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Source: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1/4, RUS' WRIT LARGE: LANGUAGES, HISTORIES, CULTURES: Essays Presented in Honor of Michael S. Flier on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday (2006), pp. 441-459

Published by: [Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41036973>

Accessed: 29/09/2014 23:20

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Shevchenko in the Critical Essays of Ievhen Malaniuk

GEORGE G. GRABOWICZ

THE UKRAINIAN RECEPTION of Taras Shevchenko is massive in scope and broad, if not nearly as massive, in its variety. Given Shevchenko's key role in Ukrainian cultural life and in the shaping of Ukrainian national consciousness, his reception also articulates (providing one brackets out the popular and cultic effusions) the major phases and the central arguments of modern Ukrainian intellectual history. In the course of the last two centuries the alignment of these positions and phases has not been symmetrical: although briefer, the nineteenth-century reception, beginning with the responses to Shevchenko's first collection of poetry, the *Kobzar* of 1840, is much the more substantive. In Mykola Kostomarov (1817–75), Panteleimon Kulish (1819–97), Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–95), and Ivan Franko (1856–1916), one sees not only the major representatives and spokesmen (the “thinkers,” as an earlier poetics had it) of the rapidly developing Ukrainian national movement, but also figures who each in his own way was a founding father of that movement, determining its profile, values, and forms of self-awareness. Almost as importantly, each of them engaged with Shevchenko not only as an intellectual and critic, and indeed ideologue, but also as a scholar, often specifically focusing on editing and publishing the Shevchenko corpus. For Kostomarov, Kulish, and Franko, Shevchenko is also a defining presence in their own poetic creativity.¹ The twentieth century witnesses both continuity, where each mode—the critical, the ideological, the scholarly as such—evolves with its own dynamics, and also ever-greater differentiation. The “heroic” synthesis of the earlier period, where a writer like Kulish or Franko is driven to “cover all the bases” in the field of both Ukrainian literature and of Ukrainian scholarship as well, is progressively replaced by specialization—although at the beginning of the century the programmatic search for a unified vision is also evident. Most striking here is the predominance of ideology in the Shevchenko reception: the fact, so tellingly put by Drahomanov with reference to the latter half of the nineteenth century, that each emerging social and political orientation felt obliged to buttress its legitimacy by professing fealty to the Bard or, better, reinterpreting him to fit

its ideology. In the twentieth century this becomes particularly true of the polarized perspectives of the far Right and the Left—which in various ways also end up mirroring each other.

The Shevchenko reception can also be seen as a synchronic presence, as the kind of cultural force field envisioned by T. S. Eliot in his notion of an ideal literary history: in effect, a transtemporal continuum marked out by intertextuality and the implicit struggle, the Bloomian anxiety of influence, of succeeding generations of literary fathers and sons. In this way the Shevchenko reception stands revealed as a *sui generis* but altogether organic “internal” or “meta-history” within the overall history of Ukrainian literature and culture, and thus also an archeology of various tropes, topoi, and paradigms that relate both to Shevchenko (“genius,” “prophet,” and so on) and to the systematics of his perception (the *narod*, Ukraine itself, the realm of literature-as-State [the *derzhava slova*] and so forth). From a deconstructive and psychological perspective, this “internal history” can also be seen as a concealed and subliminal struggle with Shevchenko and his authority. A defining moment here becomes the paradigm-aporia of insight-and-blindness.² While arguably most dramatic at the very outset, in the reception of Kostomarov,³ it cannot but mark each succeeding phase and perspective: as the metaphor suggests, the binaries are yoked and intense light produces deep shadows. What is obscured as a result is not only the object of our attention, Shevchenko, and particularly his poetry, but the very history of his reception, the various attempts at reading him.

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At the start of the twentieth century there was a short-lived and tentative attempt at a modernist reading of Shevchenko—particularly in the writings of Mykola Ievshan (1889–1919)—but its impact, if any, was fleeting. (Published in an all-too-brief period of ideologically unfettered Ukrainian criticism, largely in 1910–1912, the texts were largely forgotten and then proscribed in Soviet Ukraine, and became more generally available only at the very end of the century.)⁴ In the actual reception, and the cultural discourse, the dominant foci become the diametrically opposed, but in various respects essentially similar, approaches of the ideological Left, culminating and congealing in the official Soviet line, and the writings—equally dogmatic, but lacking the same capabilities of enforcement—of the nationalist Right. The great majority of the spokesmen for both camps were indifferent critics, often simply propagandists, but in both camps there were also positions and authors that merit attention. For the nationalists these are Dmytro Dontsov (1883–1973), the premier and unchallenged ideologue and publicist and then, with a considerably more nuanced response, the poet and critic Ievhen Malaniuk. Our focus here will be on the latter.

A basic and at times programmatically stressed feature of post-Soviet Ukrainian literary historiography are its attempts at rethinking the canon of twentieth-century Ukrainian literature. In actual practice these are often halfhearted and prone to echo earlier non- or anti-Soviet (largely émigré) ideological readings. At times they compensate for their derivativeness with greater stridency. At the same time they show various continuities with Soviet practice, particularly in the focus on “ideologically committed” writers and the underlying value of patriotism and nation building. (This, in turn, reflects the broader problem of institutional and pedagogic priorities, of quality control and of institutional continuity with the Soviet system.) The post-Independence reception of Malaniuk, and no less so of Dontsov, is most revealing here. With few if any exceptions, recent Ukrainian critical writings on Malaniuk are cast in the mode of nationalist pathos and aggressive veneration⁵ and in fact signal a decline of insight and historical grounding with respect to earlier émigré responses.⁶ (One cannot, of course, speak of a contrast with Soviet treatments of Malaniuk, since these were confined to ignoring the writer or denouncing him.) For the most part, a reassessment of the writer, let alone a deconstruction of his self-presentation, does not figure as a goal in these recent studies.⁷ And if this is true of the general reading of Malaniuk, then it is all the more so of his treatment of Shevchenko, the National Poet.

