EUROPEAN WRITERS

The Twentieth Century

GEORGE STADE

EDITOR IN CHIEF

Volume 10

YEVGENY ZAMYATIN

TO

PÄR LAGERKVIST

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS / NEW YORK

PAVLO TYCHYNA

(1891–1967)

THE MEASURE OF Pavlo Tychyna's preeminence in the history of twentieth-century Ukrainian literature is perhaps best conveyed by the fact that he is considered the outstanding poet of his time, and arguably of this century, by both Soviet and non-Soviet readers and critics. Apart from this point of convergence, however, the understanding and reception of Tychyna and his poetry is marked by profound oppositions and often virulent dispute. Capping the ideological polarization surrounding Tychyna is a widely held belief in the radical discontinuity of his poetry, in the nearly total disjunction, indeed antithesis, between the early and late Tychyna, summarized in the irreconcilable images of the spontaneous Orphic poet who expressed the very spirit of a newborn nation and the official and canonized bard of the Soviet Ukraine. In one sense this general impression is valid: the contrasts between his early and late work in theme and diction, in emotional and psychological complexity, and in the very definition of the poetic self can be as stark as the difference between the unchained, elemental aspirations of the Ukraine during the time of the Revolution and the official, reductive doctrine of socialist realism. Yet both extremes served organically as the material for Tychyna's poetry.

Tychyna's decisive impact on the course of Ukrainian poetry has been profound—and, what is no less important, manifest from the publication in 1918 of his first collection of poetry, *Soniachni klarnety* (Clarinets of the Sun). It was not only the broad readership, but the writers, and especially the poets, who felt that in Tychyna they were witnessing a sea change, a revolution in Ukrainian poetry. For Mykola Bazhan, another eminent contemporary Ukrainian poet, his first reading of *Soniachni klarnety* was a heady rediscovery of the beauty of the Ukrainian word and "a plunge into a deeper understanding of the authority and the secrets of Ukrainian poetry." For the prose writer Yurii Smolych, Tychyna stood directly in line after the great nineteenth-century triad of Taras Shevchenko, Ivan Franko, and Lesia Ukrainka, and the present age was indeed the "epoch of Tychyna."

To be sure, the genre of memoirs and officially sanctioned (and posthumous) recollections, from which the above comments are taken, naturally tends to plaudits and platitudes, while the phenomenon of Tychyna, including his meteoric rise and, for some, his precipitous decline, requires a distanced, nonmetaphoric approach, precisely because his poetry is so difficult to extricate from its emotional and subliminal resonance. For while much still remains to be examined and tested (all the more so as only now a more or less complete canon of his work is becoming available), one thing is fairly certain: the dominant paradigms of the vast majority of Tychyna critics to date have been more evaluative than analytical; even where the argument has refrained

from blatantly ideological praise or blame, the very reliance on such metaphoric constructs as "bard of the Ukrainian Revolution," or "elemental voice (or conscience) of the nation," or the "agricultural Orpheus," or, alternatively, the borrowing of his own image to describe his early poetry as "clarinetism" have tended only to obscure the object of inquiry.

While Tychyna has come to exemplify the energy and reach of the new, full-fledged Ukrainian literature of the twentieth century—especially its drive for innovation and experimentation—he is also a writer who in manifold ways, varying from the deliberate to the intuitive and unconscious, draws on the rich repertoire of Ukrainian poetic traditions. This ear for the various devices, genres, and cadences of folklore is only the most obvious recourse to such traditions. Underlying discrete moments of textual use—be it modeling on a genre like the folktale or riddle, echoes of folk beliefs, or simply the introduction of folk sayings or epithets—is the basic structure of identification with the folk, the *narod,* its experience and its values. This clearly is a central issue, but also one that can easily be distorted into a quasi-metaphysical notion (so apparent in much of Soviet criticism) that a great poet must necessarily be a "faithful son of the people (the *narod*)," and, conversely, that poetic greatness is contingent precisely on such a bond. Yet though a normative application of such a perceived bond is to be resisted, there is little doubt that Tychyna's poetics and his worldview are profoundly influenced by this paradigm. In this Tychyna recapitulates much of Ukrainian nineteenth-century literature with its implicit, but also often programmatic, populism. A specifically literary articulation of the imperative to speak *to* and *for* the *narod*—one that also clearly draws on Romantic premises that were particularly prominent in various Slavic literatures—is the belief that the poet should be tribune and bard, spokesman for the *narod* and indeed its acknowledged leader. It is precisely this stance that animates much of the poetry of the outstanding Ukrainian nineteenth-century figure Taras Shevchenko. As witnessed by various texts, the specifically Shevchenkian legacy, the general bardic and tribunicial stance, and above all the readiness to blur the boundary between poet and *narod,* self and collective, emerge as the central ethical and poetic choice in Tychyna. Compared to the psychological and cultural resonance of this felt and desired bond, it is almost superfluous to note that the concrete historical and political circumstances also continued to justify it: in Tychyna's as in Shevchenko's time, literature, and in the Ukrainian case poetry in particular, served as a surrogate for political discourse. With all political power concentrated in the hands of the state, literature—poetry—seemed to many to be the only vehicle for expressing dissenting opinions or simply even commenting on the political sphere. When, in addition, the prerevolutionary Ukrainian context was marked not just by the political repression that characterized the entire Russian empire, but also by a specific and relentless oppression of national aspirations, of cultural self-expression, it is hardly surprising that being a Ukrainian writer was also inevitably a political statement.

By the turn of the century, however, there was an ever-growing willingness on the part of various Ukrainian writers to question the identification of literature with the cause of national and social emancipation. While the rejection of this equation was never total or militant and never approached anything like an art-for-art's sake argument, and while even its timid formulations met with harsh attacks from the older, populist-oriented establishment, such as the poet and eminent literary figure Ivan Franko or the literary historian Serhij Iefremov, the movement toward modernism, as it came to be known, was not to be stopped. It was, after all, an organic development reflecting the differentiation and growing sophistication of the Ukrainian reading public. In this early and hardly developed phase of Ukrainian modernism two poets, Oleksandr Oles' and Mykola Voronyi, can be seen as pre-

cursors of, or at least a bridge to, Tychyna. Oles', by far the most popular poet of the prerevolutionary period, introduced a new, intensely emotional lyrical poetry that treated the self, society, patriotism, even the revolution of 1905 as pure feeling unmediated by history or even reason. Voronyj, a talented but highly eclectic poet (and one who dedicated more effort to underground political activity than to literature), brought into Ukrainian poetry—from the contemporary Western European, Polish, and Russian literatures—a wealth of new themes, subgenres, and forms of verification; thanks to him such topics as the cult of pure beauty (with the poet as high priest), or contemplations of the ethereal "music of the spheres," such modalities as lighthearted erotic poetry or bohemian mock-spleen and most significantly perhaps an impressive range of often recherché stanzaic and metrical forms found their way into the expanding repertoire of early twentieth-century Ukrainian poetry. Apart from these two, there is also the possible influence on Tychyna of two minor poets, Hryhorii Chuprynka, whose brief poetic career and small output was oriented toward somewhat jejune sound experimentation, and the interesting but little known presymbolist Mykola Filianskyi. All of them—even if points of continuity or influence can be demonstrated—are hardly of the caliber of Tychyna and are precursors only in the strictly historical sense.

LIFE AND CAREER

Pavlo Tychyna was born on 27 January (15 January old style) 1891, in the village Pisky in the Chernihiv *gubernia* (region) of north-central Ukraine, as one of nine children of a destitute village cantor. After attending the local school for two years Tychyna was enrolled first in the choir and boarding school of the Ielets monastery in Chernihiv and then, one year later, in the choir and school of the Troitsk monastery in the same town. In 1906, the year in which Tychyna is known to have written his first poem, his father died, and when in the following year Pavlo entered the Chernihiv seminary it was as an "impoverished orphan" with a government stipend; to support himself Tychyna also worked as choir conductor. In later autobiographical references Tychyna would invariably (in large measure no doubt to be in harmony with the obligatory, official interpretation of such things) depict the seminary as stifling, slovenly, and gratuitously cruel; however, this is also the picture of the seminary that he paints in three short prose pieces, "Theology," "On the Rivers of Babylon," and "Temptation," which he published in 1913. For all that, the seminary did leave its mark on Tychyna, not only by way of the prominent religious imagery and motifs in his early poetry or in the genre models that the liturgy provided, but more deeply, perhaps, in the significant presence of a spiritual dimension that clearly set the early Tychyna apart from his contemporaries. And whatever his later efforts at repudiating this influence and replacing it with a fervently professed (and of course obligatory) materialism, a certain quality of spiritual sensitivity, of openness to a higher order of existence came to characterize Tychyna's poetry—and not only the early period.

A major event in Tychyna's life as a seminary student, and one that he particularly highlighted in later autobiographical writings and his poetry, was his friendship beginning in 1910 with the outstanding Ukrainian master of impressionist prose, Mykhailo Kotsiubynskii. In effect, Kotsiubynskii was the first to "discover" Tychyna, singling him out on the basis of his early poetic efforts from the group of talented young students he would invite to his house each Saturday for a literary salon. Kotsiubynskii was instrumental in helping Tychyna publish, in 1912, his first poem in the prestigious *Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk* (Literary-Scholarly Herald). Although the relationship was short-lived due to the older writer's early death, it apparently had a lasting impact on Tychyna. The influence of Kotsiubynskii's impressionist technique—which is quite evi-

dent in Tychyna's early collections—is only the lesser consequence. The more important effect was undoubtedly the sense of validation and even mission that this warm recognition by the foremost Ukrainian writer of the time gave to the young poet.

In 1913, Tychyna finished the seminary and enrolled in the Commercial Institute in Kiev. To support himself he took the job of technical secretary for a minor Ukrainian educational journal. When with the outbreak of World War I the czarist authorities closed down this journal along with virtually every other Ukrainian periodical, Tychyna found work in a government statistical office in Chernihiv and later as assistant choir director in a Kiev theater. And even though now no Ukrainian journal existed where he could publish, Tychyna wrote poetry. He also engaged in what was to be a lifelong passion—the collecting of folk songs.

