося Вашингтона  
З новим і праведним законом?

(When/ shall we see a Washington/ with a new and just law?); or:

В своїй хаті своя й правда,  
І сила, і воля. . .

(In one's own house—one's own truth/ and power and freedom. . .); or finally of revolutionary calls to arms:

Поховайте та вставайте,  
Кайдани порвіте  
І вражою злою кров'ю  
Волю окропіте.

(Bury me and rise,/ break your chains/ and with the enemy's evil blood/ bless your freedom).

Most significantly, the practice of rifling the poetry for appropriate sentiments was not confined to propagandists, journalists, or school-marms—it also became the methodology for much of what passed as scholarship. By far the worst offenders were the engagé ideologues whose only method for discussing Ševčenko's alleged atheism, for example, or, conversely, his religiosity and piety, was simply the culling of citations to be interpreted by nothing more than free association. In the absence of any rigorous and comprehensive method for dealing with the levels of meaning and symbolism in Ševčenko's works, the study of his writings became ever more noticeably mori-



bund—both in the Soviet Union and in the West.<sup>6</sup> To be sure, in the more recent (and non-Soviet) Ševčenko scholarship, a few authors have seemed to suggest an awareness of the fact that Ševčenko's imaginative universe is highly symbolic and coded. They note that beneath the level of surface structures (which encompasses not only matters of ideology and, in general, the whole sphere of rational elaborations, programs, and so on, but also conventions, specifically the literary Romantic convention) there exist the much more important deep structures.<sup>7</sup> In the mass of Ševčenko criticism and scholarship, however, this is precisely what has received the least attention—with the consequence that the study of Ševčenko, as if transfixed in a Gogolian “enchanted place,” has, in the main, been reduced to an endless repetition of fragmentary observations and outright misreadings.

It seems clear that the fundamental requirement for any investigation of the deep structures and the symbolic code in question is that it take into account the entire systematics of Ševčenko's creativity. Here, the first and most basic task is to establish a framework or a “unified field” for the various forms and modes of his expression. It is a task that presents immediate difficulties for the critic.

As anyone with even a passing acquaintance with his work knows, Ševčenko is what he is by virtue of his poetic production, his Ukrai-

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<sup>6</sup> A rather critical summing up of Soviet *ševčenkoznavstvo* was made in 1960 by O. Bilec'kyj, the dean of Soviet Ukrainian literary scholars, in his “Zavdannja i perspektyvy vyvčennja Ševčenska,” *Zbirnyk prac' dev'jatoji naukovoji ševčenkivs'koji konferenciji* (Kiev, 1961), pp. 13–25. See also *Ševčenkoznavstvo: pidsumky j problemy* (Kiev, 1975). Despite a few interesting articles in *Taras Ševčenko, 1814–1861: A Symposium*, ed. Volodymyr Mijakovs'kyj and George Y. Shevelov (The Hague, 1962), Ševčenko scholarship in the West offered no new approaches. See also *Shevchenko and the Critics*.

<sup>7</sup> An early, if tentative and flawed, effort in this direction is Mykola Shlemkevych's “The Substratum of Ševčenko's View of Life,” in *Taras Ševčenko, 1814–1861: A Symposium*, pp. 37–61. See also, in the same volume, Victor Petrov's “Ševčenko's Aesthetic Theory: An Approach to the Problem.” Of the more recent works, see Bohdan Rubchak's “Shevchenko's Profiles and Masks: Ironic Roles of the Self in *Kobzar*,” and Leonid Pliushch's “‘The Bewitched Woman’ and Some Problems of Shevchenko's Philosophy” in *Shevchenko and the Critics*.

nian poetry. But what many, including some scholars, tend to gloss over, and many may indeed not know, is that this poetry is a segment—quantitatively speaking, a smaller segment—of the whole of his self-expression. For in addition to the Ukrainian poetry, with which he is so often exclusively identified, Ševčenko also wrote some Russian poetry (the long poems “Slepaja” [The Blind Woman] and *Trizna* [The Wake]), a considerable body of prose in Russian (by his own account about twenty novellas, of which nine have survived), a diary written in Russian that covers a crucial year of his life, a sizable epistolary legacy in Ukrainian and Russian, a few prose fragments in Ukrainian, three of four dramas in Russian (of which two have survived, one in prose, in a Ukrainian translation probably made by Kuliš, and an unfinished one in verse), and a large body of pictorial art—paintings, drawings, and etchings which, while certainly pertinent to the overall question, will not concern us here.

It does not take a scholar or a specialist but only an informed and sensitive reader to see that there is a profound difference between Ševčenko's Ukrainian poetry on the one hand and all the other forms of his self-expression on the other. Leaving aside for the moment the obviously different mode of non-belletristic writings (letters, and so on) one could simply say that the difference between these two provisional categories hinges on aesthetic and artistic quality—and the lack of it. The Ukrainian poetry is powerful and moving and very often great, but the other writings are often merely interesting, and not infrequently mediocre. This answer does not suffice, however, for the issue now is not evaluation of the works or categories in question, but determining what is different in their essential nature, in their mode of existence, as it were. Ultimately, the aesthetic and artistic values must build on these very differences.

More apparently, that basic difference is the one between poetry and prose. Closer analysis shows, however, that while there is considerable congruence between this division and the intuited one noted above, this is not the basis for the very fundamental divergences in question. It could be argued that various pieces of Ševčenko's Ukrainian prose, for example, his postscript to *Hajdamaky*, or the preface to the unpublished second *Kobzar*, or fragments of various letters, are much closer to the spirit of his Ukrainian poetry than is the Russian poem *Trizna*. This, of course, leads to the most obvious and the most frequently noted basis of differentiation, namely language. There is a whole critical legacy, going back to Kuliš, and

still favored by the nationalistically minded, that sees between Ševčenko's works in Ukrainian and Russian the basic divide in his entire canon.<sup>8</sup> This explicitly evaluative (not to say biased) approach takes its cue from a statement by Ševčenko in one of his letters where he castigates himself for confessing to the Russians in stale Russian ("...spovidajusja kacapam čerstvym kacaps'kym slovom. . .") and views all of his Russian writings as inherently flawed by the very choice of linguistic medium, and indeed a betrayal of his muse.<sup>9</sup> Even more than the opposition of poetry and prose, this language criterion does have its validity: the Ukrainian works are strikingly different from, and as a rule greatly superior to the Russian ones. But it too does not provide the solution. For two reasons. First are the exceptions that undercut the neat scheme: the Russian poem "Slepaja," or the fragments of "Nikita Gajdaj" are much closer to the spirit of the Ukrainian poetry than are some of his Ukrainian writings. Similarly, there is the problem posed by the *Diary*—a superior and intimate work that is written in Russian. The second and more important reason, however, is that merely stating, and then evaluating, the existence of these two classes of works begs the entire question; we are left no wiser as to what is and what can be said in the given medium, as to what is the structure of the respective contents of these two categories.

Here, again, it is the totality of the work that provides the answers. Ševčenko's poetry, as even a cursory reading will tell, is highly personal, intimate, and autobiographical; these qualities determine not only the lyrical poetry but the narrative and "political" poems as

<sup>8</sup> Kuliš's advice to Ševčenko not to publish his Russian works is documented in two letters of 20 January 1858 and 1 February 1858. See *Lysty do T. H. Ševčenko, 1840–1861*, ed. L. F. Kodac'ka (Kiev, 1962), pp. 123–124 and 125–127. His argument is based on aesthetic considerations and certainly has nothing of the "bourgeois-nationalist" anti-Russian bias that various Soviet critics impute to him. Similar advice was given to Ševčenko by the Russian writer S. T. Aksakov; see his letter dated 19 June 1858, *ibid.*, pp. 143–144.

<sup>9</sup> Compare his letter to Ja. H. Kuxarenko, dated 30 September 1842, in Taras Ševčenko, *Povne zibrannja tvoriv v šesty tomax* [henceforth: *Tvory*], vol. 6 (Kiev, 1964), pp. 19–20. See also Pavlo Zajcev's "Poeziji Ševčenko rosijs'koju movoju" and "Prozova tvorčist' Ševčenko," in Taras Ševčenko, *Povne vydannja tvoriv*, 14 vols. (Chicago, 1961), vol. 5, pp. 212–228 and vol. 6, pp. 297–310. A brief discussion of the language question is also given in my "The Nexus of the Wake: Ševčenko's *Trizna*," in *Eucharisterion: Essays presented to Omeljan Pritsak on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students* (Cambridge, 1980), part I, pp. 320–321.

well. But a look at what is actually portrayed or alluded to reveals a fascinating picture, one which shows that whole segments of Ševčenko's life, indeed most of his mature life, remains outside the range of his poetry. There is, for example, no reference at all to his life in St. Petersburg and to the Academy of Arts (which as we know from his own novella *Xudožnik* [The Artist] was so central for him), no reference to the time spent in the Ukraine and to his many contacts with Ukrainians, especially in the Brotherhood of Sts. Cyril and Methodius, in fact no reference even to the momentous event of being freed from serfdom. The only apparent exceptions to this are the first years of exile and the last months of his life; on closer analysis, however, the exile poems do not constitute an exception, and the very late poetry is also quite ambivalent in this regard. The issue is not so much one of chronology, of time gaps, as it is of subject matter, of content. Ševčenko's own writings—the autobiographical novellas, the *Diary*, the letters—and the numerous other sources, primarily memoirs and letters of friends and acquaintances provide a wealth of information on the kind of life he lived, not only in St. Petersburg, in Kiev, in his travels in the Ukraine, but indeed at times even in exile, in the first two years in Orenburg, for example. It was the active, intense and full life of a young artist and litterateur; it was full of social and intellectual contacts, of literary salons, theaters, and the opera. It was the life of an attractive young man accepted in the highest society, esteemed and in fact lionized by both his Russian and Ukrainian admirers. Given Ševčenko's origins, this was, in a word, a remarkable success story. And yet none of this appears in his poetry. The only thing more remarkable than this immense blind spot in his poetic creativity is the blindness of generations of Ševčenko scholars to this crucial state of affairs.<sup>10</sup>

The conjunction of the actual biographical context with the massive data of the texts themselves reveals the outlines of a fundamental duality in Ševčenko's creativity. It is a duality or an opposition that rests on two very different creative stances, different self-perceptions and self-definitions, and on entirely different intellectual and emotional

<sup>10</sup> A significant exception is Komej Čukovskij who concludes a penetrating, if, at times, highly impressionistic essay on Ševčenko with a discussion of precisely the structured absence in his poetry (*Lica i maski* [St. Petersburg, n.d.], pp. 240–275). Čukovskij's interpretation of this solely in terms of collective models and patterns of thought, of Ševčenko's "narodnyja čuvstva," is not entirely adequate, however.

modes of expression. In fact, one can speak here not so much of different stances or styles, but of different personalities. This duality, of course, should not be confined to the psychological level, or reduced to an ego-split or to dissociation. There is considerable interplay or "leakage" between the two modes by way of common themes, experiences, and values—as illustrated, for example, by "Najmyčka" (The Servant Girl), the poem and the novella, or the poem and novella entitled "The Princess" ("Knjažna" and *Knjaginja*), or a number of other paired works;<sup>11</sup> clearly, non-psychological elements are also involved. In general, the two modes are not hermetic—but they are radically different.

What, then, are these two personalities? One, which is represented by the Russian prose, the *Diary*, the letters, and so on, is what I would call the "adjusted." Even while speaking out most forcefully against the iniquities of the social order, above all the unspeakable outrage of serfdom, Ševčenko manifestly sees himself here as part of the imperial reality, and shares many of the civilized, progressive values of this society. The basic defining features of this mode are a sense of intellectual distance (for example, with regard to Ukrainian history), a rational perspective on the role of the Ukraine vis-à-vis the Russian Empire and on the role and efficacy of the artist (for example, in the novella *Xudožnik* or *Muzykant* [The Musician]), a rational and basically measured perception of human behavior, and, not least of all, the point of view of the mature self.

The other, represented primarily by the poetry, is what I would call, for want of a better term, the "non-adjusted" self. (Though Ševčenko himself never attempted to provide a dispassionate analysis, he felt full well the power of this side of his ego, which in his *Diary* he portrayed as driven by a "strange and restless calling."<sup>12</sup>) It is a personality marked above all by an intense emotionality, an absolutization of emotion and of the emotional perception of surrounding reality, which in consequence becomes totally, or almost totally, polarized—into the sacred and the profane. In its sharpest form the world, mankind, is divided into the absolute Good and the absolute

<sup>11</sup> One of the first to discuss such parallels between Ševčenko's poetry and prose was Ivan Franko; see his "'Najmyčka' T. Ševčenska" in Ivan Franko, *Tvory v dvadcaty tom* (Kiev, 1955), vol. 17, pp. 100–120. See also L. Kodac'ka, *Odnymennij tvory T. H. Ševčenska* (Kiev, 1968).

<sup>12</sup> See the entry for 1 July 1857: *Tvory*, vol. 5, pp. 42–44.

Evil. The poet himself is so polarized: he, or his poetic persona, is either the victim, one of the lowly and despised—the bastard, the blind, vagabond minstrel, the fallen woman (the *pokrytka*)—or even a moral reprobate (compare, for example, the poem “Čy to nedolja ta nevolja. . .” [Is It Ill Fate and Captivity. . .], or he is the martyr and the Prophet, the last hope of his nation. Significantly, there is virtually no middle ground; there is, rather, apotheosis, again of the sacred and the profane. In contrast to the adjusted and the rational, this mode and personality refuses to accept and abide by the verities and wisdoms of this world. Thus, Ševčenko conjures up and resurrects the past that for everyone else is dead. He wills it alive, as we see in the opening lines of “Černec” (The Monk):

У Києві на Подолі  
 Було колись. . . і ніколи  
 Не вернеться, що діялось,  
 Не вернеться сподіване,  
 Не вернеться. . . А я, брате,  
 Таки буду сподіватись,  
 Таки буду виглядати,  
 Жалю серцю завдавати.

(lines 1–8)

(In Kiev, in the Podil/ there once was. . .and what occurred/ will never return,/ what was hoped for will not return,/ will not return. . . and yet, brother,/ I will continue to hope,/ I will continue to expect,/ to inflict sorrow on my heart. . .) It is a mode and a personality that relies on visions to convey the past and the future, and when it deals with the present it does not focus on realia, it is certainly not guided by any canons of “realism,” but turns instead to the depths of the collective soul; as he says,

невчене око  
 Загляне їм в саму душу  
 Глибоко! глибоко!

(the untutored eye/ will look deep, deep into their very soul). In terms of the chronological or biographical point of view, there is also a radical difference, for in contrast to the mature, man-of-the-world narrator and authorial ego of the novellas, for example, the perspective of the authorial ego in the poetry is dominated and molded primarily by



the experiences and emotions of childhood and pre-adulthood. (This is made explicit in various poems, but especially in the extended digressions of Ševčenko's longest poetic work, *Hajdamaky*. It is also in these pre-adult experiences that the poet finds his principal narrative model of the old minstrel, the *kobzar*. Indeed a corollary perspective in the poetry is that of the old man, and at times Ševčenko explicitly conflates childhood and old age, as in the emblematic image of the grey-whiskered child in the exile lyric "A numo znovu viršuvat' . . ." [So Let Us Versify Again. . .]. The latter image, as we shall see, is also a synchronic device—and a synecdoche of a mythical telescoping of time.) The world of Ševčenko's poetry is not impervious to adult experiences and concerns; it is neither fixated nor static, but its core is firmly set in an earlier existence.

The implications of this perspective extend beyond the individual psychological moment, and beyond Ševčenko's persistent concern with symbolic autobiography. They also reflect the collective, the mythical plane of his poetry. The world of childhood memories, of pre-adult existence, elicits a special emotional state which in turn activates a "collective unconscious." And, clearly, it is only in the Ukrainian poetry that Ševčenko resonates with the "national soul," that is, with the whole gamut of shared, semi-articulated knowledge, feelings, and perceptions. The "adjusted" self has little contact with this soul: it is molded by and reacts to an entirely different world, to St. Petersburg, to the Academy of Arts and to the world of art, to a cosmopolitan milieu and to a standard of intellection. But it is the former "Ukrainian" world that gives the poetry its imaginative power and provides the foundation for its symbolic code. The power of the unadjusted, rebelling personality animating this world must be stressed in any approach to Ševčenko, if only because its effects are visible to this day. For in contravention of the real state of affairs and the mass of evidence that supports it, the image of Ševčenko now held in the minds of millions of his countrymen, and indeed many scholars, is precisely the one projected by his poetry: of Ševčenko the martyr and prophet living only for and through his people. This has become the real Ševčenko. He has become, to paraphrase Claude Lévi-Strauss, the product and hero of his own myth.

Clearly, to speak of myth is to speak of symbolic meaning. At the same time, for various critics and scholars the essence of myth is to be

found in its symbols, and discussing them is largely equated with discussing the myth itself. Mircea Eliade, for example, examines the myths of various cultures precisely through key symbols (of the "centre," of time, of knots, of shells and pearls, and so on) and explicitly calls for "indices" of symbols and speaks of the need to study selectively those that are most central.<sup>13</sup> Between the two premises, however, there is an important difference, a difference that becomes most evident in the actual analyses. As valuable as an examination of selected, recurring and putatively universal symbols may be for a comparative survey of myths, as we see in Eliade, and before him in Carl Jung, it cannot be a substitute for, and to a certain extent can hardly be compounded with an analysis of the actual structures and manifold dynamic relations of the given myth.

The difference between studies that focus on individual elements and those that deal with the system in which they inhere and which determines them, and the paucity of the latter, is particularly noticeable in the case of Ševčenko. Critical attention to certain crucial and recurring moments in the poetry, be they identified as images, symbols, or motifs, appears belatedly and is not infrequently subordinated to extrinsic—political and ideological—concerns.<sup>14</sup> In general, the symbols that were perceived as such by traditional *ševčenkoznavstvo*

<sup>13</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism* (New York, 1961), p. 37.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, N. F. Sumcov, "Glavnye motyvy poëzii T. G. Ševčënka," in his *Iz ukrainskoj stariny* (Xarkiv, 1905), pp. 82–96. In the inter-war period, the growing politization of Ševčenko expressed itself in a search for symbols that would demonstrate the poet's allegiance to this or that ideology. For Stepan Smal'-Stoc'kyj, for example, virtually every poem is filled with symbols and allegories expressing Ševčenko's nationalist convictions; see his *Taras Ševčenko: interpretaciji* (Warsaw, 1934). Given the crude level of Smal'-Stoc'kyj's argument, it is not surprising that he makes no attempt to define the nature of Ševčenko's symbolization, and indeed largely avoids the very term "symbol." In a similar vein, Soviet criticism is highly resistant to the idea of Ševčenko's symbolism: his use of symbols is grudgingly conceded in the context of his "folk poetics" (where it is confused with the epithet) and harnessed (along with his "allegory," as it is called) in the service of his alleged revolutionary sentiments (viz. the symbol of the axe); see *Ševčenkivs'kyj slovnyk*, vol. 2, p. 211. It hardly needs elaborating that a dogmatic, official understanding of the poet cannot very well accommodate the notion of a symbolic cast to his poetry: apart from the brief reference in the *Ševčenkivs'kyj slovnyk*, neither the bibliographies nor the summarizing *ševčenkoznavstvo* (see note 1) make any mention of "symbol" or "symbolism."

were only the most immediately apparent: the burial mounds, the three souls or the three ravens in "Velykyj l'ox" [The Great Crypt], the falling oak in "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary" [There Had Been Wars and Military Feuds], the solitary tree in the desert in "U Boha za dvermy ležala sokyra" [An Axe Lay behind God's Door]. They could not be ignored for the very fact that they were consciously highlighted in terms of composition or narrative, or, because, as in "Velykyj l'ox," they were clearly a part of a literary, Romantic convention.

But these symbols are only the visible surface, so to speak, of a massive underground construction. For while the symbolic level, as I have noted, is not the only level of Ševčenko's poetry, it is the determining and central level, and as such it is highly complex and ramified; it manifests itself in the protagonists (be it Hamalija or Xmel'nyč'kyj, Marija or Saul), in things and places (the above mentioned tree and axe; the town of Čyhyryn, the village of Subotiv, the city of St. Petersburg), in events (the election of a hetman, the entry of a Cossack into a monastery), and perhaps most significantly in movements and relations—above all in the fates of various represented characters, and of the poet himself. Each of these moments carries symbolic meaning; by virtue of being a sign that is fraught with associations and significance of a special kind, each is a symbol.<sup>15</sup> Although many of these symbols become apprehendable as symbols only in and through a symbolic analysis, the primary object of such an analysis is not the symbols themselves but the relations between them and the structures that determine these relations. To echo Turner, our task is

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<sup>15</sup> There is a broad consensus that virtually anything can be a symbol. See Susanne K. Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite and Art* (New York, 1951), especially chapters 2 and 3; compare also Nelson Goodman's introductory comment to his *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (New York, 1968): "'Symbol' . . . covers letters, words, texts, pictures, diagrams, maps, models, and more, but carries no implication of the oblique or the occult. The most literal portrait and the most prosaic passage are as much symbols, and as 'highly symbolic,' as the most fanciful and figurative" (p. xi), and Victor Turner's introductory statement in his *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, 1974): "The symbols I observed in the field were, empirically, objects, activities, relationships, events, gestures, and spatial units in a ritual situation" (p. 19).

Compare also the comment of G. S. Kirk: "For many people, statements like 'myths make use of symbols' imply that a myth derives any significance it may possess from its inclusion of one or more special symbols, each of which in itself represents

more to chart the forest of symbols than to contemplate individual trees.

In the traditional Ševčenko scholarship the dominant perspective has been thematic: history, the supernatural (including prominently the convention of the ballad), folk custom and belief (and the poetics of oral and folk literature), social and political concerns, and literary models and influences (preeminently among them the Bible), seem to provide a clear rubric for discussing his poetry. As accepted as this classification may now be (and it has become so more by inertia than because of persuasive critical argument), the approach in general, and the individual categories in particular, are ultimately inadequate; the focus on manifest and surface elements tends to obscure and ignore the deeper and considerably more important symbolic meanings, patterns of movement, and structures. Moreover, such a surface, thematic, or metonymic focus is not conducive even for a "purely functional" classification, since it can be shown that any number of Ševčenko's poetic works can be subsumed simultaneously under two or more of the given rubrics.

By its very nature, Ševčenko's poetry, the product of what I have called his "unadjusted" and "rebellious" self, is remarkably autonomous with regard to existing literary norms, influences, and conventions and highly resistant to simple classificatory schemes; it presents the reader and the critic with a seamless web where any given

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some important and complex emotion or some widespread but not easily expressible intuition about the world. I believe this way of understanding the symbolic aspect of myths to be largely erroneous. It is undeniable that certain myths do contain static symbols of this kind—some of those adduced by Freud and Jung, even. More important, recurrent subjects like ogres may carry with them special psychological associations of terror, revulsion, or other strong emotion, and therefore have a symbolic value independent of the actions in which they are involved. Yet many myths do not contain, or at least do not emphasize, such symbols. . . . Many of them have a symbolic reference or set of references, but the reference is dynamic and allegorical in a complex way; it implies the transposition of whole episodes or situations on to different semantic and emotional levels. Most of the operative and speculative functions of myth entail a degree of this kind of transference, and even the structural interpretation of myths sees their meaning as implicit in relationships, not static subjects." *Myth: Its Meaning and Functions in Ancient and Other Cultures* (Cambridge, Eng., 1970), pp. 279–280.

construct, be it emotional or cognitive, an event or a character, is connected with manifold and intricate ties to the organic totality. Still, even at this preliminary stage, one can make several discriminations. For one, it may be argued that Ševčenko's poetry may indeed be classified—not according to theme or ostensible subject matter, but according to different formal modes of presentation. While there are inevitable overlappings and borderline or hybrid cases, Ševčenko's poetry divides into three basic types: 1. the rhetorical, prophetic, ultimately "political" or "ideological" poems, such as "Poslanije" (I mertvym i žyvm i nenarodženym. . .) [Epistle (To the Dead, the Living and the Still Unborn. . .)], "Kavkaz" (The Caucasus), the paraphrases of the Old Testament Prophets, and others; 2. the intimate or "purely lyrical" or confessional poems, for the most part short, and concentrated in the exile period; and, lastly, 3. the narrative poems, which are mostly longer, but which can be as brief as the 62-line ballad-like "Rusalka." The latter group, which includes such poems as "Kateryna," *Hajdamaky*, "Vid'ma" (The Witch), "Kniazna" (The Princess), "Slipyj" (The Blind Man), "Moskaleva kryncja" (The Soldier's Well), "Tytarivna" (The Sexton's Daughter), "Neofity" (The Neophytes) and "Marija," to name only the more important, is by far the more complex and the more interesting. It is perhaps indicative of the traditional concerns of Ševčenko scholarship that the narrative poems have received the least attention. And yet it is precisely here, with the almost obsessional repetition of motifs and patterns of movement and character that we see at its sharpest the nature of Ševčenko's imaginative world. For as in "true" (that is, collective, primitive, or classical) myth, the essential unit is a narrative; and by establishing, through symbolic analysis, comparison, and superimposition, the underlying structures in the poems (now taken as "variants"), we can decode the statement of the whole, the myth as such. Here, the very redundancy—the repetition of patterns and the "excess of information"—is a sign of the mythical mode. For the only defense that myth has against deformation and the failings of memory is not the accuracy of the account—it is precisely the details that are the first to be deformed and forgotten—but repetition through variants. The narrative poems, in short, are the "ground floor" through which the symbolic edifice can be entered. Ultimately, however, the first two categories as well, that is, the non-narrative poems, also express the same myth, although they principally tend to focus only on a given aspect or phase of the myth.

Even more important than the just described formal typology is the fact that the symbolic code of Ševčenko's poetry exists on two levels, or in two parallel modalities, and as such allows two basic (and complementary) lines of inquiry. One is the psychoanalytic, and pertains above all to the author's symbolic autobiography. This analysis must be left for another occasion. Now, our attention is focused on the other level of the code—the myth and its structures. Fittingly, it is precisely in what should be its logical antipode—in the treatment of history—that we have the clearest introduction to Ševčenko's mythical thought.

## *History and Metahistory*

CRITICAL DISCUSSIONS OF the "historiosophy," or "historiography" or, more modestly, the "historical views" purportedly expressed in Ševčenko's poetry, while generally more noteworthy for their quantity than quality, can be roughly divided into two basic types—interpretations and source studies. The latter, a much smaller group, do occasionally contribute to our knowledge of the background of Ševčenko's creativity, his intellectual interests and contacts, his reading, even his travels.<sup>1</sup> The interpretations and explications on the other hand, bulk large in the field of Ševčenko scholarship, but for the most part only reflect the prevailing (and, in Soviet circumstances, the obligatory) attitudes toward the Bard. In the nationalist critical tradition, for example, Ševčenko's "historicism" is perceived almost exclusively as assertion and glorification of Ukrainian freedom and nationhood in battle against foreign, especially Russian, domination. For Dymtro Doncov, the ideologue of Ukrainian nationalism between the two World Wars, and a literary critic who mixed occasional perspicacity with extreme bias and dogma, the very essence of Ševčenko's meaning and message is his depiction of the Cossacks as a totally dedicated, disciplined and self-sacrificing order of knights ready to overcome both their external enemies and their vacillating and weak countrymen

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, B. Navroć'kyj's *Hajdamaky Tarasa Ševčenka* (Xarkiv, 1928), as well as the articles of Ja. I. Dzyra, "Taras Ševčenko i ukrajins'ki litopysy XVII–XVIII st." and M. Iu. Brajčevs'kyj, "T. H. Ševčenko i arxeolohija" in *Istoryčni pohljady T. H. Ševčenka*, ed. I. O. Huržij et al. (Kiev, 1964). Ju. O. Ivakin's two-volume *Komeniar do 'Kobzarja' Ševčenka* (Kiev, 1964 and 1968) also contains valuable information.

—the peasants and the denationalized gentry.<sup>2</sup> In subsequent variations and elaborations on this, Ševčenko's historiosophy, as it is called, has been identified with religious providentialism and indeed made synonymous with modern Ukrainian nationalism.<sup>3</sup> A mirror image of this state of affairs is found in the recently quite active Soviet interest in this issue.<sup>4</sup> There, with equally dogmatic assurance, Ševčenko is described as a committed "revolutionary-democrat" who, "coming from the repressed, exploited and enserfed peasantry, and having personally experienced all the horrors of serfdom. . . perceived the more important historical events from the point of view of the interest of the popular masses"; his "historical views. . . were formed in concerted battle against gentry, bourgeois, and nationalist histori-osophy."<sup>5</sup> Ironically, both extremes contain a grain of truth—but one that is hardly visible under the layers of misconceptions and distortions.

A leitmotif for the more analytically inclined is the disclaimer that while Ševčenko's so-called historical poems may be replete with historical inaccuracies, the *spirit* of the past is captured faithfully, and the picture of the epoch is both powerful and essentially true.<sup>6</sup> The idea, of course, is now commonplace in all discussions of historical

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, his *Pravda pradiiv velykyx* (Philadelphia, 1952). Doncov's vivid and forceful elevation of the central idea (as he saw it) over and against any possible contravening facts influenced various contemporaries, such as the poet and critic E. Malanjuk, or the literary scholar S. Smal'-Stoc'kyj (compare his *T. Ševčenko: interpretacii* [Warsaw, 1934]).

<sup>3</sup> Thus, according to L. Bilec'kyj, "The poet's hope [for the rebirth of the Ukrainian nation] was supported by his elevated perspective on Ukrainian history as on the progressive unfolding in it of God's will and the absolute spirit of the Nation which lives in the chosen people and effects its destiny not as an implacable *fatum* but as Divine Providence." Taras Ševčenko, *Kobzar* (Winnipeg, 1952), vol. 2, p. 36. Compare p. 134, below.

<sup>4</sup> Compare, for example, M. I. Marčenko's *Istoryčne mynule ukrajins'koho narodu v tvorčosti T. H. Ševčenska* (Kiev, 1957), and Ju. D. Margolis' *Istoričeskije vzgljady T. G. Ševčenska* (Leningrad, 1964).

<sup>5</sup> I. O. Huržij and M. N. Leščenko, "Istoryčni pohljady T. H. Ševčenska," in the collection by the same title, pp. 12 and 31.

<sup>6</sup> Such is the argument of Volodymyr Antonovyč, a major nineteenth-century Ukrainian historian, in his paper "O vosproizvedenii istoričeskix sobytij v poezii Ševčenko," *Čtenie v istoričeskom obščestve Nestora-Ietopisca*, vol. 2 (St. Petersburg, 1888), pp. 145–149.



fiction, and had already received considerable attention with the onset of Romantic historicism.<sup>7</sup> It is predicated on the notion that the author of the given work is in fact "painting" a "picture" of the past, or "constructing" a "model" of a given epoch. The question of accuracy, however, becomes valid only after we can establish that the work in question is historical fiction in the *literary* sense of the term; all historical fiction after all, is fiction and not history *sensu stricto*. The question, in short, is whether historical fiction as such is to be found in Ševčenko's poetry. More functionally, the question is not whether or how well the spirit of the past is conveyed, nor even (for that may be a purely semantic exercise) whether any given work can be called "historical," but whether one can speak in any non-metaphorical way of Ševčenko's poetry as expressing "historical views" or indeed a "historiosophy." It seems obvious that one cannot. The reason is not simply that his views are unsystematic—this in itself would not invalidate the idea. There is, in fact, overwhelming evidence of a systematic cast to Ševčenko's imaginative world. The reason that one cannot speak of "historical views" or "historiosophy" is precisely because the various moments, scenes, figures, references, and so on that are adduced as evidence of this are all integral parts of a code, a symbolic system that consistently and radically modifies each such constituent element. This system or code is unique to and co-extensive with the corpus of Ševčenko's poetry, and any given "historical" figure or event or judgment, as, for example, Bohdan Xmel'nyckyj, or an election of a hetman, or the statement of the cause of the Ukraine's fall from a happier form of existence, is fully meaningful only in terms of this system. To proceed otherwise, to discuss Ševčenko's "historical views" (or, indeed, other aspects of his poetic world) "in and of themselves," on the implicit assumption that there is a one-to-one, nominal, straightforward correspondence between the poetic and the real world, or that the movement from the poetic statement to the external designatum is direct and unmediated, is to engage in naive speculation. Unhappily, this is precisely what much of traditional Ševčenko scholarship has persisted in doing.

To be sure, one can speak of certain "historical views" (if not historiosophy) in Ševčenko's writings—but only in his prose, the

<sup>7</sup> See Friedrich Meinecke, *Entstehung des Historismus* (Munich, 1936). See also Dwight E. Lee and Robert N. Beck, "The Meaning of Historicism," *The American Historical Review*, vol. 59, no. 3 (Washington, D.C., 1954), pp. 568–577.

novellas and the *Diary*.<sup>8</sup> In their content, range, and tone, these views on the Ukrainian past stand in sharp contrast to what is presented in the poetry. For one, they are quite unsystematic (for although Ševčenko's prose certainly does not lack symbolic structures, these exist on the autobiographical and psychological level and not on the collective and mythical). The historical views expressed in his prose are therefore largely that—views, which are basically consistent and of an even tenor, reflecting a cultured and cosmopolitan perspective, and certainly not symbolically coded. The differences are immediately apparent: whereas in the poetry the Ukraine's past is invariably presented through an emotional, often intensely emotional prism (cf. the gamut of melancholy in "Černec" or pathos and commiseration in "Iržavec"), in his prose, precisely as a function of the "adjusted" authorial self, the depictions or references are almost always distanced and the narrator's involvement marked only by sarcasm and irony. In the novella *Bliznecy* (The Twins), for example, the author provides background on one of his major characters, Nikifor Sokira (a figure closely patterned on Gogol's "Old-World Landowners"), by describing in lapidary fashion the life of his father, Fedor, who once was so impressed by the spectacle of a dancing and drinking Zaporozhian "taking leave of the world," that is, entering a monastery at old age, that he leaves his own monastery where he was studying and joins the Cossacks. "After this," the narrator continues, "his trail was found in the great Zaporozhian Luh, and he appears among the Zaporozhian delegates, along with Holovatyj, before Catherine the Great. Then he appears at the uncereemonious dinner at General Tekelij's. And after the destruction of the Zaporozhian army, he successfully returned to the town of Perejaslav with the rank of captain and the rights of hereditary nobility."<sup>9</sup> The account is telescoped of course—and no historical event in Ševčenko's prose is ever anything more than a digression or anecdote—but it is quite revealing. Thus the destruction of the Sič, and with it the whole Cossack way of life, an event that in the poetry (for example, "Son," "Iržavec," "Velykyj l'ox," and others) is treated with utmost pathos and grief, is here noted coldly and even casually. The use of "uncereemonious" to describe the ruse used by the Russian general Tekelij to invite the

<sup>8</sup> One can also, of course, speak of Ševčenko's "historical interests" as reflected in his letters, his paintings, various recorded comments, and so on.

<sup>9</sup> *Tvary*, vol. 4, p. 16.

Zaporozhian leaders for a banquet and then to arrest them summarizes in one word an attitude of sardonic distance, almost of cynicism.<sup>10</sup> At another point, in the novella *Kapitanša* (The Captain's Wife), Ševčenko digresses on the fate of the Little Russian College (Malo-rossijskaja Kolegija) and the palace of Hetman Skoropads'kyj. He begins with an anecdotal account of one of Menšikov's excesses, that is, his attempt to intimidate Skoropads'kyj and the Cossack *staršyna* by setting up a stone pillar in the square before the College to which he threatened to chain them if they dared to denounce his graft to the tsar, and then turns to contemplate the passage of time:

But where is that square? Where is that palace? Where is the College with its bloodthirsty wonder, the secret chancery? Where is it all? Not a trace remains! Strange! And all of it is so recent, so fresh! A hundred or more years flash by and Hluxe changes from the residence of the Little Russian Hetman into an utterly filthy little provincial town.<sup>11</sup>

Here again the theme is most familiar, but the tonality entirely different. The implacable ravages of time are felt almost as sharply as in the Ukrainian poetry, but instead of evoking the anguish of a personal loss, of a deep personal tragedy, the effect is one of melancholy realization of the transience of man's achievements (very much in the spirit of Shelley's "Ozymandias"). There is involvement, and even sadness, but the mode of the recollection is decidedly more rational than emotional.

In a passage from *Progulka z udovolstviem i ne bez morali* (A Journey with Pleasure and not without a Moral) the author takes his cue

<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that Ševčenko's ostensible praise, especially the terms "znamenityj" (outstanding) and "genijal'nyj" (genial) is frequently ironic, for example when the Cossack colonel Halahan, who was the first to leave Mazepa and join Peter I is called "znamenityj" (*Muzykant; Tvory*, vol. 3, p. 244) or Šaxovskoj's vaudeville, "Kozak-stixotvorec" (which Ševčenko clearly scorned) is also labeled "znamenityj" (*Tvory*, vol. 4, p. 60). The term "genijal'nyj," which Ševčenko at one point applies to Xmel'nyc'kyj ("genijal'nyj buntovščik" [a genius of a rebel]; *Tvory*, vol. 5, p. 139), and which Soviet critics repeatedly cite as proof that Ševčenko did not in fact really scorn the Hetman, is also often used ambiguously. In *Progulka* (*Tvory*, vol. 4, p. 319), for example, he speaks of a local landlord's idea to turn an old historical landmark into a grain warehouse as a "genial'naja agronomičeskaja zateja" (a genial agronomic undertaking).

<sup>11</sup> *Tvory*, vol. 3, p. 401.

from archeological remains<sup>12</sup> for another historical digression: "What" he asks,

do these frequent dark burial mounds on the shores of the Dnieper and the grandiose ruins of palaces and castles on the shore of the Dniester tell the curious descendant? They speak of slavery and freedom. Poor, weak Volhynia and Podolia defended her crucifiers in inaccessible castles and luxurious palaces. But my beautiful, powerful, freedom-loving Ukraine tightly packed countless, huge burial mounds with her free corpses and with the corpses of the enemy. She did not leave her glory to the mercy of her enemies, she trampled the enemy despot underfoot, and she died free and uncorrupt. This is the meaning of the burial mounds and the ruins. It is not for nothing, my contemplative countrymen, that your songs are sad and melancholy. They were composed by freedom, and sung by heavy, solitary slavery.<sup>13</sup>

His sympathy for and identification with the people is obvious and unqualified; but as before, the difference in tone between this and the corresponding formulations in his poetry, a difference between measured and absolutized emotion, is more than apparent. (Indeed the very next sentence in the text of *Progulka* underscores control and distance as the narrator, with deft irony, puts his musings into perspective: "While I was thus resolving this misty archeological conundrum, the dark forest through which we were travelling grew darker still.")<sup>14</sup>

Perspective and a sense of context (of world history, of human affairs in general) are in fact determining features of the historical views, that is, the various historical digressions and asides, that Ševčenko expresses in his prose. Thus a reference to the 1768 *hajdamak* uprising (again in *Progulka*) is couched in terms of "comparative" or European history. The actual occasion is an observation on the town of Lysjanka, which, as the peripatetic narrator notes, "plays an important role in the history of the Ukraine (*v istorii Malorossii*)":

It was the home of the father of the famous Zinovij Bohdan Xmel'-nyc'kyj, Myxajlo Xmil'. And it is also noteworthy (if one is to believe the local old timers) for its vespers—no worse than the Sicilian vespers—that Maksym Zaliznjak prepared here for the Poles and the Jews in

<sup>12</sup> Compare especially Brajčevskij's interesting article cited in note 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Tvory*, vol. 4, p. 319.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 420.