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That Shevchenko occupies a central place in Malaniuk’s writings should come as no surprise. A poet who proclaimed as his core virtues patriotism and total commitment to the nation and saw himself as not just its spokesman, but a tribune called to lead, challenge, and excoriate its faults, could not but turn to Shevchenko, the National Poet, who had come to exemplify this stance, particularly for the nationalist ideology. This is the recurring trope in Malaniuk’s own writings and it dominates in the criticism devoted to him.⁸ It also begs the question, for these public virtues inhere not so much in Shevchenko as in his reception—that is, in the operant ideology or mode of perception.⁹ At the same time these perceived virtues or values refer us back to the overarching problem of the Shevchenko reception—its protean and evolving nature. For Malaniuk’s sense of Shevchenko-as-tribune is also not false; it is not merely the projection of a perfervid generation and ideology. The prophetic voice *is* a presence in Shevchenko’s poetry and *is* clearly perceived in the earliest reception, particularly that of Kostomarov.¹⁰ But as central as it is, it is always tempered and recast by the more complex dynamics of Shevchenko’s voice and message and self-presentation—and the nuances that emerge are something that Malaniuk’s ideological thrust is programmed to ignore—or simply not see. Still, he does see various key moments, some of them acutely, and his confrontation with

Shevchenko contains within it, mostly unconsciously, a confrontation, an agon with himself. The antagonists, the two hypostases that come into play here are Malaniuk-the-poet and Malaniuk-the-publicist-and-critic. In a manner that echoes the underlying dualism of Franko, and particularly the tension in his reception of Shevchenko, the voices that emerge decenter and problematize each other in new and perhaps unexpected ways.

A further qualification is that a fuller picture of Malaniuk, particularly the range of his poetic stances and poses, of his shifts of voice and of his own sense of self, is emerging only now with the publications of heretofore unavailable poetic and critical material.¹¹ Almost forty years after his death there is no complete edition of his works (a situation, alas, that obtains for the great majority of Ukrainian writers); his epistolary legacy is still largely uncollected and unpublished; and his critical writings are for the most part available only in a selection that he compiled in his last years.¹² But the essentialist and ideological portrait that had been traditionally presented is now much more open to revision—even while for some the new publications are intended precisely to reassert the ideological icon of the past.¹³

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Although Shevchenko also figures in Malaniuk's poetry and a comprehensive treatment would need to focus on that as well, the core of his Shevchenko reception is in his essays and criticism. (Arguably, too, the prose constitutes his truer accomplishment; at the very least it articulates a stronger voice, but a demonstration of this must be left for another occasion.) To be sure, the scope of this Shevchenkiana is not voluminous (9 out of 76 essays in the two-volume edition that he prepared, or a little more than a tenth of his output)¹⁴—although one should note that not all his essays are included here, and that the Shevchenko theme occurs in essays other than those specifically devoted to him. But given the range of Malaniuk's interests—modern Ukrainian literature, particularly of the twentieth century, but also the central figures such as Kulish and Franko; Russian literature and the question of Russian-Ukrainian relations, especially literary, with a special focus on Gogol'/Hohol; the general political and cultural scene, miscellaneous reviews, and so on—the Shevchenko bloc clearly stands out and is commensurate with the writings of other major figures in the Shevchenko reception. It consists both of occasional pieces and reviews and of his more fundamental efforts, in effect the essays he himself placed at the beginning of the first volume of his *Knyha sposterezhen'* in a section entitled "Vid Kobzaria do natsii," i.e., "Buriane polittia (1917–27)" (1927), "Rannii Shevchenko" (1933), "Try lita" (1935), "Do spravzhn'oho Shevchenka" (1937), "Shevchenko zhyvyi" (1961), and "Replika" (1927) (which he places here out of chronological sequence—presumably because it is a response

to Khvyl'ovyj—although despite its “occasional” nature it probably deserves more prominence). The other two essays are “Shevchenkovi metamorfozy” and “Shevchenko v zhytti” (both written in 1956 and included in volume 2 of *Knyha sposterezhen'*).

For the most part, especially in the earlier period, these essays have a pronounced, indeed programmatic, ideological orientation. The stance Malaniuk chooses is not that of a dispassionate observer or academic critic, although a certain claim to academic seriousness is also apparent—that is, to a generally historical (in his terms an “historiosophic”) and what we would now call cultural studies overview; he is not, however, either by training or temperament a literary scholar, a *literaturoznavets*.¹⁵ And for the most part, with greater or lesser insistence, at times even stridently, Malaniuk is espousing the new nationalist ideology of Dontsov and the journal *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk* (from 1933 simply *Vistnyk*) that he was editing. The story of Malaniuk's relationship with Dontsov is still to be written, and much of it is contained in a sizable and still unpublished correspondence.¹⁶ At the end of their lives, i.e., in the 1960s, their views were diverging, resulting, above all, from Malaniuk's need to reorient his thinking on contemporary Ukraine. But that was far in the future. In the seminal interwar period Malaniuk can be said to be fully in Dontsov's camp. A sense of Dontsov's hold on him, and of Malaniuk's loyalty to the man and his cause, is conveyed in an article that he wrote on the occasion of Dontsov's seventy-fifth birthday, in which he traces—with the fervor and pathos of a true believer—the role that “the Doctor” (as he was styled by his followers) played for Ukraine and for him personally.¹⁷ The article, in effect an encomium, is itself constructed from the essentialist and Manichean topoi of a Dontsovian vision of Ukrainian history: the dark night of Ukrainian political powerlessness, confusion, and lack of will that marked the end of the nineteenth century and was epitomized by the rationalism and federalism and, allegedly, Russocentrism of Drahomanov; the heroic effort and then debacle of the war for Ukrainian independence, the *vyzvol'ni zmahannia*; and then the promise of an answer for the reasons behind the failure—and with that a vision of renewal and indeed release from a psychological state of siege. That moment of release is Dontsov and his *Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk*, which started appearing in 1922 when many were still literally caught in the aftershocks of the war:

...від того першого числа ЛНВ—вже дихнуло на нас першим передчуттям можливої відповіді. Це вже було щось якби прорив облоги, якби вихід в широкий світ, якби відзискання вільного тху і вільних рухів—після довгого спаралізування.¹⁸

The “нас” is key here: it refers broadly, one must assume, to the whole young generation of patriots, to everyone who identified with the cause of Ukrainian

independence, but specifically—and this the article elaborates at length—to the soldiers who had fought and suffered for it and now, like Malaniuk, found themselves defeated and in exile, in internment camps in Poland. And this poses a crucial question:

Як це сталося, що ми, аджеж озброєні духом великої ідеї, опинилися в таборах? Як це сталося, що ми, аджеж ідейно непереможені, тепер—переможені й безсилі? Як могло статися, що ми, сини Батьківщини, Батьківщину покинули, і Вона—залишилася без нас, її вірних синів?¹⁹

In its repetition and pathos the question is remarkable not so much for its intensity of feeling, as for its *topoi*, its logic, and its value system, which clearly (and anachronistically) imposes on the time immediately following the Independence struggle (1917–21/22) a Dontsovian worldview, a worldview of will and voluntarism, which was then only on the verge of being articulated by Western ideologies, the fascist and the National Socialist, to be echoed later in the course of the 1920s and especially the 1930s by Dontsov and his company, among them Malaniuk himself, but which from the postwar perspective of the writing (1958) is inferred as having always been there, as being, in fact, in the very essence of things.

That essentialist and totalizing perspective will be at the heart of our discussion here, even as we move from the historical context to the writing itself, to the fabric of the Shevchenko reception. For now, one must only stress that for Malaniuk, who began his life in exile as a young officer-adjutant of the Ukrainian army interned in the Polish camps, who was a direct participant in the war for Independence, and then the retreat before the Bolsheviks, and the final defeat, that trauma became the defining moment. As we see from the essays he included in his *Книга спостережень*, but even more so in those that have emerged only recently, his sense of self, as poet and as patriot, is born of that formative experience of defeat and disillusionment and, of course, guilt.²⁰ Following at its heels was the need to make sense of it all and to compensate for the failure and guilt by continuing on and overcoming—if need be in another modality. From this, too, is born, it seems, the essential connection between writing and patriotic action; as for the Romantics a century earlier, the word is again made flesh, or to use his not altogether felicitous metaphor, poetry becomes the stiletto, or, in another image (which arms his editor), the saber: “Поєзія і ніж’ та строфи—на шаблі.”²¹ While the projection of literature as social action, indeed revolution, is very much in the air throughout Europe, in the Ukrainian case it is a particularly potent *topos*—adumbrated by the fact that it has such a long history as a central paradigm for the major nineteenth-century writers—Shevchenko himself, Kulish, Franko, and Lesia Ukraïnka. In

the first emigration it is perhaps most essentially identified with Malaniuk, who, as reflected in the name of his first collection of poetry, *Stylet i stylos* (1925), is at pains to stress the connection between poetry and action, and indeed to represent poetry as action. While the term *derzhava slova* was first used by Mykhailo Orest as a title for a collection of his poetry a few decades later,²² and while this turning of poetry into unmediated political action was also attempted (quite to the detriment of the poetry—for here it becomes merely versified propaganda) by Oleh Ol'zhych, i.e., in his collection *Vezhi*, the fusion of the real (political and martial especially) and the literary clearly animates the poetry of Malaniuk and also appears in various (unfortunately triumphalist and turgid) formulas of self-identification (e.g., “залізних імператор стрוף” and so on). For its part, while this fusion of the real and the literary/poetic is a standard topos in modernist and postmodernist poetics, it does not by itself provide an unambiguous modernist connection for Malaniuk: the problem bears further investigation.

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The ideological cast of Malaniuk's Shevchenko essays can be subsumed under the following major topoi or rubrics, each of which subtends a range of ramifications and nuances (which require further, more extensive examination):

1. At the core of this criticism is a unifying, a priori belief, one that clearly draws on Dontsov's thinking, that Shevchenko articulates in his poetry both a *political* and a *national* vision of and for Ukraine. As noted at the outset, this position is entirely plausible as far as the reception is concerned, especially in the early twentieth century; and in the poetry itself, particularly in Shevchenko's so-called political poems (“Son,” “Kavkaz,” “Poslaniie,” “Rozryta mohyla,” and so on), there are formulations that both anticipate a political reading and draw on a collective sensibility that is protonational and at the same time serves as a conduit and stimulus for the formation of national consciousness. In and of itself, however, Shevchenko's vision of Ukraine and his sense of the audience he is addressing is marked by symbolic, mythical, and millenarian moments, by constant decentering and above all by the presence of the sacred—all of which individually and in sum qualifies the nascent political and national dimensions. For Malaniuk, drawing as he does on Dontsov, this is largely ignored or simply not perceived. His argument is fundamentally essentialist and a priori: Shevchenko *is—eo ipso*—a national prophet and a national genius, and the critic's task is not to test the proposition but to assert it—and to apply it, to develop it for the needed effect. The reality of the literary work and the need to elucidate it, to bear witness to it are linked: the propaedeutic, nation- and consciousness-building task that the critic—the true critic—must live up to is altogether implicit in the ethos, the rhetorical

devices, and in the overall polemical tenor of these essays. For in and of itself there is no *shevchenkoznavstvo* or a Shevchenko reception: there is only a battle for the “real Shevchenko” (an idea already well-established on the Soviet side). Thus in “Rannii Shevchenko”:

І тут годиться згадати ім'я невтомного Степана Смаль-Стоцького.