Tychyna's first published collection of poetry, *Soniachni klarnety* appeared sometime in November or December of 1918. The "war to end all wars" had finally ended in the West, but in the East, in what had been the Russian Empire, bloodshed and chaos continued unabated. The events of the Russian revolution of 1917 were answered in the Ukraine by the creation of a new government, the Ukrainian National Rada (Council), which first proclaimed autonomy and then full independence from Russia. The general feeling of euphoria and hope at the rebirth of a nation was articulated more powerfully by Tychyna than by any other contemporary; some of his poems of this period, however, poems marked precisely by an elemental national consciousness that was quite distant from the criteria of class consciousness and proletarian internationalism, were fated never to be republished in the Soviet Union. In 1917 and 1918 the Ukraine had seen three Ukrainian governments and a Russian-dominated Soviet one. In the course of the next three years the civil war in the Ukraine involved fighting between the Ukrainian national forces, the Bolsheviks, the Russian White Army, various anarchist formations, Western interventionist forces, and the Poles. In this turbulent period Tychyna was remarkably productive, publishing in 1920 the collections *Pluh* (The Plow) and *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav* (Instead of Sonnets and Octaves). With the establishment of Soviet rule and the resumption and then rapid expansion of cultural and literary activities, Tychyna's involvement in them was also marked. Already in 1918 he had participated in the largely symbolist *Literary-Critical Almanac.* In 1919 he was prominently involved in the programmatically symbolist and aesthetically discriminating almanac *Muzahet;* it is in the latter that Tychyna published "Pluh," the lead poem for the collection by the same name, in which he welcomed the revolution—significantly, however, not with any ideological-political commitment, but, precisely as in the case of various Russian symbolists, with an apocalyptic sensibility and with the hope for an elemental purgation. Dithyrambs to the Revolution appeared in yet another symbolist journal of 1919, *Mystetstvo* (Art), and here, too, Tychyna was a prominent participant.

Music also continued to be a prime interest in Tychyna's life. In the fall of 1920, with the civil war still very much active, he traveled, as a kind of chronicler, with the kapelle of the Ukrainian composer Kyrylo Stetsenko on a tour of the Right-bank Ukraine, from Kiev to Odessa. It was on this tour that he met another, more famous Ukrainian composer, Mykola Leontovych. The next year, in Kiev, Tychyna became director of a choir and musical studio named after Leontovych. In 1922, with another composer, Hryhorii Veriovka, Tychyna helped to found the Ukrainian School of Music.

Beginning in 1923 Tychyna turned to literary activity with a new intensity. He moved to Kharkiv, then the capital of the newly formed Soviet Ukrainian Republic, assumed the post of literary editor of one of the two major Ukrainian literary journals, *The Red Path,* and joined *Hart,* a newly formed union of proletarian writers.

The proliferation of literary organizations,

and the involvement in them of the great majority of writers—many of whom were politically quite unengaged—is one of the most salient features of this period. Underlying it were several important sociocultural developments. The first and historically the most momentous was that now, for the first time in the modern period, Ukrainian literature had the support of a state; rather than being suppressed (as it had been by the czarist authorities in roughly the last third of the nineteenth century) or merely neglected, it could count on a whole range of governmental functions, programs, and subsidies designed to further the growth and authority of literature. After all, the writer, according to Trotsky's dictum, was to be the engineer of human souls. At the same time, the government's prime cultural policy from the early to late 1920's was one of "Ukrainization." Designed to defuse political opposition, and reflecting the power of the Ukrainian component in the Communist Party, it was a policy of furthering the spread of the Ukrainian language into the various areas of social and cultural and political life that had up to then been served only by Russian; the effects were most pronounced in education and the mass media, and the cutting edge, again, was literature. Finally, by a somewhat reluctant decision, but one which, like Lenin's New Economic Policy, reflected the Party's awareness of its own weaknesses, and hence its tactical moderation, no single literary organization was given the mandate to speak for the regime, and a certain pluralism was tacitly allowed.

In the Soviet Ukraine the second half of the 1920's witnessed a broadly based and at times ferocious debate over the paths to be taken by the new Soviet Ukrainian literature. Apart from such intrinsically literary and, in this context, relatively innocuous issues as those of artistic style and direction (where, for example, both the futurists and the "revolutionary romantics" laid claim to representing true proletarian art), some of the issues raised were far-reaching and politically dangerous. They devolved on the following choices: Should Ukrainian literature be populist and literary organizations reflect the broadest—and lowest—common denominator, or should aesthetic quality be given primacy? Should native, frequently ethnographic and provincial, traditions suffice, or should Ukrainian literature look to the European avant-garde? Should Russian literature continue to serve as an "older brother," to be the perennial model for and conduit to high literature and art, or should Ukrainian literature perform this function for itself, and indeed go to the sources without any intervening interpretation? A most passionate answer to these questions was given by Mykola Khvyl'ovyi, a prose writer and polemicist and the single most dynamic force on the Ukrainian scene of that time. His theses of aesthetic quality and creative elitism, of openness to the West and to the avant-garde and of "away from Moscow" and "to the sources," adumbrated further by a romantic vitalism and a somewhat mystical belief that the Ukraine, as the quintessential newly awakened nation, was fated to lead an "Asian Renaissance," constituted the agenda and the clearest platform in the ongoing "literary discussion." The implications of this discussion, it goes without saying, went far beyond literature.

In 1925, Khvyl'ovyi, having attained a leading role in *Hart,* proceeded to reconstitute this organization into a new entity. While still proletarian in name, this group, VAPLITE (an acronym for Free Academy of Proletarian Literature), came to embody Khvyl'ovyi's ambitious vision. Most propitiously it attracted into its ranks the best talents, the "Olympians" (as Khvyl'ovyi wryly called them) of Ukrainian writers—prose writers, dramatists, and poets, Tychyna among them. Tychyna was also a contributor to this group's publications, first *Vaplite* and then *The Literary Marketplace.* And even as the Party turned, ever more harshly, against what it saw as the "nationalist deviation" of VAPLITE, Tychyna remained a member until its dissolution in the late 1920's.

In 1921 Tychyna published a short cycle of ten poems entitled *V kosmichnomu orkestri* (In

the Cosmic Orchestra) and in 1924 a major collection of poetry, *Viter z Ukrainy* (Wind from the Ukraine). For the rest of the decade, just as he did not play an active role in the swirling debates and conflicts, Tychyna did not come out with new collections. He was hardly inactive, however. Apart from writing his own poetry, which he published in various journals, he now began translating, particularly from Armenian. In time this activity became a major passion and achievement and grew to include translations from various cultures and nationalities of the Soviet Union—Georgian, Tatar, Bashkir, Yiddish, as well as Russian and Byelorussian.

Throughout the 1920's and into the 1930's, Tychyna worked on what he envisioned as his summa—a long poem, subtitled "A Symphony," on the life and meaning of the eighteenth-century Ukrainian wandering mystic philosopher and poet Hryhorii Skovoroda. *Skovoroda* was never completed; parts of it were read to close friends and colleagues, and some parts published in 1941; as a book, reconstructed from a mass of variants, drafts, notes, plans, and even Tychyna's appended dictionary of arcane Ukrainian words, it appeared only posthumously, in 1971.

By the 1920's Tychyna's reputation as the leading Ukrainian poet was firmly established. His poetry was translated into Russian and not infrequently quoted by such figures as Vladimir Mayakovsky; the Polish poet Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, writing in 1922 in the leading Polish literary journal, *Skamander,* saw Tychyna's poetry, building as it did on the native Ukrainian tradition and the achievements of French and Russian symbolism, as something "exceptionally powerful and fresh." The year 1927 saw the first Czech translation of Tychyna's poetry. With increasing frequency Tychyna was chosen to participate in various official delegations, whether to meet with workers in the Ukrainian industrial heartland of the Donbas, to formally visit the soviet Republics of Byelorussia, Armenia, and, of course, Russia, or indeed to represent Ukrainian literature abroad, for example to Czechoslovakia (1925) or Turkey (1928). In 1929, as if capping the official recognition Tychyna had received in this decade, he was elected a full member of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR.

But Tychyna's renown did not fully shield him from criticism or attack: in 1927 he was accused by Ulas Chubar, then chairman of the Council of People's Commissars for the Ukraine, of "insinuating a nationalist opiate under the banner of proletarian literature." The offending work, actually an untitled fragment of a longer poem that begins with the words "Mother was peeling potatoes . . . ," appeared in the almanac *Vaplite* (in 1926); it depicted with an eerie mix of naturalist detail and a metaphysical sense of impending doom a typical village scene in the midst of the horror of the Civil War. In a letter to the editor published in the newspaper *Komunist* (where the attack initially appeared), Tychyna denied the charge and noted that the fact of depicting famine, wretched poverty, or the peasants' belief that Lenin was the anti-Christ could hardly be construed as their acceptance; indeed his sympathy—as is evident from his poem—is with the son in the family, the Communist, symbol and creator of the new order.

Chernihiv (1931), a slim collection of eight poems that thematically constituted a kind of reportage about the city on the eve of the new Five-Year Plan, did not please the critics, who were now acutely conscious of the demands of the newly promulgated socialist realism. The volume's overtly orthodox and timely thematics (industrialization, Stalin's latest directives, anti-Western invectives) did apparently compensate for its complex and disorienting poetics. Still, the book was criticized and with time largely excised from the canon of Tychyna's poetry.

The following year saw the beginnings, in full earnest, of Stalin's great terror. In the Ukraine, during 1932 and 1933, a man-

made famine was engineered to break the back of a recalcitrant peasantry and cow the nationally conscious intelligentsia as well as the Party cadres that opposed Stalin's policies. Some seven million died of starvation. In the course of the 1930's, hundreds of intellectuals, writers, and cultural figures were arrested as class enemies and either summarily executed (the first wave of such executions came in 1934) or allowed to perish in Siberian labor camps. Tychyna, a man who by all accounts was generally timid and self-effacing, was in this period subject to extreme stress as each day brought news of new arrests of friends and colleagues. In May 1933, Khvyl'ovyi, the national-communist whose vision of a reborn Ukrainian culture had inspired many, who had been a friend and colleague and to whom Tychyna had dedicated the title poem of *Viter z Ukrainy,* committed suicide. In July, Mykola Skrypnyk, the old-guard Bolshevik and colleague of Lenin who as People's Commissar had implemented the policy of Ukrainization and who had long tried to reconcile his loyalty to the Party with a belief that the Ukrainian Soviet Republic was a real entity with real rights, also committed suicide. Later that month, the chairman of the Ukrainian Organizing Committee, preparing for the formation of the Union of Soviet Writers, in response to the demoralization among Ukrainian writers following the suicide of Khvyl'ovyi, publicly appealed to his Russian counterparts to send Russian cadres to help stabilize the situation in the Ukraine; the Stalinist policy of total centralization and Russian hegemony was now being ruthlessly applied to Ukrainian literature. In October 1933 the Berezil' theater of Kharkiv, the most avant-garde and sophisticated of Ukrainian theaters, one with strong roots in the expressionist and experimental stage, was disbanded, and its highly talented director, the producer Les' Kurbas, was removed, later to be arrested and exiled.