1768. Indeed if one is to consider all such events, events unworthy of human memory, remarkable, then not only some Lysjanka, but every village, every yard of Ukrainian soil, especially on the right bank of the Dnieper, will be famous. In this regard if not in any other, my countrymen in the past did not take a back seat to any European nation, and in 1768 outdid St. Bartholomew's night and even the first French Revolution. The one thing in which they differed from the Europeans was that for them all these bloody tragedies were the work of the entire nation and never the result of the will of some schemer like Catherine de Médicis.<sup>15</sup>

Perspective and a sense of context are also revealed in the fact that whereas the poetry treats the past almost exclusively through the prism of military feats, heroism, glory, and suffering, the prose—even when the vehicle is merely an occasional digression—intimates a fuller picture, a past that includes along with the “mob council” of 1663 (*Knjaginja*) vignettes of the upper classes, of a Halahan, Skoropads'kyj, the Malorossijskaja Kolegija (in *Muzykant*), as well as of cultural life (the figures of Skovoroda and Kotljarevs'kyj in *Bliznecy*) and general references to, and occasional brief descriptions of various strata of Ukrainian society—the nobility, the clergy, the middle class. As sketchy as the picture may be, it is modeled by a focus on a broad, structured society, and as such it stands in sharp contrast to the poetry's mythical conception of the Ukraine.

But even while the picture of the Ukrainian past in Ševčenko's prose is defined by the rational mode, by a general historicism and by supra-national concerns (above all art and archeology), in a word by the perspective of the “adjusted” personality, there is no total break with the other, “unadjusted” self; there are, in fact, occasional intimations of a different reality just beneath the surface. One of these occurs in *Bliznecy* where Nikifor Fedorovyč Sokira, the “old-world landowner,” is fond of explaining to his wife, Praskov'ja Tarasovna, the various historical figures depicted under a protective shroud of the Virgin Mary in a painting in a church they frequent. “At times,” we are told, “he described in such detail about Danilovič [that is, Menšikov] and his destruction of Baturyn [the old Cossack capital] that Praskov'ja Tarasovna would naively ask her husband: ‘Why then does she protect him?’” The question, in fact, threatens to explode the whole complacent world of Sokira, of the passive and if not

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

actually ignoble then weak and deracinated descendants of the Cossacks. It is the discordant note in an ostensibly idyllic world, as the very next sentence makes plain: "However full our cup of happiness may be, there is always room for a drop of poison."<sup>16</sup> This "drop of poison" is the wrenching awareness of disharmony, and even of a curse, under the surface of the existing order; as the narrator had noted in *Progulka*, it was in Eden, after all, that brother first slew brother. And it is this awareness—here emblematically articulated through the "naive" intuition of a woman—that animates Ševčenko's poetry. Its full dimensions, however, can become apparent only on examining the deep structures of Ševčenko's Ukrainian myth, both in the past and the present.

To deal with the past, however, one must still pose, in the most general and non-exclusionary terms, the basic question: what are the poems that have traditionally been considered "historical?" And further: what is the basis for their differentiation or typology? What is the nature of the "historical views" they express? Oddly enough, in the various writings on the subject this rudimentary operation—a preliminary definition of terms and criteria—has never been seriously attempted.

Without great risk of schematism, it seems that the whole field of poems that can be called "historical" in any commonly accepted sense, that is, poems that deal in various ways with the Ukrainian past, can be subdivided into three more or less discrete groups. The first group contains poems that are closest to what is usually understood to be a work of historical fiction, whether in poetry or prose. They generally turn on a "historical" event which is at the center of focus and which occupies most of the poem's intellectual and emotional space. In order of their writing these are: (1) "Tarasova nič" (Taras' Night; 1838), (2) "Ivan Pidkova" (1839), (3) *Hajdamaky* (1840–41), (4) *Hamalija* (1842), (5) "Nevol'nyk"/"Slipyj" (The Slave/The Blind Man; 1845), (6) "Iržavec" (1847), (7) "Černec" (The Monk; 1847), (8) "Švačka" (1848), (9) "U nedilen'ku u svjatuju" (On Holy Sunday; 1848), (10) "Zastupyla čorna xmara" (A Black Cloud Covered the Sky; 1848), and (11) "Buvaje v nevoli inodi zhadaju" (Occasionally in my Slavery I Remember; 1850). Except for

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

the last, all of these works not only refer to more or less well known events, but also depict (or at least mention) actual (often misidentified, but popular) historical figures. In contrast, "Buvaje v nevoli inodi zhadaju" presents a historically unspecified archetypal event from the Cossack past. The longest of these poems, *Hajdamaky* and "Nevol'nyk"/"Slipyj" are also mythically the most complex and interesting.

The second group is considerably more heterogeneous, and, like almost all of the first group, with two exceptions, they are all written in the first decade of Ševčenko's creativity: "Do Osnov"janenka" (To Osnov"janenko; 1839), "Dumy moi" (My Thoughts; 1839), "Rozryta mohyla" (The Opened Grave; 1843), "Čyhyrne, Čyhyrne" (O Čyhyryn; 1844), "Son (Komediya)" (The Dream [A Comedy]; 1844), "Hoholju" (To Gogol; 1844), "Velykyj l'ox" (The Great Crypt; 1845), "Stojit' v seli Subotovi" (There Stands in the Village of Subotiv; 1845), "Poslaniye" (The Epistle; 1845), "Xolodnyj Jar" (1845), "Za ščo my ljubymo Bohdana" (Why Do We Love Bohdan [Xmel'nyč'kyj]; 1845-47), "Za bajrakom bajrak" (Behind the Ravine Another Ravine; 1847), "Šče jak buly my kozakamy" (When We Were Still Cossacks; 1847), "Son (Hory moi vysokiji)" (A Dream [My Tall Mountains]; 1847), "Oj čoho ty počornilo" (O Why Have You Turned Black; 1848), "Jakby to ty, Bohdane p"janyj" (If You, Drunken Bohdan; 1859) and "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary" (There Had Been Wars and Military Feuds; 1860). These poems are either exclusively or largely meditations or reflections on history, that is, either generally on the Ukrainian past, most often the decline and fall of a formerly free existence, or on a specific moment or indeed place (for example, the town of Čyhyryn, Xmel'nyč'kyj's church in Subotiv, the ravine called Xolodnyj Jar) that captures an element of the past and serves in the present as an objective correlative, a concrete object of contemplation for the poet. Such reflections, to be sure, are also found in the first group, especially in *Hajdamaky* and "Iržavec," and to a lesser extent in "Černec." But in contrast to the first group, the poems here do not tell a story, they are not constructed around a real or fictional event. By that very reason, perhaps, by the absence of what some might call the epic factor, they gain in emotional and especially in symbolic intensity; as such they constitute some of the most politically and rhetorically charged of Ševčenko's works.

The third group is smaller and, from our perspective, rather

marginal. It contains poems, virtually all of them written in the first two or three years of exile, that are both set in the past and to some extent descriptive of it, that is, such poems as "Xustyna" (The Kerchief; 1847), "U tijeji Kateryny" (At Catherine's; 1848), "Ne xoču ja ženytysja" (I Do Not Wish to Marry; 1848), "Naščo meni ženytysja" (Why Should I Marry; 1849), and "Oj kryknuly siri husy" (The Grey Geese Cried Out; 1849).<sup>17</sup> The depiction of the past in these works is confined to and stylized by popular conventions, specifically the folk song (as we see from the very titles of the last three) and the *duma* ("U tijeji Kateryny"). And this is not insignificant for the larger picture. For even though this group is peripheral for any critic's notion of Ševčenko's historicism, the principle so apparent here—the perception of the past through the values, beliefs, and emotions of the collective, the *narod*, as it were—is *mutatis mutandis* applicable to Ševčenko's treatment of history in general. Ultimately, this is one of the factors transforming the putative historicism of his poetry into myth.

The matter may now be put directly: if by history one simply means telling the past "as it really was"—according to the poet's higher, imaginative perspicacity—then all of these poems, in all three groups, are indeed historical. But surely this is not an adequate definition; it is only the surface of a definition. For what is really implied by Ranke's phrase is a context of veracity, an idea of verifiability. If the projected reality is sufficient unto itself, if the "really" in the formula is taken without reference to any external criteria, then any given narrative purporting to be about the past would be true and historical. The truth and historicity of an account, however, derives from a commitment to reasoning and consensus that allows and in fact requires questioning, emendation, correction, improvement, and so on. But while such an approach is implicit in the work of many contemporary writers, such as Grabowski, Puškin or Kuliš, it is patently not to be found in Ševčenko. In his poetry the truth about

<sup>17</sup> A subset of this group are the several poems that show that they are set in the past, but do so only in passing, or only implicitly—for example, "Utoplena" (The Drowned Girl; 1841), "Tytarivna" (1848), "Perebendja" (1839) and "Varnak" (The Convict; 1848/1858). They can hardly be considered historical. Here the past is simply a *topos*. Finally, there are various poems, beginning with "Pryčynna" (1837), that mention a Cossack, or the Sič—but this too does not in any sense make them historical.



the Ukrainian past is not subject to verification or emendation in the give and take of rational inquiry, or in the marketplace of intellectual opinion. He, in fact, mocks this attitude, and in his "Poslanije" sardonically equates it with solipsism.<sup>18</sup> For him the truth about the Ukraine's past cannot be learned from books or archives or the paraphernalia of learning for it is precisely this learning that he finds false in its very nature.<sup>19</sup> This truth for Ševčenko can be learned only by communing with the collective soul of his people; it is not learned but experienced—or apprehended in a revelation. It is indivisible, immutable, and transcendent, as transcendent as his key metaphors, *slovo* (the word), *volja* (freedom-will), *pravda* (truth-justice).

As the soul of the people is in the domain of the sacred, so the teaching of the philosopher-scholars, whom he derisively equates with "the short, gnarled German" (see "Poslanie"), is alien and profane. It has been demonstrated, of course, that Ševčenko was well acquainted with various historical sources (*Istoriia Rusov*, the Cossack chronicles, especially Velyčko) and we know from his own remarks in his letters and the *Diary* of his enthusiasm for archival sources, but this does not in any way change the picture.<sup>20</sup> Although he was acquainted with such sources and drawn to them, and although he occasionally incorporated details or formulations from them into his works,<sup>21</sup> his conception of history is ultimately quite distant from any reliance on sources and archives and facts. Reliance on such evidence clearly assigns existential autonomy to the past; the past becomes separate and complete and hence objectively knowable. But for Ševčenko the division between past and present, the objective and subjective, is continually blurred. The past enters the present not only through collective memory, as "glory" (*slava*),<sup>22</sup> and not only

<sup>18</sup> Compare "Poslanije," lines 91–100 and *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> Compare, for example, *Hajdamaky*, lines 54–64.

<sup>20</sup> Ševčenko's comments about Kuliš's *Zapiski o Južnoj Rusi*, for example, are invariably highly enthusiastic; see his letter to M. M. Lazarevskiy of 18–19 October 1857 or to Kuliš himself, 4 January 1858, in *Tvory*, vol. 6, pp. 175 and 193.

<sup>21</sup> Compare Dzyra, "Taras Ševčenko i ukrajins'ki litopysy XVII–XVIII st."

<sup>22</sup> Compare the frequently cited lines from "Do Osnov"janenka": "... vse hyne—/ Slava ne poljaže; / Ne poljaže, a roskaže, / Ščo dijalos' v sviti, / Čyja pravda, čyja kryvda / I čyji my dity" (everything dies—/ but glory will not die; / it will not die and it will tell/ what occurred, / [and] whose is the justice, whose is the crime/ and whose children we are).

through the power of his imagination, but by virtue of the basic fact that nearly any element in daily reality, be it old oaks (compare "Kateryna") or old ruins (for example, Xmel'nyč'kyj's church) or above all the Dnieper and the burial mounds, all speak to him as witnesses of the past. And when he enjoins his countrymen to "read" the past, the "glory,"

Подивіться лишень добре,  
Прочитайте знову  
Тую славу. Та читайте  
Од слова до слова,  
Не минайте ані титли,  
Ніже тії коми,  
Все розберіть . . . та й спитайте  
Тойді себе: що ми? . . .  
Чиї сини? яких батьків?  
Ким? за що закуті? . . .

(lines 149–158)

(But look well,/ read again/ that glory. But read/ from word to word,/ do not skip even an abbreviation,/ or a comma,/ decipher all. . . and then ask yourselves: who are we? . . . / Whose sons? Of what parents?/ Chained by whom and for what? . . .) he is clearly referring, as the context and the lines immediately preceding show, to the book that is the Ukraine herself, with her script the burial mounds that dot the landscape, and not requiring a rereading of the chronicle of Velyčko.<sup>23</sup>

In the light of these considerations it is apparent that a historicist stance, the reconstruction of history *qua* history—as opposed to the transmission of sacred knowledge, which is, in effect, the function of myth—does not figure in Ševčenko's poetry. The determinant here is not only conscious attitude and modality of approach, but literary form, genre itself. Ševčenko's poetry, with but a few exceptions, does not produce historical fictions, that is, works that concentrate, to return to the line of reasoning first introduced by Antonovych, on giving a "picture" or "canvas" of the epoch. This is reflected not only in the (consciously and unconsciously) motivated stance of the Bard,

<sup>23</sup> This well-intentioned but absurd interpretation is offered by Dzyra (cf. note 21), who, like all the Soviet Ukrainian Ševčenko critics, cannot free himself from a naive literalism. Ivakin's criticism on this point is well taken (cf. his *Komentar* [1964], p. 337), even though he himself often succumbs to the same literalism.

and the highly emotional tenor of his poetry, but in its formal properties as well. Starting already with the poetics of the "open form" canonized by the Romantics, Ševčenko proceeded to develop the formal, specifically compositional and generic side of his poetry (and also his prosody and diction) with a radical unconcern for existing conventions and norms. A great number of his works purposefully blur boundaries as they recombine lyric, epic, and dramatic elements; in the later poetry he again mixes elements of high and low diction, of the vulgar and the elevated.<sup>24</sup> For such a poetics, differentiation by formal criteria must necessarily be tentative, but it can be illuminating. It is significant, for example, that of the eleven poems in the first group, each ostensibly depicting historical events, only three are narrative poems, *Hajdamaky*, "Nevol'nyk"/"Slipyj" and "Buvaje v nevoli . . .," and only in *Hajdamaky* is the historical content actually developed (in "Nevol'nyk"/"Slipyj" it is merely a highly telescoped background, and in "Buvaje v nevoli . . ." an archetypal event). All the remaining poems of the first group present images and scenes of the past, but they are hardly more than vignettes. When compared to the developed focus on the present, or on the "social problems" as they are traditionally called—in such narrative poems as "Kateryna," "Knjazna," "Vid'ma," "Najmyčka" and others—it is clear that the "historical" poems are illuminations or epiphanies that give the meaning of the past, but are certainly not intended as a "whole canvas"; they are not the attempt to portray the whole fabric of an epoch, which we have in Scott, or Gogol' (*Taras Bul'ba*), or Kuliš (*Čorna rada*). The mode of presentation is not "epic" or narrative—which would seem to be called for if the goal were a straightforward depiction and reconstruction of the past—but rather a mediation, a "secondary modeling system" between the events described and the audience. Thus, more than half of the poems in question are stylized or modeled on the "historical" folk song or the duma. The clear implication of such modeling is that the semantic essence of these poems is not history but metahistory, not the mere reconstruction of the past for those who do not know it, but the retelling of the deep "sacred truth" to those who already have it in their hearts to insure that they do not forget it. The difference between the two approaches is fundamental.

Even more persuasively than the formal side, the "content," that is, the nature and range of the represented reality, throws light on the

<sup>24</sup> Compare George Y. Shevelov's "The Year 1860 in Ševčenko's Work," in *Taras Ševčenko 1814–1861: A Symposium*, pp. 71–74.

very specific and consistent qualification of the historicity of the past being depicted by Ševčenko. For one thing, in none of the poems of the first category, from "Tarasova nič" to "Buvaje v nevoli. . .," are the events depicted truly historical. In the early poems, for example, in "Tarasova nič," "Ivan Pidkova," *Hajdamaky* and *Hamalija*, the general background is historical—there were Cossack sea raids on the Turkish coast, there were battles in which Cossacks defeated the Poles, the *kolijivščyna* of 1768 did take place—but the events actually described exist apart from history: the heroes are fictional or legendary (Ivan Pidkova, Taras Trjasylo, Hamalija), events are transposed or telescoped in time ("Tarasova nič," *Hajdamaky*), and apocryphal and legendary material is freely added (for example, Gonta's murder of his children, or Catherine's proclamation and gift of the knives for the uprising in *Hajdamaky*). In a word, an implicitly historical matrix is filled out with manifestly unhistorical material, drawn from legend, folklore, and the author's imagination. Put in another way, the historical event (or series of events) is itself decidedly secondary and is easily subordinated or adjusted to a higher category of truth, that is, the "transcendent sense of the past" as some may call it, or, more directly, the structures of Ševčenko's myth of the Ukraine. Ševčenko's readiness to use to this end details and moments from an open-ended set of sources—academic histories (Bantyš-Kamens'kyj's *Istoriija Maloj Rossii* [1822], M. Markevyč's *Istoriija Malorossii* [1842–43], the works of Bandtke, and others), pseudo-historical sources such as the famous *Istoriija Rusov* (which at that time, to be sure, was still treated as a reliable source), Cossack chronicles (Velyčko and Samovydec'), literary and ethnographic sources such as Sreznevskij's *Zaporožskaja starina* or Markevyč's *Ukrainskie melodii*, and beyond that general folklore, folk songs, *dumy*, various oral accounts that he may have heard or read (as he explicitly notes in the "Introduction" to *Hajdamaky*)—all this is nothing short of the intellectual *bricolage*, as Lévi-Strauss call it, that characterizes the process of myth-making; it is just such a collection of "odds and ends," such a "detritus of culture" that is assembled, according to the operant model and structures, into myth.<sup>25</sup> In a manner characteristic of *bricolage* and the mythical mode, moreover, the various disparate elements are all taken on equal terms; no external, logical, or scholarly hierarchy of validity or importance is conceded to them—a moment from a *duma* is as much a "fact" as is a detail from an academic history; validity

<sup>25</sup> See the chapter "The Science of the Concrete" in Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, 1973). Compare Chapter Three, below.

and importance is given only in terms of the structures into which these "events" are fitted.

Such "subordination" or, in effect, incorporation of actual historical material into the structures of myth is most apparent in the long poem "Nevol'nyk"/"Slipyj" (1845) where in the course of the hero's lifetime there unfolds the entire history of Cossackdom, from the early sea raids against the Turks in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, to the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sič in 1775 and then the creation of the so-called Trans-Danube (Zadunajska) Sič in the early nineteenth century. This is mythical telescoping on a grand scale; on a more modest scale, but on the same principle, there is the conflation of events, time, and character in *Hamalijsa*, "U nedilen'ku u svjatuju," and "Zastupyla čorna xmara," to mention only poems in the first group.

In "Buvaje v nevoli," the presence of a historical event as such is dispensed with, but the work remains one of Ševčenko's most significant "historical" poems. In fact, the remaining poems of this group, although they do not dispense with "history" altogether, do focus on moments and events that are largely legendary. Thus, "Iržavec'," whose references to Peter's terrible reprisals against the Ukrainian Cossacks and gentry after his victory at Poltava are historically true, is focused on the legend of the miraculous icon of the Virgin of Iržavec' whose tears become emblematic of the Ukraine's and the poet's anguish. "Černec'," in conveying the sense of freedom that animated the Cossack past as well as the implicit guilt of the protagonist, focuses on the legend of the Cossack colonel Palij entering a monastery to live out his last days as a monk praying for the Ukraine and his own sins. "U nedilen'ku u svjatuju" vividly evokes a Cossack council in which the entire assembly unanimously elects Ivan Loboda hetman, and he in turn urges them to choose a younger, stronger leader, Nalyvajko—which they do, also unanimously. The council never happened, but the poetic fiction projects an ideal reality, the very essence of which is a community in a ritual and holy feast of brotherhood, unity, and renewal. And finally "Zastupyla čorna xmara" also presents a fictionalized Hetman Dorošenko, who after the failure of all his hopes and efforts for the Ukraine dies alone, in prison and forgotten. The centerpiece again is not a historicist depiction or evaluation of Dorošenko's activities but the poetic fiction of his succumbing to implacable fate, his solitary death (in which Ševčenko clearly sees a parallel to his own situation) and above all the

legend that St. Dmytro Rostovs'kyj erected a chapel in his honor. As much as any individual work, this poem shows that the issue of Ševčenko's historical accuracy, first broached by Antonovyč in his injunction to remember that Ševčenko's "history" was only as good as the current state of the discipline and thus not to be judged absolutely, is quite spurious.<sup>26</sup> For as we see from Ivakin's thorough (if ideologically fettered) account, Ševčenko did have access to various historical sources and studies on Dorošenko, but consciously chose to refashion or ignore them where it suited him: where all the available sources depict Dorošenko in a negative light, he, for Ševčenko, comes to embody the ideal of a "Zaporozhian brother."<sup>27</sup>

This willingness to reject established historical judgments of the day in favor of a higher, intuited truth is quite notable in various sarcastic, self-mocking remarks in the introduction to *Hajdamaky* ("...duren' rozkazuje/ Mertvymy slovamy. . . xoče, ščob sluxaly,/ jak starci spivajut'" [the fool tells stories in a dead language. . . he wishes for us to listen to old men singing]; compare lines 54–105) and it is laid bare in "Xolodyj Jar" where he castigates the historian A. Skal'kovs'kyj:

«Гайдамаки не воины,—  
Розбойники, воры.  
Пятно в нашей истории. . .»  
Брешеш, людоморе!  
За святую правду-волю  
Розбойник не стане,  
Не розкує закований  
У ващі кайдани  
Народ темний. . .

(lines 57–65)

("The *hajdamaks* were no warriors,/ but robbers and thieves. A blot on our history. . ."/ You lie, you bloodsucker!/ The robber will not rise up for holy justice-freedom,/ he will not break the bonds you have placed on the ignorant people. . .)

If the major, defining feature of the so-called historical poems is

<sup>26</sup> "O vosproizvedenii istoričeskix sobytij v poezii Ševčenko," p. 145. The argument is frequently repeated; cf. Marčenko, *Istoryčne mynule*. . . , p. 14.

<sup>27</sup> See Ivakin, *Komentar*. . . [1968], pp. 151–160.

the peripheral nature, or simply the subordination of the historical fact, the second is the consistent emphasis on the collective rather than on the individual. All the heroes in these poems are either historically marginal figures who are remembered only in legend and folk song (Ivan Pidkova, Taras Trjasylo, Hamalija) or historical figures who became folk heroes, such as Nalyvajko, Švačka, Palij, or Gonta. The case of Dorošenko only corroborates the pattern: even though he was an important historical figure, and not always a very popular one, Ševčenko depicts him primarily in terms of his dedication to the Ukraine and even more his fellowship in the Zaporozhian Host (that is, through the repeated invocation, "zaporoz'kyj brate"). Apart from this hetman who is so insistently and against historical evidence made "one of the Cossacks," only Polubotok is made into a positive hero; the other hetmans and the Cossack elite in general are treated in a very different light. This does not yet signify, as Soviet critics claim, that Ševčenko is consciously positing the masses or the *narod* as the only true factor in history. In fact, apart from *Hajdamaky* and, more obliquely, "U nedilen'ku u svjatuju," there is little actual depiction of the "broad masses"; the actual agents (invariably in battle or in heroic deeds) are the Cossacks. But it is clear, as the following chapter will elaborate, that it is the ethos of the collective, the group, often epitomized by the Cossacks, that provides the perspective on the past and constitutes its moral measure.

The second group of poems, the meditations on history, is not only larger but more complex, and the individual works here are generally artistically superior to the first. Yet, in a sense, they are more easily discussed for their metahistoric nature is unmistakable; what was largely implicit in the preceding group is now explicit and manifest. The poems here present several interconnected clusters of themes, some of which were already broached in the ostensibly historical works just discussed and some signaled for the first time. They are all, however, dominated by an impassioned tone, with the poet alternatively lamenting his country's fate and denouncing the root of the evil—in the past and the present. This double focus is the central and distinguishing feature, and the explicit juxtaposition of past and present is made not so much to trace the workings of historical cause and effect as to pass judgment on both the past and present. As with Ševčenko's other "rhetorical" poetry, specifically his later prophetic

poems, these "historiosophic" reflections are apparently straightforward and direct; as such they have always drawn equally impassioned but often ideologically distorted commentary.

Chronologically the earliest, and perhaps the most insistent theme is that of the death of freedom, of the irrevocable passing of the Cossacks and their world. Initially, as in the very early poem "Dumy moji," it is merged with the sense of nostalgia for the Ukraine of his youth and the Cossack past that was so intimately a part of it, and for which the poet, now in the distant northern capital, so painfully longs:

Серце мліло, не хотіло  
Співать на чужині. . .  
Не хотілось в снігу, в лісі,  
Козацьку громаду  
З булавами, з бунчуками  
Збирать на пораду.  
Нехай душі козацькії  
В Україні витають —  
Там широко, там весело  
Од краю до краю. . .  
Як та воля, що минулась. . .

(lines 38–48)

(The heart grew faint, it did not wish/ to sing in a foreign land. . . / One did not wish—among the forests and the snows—/ to assemble, with their standards and maces,/ the Cossack community for council. . . / Let the Cossack souls dwell in the Ukraine—/ where life is broad and gay/ from end to end,/ like that freedom that passed. . . ) But even if it begins as an aside, an image or association, the evocation of the Ukraine and its past must necessarily—as a structural unity—carry with it a glimpse of the present; where there was once freedom there are now burial mounds, *mohyly*—and a memory to be passed on:

Там родилась, гарцювала  
Козацькая воля;  
Там шляхтою, татарами  
Засівала поле,  
Засівала трупом поле,  
Поки не остило. . .  
Лягла спочить. . . А тим часом  
Виросла могила.



А над нею орел чорний  
 Сторожем літає,  
 І про неї добрим людям  
 Кобзарі співають. . .

(lines 52–63)

(There Cossack freedom was born, there it did battle,/ sowing the field with gentry and Tartar corpses,/ sowing the field until it grew cold. . . There it lay down to sleep. . . And in the meantime/ a burial mound arose,/ and over it a black eagle flies in watch/ and the minstrels sing about it/ to good people.)

The binary opposites of Cossack freedom (and glory) and the *mohyla* recur continually, both in reflections on the past and in depictions of the past, as, for example, in the paradigmatic oft-cited opening lines of "Ivan Pidkova":

Було колись — запорожці  
 Вміли панувати.  
 Панували, добували  
 І славу, і волю;  
 Минулося — осталися  
 Могили на полі.

(lines 3–8)

(There was a time when the Zaporozhians/ knew how to rule./ They ruled and won/ glory and freedom./ It all passed: there remain/ burial mounds in the fields.) The past may be evoked, as the whole of "Černec'" demonstrates, even though the poet fully realizes that it is gone forever:

Було колись. . . і ніколи  
 Не вернеться, що діялось,  
 Не вернеться сподіване,  
 Не вернеться. . .

(lines 2–5)

(There once was. . . and what was/ shall never return,/ the expected shall never return,/ never return.) And while *his* will, *his* imagination, *his* calling allow him to resurrect the past—as the very next lines of "Černec'" show,

А я, брате,  
Таки буду сподіватись,  
Таки буду виглядати,  
Жалю серцю завдавати.

(lines 5–8)

(But I brother,/ will continue to expect,/ will continue to await,/ and give sorrow to my heart)—he is aware that for his countrymen the past, the freedom that once lived is now dead. Perhaps the most lapidary and moving expression of this comes in the exile lyric “Oj čoho ty počornilo, zeleneje pole?” (O Why, Green Field, Have You Turned Black?). Here, the reply to the opening question, which is the rest of the poem, is spoken in the voice of the Ukraine-nature herself: “Počornilo ja od krovi/ Za volnuju volju” (I have turned black from blood/ [shed] for freedom), and it concludes with an ambiguous prophecy and indictment:

Я знов буду зеленіти,  
А ви вже ніколи  
Не вернетеся на волю,  
Будете орати  
Мене стиха та орючи  
Долю проклинати.

(lines 15–20)

(I shall green again/ but you will never/ return to freedom,/ you will plow me/ silently, and plowing/ curse fate.)

The tension between the vitality and freedom of the past and the present fallen state of his people, a state anatomized in detail in Ševčenko's “political” and narrative poems as a world of the descendants of free Cossacks turned into passive peasants-serfs or equally passive lackeys of tsarist despotism and of fallen women with bastard children, is partially resolved through the workings of memory. This is, on the one hand, that “glory” that lives on in collective memory and bodies forth in song and legend, in the creativity of the kobzars, and the poet himself; as he says in “Do Osnov”janenka,” “Vse hyne—Slava ne poljaže” (everything dies—glory will not perish), and its message, as that of his poetry, is “loud and true as God's word” (*holosna ta pravdyva, Jak Hospoda slovo*). It is more than that, however, for already in this early poem Ševčenko sets himself the task of not

merely reasserting the glory of the nation's past, but radically rethinking it ("Čyja pravda, čyja kryvda/ I čyji my dity"). Such rethinking becomes the centerpiece of Ševčenko's mature poetry, particularly of the "Try lita" period and the first years of exile.

The poems in question, of course, are not in any sense "historical investigations"; their concern is not with a balanced, many-leveled "analysis" that one might find, for example, in Kuliš's *Čorna rada*, but with the creation of new values, that is, a new attitude toward the past, precisely through symbolic structures. The nature and content of these structures is the subject of the following chapter. Now, as we speak of the themes, we are still dealing only with the surface expression of underlying structures.

The second, more central theme of Ševčenko's "historical reflections" is thus a broadly phrased sense of a curse, an evil fate, that weighs over the Ukraine and, indeed, over the poet himself. "Čyhryne, Čyhryne" (1844), the first poem in the "Try lita" collection and the poem that actually initiates the new prophetic stance of this period, presents this curse at its most general. The poet casts himself as a Jeremiah (indeed the epigraph of the poem, and by extension the whole cycle, is from Chapter 5 of Jeremiah), and it is clear from his tirade-lament that the curse is immanent, that it is the result of a deep "original" sin:

А я, юродивий, на твоїх руїнах  
Марно сльози трачу; заснула Україна  
Бур'яном укрилась, цвіллю зацвіла,  
В калюжі, в болоті серце прогноїла  
І в дупло холодне гадюк напустила,  
А дітям надію в степу оддала.

(lines 26–31)

(And I, the holy fool, vainly shed tears on your ruins;/ the Ukraine has fallen asleep,/ covered herself with weeds, bloomed with a mould,/ let her heart rot in the mire and mud/ and let in the snakes into her cold hollow tree,/ and for her children, she let hope loose in the steppe.) In the other poems of "Try lita," however, the idea of the curse becomes refined and qualified. In the "mystery" "Velykyj l'ox," the evil that befalls the Ukraine results, on the one hand, from her very nature,

her weakness, innocence, gullibility and passivity (compare the section "Try duši" [The Three Souls]) and on the other from the workings of external and internal malefactors, by and large the upper classes (compare the section "Try vorony" [The Three Ravens]). In the long poem "Son (Komediya)," the Ukraine is a victim of Russian despotism and imperialism, as epitomized by Peter I and Catherine II ("Ce toj pervyj, ščo rozpynav/ Našu Ukrajinu,/ a vtoraja—dokonala/ Vdovu syrotynu" [He is that first one who crucified/ our Ukraine,/ and she the second one who finished off/ the orphan widow]). This is reiterated with reference to Peter I in "Iržavec" and with reference to the Poles in "Šče jak buly my kozakamy. . .," "Buvaje v nevoli," and *Hajdamaky*.

But as clear and terrible as the evidence is of oppression by external enemies, the poet's accusation falls most directly on the country's own false and evil sons. The first charge in the indictment is given with high pathos—reinforced by the fact that it is voiced by Mother Ukraine herself—in "Rozryta mohyla," chronologically the first of the "Try lita" poems. The condemnation is subsequently developed in a number of poems, and, as in "Rozryta mohyla," it is focused on Bohdan Xmel'nyč'kyj who stands for the Cossack leadership. His policies (here specifically alliance with Muscovy) made Ukraine's enslavement inevitable (cf. "Velykyj l'ox," "Stojit' v seli Subotovi," "Za ščo my ljubymo Bohdana," and "Jakby to ty Bohdane p'janyj"). Condemnation of the Cossack hetman, which is, of course, also a conscious rejection of the officially favored cult of Xmel'nyč'kyj (as reflected, for example, in Maksymovyč's epic poem in six cantos, *Bogdan Xmel'nickij* [1833]), must necessarily lead to a rejection of the entire framework of official—and, for Ševčenko, quintessentially false—history. Thus, in "Poslanije" (whose highly significant full title is "I mertvym i žyvm, i nenarodženym zemljakam mojim v Ukrajinu i ne v Ukrajinu moje družnjeje poslanije" [To My Dead, and Living, and Yet Unborn Countrymen, in the Ukraine and Outside the Ukraine, My Friendly Epistle]), a work that ushers in modern Ukrainian national consciousness, his meditation on the tragic fate of his country culminates with the bitter understanding that the root of evil is internal. The problem is not merely that of oppositions in the body politic, of "class conflict," but that of a flawed consciousness, in effect a lack of national memory and of national dignity, leading to massive self-deception. He mocks the typical self-congratulatory paeans to the past:

А історія! . . . поема  
 Вольного народа!  
 Що ті римляне убогі!  
 Чортзна-що — не Брути!  
 У нас Брути! і Коклеси!  
 Славні, незабуті!

(lines 135–140)

(And what a history! . . . a poem/ of a free people!/ What are these poor Romans!/ The devil only knows—Brutuses?/ We had Brutuses! and Cocleles!/ Famous and unforgotten!) and excoriates the actual reality (both past and present) behind this false pride:

ось що  
 Ваші славні Брути:  
 Раби, подножки, грязь Москви,  
 Варшавське сміття — ваші пани,  
 Ясновельможні гетьмани.  
 Чого ж ви чванитеся, ви!  
 Сини сердешної України!  
 Що добре ходите в ярмі,  
 Ще лучше, як батьки ходили.

(lines 159–167)

(. . . here are your famous Brutuses:/ slaves, footstools, Moscow dirt,/ Warsaw trash—your Lordships,/ your Excellencies the hetmans./ Why do you boast/ you sons of a destitute Ukraine?!/ That you walk well in a yoke,/ even better than your fathers did?)

The final stage of Ševčenko's "historicity" is the cluster of themes dealing with the rebirth of freedom. In the early poem "Xolodnyj Jar," the past becomes a model for the future, and the peasant rebellion of 1768, the *kolijivščyna*, comes to foreshadow a new holy vengeance against the new oppressors. In the middle, and especially the late period, Ševčenko's reflections on the past are not only radically opposed to the existing, official historiography, but pushed into the realm of sacred knowledge (note the repeated references to "svjatyj zakon" [holy law] and "svjataja pravda-volja" [holy justice-freedom]) and prophetic vision. Such warnings, injunctions, and visions, fortelling a future order can only marginally be connected to Ševčenko's "historical" poems. At the same time this mental set

toward the future, the confidence in elaborating a whole vision of the future indicates mythical and not rational or historical thought. The contiguity of this to Ševčenko's treatment of the past again reinforces our sense that his "historicism" is fundamentally mythical.

It seems clear that any discussion of history and historical consciousness in Ševčenko's poetry must recognize at the outset the symbolic system, the code that governs it. As do all codes, this one qualifies its constituent elements and give them meaning only in terms of its laws or structures. To ignore this, to take any element in isolation, at face value, is, at best, to phrase the question obliquely, and, most often, to distort the meaning.

Even before examining the deep structures of Ševčenko's thinking about the Ukraine, its past, present and future, one can establish, on the surface, non-symbolic, sign level, the basic features of his "historiosophy." The first of these is *metahistory*.<sup>28</sup> Ševčenko's concern is seldom if ever an account of *what* happened, and certainly not an account purporting to tell *all* that happened (hence the radical

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<sup>28</sup> In the course of a wide-ranging discussion of poetry, history and myth, Northrop Frye also touches upon metahistory ("New Directions from Old," in *Myth and Myth-making*, ed. Henry A. Murray [Boston, 1960], pp. 115-131). Echoing the Canadian historian F. H. Underhill, he uses the term "metahistory" to signify a historian's universal scheme, vision, or insight. Moreover, he stresses the resultant accessibility of such a construct: "We notice that metahistory, though it usually tends to very long and erudite books, is far more popular than regular history: in fact metahistory is really the form in which most history reaches the general public. It is only the metahistorian, whether Spengler, Toynbee or H. G. Wells or a religious writer using history as his source of *exempla*, who has much chance of becoming a best-seller" (p. 117). Taking the matter very liberally, one could perhaps see a certain analogy between Ševčenko and the metahistorians Frye mentions insofar as they all express overarching visions and evoke a significant popular response. The differences are crucial, however. In contrast to the historian (regardless of whether he writes "regular history" or "metahistory") Ševčenko's sense of the past is totally emotive and, as we shall see below, couched—on the level of both the small and large semantic units—in the structures of mythical thought. Ultimately, his concern is not at all with history but with a social model. As I have used it here, "metahistory" refers not so much to a universal schema of history (although Ševčenko's mythical thought will be seen to have a universal cast to it) as to the persistent transformation of ostensibly historical content into the symbolic and the mythical.

selectivity of focus as well as the telescoping of events and characters), but rather a focus on *why* something happened, and "what it all meant." His interest is not in history as such (for example, the genesis and ramification of various important events, the deeds and thoughts of key individuals, processes and transformations, and so on), but its *deep, true* (and now largely forgotten or misconstrued) *concealed* meaning. One cannot but notice how often the movements and images in a given poem stress this *revealing of the concealed*. The key metaphor (or symbol) for this is the burial mound or crypt, as we see in the conclusion of "Rozryta mohyla":

Чого вони там шукали?  
 Що там схоронили  
 Старі батьки? — Ех, якби то,  
 Якби то найшли те, що там схоронили —  
 Не плакали б діти, мати не журилась.

(lines 50–53)

(What did they seek there?/ What did the old fathers bury there?— Ah, if they,/ if they found what was buried there/ the children would not cry, the mother would not grieve)—or in the extended "mystery play" "Velykyj l'ox," which concludes in an identical manner:

Так малий льох в Суботові  
 Москва розкопала!  
 Великого ж того льоху  
 Ще й не дошукалась.

(lines 496–499)

(Thus did Moscow unearth the small crypt in Subotiv!/ But the great crypt—/ it has not even found yet.) It is also signaled by the fact that the Cossack who appears to tell his story in "Za bajrakom bajrak" and "Buvaje v nevoli inodi zhadaju" rises from the burial mound (and in the latter poem actually carries the boy back into the mohyla); it is expressly stated by the poet-narrator in the opening part (the dedication) of *Hajdamaky*, where the process of composing the poem-to-be in his mind's eye begins precisely with the image of a mohyla opening up for him:

Заспіваю, — розвернулась  
 Висока могила,  
 Аж до моря запорожці  
 Степ широкий крили.

(lines 113–116)

(I sing—the tall burial mound opens up,/ the *zaporozhians* cover the broad steppe to the very sea.) In a word, as he puts it in “Iržavec,” history is meaningful for Ševčenko only as *istorija-pravda* (history-truth), in other words, as *sacred* history.

The second basic feature, as we have seen, is that Ševčenko's perception of the past is invariably cast in the collective mold; it is geared to and meshed with the popular experience. The vehicle for depicting the past is collective memory—songs, dums, legends, and so on, and its object of interest and empathy are the semi-legendary and popular heroes. Though Ševčenko's poetry does not, as Soviet critics would have it, make the people, the *narod*, the sole agent in the historical process, it is clear that it is the collective ethos—frequently identified with the Cossack, that is, *zaporozhian* perspective—that animates his vision of the past.