В його завзятій боротьбі за справжнього Шевченка, часом перебільшеній (напр., у справі метрики), в його зворушливій простолінійності та впертості, навіть у можливих помилках, дається напрям до великої правди: розуміння творчості Шевченка і висвітлення його особистості можливі лише за національного підходу до національного генія.

І справді, у великим, як-не-як, дорібку сучасної шевченкології... як мало праць чи статей, що кидали б справді нове і очищальне світло на й досі “таємничу” постать генія. Тим більше, що з таким своєрідним генієм, як Шевченко, сама лише раціоналістична аналіза в багатьох випадках буде безпорадна й, що найменше, неповна. Без творчої й при тім національної інтуїції тут, напевно, не обійтись.²³

To this latter issue of the mode (rational versus transrational) for addressing the phenomenon of genius we will briefly return at the end. In the broader sense, however, this notion of a “proper” or “fitting” approach to the problem also implies that some past readings may prove valid but some, indeed most, will be but facets of “pseudo-*shevchenkoznavstvo*.”²⁴ This belief, and the polemical stance it subtends, is general and informs various other theses as well.

2. The priority of the idea of nation and of its essential manifestations (“national perspective,” “national cause,” “national genius,” “a national approach to a national genius,” and so on) imposes a clear teleology, even determinism, on Shevchenko's poetic world and his overall import and meaning. Thus in this same essay (building up to the preceding citation):

...жадних ідеологічних “борсань,” жадних “спалювань ідеалів” і жадних “матеріялістичних” (отже й “соціалістичних”) *звужувань* видно-кругу ані в Шевченковій творчості, ані в Шевченковій свідомості—ніколи не було. Був—безупинний *ріст*. І свідомість його, і його творчість являють рідкий в історії культури приклад органічного, суцільного зростання особистості й її світогляду—вверх...

Хто цієї монолітної суцільності Шевченка й готичного зростання його геніяльної особистості не бачить, тому—поза “Реве та стогне,” або “Садок вишневий”—головна суть, щирець його творчості й його історично-національного значення зостануться невідомі.²⁵

What is particularly revealing here is the coexistence in this passage of two incommensurate tropes—the “organic” and the “monolithic”—for dealing with presumably one and the same phenomenon. Rhetorical looseness aside, this does point to Malaniuk’s peculiar adherence to and yet (at times only incipient) divergence from the Dontsovian faith: the notion of a monolithic cast to Shevchenko is certainly part of that dogma, but the moment of organicity is one that Dontsov’s fundamentally static and nominalist, surface-oriented, and basically illustrative approach cannot really perceive. And yet the argument of an underlying, organic unity in Shevchenko’s poetry is of course valid and productive—but it also requires a delineation of which moments and structures determine that unity (i.e., other than an essentialist notion of “nation”). Still, Malaniuk’s movement in this direction deserves further attention (see below).

3. As an extension of both of the preceding features, the nationcentric and the teleological, the perspective on Shevchenko in both Dontsov and Malaniuk projects a radical and highly self-conscious historical break. To be sure, this can be considered normal for any phase or stage of the Shevchenko reception, i.e., in the earlier readings of Kulish, or Drahomanov, or Franko (Kostomarov is privileged in that he really is the first and as such less anxious, perhaps, to stress his priority): each more or less self-consciously sets himself apart and purports a new beginning. At the same time, this sense of distinction and of a new beginning accompanies virtually any programmatic and polemical approach, and is a product of the pragmatic role the criticism is intended to play. Here, however, there is a qualitative difference: the break or caesura in question is ideological and in its full extension (i.e., with Dontsov) totalizing. A true, nationally adequate reading—so the tautology goes—begins only with them; before them there was for the most part, or entirely, only *pseudo-shevchenkoznavstvo*. Malaniuk, to be sure, allows for more nuance. Thus, in a late article (a 1956 review of Pavlo Zaitsev’s biography of Shevchenko) he lists the writers who “de-bronze”²⁶ the canonic “Kobzar Taras” and establish a real, live Shevchenko. The list is rather catholic, albeit still (with only one exception) confined to non- or anti-Soviet critics, i.e. (in his order), Stepan Smal’-Stots’kyi, D. Dontsov, D. Chyzhevs’kyi, D. Antonovych, and O. Doroshkevych.²⁷ (The only one who does not belong among these scholars-academics is the publicist-ideologue Dontsov, and his presence here again reflects Malaniuk’s peculiar dependence and deference.) In 1937, however, near the end of the interwar period, with a new cataclysm looming, his argument is more categorical and, as ever, impassioned:

Ані великою помилкою, ані надто химерним парадоксом не буде твердження, що Тараса Шевченка—живого і не смертельного—

уздріли ми допіру по історичній провесні 1917 року. І з того часу вдивляємося все напруженіш і уважніш в його невинно зростаючу постать.