That same month Tychyna wrote a poem entitled "Partiia vede" ("The Party Leads"). On 21 November 1933 the lead editorial in *Pravda,* the central Party newspaper, was likewise entitled "The Party Leads," and dealt with the successes of the grain harvest and of collectivization in the Ukraine; this same issue included Tychyna's poem—in the original Ukrainian, and with the same title—as a kind of poetic elaboration or illustration of that central verity. For all it was more than clear that Tychyna, *the* national poet, had unconditionally accepted—for many, unconditionally capitulated to—the new power and reality. But while this judgment was quite accurate with respect to the rest of Tychyna's life and career, in effect, as that of the *official* Soviet Ukrainian poet, the poetry itself was ambiguous. The title aside, it was ambiguous and in retrospect perhaps even parodic by virtue of being a song, or chant, implicitly emanating from the collective mouths of the Young Communist League (Komsomol), and reflecting the kind of fervor and simplicity of perspective that only children or adolescents can muster.

For the remainder of his years Tychyna's life was one of ever greater official duties, honors, and rewards, punctuated every few years by a new collection of poetry. Thus 1934, the year when the collection entitled *Partiia vede* (and subtitled, significantly, "Pisni, peany, himny" ["Songs, Paeans, Hymns"]) was published, was also the year he was given the degree of Doctor of Philology. In 1938, when he published the collection *Chuttia iedynoi rodyny* (A Feeling of One Family), Tychyna was also elected deputy to the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR (The title of the collection became the official phrase for conveying the "brotherhood" of the various Soviet nationalities; in time it became the name of a major annual literary prize given in commemoration of Tychyna.) In 1941, Tychyna published *Stal' i nizhnist'* (Steel and Tenderness). (One could hardly help noticing that in the elision of normal speech the title immediately gives "Stalin.") That same year Tychyna was awarded two major government prizes—the first of

many. For the term 1936–1939 he was appointed director of the Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences, an institute that had been decimated and virtually silenced by the still on-going purges.

During the war, after the Germans had occupied both Kiev and Kharkiv, Tychyna was evacuated to Ufa, beyond the Urals; he continued in his official duties—from 1941 to 1943 he was director of the combined Institute of Language and Literature of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences—and he did write poetry. While much of it was unabashedly agitational, the intensity of his horror at the atrocities of the Nazis and the suffering of his countrymen led him at times to recapture, most strikingly in the long poem *Pokhoron druha* (A Friend's Funeral, 1943), a subtle and tragic sense of history and of human existence.

In the following years Tychyna's official status continued to rise: still during the war he was named National Commissar of Education for the Ukrainian SSR (Somewhat anticlimactically, he became a member of the Communist party only in the following year.) In the next two decades, apart from periodically receiving awards, officiating at opening ceremonies, and indeed publishing several more collections of poetry, Tychyna was repeatedly elected to various government bodies: in 1953, for example, he was elected chairman of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR, and in 1952, 1956, 1960, and 1966—a year before his death—he was elected a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine. At the end he appeared the complete official poet: bemedaled, orthodox, still alive but already cast in bronze.

For many, Tychyna's death on 16 September 1967 was a technicality: the poet in him was believed to have died much earlier. For most emigrés and nationalists it was at the moment, signaled as early as in the 1924 collection *Viter z Ukrainy,* when he enthusiastically accepted the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet state; for others it was with *Partiia vede* and the apparently unqualified acceptance of socialist realism and with it an unresisting subordination of the creative self to the collectivist diktat. But the very opposition of physical death/poetic death obliges one—in fairness to the poet—to look at his reputation after 1967. Ironically, this approach is also favored in official Soviet biographies of Tychyna, but here it is done with an eye not so much for the poetry as for the propaedeutic value of the cult of the poet.

In fact, thanks to various Soviet Ukrainian scholars and critics, the last two decades have seen a steady and by now substantial rehabilitation of Tychyna the poet. The process has been multitracked and involved, at the outset, publishing much of the still unpublished oeuvre and rolling back the accreted layers of censorship. (It is a monument to the Stalinist system that by far the larger measure of that censorship had been self-imposed, by Tychyna himself—to anticipate and forestall censure.) At the end it meant reconstituting, through criticism and scholarship, the very stature and dimensions of the poet.

The first step in this process, beginning almost immediately after Tychyna's death and continuing to this day, was the publication first in literary journals, and soon in separate publications, of Tychyna's concealed poetic legacy, particularly of the early period; the major stages here were a small volume of Tychyna's "unpublished and largely forgotten" poetry, *V sertsi u moim* (In My Heart, 1970), and the "symphony" *Skovoroda* (1971); the collected editions of his works that appeared also tended to be "revisionist" by the very fact of progressively restoring more and more of the poetry excised from the multivolume collected editions of 1946, 1957, and 1961.

Moreover, in the twenty years since his death, writing about Tychyna has constituted a kind of growth industry in Soviet Ukrainian letters and criticism. It would seem that the poet who said "Za vsikh skazhu, za vsikh pereboliiu" (I will say it for all, I will ache for all) has had the favor returned by a fair portion, if not the entirety, of the literary community.

What is most important is that such endemic Soviet failings as hidebound orthodoxy and sheer pedantry notwithstanding, Tychyna criticism has seen a real improvement in quality and subtlety and has to some extent even served as a vehicle for rehabilitating the period of the 1920's from Stalinist distortions and censorship.

The culmination of this manifold process of restoring Tychyna—not only from censorship but from self-censorship as well—has been the ongoing publication in twelve volumes (of which eleven have already appeared) of his entire oeuvre, poetry, essays, diaries and memoirs, and so on. While not an academic edition—there are a few individual poems that are still considered too sensitive to be made available to the broad readership—*Zibrannia tvoriv v dvanadtsiaty tomakh* (1983–) is remarkably complete and objective, and greatly facilitates our understanding of the poet.

EARLY POETRY

By the "early poetry" one usually means Tychyna's first four or five collections, that is, *Soniachni klarnety, Pluh, Zamist' sonetiv i oktav, V kosmichnomu orkestri,* and most probably (although those who were ideologically offended might dispute this) the 1924 collection *Viter z Ukrainy.* As recent editions of Tychyna's "unpublished and forgotten" poetry have shown, however, a substantial body of additional poetry (larger in bulk than any one or even two of these early collections) was written before 1918. This poetry, in turn, can be divided into Tychyna's earliest poetic efforts, from 1906 to 1914, and then poetry written at the same time as those poems that entered the first collection, but not included there.

The earliest poetry is now for the most part of merely historical interest. It is often derivative, drawing on such models as Shevchenko and Oles', and circumscribed by conventional themes and stances. Here Tychyna tends to patriotic sentiment, to a morbid preoccupation with his own death (not all that strange for young poets), to rapturous but vague and ultimately rhetorical contemplation of nature, to misty and at times jejune love poems, and to a religious but again diffuse meditation on man's mortality that shades off into generalized melancholy. And yet, despite all these weaknesses, the poetry clearly shows talent and in retrospect can be found to reveal in embryo whole phrases, images, moods, and poetic devices that will soon bloom forth in *Soniachni klarnety.* The few poems that Tychyna actually published in this period are invariably superior to the others, and as good or better than most of the Ukrainian poetry of that time. This is all the more true of the second subgroup, that is, poems written between 1914 and 1918 but not included in *Soniachni klarnety.* With few exceptions they are excellent poetry; their exclusion only reflects the high demands Tychyna placed on this collection.

Above all, *Soniachni klarnety* is a complex and dynamic unity. It is held together not so much by its thematics, which at most can be said to provide clusters of themes, or by narrative continuity, but by a strikingly new poetics, and beyond that by an intense and powerful lyrical voice. As was noted before, for the first time since Shevchenko in the mid-nineteenth century, this voice and personality transfixed its audience, average readers and literati alike. Indeed *Soniachni klarnety* could perhaps best be described as a celebration of the self: the poetic self, first of all, the self as subject and object of love, the self as witness to nature and then history. The apotheosis of the self—in what may seem a paradox but really signals a higher stage of awareness and existence—is its absorption by the cosmos. This will become a paradigm for Tychyna's understanding of himself as a poet.

Tychyna's poetry has not been translated into English, and given its play with sound, with conscious and unconscious (frequently folkloric) associations, and in its readiness to draw on neologisms and a nonstandard Ukrainian syntax, coupled with a diction that

is apparently all simplicity and immediacy, it would seem to epitomize the "untranslatable." In fact, even translations of his works into such close languages as Polish and Russian seldom yield more than pale approximations. Literal translations (which the following will be) invariably reduce and flatten out the manifold codes of the text. For all that, in some works, such as the untitled opening poem of *Soniachni klarnety,* which is as close to a poetic manifesto as Tychyna was to come, the semantic core and emotional tenor are unmistakable:

> Neither Zeus, nor Pan, nor the Spirit-Dove—
> But Clarinets of the Sun.
> I am in dance, the rhythmic motion
> In eternity, with all the planets.
>
> I was—not I. Only a vision, a dream.
> Around me—tolling sounds
> And the chiton of creative darkness
> And announcing hands.
>
> I awoke—and I was You:
> Beneath me, above me
> Worlds flame, worlds run
> In a musical river.
>
> And I watched, and I was Spring:
> Planets coalesced into chords.
> For all time I knew that you are not Wrath—
> But Clarinets of the Sun.
>
> (1:37)[1]

The cosmic expansiveness of this poetic act, or more precisely, self-generation, could not be more obvious; it is the thematic and narrative given. But it is effected as something utterly natural and the very opposite of rhetorical or *willed* self-assertion. The crux, it appears, is in the two-step transition signaled by the first lines of the two "inner" stanzas: "I was—not I" and "I awoke—and I was You." It is a transformation, a transition into a oneness with the cosmos, which, as in a mystical experience or a Buddhist attainment of "final liberation," is achieved passively, so to say, through being, through awakening, through awareness, and not through doing or acting. The movement of the self, its crystallization (one can observe the increments of the pronoun "I" in the course of the four stanzas), is actualized only in the product, however, in the poetry.