The emphasis on metahistory and the popular ethos conforms, one might note, with the premises and desiderata of Romantic historicism. An analogous concern with the “full texture” of the past, with the experience and the “soul” of the people, is found in the theory and practice of various contemporaries.<sup>29</sup> But the much greater intensity and selectivity of Ševčenko's approach makes this more a matter of proximity or analogy than of true similarity. For beyond them lies the third and central feature of Ševčenko's historicism which strongly distinguishes him from all his contemporaries who turn to the Ukrainian past, be they Polish, Russian or Ukrainian Romantics. And this is the *function* of his ostensibly historicist concern. In contrast to these writers, the historical knowledge recovered by Ševčenko is intended for a unique and sublime role—to revive, to heal, and to liberate his people, to be the very medium of their spiritual rebirth. In this he transcends the parameters of Romantic historicism. In the works of the Polish writers of the “Ukrainian school,” or Słowacki, or Puškin, or even the early Ukrainian Romantics, such as Metlyn's'kyj,

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Goszczyński's postscript to his *Zamek kaniowski*.



works which focus on a hidden, mysterious, perhaps even "cursed" past, the events they present may be colorful and vibrant, tragic and terrifying, but also, invariably, to some degree exotic and distant; in all of these works (even in those of so ardent a Cossackophile as Czajkowski) there is a clear sense of the writer's separateness from the world he depicts; he may be wholly sympathetic, but he is still an observer who sees it from an outside perspective, an individual artist working with literary material. Ševčenko, however, is the very opposite of an observer—he is both a spokesman for the entire group and its past and a mediator between that past and the future. He knows the past totally and deeply—not as a Romantic who has come into possession of interesting material or archives (for example, Grabowski and the Scottish device of the discovered manuscript), but as one who is attuned to the sacred truth, *istorija-pravda*. His knowledge of the past may draw on various moments or "events"—some from historical sources, some from oral lore and collective representations—but in the poetry, in conjunction with his sense of the present and the future, it is synthesized into and articulated exclusively in terms of mythical structures. His symbolic code, moreover, attains special resonance by being conflated with his autobiography in a process that intimately links personal and national destiny.<sup>30</sup> Like the shaman who mediates between the earth and sky, or the minstrel-kobzar, the poet is chosen by transcendent forces, by "fate," for a task that is both "cursed" and "holy."

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<sup>30</sup> It is quite evident that his most sympathetic Cossack heroes, Polubotok in "Son," Palij in "Černec," Dorošenko in "Zastupyla čorna xmara," are cast in his own likeness, that is, with special emphasis on their exile or imprisonment in a foreign land, on their suffering and expiation for the tragedy that befell their people, and on the apparent fact that they ended their days forgotten by their countrymen.

## *The Myth: Structures and Paradigmatic Relations*

IN A BROAD and figurative sense myth is often understood as communication with, or a "peering into," another, profound and mysterious reality. In a narrowly conventional and "thematic" sense myth may be considered, as it is by Northrop Frye, "a story in which some of the chief characters are gods or other beings larger in power than humanity."<sup>1</sup> Myth is also generally seen as a communication that is held to be momentous and true, but by its very nature unverifiable; as part of the category of beliefs it has thus become equated, in popular usage (the "myth" of male menopause) and in the parlance of the political scientist (the "myth" of the master race), with mischievous falsehood or mere misconception—on a massive scale. In the framework of the study of religion, for Mircea Eliade above all, myths are concerned with origins: ". . . myth is always related to a 'creation,' it tells us how something came into existence, or how a pattern of behavior, an institution, a manner of working were established."<sup>2</sup> In contrast, our concern is with the specific, structural aspects of myth, most importantly, with myth as a multi-tracked narrative constituting a coherent and closed symbolic system. We are concerned as well with the fact that mythical thought, as Lévi-Strauss has observed, is essentially different from rational or scientific thought. (It is parallel to the latter, but not antecedent to it in an evolutionary sense: it is neither "pre-scientific" nor "pre-rational.") The analysis that follows, however, requires a fuller and optimally rigorous determination of myth, not in the sense of an all-encompassing definition

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<sup>1</sup> Northrop Frye, *Fables of Identity* (New York, 1963), p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality* (New York, 1963), p. 18.

of what myth is or what the category "myth" may contain, but in the particular sense of a model of the structural properties of myth and of mythical thought as such. This is dictated by the subject at hand, for however much Ševčenko is attuned to his culture and to that culture's perceptions of reality, his myth is still an individual construct. While conveying "universal truths," his myth also reflects his psyche and his culture *as perceived through it*, and in this it differs profoundly from myth *sensu stricto* (especially in its ritual version), which can be taken as an icon of social structure. Even more decisive is the fact that in Ševčenko we have mythical thought and mythical structures but no myth in the sense of an ordered sequence of events, or of the kind of reconstructed unified narrative that we find, for example, in the *Kalevala*. Instead, his poetic texts present the myth in "fragments," as it were, and it is the critic's task to "reassemble" them. In doing this, however, he must be an "engineer," not a "bricoleur."

The model proposed here draws on the structural-anthropological approach to myth, and particularly on the analyses of Lévi-Strauss and Victor Turner. In brief, it postulates five fundamental properties of myth taken as the product of mythical thought: 1) In terms of its constructive principle, myth is highly redundant or multi-tracked in that it is a continual working out of a structure (a "sense" or an "idea") through a heterogeneous, but finite body of "events" or constituent structural units ("themes" or "motifs"). In terms of concrete texts, a given structure, for example the poet's sense of the Ukraine as "victim" (specifically, a female victim), can produce a seemingly infinite set of variants, each with a different plot and cast of characters, but each expressing the same basic relations, or structure. 2) In terms of its dynamics, both of the narrative development and the interrelation of elements, myth proceeds through a series of binary oppositions and mediations; an opposition on a lower level of structure is resolved by a mediation on a higher one. As we shall see, this dynamics of opposition and mediation (transformation) is presented in Ševčenko in manifold variations. One striking example is given in *Hajdamaky* where Gonta's sons, children of a Polish Catholic mother and a Cossack Orthodox father and hence on the surface appropriate mediators are, in fact, killed, precisely to signal, in the deep structural sense, that on that—polish/Cossack—level no simple mediation is possible; the mediation that will occur, as is intimated by the poem's postscript, but developed only in the context of the later poetry, will be on a higher and universal level, in the future, when the

very distinction of Pole and Cossack will disappear and only people will inhabit the world. 3) Myth, as already noted, communicates "universal truths"; within its culture its message almost always carries great importance and becomes part of the given group's sacred knowledge. Finally, it necessarily follows from the above that the world represented in myth is not contingent and is 4) transcendent to time and 5) place. Ševčenko's poetic world is, in fact, remarkably congruent with this model.

Ševčenko's mythical thinking is not confined, of course, solely to his "historical" poems, but is expressed by the whole of his poetry. Those works that have traditionally been called "social" (*suspil'no-pobutovi*), "ideological" or "political," and also "fantastic" (or "balladic"), all articulate the same mythical structures, though in varying degrees and from different formal or narrative vantage points. In this regard, many critics have been substantially correct in perceiving a unified, core "message" in his poetry—even while perceiving it only in terms of surface elements and largely on the basis of intuition, essentially in a kind of mythic resonance with the message. This maximal or universal presence of the myth also distinguishes Ševčenko from his counterparts in Polish and Russian literature: in Słowacki the Ukraine is strictly speaking presented in terms of myth only in the later cantos of *Beniowski* and in *Sen srebrny Salomei*, and in Gogol' only in his early collections *Večera na xutore bliz Dikan'ki* and *Mirgorod*. And whereas both Słowacki and Gogol' effect through their mythic treatment of the Ukrainian theme a personal, psychological rite of passage, that is, exorcise, by expressing their sense of the Ukraine in myth, a deep conflict in their psyches, such a transformation and release does not exhaust Ševčenko's dynamics. For in a dramatic further step he not only works out in the course of telling his myth a reconciliation of opposites and thus also a form of psychic release, but takes this resolution to construct nothing less than a mythic *program* for his nation. Thus, although all three are undeniably mythmakers, only Ševčenko came to perceive himself and to be perceived by the broadest consensus of his countrymen as a "prophet," in fact, a myth-carrier.

Ševčenko's mythical thought, while clearly different from the

rational, intellectually distanced mode that we find in his Russian novellas and his *Diary*, must also be distinguished from what has been generally and quite nebulously called his "national character," his *narodnist'*. At its most cogent, the by now traditional argument holds that Ševčenko is a "national" (or "people's") poet (*narodnyj poet*) not simply because of his peasant origins and not merely by virtue of the massive presence in his poetry of folk themes, tropes, formulae, and subtexts, but especially by the fact that he is so deeply and accurately attuned to the feelings and aspirations of his people. Whether the formulation is quasi-mystical, or, as it is in Soviet usage, that and normative too, the point of the argument is clear: Ševčenko, consciously and intuitively, speaks with the power and the mandate of the people, or, as Kostomarov put it as early as 1843, "it is the entire nation speaking with the lips of the poet."<sup>3</sup> Implicitly, his message, in its form and content, is the collective voice of the people. As with so much of Ševčenko criticism, however, this argument is based on a misconception which has at its root an entirely fallacious understanding of "collective," characteristically confusing the metaphor with reality. In fact, the truly collective work of art is rather uncommon, and when it does occur it is likely to be conditioned by very special circumstances (for example, a Stalinist directive to twenty or so Ukrainian poets telling them to produce a collective epic). Indeed even in folklore, where it is most commonly perceived,

<sup>3</sup> See his "Obzor sočinenij, pisannyx na malorossijskom jazyke" *Molodyk* (Xarkiv, 1842 [1843]), no. 3, p. 177 and M. I. Kostomarov, *Tvory v dvox tomax* (Kiev, 1967), vol. 2, p. 388. Kostomarov elaborates this notion at length in an article published a few months after Ševčenko's death. "As a poet," he says, "Ševčenko was the nation [narod] itself, continuing its poetic creativity. Ševčenko's song was in its very essence the song of the people [*narodnaja pesnja*], but a new one, the kind of song that could be sung by the whole nation, a song which should have poured forth from the nation's soul in the course of its recent history. In this regard, Ševčenko was chosen by the nation in the direct sense of the word; it was as if the nation chose him to sing in its stead. The forms of folk poetry entered Ševčenko's verse not as a result of study, not by contrivance—where what fits, where one should place what—but by the natural development in his soul of the whole endless web of folk poetry [*narodnoj poëzii*]. . . Ševčenko said what anyone from the common people [*narodnyj čelovek*] would say if his national substance [*narodnoe suščestvo*] could rise to the task of expressing what lay at the bottom of his soul." "Vospominanija o dvux maljarax," *Osnova* (St. Petersburg, 1861), no. 4, pp. 44–56; see also M. I. Kostomarov, *Tvory v dvox tomax*, vol. 2, pp. 405–406.

the actual authorship is individual, and the collective tenor of an individual work, or folkloric creativity as such, is imparted by the set of common, shared constructive principles, and the parameters of the repertoire. But the issue of Ševčenko's *narodnist'* is not illusory. And while that quality of seeming to speak with a "collective" voice can hardly be said to constitute a distinct mode of thought, it does determine a particular level of expression, one which stands somewhere between the mythical and the rational. In the broadest sense, of course, Ševčenko's "national character" subsumes the whole phenomenon of his work and his legacy, including prominently the mythic aspects of his creativity; in the narrower and most frequently implied sense, however, his *narodnist'* actually devolves on his refraction of the peasant ethos and folklore, and on his specific use of popular or collective representations.

As setting and as basic frame of reference, the Ukrainian peasant world is predominant in Ševčenko's poetry;<sup>4</sup> in its frequency of appearance—if not in innate importance—it clearly overshadows the other major frame, the Cossack world. Indeed it seems to model a milieu that is far removed from it, for example, the Biblical world, as we see in "Saul" and especially "Marija." In general, in its tendency to become a universal model Ševčenko's peasant world diverges significantly from any veristic depiction of the actual world of the peasants. Far from attempting a broad and encompassing picture of peasant and country life in its manifold rhythms and variety (which we later find in the large canvases of Zola, Verga, and Rejmont, and which is already present to a large extent in Turgenev's *Hunting Sketches*), Ševčenko gives a highly selective representation of this world; rather than concern himself with showing it in its plenitude, with its bright as well as its dark colors and with a range of activities, concerns, and experiences, he depicts it, as we shall see in the following sections, in terms of a rigorously circumscribed model. This

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<sup>4</sup> A polemical, ideologically constricted, self-avowedly publicistic, and yet at times interesting and provocative study of Ševčenko as an exponent of the peasant ethos is given in A. Ričyc'kyj, *Taras Ševčenko v svitli epoxy* (Xarkiv, 1923); an English translation of the book's central chapter, "Muzhik Philosophy" is included in *Shevchenko and the Critics, 1861–1980*, pp. 145–167. Ričyc'kyj is particularly sensitive to Ševčenko's rootedness in this "philosophy" as well as his "revolt against official society" (the title of another chapter), but his insights are greatly weakened by his crudely Marxist premises and criteria.

model, the systematics of his mythical thinking, differs not only from objective reality as we have come to know it, but also from the totality of the "collective" version of that reality.

The latter difference is well illustrated by Ševčenko's selective use of folklore. Even within the confines of the folk song, the most relevant genre in the context of his lyrical poetry, his choice of models hardly reflects that genre's range of moods and themes. With perhaps the major exception of *Hajdamaky*, where the depicted kobzar plays a traditionally varied repertoire, balancing the gay and the sad, and such poems as "Mar"jana-černycja" or "Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk" each with an inserted merry song, Ševčenko's poetry is strongly focused in its use of folkloric elements on the melancholy end of the emotional spectrum, formally on the lament and the elegy. The few other reflections of the gaiety or humor of folk song are no more than a handful. The thematic range of the whole set of folkloric moments in the lyrical poetry is well summarized by Filaret Kolessa who lists what he calls the motifs of Ševčenko's early poetry (and in a deeper sense they characterize the poetry as a whole, not just the early period) and then proceeds to use these motifs as the grid by which to organize Ševčenko's manifold echoes, paraphrases and variations, and citations of folk songs. The key, as we see, is exclusively minor:

a) orphanage and loneliness; b) a foreign land and enemies; c) nostalgia and longing for one's native land; d) forebodings of death in a foreign land; e) grief over one's lost youth; and, dominating over all, f) the motif of fate.<sup>5</sup>

While Ševčenko clearly imposes his own model on the world and the emotional life of the common people, or the collective, it is also clear that that world provides him with a repertoire and a surface grid of structural units (or "themes" and "motifs") to be used in accordance with the underlying deep structures of his mythical code; this is precisely the meaning of his selectivity. Just as a moment from a duma is used as an event in a "historical" poem, so too a folkloric motif can be used to "fill out" a given structure. At the same time, folklore—for Ševčenko, and generally, as a system—is not merely a surface grid of motifs. It also expresses underlying, collective feelings and perceptions. In their articulated form they appear most often as

<sup>5</sup> Filaret Kolessa, *Studiji nad poetyčnoju tvorčistju T. Ševčenko* (L'viv-Kiev, 1939), p. 18; see also pp. 19–41.

types (the brave but tragic Cossack, the love-lorn girl, the poor orphan), or as stereotypes (the cruel landlord, the fanatical Jesuit, the avaricious Jew),<sup>6</sup> or as *topoi*, for example the image of the idyllic cottage with its surrounding orchard. As images, types, or stereotypes, as well as typical scenes or situations, or even moods, these representations are emotionally charged, and express the culture's values and beliefs. As presented by folklore, that is, apart from social action, they form a loosely connected system, precisely a repertoire, not a grammar or language. In themselves, they are not part of his system of oppositions, mediations, and transformations. In Ševčenko's poetry these representations exist on a deeper and more general level than do personal moments (feelings and experiences) and individual characters and events, and as such serve as a matrix for them, but they are in turn selectively integrated into and animated by the still deeper mythical structures of his thought. Ševčenko's *narodnist'*, taken as a reflection of such forms of "collective thinking," is thus distinct from his mythical thought and subordinate to it—even while being more apparent and accessible to the reader and the critic.

A central, salient feature of Ševčenko's, as of all mythical thought, is the imposition of synchrony on the represented world. In his mind's eye the distinctions between past, present, and future are often blurred or even obviated. The past, as seen from his various "historical" poems, is frequently coextensive with the present, it is alive in the present, as in the just cited characteristic statement of *Hajdamaky*

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\* Stereotypes, as I am suggesting, are as a rule applied to those *outside* the group. I must add also that while stereotypes reflect the collective tenor of his poetry, they can hardly be said to characterize the attitudes of Ševčenko the man. Thus while Lejba, the Jew in *Hajdamaky*, is depicted negatively (if not with utter hostility), Ševčenko in real life is on record as protesting against anti-Semitic attitudes: note his collective letter (with, among others, Kuliš, Kostomarov, Marko Vovčok and Nomys) to the editor of *Russkij vestnik* (*Tvory*, vol. 6, pp. 355–356 and 354–355). In a similar vein, although Germans are at various times depicted negatively in his poetry, we know from his biography and the autobiographical *Xudožnik* that in the St. Petersburg period the apparent majority of his friends and acquaintances were of German background. The same can be said of Ševčenko's relations with Poles, especially regarding various close friendships made during exile; cf. "Poljakam."



("Zaspivaju—rozvernulas'/ Vysoka mohyla,/ Až do morja zaporožci/ Step šyrokyj kryly"). Similarly, in the prophetic later poetry, the future is made real and present. The suspension and manipulation of time is best illustrated by the device of telescoping chronologically distant events into one overarching present ("Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk"). To be sure, a general distinction between time past and present does obtain and the very idea of the passing of freedom, of *volja*, is predicated on it. It is evident, however, that there is no real, rational objective periodization of the past: analogously to Gogol's treatment of historical time in *Taras Bul'ba*, the past of the early seventeenth century is not at all different from that of the late eighteenth; ultimately the past of the times of Hus ("Jeretyk"), of Nero's Rome ("Neofity"), and the Biblical prophets (for example, "Cari") is all part of one frame. But the issue, in fact, is not the manifest, surface indication of a time frame ("bulo kolys'," "mynulos'," "ne vernet'sja," and so on), or even, as noted, the sense of the poet's mind ranging freely over the past, present, and future. It is instead the fact that in the modality, in the very essence of Ševčenko's poetry, chronological distinctions are decidedly secondary. The determining, true core of his poetic world are the structures—expressed in various patterns, movements and configurations, oppositions and mediations—into which various events, such as ostensibly historical events, are fitted, or more precisely, which generate such events. Thus, while Ševčenko's mythical thinking can be called *pan-topical* in the sense that it informs all the manifold themes and subjects of his world, it is also *synchronic* in that it implicitly transcends time. Quite frequently, even when passage of time is indicated, it is subsequently denied (for example, most overtly, in "Černec," where the thrice repeated "ne vernet'sja" is rebutted by the poet's act of will—"a ja brate taky budu spodivatys'"—and his act of creation, the poem itself, which resurrects a time supposedly irrevocably lost). Such manifest references to time's passing may be seen as a concession, so to speak, to the real world, but the laws and logic of that world are at most secondary to the structures of the mythical world. There is, of course, an awareness and presence of stages, the "before" and "after," that inheres in narrative as such, but the categories of historical time are not thereby made absolute and autonomous. In short, events are governed not by chronology or historical time but by the structures of myth; the very

sense of time itself is determined by these structures.<sup>7</sup> Ultimately, Ševčenko's myth, like all myths, is about the "deep truths" of his society, and his focus is on the innermost dynamics of that society, a dynamics which from the mythical (and affective) perspective is quite independent of objective time or history.

In a similar vein, the world depicted in Ševčenko's poetry is also largely not determined by place. The great majority of his poems, not just the lyrical, but the narrative, "historical" and "political" as well, either do not specify the setting at all, or, if they do, refer to it by the most general topoi, literally *common places*, such as the Ukraine, Muscovy, Poland, the Dnieper (or the Don, or Danube), St. Petersburg, the Sič. There are, to be sure a number of more focused references. A few poems, like "Sotnyk," or "Son (Hory moji vysokiji)," seem to establish geographical concreteness by naming one or more specific, but not "historical" or "important" localities. In this respect, the most detailed and concrete sense of place is given in *Hajdamaky* which names twenty or more towns, villages and other locations—in sum, considerably more than all such specific references in all the other poems combined. (It is on this basis, and on its relative historical-chronological concreteness, and beyond that still on its much greater reliance on literary conventions and its greater literary self-consciousness that one can distinguish *Hajdamaky* from the rest of the poetic corpus.) All the other specific references to places, however, especially those within the Ukraine, have a markedly symbolic character.

Like the natural sites or phenomena—the Dnieper, the territories around the Sič, Zaporizžja and Velykyj Luh, Xolodnyj Jar (the ravine where the 1768 *hajdamak* uprising began)—the various cities, towns, and village that Ševčenko names, such as Čyhyryn, Perejaslav, Hluxiv, Baturyn, Subotiv, Kiev and the Podil district, Poltava, Berestečko, Iržavec', and others, do not stand for concrete, physical entities but designate a different dimension (which on the manifest, or "event" level refers to the Cossack world, its glory and tragedy). As symbols they are laden with emotional value and raised to the level of the sacred, and this, apart from the context, is often signaled

<sup>7</sup> "Time in myth is not really Time at all, but the eternal present of primordial Time which is, in effect, 'articulated atemporality' or 'intemporal Time. . . a moment without duration, as certain mystics and philosophers conceive of eternity.'" John G. Gunnell, *Political Philosophy and Time* (Middletown, Conn., 1968), p. 25.

by epithet ("xolodnojars'ka svjatynja"—the temple of Xolodnyj Jar) or formula ("Velykyj Luh i Matir Sič"—The Great Meadow and Mother Sič); they clearly exist in a separate time-space, and the actual, concrete here and now which evokes them is only a shadow between the poet and that other reality. What is most significant, is that they all are part of one *undifferentiated* set, with perhaps the only exception being the town of Čyhyryn, the old Cossack capital, which Ševčenko variously singles out as an especially "holy" and "famous" place; compare, for example, *Hajdamaky* and "U nedilen'ku u svjatuju." With that one exception, this set of places or locations is entirely non-hierarchical: the Sič and the Velykyj Luh are as important as Kiev and its Podil ("Černec"); the village of Iržavec' with its legendary miraculous icon is as important as Baturyn, Hetman Maze-pa's capital; Subotiv, the village where Xmel'nyč'kyj was buried, is no less important than the city of Perejaslav. Furthermore, it is apparent that Ševčenko seldom if ever depicts a particular place as something concrete and unique in itself. While some poems (for example, "Sotnyk," "Son [Hory moji vysokiji]," or "Knjažna") do contain descriptions of place, that description invariably moves into a generalized or "universal" mode. One of the most striking instances of this occurs at the beginning of "Knjažna" as the poet starts to tell his story of a quintessential perversion of family relationships. He opens the story with the setting, which he sketches in a short passage that because of its ostensible sentiment and piety has become standard fare for recitation by young children at countless commemorations of Ševčenko (these innocents, one may assume, and probably their schoolmarms as well, were oblivious to the fact that the passage is taken from a poem about incestuous rape):

Село! — і серце одпочине.  
Село на нашій Україні —  
Неначе писанка село,  
Зеленим гаєм поросло.  
Цвітуть сади; біліють хати,  
А на горі стоять палати,  
Неначе диво. А кругом  
Широколисті тополі,  
А там і ліс, і ліс, і поле,  
І сині гори за Дніпром.  
Сам Бог витає над селом.

(lines 33–43)

(A village! And the heart will rest./ A village in our Ukraine—/ a village like an Easter egg,/ covered in green groves./ The orchards bloom,/ the houses shine in their whiteness,/ and on the hill stands the palace,/ like some wonder. And round—/ the broad-leaved poplars,/ and then the forest, and more forest, and field,/ and the blue mountains beyond the Dnieper./ God Himself watches over the village.)

The description, of course, is not so much setting as set piece. It illustrates quite effectively how Ševčenko's imagination shifts from the experiential to the universal, to the model itself. Here the village described is not only "universal" in that it can stand for any village in the Ukraine, and it is not only an expression of the *idea* (that is, the ideal) of a Ukrainian village, it is an expression, a modeling, of the Ukraine as such. This, in fact, is made explicit in the lines preceding this passage as the poet concludes his prefatory discourse with his muse with a rhetorical question, and its answer:

І хто знає, що діється  
В нас на Україні?  
А я знаю. І розкажу  
Тобі; й спать не ляжу.  
А ти завтра тихесенько  
Богові розкажеш.

(lines 27–32)

(And who knows what is happening/ in our Ukraine?/ But I know. And I will tell/ you. And not go to sleep./ And tomorrow you will quietly/ relate it to God.) The story that follows, therefore, is not an example or illustration, but an encapsulation of the essential meaning; in terms of Ševčenko's poetic code it is a *standardized* symbol, and hence an icon of the meaning he seeks to convey.<sup>8</sup> A very similar case is presented in the short lyric "Sadok vyšnevij kolo xaty" (A Cherry Orchard by the House), an uncharacteristically unqualified idyllic vision which also depicts the setting—a village scene at evening time—in entirely universal terms, as a utopian ideal. And here again, the whole poem is an icon of that ideal.

It may of course be argued that since the great majority of Ševčenko's

<sup>8</sup> See Edmund Leach, *Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols are Connected* (Cambridge, Eng., 1976), p. 15.

poems were written when he was forcibly separated from his native Ukraine, either by prison or exile (where respectively "Sadok vyšnevij kolo xaty" and "Knjažna" were written) or more generally the circumstances that kept him in St. Petersburg, his depictions of his homeland, being tinged by nostalgia and longing, would tend to idyllic and idealized depictions. But as we see so eloquently from Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*, neither a longing for one's homeland—and one's childhood—nor, indeed, an idyllic mode, need militate against fully concrete and specific depictions of time and place. In contrast, what we continually encounter in Ševčenko is the dominance, the assertion, of the mythic code, manifesting itself, among other things, in this rapid shift from the level of the sensory, of the immediately experienced, to the level of the model itself. This is the teleology, so to speak, of Ševčenko's metaphoric system. At times it is quite apparent, as in "Son (Hory moji vysokiji)," where the poem proper (coming after the long, digressive invocation: lines 1–60) begins with this setting:

Над Трахтемировим високо  
На кручі, ніби сирота  
Прийшла топитися. . . в глибокім,  
В Дніпрі широкому. . . отак  
Стоїть одним-одна хатина. . .  
З хатини видно Україну  
І всю Гетьманщину кругом.  
Під хатою дідуся сивенький  
Сидить. . .

(lines 61–69; emphasis mine)

(High over [the village of] Traxtemyryv, / on a cliff, like an orphan / that has come to drown herself in the deep, / the broad Dnieper, thus / stands a single, solitary cabin. . . / From this cabin one can see the Ukraine / and all around the entire / Hetman state. / Beside the cabin a grey, old man / is sitting. . . .) Thus, again, while a seemingly concrete place is implied (the reference to Traxtemyryv, and before that to the village of Monastyryšče), and though a striking visual image is given (the cabin on the cliff, solitary like a would-be suicide), the setting becomes symbolic and immediately keyed into the mythical code: precisely because the old man will proceed to meditate on the meaning of Cossackdom, and more generally on the meaning of the

Ukraine as such, his cabin focuses the mythic statement and becomes the central vantage-point from which the poet can see the entire Ukraine, in both its temporal and spatial extension. A total barring of this operation comes in the late poem "Saul" (1860), which deals with the origins of structure in society—which for Ševčenko is tantamount to the origins of evil in this world. Here, too, the presentation of the setting follows the same pattern:

В непробудимому Китаї,  
В Єгипті темному, у нас,  
І понад Індом і Євфратом  
Свої ягнята і телята  
На полі вольнім вольно пас  
Чабан, було, в своєму раї.  
І гадки-гадоньки не має,  
Пасе, і доїть, і стриже  
Свою худобу та співає. . .

(lines 1–9)

(In unawakable China,/ in dark Egypt, in our country,/ and on the Indus and the Euphrates/ the shepherd in his paradise freely grazed his lambs and calves on the free fields./ And no worries cross his mind./He grazes, milks, and shears/ his cattle, and he sings. . .) But now the universality of the setting is stressed maximally (and, in keeping with the poem's tone, with no little irony), and the spatial-geographical aspects are entirely subordinated to the mythic model. The actual country where this happens, the poet is telling us, is immaterial—his concern is with the existential (and social and moral) dimension. His stress on this is signalled by the abruptness of his shift from the metonymic chain of "China," "Egypt," [Russia], [India] and [Babylon], to the metaphoric "paradise" of the shepherd's fields.

Myth, in short, transcends both space and time, and, as we see here, the mythical model or code can be superimposed on the experientially given sense of place as well as time. Within the poetic text the effect throughout is one of intense highlighting. Because of this "shift" into the code, any given setting, however minor or obscure—the ruins of a village church where Xmel'nyč'kyj was buried, a cliff-top perspective on the Dnieper and its environs, a ravine where the hajdamaks once gathered—can become the basis for an epiphany that reveals nothing less than the total meaning of the mythically

perceived Ukraine. In this, the poet too is sharply illuminated, and as the myth is highlighted, so also is his role as active myth-carrier. The fundamental import of this transcendence of space, however, is that it shows that in Ševčenko's myth the Ukraine is ultimately not a place, a territory, or a country, but a state of being, or, more precisely, an existential category in the present and in the future, after the final transformation, a state of ideal existence.

Like Gogol' and Słowacki, like Malczewski, Czajkowski and Puškin, Ševčenko also sees at the heart of the world he depicts a deep and pervasive disharmony and conflict. By "conflict," however, I do not simply mean an actual, dynamic struggle between two forces or entities (although it may be that), but more generally an opposition, a clash that determines an *abnormal state of existence*. More generally still, this is the sense of a "curse" that so many Romantics perceived in the Ukraine and its past. This, too, is the initial set in Ševčenko's myth—but that it is initial must be stressed, for Ševčenko's myth of the Ukraine, in contrast to the writers just named, for whom it is largely coextensive with the conflict-curse that they intuit, is considerably more complex. His depiction of conflict, of society's abnormality, is remarkably elaborate and subtle, appearing as it does on three paradigmatic levels: on the level of the individual protagonist and his or her fate, on the level of the family, the basic unit of social organization, and finally in the social macrocosm, with a focus on the dynamics and tensions of the collective as such. Though it is many-leveled and many-faceted, the conflict that Ševčenko perceives in the Ukrainian world issues from one basic source—the violation of an original ideal state whose existence he posits both explicitly and implicitly. This state or mode of existence is defined by his vision of ideal equality, of *communitas*, and this serves as the very touchstone of Ševčenko's mythical perception of the Ukraine. In turn, both *communitas* and its antipode flow from the emotionally absolutized, manichean division of the world into good and evil that typifies the creative mode and perspective of his "unadjusted" self.

### 1. "Unfortunate Lovers"

The first level of the conflict, then, is reflected in the pattern of

movements that define the fate of the individual protagonist who in the narrative poems is characteristically, if not exclusively, an unfortunate lover. Typically, also, there is a general equivalence of male and female protagonists, and hence the significant presence of a dual male and female perspective. As in Gogol's Ukrainian stories and Słowacki's *Sen srebrny Salomei*, the love itself, the erotic plot, remains a largely surface or manipulative element, for the underlying structure revealed in the movements shows a world divided against itself, a fixed asymmetry, with no hope of mediation. The unresolved tension between the male and female sides, their inability to come together, to reproduce and develop, is the curse of this world. From the perspective of the woman this is conveyed by the pattern of love (or seduction) followed first by desertion or separation, and then by transformation, either by death or as a change into the non-human realm, or into nature. This pattern appears in "Pryčynna" (The Bewitched Girl) where the death of the girl, and her lover, is seemingly unmotivated—or, in fact, motivated precisely by her ill fortune of being in love ("Taka jiji dolja. . . O Bože mij mylyj! Za što ž Ty karaješ jiji molodu? Za te što tak ščyro vona poljubyla/ Kozackiji oči? . . . Prostý syrotu!") [Such is her fate. . . Dear God! Why do You punish her youth? Because she so sincerely loved a Cossack's eyes?/ Forgive the orphan!], or "Topolja" (The Poplar) where, as in a typical etiological tale, the girl grieving over a lost lover turns into a poplar tree, or in "Kateryna" where the girl, seduced and abandoned by an officer and banished from home by her parents, leaves her illegitimate son to his fate and drowns herself, or, perhaps most strikingly in "Utoplana" (The Drowned Girl), where the mother kills her daughter to prevent her union, her symbolic marriage, with a young fisherman. A plausible "social" interpretation is given in the unfinished "Mar"jana-černycja" (Marianna the Nun), where the mother prevents her daughter from marrying her true love and insists that she accept an old, unlovable, but rich official; it is repeated in various non-narrative poems, such as the expressive lyric that begins "I bahata ja,/ I vrodlyva ja./ Ta ne maju sobi pary,/ Beztalanna ja." (I am rich./ I am beautiful./ But I have no mate./ I am ill-fated). This poem, in fact, summarizes the "social" or "class" or "economic" basis that may at first appear to be the underlying cause for the recurring impossibility of love and marriage. As seen from the earlier examples, however, and from others too, even if the ill will of the people (*čuži ljudi*) who characteristically mock the poor orphan is



mentioned in each instance, the rational, "sociological" explanation is neither stressed nor clearly articulated at this juncture: the misfortune is invariably caused by the workings of impersonal ill fate ("taka jiji dolja"), in effect, a curse. Symbolically, the feminine Ukrainian world projected in these poems is not dead—it survives either as nature, as the girl in "Topolja" who turns into a poplar, or as a preternatural being such as a *rusalka* (in "Pryčynna" and other poems)—but it is not full, normal life; it is life constricted and oppressed, the synecdoche for which is a loveless marriage. The feminine world that is revealed in this pattern (a pattern that builds on the same fundamental division of the Ukraine into a feminine, settled and peaceful half opposed by a masculine, nomadic, and warlike one that we find in Gogol'), is precisely the Ukraine of Ševčenko's time: a suspended, helpless "feminine" Ukraine of serfs, a world peopled primarily by fallen women and their illegitimate children; its victimized state of existence is further stressed by the recurring motifs of incest and rape.

The pattern of movements of the male protagonist is virtually identical. In such poems as "Mar"jana-černycja," "Varnak" (The Convict), "Tytarivna" (The Sexton's Daughter), "U tijeji Kateryny" (At Catherine's), "Maryna" and various non-narrative poems beginning with the early "Dumka" ("Tjažko, važko v sviti žyty. . ."; It is hard and burdensome to live in this world), the man is also fated to be separated from his love, to be a vagabond and wanderer, and never to marry. In the duma-like "U tijeji Kateryny," where at the end the surviving Cossack suitor kills Kateryna for deceiving him and rides off into the steppe with her lover-brother whom he had freed from Turkish captivity, the pattern is given in a stylized "pure" form: the male world is shown as self-sufficient and the woman is killed. (The implicit misogyny and homosexual nature of the solution is not the structural core, however. That core, as we shall see, is the conflation of lover, the symbolic "husband," and brother.) In some poems, for example, "Mar"jana-černycja," "Tytarivna" and others, the impediment to the union is social (economic) inequality. (In "Tytarivna" the movement is symmetrically reversed and the poem merges two different variations on the same theme, that is, of "Kateryna" and "Maryna." At first the poor young man in love is a victim of the rich girl's scorn; later, after he becomes a *panyč*, she becomes the victim as he seduces her and subsequently kills their illegitimate child.) In other poems, for example, "Varnak" or "Mež skalamy nenače slodij. . ."

(Between crags, like a thief. . .), marriage is frustrated by the willful lust of the local nobleman—in the first poem as he abducts the woman before the marriage, and in the second (by all appearances) soon after the marriage. Indeed, the apparent exceptions to the pattern of frustrated love and marriage are most revealing. In *Hajdamaky* the orphan Jarema does succeed in recapturing his love, Oksana, from the Poles who had abducted and (apparently) ravished her, and they do marry. But their marriage remains unconsummated. He departs for battle straight from the wedding feast and Oksana is left in her monastery cell to wait in vain for his return and for a true married life:

Вона виглядає, —  
Виглядає, чи не їде  
З боярами в гості —  
Перевезти із келії  
В хату на помості.

(lines 2112–2116)

(She awaits,/ waiting to see if he does not come/ with his best men,/ to take her from the cell/ to a well-built house.) In the long poem “Slipyj”/“Nevol’nyk” a marriage does take place. The hero, Stepan, learns that his sister Jaryna is not really his sister because he is only an adopted son. Her father, however, requires that he, like Taras Bul’ba’s sons, attain manhood by first going to the Sić and becoming a Cossack. He does that and more as he becomes a valiant *otaman*; but he is captured by the Turks. He returns after many years—as a cripple, however, having been blinded in captivity. Despite his protestations,

«Ні, не тр[е]ба, мій таточку,  
Не треба, Ярино!  
Подивіться: я загинув,  
Навіки загинув.  
За що ж свої молодії  
Ти літа погубиш  
З калікою. . .»

(lines 553–559)

(No, there’s no need, father,/ there’s no need, Jaryna./ Look: I have

died./ died forever./ Why should you lose your years/ with a cripple. . .), Jaryna marries him, but he, even though a witness to the whole history of Cossackdom (as noted above), is not a full man; he is insistently depicted as a cripple. On the other hand, and I return to this in the following section, their future married life is cast in explicitly regressed terms, as a return to childhood. While the very fact of their attaining marriage and a kind of happiness is in itself rare in Ševčenko's world, its qualification is also revealing: this vision of happiness, which Ševčenko explicitly calls idyllic, comes after severe tribulation and remains inherently flawed. Finally, in "Moskaleva krynycja" (The Soldier's Well; 1847 redaction), a work that in its introduction strongly signals that it is to be taken as a *typical* story, the possibility of any such idyll is brutally denied. Here too there is a marriage, but the very fact that both are poor, Maksym an orphan and she a widow's daughter (and also an orphan), and that they are hard-working and generous and at first modestly successful, seems of itself to presage the inevitably calamitous turn: envious neighbors burn down their house, killing their children. Maksym and his wife are permanently separated and he ends his days as a war invalid doing good deeds. (In the 1857 version it is the narrator-protagonist himself who sets the fire in which Maksym's wife and children die, and who later kills Maksym.)

The pattern in these poems is two-planed. On the manifest level this is frustrated marriage and unhappiness, with the constituent motifs of seduction and abandonment, separation and wandering, and death or unfulfilled "suspension." The underlying causal relationship is one of the victimization (which is occasionally simply the ill fate) of the poor and the powerless. Most expressively this is the victimization of women by men, particularly peasant women by noblemen and officers (for example, "Kateryna," "Vid'ma," "Varnak"), and generally the oppression of serfs by their masters. It may also simply be the suffering of the poor at the hands of the well-off, which may occur within the village community itself. At its most elemental, the "cause" is the cold malice of people as such, of the "čuži ljudi," with the implicit conflict quite divorced from any class oppositions. The opposition is simply "syrota" (orphan)/"čuži ljudi." Thus in the earliest poem, "Pryčynna," the poor love-crazed girl is called a "syrota," and ranged against her are the people who mock. "Pošly ž jiji dolju," the poet invokes God, "bo ljude čužiji jiji zasmijut'" (Send her good fortune. . . for strangers will mock

her.)<sup>9</sup> In "Kateryna" this is elaborated to show an absolute, perverse *Schadenfreude*:

Сиротині сонце світить  
(Світить, та не гріє) —  
Люде б сонце заступили,  
Якби мали силу,  
Щоб сироті не світило,  
Сльози не сушило.  
А за віщо, Боже милий!  
За що світом нудить?  
Що зробила вона людям,  
Чого хотять люде?  
Щоб плакала! . .