Потрібне було аж тектонічне зрушення історії, потрібен був аж пламіль того вогню, що в нім “її, окраденую, збудять,” потрібні були аж “мартівські” *іди* України, щоб в димові і пожежах революції, з першими судорожними відрухами поволі притомніючого Лазаря, побачили ми, здавалося б, знайоме, але яке ж відмінне обличчя, і відчули тисячкратно спотужнілий палючий і спалюючий дух.²⁸

Two moments may be noted here. One is that this is a text of a talk at a student “*akademii*” in Warsaw and thus the heightened pathos conforms to the genre of the public gathering. In terms of the reception as a whole, this mode may well underlie much of the hyperbole and passion of various Shevchenko effusions. At the very least, one should note that the public setting is a driving force in most of the nationalist (and much of the Soviet) Shevchenko commentary—and the implicit soapbox may condition much of the earlier commentary as well. For all its passion and pathos, however, Malaniuk’s argument has more than a grain of truth: as T. S. Eliot also stressed, each age not only sees the past and its canonic texts differently, but has an obligation to do so; each generation has the right to insist on its perspective.²⁹ The major difference here is that for Malaniuk this right is couched not in esthetic or cultural terms, but as political epiphany and empowerment, as nothing less than the birth of a nation, which in that birth also discovers its spiritual father. Furthermore, as he is at pains to stress in this address to the student audience, that experience is not given to all: it is the special, indeed exclusive, inheritance of a new generation that made history (witnessing the “ides of March”) and is now—as if in recompense for that ordeal and enlightenment—implicitly chosen to lead the nation. This sense of constituting a select, chosen group, indeed, as Dontsov frequently asserted, not a party, but an “order” (*orden*), one which was called to set itself apart (and above) society, underlies the pathos of the nationalist discourse, and within that its exclusionary claim on Shevchenko.

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In the Shevchenko reception itself, the central task facing the critic and his audience—and one that encapsulates all three ideological constructs, the national, the teleological, and the historical—is *to perceive and then act* on the fundamental paradigm shift that stands revealed in that reception; i.e., the shift from a populist to a voluntarist-and-nationalist Shevchenko. In the same student talk Malaniuk presents both poles succinctly and with his usual verve. The first, the “before,” is the populist-*cum*-Drahomanovian perspective

on Shevchenko—on a Shevchenko, as he tellingly puts it, who is both “icon” and relic:

...тут говоримо не про винятки, а про загал суспільства, про те просвітянсько-драгоманівське *тло*, якого нездолані рештки бачимо й досі.

На тім тлі і в тій атмосфері покалічена цензурою і впень закобзарена суспільством поезія Шевченка обернулася в вельмишановну, але майже мертву реліквію, а образ Шевченка сплотився і зазмер народницькою іконою, перед якою час від часу відбувалися нелегальні і безнадійно-панахидні відправи. На іконі тій, в згоді з народницькими канонами, лавреат академії мистецтв і академік гравюри фігурував у відповідній канонічній уніформі, себто в шапці і кожусі, що сталися зловісним *символом* на довгі десятиліття.

Як далекою є ця ікона тій живій постаті, що за ці трудні роки навчилися ми і привчаємося бачити в Шевченкові!³⁰

(The debate, one should note, over the symbolism of the populist Shevchenko icon, the “шапка і кожух,” is literally still ongoing in today’s post-Independence Ukraine, and reflects the decades-long hiatus, the suspension of free discourse, that was imposed by Sovietism.)

On the other side, the “after,” is Shevchenko-not-the-peasant, but the Cossack, a “пан” who was born to lead, to straighten the backs of his countrymen, to make them a nation:

Вкладаючи своє життя в історію своєї батьківщини, “кріпак” Шевченко був свідомий свого творчого, “обаполи времени” пов’язуючого чину.

Бо був він, повторюю козак, себто пан, та ще й над панами, що одразу загетьманував над всіма тими Гребінками, Галаганями, Лизогубами, Маркевичами... Недарма—дехто з них називав його “отаманом.”

Був він свідомий, що своєю визвольною, переможною, панівною поезією випростує тих, що “похилились,” що зробилися “душевобогими,” відродить самий *інстинкт* панування...

До “рабів незрячих—гречкосіїв,” до “німих підлих рабів,” до “підніжків” і “овечих натур,” до “капусти головаті” різних повітових “громадівців,” до “мільйонів полян, дулібів і древлян,” як стисло в “Юродивім” окреслює він українську національну дійсність, до “недолюдків,”—він вогненний видає наказ: “*Будьте люди!*” “Схаменіться!”—яке глибоке й яке ж стисле це слово!—відчуйте

той сором, що Я відчуваю за ваше внутрішнє каліцтво, каліцтво недолюдків, неповних, часткових істот. Адаже ви “козацькі діти,” “лицарські сини.”

“Будьте люди”—в устах Шевченка то велике слово бути “людиною,” бо то—“образ Божий” а він, як правдивий геній, носив у собі полум’яму віру в Бога.

“Будьте люди”—значить будьте народом, будьте нацією так, як ваші славні козацькі прадіди.³¹

In this passage one sees the quintessential Malaniuk bombarding (precisely in the spirit of Dontsov) the reader/listener with quotations (some of them out of context), projecting the central ideological message and deftly weaving in its core topoi—of “action (*chyn*)” and the “aristocracy of the Spirit,” of the inherent provincialism (“*plebeistvo*,” as Dontsov was fond of calling it) of the establishment worthies and of the old “Hromada” order, and of the implicit leadership principle, with Shevchenko-as-*otaman* and his poetry constituting “fiery orders” (наказ). Culminating it is the ultimate value of the Nation and with it a return to glorious ancestral values. And all is couched in a rhetoric that appears to draw on nothing more than the poetic text itself. Its very passion (like the citations) hides its selectivity and its elisions.

*

As rooted as it is in the ideological, Malaniuk’s reception of Shevchenko still differs significantly from that of his editor and guru. For the most part, each of these moments of difference rebounds to the benefit of Malaniuk, constituting an attenuation of the categorical, hard-core ideological vision of Dontsov.

As a rule, Malaniuk is more balanced, more nuanced, and less unabashedly doctrinaire and propagandistic than Dontsov. This is particularly evident in his treatment of various figures surrounding Shevchenko that interact with him and comment on him. Thus where for Dontsov Kulish is mostly cast in negative terms, as an unworthy and mean-spirited contemporary, pro-Russian, idyllic, and unrealistic, the very antipode of Shevchenko’s patriotism, etc.,³² for Malaniuk, who devotes an appreciative essay to Kulish and frequently cites him, he is a major figure shaping the national revival, an epitome of national commitment with a range of literary contributions. The same can be said of Franko, whom Dontsov regularly derided in the interwar period and accepted only late in life. And while Malaniuk follows Dontsov, for the most part, in decrying Drahomanov for his alleged hedging on the Ukrainian national cause, for his alleged Russocentrism, cold rationalism, and so on—it is never in the spirit of unbridled vituperation and vilification that characterizes Dontsov.