It is the poetry that is apotheosized. It is—as the opening and concluding lines assert—the new religion, contrasted to and elevated above the Greek deities (Zeus, Pan) and the God of the Old and New Testament (Wrath and the Spirit-Dove). The poet produces it, of course, and the metathematic point that the poetry produced in this cosmic genesis—"Clarinets of the Sun"—is also the poetry to which Tychyna is now introducing the reader is dramatically highlighted in the conclusion. (This metathematic point will become a favorite device for Tychyna, and in several of his subsequent collections, especially *Pluh* and *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav,* the introductory poem will identify the newly offered concrete collection of poetry with a new vision and indeed a new apotheosis of poetry as such.) But the poet himself stands behind it, so to speak. He is, to expand his own allusion to the Annunciation ("announcing hands"; in the original, *blahovisni ruky*), like the Virgin imbued with the knowledge that she is pregnant with the God-child. The poetry that was to come, in this collection itself and in the volumes that were still to be written, would dispel any notion that Tychyna (as some did indeed argue at first) was merely a passive tympanum, a cosmic ear that catches and then conveys, virtually impersonally, all that it perceives. The manifest subtlety of his art, the psychological depth and the social and cultural perspicacity of his work must dispel any notion that his was a kind of automatic reconstituting of reality. And yet the tension between self and nonself ("I was—not I"), between the individual and the collective, is never easily resolved, and itself becomes a source of energy

[1]All quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the edition of collected works *Zibrannia tvoriv v dvanadtsiaty tomakh* (Kiev, 1983–).

and anxiety for the poet. It is hardly surprising that the last stanza of one of the last poems Tychyna is known to have written, *V sertsi u moim,* turns precisely to this self-definition through, not self-effacement, but self-projection onto the collective:

For I am not in myself, but entirely—in the people,
Because all of that is mine, whether it is close or far.
And hence the earth boils like the heart in the breast,
And the heart moans like the entire earth.

(3:305)

In *Soniachni klarnety* nature becomes the most resonant model for self-definition. To put it differently, it serves as the ultimate correlative for the gamut of feelings, from the euphoric to the melancholy, that swell in the poet's heart. The poem "Tsvit v moiemu sertsi" ("A Blossom in My Heart") gives in its second stanza what amounts to a compact grammar of the themes and stances animating this collection:

I listen to the melodies
of the clouds, the lakes and the wind.
I resonate like the strings
Of the steppe, the clouds and the wind.
We all ring with one heart
We dream with red wine—
Of the sun, the clouds and the wind.

(1:42)

Nature provides an ever-changing and yet ever-abiding matrix for the experience of romantic love, which in its ebb and flow, successes and failures, is the dominant concern for something like the first half of the collection. Paradigmatically, in a poem entitled "Des' nadkhodyla vesna" ("Somewhere Spring Was Approaching"), a stormy love affair is depicted through the change of seasons. In each of the four stanzas the planes of nature and of the human relationship are linked, and the narrative of the changing seasons and the changeable love affair interwoven. Thus in the opening stanza he describes and addresses both nature and his beloved:

Somewhere spring was approaching.—
I said to her: you are spring!
In the corners of her mouth
Something in her fluttered up with smiles
And sank in my soul . . .

(1:41)

The emotional tonality of the love poems, and generally the first half of the collection, is one of harmony with life, and despite moments of melancholy and sorrow the world exists as in a joyous forcefield. This sense and tonality is conveyed above all by a voice and diction that is extraordinarily intimate and almost childlike in its directness. To achieve this, Tychyna, among other resources, draws on a wide range of folk elements—diminutives, traditional expressions and images, echoes of folk songs or folk beliefs—that subtly and powerfully reinforce the sense of simplicity and naturalness. At the same time, these traditional, native elements are paired with and resonate against a no less varied range of sophisticated poetic devices that, in this collection in particular, seem to echo impressionist and symbolist techniques.

Tychyna's impressionism can be found both in individual moments and images that coexist with other elements in a larger narrative construct, and in the very principle by which a poem is organized. As the former it is ubiquitous, and virtually every poem contains images designed to capture the fleeting moment, the shimmering play of sensory perception that—implicitly—is precisely the essence of the phenomenon, and the truest way of communing with it. We see it in such striking images as "the day dims, losing petals like a poppy . . ." (in the poem that begins "Tam topoli . . ." [The poplars, there . . .]); we see it as the dominant modality of images in a poem like "Ishche ptashky . . ." ("The Birds are Still . . ."), a poem that, though it is early (1914–1916), already

anticipates the apocalyptic tone of the next few years (the punctuation, here and throughout, adheres to Tychyna's idiosyncratic but motivated usage):

The birds are still bathing the blue day in ringing songs,
the robe of wheat is still turning yellow in waves of gold in the sun
(the winds are lying low, the winds are playing harps);—
But in the heavens someone is already quarreling.
A black-grey curtain silently covers half of the sky.
The earth puts on shadow . . . Man hides like a beast.
—The Lord is coming—the wormwood thinks
Rain begins to weep . . . . . and stops.
The mountain is silent. The valley is silent.
—The Lord's shadow,—the wormwood whispered.

And suddenly—the curtain splits in two!—Silence. Dead . . .
Fire surges: blooms, falls apart—until the waters boil!
And the song burst forth, the sacrifice was made.
The roads smoke, running, running . . .
Whirlwinds tear, like veins, the thin roots of old willows that pray in tears.
And the grasses—they do not even dare to weep.
Powerful forces are on the move! Darkness. Terror . . .
. . . And they are ringing in the village.
And already the silver doves are trembling
Already they are sowing peace in the heavens.

(1:52)

The impressionist technique is even more pronounced when it is used as the organizing principle, the modality, as it were, of the given poem. Throughout Tychyna's early poetry, and indeed into the poetry of the 1930's, this is reflected in his predilection for the vignette. A scene, a fleeting moment, is what Tychyna's vision is most frequently drawn to; it may, of course, come in clusters—either explicitly, by appearing in a cycle, or through an implicit patterning of images—but the narrative connections are not spelled out. The immediately given perception-impression is the meaning, and any "explanation" by the poet would be superfluous. Thus, in the cycle of four short poems called "Enharmoniine" (Enharmonic), "Mist," "Sun," "Wind," and "Rain" are depicted as four virtually identical "notes" that happen to be played on different "instruments." The depiction is pure association and impression; for example, "Rain":

And on the water in someone's hand
Snakes are climbing . . . Dream. To the very Bottom.
He gusted, breathed, scattered seeds
Run!—Something whispered to the river banks
Lie down . . . —it rocked the flowers.
A cloud let fall on the meadows
her embroidered hems.

(1:57)

In general, the impressionist technique is a major component of Tychyna's poetry. It may determine a poem or a cycle—not only the "light," purely sensual "Enharmonic" or the very similar "Pasteli" ("Pastels"), but also the much more substantial, philosophically and historically probing *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav;* it may appear, in the later poetry only as an isolated image, as a moment of pure feeling in a surrounding mass of standardized sentiments. Whatever the path of Tychyna's style, however, it remains an irreducible, identifying trait.

The question of Tychyna's symbolism, on the other hand, is rather more difficult to answer, in large measure because Tychyna (in contrast to, say, the major French or Russian symbolists) never expanded on its role in his poetry and his sense of himself as a poet, or even very much acknowledged its presence. In an undated questionnaire, attributed by the editor of *Iz shchodennykovykh zapysiv* (Excerpts from Diaries, 1981) to sometime in 1921, Tychyna is quite offhand about such matters: "The literary figure who influenced me with all his personality was Mykhailo Kotsiubynskii. I cannot include myself in any given school. I show some symbolism, and impressionism, and even futurism and to some degree imagism" (p. 43). Another reason may be that

Ukrainian symbolism as such was a rather tenuous phenomenon, with none of the theoretical or organizational features of its Russian counterparts. But the issue is not only valid, it is central. For one, the impressionist elements themselves speak for an imagination that is in many of its forms of perception clearly associated with the symbolist one; the prominent role synesthesia plays in both is a case in point. The primacy of the immediately given perception-as-feeling is not, however, so absolute in Tychyna as to obviate the presence of meaning.

Already in *Soniachni klarnety,* even its early parts, but especially in the next two collections, a very clear sense is given of levels of meaning and correspondences between them. While Tychyna's symbols may not be programmatically highlighted in his poetry (and while he does not discuss them in his other writings), they become apparent nonetheless. The natural elements—wind, storm, sun, and so on—are more than the phenomena themselves; they appear as players on a cosmic stage, and later project, symbolize, human historical forces as well. Their role as symbols is greatly facilitated by their prominence, frequently in anthropomorphic form, in Ukrainian folklore. Religious, Christian motifs and images—at times with their own tie to folklore through apocrypha—also serve as powerful symbols, be it in the personal context, adumbrating the birth of the poet (that is to say, the Annunciation, Genesis itself), or, with a darkening vision, the trials of his native land during the revolution and civil war.

It is as a technique, however, that Tychyna's symbolism is most apparent, and, in the context of Ukrainian poetry, most innovative. The language is pushed to what would seem the limit of its musicality and allusiveness, and syntax is consistently dislocated—through inversions or interruptions of the normal sequence, through deletions of purportedly essential elements, and even through a convention of punctuation that is at the very least idiosyncratic, and at times (purposefully) disorienting. Thus, a sentence or even a whole stanza may interrupt a phrase; the subject may be omitted, but is, therefore, probably even more stressed, as in the conclusion to the poem "Terror" from *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav:*

> The University, museums, libraries cannot give
> What can be given by
> dark,
> gray,
> blue . . .
> (1:132)

("Eyes," the missing term, may or may not be the entirely apparent closure in English; in Ukrainian, however, the last three qualifiers—*kari, siri, blakytni*—can only refer to eyes.) Narrative, as in various poems of *Soniachni klarnety* or most evidently in *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav,* where it is the determining structure, may be antiphonal, with two (or more) distinct voices carrying the message.

Throughout, music and musicality is the very lifeblood of this poetry. It appears in a dazzling plenitude of guises and levels: as the mellifluousness of the language, with its inexhaustible rhythms, as ranges of images and allusions to music, and most effectively and subtly perhaps, as the utilization of musical tropes, leitmotifs, phrasing, and later whole genres and modalities (the movement, the cantata, the symphony) as a model for poetic expression. Ultimately, music becomes the key, the grand cognitive metaphor for understanding the complex polyphony of history, life, one's role in them, and one's own soul.

