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Reveries of the Earth: Three Slavic Versions

There is a surprising number of thematic similarities, some more obvious than others, between the poetry of the Russian Velimir Khlebnikov, the Ukrainian Bohdan Ihor Antonych, and the Pole Jerzy Harasymowicz. Such similarities shine through the evidently different textures of their work. One can speculate about Antonych having influenced Harasymowicz directly; as for Khlebnikov, at first glance he stands somewhat apart, possibly because of his audacious and unique formal and linguistic experiments which help to shape his thematic patterns. Closer scrutiny, however, reveals that Khlebnikov's pervasive thematic concerns frequently antecede those of the other two poets.

My present task is neither to disclose evidence of influences, nor to point out random thematic parallels. I shall limit myself to a survey of the poets' common tendency of motifs and images toward the elemental ethos of the earth (so obviously founded in the three cases on Slavic myths) — of gestation, birth, maturation, and decay on the surface, the more rapid and less predictable movement of high flight, and the slower, dreaming ripening within the depths. The systems of motifs and images which I shall describe imply temporal directions. Situated in the present, and hence beginning with it, each poet envisions futurity as the ultimate horizon of desire. Those visions, in their turn, are generated by a reimagined past, reaching beyond reveries of a personal childhood toward the birth and childhood of the earth itself. I shall attempt to show that much of the poets' imagery is stratified, in layers, toward that deep ground of an oneiric Genesis.

The first layer, or the beginning of each poet in the present, is determined by "seeing nature well."[1] Such imagery is concentrated

[1] By the word "beginning" I do not mean an originating point in chronological time. Although in the case of Harasymowicz "seeing well" happens to coincide with his early collections, the concentration on the so-called "visual imagery" occurs considerably later in Khlebnikov's development and is evident throughout Antonych's mature work. A beginning, as opposed to an origin, is the point at which the text calls forth and answers the initial questions put to it by the reader after he has read the work for the first time. For a much more complex definition of beginnings than is needed here, see: Edward SAID, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 29 *et passim*.

in the eye — an eye innocent of the prejudices of causality. But the three poets soon leave the point of departure of seemingly effortless writing; *through* their playful images of nature they intuit the ancient folk cultures of their native areas which surround their dream-invested childhoods. Such reveries open onto vistas of a still deeper childhood: language itself, particularly in Khlebnikov and Harasymowicz, is made to embody the essence of Slavic cultures — a reverie of an imagined proto-Slavic culture — which in its turn implies visions of universal myths, particularly myths of Genesis. Fragments of actual Slavic myths are appropriated by the poets' own quasi-mythical creations and become part of new and unique mythologies. Such essential past serves as a basis for reveries of horizons of the poets' own futures which become moments in the possible-impossible future of the world. It is in the heights and in the depths that the three poets seek the ground of Being: reveries of depths imply reveries of the past, while images of flight imply horizons of the future. Ultimately, however, the Above and the Below, the past and the future, blend in a unified Orphic vision of temporal and spatial transcendence.

Although my view on the poets' stratification of imagery and thematic motifs may be reminiscent of various Romantic theories, it is actually based on Gaston Bachelard's more contemporary philosophy of poetry. I do not intend, however, to follow Bachelard's arguments step by step or to adopt all of his conclusions, as for example, his notion of a poet's "native element" (root images of many poets, Bachelard claims, are organized around one of the four elements — earth, fire, water, and air — which the reader searches out and identifies intuitively). I shall concentrate instead on the movement of the poets' images toward their essential intuition of the mythical life of the earth, thus pursuing my main theme — the Slavic ethos that constantly sustains their poetry.

Bachelard believes that the premise of poetic imagining is "to will to see well," "to see beautiful in order to speak beautiful," "to make yourself some gaze."[2] This, however, does not turn the poet into a slave of perception: "It is necessary to participate in the existentialism of the fabulous... and replace perception of the world with admiration. Admiration in order to receive the qualities of what is perceived" (*R*, 119). To open himself thus to perception, the poet should enter into a state of wide-awake, attentive reverie which will afford him a *clearer* vision than ordinary perception would yield. He (and subsequently his reader, whose task is always to reimagine the poet's imagery for himself) should diminish his personality with its

[2] *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language, and the Cosmos*, trans. Daniel Russel (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 183. All subsequent references to this source will appear within the text, with the page number given in parentheses and preceded by the letter *R*.