The fundamental difference, however, is that Malaniuk actually focuses on

Shevchenko in an intrinsically literary way; his criticism engages the poet and his texts and his multivalent presence in the literary process. Shevchenko thus emerges not as a set trope or exemplum, but as a phenomenon that deserves a critical reading—in effect a programmatic rereading. This rereading begins with a focus on the text itself, which, in contrast to Dontsov, Malaniuk treats more or less in context, although with an interpretative paradigm clearly in mind (which thereby severely limits any readiness to follow an unpredictable line of inquiry). The shift into the ideological mode and the ideological metatext, however, follows almost invariably. His argument, as noted, is not couched with any academic rigor and is basically not related to any theoretical constructs. At the same time, while he does acknowledge a literary-historical parsing or internal differentiation to Shevchenko's poetic corpus such as the "Try lita" period (i.e., the poetry of 1843–45) or the still earlier poetry (the prose corpus and generally his Russian-language works, as well as his paintings, are virtually ignored), he clearly does not accept their autonomy or discreteness. This in turn—precisely as a product of the underlying essentialism and teleology—makes Shevchenko not only monolithic and predetermined (any concession to his "growth" and "development" is highly circumscribed), but radically truncated: the glaring absences in this vision are the psychological dimension of Shevchenko's poetry, and with it the enfolded questions of irony and decentering, the turn to the religious dimension and to universal values, the interplay of the collective and the individual, and above all the ongoing quest for self-definition. (For Malaniuk as for Dontsov the latter is a non-issue par excellence: for them Shevchenko *is what he is*—and a process of self-definition and self-creation is simply not predicated. If it were to be considered, their entire essentialist and teleological edifice would come crashing down.) Clearly, much more is left out than in.

But in one respect Malaniuk does offer a genuine insight, and it relates to what is a constant and indeed dominant leitmotif in these essays: our reception of Shevchenko on the one hand, and on the other the way in which the poet molds that reception by acting on us as a dynamic, even preternatural force (his favorite image for this is the volcano or the shifting of a tectonic plate), one which reorients collective notions of identity and indeed shapes a new identity. The underlying trope here, as noted earlier, is the unity of Shevchenko's vision and of his poetry as such, which can be interpreted either as a monolithic or as an organic unity. While the former tends to stasis (and to doctrinaire readings—as in Dontsov), the latter is implicitly dynamic and, in fact, highly productive. Malaniuk (who himself at times lapses into the monolithic, doctrinaire interpretation) does, however, intuit the organic moment in two key ways. One relates to what is a recurrent question for him: how does one perceive Shevchenko? and what is an adequate response to Shevchenko? And the other and more problematic: how can we mold or train our response?

One simple answer for the latter is—we cannot.

Malaniuk begins one of his late essays, “Shevchenko zhyvyi” (which he wrote in 1961 and as the date, 18 March, suggests—for some Shevchenko celebration that typically takes place that month) with a formulation (echoing one we had already encountered in his earlier article “Rannii Shevchenko”)³³ that anyone who has closely studied Shevchenko cannot but agree with:

Хочеться ще згадати про таємницю наших відносин з Тарасом Шевченком і таємницю самої постаті Шевченка. А що постать його—і в історії нашої літератури, і в історії нашої Батьківщини—є *таємнича*—згодиться більшість земляків, які мали нагоду над тією справою замислюватися.³⁴

The formulation is striking. One can quibble with the proposition that a majority of Ukrainians who had thought about it would agree with it (my hunch is that only a small minority would—unless by “замислюватися” one means a process of truly intense contemplation), but the overall reading rings utterly true. “Шевченкознавство,” he continues,

так розквітле на переломі 20-х і 30-х р.р.,—нині, силою речей загальмоване,—зробило, все ж, на шляху до розкриття тієї таємниці немало. Щонайменше, згромадило певний матеріал, що правда, у великій мірі знищений або не завжди доступний.

Але шевченкознавство є галузь літературознавства, отже науки, отже—категорії раціональної. А для виявлення Шевченка взагалі, а феномену його поезії зокрема, самої лише розумової аналізи напевно не вистачає.³⁵

He goes on to distinguish between the word as mere verbal communication and the Word, the *Logos*, as profound, God-given truth, and cites Franko’s

Слова—полова
Але вогонь в одежі слова—
Безсмертна іскра Прометея

and sees the latter as the fire that is the very essence of Shevchenko:

...цей *вогонь*, так чи інакше, присутній в кожній справжній творчості,—є передовсім незаперечним, суттєвим, істотним і природним складником поезії Шевченка, можна сказати душею її. Той вогонь відчувається майже в кожному його рядку, хоч температура його, розуміється, не завжди однакова. Але той вогонь

з вулканічною силою проривається назверх в “Кавказі,” “Посланії,” “Марії,” переспівах псалм, ліриках заслання й по повороті. Проривається майже наочно, майже намацально, майже, що так скажу, фізикально.³⁶

And it is precisely this protean force that cannot be rationally grasped:

Того вогню розумово, “науково,” аналітично—викрити, зважити, підрахувати—не можна. Переконати когось, хто того вогню *ще* не відчув або *вже* не відчуває,—способу немає. Реестрування метафор чи ритмічних ходів, клясифікування епітетів чи розгляд навіть синтакси Шевченка—дає вже багато, але не дає (і не може дати) істотного.