(lines 438–448)

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<sup>9</sup> This, of course, also projects Ševčenko's own psychological state, and the belief that goodness, and good people, existed only in early childhood; compare also "Kateryna," lines 289–304:

Отаке-то на сім світі  
Роблять людям люде!  
Того в'яжуть, того ріжуть,  
Той сам себе губить. . .  
А за віщо? Святий знає.  
Світ, бачся, широкий,  
Та нема, де прихилитись  
В світі одиноким.  
Тому доля запродала  
Од краю до краю,  
А другому оставила  
Те, де заховать.  
Де ж ті люде, де ж ті добрі,  
Що серце збиралось  
З ними жити, їх любити?  
Пропали, пропали!

(Thus do people treat people/ in this world!/ This one they bind, that one they slaughter./ and that one kills himself. . . / And for what? God only knows./ The world, it seems, is wide/ but he who is alone has no refuge. To this one fate has given everything./ from horizon to horizon./ but for that one has left only a plot to be buried in./ Where are those people, those good people/ that the heart intended/ to live with, to love?/ They are gone, they are gone!)

(The sun shines for the orphan/ [it shines but gives no warmth]—/ [and] people would block out the sun/ if they had the strength,/ so that it would not shine on the orphan/ and dry her tears./ And for what, dear God!/ Why does she suffer?/ What did she do to them/ what do they want? They want her to weep! . . .) And in "Moska-leva krynycja" (1847) the malice of the village neighbors after the calamity that befalls the young couple is again explicit, and explicitly negates any "class" interpretation:

До стеблї все погорїло,  
І діти згорїли,  
А сусїди, і багатї  
І вбогї, радїли.  
Багатїї, бач, радїли,  
Що багатше стали,  
А вбогїї тому радї,  
Що з ними зрівнялись!  
Посходились жалкувати,  
Жалю завдавати.

(lines 101–110)

(Everything burned to the ground,/ and the children burned too,/ and the neighbors, both the rich/ and the poor rejoiced./ The rich, you see, rejoiced because they became richer/ and the poor rejoiced/ because they were leveled with them!/ They came to commiserate,/ to give grief.)

## 2. The Family

While the conflict just described is certainly not the conventional "class conflict," it is very much rooted in social reality and social structures, and this is made manifest in the poems of the second level, that is, those dealing with the family.<sup>10</sup> Where the fates of the various male and female protagonists almost invariably signal the impossibility

<sup>10</sup> Despite the fact that this "theme" is so central to Ševčenko's work, it has not received adequate critical attention—most likely because it is symbolically complex. An interesting but quite impressionistic step in this direction is M. Shlemkevych's "The Substratum of Ševčenko's View of Life," in *Taras Ševčenko, 1814–1861: A Symposium* (The Hague, 1962). George S. N. Luckyj's "The Archetype of the Bastard in Ševčenko's

of harmonious union, the inability to marry and reproduce (a concern, *note bene*, also amply reflected in the overt, personal, and autobiographical statement of the lyrical poetry), the poems here, with equal consistency, show the family as a unit that does not function. Like the positive hero, the good man Stepan in "Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk" or Maksym in "Moskaleva krynycja" or indeed the archetypal kobzar, the family is crippled and shows in microcosm a crippled and abnormal society.<sup>11</sup> Its dysfunction is dramatically presented in terms of "crimes against nature" and illegitimacy.

The most dramatic violation of natural law within the family circle is murder itself, and most often this is the murder of children by parents. The poem where this receives greatest stress is *Hajdamaky*, in which Gonta, in accordance with legend, kills his two young sons. In "Utoplana" the mother kills her daughter in an apparent fit of jealous rage. In "Tytarivna" Mykyta drowns his illegitimate infant son, and in "Rusalka" the mother drowns her illegitimate daughter. The killing of children, of course, amplifies the curse, for not only is marital union largely unattainable, but the issue of those unions that do occur, the mediating element that stands for the vitality of the community, is also destroyed. *Hajdamaky* presents this starkly and with much pathos. Behind the manifest "ideological" explanation that the murder of Gonta's sons because their mother was a Pole and a Catholic is a form of "holy vengeance" against the Poles, there is, still on the surface, ideological (that is, Slavophile) level, the tragic sense that this also kills any hope for reconciliation. (On the deeper

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Poetry," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Urbana, Ill., 1970), pp. 277-283, is basically focused on several surface elements and not on the underlying structures. Soviet scholarship is *de facto* prohibited from dealing with this issue since the only perspective permitted is social verism and class conflict and consciousness.

<sup>11</sup> In symbolic thinking, as Mary Douglas argues (following Marcel Mauss), "the human body is always treated as an image of society"; conversely, "the physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society." Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (London, 1970), pp. 70 and 65. This, of course, has great relevance in Ševčenko's case for it explains not only the correlations of the individual-family-society continuum, but also the specific projection of his personal misfortune on the Ukraine as a whole. Explicitly in numerous poems, and implicitly in the very structure of the symbolic code, the poet is cast as the true emanation of her essence: his suffering and fall is her suffering and fall, his expiation is her's, and his apotheosis is her promised salvation. See p. 145 below; compare also "The Nexus of the Wake. . ." pp. 339-340.

symbolic level, however, the killing of Gonta's sons is a purification which must be performed in view of the fact that they exist between two worlds, the Polish Catholic and the Cossack Orthodox, and, like all such in-between beings, are polluted; on this level, as I have already noted, no mediation is possible. Once they are dead, however, they can be reincorporated into the Cossack world. As Gonta buries them, their bodies are called Cossack bodies ["kozac'ke male tilo"] and their death becomes meaningful and sacred for in his own words they, like he, die for the Ukraine ["...vy za neji/ J ja za neji hynu"].)

As the hajdamaks bring up Gonta's sons, and before he begins to explain the bloody course he is set on ("...ne ja vbyvaju/ a prysjaha" [it is not I who kills/ but the vow]) the Jesuit priest who is brought with them says: "Poky nevelyki,/ Zariž i jix, bo vyrostut'./ To tebe zarižut'" (While they are still small/ butcher them too, for they will grow up/ and butcher you). In Ševčenko's manichean depiction of the Polish-Cossack past, especially as seen in "Poljakam" (To the Poles), the Jesuits and priests, as in popular tradition, are unequivocally evil—carriers of absoluté, fratricidal intolerance. But the curse voiced by the Jesuit in *Hajdamaky*—kill your children or be killed by them—is not the mere figment of his malice. In fact, it informs the world of Ševčenko's narrative poems, where patricide or matricide is the second, if somewhat less pronounced, variant of the family torn by extreme conflict. It occurs in "Rusalka" where the daughter drowned by her mother returns, now as a rusalka, to help drown her. In "U Vil'ni horodi preslawnim" (In Vilnius, the Famous Town) the young Jewess kills her father with the same axe with which he had just slain her lover. In "Maryna" the ravished, illegitimate daughter kills her father and then, gory knife in hand, recounts it in a mad scene. In "Petrus" the murder is twice removed: the wife who poisons her husband is not really the mother of the bastard peasant child, Petrus' (though in the course of the poem she does call him her son and child), and he only assumes the blame, without having performed the deed. But symbolically, and in keeping with the pattern established in the poetry, it is indeed he, the hero, who kills the evil father. "Petrus'," in fact, bares an essential structure for in its movements and identifications it shows that being loved by the mother—and then defending her—is symbolically tantamount to killing the father. Finally there is "Knjažna." As the evil father approaches his daughter's bed to rape her the poet-narrator addresses an impassioned plea to the sleeping girl:

Прокинься!  
 Прокинься, чистая! Схопись,  
 Убий гадюку, покусає!  
 Убий, і Бог не покарає!  
 Як тая Ченчію колись  
 Убила батька кардинала  
 І Саваофа не злякалась.

(lines 354–359)

(Awake!/ Awake you who are pure! Rise up,/ kill the snake, for it will bite!/ Kill and God will not punish!/ Like that Cenci who once/ killed her father, the cardinal,/ and did not fear the Lord of Sabaoth.) Here the patricide does not actually take place, but it is invoked and given moral and "historical" justification, and as such it is symbolically asserted.<sup>12</sup>

Murder of a spouse is also committed or attempted in several poems. The husband is killed in "Petrus" and a plan for his murder laid in "Rusalka." A wife is almost killed in "Mež skalamy. . ." and the bride-to-be is killed in "U tijeji Kateryny. . ."

The poem "Knjažna," paradigmatically, points to another, even more prevalent violation of the natural law—the sin of incest. Here, as well as in "Slepaja" (The Blind Woman) and "Vid'ma," it is accompanied by rape; in other poems the seduction is more or less directly associated with physical violence.<sup>13</sup> Most significantly, the preponderance of incestuous relations are those between father and daughter. Besides the three thematically developed instances of "Knjažna," "Slepaja" and "Vid'ma," it is found in "Lileja" (The Lily) and implied in "Rusalka" (hence, supposedly, the mother's wish for revenge); it is intended but unconsummated in "Sotnyk" where the old Cossack plans to marry his ward (his "daughter"). A mother's

<sup>12</sup> Those (primarily the Soviet critics) who are particularly attuned to the manifest level, that is, that of signs and not of symbols, will consider it significant that two of the most drastic instances of parricide occur in the gentry milieu (in "Petrus" and "Knjažna"); they would thus be seen as reflecting Ševčenko's moral condemnation of *this* sphere, and not constituting a judgment on the "Ukrainian world as such." The observation is true; however, the gentry sphere is an integral part of Ševčenko's Ukraine, and not to be separated from it, and further, the determining level is still that of symbol and structure and not that of overt events.

<sup>13</sup> Incestuous rape also occurs in "Cari" (The Tsars), which, however, is set in Biblical times and offered as a general illustration of the depravity of monarchs.



incestuous love for a son is developed at length in "Petrus'," although here it is not actualized and is also the only instance of such an attraction that is given more commiseration than condemnation. Incestuous love between a brother and a sister is shown or implied in four poems. In "Cari," in the case of Amnon, the son of the Biblical David, and his [half-] sister Tamar, it is coupled with rape and portrayed in the darkest colors; in "U tijeji Kateryny. . ." it is implied when we see that Kateryna's lover is also called her brother and she in turn is killed for this. In both "Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk" and "Sotnyk," however, a functionally incestuous love is justified and "decriminalized" by the plot device of making in the first instance the brother and in the second the sister an adopted child. Taken together with "Petrus'," these treatments, by the very fact of this strong qualification, point to a new dimension in Ševčenko's depiction of the family.

Incest and murder in the family, especially parricide, as violations of the most fundamental of human taboos, have been taken by virtually all the major writers dealing with the Ukrainian past, from Malczewski, Goszczyński, Czajkowski and Słowacki to Puškin and Gogol', as epitomizing the curse of this land. In Słowacki (in "Wacław" and *Beniowski*) and Gogol' (in "Strašnaja mest'") these sins are given a subtle and powerful evocation, but even here they pale before the intensity and the seemingly inexhaustible variations that Ševčenko conjures up, variations, of course, which only reveal the complexity of the generating structures. And yet, as heinous, as frequent and as intensely highlighted as these "crimes against nature" are, they are still only symptoms of a more fundamental malaise. The crux of the matter is illegitimacy. This issue, with its objective manifestation of the bastard (*bajstrjuk*) and the unwed mother (*pokrytka*) is so pervasive that Ševčenko himself ironizes over its obsessiveness: ". . .duže vže j meni samomu/ Obrydly tiji muzyky,/ Ta panyči, ta pokrytky" (I myself am heartily bored/ with these *muzhiks*/ and young gentlemen and unwed mothers). The irony, in actuality, is deceptive for the poem where this is said, "Cari," turns precisely to these same issues, only now on the sublime level of tsars and saints. Indeed, full half of the narrative poems, twelve in all, focus on illegitimate children, and most of them also present the *pokrytka*. The bastard son appears in "Kateryna," "Vid'ma," "Najmyčka," "Tytarivna," and "Petrus'" and culminates, in what to many seemed nothing short of blasphemous, with the depictions of Christ and the

Virgin Mary in "Marija." The bastard daughter appears in "Utoplenu," "Slepaja," "Rusalka," "Vid'ma" and in "Sotnyk." In "Maryna" the sex of the bastard child is not given. In *Hajdamaky* the hero, Jarema, is an orphan and, according to tradition (as Ševčenko tells us in a footnote), his surname was Bajstrjuk and only later was changed to Halajda. But what is equally significant in *Hajdamaky* is that in terms of the manifest (national, religious, and class) oppositions of the work, the children of Gonta are also illegitimate, having been baptised as Catholics by their mother. They belong only to her and are cut off from the world of their father. Typically of bastards, they both are and are not his sons and thus in the violent either/or situation of the uprising they must die; his hand is only the agency of the fatally circumscribed choice. The bastard and the pokrytka also appear in non-narrative poems, most clearly, for example, in "U našim raji na zemli" (In Our Earthly Paradise). Finally, when we consider that functionally and symbolically the orphan is equivalent to the bastard,<sup>14</sup> and that the orphan, as even a cursory reading shows, is the central figure in Ševčenko's poetic universe, then it becomes clear that the issue of illegitimacy is literally everpresent.

Much more than the luckless, unmarried person, the bastard is a marginal and suspended figure in society, the object of its scorn and abuse, and at the same time a mirror of its inhumanity. The pathetic figures of the unwed mother with her bastard child or the solitary bastard-orphan (who is also, of course, a projection of the poet himself) wander, accompanied by mocking laughter or cold indifference,

<sup>14</sup> Compare p. 71 below. For the moment one can illustrate it with this eloquent example of conflation from "Sotnyk" (The Captain; lines 18–24):

А сотник був собі багатий,  
То в його, знаєте, росло  
На божій харчі за дитину  
Чнесь байстря. А може й так  
Узяв собі старий козак  
Чню сирітку за дитину  
Та й доглядає в затишку. . .

(. . . the captain was rich,/ and, you know, at his place someone's little bastard was growing up as his child,/ or, perhaps, the old Cossack/ had taken someone's little orphan for a child/ and was quietly rearing it. . .) See also "Kateryna," where the child is both orphan and bastard.

through all of Ševčenko's poetry, from "Kateryna" (1838) to "Marija" (1857), from "Dumka" (1838) which begins "Tjažko, važko v sviti žyty/ Syroty bez rodu. . ." (It is hard and difficult to live in this world/ for an orphan without kin), to "Jakby z kym sisty xliba z"jisty" (If There Were Someone with Whom to Sit down and Break Bread) (1860), where the poet, a few months before his death, recapitulates his life:

Світ широкий,  
Людей чимало на землі. . .  
А доведеться самотнім  
В холодній хаті кривобокої,  
Або під тином простягтись.

(lines 5–9)

(The world is wide,/ there are many people on this earth. . . / And still one will have to stretch out, alone/ in a cold leaning house/ or under a fence.) Perhaps the most radical apotheosis of the bastard occurs in an ultimately rejected draft of "Vo Iudeji vo dni oni" (In Judea in Those Days), a poem originally intended as a prologue to "Marija," in which the poet addresses Christ three times as "bajstrjuče pravednyj" (godly bastard) and directly refers to Mary as a *pokrytka*. Plainly, these designations, as later the tone and setting of "Marija," have nothing of the blasphemous in them and are instead an ultimate statement of human commiseration and piety.<sup>15</sup>

To say, however, that "an agony of cosmic proportions is symbolized by Ševčenko in the figure of the bastard" is to overstate the case.<sup>16</sup> Or, perhaps, not so much to overstate it as to miss something very specific and altogether concrete, and thereby all the more painful. For instead of a nebular cosmic agony the bastard in fact actualizes a sharp conflict between two different modalities, two different social and family structures. And this conflict is the root of evil in Ševčenko's world. The first is the family structure or system in which descent, legal rights, and inheritance, and, in general, one's standing in society is traced from the father to the son or daughter; in a word, patriliney. The other is that system where descent and the

<sup>15</sup> Compare *Tvory*, vol. 2, pp. 578–579. What is also highly revealing is the parallel that Ševčenko draws between Christ the "godly bastard" and himself, a sinful one: "Bajstrjuče pravednyj! Prosty/ Mene ne pravednoho." *Ibid.*, p. 579.

<sup>16</sup> Luckyj, "The Archetype of the Bastard in Ševčenko's Poetry," p. 281.

attendant rights and identity are traced from the mother, that is, matriliney.<sup>17</sup> In Ševčenko's Ukraine, both the real world of the Russian Empire of the nineteenth century and the poetically projected world of the present, the operant system is clearly patrilineal. In this the Ukraine is like the rest of Europe and the whole "civilized" world of the nineteenth century. And yet in his poetry there are echoes of an earlier matrilineal order, and an intense emotional attachment to it. The historical chronology is murky and unreconstructable, but the existence of such an order can be deduced from folklore and folk customs and traditions, especially wedding rites.<sup>18</sup> For Ševčenko, to be sure, the "collective memory" of a matrilineal order, as strongly as it is conveyed by folklore, is still secondary to the fact that for him the preeminence of the mother and the structuring of the family around her reflects a profound and many-faceted psychological need and orientation. It is on this basis that he will posit an ideal, just order, and it is with this model in mind that he will highlight and internalize folk tradition.

Now, in terms of these two family systems, the one actual and prescribed (patriliney) and the other remembered and idealized (matriliney), the very existence of the bastard assumes crucial importance; here he becomes the synecdoche for the conflict—the abnormality and iniquity—in this society. *For in matrilineal descent there are no bastards.* Legitimacy is conferred by the blood tie as such and legal fatherhood is assumed by the mother's brother (or some other close kinsman) and the husband is only a sexual partner. For this reason, too, matrilineal society (for example, in Polynesia) has no taboo on pre-marital

<sup>17</sup> A thorough discussion of both forms of descent is given in David M. Schneider's "The Distinctive Features of Matrilineal Descent Groups," in *Matrilineal Kinship*, ed. David M. Schneider and Kathleen Gough (Berkeley, 1962), pp. 1–29.

<sup>18</sup> It is primarily on this basis that earlier ethnographers—and contemporary Soviet ones—mistakenly speak of "matriarchy." Since the time of Bachofen (*Das Mutterrecht*, 1891), and the evolutionist theories of Morgan and Taylor, modern anthropology has demonstrated that matriarchy (where total political and economic power would reside only in women) has not existed, nor does exist, in any known society. The existence of matriliney in Ukrainian society is evidenced in the "grid" (the rites and the accompanying songs) of the wedding ritual, which includes, for example, "the 'buying' of the bride by the groom from the mother, not the father. . . the greeting of the wedding train by the bride's brother or mother, not the father, etc." See the review of M. M. Šubravs'ka and O. A. Pravdjuk, eds., *Vesillja* (Kiev, 1970), by Oksana I. Horodyska-Grabowicz, in *Recenzija*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 3–14.

sex. In patrilineal descent, however, physical motherhood, the uterine connection, confers no rights, no social status, and no identity on the child; all the mother can give is love.<sup>19</sup> Without a legal father the child is a bastard, an outcast, indeed no different from an orphan. Hence the equation of orphan and bastard noted earlier is not a "mere" poetic formula but an unflinchingly accurate statement about a harsh social reality.

A sense of these two different social orders—again, one actual and the other ideal—gives Ševčenko's Ukrainian world a remarkable coherence, and the opposition between them becomes the deep structure that models the reality of this world. The fate of the unwed mother, for example, can now be seen as coalescing into a regular, most inevitable pattern. When the title heroine of "Kateryna" bears an illegitimate child she is banished from her parental home in what, as various critics noted, is a standard social sanction. Similarly, various other *pokrytky*, especially in "Vid'ma," bear the taunts and abuse of social opprobrium. Rather more indicative of the underlying structure is the story of "Najmyčka" (which Ševčenko also elaborates in a novella by the same name). Here the *pokrytka* secretly leaves her bastard son at the homestead of an old childless couple, who understandably adopt him, and then for the rest of her life serves as a servant in the family and reveals her identity to her son only on her death-bed. The poem surely displays a distinct psychological coding, that is, the concealing/revealing of true parentage and the punishment of the "sinful" mother (an explicit theme in various poems). But it is also a quintessential statement of the mother's lack of "title" to her illegitimate son and her inability to do anything for him. Thus, Kateryna's suicide can be seen as merely an actualization of an already existing state of affairs, for when the father rejects his bastard son her parentage becomes superfluous; at the end it is a blind *kobzar* who becomes the surrogate father. In "Petrus" the real mother is neither named nor mentioned and it is the surrogate mother, the general's wife, who raises Petrus' from the status of a "pohanyj bajstrjuk" to that of a gentleman. An illegitimate son, as Ševčenko shows in the sublime case of Christ in "Marija," may give status and dignity to his mother, but when his presence is removed his *pokrytka*

<sup>19</sup> This is true in an unqualified sense only in a pure type—or in a poetic, ideal type such as Ševčenko's. In Europe, historically, especially among the upper classes, a mixed type of descent system in which the mother could indeed confer status was the rule.

mother must inevitably suffer the fate of the outcast—and this indeed occurs, in what for many seemed an arbitrarily harsh end to the poem, as Marija dies alone and forgotten in a ditch. This end also epitomizes the cruelty of the world of existing social structures and the corresponding helplessness of the legally unsanctioned bond between mother and child.

The workings of an intuited matrilineal order is most evident in Ševčenko's depiction of the brother-sister relationship. In a matrilineal society the brother is legal husband to his sister, but he is emphatically not a sexual partner.<sup>20</sup> The prevention of a possible confusion of these roles is assured by a strict incest taboo. It is indicative, therefore, that in "U tijeji Kateryny" the woman is immediately killed when she reveals that her brother is in fact her lover. On the other hand, in "Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk" and in "Sotnyk" the confusion is removed as in each case, to make the marriage possible, one of the siblings is shown to have been adopted. At the same time these poems present an unmistakable incest fantasy—which is, however, legitimized and in "Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk" given social approval by the father himself, who tells Stepan that he is not really his son, and later urges him to marry his daughter.<sup>21</sup> "Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk," which is closest to presenting a developed picture of an ideal Ukraine, shows, quite clearly, two distinct echoes of a matrilineal order. One is the paramount value put on the brother-sister relationship (which we also know from such autobiographical moments in the poetry as the poem "Sestri" [To My Sister] or the lyric that begins "Dobro, u koho je hospoda/ A v tij hospodi je sestra/ Čy maty dobraja" [Happy is he who has a home,/ and in this home there is a sister/ or a good mother]); the other is the passionate desire to avoid separation. Here this is achieved by the plot device of Stepan's adoption, but even after this is duly announced, and a betrothal made, Stepan and Jaryna are still depicted as brother and sister. After it is decided that Stepan is to go off to the Sič, both he and Jaryna fall into a tearful embrace, losing all sense of time:

<sup>20</sup> Compare Schneider, "Distinctive Features of Matrilineal Descent Groups."

<sup>21</sup> Although Ševčenko introduced a number of changes between "Slipyj" (1845) and "Nevol'nyk" (1858–59), the important elements are quite untouched.

Незчулися, як і смеркло.  
І сестру і брата,  
Мов скованих, обнявшись,  
Застав батько в хаті!

(“Slipyj,” lines 280–283)

(They were unaware that it had grown dark./ The father found brother and sister/ embraced, as if chained together,/ in the house.) When Stepan returns a blind and wasted man and voices his reluctance to burden Jaryna with his state, her reply is most revealing:

«Оставайся, Степаночку!  
Коли не хоч братись,  
То так будем. Я сестрою,  
А ти мені братом,  
А дітьми йому обоє,  
Батькові старому. . .»

(lines 573–578)

(Stay, Stepan!/ If you do not want to marry/ we will stay as we are. I your sister/ and you a brother to me, and both of us children/ to our old father.) This, of course, leads to a second major element, which is the de-sexualization (or more precisely the infantilization) of love. In “Slipyj” we see this in the above scene, and still more plainly when Jaryna learns that Stepan is not her brother:

«Боже ти мій,  
Чом же я не знала?  
Була б тебе не любила  
І не цілювала.  
Ой, ой, сором! Геть од мене!  
Пусті мої руки!  
Ти не брат мій! ти не брат мій!  
Муко моя! муко!»

(lines 260–268)

(O, My God/ why did I not know?/ I would not have loved you/ or kissed you./ O shame, shame! Away from me!/ Let go my hands!/ You are not my brother! You are not my brother!/ O woe! Woe!) Later, this is repeated in “Marija” where the relationship of Josyp to

Marija is quite asexual, as that of father to daughter. In fact, however, one should not see here so much a de-sexualization of love as a "de-criminalization" of sex. This is suggested most strongly in "Petrus'" where the description of the "mother's" sinful passion for Petrus', her "madness" ("Nestalo syly/ Serdeha razom odurila" [She had no strength left,/ the poor woman went quite mad]),<sup>22</sup> is followed by this digression:

Моліте Господа, дівчата,  
Моліте Господа, щоб мати  
І вас отак не завдала  
За генерала, за палати  
І вас отак не продала.  
Любіться, діточки, весною.  
На світі є кого любить  
І без користі. Молодою,  
Пренепорочною, святою  
В малій хатині буде жить  
Любов та чистая. І буде  
Святий покой ваш стерегти  
І в домовині.

(lines 157–169)

(Pray to God, girls,/ pray to God that your mother/ does not give you away/ for a general,/ that she not sell you in this way for palaces./ Make love, children, in the springtime./ There are people you can love in this world/ without gain. Young/ and immaculate and holy/ this pure love will live in a small hut./ And it will guard your holy peace even in the grave.) The opposition here is not simply that of innocent young love and sinful passion. It is rather the opposition of an ideal framework or social setting with the present cruel social reality, the contrast between the holy love of Marija and the wandering apostle,<sup>23</sup> and the interpretation that people put on it. It is for

<sup>22</sup> In some respects the "mother" is more like an older sister; and this ambiguity is not an isolated instance in Ševčenko's poetry—see, for example, "Vid'ma": "Ščo ž se take? Se ne mara./ Moja se maty i sestra./ Moja se vid'ma, ščob vy znaly" (What is it? It's not a phantom./ It is my mother and my sister./ It is my witch, don't you know). Compare p. 155, below.

<sup>23</sup> Here, too, there is some ambivalence. For as righteous and holy as the prophet is, when he leaves Marija he is still associated with a seducer; see lines 258–263:



saving Marija from the bitter fate of a pokrytka (which fate she does after all meet at the end) that the poet thanks Josyp:

Якби  
Пречистій їй не дав ти руку,  
Рабами б бідніе раби  
І досі мерли би. О муко!  
О тяжкая душі печаль!

(lines 245–249)

(If you/ had not given your hand to the immaculate one/ we slaves would still die as slaves./ O woe!/ O heavy agony of the soul!) and then turns to Marija herself:

Маріє  
Ти, безталанная, чого  
І ждеш і ждатимеш од Бога  
І од людей його? Нічого,  
Ніже апостола того  
Тепер не жди. Тесляр убогий  
Тебе повінчану веде  
В свою убогую хатину.  
Молися й дякуй, що не кинув,  
Що на розпуття не прогнав.  
А то б цеглиною убили —  
Якби не вкрив, не заховав!

(lines 265–276)

(Marija! You unfortunate one, what/ do you expect and what will you expect from God/ and his people? Nothing,/ await nothing other than the apostle./ The poor carpenter/ now leads you a bride/ into

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Де ж подівсь  
Дивочний гость отой лукавий?  
Хоч би прийшов та подививсь  
На брак той славний і преславний!  
На брак окрадений!

(And where/ did that wondrous and cunning guest go to?/ He should, at least, have come to see/ that famous, that most famous marriage!/ The despoiled marriage!)

his poor hut./ Pray and give thanks that he did not leave you,/ that he did not send you away to the crossroads./ For they would have killed you with a brick/ had he not concealed and protected you!)

Illustration of this stance, and the underlying social and family order, is the very substance of Ševčenko's poetry. It is the reality of the squire or soldier seducing peasant girls, of the *pokrytka* and her bastard, and it is also, as the above digression from "Petrus" makes clear (and which such poems as "Knjažna," "Mar"jana-černycja," "Tytarivna" and others repeat again and again), the brutal fact that in this society the woman must always be guided by considerations of wealth and status and not by emotions and love. In Ševčenko's expressive and pathetic formulation, this is precisely the conflict between love, the language of the heart, and the prescriptions of a system, epitomized by the cold calculations of parents who sell their daughter to the highest bidder. All are features of a male-dominated, patrilineal society. It is only in a society where the woman herself, and not only her husband, has status that she can be guided by her heart, or, specifically, marry under her status.<sup>24</sup> Only in such a society is the family bond—of brother and sister, of mother and child—inviolable, and only here are there no bastards.

The existence of these two different orders is, by all appearances, only intuited by Ševčenko and neither named nor explicitly analyzed. Still, they are perceived and conveyed with great consistency. The issue, of course, is not merely one of matriliney vs. patriliney. These are, so to speak, simply the preliminary and, in terms of the basic structures and conflicts that Ševčenko is so manifestly concerned with, the most apparent terms of identification. Beyond them lies a more fundamental dichotomy which builds on the opposition of the "world of the father" and the "world of the mother," but which encompasses considerably more. This, the opposition of *communitas* and structure, lies at the heart of his mythical thought.

<sup>24</sup> A number of Ševčenko's short lyrical poems (particularly of the Kos-Aral, 1848, period), frequently considered "simple" paraphrases of folk songs, deal with this very problem. The fine lyric "I bahata ja" (Although I Am Rich), is precisely the lament of a woman who is handsome and rich—but who has no mate: she is the victim of an unbending structure. Characteristically, this is the fate of the very poor (the majority of Ševčenko's heroines), or, as here, the rich; it is not the case of the middle, average group, and the focus is not on them.

### 3. *Communitas and Structure*

The concepts of *communitas* and structure were first formulated by Victor Turner in the course of his discussion of the central role of rites of passage in the study of culture and society. Here he notes that "liminality," that is, the state of transition, brings to the fore

two major "models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals. . .

"I prefer," he continues, "the Latin term 'communitas' to 'community,' to distinguish this modality of social relationship from an 'area of common living.'"<sup>25</sup> In a later work Turner elaborates on the basic division:

Implicitly or explicitly, in societies of all levels of complexity, a contrast is posited between the notion of society as a differentiated, segmented system of structural positions (which may or may not be arranged in a hierarchy), and society as a homogeneous, undifferentiated *whole*. The first model approximates to the preliminary picture I have presented of "social structure." Here the units are statuses and roles, not concrete human individuals. The individual is segmentalized into roles he plays. Here the unit is what Radcliffe-Brown has called the *persona*, the role-mask, not the unique individual. The second model, *communitas*, often appears culturally in the guise of an Edenic, paradisiacal, utopian, or millennial state of affairs, to the attainment of which religious or political action, personal or collective, should be directed. Society is pictured as a *communitas* of free and equal comrades—of total persons. "Societas," or "society," as we all experience it, is a process involving both social structure and *communitas*, separately and united in varying proportions.

Even where there is no mythical or pseudohistorical account of such a state of affairs, ritual may be performed in which egalitarian and cooperative behavior is characteristic, and in which secular distinctions

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<sup>25</sup> Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process* (Chicago, 1969), p. 96.

of rank, office, and status are temporarily in abeyance or regarded as irrelevant.<sup>26</sup>

For us, the focus is precisely on such mythical and pseudo-historical accounts. Turner finds himself in agreement with Martin Buber's ideas when he speaks of the "spontaneous, immediate, concrete nature of *communitas*, as opposed to the norm-governed, institutionalized, abstract nature of social structure."<sup>27</sup> But his stress is on the dialectical nature of the relationship: "*communitas* emerges where social structure is not." Specifically,

*communitas* breaks in through the interstices of structure, in liminality; at the edges of structure, in marginality; and from beneath structure, in inferiority. It is almost everywhere held to be sacred or "holy," possibly because it transgresses or dissolves the norms that govern structured and institutionalized relationships and is accompanied by experiences of unprecedented potency.<sup>28</sup>

For Ševčenko, as for virtually all the Romantics who treat the Ukraine in mythical terms, be it Malczewski or Słowacki, Puškin or Gogol', the focus is on liminality, that is on her "ordeal" and her passage into a different state of being. Uniquely for Ševčenko, however, the depicted world is also determined precisely by oppression and marginality.<sup>29</sup>

As one reviews the manifest content of Ševčenko's poetry it is more than evident that it is primarily concerned with *communitas*. The moment of inferiority is of course implicit in the very fact that his attention is all but exclusively devoted to the Ukrainian world (which is discernable even under the surface of his Imperial Rome or Biblical Nazareth) and which is characterized, on the one hand, by its social oppression, specifically the enslavement of the great majority of its people, and on the other, its loss of political and national independence. (The latter aspect, to be sure, is complex and ambiguous in its formulation and highly susceptible to misconstruction.) Both aspects are continually reflected in the theme of freedom (*volja*), with its

<sup>26</sup> Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Utica, 1974), pp. 237–38.

<sup>27</sup> *The Ritual Process*, p. 127.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126 and 128.

<sup>29</sup> In this, to be sure, he is not unique, for, as Turner notes, "Liminality, marginality and structural inferiority are conditions in which are frequently generated myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems, and works of art," *ibid.*, p. 128.

central motifs of lamentation over its passing and hope for its return. Like all of his major themes, moreover, this one, too, is continually adumbrated by his personal fate. Marginality is no less manifest. The heroes and protagonists, the thematic and plot lines of Ševčenko's poetry provide an exhaustive catalogue of the margins of society: bastards and unwed mothers, orphans and young children (cf. the autobiographical poem "A. O. Kozačkovs'komu"), widows, beggars, wanderers and blind minstrels, servants (the various *najmyty* and *najmyčky*), criminals and convicts (compare, for example, "Varnak," "Mež skalamy, nenacě zlodij," "Jurodyvyj" [The Fool], "Moskaleva kryncja," "Jakby tobi dovelosja. . ." [If You Ever]), unfortunate lovers and loveless older women and men (for example, "Sotnyk"), seduced and raped girls, abused wives, the poor and the crippled. In all, this is a remarkable evocation of the disenfranchised and statusless, of common humanity, of *communitas* in its purest form.

Ševčenko's *communitas*, however, is not simply implicit in various figures, themes and motifs, it is also explicit in numerous scenes, patterns of movement, and actual formulations. Perhaps the best known formulation, presented in the "ideological" mode (and hence seldom if ever recognized as a formulation of *communitas* itself), is the final injunction of "Poslanije" where the poet, speaking to the upper classes, begs them to embrace their oppressed younger brother, the peasant, under the aegis of Mother Ukraine:

Обніміте ж, брати мої,  
Найменшого брата, —  
Нехай мати усміхнеться,  
Заплакана мати.  
Благословить дітей своїх  
Твердими руками  
І діточок поцілує  
Вольними устами.

(lines 246–253)

(Embrace, then, my brothers,/ the littlest brother—/ so that the mother may smile,/ the weeping mother,/ and that she may bless her children/ with her hard hands/ and kiss her children with free lips.) The idea of *communitas* as a rejection of status, wealth, rank, privilege, false learning, and false philosophy for the goal of an egalitarian, emotional, and immanent bond is repeatedly stated in this poem. Its

major image is the microcosm of the family:

Доборолась Україна  
До самого краю.  
Гірше ляха свої діти  
Її розпинають.

("Poslanije," lines 194–197)

(The Ukraine in her struggle has reached the final end./ Her children crucify her worse than the Poles); or again:

Схаменіться, недолюди,  
Діти юродиві!  
Подивіться на рай тихий,  
На свою країну,  
Полюбіте ширим серцем  
Велику руїну,  
Розкуйтеся, братайтеся!

("Poslanije," lines 19–25)

(Stop! You who have not attained your humanity,/ you mad children!/ Look at the peaceful paradise,/ at your land,/ love with a sincere heart/ the great ruin./ Break your chains, be brothers!) Most of all, the oneness and the absence of differentiation in *communitas* is captured by the image of the nation as *one home*; and this, in turn, also establishes a radical distinction between one's own, deeply intuited, common knowledge (or national memory) and alien wisdom, which is nothing more than "z čužoho polja. . . Velykyx slov, velyk[a], syl[a],/ Ta j bil's ničoho" (from a foreign field/ a great lot of great words,/ and nothing more):

У чужому краю  
Не шукайте, не питаєте  
Того, що немає  
І на небі, а не тільки  
На чужому полі.  
В своїй хаті своя й правда.  
І сила, і воля.

(lines 26–32)

(In a foreign land/ do not seek, do not ask for/ what does not exist/ even in heaven, let alone/ in a foreign land./ In one's own house, is one's own justice/ and power and freedom.) And, "Jakby vy včylys' tak, jak treba,/ To j mudrist' by bula svoja" (If you would study as you should/ then the wisdom too would be one's own); and, finally, the injunction that in innumerable repetitions has been reduced to trite pedagogy:

Учітесь читайте,  
І чужому навчайтесь,  
Й свого не цурайтесь.  
Бо хто матір забуває,  
Того Бог карає,  
Того діти цураються,  
В хату не пускають.  
Чужі люди проганяють,  
І немає злomu  
На всій землі безконечній  
Веселого дому.

(lines 219–229)

(Study, read,/ learn what is foreign,/ but do not reject your own./ For he who forgets his mother/ is punished by God,/ his children reject him/ and shut him out of the house./ Strangers send him on his way,/ and on this whole boundless earth/ the wicked one has no joyful home.)

As formulated in the "Epistle," however, *communitas* is not simply a pious goal, or an ideal, hoped-for state of egalitarian unity. It is also a latent but powerful social force that may appear in a bloody reckoning. References to an imminent retribution against the wicked and the oppressors animate a number of Ševčenko's poems, beginning with "Poslanije" and "Xolodnyj Jar,"<sup>30</sup> and as such have been taken as the principal evidence for his supposedly quintessentially revolutionary world view. This notion, as we shall see, requires basic rethinking. What is readily apparent at this point, however, is that a

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<sup>30</sup> "Xolodnyj Jar" repeatedly equates the common cause, the ideal of *communitas*, with the sacred; thus: "Ne xovajte, ne topčite/ Svjatoho zakona" (Do not bury, do not trample/ the holy law), or "Za svjatuju pravdu-volju/ Rozbojnyk ne stane" (The robber will not rise up for holy justice-freedom).

sense of a coming resolution and new order, as Turner suggests by referring to a "utopian or millennial state of affairs," is implicit in the very idea of *communitas*.

*Communitas* is also portrayed by Ševčenko as a "historical," in effect, pseudo-historical or, still more accurately, edenic state of existence. Some of these embodiments are generated by his early espousal of Slavophile ideas, as reflected, for example, in the "Prologue" (actually the epilogue) to *Hajdamaky*, and even more in "Jeretyk." In the latter, Slavdom is not only cast as one great family that is subverted by the Germans (compare the opening image of a "good new house" set on fire by evil neighbors), but the hero, Jan Hus, himself becomes an archetypal defender-representative of *communitas*, as reflected in his opening monologue (which in its imagery and rhetoric closely prefigures "Poslaniye" and "Xolodnyj Jar"):

Небесний Царю! суд Твій всеу,  
І всеу царствіє Твоє.

Розбойники, людоїди  
Правду поборолі,  
Осміяли Твою славу,  
І силу, і волю.  
Земля плаче у кайданах,  
Як за дітьми мати.  
Нема кому розкувати,  
Одностайне стати  
За євангеліє правди,  
За темній люде!