An intersection of the symbolist and impressionist techniques, and at the same time the formal correlative of the nexus of an internal and external music, is the already mentioned device of synesthesia. The fusing of different sensory planes, here of the visual and the auditory, is programmatically signaled by the very title "Clarinets of the Sun." In the course of the collection, such fusion, such melding (not necessarily only of these senses, but of various other combinations) becomes not only a recurrent motif, an evocative sensory shorthand, but something very close to a philosophical state-

ment about the poet's calling. Any given instance may be powerful and moving in its own right. Thus, an early untitled poem begins:

> I stand on a cliff—
> Beyond the river, bells:
> I await your sails—
> (1:47)

The last line, literally, says: "Shadows are melting there, shadows in the distance," but in the original—"Tin' tam tone, Tin' tam des' . . ."—it is palpably clear that even more than the play of light on clouds and landscape there is the echo here of the distant bells. (Here, too, we see a characteristic distortion of the logical narrative, for the third line should follow the first, and the fourth line the second.) Such moments are many, each with its own poignant or dramatic message, but it is their totality that can reveal a profound truth: the autonomy, the chosen status of the poet. For one who is so attuned to nature, to the cosmic melody that is the universe, must surely have a special role to play in the affairs of men. And this premise, which is basically only implicit in the early, lyrical, romantic and self-centered parts of the first collection, becomes, in its second half, and then with great intensity in the following two collections, a conscious (though still hardly ideological), moral involvement in the historical experience of his nation.

A sense of historical context, more pointedly of an ongoing, bloody cataclysm—World War I—begins in the early parts of *Soniachni klarnety* only with solitary images and allusions. In the poem that begins "Tam topoli u poli na voli" (The poplars, there, free in the field), the very second line is the parenthetical, in effect, antiphonal, "Khtos' na zakhodi zhertvu prynis" (In the West someone made sacrifice)—which, of course, refers both to the carnage of battles and the red sunset that is emblematic of it. (It is another monument to the obtuseness of Soviet censorship that in the several collected editions of Tychyna that have appeared between 1957 and 1983, the line has been bowdlerized to remove the reference to "sacrifice"—with its unwelcome religious coloration.) In the poem that opens with the line "Na strimchastykh skeliakh" ("On steep cliffs"), the second stanza gives the following image:

> From the valley to the sky
> Hands were outstretched:
> O, lend us storms,
> A downpour of blueness!—
> Suddenly
> Down
> Fell drops of blood!
> Fell drops of blood . . .
> (1:67)

and concludes with the repeated words "Death rustles with a scythe."

In these and several similar instances the sense of that historical, ominous external reality is given impressionistically—as if purposefully not connecting that perception with any integrated and rational understanding of the world and the poetic self in it. In the poem beginning with the line "Odchyniaite dveri—" ("Open the doors") a transition to that understanding is now provided:

> Open the doors—
> The bride is coming!
> Open the doors—
> Azure blueness!
> Eyes, heart and chorals
> Stopped,
> Waiting . . .
>
> The doors opened—
> Night of tempest and deluge!
> The doors opened—
> All the roads in blood!
> With unweepable tears
> Darkness
> Rain . . .
> (1:69)

The very next cycle, "Skorbna Maty" (The Sorrowing Mother, or Mater Dolorosa), dedi-

cated to the memory of the poet's own mother, takes one of many apocryphal stories of the Virgin Mary walking the earth and interceding for man, and locates the story in the Ukraine, in the period of its extreme tribulation. The Sorrowing Mother, now a composite symbol of the poet's mother, the Mother of God, the idealized, ever-grieving and victimized Ukraine of popular tradition (which icon rests, above all, on the poetry of Shevchenko) comes to serve as an ideal antipode to and clearest perspective on the destruction visited on this land; in this Ukraine she again witnesses the crucifixion, and herself dies of grief, forgotten—like this land—by the very angels in heaven.

"Zolotyi homin" ("The Golden Resonance"), the long poem that concludes the collection, addresses the historical context in an entirely different light: in its overt message, its imagery, and its emotional tonality it is a hymn of joy and hope celebrating the rebirth of a nation. Its rhapsodic tone resonates with elevated, religious (certainly more mystical than orthodox) imagery and an ideal, transcending historiography (the present rebirth of the Ukrainian nation is cast as a recapitulation of that distant—and apocryphal—event fixed in the Primary Chronicle of Kievan Rus' when Saint Andrew the Apostle was believed to have traveled up the Dnieper and blessed from the hill that is now the center of Kiev the surrounding territories). The poet is hardly unaware of the fratricidal strife that continues to exist; indeed his major dramatic opposition is between the overwhelming sense of joyful brotherhood and optimism that imbues him as it does so many of his countrymen, and the class rancor and hatred of others; his depiction of the latter in terms of "A black bird, with eyes that are claws! A black bird from the rotting crevices of the soul" or of cripples who "scuttle and whine and curse the sun, / the Sun and Christ" and who "nurture the beast within" makes his stance entirely unambiguous. The poem concludes with a crescendo of optimism and with the voice of the poet merged with the voice of the Ukrainian nation:

I have listened intently to your golden resonance—
And I have heard.
I have looked into your eyes
And I have seen.
The mountain of stones that they had piled up on
  my breast
I have thrown off as easily—
As down . . .
I am the unquenchable Beautiful Flame,
Eternal Spirit
Greet us then with the sun, with doves.
I am a strong nation!—with the Sun, with doves.
Greet us with our native songs!
I am young!
Young!

(1:86)

In no other poem of Tychyna's, or indeed of any other Ukrainian poet's, was this moment of rebirth ever conveyed with greater intensity or clarity of vision. But as a poem animated by a transcendent and religious—not to speak of national—sensibility, it was fated to be suppressed and bowdlerized; it remains bowdlerized even in the most recent relatively complete and honest Soviet edition.

In his next collection, *Pluh* (1920), Tychyna confronts the Revolution directly, in a concerted attempt to perceive its many facets and its higher meaning, and with an enormously expanded sense of confidence in his role and mission as poet. The opening, title poem immediately establishes the new parameters:

Wind.
Not wind—storm!
Crushing, breaking, tearing up from the earth . . .
Behind black clouds
(with flashes! with blows!)
behind black clouds a million million muscular
  arms . . .
Rolling. Cutting into the earth
(be it city, road, or meadow)
a plow into the earth.
And on the earth—men, beasts and orchards,
and on the earth gods and temples:
o pass, pass over us,
judge us!
And there were those that fled.

Into caves and lakes and forests.
—What power art thou?—
they asked.
And none of them rejoiced, none sang.
(The wind sped a fiery horse—
a fiery horse—
in the night—)
And only their dead staring eyes
reflected all the beauty of the new day!
Eyes.

(1:89)

Tychyna, of course, accepts the Revolution, but, as was mentioned earlier, a Revolution that is conceived—specifically here, in the prologue, as it were, to this collection—not ideologically, nor even logically, but elementally, symbolically—and ambiguously. The dominant metaphor is that of apocalypse, and even though the end result of plowing is the prospect of a new beginning, of new life, its action in the here and now for the denizens of the sod, the earth men dwell on, is one of death and destruction. In the quintessentially impressionist, and symbolist, fabric of this poem this is precisely the cutting edge of the share: dead staring eyes. And the fact that it is *only* these eyes that reflect the beauty of the new day, the Revolution's promise, constitutes a very ambivalent endorsement. As much of the poetry of this collection, and especially of the next one, *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav,* will show, it is an endorsement that comes from the will, from the increasingly insistent imperative to be consonant with the age, and not from the whole self, certainly not from its reservoir of human empathy. (That, however, will soon also be given full voice.)

What lends resonance and power to this act of will is that it involves not only the real world, the Revolution that is turning upside down the Russian Empire, but the metaworld, that of Tychyna's poetry. For the plow (like the clarinets of the sun) refers through Tychyna's characteristic metathematic device to the poetry now unfolding before the reader. And the development from the one world to the other entails not only a shift of metaphors, but of worldviews and self-perceptions: the dominance of a unifying, harmonious, and at heart beneficent vision now gives way to a vision of separation and judgment and authority. Its major expression is the crystallization of the role of the poet as tribune and moral legislator. The very next poem, "Siite . . ." ("Sow"), continues the grand metaphor of the Revolution as an agricultural cycle: after the plowing, the sowing. The poet's role (and voice) is now that of an enthusiastic taskmaker, as literally each sentence of the poem is in the imperative mood; to take but the first lines of each stanza:

Sow into the fertile black earth.
. . . . . .
Work—the beehive is awake.
. . . . . .
Be possessed—not cold.
. . . . . .
Strike the brass, dispel the clouds!

(1:90)

The poem is a far cry from mere exhortation or sloganeering: it is replete with neologisms, and its striking, futurist-influenced imagery overpowers the ideological content of the message. Thus, the last stanza:

Strike the brass, dispel the clouds!
Believe (don't lyricize!), go,
shout out with fanfares in the night:
put sharps, sharps in your keys!

(1:90)

The enthusiasm that is already so apparent here leads Tychyna in a few poems to reach for a new genre—the poetical equivalent of the ubiquitous exhortatory poster, where everything is simple and exaggerated and hard-hitting, where the new titans of labor, as he envisions in "Perezoriuiut' zori" ("They Will Outshine the Stars"), for example, will inherit a new, industrialized paradise:

With songs, with hammers!—
(the motif is the locomotive!)—

Rushing to meet them—factories
oceans, fields of grain . . .
(1:94)

This does not at all become the dominant theme or mood of *Pluh,* however. In fact, to use a Tychynian image, the ringing chord that this collection is clearly intended to be breaks apart into several distinct and hardly consonant notes. This does not detract from its aesthetic achievement: *Pluh* remains at the very apex of Tychyna's art. But the Revolution—which is no longer just that, but an extended and brutal civil war—can no longer be reduced to a single elemental force, or an unequivocal value. The poet's openness and sensitivity to experience, and sense of duty toward what he perceives as his calling, quite simply militate against this.

Several different stances emerge here. The poet continues the role of spokesman for the nation, exhorting it to accept the emerging new order as part of the cosmic plan (e.g., the cycle "Sotvorinnja svitu" [The Creation of the World], or the cycle "Psalom zalizu" [Psalm to Steel]). And he even couches this, as in "Palit' universaly" ("Burn the Decrees") in the perfervid language of a political orator—with an anarchist bent ("Curse the laws and bureaucratic fury— / Freedom!—let that be your only order"). At the same time, Tychyna turns to his fellow poets, castigating them for their gamut of weaknesses (false aestheticism, eroticism, hunger for love, simple shallowness) and enjoining them to realize their true potential in the moment of national trial.