Скажу коротко і просто—*навчитися Шевченка не можна.*

Його можна сприймати або не сприймати, як явища творчості взагалі. І це не довільне твердження. Як можна навчити сприймати поезію напр. Гете, чи музику Вагнера, тим більше людину національно чужу? Згадаймо, які остаточно даремні наші зусилля передати Шевченка іншим народам, Шевченка, який є органічним згустком нашої нації аж до майже повної герметичності для не-українця.³⁷

The passage raises a number of questions and reflections. Even though at this late stage in life Malaniuk is no longer in the ideological trenches and his poetry has taken on an elegiac tone, the imprint of an earlier time is still evident in this essay. The piece ends with Malaniuk again invoking the events of 1917 and the rebirth that was occasioned by this poetry, and again pressing the fact of the ongoing attempts to stifle Ukrainian identity by the Soviet regime, and finally the conviction that this ordeal can only be met by a poetry of genius, that this is the only recourse:

Про це треба пам’ятати особливо тепер, коли Батьківщина є фізично беззбройна і безборонна, і коли її сливе єдиною “військовою силою,” єдиною справді “атомовою бомбою” є саме книга, де м. ін. стоїть:

Буде бито
царями сіяєє жито!
А люди виростуть. Умрутъ
Ще незачатіє царята...
І на оновленій землі
Врага не буде, супостата.
А буде син і буде мати
І будуть люди на землі.³⁸

Despite the fact that the argument veers towards a providential and “nationally” hermetic mode, and circles back to his moment of trial and ordeal (1917 and the *vyzvol'ni zmahannia*), and that the whole is again given a political and ideological reading, and even despite the fact that once again he has to rely on the *derzhava slova* topos, the notion of literature-poetry as the collective's recourse of last resort—the core of the argument is not vitiated: the bond that is established between Shevchenko's poetry and the collective reception is indeed remarkably profound and multifaceted and resistant to simple rationalistic readings. If his argument were to be parsed and translated into a nonmetaphysical idiom, it would purport a deep organic bond (as he also asserts) through and by which, and more so than with any other Ukrainian writer (hence, the notion of genius is most applicable to him), Shevchenko's poetry becomes coextensive with the experience of the Ukrainian people—not so much the real, historical experience (although clearly that, too), as the symbolic, transcendent code that is contained above all in language, but generally in a complex of feelings and values that both define the group's culture and identity and at the same time suggest transcendent, universal efficacy. In a word, that which in all cultures is conveyed by the realm of the sacred. In the absence of a ready key for articulating this totalizing mode, the metaphors Malaniuk draws on, albeit couched in the language of military force that came so readily to him, were indeed accurate—precisely with reference to the power that is accumulated in this poetry.

The analytical repertoire, the language that Malaniuk had to draw on was not particularly suited to articulating this core. Yet he did more than one could have expected with the limited resources at his command—and especially when confronted with the pressures to shift his argument into an ideological and ultimately an instrumental mode. For just as there is genuine insight in his articulation of the reception side of Shevchenko's poetry—the topos or metaphor of its mysteriousness (though oblique and continually veering towards an exclusionary nationalist reading) ultimately still refers to the realm of the sacred—so also his sense of the code itself is remarkably intuitive. In probably his best essay of the interwar period, “Try lita,” Malaniuk lets fall a notion that was to be picked up with a very different repertoire of analytical tools and premises only some half century later, and without at that time any awareness of that earlier articulation—by this author.³⁹ Malaniuk speaks in that essay of Shevchenko's myth of Ukraine almost in passing:

Задивлений у сліпучий міт своєї України—без чого не був би поетом—він, однак, ніколи не втрачав відчуття української дійсності. В умінні втримати рівновагу між мітом та дійсністю крилася й таємниця його творчості, таємниця його романтизму. От чому трагічного “зударення” міту з дійсністю в році 1843-му не сталося.⁴⁰

And further:

Він міг би той історичний і геополітичний фатум України проклясти враз з її “малоросійською” дійсністю, міг би “відцуратися” тієї “Малоросії” зовсім, міг би виїхати за кордон, щоб і там творити Україну-міг... Але погодитись з тою дійсністю, заспокоїти себе найбільш навіть “раціональною” ідеологією чи історіософією, хоча б вона найвлучніше ту дійсність виправдувала і обґрунтовувала,—він не міг. Не вмів.⁴¹

It is clear that this notion of myth is not fleshed out as a conceptual (let alone theoretical) paradigm, and not presented as a code or mode of perception and creativity; it is basically synonymous with “poetic vision”—and one that is placed in direct opposition to the hard, “real,” political reality. The correlations between it and the functions of history, collective memory, and prophecy are still uncharted, and various central structures, particularly the millenarian, are hardly even conceived. But it is based on a sense of an organic unity in the poetry and it does intuit the centrality of the sacred, which implicitly even surpasses the ideological. As such, it foreshadows arguments to come.

NOTES

1. A core issue here is an inordinate anxiety, not just in the face of influence but of genius; i.e., the fact that Shevchenko’s poetry apparently overwhelmed both Kostomarov and Kulish. Both of them—already published authors of poetry—fell silent once Shevchenko appeared on the scene. After Shevchenko’s death Kulish returned to writing poetry (indeed with compensatory gusto); Kostomarov did not.
2. See Paul de Man’s *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (New York, 1971), esp. 105–6.
3. See my “Insight and Blindness in the Reception of Ševčenko: The Case of Kostomarov,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 17, no. 3–4 (December 1993): 279–340.
4. See the various Shevchenko articles by Mykola Ievshan in his *Krytyka, literaturoznavstvo, estetyka* (Kyiv, 1998).
5. Most active among the ideologist venerator is probably Taras Salyha; see his introduction to Ievhen Malaniuk, *Povernennia: Poezii, literaturoznavstvo, publitsyky, shchodennyky, lysty* (Lviv, 2005); this same introduction—“Poeziia i nizh’ ta strofy—na shabli...”—also appeared as a separate article in *Suchasnist’*, no. 1 (2006): 138–53. An earlier article by Oksana Nakhlik specifically on Malaniuk’s Shevchenko reception, “Shevchenko v eseistytsi ta poezii Ievhena Malaniuka,” *Ukrains’ka mova i literatura v serednikh shkolakh, himnaziakh, litseiakh ta kolehiumakh*, no. 1 (1999): 85–93, is generally laudatory—but not strictly ideological,