(lines 94–105)

(O heavenly Tsar! Your judgment is in vain/ and Your kingdom is in vain./ The brigands and cannibals/ have conquered justice,/ and mocked Your glory/ and power and will./ The earth weeps in her chains/ as a mother for her children./ There is no one to unchain her,/ to stand up, as one,/ for the Gospel of justice,/ for the ignorant people.) In "Poljakam" (To the Poles; 1847), Ševčenko is no longer working within an explicitly Slavophile frame, but rather with a more circumscribed, and, of course, utopian vision of a Polish-Cossack amity that had once existed, but that had been subsequently destroyed by priests and magnates.

Most emphatic, however, are those images of *communitas* that are cast exclusively in the mold of the Ukrainian past. One that is quite



traditional, and which has drawn the attention of various ethnographers, antiquarians, and writers, is that of a Cossack bidding farewell to the world in one last fling before entering a monastery to spend his last days in prayer and penance. This is the subject of "Černec," also written in exile (1847). Here, the protagonist, the Cossack colonel Palij, is one of Ševčenko's quintessential popular heroes, a man of the people who incarnates their ethos of freedom, equality, expansiveness, and spontaneous emotion, and shares in their suffering. He is not only typical but also representative of this ethos, and this is underscored by the fact that Palij is shown as recapturing in his memories a whole epoch of a turbulent and vibrant Cossack past ("I v keliji, nanače v Siči,/ Braterstvo slavne ožyva. . ." [And in the cell, as if it were the Sič,/ the famous Brotherhood comes to life]; compare lines 88–113) and that his "task" is to pray for *all* of the Ukraine. (As already noted, these and other features, make Palij, like Polubotok and Dorošenko, a symbolic projection of the poet himself.) As does the protagonist, the setting also stresses the ethos of communitas:

У Києві на Подолі  
Братерська наша воля  
Без холопа і без пана  
Сама собі у жупані  
Розвернулася весела,  
Аksamитом шляхи стеле,  
А єдвабном застилає  
І нікому не звертає.

(lines 9–16)

(In Kiev, in the Podil,/ our brotherly freedom,/ without serf or lord./ alone in her *župan*,/ stretched herself joyfully./ She covers the roads with velvet,/ and spreads the silk/ and makes way for nobody.)

Two other poems, *Hajdamaky* and "U nedilen'ku u svjatuju," are more expressive of communitas in action in that they depict, at some length, the group itself, the people.<sup>31</sup> In *Hajdamaky* the centerpiece of this depiction is the section "Svjato v Čyhyryni," where "all" the

<sup>31</sup> Mass or group scenes do appear in various poems ("Perebendja," "Tytarivna," and others), but they are not the center of focus; in "Son (Komedija)" there is a depiction of a large gathering (the Tsar's ball), but it is basically presented in a fragmentary manner.

people are gathered for the momentous occasion—the blessing of the knives that will sanctify the bloodletting and turn the uprising against the Poles into holy vengeance:

А де ж люде? . . Над Тясмином.  
У темному гаю,  
Зібралися; старий, малий,  
Убогий, багатий  
Поеднались, — дождають  
Великого свята.

(lines 868–873)

(And where are the people? Above the Tjasmyn,/ in a dark grove,/ they have gathered; old and young,/ poor and rich/ have united and are waiting/ for a great holy day.) They represent an unstoppable force, as one Cossack leader says, “Čym spynyš narod ščob ne homoniv? Ne desjat' duš, a slava Bohu, vsja Smiljanščyna, koly ne vsja Ukrajina” (How will you stop the people from murmuring? Gathered here are not ten souls, but, praise God, all of Smiljanščyna if not all of the Ukraine). Its will is actualized not in structured authority but through the will and person of one charismatic leader; “A ščo nam vaša staršyna? . . .” asks one Zaporozhian, “U nas odyń staršyj—bat'ko Maksym” (What are your elders to us? We have one elder—father Maksym). Perhaps most important, as we finally see from the words of the Archimandrite who officiates at the ceremony, is the direct tie that is postulated between the will and goals of the collective and that of heaven:

Кругом святого Чигрина  
Сторожа стане з того світу,  
Не дасть святого розпинать.  
А ви Україну ховайте:  
Не дайте матері, не дайте  
В руках у ката пропадать.

(lines 1115–1120)

(Around holy Čyhyryn/ will stand guardians from the other world;/ they will not allow the holy city to be crucified./ And you, you must protect the Ukraine:/ do not let the mother, do not let her/ perish in the hands of the executioner.) In the short poem “U nedilen'ku u

svjatuju" Ševčenko presents—now in a "constructive" rather than apocalyptic frame—a solemn picture of the election of Nalyvajko as Cossack hetman. The event, of course, is fictional, and the whole is an iconic set piece and its constituent elements are all chosen so as to highlight an ideal, or, as Turner calls it, "existential" *communitas*. These are the sacrality of time and place ("U nedilen'ku u svjatuju. . . U slavnomu-preslavnomu/ Misti Čyhyryni" [On holy Sunday. . . in the glorious, most glorious city of Čyhyryn]), the solemnity of the gathering ("Z svjaty my korohvamy/ Ta z prečestnymi obrazamy/ Narod z popamy/ Z usix cerkov na horu jde" [With holy banners/ and with scared icons,/ the people with the priests/ from all the churches, ascend the mountain]), the presence of all the various strata (clergy, Cossack officers, the Cossack army itself, the common people), and above all their blending into one collective body. In this feast of national unity the community (*hromada*) exists and speaks and acts as one:

І громада покладає  
Земніє поклони. . .

І одногласне, одностайне  
Громада вибрала гетьмана —

Три поклони покладає  
Великій громаді. . .

Громада чмелем загула. . .

(lines 30–31, 37–38, 49–50, and 77)

(The community bows to the ground. . . With one voice, as one man/ the community elected a hetman. . . . He bows three times to the great community. . . The community buzzed as a bee. . .) This apotheosis of *communitas* is effected in the course of establishing authority—but there is no paradox here, for the authority is not structured, it rests not in the office nor in procedure (of which there is no mention), but in the expression of a single will.<sup>32</sup> This unity is actually reinforced

<sup>32</sup> It is instructive to compare this scene from Ševčenko's poem with the corresponding scenes of Cossack elections in Gogol's *Taras Bul'ba* or Kuliš's *Čorna rada*. What is shown by Ševčenko as an exercise in ideal unity, a manifestation of an "existential" *communitas* (as Turner calls it in *The Ritual Process*, p. 132) is, for the two novelists, the expression, at best, of an anarchic "Cossack republic."

by the introduction of a utopian, pseudo-historical "fact": after unanimously electing the old Cossack Loboda, the gathering, at his urging, unanimously chooses the young Nalyvajko as hetman. Like "Svjato v Čyhyryni," "U nedilen'ku u svjatuju" reaffirms the mythical syllogism that the very presence of unity and harmony indicates the sacred nature of the phenomenon; the sacred, therefore, is not merely a component of the iconic depiction but is rather an ontological basis, the very mode of existence, of ideal *communitas*.

The essential context for *communitas* is its relation to society as a structured body. In the functioning of various societies and cultures this relationship is dialectical and complementary. Typically, the individual or group moves from the framework of structure, with its ranks, statuses, and so forth, to the state of *communitas* where all such distinctions are absent, and while there is purified and regenerated through symbolic nakedness, as it were, and immersion in common humanity, and, thus revitalized, reenters social structure. This is the basic pattern of rites of passage and of the general symbolic regeneration of society. Such an interplay of *communitas* and structure defines the "normal" case, that is, the functioning of stable systems.<sup>33</sup> The idea of an ideal ("existential") *communitas*, however, and the postulation of a sharp dichotomous opposition between *communitas* and structure arises when the group, or individuals within it, perceive their existence as inferior or subjugated or threatened. This is precisely the context of Ševčenko's thought and of the more or less symbolically coded thought of a number of his Ukrainian contemporaries.<sup>34</sup> And this, in turn, leads to mythical and providentialist solutions.

<sup>33</sup> See *The Ritual Process*, pp. 94 and 97 and chap. 3, "Liminality and *Communitas*," *passim*.

<sup>34</sup> It is reflected, for example, in the pessimistic tone and melancholy motifs of the poetry of Metlyn's'kyj and Kostomarov and such specific expressions as Metlyn's'kyj's "Smert' bandyrysta." In general, the nostalgia for the past in early Ukrainian Romanticism (or pre-Romanticism) often tends to assertions about the imminent "death" of the Ukrainian language and culture, or even of the Ukraine itself. Thus, Kostomarov, in what is one of the first nineteenth-century overviews of Ukrainian literature, his "Obzor sočinenij pisannyx na malorossijskom jazyke" (1843), argues (in connection with Kvivka's "Marusja") that the Ukraine of traditional values and customs is fated to die ("on the nation in which she [that is, Marusja] lives there lies the stamp of a sickly decrepitude; she is a girl of dying Little Russia." (M. I. Kostomarov, *Tvory v dvox*

In Ševčenko's poetry (but, significantly, not in his prose) society's structure and hierarchy is essentially the realm of evil. By definition it is the world of authority and rank, of law and order, and the fruit of rational inquiry—and none of this is ever given even a neutral, let alone a positive value. On the highest or broadest level, structure is incarnate in the despotism of large autocratic and bureaucratic systems—of the Russian Empire, as seen in many poems, but especially in "Son (Komediya)" and "Kavkaz," of the Roman Catholic Church, especially as portrayed in "Jeretyk," or of Imperial Rome persecuting the Christians ("Neofity"). On the more specific and proximate level this is the despotism of the local landlord, squire or general and the institutionalized system of exploitation and oppression—economic, political, moral and sexual—that Ševčenko sees all around him. Instances and excoriations of these deprivations are to be found in the great majority of Ševčenko's poems and virtually every depiction of the poor and the weak, be it an individual *pokrytka* or the ravished Mother Ukraine, also refers to the guilt that is born by the system and its representatives.

Fundamentally, the world of social structure is the world of property. And since the poet's perspective is exactly that of *communitas*, with its radical egalitarianism, this property is nothing more than theft and greed. Its corollary in the domain of sexual relations is lechery and rape. The whole of "Kavkaz" is one great philippic against structure in its various guises, from false religion, to false Enlightenment, to finally, above all, the boundless, imperial lust to aggrandize. In "Stojit' v seli Subotovi," in a sardonic variation on this, Ševčenko paraphrases the imperial Russian historians as saying of the Ukraine that it was "only leased to the Tartars and Poles for

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*tomas*, vol. 2 [Kiev, 1967], p. 387). In his early *Mixajlo Čarnyšenko ili Malorossija 80 let nazad*, vol. 1 (Kiev, 1843), pp. 49–50, Kuliš, whose ideas were to undergo complex evolution, ascribes to Sotnyk Čarnyš, the father of his hero, an identical opinion: "He loved Little Russia, he knew that she had lived out her allotted age, that she had grown old and prematurely decrepit in spirit; he felt that she will soon expire." Two things must be stressed, however: (1) these views largely reflect the thinking (including perhaps a sense of guilt) of an educated or upper class, whose members project their own subjective state on the group as a whole; and (2) these are, above all, statements of feeling not of analysis. While objectively the culture was indeed undergoing change, that change, rather than pointing to the group's death, was in fact (that is, in retrospect) signaling its revival. The whole question of this "pessimism" clearly requires further analysis.

grazing" and in "Son (Komediya)" he perceives Peter I, the bronze horseman of Falconet's monument, as stretching out his hand to rake in the whole world ("...ruku prostjahaje,/ Mov svit uves' xoče/ Zaharbaty"). This boundless greed, however, is not simply the property of Russian imperialism. In the "mystery" "Velykyj l'ox," for example, the three ravens of the second section portray the evil ("black") spirits of, respectively, the Ukraine, Poland, and Russia, and the Ukrainian raven is by far the most central (its lines are more than three times that of the other two combined); its very first statement, setting the tone for the whole section, is directed at the figure and the deeds of the paradigmatic Ukrainian representative of authority, Bohdan Xmel'nyc'kyj:

Крав! крав! крав!  
Крав Богдан крав,  
Та повіз у Київ,  
Та продав злодіям  
Той крав, що накрив.

(lines 175–179)

(He stole! He stole! He stole!/ Bohdan stole the stuff/ and carried it to Kiev/ and sold it to thieves,/ the stuff that he stole.) Similarly, with respect to lechery, in the treatment of women as property, the national provenance of the culprit is quite secondary: he may be a Russian general, a Polish nobleman, or a descendant of a Ukrainian hetman, as Petro Skoropads'kyj in "P.S."

Another basic feature of structure is status and rank. The opening of the poem "Jurodyvyj" gives a condensed (and of course satiric) picture of social structure as the pecking order of a military hierarchy:

Во дні фельдфебеля-царя  
Капрал Гаврилович Безрукий  
Та унтер п'яний Долгорукий  
Україну правили. Добра  
Таки чимало натворили,  
Чимало люду оголили  
Оці сатрапи-ундіра,  
А надто стрижений Гаврилич  
З своїм єфрейтером малим  
Та жвавим, на лихо лихим,  
До того люд домуштровали,

Що сам фельдфебель дивувались  
І маршировкою і всім,  
І «благодарні перебували  
Всегда к ефрейторам своїм»

(lines 1–15)

(In the days of the sergeant tsar [Nicholas I], Havrylovych, the one-armed corporal [Dimitrij Gavrilovich Bibikov, governor-general of Kiev, Volhynia and Podolia]/ and Dolgorukij, the drunk noncom [Prince Nicholas Andreevich Dolgorukov, governor-general of Xarkiv, Černihiv and Poltava] ruled the Ukraine./ They did much good,/ they shaved many people,/ these noncom satraps,/ especially the close-cropped Havrylyč/ with his little corporal [that is, M. Je. Pisarev in charge of Bibikov's chancery] spry and more vicious than any./ They mustered the people so well/ that the sergeant himself wondered/ at the marching and all,/ and “remained ever gracious/ to his corporals.”) Man's willingness to allow himself to be transformed from his state of original “holy” equality and dignity into “livered slavery” brings the poet to the brink of despair:

А ми дивились та мовчали  
Та мовчки чухали чуби.  
Німії, подлії раби,  
Підніжки царські, лакеї  
Капрала п'яного! Не вам,  
Не вам, в мережаній лівреї  
Донощики і фарисеї,  
За правду пресвятую статъ  
І за свободу. Розпинать,  
А не любить ви вчилися брата!  
О роде суєтний, проклятий,  
Коли ти видохнеш?

(lines 16–27)

(And we looked and remained silent/ and silently scratched our heads./ Mute, miserable slaves,/ footstools of the tsar, lackeys/ of the drunken corporal! It is not you,/ not you, informers and pharisees in embroidered livery,/ who will rise for holy justice/ and for freedom. You learned/ to crucify not to love your brother!/ O vain, cursed people/ when will you die out?) It is inevitable that in the face

of such total acquiescence to slavery the one man who dares strike out against such an order is deemed a madman, a *jurodyvyj*. (And he too, of course, is a projection of Ševčenko himself.) In various other poems, society's slavery in and oppression through rank is given by metonymy, through references to dress. In "Velykyj l'ox" the Ukrainian raven boasts of having spawned hosts of gentry in uniform, like lice ("I dvorjanstva strašnu sylu/ U mundyrax rozplodyla,/ Jak tyx vošej rozvela"); in "Son (Komediya)" the officious bureaucrat, a fellow Ukrainian, who offers to guide the newly arrived narrator around St. Petersburg, is described not even by his uniform, but by his shiny buttons, and the conclusion of "Vo ludeji vo dni ony" (In Judea in Those Days) is a small tour de force of metonymy, where the poet's outrage at his fellow man's moral enserfment is given in fleeting impressions of his gaze measuring the imagined figure from head to toe:

Ми серцем голі догола!  
Раби з кокардою на лобі!  
Лакеї в золотій оздобі. . .  
Онуча, сміття з помела  
Его величства. Та й годі.

(lines 41–45)

(We are utterly naked of heart!/ Slaves with a cockade on our head!/ Lackeys in golden ornaments. . . / foot-clouts, trash from the broom/ of his highness. That is all.)

As the above examples of Xmel'nyc'kyj and Skoropads'kyj suggest, structure for Ševčenko is more than just the Russian imperial system; the later poems, particularly those drawing on the Bible, show that the opposition is not merely national (the Ukraine vs. Russia), but universal, that is, the opposition of *communitas* and structure. The first, and mockingly "programmatic" reference to his expanded frame of reference is made in "Cari" (1848), where, as we have just seen, he says to the muse,

. . . дуже вже й мені самому  
Обридли тії мужики,  
Та паничі, та покритки.  
Хотілося б зогнать оскому  
На коронованих главах,  
На тих помазанниках божих. . .

(lines 10–15)



(. . .for I myself have become/ quite tired of these muzhiks,/ and young gentlemen and pokrytky./ Should we not sate our appetite/ with crowned heads,/ with those anointed by God?) The poem itself examines the morals of the "tsars" of antiquity—of David and his criminal lust (the story of Uriah and Bathsheba), of his son's incestuous relations with his own half-sister (Amnon and Tamar), and Vladimir the Great's lechery and brutality (the story of Rohnida and Rohvolod). The unmasking is all the more pointed in that the two royal miscreants, David and Vladimir, have both become official saints for the Orthodox Church: "Tak otakiji-to svjatiiji/ Oti cari." Both in the beginning of his summation ("Bodaj katy jix postynaly,/ Otyx cariv, kativ ljuds'kyx." [Would that the executioners take off the heads/ of these tsars, executioners of men]) and in its conclusion the antithesis of *communitas* and *structure* is unqualified and stark: "Xodimo v selyšča, tam ljude,/ A tam de ljude, dobre bude,/ Tam budem žyt', ljudej ljubyt',/ Svjatoho Hospoda xvalyt'" (Let us go into the villages. There are people there./ And where there are people things will be alright./ We will live there, love people,/ and praise holy God). In fact, however, Ševčenko does not confine himself to the "villages," and his search for the origins of man's injustice toward man repeatedly draw him back to the tsars. The poem that culminates this search, one of Ševčenko's last, is "Saul." Here the focus on the Hebrews is shown to be arbitrary, for the setting is intentionally universal:

В непробудимому Китаї,  
В Єгипті темному, у нас,  
І понад Індом і Євфратом  
Свої ягнята і телята  
На полі вольнім вольно пас  
Чабан, було, в своєму раї.

(lines 1–6)

(In unawakable China,/ in dark Egypt, in our country,/ and on the Indus and the Euphrates,/ on a free field, in his paradise,/ a shepherd freely grazed his lambs and calves.) Into this paradise the devil brings the tsar, who is now a fully bared metaphor of *structure*, with its basic features:

Аж ось лихий царя несе  
З законами, з мечем, з катями,  
З князями, темними рабами.

(lines 10–12)

(And lo the evil one brings a tsar,/ with laws, with the sword, with executioners,/ with princes, and ignorant slaves.) Though the treatment of Saul's story is both ironic and at times buffo, the concluding vision is dark: "Hore! Hore!! Dribnijut' ljude na zemli,/ Rostut' i vysjatsja cari!" (Woe! Woe!/ People grow ever smaller on this earth;/ the tsars grow and loom large!). This darkness is all the more terrible in that God's visage has been obscured from man by official religion:

Раби мовчали,  
Царі лупилися, росли  
І Вавілоні муровали.  
А маги, бонзи і жерці  
(Неначе наші панотці)  
В храмах, в пагодах годувались.  
Мов кабани царям на сало  
Та на ковбаси.

(lines 22–29)

(The slaves were mute./ The tsars fleeced each other, grew/ and built Babylons./ And the magi, bonzes, and druids/ (just like our priests)/ fed themselves in the temples and pagodas/ like hogs for bacon and sausages for the tsars.) More than simply questioning official religion,<sup>35</sup> Ševčenko questions God the Father, God the Creator, who allows man to make a hell of paradise, and who may indeed conspire with the nobles, in effect, be part and parcel of structure:

А може й сам на небеси  
Смієшся, батечку, над нами  
Та може радишся з панями,  
Як править міром!

("Jakby vy znaly panyči," lines 57–60)

<sup>35</sup> See D. Čyževs'kyj's "Ševčenko i religija," *Povne vydannja tvoriv Tarasa Ševčenk*a (Chicago, 1960), vol. 9, pp. 329–347.

(Or maybe You, in Your heaven,/ are laughing, Papa, at us/ and maybe counseling with the lords/ on how to rule the world!) In Ševčenko's poetic world this is largely the case: God the Father is mostly distant and unresponsive, and even accused of being deceptive ("Zbrešut' ljude,/ I vizantijs'kyj savaof/ Oduryt'" [People will lie,/ and the Byzantine [Lord of] Sabaoth will fool you/]; "Lykeri" [To Lykeria]). True godhood and solace is found in Christ, the crucified God of the poor and the humble, the God of *communitas*.

If Ševčenko's sense of *communitas* depends on his perception of society as a structured entity, the actual role both play in his Ukrainian world is found not just in their simple juxtaposition, but in the symbolically coded movement between them. In "normal," stable societies, as noted, the movement is from structure to *communitas* and back to structure; this is the pattern of purification and then reaffirmation of social structure. In Ševčenko this is reversed. In those poems in which movement between the modes is present it is always either from structure to *communitas* or from *communitas* to structure and back to *communitas*. It is always, without exception, *communitas*, not structure, that is reaffirmed. One rather clear example is given in "Petrus'." Here the hero begins as a small, "ugly" bastard child tending pigs in a village. He is taken by the bride of the general as part of her dowry. She raises him and sends him to school. He is freed from serfdom and becomes a young gentleman. But his protectress—"mother" falls in love with him, and in her uncontrollable passion for Petrus' rids herself of her husband by poisoning him. To protect her, Petrus' takes the blame on himself, and at the end, shaven and in shackles, shorn of all vestiges of status and privilege and dressed in chains (!), he sets off for Siberia. He reenters *communitas*. In *Hajdamaky*, Jarema Halajda begins as an archetypal exponent of *communitas*—he is an orphan and a bastard and a servant. For a brief time, during the uprising he "spreads his wings" as a hajdamak leader, as an "adopted son" of Maksym Zaliznjak (see lines 2166–2171), but in the end he shares the fate of all the hajdamaks—if not to be caught and executed then to become a brigand and wanderer. Similarly, the pattern can be perceived in those poems where the woman moves from the world of privilege to share the fate of suffering humanity, either by being abandoned ("Knjažna") or by her own volition ("Jakby tobi dovelosja"). A more complex variation on this pattern is found in "Tytarivna" where the movement involves two protagonists, the sexton's daughter and Mykyta, her seducer. In the beginning

Tytarivna publicly scorns and humiliates Mykyta ("najkraščyj xlopec", ta bajstrjuk. . .ta ščej ubohyj) [the most handsome boy, but a bastard. . .and poor to boot]). When he leaves on a long journey, however, she finds that she has fallen in love with him. Mykyta returns after four years as a dashing, rich Cossack who bullies the young men and makes all the girls lose their hearts. Hardly anyone recognizes him, except for Tytarivna, who now readily gives herself to *pan* (!) Mykyta. One winter day, after her child has been born, Tytarivna, humiliated and cast out by her family, brings her infant son to a well; she cannot bring herself to drown him, however, and merely leaves him at the well's edge and runs off. Mykyta (still called a "bajstrjuk"), who had been spying on her, now throws the child, his bastard son, into the well and goes off to the village to report that Tytarivna had done the deed. In punishment she is buried alive with her dead child, as a lesson to others. Mykyta disappears; later he is seen in Poland and heard asking whether Tytarivna is still alive and whether she still laughs at the poor. And it is this offense (which the narrator stresses three times), and not her sexual laxity that is the cause of her punishment. But Mykyta is also punished—not by death but by being cursed to walk the world as a devil-man and seduce girls.

"Tytarivna" is symbolically polysemous. It is on the one hand a condensed fantasy of punishment—of the girl who scorns the poor or local boy but gives herself to an outsider (a "moskal"; compare the early "Kateryna" or the late "Tytarivna-Nemyrivna"), of the mother who kills or wants to kill her child (compare the poems discussed above), and of the evil seducer, who appears in a number of poems, from "Kateryna" to "Marija." It is also, as the various ironic asides and the telescoping of narrative and motifs seems to indicate, a case of Ševčenko consciously playing with the recurring themes of his poetry. In terms of our immediate concern, it is a radical reassertion of *communitas*. The sexton's daughter, implicitly the first girl in the village, is brought low, in fact cruelly punished, for scorning the lowly. "Sterežite! divčatočka, / Smijatys' z nerivni" (Beware little girls/ of laughing at the lowly) the narrator intones. But Mykyta's corresponding rise from his low status to that of a Cossack and *pan* is also not an affirmation of structure: he is still called a "bajstrjuk" and his upward mobility is to the status of a monster. To become a gentleman, a "panyč," is thus equivalent to falling into depravity. And, as witnessed so powerfully by the poem "Čy to nedolja ta nevolja" (Is It

Ill Luck and Captivity), this is a central, tormenting concern of Ševčenko's own symbolic autobiography.

This continuing affirmation of *communitas* and rejection of social structure, as reflected both in the above discussed movements and in the fact that all of Ševčenko's positive heroes and heroines are, or become—principally by suffering—part of the set of *communitas*, defines his world and constitutes the paramount structure of his mythical thought. It is a structure quite distinct from the amorphous and almost always crudely applied notion of his "national character," his *narodnist'*. In fact, Ševčenko's sense of *communitas* is not only not congruent with, but is in various respects opposed to the popular, peasant ethos that is generally intended by *narodnist'*. For in contrast to the fiction so strenuously promulgated by Soviet critics, the Ukrainian peasant ethos and its system of values, like that of any peasantry, predicates a very structured society. Indeed this, the society's sanctions, its enforcement of its law, its harshness, and its hierarchy, is portrayed by Ševčenko himself—in 'Kateryna,' "Sova," "Tytarivna," "Moskaleva krynycja," and many other poems. *But this is not communitas*. *Communitas* (which Turner also terms "anti-structure") intends, in the ideal or utopian mode, a structure-less, free and equal society; in terms of the real world it reflects society's margins, the "down and out," the "insulted and injured." And it is they, the poor widows and the *pokrytky*, the illegitimate and abandoned, the abused and the unfortunate, who become Ševčenko's special charges, as he so eloquently puts it in a reflective digression in "Maryna":

Неначе ворон той летячи  
Про непогоду людям кряче,  
Так я про сльози, та печаль,  
Та про байстрят отих ледачих,  
Хоть і нікому їх не жаль,  
Розказую та плачу.  
Мені їх жаль! . . . Мій Боже милий,  
Даруй словам святую силу —  
Людськеє серце пробивать,  
Людськії сльози проливать,  
Щоб милость душу осінила,  
Щоб спала тихая печаль  
На очі їх, щоб стало жаль  
Моїх дівчаток, щоб навчились

Путями добрими ходитъ,  
Святого Господа любить  
І брата миловать. . .

(lines 116–132)

(Like that raven that flies/ cawing to people about foul weather,/ so I tell and weep/ about tears and woe/ and those good-for-nothing illegitimate children/ whom no one pities./ I pity them! My dear God,/ give the words a holy power/ to pierce the human heart,/ to shed human tears,/ so that love would protect the soul,/ that a quiet grief would descend/ on their eyes, that they would take pity on my little girls, that they learn to walk true paths,/ to love the Holy Lord/ and love their brother. . .)

The poet's sense of his task also determines his self-image. Thus the minstrel-kobzar, who symbolizes for Ševčenko the living native culture and its traditions and who stands, as illustrated above all in "Perebendja," as the prime image and model of the poet, is also emblematic of *communitas*. Historically, these singers were drawn from the margins of society (and hence frequently called "the brotherhood of beggars" [nyšča bratija]); almost without exception they were physically afflicted, most often by blindness.<sup>36</sup> For this very reason the kobzar, a quintessential representative of "common humanity," can function in Ševčenko's poetry as a witness and a carrier of the collective experience, an experience that must be true and holy precisely because it was felt, and then retold, without the "interference" of the false criteria of social structure and authority. Only the kobzars (compare "Iržavec") and the poet who models himself on them can genuinely feel the truth of the past, the *istorija-pravda*. Ševčenko's identification with the kobzars, however, is psychological as well as functional: he not only shares with them the same mythical mode of apprehending and retelling reality but also sees himself as sharing their fate. Whether by symbolic identification, or overtly

<sup>36</sup> See P. Žytec'kyj, *Mysli o narodnyx malorusskix dumax* (Kiev, 1893), p. 170 and *passim*, K. Hruševs'ka, *Ukrajins'ki narodni dumy* (Kiev, 1927), vol. 1, pp. cxliii–cxlix and *passim*, and F. M. Kolessa, *Myzykoznavči praci* (Kiev, 1970), p. 348.

(as in *Trizna*), he too views himself both as a marginal, a perpetual outsider, and as one cursed by a profound affliction, in a word as a cripple in the spiritual if not the physical sense. Such poems as "Zavorožy meni volxve" (Soothsayer, Tell My Fortune; 1844), or "Buvaje v nevoli inodi zhadaju" (1850), or "Kolys' durnoju holovoju" (Once, in My Stupidity; 1854), or especially "Čy to nedolja ta nevolja" (1850), show the poet confessing that his heart is a blasted desert and his once pure soul demeaned and dragged through the mire; by his own reckoning he is more than an outsider, he is an outcast. This self-definition through alienation and affliction may seem to be part of a Romantic poetics, and indeed it is, but primarily in the sense that Ševčenko partakes of the general Romantic openness to the life of the unconscious and to what lies on the other side of "normal," everyday existence. Here, as in other aspects of the poetry, however, specific Romantic literary conventions are hardly determinant: his identification with a kobzar follows not from a literary model drawn on Ossian or Scott, but from a deep cultural and personal paradigm involving function and status. Hence, too, his *distance* toward the kobzars (or *lirnyks*), which is shown most dramatically in "Velykyj l'ox," is more than just a function of Romantic irony. For in terms of the ultimate function of serving as myth-carriers the kobzars exist on a lower level. They perform the ritual narrative and they retell the myth; they are wholly emotionally attuned to it, both past and present. But they neither fully comprehend it, nor fully know it; they recreate, but they cannot create a new vision. Thus, even if Ševčenko's poetic corpus, and he himself, came to be called the *Kobzar*, he must necessarily transcend this model, for the function of creating a new vision and a new resolution of conflicts is exclusively the domain of the poet as prophet.

#### 4. *Communitas and Structure as a Universal Model*

The relations founded on the binary opposition of *communitas* and *structure* can be seen as marking out the dimensions and providing the very framework for Ševčenko's world. But while this world is so intensely and all but exclusively focused on the human condition, on people and their fates, and, of course, on the poet himself, the underlying model of human relations is not in any sense "analytical" or "realistic," let alone "socio-economic." *Communitas* and *structure*

do constitute a model, but one that is universal, and ultimately meta-physical and visionary.

The universality of this model is confirmed by its all-encompassing horizontal and vertical extension. By "horizontal" I simply mean that in Ševčenko's poetry every portrayal of an actual (that is, post-Edenic and pre-millennial) human society, whatever its time and place, is determined by this opposition; this we see in the Ukraine of the present and the "historical" past, the Bohemia and the Holy Roman Empire of the times of Hus, the Biblical world (the paraphrases of the prophets, "Cari," "Saul," "Marija"), ancient Rome ("Neofity," "Kolys'-to šče, vo vremja ono" [Once, in Those Olden Days]) and finally the present-day Russian Empire viewed from the vantage point of its capital, St. Petersburg (from the early "Son [Komedija]" to such late poems as "O ljudy! ljudy neboraky" [O People, Wretched People] or "Jakos'-to jdučy unoči" [Somehow, Walking at Night]). Even a brief evocation of the Kievan Rus' of Grand Duke Vladimir, in "Cari," is built around this opposition, which here is perforce distilled to its central feature—the merciless lust and greed of the "tsars." To be sure, this universal cast becomes most pronounced in the poetry of the post-exile period (1857–1861), but it is not a question of chronological development. Thus, while in the pre-exile and exile poetry the Ukraine is very much at center stage, even here the clash of *communitas* and structure—as witnessed by the programmatic "Kavkaz" (1845), which apotheizes the struggle of the Caucasian peoples against Russian imperialism—is shown as something more than simply a "Ukrainian problem."

The horizontal or trans-historical and trans-cultural aspects of the model are quite manifest, and the universality they intend, the fact that regardless of time and place Ševčenko always perceives the oppressed and empathizes with them, can be used (as is the case in Soviet criticism) to attribute to Ševčenko a revolutionary ideology.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Ivakin, for example, speaking of "Kavkaz," says that "this was a new word in the development of the revolutionary poetry of the world. It seems that in no poetic work of world literature of the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century (with the exception perhaps of Burns' 'The Tree of Liberty') had the idea of the international brotherhood of nations in battle against oppressors been raised with such fire." *Komentar do 'Kobzarja' Ševčenka* [1964], p. 284. At this point Ivakin also cites Franko, who, while not using the term "revolutionary," does stress Ševčenko's universal opposition to oppression: "'Son' [is] a great indictment of the 'dark kingdom' for all its present and



But while the empathy is unmistakable, its object (let alone the system of thought involved) is considerably more complex. It is thus essential to look at the actual constitution of the communitas/structure opposition, that is, precisely at the "vertical" dimension of the model. The content presented here is less obvious than that of the horizontal dimension (precisely because patterns of relations are less obvious than an overt, physical setting, a Kiev or St. Petersburg or Rome), but it is here that we see the full extent to which Ševčenko's poetic world is modeled by this opposition, the degree to which communitas/structure is a pure model, and, beyond that, the striking consistency of Ševčenko's mythical thought. In short, in its vertical aspect the model projects another, more immanent and more profound universality as it reveals that the dialectic of communitas and structure exists on and applies to all levels of human existence, from the highest to the lowest.

As projected by Ševčenko's poetry, the most fundamental common feature of communitas is victimization. More precisely, it is the state of marginality which subtends lack of status, suffering and victimization, weakness and dependence, isolation, generally the fate of a woman in a male society, and most generally misfortune (*nedolja*). If we now establish the pattern of relations in the narrative poems (one which is made overt and explicit in the lyrical and "political" poems), it becomes evident that such marginality can determine every walk of life. The great majority of the victims (the objects of rape, seduction, unfeeling parents, unrequited love, and so forth) are women, and these are for the most part peasant girls (beginning with "Pryčynna," "Kateryna," and "Topolja") who may (as in "Vid'ma" and "Moskaleva

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past violations of the Ukraine, an indictment which is raised from a largely if not exclusively Ukrainian standpoint. 'Kavkaz,' on the other hand, is built on a broader, one might say universally human foundation. Every struggle for freedom, every battle against the 'dark kingdom' finds an ally in our poet." I. Franko, *Tvory v dvadcaty tomach*, vo. 17 (Kiev, 1955), p. 14.

Ivakin's reference to "The Tree of Liberty" serves to illustrate the problem with some of the traditional comparisons made between Ševčenko and other poets, the comparison with Burns being the most time-honored. As we see here, they tend to be mechanical and based on ignorance. "The Tree of Liberty," a patently inferior poem, is not included in most full editions of Burns' works; the 1897 Cambridge edition includes it among the "Improbables" and the editors conclude that "Burns neither made the trash nor copied it"; *The Complete Poems of Robert Burns*, vol. 5 (Boston and New York, 1926), p. 309.

krynycja" [1857]) be specifically designated as being poor; the victim, however, may be a rich peasant girl, as we see in "Najmyčka," "Mar"jana-černycja," and "Tytarivna"; indeed she may be of the gentry class—as seen paradigmatically in "Knjažna" (and later, with some qualification, in "Petrus"). Beyond that, she may even belong to the royalty, as King David's daughter, Tamar, who is raped and then cast off by her half-brother Amnon, or the Polockian Princess Rohnida, also ravished and then cast off by Vladimir. Ultimately, she may be the most exalted of women—Mary, the mother of God ("Marija"). The treatment of Marija, moreover, is particularly revealing, for in making her not only a peasant girl, and then a pokrytka, but in the end an outcast who dies forgotten and in utter misery (see "Slepaja," "Vid'ma" and "Sova"), Ševčenko harshly challenges the accepted Christian traditions concerning Mary. Yet the pattern of her end, as we shall see in a moment, is far from arbitrary, and is, in fact, as revealing of the workings of the model as is Ševčenko's readiness—with all of history to choose from—to illustrate the essence of royalty (or "tsardom") by the darkest incidents from David's and Vladimir's lives.

The world of *communitas* is also represented by male characters, of course. The various orphans and bastard sons, kobzars and cripples, prisoners and convicts do reflect, for the most part, the lower reaches of society. Still, in the male world as well, marginality has a clear vertical extension. Moreover, as a specific male counterpart to feminine victimization, and as an elaboration on it, so to speak, the marginality here assumes the form of martyrdom and of self-sacrifice for a holy cause, and it does so over the whole gamut of social levels. Not entirely on this scale, but approaching it, are such figures as the convict in "Varnak," who was once a great sinner, who became a hajdamak and killed the gentry in revenge for their ravishing of his fiancée (see also Jarema in *Hajdamaky*), but who later repents and asks for the punishment due him ("Mež skalamy nenače slodij"), and Maksym, the good, meek and "holy" man of both versions of "Moskaleva krynycja," who is animated by his own misfortunes and suffering to do good in the community (and in the second version is killed for his goodness, like Abel by Cain). In the poem "Jakby tobi dovelosja" (If You Should Ever) the peasant boy who kills the young squire who was raping a peasant girl (a situation parallel to "Varnak," "Buvaje v nevoli inodi zhadažu," and, by extension, to *Hajdamaky*), is from the beginning seen as a just and "holy" avenger, and his exile

to Siberia as a form of martyrdom. In "Jurodyvyj" the act is more symbolic than violent (that is, publically slapping the face of the "satrap," the local governor) and the perpetrator is not named, nor his status defined; he is described as "some individual/ some stupid eccentric" (jakyjs' projava/ Jakyjs' durnyj oryhinal), but also called a "Cossack" among "millions of swineherds"; his act of defiance and protest, and his subsequent punishment, however, make him a martyr for the cause of the millions of silent and suffering—and unappreciative—countrymen. In "Petrus" the hero who takes on himself the sin of his "mother" (in effect, foster-mother) who had poisoned her husband, and who goes in chains to expiate it in Siberia, was once an illegitimate peasant child, but at the moment of his self-sacrifice is part of the upper class, the adopted son of a general. In fact, martyrs for the holy cause do come from the upper class, and this is attested in all three of the poetry's formal modes: in the narrative poems it is the Roman Alkid in "Neofity," in the personal and lyrical, or, more precisely, elegiac conclusion of "Kavkaz" it is Ševčenko's friend Count Jakiv de Bal'men, who is seen as shedding his blood for freedom ("Dovelos' zapyt' / Z moskovs' koji čaši moskovs' ku otrutu!") [In the end you drank Muscovite poison from a Muscovite cup] even though he dies while serving in Russian ranks. (In the poem "Meni zdajetsja, ja ne znaju" [It Seems to Me, I Don't Really Know] Ševčenko also calls Lermontov, whose poems he has just received in exile, a "holy martyr" for his sympathy for suffering humanity and his opposition to despotism.)<sup>38</sup> Above all, in the "political" mode, especially in the extended allusion of "Son (Komedijs)," and in a direct reference in "Velykyj l'ox," it is the Decembrists who become exemplary martyrs.<sup>39</sup> Ševčenko's most eloquent statement on the role these and other martyrs like them play in his poetry comes in the conclusion of "Jurodyvyj," in what begins as an impassioned questioning of God:

<sup>38</sup> Lermontov, as we see from the *Diary*, from references in letters and echoes in the poetry, was one of Ševčenko's favorite poets. Compare Ivakin (who gives a short bibliography of the subject), *Komentar do 'Kobzarja'*. . . [1964], pp. 142–144.