The moralizing and didacticism surging here are kept in check and are ultimately defused by Tychyna's own agonizing reappraisal of himself as a poet. We see it in two poems (actually a diptych and triptych) on the theme of Shevchenko (with the second depicting a private pilgrimage, in times of war, to his grave on the banks of the Dnieper) and a triptych entitled "Lysty do poeta" (Letters to the Poet). The latter becomes the first of many exercises in self-criticism with the authors, simple village people, telling the poet that they don't quite understand him, that his poetry is not really close to life, and boldly asking him "who needs those rachitic sonnets and songs!" The criticism is deflected by the fact that the last accusatory letter ends with "You are a power / and you will still be a communist," and by the more basic fact of poetically identifying, naming, and thus purging the anxiety about one's reception "among the people." As history shows, the issue, however, will not be laid to rest.

Perhaps the most powerful notes in *Pluh* are those that reflect Tychyna's anguish at the destruction befalling his land. In the poem "I Bielyi i Blok i Iesenin i Kliuiev" (And Bely and Blok and Esenin and Kluiev), this is again connected with the imperative of speaking for and serving one's nation. The four Russian poets mentioned in the title have provided a voice for Russia, and Russia has its messiah—Lenin. But who will lead the Ukraine from its bondage, who will be its Moses? The answer, of course, is the Poet. And yet the answer is undercut by the concluding lines, addressed to the Poet by himself, and implicitly by the land itself: "to love one's land is no crime / if it is for all." The assertion would seem self-evident, even naively so, only in "normal" circumstances. The bleak fact is that Ukrainian patriotism must always guard against the charge of chauvinism, and that in its relation with Russia—for it is this that the poem examines, if obliquely—any native sentiment can be a political crime, to be called "separatism" by the czarist regime, or "bourgeois nationalism" by the Soviet one.

Still, virtually all the poems that turn to the theme of death and destruction are not programmatic, not tribunicial, but intensely personal and laconic; at times they rise to a luminous, almost mystical sense of man's tragic fate. The poem beginning "Na maidani kolo tserkvy" ("On the green by the church"), one of the most anthologized of Tychyna's poems, depicts with ever more somber colors a group of men choosing a leader and going off to fight for

the Revolution and freedom—and to die. The highly symbolist and difficult "Mizhplanetni intervaly" ("Interplanetary Intervals") attempts to visualize the void where the spirits of the fallen revolutionary heroes are trapped, unable to join the classical deities (Jupiter, Mars, Venus) or to be apotheosized by them into constellations (as the Greek heroes were), because they no longer share that belief. "Zrazuzh za selom" ("Directly Beyond the Village"), arguably the most moving of these poems, depicts the aftermath of a massacre—by whom, of whom, is not given and not important. They were simply people; cold, implacable, and ever-present death has settled upon the land, and the very people searching at night among the corpses for relatives are themselves shadows of death.

With its gamut of different themes and stances, *Pluh* does appear heterogeneous; if it attains unity—and it does—it is through its overriding sense of purposefulness and need to break new ground. *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav,* also published in 1920 and consisting of an introductory short poem and a cycle of eleven poems, each with an antistrophe, is quite openly a collage, or a montage, of scenes, impressions, recollections, and ruminations, all dealing with the Revolution and the ongoing civil war. And yet this is a remarkably coherent and unified, even tightly knit collection. This is achieved by several converging factors: above all, by the poet's stance of high moral seriousness, which leads him to probe and question the values and verities of society and of ideology, his own values, and his own character. This moral or, loosely speaking, philosophical inquiry is compounded with an introspectiveness that is entirely open and honest, as a consequence of which the impressionistic poetic technique becomes a form of meditation; at times it is very much like a stream of consciousness, one, however, that is not naturally aimless but is channeled by the twin banks of ethical and aesthetic concerns. Finally, the form also establishes coherence and unity: it is poetic prose, with no apparent conventional metrical or rhyming or strophic pattern, but with a clear rhythm of images, tropes, and moods that seems eminently appropriate to the implicit goal of attaining openness, full clarity of perception, and honesty of judgment. For this, Tychyna is implying, a sonnet or octave would be a dissonance.

The title of the collection is again woven into the opening poem. An impressionistically captured moment—mixing images of the coming dawn, the sound of distant trumpets and cannon, an insistently recurring line from the poetry of Skovoroda and a memory of the poet's dead mother—culminates with a cry of despair: "A curse on all, a curse on all those who have become beasts!" (*Zamist' sonetiv i oktav* [1:127]). The poems that follow are hardly curses, but they are an excoriation, and hopefully an exorcism, of the beast in man. And curiously, this is done on two seemingly incompatible levels: on the one hand by direct didactic and aphoristic statements, moral prescriptions for an age that scoffs at them, and on the other by a subtle interweaving, sometimes through the barest of hints and allusions, of the mythic story of Orpheus, the archetypal poet and musician, the reputed son of Apollo, who with his lyre could move even the savage beasts to forget their ferocity, who was the first of several poets to descend to hell in search of his muse and to return, and who was fated to be torn to pieces by the wild followers of Bacchus. The fate of the poet, a tragic, grim fate, is the symbolically coded, unquestionably autobiographical, deep structure of this cycle.

"Terror," the second poem of the cycle, shows both levels at work:

> Again we take the Gospels, the philosophers,
> the poets. The person who said: to kill is a
> sin!—is found in the morning with his head
> shot through. And the dogs fight over his
> body on the trash heap.
>
> Lie still, my mother, do not wake!
>
> A great idea requires sacrifices. But is it
> a sacrifice, when beast eats beast?

—do not wake, mother . . .

Cruel aestheticism!—when will you stop
delighting in a slit throat?

Beast eats beast.

(1:131)

The injunctions, the pleas for humanness are evident, and they are repeated in various registers, for example "Indeed: no number of cannons will suffice to establish a socialism without music" (the antistrophe to "The Highest Power"), or "Join that party where they look on the person as a treasure belonging to the whole world, and where all, to the last man, are against the penalty of death" (antistrophe to "Evoe") or "Everything can be excused by a sublime goal—except for the soul's emptiness" (antistrophe to "Porozhnecha" ["Emptiness"]). The Orpheic story in "Terror" is alluded to in the image of the person preaching nonviolence (by contiguity, one with the evangelists, philosophers, and poets) who is found killed in the morning. (The first such reference occurs in the very first poem, "Osin'" ["Autumn"], in the image of the head—in the Orpheic myth the decapitated head is explicitly described—that has been planted, but will not stay upright and will not speak.) Indeed these references, precisely like Orpheus' body, are scattered throughout the cycle, seemingly randomly. And this in turn points to the organizing principle of the whole: as any individual poem, the collection itself is given synchronically, it is all simultaneously present, and no summation can replace the total effect of experiencing the whole. (It is very revealing, for example, that several poems depict the fleeting moment between sleep and awakening when disparate threads of thought, mental images, and preconscious sensations converge into a profound insight.) One can, however, single out the poem that is the most autobiographical; it is the last one, the antistrophe to "Kukil'" ("Tare"):

To have the prison guards play Scriabin—that
is not yet Revolution.

The Eagle, the Trident, the Hammer and
Sickle . . . and each claims to be native . . .

That which is native to us was killed by the
rifle. That which is native lies at the
bottom of the soul.

Will I, too, kiss the Pope's slipper?

(*Zolotyi homin. Poezii,* p. 100)

For some emigré Ukrainian critics this was Tychyna's anguished prophecy of imminent capitulation. As one writer dramatized it: "The red slipper that he kissed concealed in its fabric a poison that entered him like a spiritual paralysis and killed the Orpheic strings of the heart." For Soviet critics, to the small extent that they can comment on this highly heterodox text, the competition of the symbols (of the imperial eagle, the nationalist trident, and the Bolshevik hammer and sickle) is illusory, for Tychyna was already clearly siding with the latter; the ritual of subjugation in the kissing of the slipper is simply dismissed. But the answer is surely in neither of these reductive extremes but in the totality of Tychyna's canon, and to the extent that it is still expanding any answer must still be qualified. One should note, however, that ever since its first publication, *Zamist' soneti i oktav* has been in greater or lesser degree banned from the Soviet editions of Tychyna: its humanism and questioning of ideologically sanctioned ruthlessness made it simply too heretical. Even now, when the collection has been basically rehabilitated, the last, above-cited antistrophe is still missing.

THE MIDDLE PERIOD

There is no consensus as to the periodization of Tychyna's poetry; on this issue as on so many others relating to Tychyna there is rather ideological polarization. But the case for a distinct period that lies between the one just discussed and the last period of his creativity, which is diametrically different, is a persua-

sive one. In effect, the 1920's and even the early 1930's together constitute a separate phase of Tychyna's work and achievement, a phase that we can preliminarily describe as one where features of his early poetry and of his late poetry coexist in an artistically effective, often remarkably innovative new modality. Furthermore, even if the poetry produced in this period is far from being uniform in style or even quality, the chronological points of demarcation are clear. The difference between *Zamist' soneti i oktav,* and even *Pluh,* on the one hand, and *V kosmichnomu orkestri* on the other is significant and demonstrable; the one between *Partiia vede* and *Chuttia iedynoi rodyny* is much less so, especially for the general reader. Still, the changes that are occurring here on a deeper poetic level are important, and generally a positing of a transitional period does not hinge on an unequivocal upper limit.