- and indeed even critical (in very general terms) of the propagandistic element in Malaniuk's Shevchenko essays. The writings of Leonid Kutsenko, especially his monograph *Dominus Malaniuk: Tlo i postat'*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv, 2002), are generally balanced, academically scrupulous (and based on genuine archival research), and insightful—although still clearly marked by an apologetic stance towards his subject; see esp. 251–73 for his discussion of Malaniuk's Shevchenko reception.
6. See, e.g., the articles (and, unfortunately, only fragments of articles) of Bohdan Boichuk, Bohdan Kravtsiv, Iurii Sherekh, Volodymyr Derzhavyn, and Hryhorii Kostiuik included in Ievhen Malaniuk, *Zemna Madonna: Vybrane* (Prešov, 1991).
 7. Kutsenko, *Dominus Malaniuk*, is the exception here—and his arguments deserve closer scrutiny.
 8. For example, the already mentioned Salyha, Nakhlik, and Kutsenko. It is also a central topos for Ivan Dziuba, who does not share the nationalist cant; see his "Poeziia vyhnannia," in Malaniuk, *Zemna Madonna*, 396–405.
 9. The remarkable permutations in Shevchenko's ideological reception in the space of less than twenty years since his death were summarized most succinctly by Mykhailo Drahomanov in his "Shevchenko, ukraïnofily i sotsializm" (1879).
 10. See my "Insight and Blindness in the Reception of Ševčenko."
 11. See, e.g., Malaniuk, *Povernennia*. The bulk of the new material here, however, is the product of the research of Leonid Kutsenko—not the editor, Salyha.
 12. Ievhen Malaniuk, *Knyha sposterezhen'*, 2 vols. (Toronto, 1962–1966).
 13. This is the basic leitmotif of Salyha's introduction to Malaniuk, *Povernennia*.
 14. See Malaniuk, *Knyha sposterezhen'*.
 15. Notwithstanding Salyha's wishful thinking in such passages as this: "Маланюк на високопрофесійному рівні академічного знавця літератури і письменника-практика стежив за усім, що 'за шеломянем' відбувається в рідній культурі радянського часу" (Malaniuk, *Povernennia*, 4).
 16. Contained above all in the Dmytro Dontsov fonds in Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa and in the Malaniuk archive in the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the US (UVAN).
 17. See Malaniuk, "Dmytro Dontsov (Do 75-littia)," in *Knyha sposterezhen'*, 2:367–76.
 18. *Ibid.*, 2:375. All emphasis in original unless otherwise specified.
 19. *Ibid.*, 2:373–74.
 20. See, e.g., Malaniuk, "Kruty—narodyny novoho ukraïntsia," in *Povernennia*, 257–67, written in January 1941 just before the start of the German-Soviet war.
 21. See Salyha's introduction to *Povernennia*, 3. In the poem from which Salyha draws this line, poetry is also compared to David's slingshot; see "O, ia ne vypustyv," in *Povernennia*, 157.
 22. See Mykhailo Orest, *Derzhava slova* (Philadelphia, 1952).
 23. Malaniuk, "Rannii Shevchenko," in *Knyha sposterezhen'*, 1:37–38.
 24. Thus in "Rannii Shevchenko": "Серед особливо прикрих, канонізованих

- псевдошевченкознавчою традицією, забобонів, поруч славнозвісних 'кожуха і шапки' треба поставити забобон про 'ранній безкритичний романтизм' і 'пізніший соціальний реалізм'" (*Knyha sposterezhen'*, 1:36).
25. *Ibid.*, 1:36–37.
 26. The idea of “de-bronzing,” of changing the poet, especially the National Poet, back from a bronze statue into a real, live, complex human figure, comes from the Polish critic Tadeusz Boy-Żeleński; see his “Mickiewicz a my” (introduction to Mickiewicz’s *Dziela* [Warsaw, 1929]); reprinted in his *Reflektorem w mrok* (Warsaw, 1984), 459–84; cf. also Boy-Żeleński, *Bronzownicy* (Warsaw, 1930). Malaniuk, who was well acquainted with Polish literature, was surely aware of this revisionist essay.
 27. Malaniuk, “Shevchenko v zhytti,” in *Knyha sposterezhen'*, 2:45–46.
 28. Malaniuk, “Do spravhn’oho Shevchenka, in *Knyha sposterezhen'*, 1:55.
 29. See his “The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism” (1933), in T. S. Eliot, *Points of View* (London, 1941).
 30. Malaniuk, “Do spravhn’oho Shevchenka,” 60.
 31. *Ibid.*, 66–67.
 32. See, e.g., Dmytro Dontsov, “Dva antagonisty (P. Kulish i T. Shevchenko),” in *Dvi literatury nashoi doby* (Lviv, 1935).
 33. See note 24 above.
 34. Malaniuk, “Shevchenko zhyvyi,” *Knyha sposterezhen'*, 1:69.
 35. *Ibid.*, 1:69–70.
 36. *Ibid.*, 1:70.
 37. *Ibid.*, 1:70–71.
 38. *Ibid.*, 1:72.
 39. I am referring here to my own study, *The Poet as Mythmaker: A Study of Symbolic Meaning in Taras Ševčenko* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982).
 40. Malaniuk, “Try lita,” in *Knyha sposterezhen'*, 1:43.
 41. *Ibid.*, 1:45.