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, I. Pil'huk, *Ševčenko i dekabristy* (Kiev, 1958), and the entry in *Ševčenkivs'kyj slovnyk*, vol. 1, pp. 184–186.

А ти, всевидящее око!  
 Чи ти дивилося звисока,  
 Як сотнями в кайданах гнали  
 В Сибір невольників святих,  
 Як мордовали, розпинали  
 І вішали. А ти не знало?  
 І ти дивилося на них  
 І не осліпло. Око, око!  
 Не дуже бачиш ти глибоко!  
 Ти спиш в кіюті, а царі. . .  
 Та цур їм, тим царям поганим!  
 Нехай верзуться їм кайдани,  
 А я полину на Сибір  
 Аж за Байкал; загляну в гори,  
 В вертепи темнії і в нори  
 Без дна глибокії, і вас —  
 Споборники святої волі —  
 Із тьми, із смрада і з неволі  
 Царям і людям на показ  
 На світ вас, виведу надалі  
 Рядами довгими в кайданах. . .

(lines 76–96)

(And you, all-seeing eye!/ Did you look from above/ as they drove  
 the holy prisoners, by hundreds, in chains, to Siberia?/ How they  
 tortured and crucified/ and hanged them? And you did not know?/  
 And you looked on them/ and did not go blind? O eye, eye,/ you do  
 not see very deeply!/ You sleep in the ciborium, and the tsars. . ./  
 But to hell with them, these vile tsars!/ Let them dream of shackles,/ but I will fly off to Siberia,/ even beyond Baikal; I will look into the  
 mountains,/ into dark dens and into caves/ so deep as to be bottom-  
 less, and you—/ fellow-champions of holy freedom—/ I will lead,  
 from darkness, stench, and captivity/ into the bright day, to show the  
 tsars and the people/ in long columns, in chains. . .)

The two distinct parts of this passage dramatically convey the two essential aspects of martyrdom-marginality as conceived by Ševčenko. The first, culminating here in the poet's questioning of God's justice, and indeed in an accusation on His complicity in injustice, is Ševčenko's awareness, expressed in manifold ways in the poetry, that people are indifferent, that unless their icy souls are melted by a prophet speaking the Holy Word (see "Prorok"), they will remain blind, deaf,

and dumb, and championing them will not only entail self-immolation, but will be the act of a madman, a jurodovyj, who will ultimately be quietly disposed of on a rubbish heap—in distant exile, forgotten by God and man, as Ševčenko says in "Jurodyvyj": "Bil's ničoho/ Ne vykrojilosja, i dramu/ Hluxymy, temnymy rjadamy/ Na smitnyk vynesly. . ." The second part answers the first—it is the articulation of the poet-martyr's sacred task of disseminating truth, of leading it, in the long columns of his poetry, out of "darkness, stench and captivity," into the light of day and into the hearts of men. Up to that time (1857), this is Ševčenko's most explicit profession of faith, more direct even than the allegorical (and autobiographical) "Prorok" (1848), or the programmatic *Trizna* (1843). "Jurodyvyj," of course, is also eminently autobiographical and a statement explicitly placing the poet among the company of holy martyrs, as one who has acted and suffered in the cause of justice and freedom. In this role Ševčenko's supreme model is Christ Himself, the Son who must act when the Father will not. Like the Virgin Mary among women, He exemplifies *communitas*—as martyrdom—on the highest level.

Given the universality of the model, structure, the antipode of *communitas*, also appears in a vertical cross-section of society. Its most general property, its common denominator, as it were, is authority. But this, too, subtends a range of qualities, from coldness and lack of human compassion to the overt victimization of the poor and the weak. In its pure form it is immanent, not socially contingent, status and power. Its supreme manifestation, as we have already observed, is God the Father, the "Byzantine Sabaoth" as Ševčenko calls Him in "Lykeri" (1860), who represents ultimate authority and law, rather than suffering, compassion and redemption, and who, as the all-powerful, is responsible for the actual state of the world and its injustice. Just beneath Him are the gods of this world, the tsars, kings, nobles, and then their lackeys and minions—all those on whom so much of Ševčenko's explicit attention and anger is focused. Structure, however, is also present on levels that are more immediate to the depicted or implied narrator, that is, in the peasant milieu itself, and most particularly in the family. Apart from the various forms of conflict already discussed, the family is also not infrequently characterized by coercion, with the parents functioning as implacable executors of social strictures; in such poems as "Kateryna," where they banish their erring daughter from their home, or in "Topolja" and "Mar"jana-černycja," where they (or specifically the mother)

are intent on sealing a convenient, if loveless, marriage, or in "U Vil'ni horodi preslavnim," where the father kills his daughter's lover, their defining quality is precisely deafness to the language of the heart. The most drastic form of such authoritarianism, of structure-power run amuck is when the father, the parental authority figure, becomes a rapist, as he does in "Knjažna," "Slepaja," and "Vid'ma." Finally, it is people in general, the representatives of conventional values, of the social system as it exists, who are cast by Ševčenko as victimizers, as those who contribute to, or, at the very least, take pleasure in the misfortune of the weak or luckless. In the narrative poems, from "Pryčynna" to "Marija," the role of "bad people" is remarkably pronounced and second only to that of the gentry (compare "Pryčynna," "Topolja," "Slepaja," "Sova," "Moskaleva krynycja," "U Vil'ni horodi preslavnim," "U našim raji na zemli," and "Marija"). This, of course, is also reinforced in the non-narrative poems. Throughout, the frame of reference is moral not social: the rich and poor villagers alike come to gloat at the misfortune of Maksym's family in "Moskaleva krynycja," and in "Marija" the readiness of people to stone the unwed mother is quite independent of their social class.

In short, at its most basic, society and its laws, as constituted in the present, is, for Ševčenko, merely a vehicle of rapacity and malice. A quintessential picture of this, characteristically couched in universal terms (and echoing the universal perspective of the ninth song of Skovoroda's *Garden of Divine Songs*), is given in the introduction to "Son (Komedijs)." Here each human type is shown as a predator:

У всякого своя доля  
І свій шлях широкий:  
Той мурує, той руйнує,  
Той неситим оком —  
За край світа зазирає,  
Чи нема країни,  
Щоб загарбать і з собою  
Взять у домовину.  
Той тузами обирає  
Свата в його хаті,  
А той нишком у куточку  
Гострить ніж на брата.  
А той, тихий та тверезий,  
Богобоязливий,

Як кішечка підкрадеться,  
Вийде нещасливий  
У тебе час та й запустить  
Пазури в печінки, —  
І не благай: не вимолять  
Ні діти, ні жінка.  
А той, щедрий та розкошний,  
Все храми мурує;  
Та отечество так любить,  
Так за ним біджує,  
Так із його, сердешного,  
Кров, як воду, точить! . .

(lines 1–26)

(Each man has his fate/ and his broad path before him:/ this one builds walls, and that one ruins them,/ this one looks with insatiable eye/ beyond the world's edge/ whether there is not a land/ that he could seize/ and take with him into the grave./ This one fleeces with aces/ his neighbor in his own house/ and this one, quietly, in the corner,/ sharpens a knife for his brother./ And this one, meek and sober,/ God-fearing,/ will creep up like a cat,/ await the moment/ of your misfortune and sink/ his claws into your liver—/ and don't beg: the pleading of your wife and children will not avail./ And this one, generous and voluptuous,/ continually builds churches;/ and loves his country so well,/ and worries so much over it/ that he draws blood from it/ as if it were water. . .) It begs the question in the worst way, of course, to argue that "these 'fates' are the fates of the enemies of the human collective."<sup>40</sup> The meaning here is unmistakable: in and of itself, society is not a neutral network and system of relations, tasks, obligations, and divisions of labor, but a mass of injustice. By being structured it is inhuman. It can become humanized only when moral criteria, in effect the values of *communitas* are imposed on it. Until then, the role of that "human collective" is that of a mass of passive victims, as Ševčenko's very next lines make plain:

А братія мовчить собі,  
Витріщивши очі!

<sup>40</sup> See M. H. Vysoc'kyj, "Idejno-xudožnij analiz vstupu do poemu "Son,"" *Zbirnyk prac' šostoji naukovoji ševčenkivs'koji konferenciji* (Kiev, 1958), p. 141. See also Ivakin, *Komentar do 'Kobzarja'*. . . [1964], pp. 142–144.

Як ягнята: «Нехай, каже,  
Може, так і треба».

(lines 27–30)

(And the people [bratija] keep silent,/ their eyes bulging out!/ Like sheep: "Let it be, they say,/ perhaps it must be this way.")

In short, the model of *communitas* and structure is prescriptive, not analytical. It does not anatomize, it does not distinguish between various kinds of social, let alone economic or political relations. On the contrary, it unifies a host of disparate relations into a severe, binary schema. It is nothing short of a first principle that makes for absolute, unshaded oppositions. For Ševčenko, in other words, *communitas* and structure are moral and existential categories. This, however, presents a problem, and postulates the necessity for a further step, for as such absolute oppositions, *communitas* and structure (whether within the narrower phenomena of Cossackdom and the Ukraine, or more broadly, within mankind as such) cannot be resolved by simple mediation. The task facing the poet is more complex, and he resolves it in a two-fold strategy. His preliminary step, so to speak, is to focus this conflict within the confines of a single and emotionally immediate object, namely Cossackdom, and on this basis to perceive and argue in symbolic constructs the deep meaning of the whole of Ukrainian existence. From this, moving now into a universal mode, he can postulate, in effect, prophecy, a fundamental transformation, and an ultimate resolution.

##### *5. Cossackdom Between Communitas and Structure*

The opposition of *communitas* and structure clearly models Ševčenko's conception of the Ukraine of his day. As we have amply seen, his metaphoric formulation in many poems is precisely that of a weeping widow, indeed a blind cripple, abandoned and mistreated by her ungrateful and avaricious sons. But because his vision is essentially synchronic not historical, mythic and not analytic, the past is also modeled by this opposition, and the Ukrainian body politic, specifically in Cossackdom itself, is split, like the Ukraine of the present, between *communitas* and structure. The task of the poet as myth-



carrier is to resolve the opposition by divining and expounding the deep meaning of this conflict.

For Ševčenko, in short, the Cossacks are both *communitas* and structure. Paradoxically, they exemplify for him both the "native" values of freedom, equality, and emotional spontaneity and the "foreign" features of authority, hierarchy, and power. In one sense, as Soviet critics are quick to point out, this opposition is a function of class stratification, of the tension between the poor rank and file, or the *sirjaky*, and the propertied Cossack upper classes, the *staršyna* and the *karmazyny*, and Ševčenko's clear identification, as Kuliš was perhaps the first to observe, with the former.<sup>41</sup> Mythical thought, however, is not reducible to rational, socio-political distinctions: the very fact that Cossackdom, which was for Ševčenko a single object of emotional apprehension, contained so profound a contradiction made it essential that its resolution be posited on an emotional, that is, symbolic, and not merely intellectual plane.

In their "purest" (both "holiest" and least ambivalent) form the Cossacks are a nameless, undifferentiated collective. This is projected consistently and in various contexts: in their fusion into a single agent in scenes of battle, for example, in *Hamalija* or *Hajdamaky*, in overt statements of unanimity of purpose and opinion, as in the election of a hetman ("... I odnohlasne, odnostajne/ Hromada vybrala hetmana" [And with one voice, as one man,/ the community elected a hetman], "U nedilen'ku u svajtuju"), in the common bond of suffering ("Son [Komedija]" or "Iržavec"), and above all in the ultimate

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<sup>41</sup> In an unsigned autobiographical article ("Žizn' Kuliša," *Pravda*, 1868, no. 24) Kuliš describes his first meeting with Ševčenko in the following manner: "Kuliš did not quite like Ševčenko for his cynicism; he put up with his eccentricities for the sake of his talent. Ševčenko, on the other hand, did not like Kuliš's aristocratism. . . . Kuliš loved cleanliness around his tidy person; he loved order in things and time; his ear was like that of a maiden, nobody ever heard him use foul language. It would be possible to say that this was a meeting between the lowland Cossack from the Sič and a rich city Cossack. Indeed they were representatives of both parts of Cossackdom. Ševčenko represented the Right-Bank Cossacks who after the treaty of Andrusovo were left without leadership and finding themselves under Polish domination, fled to the Sič and from there returned to their landlords' estates as rebellious *hajdamaks*. . . . anxious to smash the landlords completely. Kuliš was a descendant of the Cossacks who sat in council with the tsar's boyars, formed for Tsar Peter the Little Russian Collegium, helped Tsarina Catherine to write her Code and introduce schools in place of old seminaries." Quoted in George S. N. Luckyj, *Between Gogol' and Ševčenko*, p. 146.

equality, and anonymity, and indeed freedom of the common grave. More than any other, the image of the mohyla, the burial mound "tightly packed" with the dead, serves as Ševčenko's key metaphor for the Cossacks and the past in general. Thus in "Poslanije" he counters the self-congratulatory claims of the shallow enthusiasts of the Ukrainian past by saying that the Cossack glory and freedom, which to their mind overshadows the glories of the Roman heroes, the Brutuses and Coccleses, in fact, slept on heaps of "free" and looted Cossack corpses:

спала на купах,  
На козацьких вольних трупах,  
Окрадених трупах!

(lines 146–148)

In "Za bajrakom bajrak," for all the complexity of their mythic status (to which we shall return), the three hundred Cossacks in the common grave are called "pure as glass" ("Nas tut trysta, jak sklo,/ Tovarystva ljahlo. . ."). But the most explicit presentation of the Cossack common grave as a holy sepulchre, virtually a temple of the ideal of *communitas*, occurs in "Buvaje v nevoli inodi zhadaju" where in his dream the poet, in the guise of a child, is instructed by the Cossack who steps out of the mohyla and takes him in his arms:

— Дивися, дитино, оце козаки  
(Ніби мені каже), на всій Україні  
Високі могили. Дивися, дитино,  
Усі ті молили, усі отакі.  
Начинені нашим благородним трупом,  
Начинені туго. Оце воля спить!  
Лягла вона славно, лягла вона вкупі  
З нами, козаками! Бачиш, як лежить —  
Неначе сповита! . . Тут пана немає,  
Усі ми однако на волі жили!  
Усі ми однако за волю лягли,  
Усі ми і встанем, та Бог його знає,  
Коли-то те буде.

(lines 24–36)

(—Look, child, these are the Cossacks—/ he seems to say to me—

over all the Ukraine/ there are tall burial mounds. Look, child,/ all these burial mounds are like this./ They are packed with our noble corpses,/ tightly packed. This is freedom sleeping!/ She lay down gloriously, she lay down together/ with us Cossacks! See how she lies—/ as if in swaddling clothes! . . . Here there is no gentry./ We all, as one, lived in freedom!/ We all, as one, died for freedom./ We all shall rise together,/ but God only knows when this shall occur.)

Anonymity, however, is not absolutely essential, and there are numerous instances where the positive Cossack heroes are named. But these, as we have already observed, are without exception either legendary heroes, such as Ivan Pidkova, or the entirely fictional Hamalija, or the various leaders of Cossack uprisings, Taras Trjasylo, Loboda, Nalyvajko, Ostrjanycja, Palij, or finally leaders of Hajdamak uprisings—Gonta, Zaliznjak, Švačka. All of them, rebels against authority, defenders of the poor and oppressed, “holy avengers,” are the very incarnation of the ideal of *communitas*.<sup>42</sup> Significantly, those Cossack leaders who were not rebels or avengers but clearly representative of structure and yet are presented favorably, are positive by virtue of being perceived as opponents and victims of Russian imperial designs—most clearly Hetman Polubotok in “Son,” and Dorošenko in “Zastupyla čorna xmara” (where he is called a “Zaporozhian brother”), and implicitly, Colonel Čečel’ in “Velykyj l’ox” and the Zaporozhian otaman Hordienko in “Iržavec.” Finally, the very fact of seeking to continue Cossack institutions, that is, A. Holovatyj’s formation of the Black Sea Cossack Army (compare “Slipyj”/“Nevol’nyk”), suffices to give that figure a positive cast.<sup>43</sup>

But Cossackdom as a structured system, specifically its figures of power and authority present an entirely different picture. Apart from Polubotok or Dorošenko who become for Ševčenko victims of stronger external forces and martyrs for the common cause—and thus expiate by their misfortune their high status, in a word, suffer status reversal—

<sup>42</sup> Thus, too, the Cossack raids on Turkey (“Hamalija” and “Ivan Pidkova”) are portrayed, as in the dmy, as motivated by the desire to free captive fellow Cossacks, not by booty.

<sup>43</sup> An oblique reference to Sahajdačnyj in “Hamalija” also focuses only on his legendary military prowess and the (erroneous) belief that at the end of his life he entered a monastery; both moments, again, characterize Sahajdačnyj as one with the elemental Cossack ethos and not as a representative of structure. A passing reference to Sahajdačnyj in *Hajdamaky* (line 1121) refers not to the man but to his time.

the Cossack hetmans are invariably depicted in dark colors.<sup>44</sup> By far the most attention is directed at Bohdan Xmelnyc'kyj who symbolizes for Ševčenko (as for so many of his contemporaries) the Cossack *state*. The poet's attitude to Xmelnyc'kyj ranges from the invective and derision of such poems as "Jakby to ty Bohdane p'janyj" and "Za ščo my ljubymo Bohdana" to bitter reproaches for his folly of accepting Muscovite sovereignty over the Ukraine. In "Rozryta mohyla" Mother Ukraine herself calls him a foolish son and reproaches herself for not killing him when he was still an infant. In "Slipyj" his very memory is reviled in Cossack songs (the actual, real-life equivalent of the pathetic personification of "Rozryta mohyla"), songs that contrast eloquently with the piety with which Gonta and Zaliznjak are remembered:

І співали удвох собі  
 Про Чалого Саву,  
 Про Богдана недомудра,  
 Ледачого сина,  
 І про Гонту мученика,  
 Й славного Максима.

(lines 655–660)

(And the two would sing/ about Sava Čalyj,/ about the witless Bohdan,/ the good-for-nothing son,/ and about Gonta the martyr,/ and the famous Maksym. . .)

In "Velykyj l'ox" the songs themselves seem to carry a curse since the three minstrels in the poem are thrashed by the Russian authorities for singing about the "swindler" Bohdan. Finally, in the sequel to this poem, in "Stojit' v seli Subotovi," the poet offers Xmelnyc'kyj partial forgiveness, but at the same time elaborates on what precisely his "sin" was: above all, betraying-deceiving the Ukraine ("Zanapastyv jesy vbohu/ Syrotu Ukraju"). Here, Xmelnyc'kyj's role is

<sup>44</sup> A partial exception is Mazepa, toward whom Ševčenko is reticent and somewhat ambivalent (there is only one passing reference to him in the poetry in "Iržavec"). On the manifest level he is neither positive nor negative, but simply shown as fleeing with the Swedes after the battle of Poltava. While clearly sympathizing with the Cossacks' cause against Peter I, Ševčenko does not make the hetman an incarnation of that anti-imperial cause (as he does with Polubotok and Dorošenko) and implicitly charges him with factionalism and self-interest (see "Iržavec," lines 9–12).

one with many of Ševčenko's male characters who seduce and abandon, or generally victimize their women; the structure of the relationship precisely recapitulates the pattern of inequality and victimization found earlier in Ševčenko's depiction of the family. As so many of his *pokrytky*, the Ukraine is not only used and abandoned, but indeed left to suffer for the sins of the false husband-father; the words the poet speaks to the title characters of "Knjažna"—"Ty šče budeš pokutovat'/ Hrixy na sim sviti,/ Hrixy bat'kovi. . ." (You will go on expiating/ for these sins in this world,/ the sins of the father)—can equally characterize the fate of the Ukraine after Xmel'nyč'kyj, popularly called "bat'ko Xmel'nyč'kyj." The second aspect of the hetman's sin reflects just as directly the essential nature of structured authority as it appears in Ševčenko's mythic thought: it is destructive of the national ethos (the metaphorical "nen'ka-Ukrajina") because it is basically alien to it. Ultimately, therefore it is a form of existential absurdity, or, in Ševčenko's earthier idiom, folly. His address to Xmel'nyč'kyj brings this out most clearly:

Отаке-то, Зіновію,  
Олексіїв друже!  
Ти все оддав приятелям.  
А їм і байдуже  
Кажуть, бачиш, що все то те  
Такі й було наше,  
Що вони тільки наймали  
Татарам на пашу —  
Та полякам. . .

(lines 29–37)

(So it is, Zinovij,/ Friend of [Tsar] Alexis!/ You gave everything to your friends./ And they do not care./ They say, you see, that this [that is, the Ukraine] was ours anyway,/ that they only had let it out/ to the Tatars for grazing,/ and to the Poles. . .) The wages of being a friend to someone so alien as the Muscovite despot is that one will only become his, and history's, fool, and the following generations will become the laughing stock of nations: "Tak smijutsja z Ukrajiny/ Storonniji ljudy!"

The refrain of Xmel'nyč'kyj's folly runs through Ševčenko's depictions of the hetman,<sup>45</sup> but it must be seen as part of a much broader

<sup>45</sup> Thus, for example, the four-line poem "Za ščo my ljubymo Bohdana" (which,

dialectical set of Wisdom/ Folly (or True Wisdom/ False Wisdom) that constitutes the metaphysical essence, as it were, of the community/structure opposition. For it is the nature of structured authority, of hierarchy and rank, be it the Russian tsar and the imperial apologists, or the Biblical Saul, or Xmel'nyč'kyj with his plans, or indeed Ševčenko's fellow Ukrainians, the gentleman-fanciers of German Idealism and other fashionable theories,<sup>46</sup> to place their faith in reason and power and the existing order. But in the true, transcendent, order of things this is mere folly, and it is in fact the apparent folly of the Holy Fool (the *jurodyvyj*) and the prophet (indeed the kobzar as well), of the untutored heart of the common man, in a word the truth of *communitas*, that will ultimately be vindicated. The most fervent expression of this occurs when the poet, echoing Isaiah and Jeremiah, exhorts his noble countrymen to "Stop and become human":

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along with "Jakby to ty Bohdane p'janyj," is usually omitted in popular Soviet editions of Ševčenko):

За що ми любимо Богдана?  
За те, що москалі його забули,  
У дурні німчики обули  
Великомудрого гетьмана.

(Why do we love Bohdan?/ Because the Muscovites have forgotten him,/ [and] the Germans [that is, Russian bureaucrats] made a fool/ of the all-wise hetman).

<sup>46</sup> See "Poslanije" lines 91-99:

Якби ви вчилися так, як треба,  
То й мудрость би була своя.  
А то залізете на небо:  
«І ми не ми, і я не я,  
І все те бачив, і все знаю,  
Немає ні пекла, ані раю,  
Немає й Бога, тільки я!  
Та куций німець узловатий,  
А більш нікого! . . .»

(If you would study as you should,/ then you would have your own wisdom./ But you climb up into the sky:/ "And we are not we, and I am not I,/ and I've seen it all, and I know it all:/ there is no hell and no paradise,/ there is even no God, but only I!/ And the short gnarled German,/ and nothing more. . .")

Схаменіться! будьте люди,  
Бо лихо вам буде.

.....  
.....

Умийтеся! образ божий  
Багном не скверніте.  
Не дуріте дітей ваших,  
Що вони на світі  
На те тільки, щоб панувать. . .  
Бо невчене око  
Загляне їм в саму душу  
Глибоко! глибоко!  
Дознаються небожата,  
Чия на вас шкура,  
Та й засудять, і премудрих  
Немудрі одурять!

("Poslanije," lines 63–64 and 79–90)

(Stop! Be human,/ for evil will befall you./ Wash yourself! Do not befoul/ God's image with filth./ Do not fool your children/ [saying] that they exist in this world only to rule. . . / For the untutored eye/ will look deep, deep/ into their very soul,/ and the poor will learn in whose skins you are clad,/ and they will judge you,/ and the ignorant will fool the all-wise.)

As with Xmel'nyc'kyj, the structured system of Cossackdom over the course of its history is depicted as both foolish and destructive. Hetman Samojlovyc' is simply called "stupid" and Kyrilo Rozumovs'kyj with his Council of Elders are referred to as powdered lack-eyes, dogs licking the slippers of Catherine II; Ivan Skoropads'kyj is called a "stupid hetman" merely in passing, in the course of Ševčenko's excoriation of one of his "degenerate" descendants.<sup>47</sup> The judgments on the Cossack hierarchy as a collective entity are somewhat

<sup>47</sup> Compare "Zastupyla čorna xmara" (lines 7–8): "Iz-za Dnipra napyraje—/ Dumyj Samojlovyc'" (from beyond the Dnieper the stupid Samojlovyc' presses on); or in "Slipyj" (lines 625–628): "Kyrilo z staršynamy/ Pudrom osypalys'/ I v caryci, mov sobaky,/ Patynky lyzaly." (Kyrilo, with his elders,/ covered themselves with powder/ and, like dogs,/ licked the empress's slippers); or in "P.S." (lines 12–14): "Ščyryj pan,/ Potomok het'mana dumoho,/ I prezavzjatyj patriot" (a sincere Lord,/ a descendant of a stupid hetman,/ and a most fierce patriot).

more developed, but no less categorical. To be sure, in the first of these, in the opening lines of "Svjato v Čyhyryni" in *Hajdamaky*, the tone is one of lament at the passing of Cossack glory rather than of condemnation of any agent of this decline. In "Poslanije," however, as already noted, this condemnation becomes articulated in the sharpest invective that modern Ukrainian literature had yet seen: "Slaves, footstools, Moscow dirt,/ Warsaw trash—your Lordships,/ your Excellencies, the hetmans." Or, again, in one of the last poems, "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary," he enumerates the famous names of the Cossack upper class in the plural, as so much worthless "stuff":

Бували війни й військові свари:  
Галагани, і Киселі, і Кочубеї-Нараї —  
Було добра того чимало.

(lines 1–3)

(There had been wars and military feuds:/ Halahans and Kysils and Kočubej-Nahajs;/ there was a lot of that stuff. . .)

Although such estimations of the Cossack elite could hardly be clearer, they become even more resonant when the poet observes the historical consequences of their cravenness, as the Zaporozhian Sič and the Ukrainian steppe, drenched in Cossack blood, is now become mere real estate to be exploited by German colonists for potato production. In "Son (Hory moji vysokiji)" he again curses the hetmans and the Cossack aristocracy ("sowers of discord, like the Poles") for "destroying God's paradise."<sup>48</sup> But in the words of the old man, the last eyewitness of the Cossack past, whom the poet sees in his

48

Ні, ні. . .

Не ви прокляті. . . а гетьмани,  
Усобники, дяхи погані!! . .

(lines 50–53)

and,

«Гай! гай! . . —

Старий промовив: «Недоуми!  
Занапали божий рай! . .  
Гетьманщина!! . .» І думнес  
Чоло похмаріло. . .  
Мабуть щось тяжке, тяжке  
Вимовить хотілось?  
Та не вимовив. . .

(lines 72–79)



dream, he goes on to draw a parallel between the subversion of Cossack and Christian ideals:

Наробив ти, Христе, лиха!  
 А переіначив?!  
 Людей божих! — Котилися  
 І наші козачі  
 Дурні голови, за правду,  
 За віру христову,  
 Упивались і чужої  
 І своєї крові! . .  
 А получшали? . . ба де то!  
 Ще гіршими стали,  
 Без ножа і автодафе  
 Людей закували  
 Та й мордують. . . Ой, ой, пани,  
 Пани християне! . .

(lines 89–102)

(" . . . You, Christ, have caused misery! / And did you transform them?! / God's people?!—Our stupid Cossack heads also rolled / for truth, / for Christ's faith, / [and] were drunk with foreign / and their own blood! . . . / And did they become better for it—hardly! / They became even worse, / without the knife and the auto-da-fé / they have chained man / and continue to oppress him. . . Oh you Lords, / Christian lords! . . .")

The movement of this fragment of the soliloquy (and of the poem as a whole) is to project the immanent *communitas*/structure conflict within Cossackdom into the historical dimension. The process and its consequences were painfully obvious to Ševčenko: after the dissolution of Cossackdom, the elite, the *staršyna*, became incorporated for the most part into the Russian imperial serf-owning nobility, while the rank and file Cossacks—their former brothers—were turned into their serfs. Ševčenko's outrage at this obscene dissolution and perversion of the original order, of the "golden age" which invariably is postulated in mythical thought, wells up in many of his poems, both in conscious, polemical-ideological excoriations of the existing system (compare, for example, "Poslanie" or "P.S.") and in various symbolic constructions. And as the above passage referring to the perversion of Christ's teaching makes clear, the inversion of the Cossack ideal, from freedom and equality to total power for some and slavery for

others, is only the narrower case of a universal curse hanging over mankind—the unbridled drive to control and oppress fellow man, to establish structure over *communitas*. It is for this reason that “Saul,” which, as we have seen, traces the origins of hierarchy and authority to the devil himself (“And lo, the evil one brings the tsar,/ with laws, with the sword, with executioners, and blind slaves”), ends with such bleak pessimism: “Woe! Woe!/ People grow ever smaller on this earth;/ the tsars grow and loom large!”

The most pointed expression of this conflict in the Cossack world, in the Ukrainian past as such, is the sin of fratricide, which stands as a direct parallel to the “crimes against nature”—parricide, infanticide, incest—that occur, as we have seen above, within the time-frame of the present. The first intimation of this occurs in the above cited lines from “Son (Hory moji vysokiji)”: “[and they, the Cossacks] were drunk with foreign/ and their own blood.” There is, however, a more extensive elaboration, which is remarkable both for its power and explicitness. In the prison cycle poem “Za bajrakom bajrak” (1847) Ševčenko presents an old Cossack rising at night from the burial mound to walk the steppe and sing a sorrowful song, and then, at the cock’s third crow, to sink back into his grave. The setting, the direct communion with the *mohyla*, is already an unfailing sign of the utmost seriousness of the passage, and the Cossack’s “song,” the heart of the poem, is indeed a central statement:

— Наносили землі,  
Та й додому пішли,  
І ніхто не згадає.  
Нас тут тріста, як скло!  
Товариства лягло!  
І земля не приймає.  
Як запродав гетьман  
У ярмо християн,  
Нас послав поганяти.  
По своїй по землі  
Свою кров розлили  
І зарізали брата.  
Крові брата впились  
І отут полягли  
У могилі заклятій. —

(lines 8–22)

(They heaped up the earth/ and they went home,/ and no one remembers./ Three hundred of us, Cossacks pure as glass, fell here!/ And the earth does not receive us./ When the hetman sold/ the Christians into bondage/ he sent us to drive them along./ On our own land/ we spilled our own blood/ and butchered our brother./ We were drunk with our brothers' blood/ and we fell here, in this spellbound grave.) As a consequence of the sin of spilling their brothers' blood, the Cossacks are cursed by the very earth refusing to accept them and, even more, by the fact that they will not live on in collective memory, that "no one remembers." The tension, the contradiction in the Cossack phenomenon is again evoked in the paradox that despite their sin and the apparent consequent curse, they are still called "pure as glass." On one level this recapitulates and exemplifies the conflict of *communitas* and structure, for it is precisely the hetman who orders them to this deed. Symbolically, the poem evokes again the social conflict in the past, the "sinful" flaw in the social order, and as such parallels Ševčenko's rational and "ideological" imperative, stated in so many earlier poems (particularly of the "Try lita" period), to ponder and discern the true meaning of the nation's past. But the poem also leads to a still deeper symbolic level, for it is at the same time an elaboration of the Cossacks' relationship to death, or, more specifically, to their existential status on the borderline of life and death.

Throughout Ševčenko's poetry the image of the Cossacks almost invariably links up with the image of the grave, the *mohyla*. Most obviously and generally, this signifies that they are now dead and in the past, as we saw in the previously cited opening lines of "Ivan Pidkova." Moreover, as the examples noted show, the common grave of the *mohyla* exemplifies *communitas* and hence, for Ševčenko, the sacredness inherent in Cossackdom. (In a more specific vein, particularly in *Hajdamaky* where Gonta's sons are called "Cossacks" once they are dead, and similarly in the poem "Xustyna," death symbolizes initiation into the Cossack brotherhood; the symbolic severance of ties with one's former existence is a characteristic structure of all rites of passage, and for Ševčenko the ready model of such initiation is provided by the *dummy*.<sup>49</sup>) But beyond this lies the question of mythical function. As various references in the corpus indicate, and the poems "Za bajrakom bajrak" and "Buvaje v nevoli inodi

<sup>49</sup> See Oksana I. Grabowicz, "The *Dummy*: a Structural Approach," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, forthcoming.

zhadaju" make eminently clear, the Cossacks and the Cossack grave constitute one mythic-semantic unit, a unit whose primary function is that of ritual revitalization. This is the ritual of the graves found in practically all cultures, but particularly stressed in moments of deprivation and crisis, as in various millenarian movements: the turning to the past to find the collective (or "national") strength for continued existence, the turning to the dead to insure life, in a word, the vitalization of the future through the past. The Cossacks thus function as a remarkably resonant mediator between the past and the future, between life and death. Like all mythical mediations between opposing categories, they assume a preternatural existence.<sup>50</sup> They are the living-dead. The demonic aspect of this mode is amply reflected in various folkloric versions of Cossacks as sorcerers (*xarakternyky*) who traffic with dark forces.<sup>51</sup> It is also evident, of course, in various literary-mythic expressions of the Cossack past, from the general ambiance of Goszczyński's *Zamek kaniowski* to the distinct and dramatic figures of Wernyhora in Słowacki's *Sen srebrny Salomei* and the *koldun* in Gogol's "Strašnaja mest'."<sup>52</sup> For Ševčenko the Cossack rising from the grave may indeed carry eerie and ominous connotations—he is, after all, along with the owls, *rusalki* (drowned children reincarnated as water nymphs), mad women (compare "Vid'ma," "Slepaja," "Maryna") and werewolves ("Knjažna" and "Vid'ma"), a creature of the night. As such, he imparts the special "dark" or "night time" knowledge, which, in effect, arises from the personal and collective unconscious. (Just as Słowacki identifies with and casts himself as Wernyhora—and a vampire—in *Sen srebrny Salomei*, so here, on the personal and psychological level, the poet's persona is clearly part of this "night world": he is the owl howling a message

<sup>50</sup> "Mediation" (in this sense) is always achieved by introducing a third category which is 'abnormal' or 'anomalous' in terms of 'rational' categories. Thus myths are full of fabulous monsters, incarnate gods, virgin mothers. This middle ground is abnormal, non-natural, holy. It is typically the focus of all taboo and ritual observance." Edmund R. Leach, "Genesis as Myth," *Myth and Cosmos* (Garden City, 1967), p. 4.

<sup>51</sup> Living-dead heroes are the subject of P. Revjakin's "Sbliženija i sledy. Entrückte Helden, Lycari nevmyraky," *Osnova*, no. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1862).

<sup>52</sup> In Ukrainian literature, the most developed thematic (but not mythical) depiction of a demon-Cossack is presented in *Marko proklyatyj*, the unfinished novel of the late Romantic, Oleksa Storozhenko.

that "normal," "daytime" people would rather not hear;<sup>53</sup> he is the outcast kobzar who in turn is functionally equated with a werewolf sleeping alone on a mohyla ["Knjažna"]; he evokes and communes with the spirits of the dead and he repeatedly speaks of his home and his very soul as a grave.) It is clear, however, that for Ševčenko, in sharp contrast to Gogol' where the Cossack and non-Cossack Ukrainian worlds are shown in radical opposition, with each seeing the other as demonic, the Cossacks' demonic side is largely muted. In *Hajdamaky*, the demonic features of Gonta are on the one hand attributable to surface (Byronic) convention and on the other clearly counterbalanced by his designation as a holy martyr. The unquestionably demonic Mykyta in "Tytarivna" is given a blurred identity as he becomes a Cossack-*panyč*.<sup>54</sup> And only once, in "Xustyna" is a Cossack actually identified as a *xarakternyk*. In fact, the Cossacks serve a different function. They function above all as carriers of a profound truth, that of an ideal—free, equal, and harmonious—earlier existence of the Ukraine. Indeed, in a manner characteristic of mythical thought, the carrier is the message itself: the Cossacks, as the Cossack *communitas*, of course, *are* the Ukrainian past, and the Ukrainian past is the Cossacks. The two categories are made equal and coextensive and no other "historical" Ukrainian past is posited by Ševčenko. (This is also appropriate in another, very concrete sense: the Cossacks are the only ones to have a past, for the peasant world, the other aspect of Ukrainian *communitas*, is timeless, in effect the world of nature, an eternal vegetative cycle. And this is brought out most clearly in the short lyric "Oj čoho ty počomilo. . .") *Het'manščyna*, the Cossack period (not the territory), is consistently depicted not as a state, a political or social order, the rule of any given hetman, but as a form of ideal existence; in "Son (Hory moji vysokiji)" this is made explicit as the old man (a clear projection of the poet

<sup>53</sup> Compare "Try lita," lines 65–68: "I teper ja rozbyteje/ Serce jadom hoju,/ I ne plaču, j ne spivaju,/ A vyju sovoju" (And now I heal my broken heart/ with poison./ And I neither weep, nor sing,/ but hoot like an owl).

<sup>54</sup> Mykyta is the quintessential demon-lover. He departs for a long journey, and the phrase used here ("V daleku dorohu/ Pišov sobi") is also an idiomatic reference to death. His behavior when he returns is demonic in the conventional sense: he seduces the girl, kills his bastard child and puts the blame on the unfortunate mother, who is then killed by the community. At the end—a compleat vampire—he is fated to live on forever as a Satan-man and to seduce girls.

himself) speaks of it in one breath as "God's paradise" (*božyj raj*). Unquestionably, for Ševčenko, the Ukraine of the past is an existential, not a political category. Similarly, for him the Cossacks are a mythical and not a historical phenomenon. Not only are they not presented historically, their reason for being is not simply to embody the past and its glory but to reveal the innermost truths about Ukrainian existence *and* to serve him as a touchstone on which to base an ideal future. As we see with great clarity in "Bovaje v nevoli," they appear from beyond the grave embodying the sacred revelation of what the Ukraine was and what it can be. In the fallen and ignoble present the full meaning of this message—the secret of the "great crypt" (*velykyj l'ox*) that is the Ukraine and the *mohyly* that are Cossackdom—is known only to the poet. His prophetic task as myth-carrier is to pass it on, to inculcate it upon the hearts of his countrymen.

## *The Millenarian Vision*

JUST AS THE Cossacks are for Ševčenko a basically mythical and not a historical phenomenon, so also his periodization, or categorization, of "historical" time, that is, the sense of time of the conscious human collective, is entirely mythical. Rather than operate with historical periods he projects phases, or states of existence, which convey the process of transition. Essentially, these correspond to what Turner (following Van Gennep) called the pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal stages of the rite of passage. Speaking metaphorically, or in the language of the poetry itself, these stages may be taken as equivalent to a fourfold time-frame: the distant past, the more recent past, the present, and the future. The middle two periods, as we have already seen in some detail, are defined by existential disharmony—the continuing, unresolved, manichean conflict between the realms of *communitas* and structure. In the present it bodies forth above all in social and sexual oppression and exploitation, epitomized by the images of the serf and the *pokrytka*, as well as in depictions of political tyranny and "national" victimization (see especially "Son [Komedija]," "Poslanije," and "Kavkaz"). The same conflict between opposing modalities of human existence also informs the recent past, where it is specifically portrayed as betrayal of the common weal by authority itself (paradigmatically, by Bohdan Xmel'nyč'kyj). However, the distant past and future, which bracket these two time-frames, are defined precisely by the absence of this conflict. The distant past is generally that time—more often implied and alluded to than actually described—which precedes the "fall," the "sin" and "betrayal" that characterize the recent past and the present. As part of a mythical periodization, it obviously has no clear historical (chronological) delimitation. It is rather associated with Cossack glory (for example, "Ivan Pidkova"), the verve and color of Cossack life and

manners ("Černec"), and with an ideal social consensus ("U nedi-len'ku u svjatuju. . ."). As the opening lines of the exile poem "Pol-jakam" make clear, the distant past appears as an ideal, and, in terms of literary convention, idyllic existence:

Ще як були ми козаками,  
А унії не чуть було,  
Отам-то весело жилось!  
Братались з вольними ляхами,  
Пишались вольними степами,  
В садах кохалися, цвіли,  
Неначе лілії, дівчата.  
Пишлася синами мати,  
Синами вольними. . .