V kosmichnomu orkestri is a cycle of ten poems and as such the shortest of Tychyna's published collections; individual poems were often reprinted in various anthologies and school textbooks; in various subsequent collected editions most of the cycle was included as part of the next large collection, *Viter z Ukrainy.* Yet the cycle is *sui generis.* It reflects a then highly topical fascination with cosmic imagery (particularly evident in various futurist and constructivist publications) and a conjoining of that imagery with an assertive and hyperbolic celebration of the new Soviet state. In many respects this poetry picks up and continues earlier themes and already familiar cognitive and emotional attitudes, and most concretely some already established symbols and images. It does so with a new energy and a palpable sense of liberation—from fear, grief, despair, and doubt. As he has done before and as he will do again, Tychyna is showing how closely his psyche resonates with the life of the collective. The assertiveness, the confidence in the new, bright world is different from that in *Pluh,* however: it is not willed, it is without any tinge of the declamatory. At the same time, it echoes the inspired and expansive cosmic consciousness of *Soniachni klarnety,* as when he speaks, in the second poem ("Ia dukh, dukh vichnosti"), in the name of a cosmic force that extends from the infinite to the mundane:

> I am spirit, the spirit of eternity, of
> matter, I am the primal muscles.
> I am the spirit of time, the spirit of
> measure and space, the spirit of numbers.
> Aerolithic rivers flow
> from just one of my oars . . .
>
> I am the spirit-mover, the machine-measure,
> choruses of automobiles
> My yard-garage surges with motors
> And effortlessly, like children to the beach
> I lead titans into space.
>
> (1:155)

The poet's all-encompassing, Whitmanesque consciousness allows him to see the universe's master plan, to overcome and reconcile all oppositions, for "What are our tears and moans and shouts? / What are all the earthly dramas in the face of the tragedy of the cosmos?" From this ultimate perspective, even the moral qualms and anguish of his preceding collection recede in significance, as in "Nedokrovna planeta kruh sontsia sokhla":

> Be like an airplane my soul, like an airplane,
> Don't lower your flight, don't fall
> Are you the only one outraged by the man-beast,
> by cruelty and lies?
> Are not the hearts of all pierced by bullets?
> And thousands buried alive in the earth—is it
> not they who each night crucify the soul
> with cries of:
> Revenge, revenge. Blood for blood.
> Whom shall we punish? The sun that pours
> handfuls of fire into the earth's arteries?
> The earth that cannot give birth without dying?
> Christ was not the first, Robespierre not the
> last, but blood was always there, in
> different measure, and each battle is
> akin to its age.
>
> (1:162)

Viter z Ukrainy continues in various ways the unparalleled energy of *V kosmichnomu ork-*

estri, but again the aerolithic river of Tychyna's poetry begins to turn in unexpected directions, unexpected, that is, from the ground-zero perspective of his contemporaries. More than his previous collections it is diverse in theme and tone, and spans a gamut from the already encountered elevated celebration of the new age, of socialist construction, and of high rhetorical excoriations of ideological enemies, specifically the emigré's, to purely personal, lyrical depictions of everyday things, of a May Day parade in Kharkiv, of leaves swirled by an autumn wind—depictions that are formal masterpieces of a new futurist-inspired, but still inimitably Tychynian poetics. This new poetic idiom—nervous, quick, seemingly a direct copy of the rough, jerky speech and tempo of the new life—is most striking when wedded to his reworkings of folk genres. It is here that Tychyna's ever more pronounced drive to reach the greatest possible audience, to be *the* poet of the new masses, finds its most innovative medium. In such poems as "Try Syny" ("Three Sons") or "Kozhumiaka" ("The Tanner") or "Plach Iaroslavny" ("Iaroslavna's Lament") he takes either a motif already existing in the folk repertoire (a story about three brothers, or a tanner who slew the dragon) or in high literature, which in the case of the latter is a famous passage from *The Igor Tale,* a medieval masterpiece, and reworks it into a contemporary "folktale" or "folk poem" that blends traditional folkloric tropes and devices with his new idiom and expresses in a highly militant, almost brutal manner the class consciousness, the power and will of the triumphant proletariat. In effect, the poet becomes the *vox populi*—in form (which is highly stylized and sophisticated) and content (which is increasingly adhering to the dominant ideology). And if one accepts the Latin saying "Vox populi vox dei" (The voice of the people is the voice of God), then in this voice Tychyna has again found that all-powerful, animating source of energy. Before, his voice resonated with the music of the spheres; now it is with the "inevitability of history"; either way, the imperative of consonance is met. As Tychyna put it in a line from the "Symphony" *Skovoroda*: "How can one not roar / if the age, the age is roaring."

Tychyna's attempt to fully merge his poetic role and voice with the tempo, concerns, and emotions of the current day is exemplified in *Chernihiv,* a small collection of eight poems that was published in 1931 and almost immediately encountered resistance and criticism from average readers and critics alike. As Tychyna himself spoke about it, *Chernihiv* was conceived as a "poetic sketch," or as others put it, a reportage, of a trip through the city of his youth to witness the changes wrought by the Revolution, and the first Five-Year Plan, and to capture its new pulsing rhythms. To do so the poet's persona must be entirely suspended, bracketed out of the picture (all that is left of it are brief descriptive titles to the poems, for example, "My Friend the Worker Leads Me Around the City and Boasts" or "We Buy a Newspaper"); the poetry itself is a purportedly pure recording of the voices of the people, the sounds and voices of the age. Here, in short, Tychyna presents the new society speaking for itself, unabashedly revealing its monochromatic ideology, its incessant repetition of slogans, its din and its shouting. To capture it, Tychyna uses the most elemental forms—chanted slogans, the simplified language and cant of newspaper articles, the argot of popular songs. The language becomes refracted and distorted, words and lines crowd into each other and collide, punctuation disappears. Again, without any fanfare or programmatic commentary, Tychyna is introducing a new poetics, this time of constructivism. Its theoretical premises (as elaborated by the Russian critic Kornelii Zelinskii) of "loading down" the word, of maximizing the expressiveness of the smallest units, of replacing the voice of the author with that of his characters, of total fidelity to local color and finally formal and acoustic experimentation, are all amply illustrated in this collection.

Every poem in *Chernihiv,* without exception, presents or makes specific reference to boasts,

threats, vows, curses, or shouts. This explosion of noise (one of the lines of the concluding poem speaks of "exploding with a negation of the past") is countered, however, by the theme of deafness, which occurs in several places, and which on the one hand reflects the inability to perceive the new reality (indeed echoing poems from *Pluh*) and on the other, a very natural and human desire to shut one's ears against this acoustic rape of the psyche. In keeping with a subtle note of introspection that is present in this poetry, and in true dialectical fashion, we are shown that assertiveness is inevitably accompanied by doubt.

In fact *Chernihiv* can be said to have a false bottom: at various moments it seems quite parodic. The poem entitled "A chy ne iest' tse sami nakhvalky abo zh zapomorochennia vid uspikhov" ("But Is This Not Simply Bragging or Dizziness from Success"), which pointedly echoes a speech by Stalin ("Dizziness from Success," published in *Pravda,* 2 March 1930), has this for a third stanza:

> Let Europe croak on
> our thought's but one
> only one perturbation
> tradition's decapitation
> collectivization
> (1:229)

The last poem, "Stara Ukraina Zminytys' musyt' " (Old Ukraine Must Change), presents a kind of final mise-en-scène where all the players encountered in the cycle—marchers in a demonstration, workers, Komsomol youth, and so on—gather for what would seem a final chorus, one that pushes everything to its utter limit. As the first (and last) stanza shows, slogans, hyperbole, and snippets of Marxist-Leninist doctrine are mixed in a brew that seems part sonorous chant and part gibberish:

> Transmigrating satiating
> quantitatively qualitatively oversloshing
> mutually interpenetrating contradictions
> exploding with a negation of the past
> following the law of dialectics we are headed
> for a boundless future
> (1:235)

In a word, Tychyna seems to be hoisting "the age" by its own petard. "The crying contradiction between content and form," as one critic lamented, seems to be intentional.

Between the poetry of *Viter z Ukrainy* and *Chernihiv,* Tychyna did write other works that diverged significantly from the dominant tone of these collections. These are the personal and introspective poems from the so-called Crimean cycle, the three parts of the dramatic poem that begins "Chystyla maty kartopliu" (Mother was peeling potatoes), and the "Symphony" *Skovoroda.* Tychyna was to work on the latter throughout the 1920's and 1930's, but he never did complete it. From the beginning, the eighteenth-century Ukrainian mystic philosopher and poet Skovoroda was a kind of model for Tychyna, and it is to him that he devoted his *Zamist' sonetiv i oktav,* but not entirely surprisingly, the poem from its inception had an autobiographical cast, with Skovoroda serving as a kind of ideal alter-ego for Tychyna. The various redactions and drafts of the poem show how with the years Tychyna attempted to make the historical Skovoroda fit more and more the obligatory Marxist-Leninist and socialist realist interpretation of Ukrainian culture and history, which here meant making Skovoroda—in contradiction to all the available evidence, both historical and of his own texts—into an engaged social revolutionary, a supporter of peasant rebels. It is more than likely that Tychyna found the discrepancy untenable, not only for historical reasons, but for the violence done to Skovoroda's spiritual and mystical core.

In sum, none of these works, finished or not, published or not, broke the overall pattern: by the early 1930's, Tychyna had become a bard and for all practical purposes only a bard. The sense of autonomy, indeed of the sovereignty that one normally associates with great poetry, and which at various crucial moments had im-

bued Tychyna's work, had disappeared. The collection that was generally seen (and particularly stressed by zealous critics) as finalizing Tychyna's transition into officially sanctioned poetry, and officialdom, was *Partiia vede*. Here, too, however, there is more—and less—than meets the eye. For one, to at least the same degree as and probably more than in *Chernihiv,* the poet, as persona, as voice, simply as a human presence, is absent. The collection is subtitled "Pisni, peany, himny" ("Songs, Paeans, Hymns"), which accurately reflects the impersonal, collective tonality of the whole and of its constituent pieces. The poems here, beginning with the title poem, then "Pisnia Chervonoi Armii" (Red Army Song), "Pisnia komsomol'tsiv" (Komsomol Song), two installments of "Pisnia traktorystky" (Song of the Woman Tractor Driver), "Pisnia pro Kirova" (Song about Kirov), and all the rest, are like the texts of *Chernihiv:* seemingly overheard by the poet in the street, not created by him. There is still, to be sure, evidence of Tychyna's excellent ear for the rhythm of the period and the tenor, the "feel" of the collective, but the other determining qualities—the searching and the moral intensity, the free play of the imagination, even the formal complexity that still animated *Chernihiv*—all these are removed. The poetry is now for the most part regular, unambiguous, and accessible to the dullest reader and the most watchful Party critic. And yet a careful reading shows that even in these songs, paeans, and hymns there remains a subtle formal consciousness that only becomes apparent when viewed retrospectively, from a temporal and psychological distance.

THE LATE POETRY

The sight of a poet consciously and effectively remaking himself in his later years is quite rare, but not entirely unprecedented in world literature. The remarkable achievement of William Butler Yeats rests on the work of the last third, the last twenty-five years of his life, and stems from a deliberate decision to slough off his pre-Raphaelite beginnings. The not uncommon decline of a great poet in older age may be epitomized by the fate of William Wordsworth, who at the end, as a critic noted, was a shrunken giant "carried off the stage on the double shield of religious orthodoxy and political conservatism." With Tychyna we have the cheerless instance of a compounding of these two scenarios: to all appearances a deliberate, continuous, and willingly self-inflicted restructuring for the worse.

In terms of quantity, the poetry Tychyna wrote after *Partiia vede* and before his death in 1967 is roughly equal to his earlier work—if one includes *Skovoroda* in the latter. Aesthetically, qualitatively speaking, this later poetry is undoubtedly inferior. It is not entirely devoid of poetic achievement, however, and it does provide an invaluable mirror to the age and the man.

On the most immediate level, the later poetry tends to the prosaic (speaking both literally and metaphysically). Here, the early poetry's dominant impressionism, the focus on the detail that is lit from within by a corresponding idea and emotion, is supplemented by large, theoretical, and ultimately abstract formulations. The later poetry is also entirely normative and orthodox, and it achieves this state by avoiding at all cost any ambiguity or polysemy. All the *i*'s are dotted—almost literally, for in the later editions of his earlier work punctuation is standardized and all the formal experiments, the truncated or enjambed words of *Chernihiv,* for example (not to speak of the religious or even cosmic imagery of the earlier poetry), are forgotten. Furthermore, the poetry becomes relentlessly official: Tychyna not only adheres to the Party line (which many writers did) but proceeds to invoke it enthusiastically in contexts that hardly require it. In poems written in the 1960's, for example, he seemingly cannot complete a lyrical poem, or a reminiscence of childhood, without decrying the American involvement in Vietnam or, say, the junta of colonels in Greece. In this connec-

tion it is important to note that whereas in the 1930's—as we have now learned—Tychyna often wrote fine lyrical poems for his private use, so to speak, with no intention of publishing them, in the postwar period this is rarely if ever the case. Indeed, World War II seems to be the final watershed, with the poetry that follows it being in the main the most stunted.

In terms of genre, the last period shows a predilection for the large form (long narrative and dramatic works) as well as for occasional poetry (the déclassé descendant of the high ode of earlier times). Here, too, some works may be entirely successful, as for example the heroic epic poem *Shablia Kotovs'koho* (Sword of Kotovs'kyi, 1938), which depicts the Soviet-Polish war of 1920. The dramatic poem *Shevchenko i Chernyshevs'kyi* (1941), on the other hand, is an obvious failure, again because it is written entirely *à thèse*—to illustrate the official line as to what Shevchenko's relations with the Russians should have been.

It is precisely in the matter of genre, however, that a central structure in Tychyna's poetry begins to emerge, a structure, moreover, that once more obliges us to rethink the criteria by which Tychyna is described and evaluated. Stated most succinctly, this is the process of blurring the line between adult and children's poetry. Youth and youthfulness is a virtual constant in Tychyna's poetry. As a theme, as an ideal, youth is already highlighted in the first collection, but in the early poetry youthfulness or childhood does not determine the level and modality of the poetic discourse. By all appearances, in the later poetry, especially of the last two decades, it does. Many poems (particularly the long narrative ones) not only deal thematically with children, kindergartens, grade schools and schoolmarms, and, of course, Tychyna's own childhood, but as if by a natural extension adjust their arguments and tonality to a childlike and childish level. To be sure, this is not uniform and universal: there are several significant works, such as the powerful war poem *Pokhoron druha,* and various lyrical or meditative poems that show a high moral and intellectual level of discourse—but they are the exception. The great majority of Tychyna's late poetry, with its simplistic ideology, its didacticism and catechetic elaboration of selected (or simply current) points of doctrine, its sentimental and reductive understanding of human motivation and history, implies a reader entirely different from what one would normally assume—in effect an adolescent or child, not an adult. Not only the addressee, but the implied speaker, the voice, seems to come from the ranks of adolescents or children, as seen most crucially in the poem "The Party Leads." With this factor in the equation, the whole question of Tychyna's purported unconditional capitulation assumes a different cast. (How do the "articles of surrender" couched in the militant doggerel of fourteen-year-olds obligate the forty-three-year-old poet?)

Two moments need to be addressed here. One is the hard fact that to write in this way, totally simplifying the surrounding (and basically ignoring the internal) reality and accepting as unalloyed truth all that is handed down by the "adults," the all-wise Father Stalin (later: Father Lenin) and the nurturing Mother Party (the images are Tychyna's, and generally topical) was the safe course. (It is instructive, perhaps, that in the mid-1930's, specifically 1934-1938, the time when hundreds of Ukrainian writers and scholars, thousands of intellectuals, and indeed, with but a handful of exceptions, the entire Ukrainian party and government apparatus was being purged and liquidated, the only works that Tychyna published, and repeatedly republished, were *Partiia vede* and a small book of explicitly children's poems entitled *Ku-ku!* (*Coo-Coo!*, 1934) It was the way of survival, and many writers fell back on something akin to it. The second, no less concrete fact is that it was eminently accurate and psychologically realistic. Even today the dominant value in Soviet society is control and authority, and in the period prior to the post-Stalinist thaw (and Tychyna, sadly, never allowed himself to thaw), it was all the

more oppressively evident. No paradigm, one may submit, does more to capture the sense of total powerlessness and the mind set—and social value and reality—of total control than the image of a kindergarten with children being gently but firmly indoctrinated by a Tychynian schoolmarm. The eminent twentieth-century Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz described society's relentless attempts at controlling, molding, "infantilizing" the individual through a comic and analytic perspective—and from without. Tychyna, drawing on the harrowing reality around him, on trauma, and on the need to survive, illuminates and illustrates this reality from within.

The option of not writing, of falling silent or turning to translating (as was done by the Russian poet Boris Pasternak) was apparently not available to and not really contemplated by Tychyna. He was, by his own doing and choice, the official bard. He continued writing. Tragically, at the end, in the last phase, his ideal reader was the censor, and not even the real censor, but the censor within. For though he may have been National Commissar of Education and even chairman of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian SSR, the party critics never allowed Tychyna to forget that he had "vacillated" in his early poetry, that he had "deviated" into VAPLITE, or that he had repeatedly slipped into "formalism." Probably the most poignant fact of all is that in the 1960's, when Ukrainian poetry was undergoing a genuine revival, with honesty and openness and artistic daring becoming the coin rather than the exception, Tychyna, counseling caution and ideological orthodoxy, was loath to join or much support this youthful revolt. The notion that the poet must teach and preach, that no poetry without politics is possible, had become a part of Tychyna; it, too, was now in Tychyna's heart.

In the larger historical perspective, however, these and similar failings have already begun and will continue to recede in significance. Not because history is forgiving—it never is—but because Tychyna's true achievement transcends them. His parameters are provided not by his life and career, nor by the complex and cruel times he lived in, but by the poetry he created.

Selected Bibliography

FIRST EDITIONS

INDIVIDUAL WORKS

POETRY

Soniachni klarnety. Kiev, 1918.
Pluh. Kiev, 1920.
Zamist' sonetiv i oktav. Kiev, 1920.
V kosmichnomu orkestri. Kharkiv, 1921.
Viter z Ukrainy. Kharkiv, 1924.
Chernihiv. Kharkiv, 1931.
Partiia vede. Kharkiv, 1934.
Chuttia iedynoi rodyny. Kiev, 1938.
Shablia Kotovs'koho. 1938.
My idemo na bii. Kiev-Kharkiv, 1941.
Stal' i nizhnist'. Kiev, 1941.
Volia neprelozhna. Kiev, 1941.
Peremahat' i zhyt'. Ufa, 1942.
Tebe my znyshchym—chort z toboiu! Ufa, 1942.
Den' nastane. Ufa, 1943.
Poezii (1941–1944). Kharkiv, 1945.
I rosty i diiaty. Kiev, 1949.
Mohutnist' nam dana. Kiev, 1953.
My svidomist' liudstva. Kiev, 1957.
Zrostai, prechudovnyi svite. Kiev, 1960.
Komunizmu dali vydni. Kiev, 1961.
Sribnoi nochi. Kiev, 1964.

CHILDREN'S POETRY AND STORIES

Ivasyk-Telesyk. kazka. Kharkiv, 1924.
Ku-ku! Kiev-Kharkiv, 1934.
Lidka. Kiev, 1940.
Syritka. Kiev-Kharkiv, 1944.
Svity nashe sonce! Kiev, 1947.
Sad zelenyi. Kiev, 1949.
Dudaryk. Kazka. Kiev, 1950.
Slava Bat'kivshchyni. Kiev, 1951.
A ia u hai khodyla. Kiev, 1952.
Muzychnyi ranok v konservatorii. Kiev, 1955.
Khor lisovykh dzvinochkiv. Kiev, 1956.
Slukhaiem pro Lenina. Kiev, 1956.
Do molodi mii chystyi holos. Kiev, 1959.

Sad sadyv nam Lenin. Kiev, 1961.
Hai Shumliat. Kiev, 1967.

MODERN EDITIONS OF INDIVIDUAL WORKS

Podorozh do Ikhtimana. Kiev, 1969.
V sertsi u moim. Kiev, 1970.
Skovoroda. Symfonia. Kiev, 1971.
Z mynuloho v maibutnie. Kiev, 1973.
Chytaiu, dumaiu, notuiu. Kiev, 1974.
Iz shchodennykovykh zapysiv. Kiev, 1981.
Podorozh z kapeloiu K. H. Stetsenka. Kiev, 1982.

COLLECTED WORKS

Zolotyi homin. Poezii. L'viv-Kiev, 1922. Reprint, State College, Pa., 1967. Includes the first three collections of poetry.
Poezii. Kharkiv, 1929.
Poezii. Kharkiv, 1932.
Vybrani tvory. Kiev, 1939.
Vybrani tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Kiev, 1946–1947.
Vybrani tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Kiev, 1957.
Vybrani tvory v shesty tomakh. Kiev, 1961.
Zibrannia tvoriv v dvanadtsiaty tomakh. Kiev, 1983–. The most complete Soviet collected edition; some poetry from various periods still not included.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL STUDIES

Biletskyi, Oleksandr. Introduction to *Pavlo Tychyna, tvory v shesty tomakh.* Kiev, 1961.
Grabowicz, George G. "The Poetry of Reconstitution: Pavlo Tyčyna's *V sertsi u mojim.*" *Recenzija* 2:3–29 (1972).
———. "Tyčyna's *Černihiv.*" *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1:79-113 (1977).
———. "Continuity and Discontinuity in the Poetry of Pavlo Tychyna." In E. Bristol, ed., *East European Literature. Selected Papers from the Second World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies.* Berkeley, Calif., 1982.
Nieuważny, Florian. Introduction to *Pawło Tyczyna. Poezje.* Warsaw, 1969.
Novychenko, Leonid. *Poeziia i revolutsiia.* Kiev, 1959.
———. Introduction to *Pavlo Tychyna, V sertsi u moim.* Kiev, 1970.
Tel'niuk, Stanislav. *Chervonykh sonts protuberantsi.* Kiev, 1968.
———. *Pavlo Tychina.* Moscow, 1974.

GEORGE G. GRABOWICZ