(lines 1–9)

(When we were still Cossacks/ and there was not sight or sound of the Union [of Brest],/ then life was gay!/ We lived as brothers with the free Poles,/ we reveled in our free steppes,/ our daughters, like lilies, loved and bloomed in the orchards./ The mother took pride in her sons,/ free sons. . .) The reference to the 1596 Union of Brest, and the subsequent images of violent persecution—

Аж поки іменем Христа  
Прийшли ксьондзи і запалили  
Наш тихий рай. І розлили  
Широке море сльоз і крові,  
А сирот іменем Христовим  
Замордували, розп'яли. . .

(lines 12–17)

(When, in the name of Christ,/ came the Catholic priests and set on fire/ our peaceful paradise. And spilled/ a wide sea of tears and blood/ and murdered and crucified orphans in the name of Christ. . .) —have hardly anything to do with history as a rational subject and mode of cognition. Indeed, they are a characteristic example of a mythical imagination taking an "event" (on the one hand the real, but as such never described or even conceptualized Union, and on the other the gory and vivid but almost entirely fictitious details drawn from, among others, the *Istoriija Rusov*) and adapting it, fitting it into the overarching structure. Here the central feature of the



structure of the "distant past" is its edenic quality: it is a paradise, a paradise lost. It is also reiterated as the hope for paradise regained in the poem's concluding address to the "brother Pole":

Подай же руку козакові  
І серце чистеє подай!  
І знову іменем Христовим  
Мя оновим наш тихий рай.

(lines 29–32)

(Give your hand to a Cossack/ and give a pure heart!/ And again in the name of Christ/ we will renew our peaceful eden.) Similarly, the reference in "Son (Hory moji vysokiji)" to *Het'manščyna* noted in the previous chapter is made precisely in the context of sin and loss: "Nedoumy!/ Zanapastyly božyj raj" (The witless ones [that is, the hetmans]! They destroyed God's paradise). It is inevitable, of course, given the parallel levels of the mythic and the symbolically autobiographical, that the structure of the distant past as a paradise lost be recapitulated in images and patterns of the loss of childhood's innocence, and indeed the great majority of poems dealing with paradise (*raj*) and its loss are symbolically coded recollections of childhood.

Both the distant past and the future embody an ideal state, but where the former is only lightly sketched, the latter is considerably elaborated and remarkably insistent. The future, in short, is a central concern of Ševčenko's poetry, massive and manifest enough to have drawn the attention of virtually every critic and commentator. The traditional, and polarized, interpretations of this concern, crouched in images of, on the one hand, Ševčenko as "national prophet," and on the other as a "democratic (or socialist) revolutionary" are reductive and in varying degrees grossly fallacious, but the presence of a prophetic stance and a design for the future is unmistakable. Even before their content is established, that very presence gives a unique cast to Ševčenko's poetry. For one, it is apparent that his mythical treatment of the Ukraine not only encompasses the past, the present, and the future, but is indeed essentially focused on the future. Herein lies the fundamental difference between Gogol' and Słowacki on the one hand and Ševčenko on the other. In each the centerpiece of the Ukrainian myth is a basic transformation which follows the universal

pattern of a rite of passage.<sup>1</sup> For Slowacki the transformation of the Ukraine of the "silver dream," its "death" and its reconstitution into two entirely separate Ukrainian and Polish entities, occurs in the past, in the bloodbath of the hajdamak uprising. Gogol', too, shows a transformation in the past, as seen specifically in the seminal "Straš-naja mest'," although for him the resultant two antipodes, the Cossack and the settled, the male and the female worlds, continue in an unresolved and ever more destructive conflict into the present. (These two worlds, moreover, are not only opposite—to the extent that one demonizes the other—but are in fact shown as sick, and it is for this reason that the author, a product of both *načala*, feels so doomed.) For Ševčenko, however, the transformation of the Ukraine, the culmination of its rite of passage, is projected into the future. In this resolution he is fated to play a central mediating role, and his function is to articulate a millenarian vision as the blueprint for the Ukraine's future.

Like the past and the present, the future too is encoded, and its meaning resists the simple formula. One such traditional formula (especially in Soviet criticism) is to treat it as a function of the poet's presumed "revolutionary views" or even his "revolutionary program." A pithy, unabashedly simplistic, but quite typical statement of the case is M. I. Marčenko's contention that "the views of T. H. Ševčenko on the historic future [*istoryčne majbutnje*] of the Ukrainian nation were tied to the idea of overthrowing autocracy and destroying serfdom, that is with the present and immediate task of revolutionary struggle."<sup>2</sup> The obvious flaw in the argument, and the general ideological (ultimately pre-secular) reasoning behind it, is, of course, the lack of distinction between the realms of literature and politics and the inability to admit the special ontological status of the literary, or poetic, statement. But superceding even this is the undeniable fact that the image of Ševčenko-as-revolutionary is based on a highly selective culling of poetic evidence; precisely in the manner noted at the outset, a number of his poems, but much more often excerpts

<sup>1</sup> In effect, the basic sequence of pre-liminal, liminal, and post-liminal phases postulated by Arnold Van Gennep (*Les rites de passage*) and Victor Turner (*The Ritual Process*); compare p. 148, below.

<sup>2</sup> *Istoryčne mynule ukrajins'koho narodu*. . . , p. 187.

from various poems, are adduced as self-evident, unmediated expressions of this purported revolutionism. Perhaps the most frequently cited statement, an apparently unambiguous call to action, is from the short poem "Ja ne nezdužaju, nivroku. . ." (I Am Not Ill, Thank God; 1858):

А щоб збудить  
Хиренну волю, треба миром,  
Громадою обух сталить;  
Та добре вигострити сокиру —  
Та й заходитися вже будить.  
А то проспипть собі небога  
До суду Божого страшного!

(lines 10–16)

(In order to wake/ feeble freedom, the community,/ together, must temper the steel/ and sharpen well the axe—/ and then go about waking her,/ for otherwise the poor creature will sleep on/ to God's Terrible Judgment.) The first such call, of course, is found in the already cited "Testament" (1845), but such moments predominate in the poetry of the last years of Ševčenko's life. Thus in "Osiji. Hlava XIV" (Imitation of Hosea, chap. 14; 1859), speaking in the voice of the Biblical prophet (which issues, however, from the mouth of Mother Ukraine, and at the direct behest of God Himself), he says of Ukraine's evil sons:

Не втечете  
І не сховаєтеся; всюди  
Вас найде правда-мста; а люде  
Підстережуть вас на тоте ж,  
Уловлять і судить не будуть,  
В кайдани туго окують,  
В село на зрище приведуть,  
І на хресті отім без ката  
І без царя вас, біснுவатих.  
Розпнуть, розірвуть, рознесуть,  
І вашей кровію, собаки,  
Собак напоять. . .

(lines 43–53)

(. . .you will not flee/ nor hide; everywhere/ Vengeance-Truth will

find you; and the people/ will suddenly recognize you./ They will seize you and they will not judge you;/ they will bind you in strong fetters/ and bring you as a spectacle into the village,/ and on that cross, without an executioner/ and without a tsar they will crucify you, you possessed ones./ They will tear you apart and scatter you,/ and with your blood, you dogs,/ they will feed the dogs. . .) Thus the poem "Хо́ча ле́жа́чо́го ж не б'́јут" (Though They Don't Kick a Man Who's Down; 1860), concludes with "А л́јуде т́yxо/ без вс́јакoгo л́yxогo л́yxа/ Cар́жа до кaтa пoвeдут" (And the people will quietly,/ without any evil anger,/ lead the tsar to the executioner). Similarly, "Cв́іте л́асн́й!" (Oh Bright World; 1860) concludes with this inversion of the established order:

Будем, брате,  
З багрянцї онучї драти,  
Люльки з кадил закуряти,  
Явленними пїч топити,  
А кропилом будем, брате,  
Нову хату вимїтати!

(lines 11–16)

(We will tear, brother/ the purple robes into foot-clouts,/ light our pipes from the censers,/ heat our stoves with holy icons,/ and with the holy water brush, brother,/ we will sweep out the new house!) An angry tirade-digression by the narrator of "Neofity" (1857), directed at Nero, the prototypical tsar, is also often cited as a characteristic "revolutionary" prognosis:

Лютуй! лютуй,  
Мерзенний старче. Розкошуй  
В своїх гаремах. Із-за моря  
Уже встає святая зоря.  
Не гро[мо]м праведним, святим  
Тебе уб'ють. Ножем тупим  
Тебе заріжуть, мов собаку,  
Уб'ють обухом.

(lines 446–453)

(Rage on! Rage on,/ you miserable old man. Delight/ in your harems. From beyond the sea/ the holy star is already rising./ Not by the

righteous, holy thunderbolt/ will you be killed. With a dull knife/ they will butcher you, like a dog/ they will club you.)

For all their anger and unsuppressed violence, such moments, and such feelings do not define a poet-revolutionary or constitute a projection of a revolutionary future.<sup>3</sup> To be at all meaningful in this context, "revolution" must signify not just change and reversal but a certain modality of change; even if the thinking itself need not be entirely systematic (especially since the author is a poet, not a political thinker) the projected change must involve at least some aspects of systemic change. It cannot be solely equivalent to vengeance and punishment for evil, that is, that which in his "Imitation of Hosea" Ševčenko calls "unsleeping retribution" (*kara nevspyšča*), and it must, to whatever degree, posit a political transformation, a change in the way men govern. It cannot, in short, be exclusively confined to projecting a new moral order. Moreover, at its most basic, such a "revolution" must posit with some consistency an agency of change—and in this regard Ševčenko's "inconsistency" is most revealing. For except for the several examples cited above, where the agents, more or less clearly, are the risen people, or the community, the change in the great majority of his depictions of the coming new order is effected precisely by a non-human, preternatural agency. And, as we shall see, it is this, and the attendant stance of what one may call confident passivity, that actually determines Ševčenko's vision of the future.

For its part, the "revolutionary" violence is clearly cast in images and patterns of punishment (*kara*) and "holy vengeance." The most apparent model for this are the hajdamak uprisings, particularly the *kolijivščyna*. Thus the cry of Gonta and Zaliznjak in *Hajdamaky* (line 2262): "Kary ljaxam, kary!" (Retribution to the Poles, retribution),

<sup>3</sup> In Soviet criticism, the other basis for the argument for Ševčenko's alleged revolutionary stance is biographical—and even less persuasive. In the absence of any extended or even unambiguous, documented expression of revolutionary sentiment in Ševčenko's various writings or letters, it rests solely on conjecture and speculation, largely as extrapolation from his readings and from his broad circle of acquaintances. The paradigm here, for example, is that since Ševčenko is known to have attended the *soirées* that Černyševskij attended, he must certainly have met him and, consequently, have come to share his views. See Je. P. Kyriljuk, Je. S. Šabliov's'kyj, V. Je. Šubravs'kyj, *T. H. Ševčenko: bihografija* (Kiev, 1964), pp. 490 ff.

or the conclusion of "Xolodnyj Jar" (The "Cold Ravine" where the 1768 uprising began):

Дурить дітей  
І брата сліпого,  
Дурить себе, чужих людей,  
Та не дурить Бога.  
Бо в день радості над вами.  
Розпадеться кара.  
І повіє огонь новий  
З Холодного Яру.

(lines 77–84)

(Fool yourself, fool foreigners,/ but do not fool God./ For on the day of rejoicing/ punishment will break over you./ And a new fire will blow from the Cold Ravine), or the popular images of anti-clerical revolt in the above cited "Svite jasnyj!"<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, especially in the later poetry, the model is found in the dire predictions of Biblical prophets. Thus in "Hosea," as already noted, the poet speaks of the cry of "unsleeping retribution" (*krykne kara nevsy-pušča*); in "O ljudy! ljudy neboraky!" (Oh People! You Poor People!) he asks "Čy bude sud! Čy bude kara! Carjam, carjatam na zemli? Čy bude pravda mež ljud'my?" (Will there be a judgment! Will there be punishment?/ For the tsars and their progeny on this earth?/ Will there be justice among men?); and in "I Arximed i Halilej" (Both Archimedes and Galileo) he speaks of a final threshing and winnowing. What is common to both models is an apocalyptic sense of a Final Judgment that signals absolute moral reckoning and a total (indeed metaphysical) reversal of the human social order—from iniquity to justice and truth. Here the question of violence and bloody punishment is secondary; the essential moment, determining the very shape of the future, is the apotheosis of moral judgment and renewal.

Along with this immanent qualification, that is, the fact that what these poems project is not a vision of revolution but of punishment and holy vengeance, there is also a contextual qualification, in that a number of poems explicitly reject the "revolutionary option" of violence and vengeance and counter with an attitude not so much of

<sup>4</sup> As Ivakin notes, the poem echoes various *hadjamak* songs; *Komentar do 'Kobzarja' Ševčenka* (1968), p. 350.

forgiveness as of reliance on the workings of Divine Will.<sup>5</sup> This is seen emblematically in the three variations of "Molytva" (A Prayer; 1860). In the first two variations the first stanza asks God for retribution against the tsars:

Царям, всесвітнім шинкарям,  
І дукачі, і таляри,  
І пута кутії пошли.

(For the tsars, the tavern-keepers of the world/ send ducats and thalers/ and forged chains), and

Царів, кровавих шинкарів,  
У пута кутії окуй,  
В склепу глибокім замуруй.

(Put the tsars, the bloody tavern-keepers,/ into forged chains,/ wall them up in a deep dungeon); the third one, however, reverses this plea, as if realizing that they are a prison unto themselves:

Злоначинающих спини,  
У пута кутії не куй,  
В склепи глибокі не муруй.

(Stop those who conceive evil,/ do not put them in forged chains,/ do not wall them up in deep dungeons). Finally, in "Тим несytим очам" (To Those Greedy Eyes), traditionally considered a fourth variant, but actually a paraphrase of a poem by V. Kuročkin, the poet is willing to leave all material goods:

Тим несytим очам,  
Земним богам-царям,  
І плуги, й кораблі,  
І всі добра землі,

---

<sup>5</sup> In this regard Bryan R. Wilson's distinction between "revolutionary" and "revolutionist" is quite useful: "Revolutionist religious movements are readily recognizable in the Christian tradition. They are those groups which emphasize the second advent of Christ, and believe that that occasion will be associated with divine intervention in the affairs of men by the overturning of the social, and perhaps also the physical order. They are not, of course revolutionary movements, since they do not necessarily expect themselves to implement God's will." *Magic and the Millennium* (New York, 1973), p. 196.

І хвалебні псалми  
Тим дрібненьким богам.

(To those greedy eyes,/ the gods-tsars of this world,/ [leave] ploughs and ships/ and all earthly goods,/ and psalms of praise/ to those petty gods.)

In his valuable study on "The Year 1860 in Ševčenko's Work," George Y. Shevelov, drawing among others on the example of "Molytva," argues that in the poetry of his last year Ševčenko proceeds to "reappraise" revolt and revenge, and even to "explicitly reject the use of the axe."<sup>6</sup> According to him, the poem "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary" puts it directly:

... і без сокири  
Аж зареве та загуде,  
Козак безверхий упаде. . .

(lines 9–11)

(And without the axe,/ with a roar and rumbling,/ the headless Cossack will fall.) But perhaps even more striking than this apparent "polemic with himself," as Shevelov sees it, is the direct opposition within one single poem, namely "Neofity." For here, to balance the tirade cited above, indeed as its total rebuttal, are the words of the hero, Alkid, himself a clear projection of the poet:

— Молітесь, братія! Молітесь  
За ката лютого. . .

... А він  
Нехай лютує на землі,  
Нехай пророка побиває,  
Нехай усіх нас розпинає;  
Уже внучата зачались,  
І виростуть вони колись,  
Не месники внучата тії,  
Христові воїни святіє!  
І без огня, і без ножа  
Стратеги божії воспрянуть.  
І тьми і тисячі поганих

<sup>6</sup> *Taras Ševčenko, 1814–1861: A Symposium*, pp. 93–95 and *passim*.



Перед святими побіжать.  
Моліться, братія! —

(lines 408–409 and 413–425)

(Pray brothers! Pray/ for the raging tyrant. . . And let him rage on earth,/ let him kill the prophet,/ let him crucify us all;/ the grandchildren are already conceived/ and they will grow up one day/ not as avengers, these grandchildren,/ but Christ's holy warriors!/ And without fire, and without the knife/ God's troops will rise up,/ and countless thousands of the wicked/ will flee before the holy ones./ Pray, brothers.)

The parallel existence of two apparently opposed attitudes to the future—the active, avenging (putatively revolutionary) and the forgiving and providential—has posed a dilemma for many critics, a dilemma that has given rise to two answers. The first, potentially trivial and at best merely descriptive, is the argument of inconsistency. One of the first serious critics to apply it was Myxajlo Drahomanov, in his article “Ševčenko, the Ukrainophiles and Socialism” (1879).<sup>7</sup> His purpose, clearly, was not to engage in literary analysis or appreciation, but above all to debunk the already flourishing cult of Ševčenko and dampen the various fanciful assertions about his socialism (and revolutionism) precisely by pointing out those moments which in terms of logic, political programs and praxis must seem inconsistent and not well thought out. While the specific issue may change (no longer socialism, but, say, peasant revolution), the argument of inconsistency is still frequently encountered; indeed it becomes inevitable when the system of the poetry is measured by an extrinsic system, say, of ideological desiderata.<sup>8</sup>

The second solution is considerably more sophisticated. As proposed most cogently by Shevelov in the above-noted article, it argues that the answer is to be found through a fine periodization, that is, in perceiving that

the traditional conception of the one St. Petersburg period after the exile is wrong, that in reality we are dealing with two periods which in some respects are even opposed to each other. One of them,

<sup>7</sup> *Literaturno-publicystyčni praci u dvoch tomach*, vol. 2, pp. 7–133.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Petro Odarčenko, “Ševčenko in Soviet Literary Criticism,” *Taras Ševčenko, 1814–1861: A Symposium*, pp. 259–302.

until the end of 1859, was a period of revolutionary rebelliousness in style and ideas; the second, which encompasses the remainder of Ševčenko's life was a period in which the poet sought and to a large degree found, harmony in style as well as in his world outlook.<sup>9</sup>

As careful as Shevelov is in qualifying his division (by stressing, for example, the "undeniable continuity" and the "cyclical quality" of Ševčenko's poetry), the argument cannot but raise serious reservations. While some small differences in emphasis, a certain mellowing, a toning down of the towering anger found in the earlier (1859) Biblical imitations may be discerned, the idea of two distinct *periods* does not withstand scrutiny. Even on the level of style, a movement from "revolutionary rebelliousness" to "harmony" (notions, of course, which in this context require much more precision) is not that visible. The anti-clericalism of "Svite jasnyj!" and especially the bitter parody of "Himn černečyj," the casual, ironic and mocking use of classical, mythological and Biblical references (quite reminiscent of "Neofity"), the earthy images and sarcasm of "Saul," the continuing clash of extreme emotions, and the occasional outburst of fury and invective (as in "Xoča ležačoho j ne b"jut," where he calls the recently deceased Dowager Empress, Alexandra Fedorovna, a "bitch")—all of this makes the poetry of 1860 of a piece with the earlier work. But more important is the question of "ideas" and "world view"—and here too the argument is unpersuasive. For, in fact, throughout Ševčenko's mature poetry (Shevelov, himself, mentions "Neofity" and the conclusion of "Poslaniže,"<sup>10</sup> but one can also add the "Foreword" to *Hajdamaky*, or the dramatically elaborated "Varnak" or, *mutatis mutandis*, "Moskaleva kryncja"), the theme of forgiveness accompanies the theme of violence and vengeance. Conversely, various poems written in 1860, far from expressing forgiveness, presage an inevitable accounting, that is, the already mentioned "Saul," "Svite jasnyj!," and "Xoča ležačoho j ne b"jut," but also "O ljudy! ljudy neboraky" and indeed "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary" where, despite the disclaimer that it will occur "without the axe," the images of that final resolution are hardly peaceful or "harmonious":

і без сокири  
Аж зареве та загуде,

<sup>9</sup> "The Year 1860 in Ševčenko's Work," p. 101.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

Козак безверхий упаде,  
Розтрошить трон, порве порфиру.  
Роздавить вашого кумира,  
Людські шашелі.

(lines 9–14)

(. . .and without the axe,/ with a roar, rumbling,/ the headless Cossack will fall./ He'll demolish the throne, tear the purple,/ crush your idol,/ you human termites.)

In short, periodization, a diachronic approach, and the postulate of progression do not resolve the issue: in its essential features Ševčenko's world remains constant and the abiding structures of his mythic imagination susceptible only to a synchronic analysis. Here, the apparent opposition of "Revolution" and "Harmony," which, as we shall see, should be reformulated as the difference between an "active" and a "passive," or a militant and providential stance, is only a subordinate tension within the broad overarching structure of his millenarian vision.

Before turning to it, however, we must take account of the second major formula for simplifying Ševčenko's projection of the future, which is the thesis that he is a national prophet with an expressly national, that is, nationalistic vision, ultimately of a reborn Ukrainian state. The growing conviction that Ševčenko had a profound and unparalleled influence on the development of modern Ukrainian national consciousness can be traced from such friends and co-workers as Kuliš and Kostomarov and, in the next generation, such shapers of the new nation as Franko and Drahomanov; now this influence is a generally accepted historical fact. In the writings of various twentieth-century critics, however, ranging from publicists and ideologues like D. Doncov to scholars like S. Smal'-Stoc'kyj, this sense of Ševčenko's national importance is transformed into an unquestioning, dogmatic belief that his poetry actually contains and articulates a nationalist, political program. Thus, according to the typical claim, "The content of all of his works, both the poetry and the prose, is governed by one thought—the Ukraine, its former fate, its present state and its future; and all of this [stems] from the point of view of the broadest national and social tasks facing it." And further, even more explicitly: "Ševčenko's epoch-making role in Ukrainian history rests on the fact that he renewed our national-statist (*nacional'no-deržavnye*) traditions and put on the agenda of our historical tasks the idea of national

independence as the essential guarantee of the nation's interests."<sup>11</sup> Like the formula of Ševčenko-the-revolutionary (which it implicitly was intended to counter), this thesis, too, proceeds by selectively noting, highlighting and misinterpreting (or overinterpreting) individual moments and patterns in the poetry to a final gross distortion and impoverishment of the whole. It is certainly clear that the culminating point of the argument—the notion of Ševčenko's commitment to a national *state* (his so-called *deržavnyctvo*)—is utterly fallacious. As seen from so much of the preceding, his total identification is with the ideal and the model of *communitas*; structure and authority, "law and order," the state, and the hetmans as embodiments of the state are consistently shown as alien and evil. To a large extent, this foreignness is determined by national (ethnic) distinctions, where authority, for example, is Russian authority. But it is also plain that structure and authority inheres in the Ukrainian national (ethnic) fabric—and as such is no less foreign and evil. To put it bluntly, Ševčenko, far from positing a national state denies its moral-existential validity: in his *ideal* time-frames—the distant past and the future—Ukrainian existence is posited *solely* and exclusively in terms of *communitas*. In terms of his imaginative universe, the ultimate formulation of this is a millenarian vision. Translated and reduced to the language of political ideology, it would constitute a radical, anti-statist populism or indeed anarchism.<sup>12</sup>

Like the "revolutionary" argument, however, this one, too, has a core validity. Its foundation is that which has been variously called Ševčenko's "patriotism," but which can be seen more generally, and without the political overtones, as a profound and unalloyed emotional bond of love for his land and people. Striking expressions of this love abound in every period of Ševčenko's poetic activity; throughout, the

<sup>11</sup> O. Lotoc'kyj, "Deržavnyctvo'kyj svitohljad T. Ševčenko," T. Ševčenko, *Povnye vydannja tvoriv*, vol. 3 (Chicago, 1962), p. 352.

<sup>12</sup> A recollection by the Russian poet Ja. Polonskij seems to substantiate this: "I remember," he writes, "that at one *soirée* at Bilozerskyj's, the editor of the journal *Osnova*, Ševčenko supported the idea of a visiting Slav from Galicia that any politics was *amoral*, that it was because of political considerations that all kinds of injustice had always been committed and that from them all the misfortunes of nations and peoples were *derived* and that it would have been best for a state, therefore, to have no politics at all." (*Spohady pro Ševčenko*, p. 433; also cited in Shevelov, "The Year 1860 in Ševčenko's Work," p. 95.)

Ukraine embodies for him an absolute value, as epitomized in these oft-cited lines from "Son (Hory moji vysokiji)":

Я так її, я так люблю  
Мою Україну убогу,  
Що проклену святого Бога,  
За неї душу погублю!

(lines 57–60)

(I so love her,/ my poor Ukraine,/ that I will curse holy God,/ I will lose my soul for her.) It is a value, moreover, that is asserted not merely as pure emotion, but as a moral stance in the face of prolonged and severe adversity. As he speaks of it in "Хіба самому написат'" (It Seems I Myself Will Write), it is a value intrinsically tied to his reason for being (and suffering), that is, his writing:

Для кого я пишу? для чого?  
За що я Україну люблю?  
Чи варт вона огня святого? . . .  
.....  
.....

Отак-то я тепер терплю,  
Та смерть із степу виглядаю,  
А за що, ей-богу, не знаю!  
А все-таки її люблю,  
Мою Україну широку. . . .

(lines 24–26 and 44–48)

(For whom do I write? for what?/ Why do I love the Ukraine?/ Is she worthy of this holy fire?... .. Thus I suffer now/ and look for death from the steppe,/ and for what, by God, I do not know!/ But I still love her, my spacious Ukraine. . .)

As the nationalist critics readily perceived, the innermost center of this bond is a highly tuned sense of what is one's own and what is foreign, the sense summarized in one of the most quoted expressions from Ševčenko: "V svojij xati svoja j pravda, / I syła, i vol'ja" (In one's own house—one's own truth/ and power and freedom; "Poslanije"). This maxim (which, significantly, is directed to the gentry and plainly belies the sense of class hostility that the "revolutionary" argument invariably ascribes to Ševčenko), can hardly be equated

with nationalism. It does, however, present distinct parallels to nativistic thought. As defined originally, and most generally, by R. Linton, a nativistic movement is "any conscious, organized attempt on the part of a society's members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture."<sup>13</sup> It may be revivalist (as in the case of the Celtic revival in Ireland) or perpetuative (as in the case of various less civilized societies that are "only vaguely conscious of their past culture"); it may be more rational or entirely magical (as in the case of the well known Ghost Dance or various cargo cults), moving in the direction of apocalyptic and millennial embodiments; in each case, however, it is essentially conditioned by the given group's sense of stress and crisis or, most specifically, its perception of its own inferiority with respect to the dominant culture that threatens to assimilate it.<sup>14</sup> The turning to one's past and to what are considered the key elements of the culture is thus the symbolic, collective response to a threatening or seemingly unresolvable political or social quandary.

The juxtaposition of Ševčenko with nativism is somewhat problematical, of course. His poetry does not constitute a movement (though it may be seen as eventually animating one); the connection between the world of his poetry and the beliefs of a cargo cult may appear to be quite tenuous, and the ethical (and aesthetic) value of the one hardly comparable with the other.<sup>15</sup> And yet despite that, the positing of such common structures is valuable. It reminds us, for one, that notwithstanding its far-reaching, indeed awesome political repercussions, Ševčenko's poetry—in and of itself—is not at all political, or only potentially so; its primary focus is precisely on the native ethos and culture, on the painful uniqueness of things Ukrainian, on the

<sup>13</sup> Ralph Linton, "Nativistic Movements," *American Anthropologist*, vol. 45 (1943), pp. 230–240.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 231–232 and *passim*. An illuminating and wide-ranging account of recent studies of nativism and allied phenomena which goes far toward refining Linton's admittedly provisional definition is Weston La Barre's "Materials for a History of Studies of Crisis Cults: A Bibliographic Essay," *Current Anthropology*, vol. 12 (1971), no. 1, pp. 3–44.

<sup>15</sup> There is also the problem that in popular usage the term "nativism" has become value laden and even used as a synonym for "jingoism." As we see from the discussion following Linton's paper (p. 240), however, it has also been used to designate the anti-Fascist response during World War II. In the contemporary scholarly literature nativism is almost always considered a pre-political phenomenon.

"sacred message" of the past, and not on a political (socialist or nationalist) program. Even more importantly, however, having recognized the nativist set in Ševčenko's poetry we can then apprehend the fundamental transition that takes place in the poetry of the last, post-exile years. It is nothing less than a transition from a largely ethnocentric to a universal perspective. And it is precisely this universalism that animates the culminating millenarian vision.

The notion of a shift or a transition in the poetry introduces, of course, the very diachrony that I had questioned earlier.<sup>16</sup> Two entirely different matters are at issue here, however. On the one hand there are the structures of the myth which abide in and inform all the poetry and which can be fully perceived only in synchronic perspective; it is only through such a perspective that we can grasp the range and the implication of the paradigmatic sets that are the heart of the mythic message. On the other hand there is the actualization of these structures. As an *articulated* message the myth does have its diachronic extension—in the most obvious sense because it arises from a chronologically developed corpus of poetry. But the manifest, biographical or extrinsic periodization of that poetry (the first *Kobzar*, the "Try lita" period, the exile and the post-exile periods) says little if anything about the symbolic code and any possible developments within the myth itself. Such a development—taken in very broad and general phases and with no implied correspondence to conventional schemes of periodization—can, however, be perceived in terms of a gradual *filling out* of an already existing matrix. For all their indistinct boundaries, the phases of this process are readily apparent (and indeed follow a pattern that one intuitively feels is "normal" and inevitable): first, a focus on the conflict and the evil in the present, secondly the expansion of this focus to include the past as well as the present, and thirdly, a further expansion that takes in the future and the solution that it provides. More than simply a rough sequence of time-frames, this progression consists above all of the poet establishing ever greater resonance and complexity and, in a word, universality in his model of the world. The most notable instance of such development, more resonant indeed than the expansion of the "past" to include Biblical times and antiquity in general, is precisely the

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<sup>16</sup> See p. 133, above.

movement from a culture-specific to a universal set and perspective, the ultimate expression for which is a utopian vision of total equality and of purified humanity. This movement or "diachrony," however, is not only necessary and logical, but internal. The analogy to be made here is not to the intellect reaching out to discover new ideas and options, but to the meditative process in which the inner space of one's unconscious is progressively revealed with ever greater detail and coherence.

A comprehensive definition of the term "millenarian" is given by Norman Cohn. For him it designates "a particular type of salvationism," specifically "any religious movement inspired by the fantasy of a solution which is to be

- a) collective, in the sense that it is to be enjoyed by the faithful as a group;
- b) terrestrial, in the sense that it is to be realized on this earth and not in some otherworldly heaven;
- c) imminent, in the sense that it is to come both soon and suddenly;
- d) total, in the sense that it is utterly to transform life on earth, so that the new dispensation will be no mere improvement on the present but perfection itself;
- e) accomplished by agencies which are consciously regarded as supernatural."<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Norman Cohn, "Medieval Millenarism: Its Bearing on the Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements," *Millennial Dreams in Action*, ed. Sylvia L. Thrupp (New York, 1970), p. 31. Like the revivalist focus on the past, moreover, the millenarian solution is also a transrational response to a present that is perceived in terms of a profound and unresolvable crisis. For La Barre, nativism, millenarianism, messianism, cargo cults, and other such phenomena, are all subsumed under the general category of crisis cults:

The term crisis cult basically includes any new 'sacred' attitude toward a set of beliefs; it excludes the pragmatic, revisionist, secular response that is tentative and relativistic. It is essentially a matter of the affective-epistemological stance taken toward belief. The term crisis cult does not prejudge 'primitive' or 'civilized,' superior or inferior, innovative or traditional, dispossessed or elite, colonial or interclass, majority or minority culture.

"Materials for a History of Studies of Crisis Cults," p. 11. In turn, crisis cults can be placed within the still larger framework of non-institutionalized or emergent religious movements; *ibid.*, pp. 35-37.



While Cohn's principal focus is on *movements*, that is, on social behavior and our focus is on the individual imagination, the basic concern is still with the structures of thought, the model itself (or the "fantasy," as Cohn calls it).<sup>18</sup> And here it is utterly remarkable that Ševčenko's vision of the coming new order is *in all respects* congruent with the typology just outlined. In fact, his vision of the future is both quintessentially millenarian and exclusively so: no other alternative (or "scenario") is depicted or even considered.

In one sense, certain aspects of Ševčenko's millenarian thinking can be traced back to the ideology and the ambience of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius of which he was a member.<sup>19</sup> The ideas of this circle of young Kievan intellectuals—their Christian utopianism, democratic and constitutional reformism, Slavophilism and Ukrainian patriotism—have received considerable critical attention, especially with regard to their program, Mykola Kostomarov's *Knyhy bytija ukrains'koho narodu* (The Books of Genesis of the Ukrainian Nation), a paraphrase and reworking of Mickiewicz's *Księgi narodu polskiego* (Books of the Polish Nation).<sup>20</sup> Despite occasional differences in emphasis and "historiosophic" interpretations, the two works are strikingly similar, above all by virtue of shared messianic and millenarian premises: Poland (respectively the Ukraine) will rise from the grave of political oppression to serve as a beacon of freedom and equality and to usher in a new and just order. Most revealingly, however, the underlying, prerequisite postulate of *communitas* is projected in each work according to differing culture-specific models. For Mickiewicz it is to be realized by *status elevation*, with the entire Polish nation, all its classes, *rising* to the level of the gentry (*szlachta*). For Kostomarov, the corresponding ideal of the

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<sup>18</sup>Cohn, too, stresses the role of the individual. "A millenarian revolt," he notes, "never formed except round a prophet—John Bull in England, Martinek Hauska in Bohemia, Thomas Müntzer in Thuringia, first Jan Matthys and then Jan Bockelson at Münster," *ibid.*, p. 38. See also his *Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Messianism in Medieval and Reformation Europe and its Bearing on Modern Totalitarian Movements* (New York, 1961).

<sup>19</sup> See Volodymyr Mijakovs'kyj "Ševčenko in the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius," *Taras Ševčenko 1814–1861: A Symposium*, pp. 9–36.

<sup>20</sup> See especially Stefan Kozak, "Knyhy bytija ukrains'koho narodu, Mykoly Kostomarov'a i Księgi narodu i pielgrzymstwa polskiego Adama Mickiewicza," *Slavia Orientalis*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Warsaw, 1973), pp. 177–188.

Cossacks and the Brotherhoods signifies *status leveling*: "And the Ukraine did not love either tsar or lord, but created for itself Cossackdom, which is a true brotherhood, where each who joined became brother to the others—whether he was lord or slave beforehand, as long as he was a Christian; and the Cossacks were all equal among each other. . ."<sup>21</sup> The *Knyhy*, too, more so that the Polish model, dwell on the millennial vision:

And the Ukraine will rise from its grave and will again call out to all her brother Slavs and they will hear the cry, and Slavdom will rise, and there will be no tsar nor tsarevič nor tsarina, no count or Herzog, no Excellencies or Magnificences, no lord or boyar, no serf or slave—neither in Muscovy, nor in Poland nor in Ukraine, not in Bohemia nor among the Croats or Serbs or Bulgarians.<sup>22</sup>

The intellectual impact on Ševčenko of this manifesto, originally called *Zakon Božyj* (God's Law), and the milieu behind it, is not to be denied; it not only reveals an influence and model but also throws light on an intellectual and emotional climate, that is, a cultural readiness for his poetic message. Yet it is clear that that message, specifically here the millennial vision, is shaped by the overall mythical code, a code determined by archetypes, universal symbols and absolutized emotions—and not by prospects of reform, constitutional order or confederation.

The first millenarian notes in Ševčenko's poetry date from the "Try lita" period (1843–1845) and thus antedate his association with the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius. The earliest of these occurs in the conclusion of "Stojit' v seli Subotovi" (October 1845), the pendant poem to the "mystery" "Velykyj l'ox." Here the central image of Xmel'nyc'kyj's church, the symbolic grave of the Ukraine, is replaced by a vision of resurrection:

Церков-домовина  
Розвалиться. . . і з-під неї  
Встане Україна.  
І розвіє тьму неволі,  
Світ правди засвітить,

<sup>21</sup> Mykola Kostomarov, *Knyhy bytija ukrajins'koho narodu* (Augsburg, 1947), p. 18 [par. 72].

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24 [par. 103].

І помоляться на волі  
Невольничі діти! . .

(lines 42–48)

(The coffin-church/ will fall to pieces . . . and from beneath it/ the Ukraine will rise./ And she will dispel the darkness of slavery,/ and light the light of justice,/ and the children of slaves will pray in freedom.) In the poem "Jeretyk," written a month later, the dedication to Šafařík contains a similar vision of resurrection, now couched in terms of a utopian Slavophilism (compare lines 48–55). In the "Testament" (*Jak umru to poxovajte. . .*), written on Christmas Day of that year, Ševčenko speaks of a "great," "free" and "new family" that will come to be after a final Armageddon. (In this vein, too, the preceding "Velykyj l'ox," "Xolodnyj Jar" and several of the paraphrased psalms, particularly Psalm 81, all point to the reckoning that will usher in the new day.)<sup>23</sup> But the actual millenarian design takes shape only in the poetry of the last two years of his life. As is often true of millenarian thinking in Christian cultures, the clear and acknowledged model is the Bible, and indeed several of the poems in question are paraphrases of the Old Testament. The first of these (after the Psalms, of course), the paraphrase of Isaiah 35, is in its entirety a celebration of the promised land; its conclusion is a striking evocation of the redeemed world:

<sup>23</sup> The juxtaposition of these poems shows persuasively that, as suggested above, the old and the coming *hajdamáčyna* and the Biblical Final Judgment are equated, that the punishment they mete out and God's is one. Thus in "Velykyj l'ox" Ševčenko speaks of a new Gonta "who will let loose justice and freedom over all the Ukraine" (" . . .rozpustyt' pravdu j volju/ Po vsij Ukrajinі"), while the conclusion of Psalm 81 puts it identically:

Встань же, Боже, суди землю  
І судей лукавих.  
На всім світі Твоя правда,  
І воля, і слава.

(lines 145–148)

(Arise O Lord, judge the earth/ and the evil judges./ [Let reign] over all the earth Your justice/ and will and glory.)

Оживуть степи, озера,  
 І не верстовії,  
 А вольнії, широкії  
 Скрізь шляхи святії  
 Простеляться; і не найдуть  
 Шляхів тих владики,  
 А раби тими шляхами  
 Без гвалту і крику  
 Позіходяться докупі,  
 Раді та веселі.  
 І пустиню опанують  
 Веселії села.

(lines 39–50)

(The steppes and lakes will revive/ and roads not measured in versts,/ but free, broad, holy roads/ will spread wide; and the powerful will not find these roads./ But the slaves, without violence or clamor,/ will come together along these roads/ in joy and happiness./ And the desert will be ruled by joyful villages.)

As we recall the above paradigm, the transformation here and in the following examples conforms in all aspects to the ideal type: it is (as we have just seen) total and terrestrial. It is also imminent, collective, and occasioned by a supernatural agency. As much as doubt and despair may beset him, Ševčenko's belief in the coming of this new order is not to be denied; as shown emblematically in "I tut i vsjudy —skriz' pohano" (Here and Everywhere—All is Evil), it is asserted against reason itself, and it is as inevitable and imminent as the day that follows night:

Сонце йде  
 І за собою день веде.  
 І вже тії хребетноси́лі,  
 Уже воруща́ться ца́рі. . .  
 І буде правда на землі.

(lines 10–14)

(The sun comes/ and leads the day with it,/ and already the stiff-backed,/ already the tsars tremble. . . / And there will be justice on earth.) While there are in these last poems evocations and depictions of violence and retribution—elements, to be sure, quite typical of millenarian thought—the movement in Ševčenko, as epitomized by the

variants of "Molytva," is manifestly in the direction of a supernatural agency; ultimately his stance is one of confident but passive expectation of the inevitable change. This change, of course, is not determined by, nor does it establish, the realm of reason. When Ševčenko speaks, at the conclusion of one four-line poem ("I den' ide, i nič ide" [The Day Goes by, the Night Goes by]) of waiting for an "apostle of truth [or justice] and knowledge" [apostol pravdy i nauky]), it should be clear, as signaled by the very juxtaposition of *apostol* and *nauka*, that the frame that is established is part of the sacred not the secular world.<sup>24</sup> It is not science or learning as such, and certainly not reason or rationalism that Ševčenko intends, but rather the true knowledge and wisdom that comes with the total and final enlightenment of the millennium. In the same vein, the carriers of this enlightenment in the past, the paradigmatic Archimedes and Galileo, are characterized not as scientists in any conventional sense but as "holy forerunners"

<sup>24</sup> Shevelov's generally insightful discussion is surely in error if it means to imply (the matter is never addressed directly) that Ševčenko's vision of the future is based on reason ("The Year 1860 in Ševčenko's Work," pp. 93–97). At the root of the problem is what I take to be a mistranslation: *apostol pravdy i nauky* is rendered as "the apostle of justice and reason." Now while *pravda* is both "truth" and "justice," *nauka*, in this context, is "knowledge," or "wisdom," but not "Reason" (or "science" or "learning"). The future that Ševčenko envisions is indeed (as Shevelov argues) just and harmonious—but by virtue of a millenarian and mythical, not a rational, reasonable thinking. In fact, when Ševčenko does use *nauka* as meaning "learning" or "science," it is with bitter irony (see "Kavkaz," lines 69–77). And even when he speaks of *rozum* (reason) (in "Ne narikaju ja na Boha" [I Do Not Complain about God]), it is clear from the context (the play on fooling oneself and being fooled by hope, the imagery of sowing the true good Word) that, again, it is not reason as such, but a higher almost mystical wisdom that is implied.

The argument that Ševčenko's publication of his *Primer* (Bukvar'; 1861) signals a "connection between the small deed—popular education—and the big: the emergence of a new and harmonious social order. Not the axe, but the book is to be found at the basis of the conception of the apostle of Justice and Reason" (*ibid.*, p. 94) also does not support the contention. For in itself the *Primer* does not simply speak of a positivistic program of popular education—it is also an expression of the transcendent need to sow the Word, to reach out to and nurture the *communitas* that is his charge. Even here, in the non-poetic mode, the case for "Reason" as the basic determinant is not persuasive.

(*svjatyje predoteči*) giving generations of men the eucharist (!) that will one day make them truly free.<sup>25</sup>

The innermost, most essential feature of Ševčenko's millennium, however, is its sense of the collective, of the elect, of his *communitas*. It is ubiquitous and maximally stressed, and, of course, presented in total opposition to society's structure, to authority, to the powerful of this world. It is evident in the examples already noted and in all his projections of the future, but perhaps most pronounced in his quintessential millenarian statement, the very late poem, "I Arximed i Halilej." Here, as we see in the poem's conclusion, the vision draws on universal, archetypal images:

Буде бите  
Царями сіянее жито!  
А люде виростуть. Умруть  
Ще незачатіє царята. . .  
І на оновленій землі  
Врага не буде, супостата,  
А буде син, і буде мати,  
І будуть люде на землі.

(lines 7–14)

(The grain sowed by the tsars/ will be threshed!/ But the people will grow./ The tsars yet unborn will die. . . / And on the renewed earth/ there will be no enemy, no tempter,/ but there will be a son and a mother,/ and there will be people on this earth.) The apotheosis of *communitas*, which is the millennium itself, is distilled to its purest form: not only is it the characteristic triumph of the weak, the power of the powerless, but also the characteristically Ševčenkian assertion of the uterine bond, the bond of mother and child, a bond that stands in radical opposition to the cruel exigencies of "normal," hierarchical, authoritarian, patrilineal society. This is the deepest level of the

<sup>25</sup> Jan Hus, another such "apostle," is obviously presented as a "holy martyr," a sower of the liberating, Holy Word. But the Czech philologist and historian Šafařík, to whom "Jeretyk" is dedicated, is also cast not simply as a scholar, a man of learning, but as a father-savior of the Slavs—and implicitly a re-incarnation of the "holy" Hus. Finally, George Washington, with his "new and righteous law," symbolizes in the context of "Jurodyvyj" the sacred sphere of justice and freedom, and hardly the concrete socio-political structure of the thirteen American states.

dream of a new order. In articulating it, and the millennium as such, Ševčenko is no longer expressing only the common cultural attitudes, that is, the collective sense of lost freedom and power and the collective, subliminal fears of a threatened culture; here he is projecting and powerfully imprinting on these collective attitudes his own, psychological matrix. Here he is both myth-carrier and mythmaker.

In creating his vision of a coming millennium Ševčenko comes full circle to the golden age he had depicted in the distant past, that is, the state of ideal *communitas*. Yet this should not be construed as a form of escapism. Quite to the contrary, it is a necessary and "logical" solution. As one who is deeply attuned to the culture and the historical juncture of his people, he is profoundly aware that the alternative of revolution is impossible, for as he shows in various poems, perhaps most poignantly in the lyric "Oj čoho ty počornilo. . .", the Cossack ethos, the will and strength for such a course, is dead, and the Ukraine of his present is suspended in a state of conflict between the feminine helplessness of *communitas*, of serfs, raped and seduced women and bastard children, and the debauched and renegade manhood of hierarchy and authority. But it is equally impossible for him to reconcile himself to the Ukraine's demise. The solution is a classical mythical mediation, the sublime paradox of a "passive revolution," the projection of a millenarian *communitas* to be established by God Himself. And this mediation draws intrinsically on the need to resolve his own fundamental conflict: for Ševčenko (as he himself shows so eloquently in *Trizna*, in the Russian novellas, in his *Diary* and letters) is a classically marginal or displaced figure—he is neither peasant nor nobleman, he can neither return to his past nor forget it nor deny it. His resolution is the mediating and transcending role of a poet-prophet who is not a peasant and yet one who represents the values and is indeed a spokesman for *communitas*; who speaks to, and indeed is accepted and lionized by the highest strata of society, of the status system and authority, and yet is not part of it. Underlying this is his total identification with the Ukraine, whereby his personal fate and the fate of his nation are made to mirror and model each other: because he identifies totally with his group his fate becomes tragic as a reflection of the group's; his status elevation is perceived by him as status reversal because his people remain in slavery, as serfs. And yet, despite the strength of this bond, Ševčenko moves from an ethnocentric and nativistic stance to a full and rare universality. His late poetry not only addresses the human condition as such, but

does so in the language of archetypes and universal symbols. Among his various achievements, this ability to frame so fine a solution to so many irreconcilable oppositions certainly stands preeminent.



## *Conclusion: Ševčenko's Mythopoesis*

THE NATURE OF Ševčenko's mythopoesis can be summarized in the following major points:

1. Mythical thinking and, specifically, a mythical apprehension of the Ukraine is the very essence of Ševčenko's poetry. Mythical structures animate each of its major modes or genres—the lyrical, the narrative, and the "political." In a word, myth constitutes a basic code of his poetry. The mythical code, however, appears only in the poetry—in contrast to the other basic code of Ševčenko's creative work, that is, the psychological, or, concretely, the symbolically autobiographical, which manifests itself in all the major forms of his self-expression, in his poetry, prose, and painting too. While they constitute independent imaginative frameworks, the personal and the mythical components are also interconnected: the mythical depiction of the Ukraine and the symbolic self-portrait model and reflect each other. And precisely because it exists on a deeper level, a revealing of the mythical content must also bare the individual psychic content. A full investigation of the latter, and the code in which it is given, is still a task for the future, however.

2. Like his counterparts, Gogol' in Russian literature and Słowacki in Polish, Ševčenko can be called a true mythmaker by virtue of the fact that his poetic vision, the Ukrainian "theme" taken in the broadest sense, presents itself in a highly integrated, almost hermetic symbolic system which conveys profound personal and "universal" truths. Like all mythical thinking, his is a form of intellectual bricolage that reveals the characteristic movement from structure to events (in the sense that events selected from a broad spectrum may be taken to "fit" or actualize a given structure), a development through

oppositions and mediation, and a multi-tracked redundancy of narrative that reveals itself in an "obsessive" repetition of events and structural units ("themes" and "motifs"). Uniquely, however, Ševčenko is also a myth-carrier: he not only makes the mythical construct, but also becomes a participant in it. Through a complex system of symbolic identifications in the narrative poems—which corresponds to the overtly autobiographical and confessional character of the non-narrative poems—the poet always becomes the central protagonist and in a sense all the major protagonists.<sup>1</sup> The myth, in short, is so deeply internalized and his own experiences so interwoven with it that ultimately the poet and the myth are quite inseparable.

Ševčenko's early poetry is modeled by the kobzar, the myth-teller who resonates with the experiences and emotions of the collective, but who neither rises above them nor fully comprehends their deep significance. In his mature poetry, beginning with "Try lita," and symbolically upon discovering "the Word," Ševčenko consistently assumes the role of a prophet who consciously articulates the myth to his people and both consciously and unconsciously, like a shaman, serves them as mediator between past and present, present and future, man and God, and, ultimately, through his suffering, expiates for the collective "sin" and "curse." For this reason, too, Ševčenko, alone among the various Polish, Russian and Ukrainian Romantics who turn to the Ukrainian theme, focuses so intensely on the "future," that is, on the ideal solution.

3. The world depicted in Ševčenko's poetry, particularly the Ukraine, is presented not through historical time but through mythical time, in effect, in terms of the three stages of fundamental transition, in Van Gennep's terminology, the pre-liminal, the liminal, and the post-liminal. The Ukraine's movement through these stages clearly constitutes a rite of passage. The first and the third stages, corresponding respectively to the "distant past" and the "future," posit a world of harmony, a golden age in which the Ukraine once dwelt and to which it will return. The middle phase, liminality, corresponding to the "recent past" and the "present" and constituting the primary focus of Ševčenko's attention, shows a world in profound disharmony, suspended in injustice and abnormality.

The conflict in this, the liminal stage of the Ukrainian world, is presented on several levels and in various paradigmatic relationships, for

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<sup>1</sup> See "The Nexus of the Wake," pp. 331–336 and *passim*.

example, the ill-fated individual or family, the exploitation of women by men, and so on. At its most basic, it is the opposition between *communitas* and structure. In "normal," stable societies the ritual movement from structure to *communitas* and back again effects, as Victor Turner argues, a cleansing and revitalization of society; the structure that obtains at the end is purified and strengthened.<sup>2</sup> For Ševčenko, however, the opposition between *communitas* and structure is fixed and unbridgeable and tantamount to the difference between good and evil. His vision reaffirms only *communitas*, and thus too his solution postulates a utopia and not a "normal" society.<sup>3</sup>

Since the Ukraine exists on a mythical, not historical continuum, it follows that the concrete circumstances and the contraries of its liminal stage do not exhaust its essential meaning. The actual politically and socially determined place and state of affairs is not coterminous with *Ukrajina* for Ševčenko; the Ukraine of the present and the recent past, defined by conflict and ordeal and presented in images of marginality—the abused and abandoned widow, the *pokrytka* and the bastard, ultimately the masses of serfs—is only the surface emanation, an epiphenomenon of the true Ukraine, the full dimensions and meaning of which are concealed as in a "great crypt" and known only to the poet. If one were to look only at its visible features (as Ševčenko, for the most part, if not exclusively, does in his prose), one would only see *Malorossija*, a province of the Russian empire. For Ševčenko, however, *Ukrajina* is much more than its liminal present, above all in that it is transcendent to the seemingly iron law of linear, historical necessity and of irreversible progression and change. Thus the Ukraine, which according to the enlightened opinion of the day (an opinion, as we saw, shared by various Ukrainian writers as well) had died finally and irrevocably, leaving behind it only mute nature and archeographic remains, folklore, and memory, is, for Ševčenko, on the very threshold of resurrection. His first formulation of this conviction, in the conclusion of "Stojit' v seli Subotovi," (quoted earlier) is also one of the most direct: "The coffin-

<sup>2</sup> *The Ritual Process*, pp. 177–178.

<sup>3</sup> Here we can see a fundamental difference between Ševčenko's mythical thought and that of the *dumy*. Regardless of whether they articulate the Cossack ethos or the peasant ethos, the *dumy* precisely reaffirm social structure, its law, order and hierarchy, and postulate a normal, not a utopian society. See Oksana I. Grabowicz, "The *Dumy*: a Structural Approach."

church/ will fall to pieces. . . and from beneath it/ the Ukraine will rise./ And she will dispel the darkness of slavery,/ and light the light of justice,/ and the children of slaves/ will pray in freedom." As something transcendent to historical necessity and the laws of political existence, the Ukraine thus assumes the status of an ideal entity.

4. The Ukraine's ideality is suggested by Ševčenko in several contexts. In terms of the "past," when seen through the distance of time and space, it is an idyllic land of peace and harmony (emblematically in "Sadok vyšnevyj kolo xaty"), a "paradise" that is equated with the innocence of childhood, but which, like that childhood, is fated to be despoiled.<sup>4</sup> In terms of the "present" the Ukraine is, or approaches, a moral ideal by being conceived as an emanation of *communitas*, as constituted by the marginal and the oppressed and thus made pure by suffering. The clearest sense of an ideal, however, emerges from Ševčenko's millenarian solution, that is, his vision of the future. On the one hand, this vision entails a purging of structure and hierarchy from society (paradigmatically the tsars and their seed; cf. especially "I Arximed i Halilej") as of something that is evil and non-human. It was through structure that a pure, simple and harmonious human order was perverted (compare "Saul"), and it is through its final eradication that that order will be restored. (Here, too, we see the answer to the frequently posed question of who bears the [present and "historical"] guilt for the existing state of affairs, for the Ukraine's "ruin": Bohdan Xmel'nyč'kyj? the Cossacks? the common people in their gullibility?<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly, that guilt is to be borne by those who represent structure in society. Ševčenko, of course, frames this answer neither analytically nor causally [that is, historically], but mythically, that is, in symbols, in paradigmatic sets, and in terms of an existential dichotomy. In sum, the issue for him is not that, for example, the hetmans or the gentry were, or are, guilty of this or another crime, but that simply by being what they are, they are a fact,

<sup>4</sup> Compare the paradigmatic "Meni trynadcjatyj mynalo" (I Was Just Thirteen).

<sup>5</sup> An early discussion of the question of guilt—framed entirely in terms of a parallel between Ševčenko and Jeremiah—is given in V. Ščurat's *Svjate pys'mo v Ševčenkoviј poeziji* (L'viv, [1904]). A sharp rebuttal to Ščurat's reading is made by I. Franko in his "Ševčenko i Jeremija," *Tvory v dvadcaty tomach*, vol. 17, pp. 129–132. See also V. Dorošenko, "Istoryčni sjužety j motyvy v tvorčosti Ševčenkaka," *Povne vydannja tvoriv*, vol. 2, p. 298.

a state of evil.<sup>6</sup> In non-metaphoric language, the "evil" in question is society's shift from a "common morality" to a power structure, with its laws, rules and authorities [compare "Saul" and "Kavkaz"].) The other side of the millenarian solution is that this state of affairs, with its false reason and false morality, will be replaced by an ideal, triumphant *communitas*. Its establishment, as a few poems suggest, may be accompanied by violent retribution, but for the most part Ševčenko envisions the future utopia as coming about inevitably, through the workings of a supernatural agency, as a "passive revolution." For Ševčenko, the millennium that is thus established is mythical and sacral, and not a secular or political construct; it signifies the triumph not of Reason but of True Wisdom which, as in so many millennial visions, will characterize the coming community of the elect. Most significantly, this community is given a universal cast as the ideal Ukraine merges into a vision of an ideal humanity.

5. Like all myths, Ševčenko's provides an integrated and comprehensive (holistic) sense of the world and the individual (the poet) in it. Beyond that, it is highly teleological: the golden age of the distant past and the ordeal of the recent past and the present are made meaningful by his prophecy of the future, that is, by a millennial utopia. Even if only a limited number of poems express it overtly—most notably, the paraphrase of Isaiah 35, the paraphrase of Hosea 14, the variants of "Molytva," "I Arximed i Halilej," and "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary"—this prophecy of a new golden age is the heart of Ševčenko's mythical message. It is simultaneously a statement

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<sup>6</sup> This is made quite explicit in "Hosea 14," where the Ukraine's suffering is not caused by any particular crime of her victimizers, but by their very existence:

Вкраїно!  
Мій любий краю неповинний!  
За що тебе Господь кара,  
Карає тяжко? За Богдана,  
та за скаженого Петра,  
Та за панів отих поганих  
До краю нищить. . .

(lines 4–10)

(O Ukraine!/ My beloved innocent land!/ For what does the Lord punish you./ punish you so sorely? For Bohdan,/ and the mad Peter/ and those evil noblemen/ He destroys you so relentlessly.) See also "Rozryta mohyla."

of *prescription*, showing the coming utopia to be the only "correct solution," and a *reaffirmation* of the whole system of thought, an "explanation" of why the solution is correct. In synchronic perspective (and the mythic structures in question are above all synchronic), Ševčenko can be said to deal with the past and the present only to prove, to justify, and to explain the future and the solution it provides, that is, the apotheosis of *communitas* and negation of structure. Characteristically, no other alternative, for example, the possibility of a "good hierararchical society," is ever considered. The reason is obvious: the myth does not search for or explore other social options or configurations. The poet has the answers, and they are all fully formed. In this sense his vision can be called "ideological," by virtue of being a complete and integrated system.

Ševčenko's myth, however, is dynamic, and hardly a static, descriptive, or classificatory system. While it builds on a severe binary schema (*communitas*/structure) which subsumes and qualifies all of social reality, it also projects fundamental change on that reality. This is made most explicit in the fact that the "future" which is the centerpiece of Ševčenko's myth is not really a time-frame, but, above all, a final transformation where oppositions of a lower level, such as those given in the specific here-and-now of individual poems, are resolved and removed on a higher level.<sup>7</sup> In effect, the *existing*

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<sup>7</sup> I am drawing here on Terence S. Turner's argument for a dynamic model of ritual (and, by extension, myth). His basic focus is on transformational operations as the link between lower-level and higher-level structures:

Transformational operations can be said to be *more powerful* than the simpler classificatory operations (e.g., binary opposition) that comprise the structure of the matrix of role relations because they are capable of linking pairs or series of mutually contradictory states of such matrices as permutations of one another. Their greater power is, to put it differently, expressed in their ability to transform relationships and categories that are mutually exclusive at the lower levels of structure constituted by individual states of the matrix of relations (or, in simpler terms, any classification of relations considered as a fixed, static structure) into non-exclusive categories that may coexist or pass into one another within the same field of relations. It is only by calling upon the power of transformational operations in this sense, or (which comes to the same thing) by ascending to the higher level of structure they constitute, that it becomes possible to reclassify an actor or entity initially classed within one of a pair of

social state of affairs is radically reshaped by being placed on the higher, open-ended level of transcendent and universal existence. The remarkably concise and eloquent concluding lines of "I Arximed i Halilej"

І на оновленій землі  
Врага не буде, супостата,  
А буде син, і буде мати,  
І будуть люде на землі.

(lines 11–14)

signal some of the central moments of this resolution. The iniquity and conflict in both family and society that was epitomized by the pokrytka and the bastard is now pointedly reversed in the simple assertion: "there will be a son and a mother." The removal of the curse of illegitimacy, however, also carries with it the removal of the father: on the most obvious level his absence proclaims the removal

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mutually contrasting categories (e.g., "boy") within the opposite category (i.e., "man"). Coordinated sets of transformations of this type form the structure of processes of social transition such as those associated with *rites de passage*.

"Transformation, Hierarchy and Transcendence: A Reformulation of Van Gennep's Model of the Structure of Rites De Passage," *Secular Ritual*, ed. Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Meyerhoff, (Assen/Amsterdam, 1977), pp. 56–57. In "The Nexus of the Wake," pp. 343–344, I make a similar argument for a transformational shift to a higher level, but without the benefit of Turner's model. L. Pliushch's use of "transformation," on the other hand, is broad and loose, often meaning any inversion, shift of meaning or voice, etc. See his "'The Bewitched Woman' and Some Problems of Shevchenko's Philosophy," *Shevchenko and the Critics, 1861–1980*, ed. George S. N. Luckyj (Toronto, 1980), pp. 454–480. Despite its occasional insights, Pliushch's article is quite problematical, above all because of its lack of differentiation between the levels of structure and events. Thus, his general argument regarding Ševčenko's "philosophy of indeterminism" seems to be based on a false premise and, what is worse, approached in a manner that is totally unfalsifiable. The twists and turns that he sees in Ševčenko's "road" do exist, but on a surface and manifest level; in fact, while there are certain aspects of "openness" (see below), the system, his poetic world as a whole, far from being characterized by indeterminacy and chaos, is very much guided by over-arching structures and a highly consistent code. And it is only by approaching it as a symbolic code—and not by leaving it on the amorphous and metaphorical level of a "philosophy"—that its laws and regularities can be discerned.

of the authoritarian and coercive principle. The resolution of the fundamental opposition of *communitas*/structure in the human collective is no less simple: "there will be people on this earth." The rejection of structure does not imply, however, that *communitas* will exist as before, that is, as marginality, as the modality of the weak and the poor. Here, in fact, is where the fundamental transformation takes place. As expressed in the concluding lines of "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary"—"A my pomolymsja Bohu/ I nebahatiji, nevbohi" (and we, neither rich nor poor, will pray to God)—the new order brings a society of equals. Moreover, it is in this poem, emblematically with the image of the headless Cossack who falls and crushes the imperial throne, that Ševčenko bids farewell to Cossackdom and its legacy. The opposition within this body, just as the one between the warring Cossacks and Poles in *Hajdamaky*, is overcome not by the victory of either side but by the transcendence of the conflict through a vision of a new human order—of *people*, pure and simple. In short, the *communitas* of the future is not one of suffering or marginality, but of freedom, equality, and common morality.

It would seem, however, that one basic opposition, that between male and female, between the male and female worlds, has not and cannot be resolved. The mediation of classical myth—the preternatural hermaphrodite—would seem to be clearly precluded from the world of Ševčenko's poetry. And yet a resolution is found, one which is again a transformation on a higher level (and *as such* may indeed be taken as analogous to the mediation of classical myth). One aspect of Ševčenko's mediation of this opposition is the simple bracketing out of the (adult) male figure. As reflected in various overtly autobiographical or symbolic moments (see respectively "Sestri" and "Son [Na panščyni pšenycju žala]"), and especially in the few poems that project an idyllic vision of the Ukraine, most strikingly "Sadok vyšnevyj kolo xaty," the male figure, the father, is notably absent. Psychologically, the resolution is effected by regression to an infantile state where the relation of mother and child is sufficient and complete in itself. In terms of mythical transformation (and the mythical and psychological codes are, of course, complementary and parallel) the opposition of male and female is resolved by desexualizing the relationship. In the utopian new order that relationship is cast either as pre-sexual, as one of mother and son ("I bude syn i bude maty. . ."); compare also the paraphrase of the eleventh Psalm where future mankind is cast as



little children), or as a conflation of the pre-sexual and the post-sexual, as in various poems that present his hoped-for paradise as a joy of childhood and old age. Thus, too, Ševčenko often depicts marriage itself as asexual, whether in the early and elaborated narrative of "Slipyj"/"Nevol'nyk" where it is more a relationship of brother to sister, or in such late poems as "Rosly ukupočci. . ." (They Grew up Together), "Zišlys', pobralys', pojednalys'" (They Came Together, Married, Became Joined), or in his very last poem, "Čy ne pokynut' nam neboho" (Should We Not Leave, My Dear), where in one breath he addresses his muse as both sister and wife—"moja sestro/ družyno svjataja." The movement here is entirely consistent with the overall pattern of transformations: sexuality, especially male sexuality is removed precisely because it had so insistently been identified with the coercive and exploitative nature of structure and authority in society.<sup>8</sup>

In sum, Ševčenko's myth can be considered as a two-tiered model, with its lower level being the set of conflicts and abnormalities that is organized along the fundamental binary opposition of *communitas* and structure. In terms of the myth's dynamics, this is the liminal state of the Ukraine, its "ordeal." The higher, more general and, ultimately, universal level of the model is the set of qualities and potentialities (or ideals) that cumulatively designates the utopian solution—the coming millennium. It is a "higher" or "more powerful" level precisely because it resolves the ostensibly irreconcilable oppositions and determines the overall movement of the myth;<sup>9</sup> in short, it establishes the principle of teleology.

6. While Ševčenko's myth is firmly fixed on its final cause, that is, on the millennial vision, and while the system it subtends is complete and coherent, it is also open-ended—in two very specific ways. On the one hand, this is simply a reflection of the fact that, as noted

<sup>8</sup> The difference between human sexuality as such, and sex as a factor of social strictures, conventions, and power relations is crucial, of course. From the very earliest poetry, that is, "Pryčynna," any love and sexuality that is spontaneous, consenting, and uncalculating is, for Ševčenko, pure and innocent in the eyes of God. In the later poetry this structure becomes overt, for example, in "Neofity" and "Marija," and virtually programmatic in such poems as "Himn čemečyj" (The Monks' Hymn) and "N.T."

<sup>9</sup> Compare T. Turner, "Transformation, Hierarchy and Transcendence."

before, Ševčenko's poetry conflates the mythic and the psychological code. Thus, while the myth is couched in definite structures, it is also made to resonate with various personal experiences and with turbulent emotions. The presence and the range of these experiences and emotions constitutes the poetry's openness and spontaneity. The more important aspect of its openness rests on the fact that Ševčenko does not specify or set limits on the meaning of the future as it pertains to the Ukraine or to mankind in general: it is given only as a *state of becoming*. For one thing (not untypically of millenarian ideas), the proximity or the duration of the millennium is never specified—we are never told whether it will come tomorrow or in a hundred years, whether it will last a thousand years or an eternity.<sup>10</sup> What is clear, however, is that for Ševčenko the future (which, again, must be taken in a qualified, non-temporal sense) brings a final transformation and thus an ideal and final solution. The content and shape of that solution is strictly determined by the model of liminality and its oppositions—the conflicts, the iniquity, the “curse.” The “future,” in other words, is exclusively defined as that which overcomes and sets right the present. Beyond that there is no speculation or elaboration on the future. A key formulation to this effect appears in every poem that is specifically focused on the millenarian solution, for example, “Ožyvut’, stepy, ozera. . . i pustynju opanujut’/ Veseliji sela” (The steppes and lakes will revive. . . and joyful villages will rule the desert; “Isaiah 35”), “I bude syn, i bude maty,/ I budut’ ljudy na zemli” (“I Arximed i Halilej”), “Uže vorušatsja cari. . . / I bude pravda na zemli” (The tsars are already trembling. . . / and there will be justice on earth; “I tut i vsjudy—skriz’ pohano”), “A my pomolyomosja Bohu/ I nebahatiji, nevbóhi” (And we, neither rich nor poor, will pray to God; “Buvaly vojny j vijs’koviji svary”).

All of this, of course, reveals an unmistakable circularity, with the resultant new existence recapturing a former golden age. “The perfect age” as Thrupp observes, “may come by an act of regeneration, time being bent back, as it were, to recapture some state of harmony in which the world began.”<sup>11</sup> In fact, regeneration is the central leit-motif in Ševčenko's vision. Already in the early poetry, particularly

<sup>10</sup> Sylvia L. Thrupp, “Millennial Dreams in Action: A Report on the Conference Discussion,” in *Millennial Dreams in Action. Studies in Revolutionary Religious Movements*, ed. Sylvia L. Thrupp (New York, 1970), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

of the "Try lita" period, before a millenarian vision is yet fully articulated, images of regeneration are its main, and most often its only foreshadowings; for example:

І — о диво! трупи встали  
І очі розкрили,  
І брат з братом обнялися  
І проговорили  
Слово тихої любові  
Навіки і віки!

(lines 48–53)

(And—O wonder! the corpses rose/ and opened their eyes,/ and brother embraced brother/ and spoke/ words of quiet love/ forever and ever!; "Jeretyk"); or:

Встане Україна.  
І розвіє тьму неволі,  
Світ правди засвітить,  
І помоляться на волі  
Невольничі діти! . .

(lines 44–48)

(. . .The Ukraine will rise./ And she will dispel the darkness of slavery,/ and light the light of justice,/ and the children of slaves will pray in freedom; "Stojit' v seli Subotovi"); or:

Встане правда! встане воля!  
І Тобі одному  
Помоляться всі язики  
Вовіки і віки.

(lines 32–37)

(Justice will rise! Freedom will rise!/ and to You alone/ all men will pray,/ forever and ever; "Kavkaz"); or:

І оживе добра слава,  
Слава України,  
І світ ясний, невечерній  
Тихо засіє. . .

(lines 256–259)

(. . .and the good fame,/ the fame of the Ukraine will revive/ and a bright day, a day without evening/ will quietly shine; "Poslanije"). The "Testament" ("Jak umru to poxovajte"), the last poem of the "Try lita" album, also speaks of a "new, free family." In the post-exile period, the moment of regeneration is even more pronounced, beginning with the already cited conclusion of "Isaiah 35" ("Ožyvut stepy, ozera. . ."), and then in "Marija" ("A ja, nezlobnyj, vospoju,/ Jak procvitut' ubohi sela,/ Psalmom i tyxym i veselym/ Svjatuju dolen'ku tvoju" [And I, pure of heart, will sing,/ when the poor villages will bloom again,/ your holy fate in a quiet and joyful psalm]), in "Hosea 14" ("Voskresny mamu! . . . vernysja v svitlycju-xatu" [Arise from the dead, O mother! . . . return to your home], in the explicit reference to "renewed earth" (Onovlena zemlja) in "I Arxi-med i Halilej," and the extended image of new shoots growing from the roots of the old rotting oak in "Buvaly vojny j vijs'koviji svary."<sup>12</sup> And finally, the very last lines that Ševčenko is known to have written, the ending of "Cy ne pokynut' nam, neboho," show that in the purely personal, lyrical, and autobiographical context, his own vision of salvation, of paradise, is also cast in the mode of a return to a pristine and perfect Ukraine:

. . . Над самим Флегетоном  
Або над Стіксом, у раю,  
Неначе над Дніпром широким,  
В гаю — предвічному гаю,  
Поставлю хаточку, садочок  
Кругом хатини насажу,  
Прилинеш ти у холодочок,  
Тебе, мов кралою, посажу,  
Дніпро, Україну згадаєм,  
Веселі селища в гаях,  
Могили-гори на степах —  
І веселенько заспіваєм. . .

(lines 61–72)

<sup>12</sup> These images of renewal, it should be noted, stand in strikingly sharp contrast to the images and motifs of ruin and destruction, be it internal, in the poet's heart (for example, "Zavorožy meni volxve" or "Čy to nedolja ta nevolja") or in the external world (compare especially "Čuma" and "Sokyra"). This opposition, particularly as it reflects Ševčenko's psychology, requires further examination.

(. . . over Phlegethon itself,/ or over the Styx, in paradise,/ as if over the broad Dnieper,/ in a grove, an eternal grove,/ I will build my cottage/ and plant an orchard round that cottage;/ you [the muse] will come to me in the shade,/ and I will sit you down like a queen./ We will reminisce of the Dnieper and the Ukraine,/ of the joyful villages in the groves,/ the burial mounds like mountains in the steppe—/ and we will sing joyfully.)

7. It also follows from the preceding that Ševčenko can very well be considered a religious poet—not merely because thematically his poetry draws so heavily on the Bible, nor even because he so frequently addresses himself to God and indeed argues with Him and challenges Him, but because of the deep structures of his thought.<sup>13</sup> On the one hand this is the stance of a prophet who speaks to his people in the name, and often with the voice, of God, who mediates between them and the deity and expresses this mission by revealing to them the Word, in effect, the truth which is the myth itself. On the other, this is his all but explicit identification with Christ, the archetypal savior, the Lamb of God who expiates the sins of mankind. In his poetry Ševčenko makes this identification both expressly (most clearly perhaps in *Trizna*) and symbolically. In functional terms the equation is true and accurate, for like Christ who through his suffering frees man from the curse of original sin and opens for him the way to salvation, so Ševčenko—in both his own estimation and that of generations of his readers—unlocks the secret of the “great crypt” that is the Ukraine, expiates through his own ordeal the sin or “curse” of its disharmony, and gives his people a redemptive vision of a coming golden age. In both the prophecy and the expiation he exemplifies the role of the myth-carrier.

<sup>13</sup> The official Soviet interpretation, which is all but exclusively focused on the surface and verbal (that is, sign) level, and which generally disregards the context, crudely depicts Ševčenko as an atheist and materialist (for example, see the typical argument of the *Ševčenkivs'kyj slovnyk*, vol. 1, pp. 48–49; see also Petro Odarchenko's “Ševčenko in Soviet Literary Criticism,” in *Taras Ševčenko, 1814–1861: A Symposium*, pp. 259–302). During a period of relative thaw, it must be added, such vulgarizations were challenged by O. Bilec'kyj in his “Zavdannja i perspektyvy vyvčennja Ševčenka,” in *Zbirnyk prac dev'jatoji naukovoji ševčenkivs'koji konferenciji* (Kiev, 1961), pp. 13–25.

The ramifications of Ševčenko's legacy are many and complex, and they extend far beyond the realm of literature. In various, essential ways, however, some of them are highly revealing of the mythical core of the phenomenon. Taken most generally, the readings of Ševčenko's poetic statement can be divided into the "secular" (analytical, scholarly, historical, and so forth) and the "sectarian" (ranging from the ideological, to the metaphysical and openly irrationalist, and to the cultist). Each of these two broad categories covers a wide spectrum and, more often than not, overlaps with the other. The similarity between the two critical modes is often instructive in both a formal and a historical sense, as, for example, when we observe that various ostensibly analytical approaches are not only lacking in distance, but phrased in a critical language that is as metaphoric and affective as the poetry itself. The "sectarian" interpretations are clearly more numerous, and, in a sense, more interesting. The two major variants here are the official Soviet one and the nationalist. As can be expected from ideologies that are built on certitudes of belief and oriented toward ought-to-be realities, they share some basic premises: for both, Ševčenko is not so much a literary and historical figure as he is the carrier of profound, undeniable truths and a unique spokesman for his people. At the same time, both sides neatly divide Ševčenko in half, each recognizing only what is allowed by its ideological prism. Thus, the nationalist critics readily note Ševčenko's prophetic tone and content and stress his national, or more accurately his nativist orientation, but at the same time tend to deny the paramount role of *communitas* in Ševčenko's thought, and the populism and indeed anarchism that it implies, and instead contend that he expresses statist (*deržavnyc'ki*) views and values. In contrast, official Soviet critics enthusiastically stress the primacy of *communitas* (without, of course, naming it as such), which they see as Ševčenko's closeness to the common people, his *narodnist'* and his militant opposition to structure and authority, to tsar, nobility, and wealth. In so doing, however, they reduce the *communitas*/structure opposition to a question of socio-political views and remain largely impervious to its primarily affective and symbolic nature. Moreover, while denying the prophetic-"national" aspects of Ševčenko's poetry and turning a deaf ear to its religious overtones, they proceed to consider him a "revolutionary-democrat," very much in the mold of such mundane ideologues as Černyševskij or Dobroljubov.

And yet, despite the polarized interpretations, where each side

villifies the other for "falsifying" Ševčenko, and despite the absurd quid pro quo, where Ševčenko-the-nationalist-cum-statist is countered by Ševčenko-the-bolshevik-avant-la-lettre, there remains a basic identity of perception. Beneath the thin surface of rationalized interpretations (the secondary elaborations of primitive ideologies), Ševčenko's message is received precisely as a myth, and he himself perceived as a myth-carrier. For in both variants of the "sectarian" mode (variants, one should stress, which basically only model popular perceptions) Ševčenko is unmistakably portrayed as a culture hero—a father of his people (*bat'ko* Taras), a unique bard (*velykyj Kobzar*), who, like no one before him or after him, looked into the very depths of the national soul and articulated its needs, its values, and its language. Both sides consider his poetry a promethean "fiery word" that transcends time and history and verifiability, and serves as a lodestar for all subsequent generations of Ukrainians. And finally, what is more revealing of the myth and appropriate to it than its recapitulation in ritual? Although Ševčenko's symbolic code is now hardly accessible in its plenitude even to most critics, the great mass of his countrymen, on both sides of the ideological divide, and with little respect for differences of class and education, celebrate his central role in the national culture in a yearly ritual of renewal and rededication, in the so-called *akademiji* in his honor. This cult of Ševčenko, not infrequently disdained by critics as an aberrant or even parasitic treatment of the poet, is, in fact—like his self-portrait that became an icon for national self-identification, or like his "Testament" which for many years served as an unofficial national anthem—the most profound evidence of the impact of his poetry on the collective. Ultimately, it is quite inevitable that Ševčenko became as much a product as a maker of his own myth.

The mythical nature of Ševčenko's poetry is unmistakable. Through his own psychological and existential circumstances, his genius and, not least of all, the cultural readiness for his message, he was able to establish a unique and timeless resonance with the conscious and unconscious feelings of his people. As Kuliš said, "Ševčenko. . . was the first to ask our mute burial mounds what they are, and it was to him alone that they gave their answer, clear as God's word." Through this too he gave his people the ability to rediscover themselves and with that to gain a sense of reborn vitality. But that gift, as is often the case with mythical gifts, was not without its drop of poison: the basic structural component of the myth, the apotheosis of *communitas* and

the negation of structure, made for a questionable socio-political legacy. Even more questionable, indeed potentially fatal, was the legacy of the mythical thinking that Ševčenko had inculcated upon the psyche of succeeding generations of his countrymen. For in direct proportion to the apotheosis of *communitas* and the negation of structure came hypertrophy of the emotional and a blockage of the rational faculties. The millennial vision in particular, and the myth in general, could not but elevate metaphor and the ideal over analysis and practical action. While the actual social and political impact is still to be studied, the influence of the model of an ideal *communitas* on such concrete phenomena as "peasantomania" (*xlopomanija*), or generally on the legitimization of popular anarchistic tendencies, is more than probable.

The myth, in short, was a mixed blessing, and an answer to it was inevitable. The antithesis, a radical debunking of the myth and of mythical thinking as such, was soon provided by Ševčenko's friend and rival and self-appointed exegete—Pantelejmon Kuliš. To this day, however, it is the myth that is dominant in Ukrainian culture.



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