pressing interests, governed by purposeful thinking toward a definite result: a different kind of desire should now direct his vision. He should become "less than he is" in order to become "more than he is" — not a being that obeys the demands of actuality but a being that imagines (*R*, 152). The state of "selfless" admiration of the world as such prepares the poet to perceive the object in itself, separated from habitual associations: thus he makes the object "less than it is" in order to make it "more than it is." By thus recalling the object to its pre-ideated origin, the poet "promotes it to the poetic" (*R*, 154). When his poetic image now reaches out for material from a percept, it re-forms it in order to cause it to be reborn: "A literary image destroys the slovenly images of perception;" by projecting the object into ceaseless becoming, "literary imagination disimagines in order to reimagine better."[3]

Bachelard calls this process *valorization*. Specifically, valorization means our loving the object and our desiring the object to become for us and thus to become for itself:

> It is not *knowledge* of the real that makes us love the real passionately. It is *feeling* that is the first and fundamental value. We begin by loving nature without knowing her, without seeing her well, by realizing in things a love that founds itself elsewhere. Consequently we seek her in detail because we love her in totality, without knowing why. The enthusiastic description that we then give her is proof that we have looked at her with passion, with the constant curiosity of love.[4]

By adding to perception the value of emotion, a valorized image helps us to perceive the world more fully in the course of our mundane affairs. After reading a striking image with a pine tree, we shall return to real pine trees with a "valorized" vision, looking at them because we love them as a part of our world.[5] By extension, poetic images guide us to a better, richer life — a life flowing *under* our daily anxieties. Poetry teaches us how to "valorize" our lives by providing our days with emotional values: "valorization," Bachelard proclaims, "decides being."[6]

The literary origins of the visually oriented images in the work of the three poets discussed here may be sought (and, in the case of

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[3] La *Terre et les rêveries de la volonté* (Paris: Libraire José Corti, 1948), p. 26. All references to this source within the body of the text will be preceded by the letter *V*.

[4] *L'Eau et les rêves: Essai sur l'imagination de la matière* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1942), p. 155. All references to this source within the body of the text will be preceded by the letter *E*.

[5] See: *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria JOLAS (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 199. All references to this source within the body of the text will be preceded by the letter *P*.

[6] *L'Air et les songes: Essai sur l'imagination du mouvement* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1943), p. 90. All references to this source within the body of the text will be preceded by the letter *A*.

Khlebnikov and Antonych, have been sought) in the Imaginist tradition.[7] We must be careful not to overestimate the role of that direction in their work: it is indeed a beginning which is soon transcended by an uncommonly powerful energy of valorization that "disimagines" in order to "reimagine." The following well-known example from Khlebnikov contains some Imaginistic features (or, more accurately, "proto-Imaginistic," since it antedates Imaginism itself): centrality in the work, immediacy of effect, reduction of the lyrical self to an impersonal instrument of "observation," a certain faithfulness to the actual:

> Krylyshkuia zolotopis'mom
> Tonchaishykh zhil
> Kuznechik v kuzov puza ulozhil
> Pribrezhnykh mnogo trav i ver...[8]
>
> [Moving its wings like golden writing / Of the most delicate veins / The grasshopper put into the basket of its belly / Many grasses and faiths growing by the shore ...]

We soon notice, however, that this image is not purely visual. Besides the foregrounded sonic orchestration, in which the sounds of the language by themselves contribute to the image, the startling use of the word "faiths" jeopardizes its status as primarily a visual experience in the present: the word implies the eternity of natural forms when confronted with the ephemeral human past, and also casts a mythical spell upon the passage.

Immediate visuality seems to be the central concern in Antonych's shorter poems: the present time, the use of strong colour, the reduction of linguistic effects, the centrality of the image in the poem, and other similar features tempt us to regard those works as an offshoot of the Imaginist tradition. What makes one hesitate, however, is the strong psychological undercurrent in most of those miniatures: the reader feels that the lyrical self enslaves the visual impulse for its own purposes, even if that self is not immediately present in the poem:

> Mov svichka, kuryt'sia cheremkha
> v pobozhnii vechora rutsi.[9]

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[7] See: Vladimir MARKOV, *The Longer Poems of Velimir Khlebnikov*, "University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 62" (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), p. 196. As for Antonych, the influence of Imaginism upon his work has been the subject of a vigorous debate in Ukrainian émigré criticism.

[8] V.V. KHLEBNIKOV, *Sobranie proizvedenii Velimira Khlebnikova*, 5 vols., ed. Iu. Tynianov and I.N. Stepanov (Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo pisatelei, 1928-1933). Reprint ed.: *Sobranie sochinenii*, "Slavische Propyläen" (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1968), 2:37. All subsequent references to this source will appear within the body of the text.

[9] Bohdan Ihor ANTONYCH, *Zibrani tvory*, ed. S. Hordyns'ky and B. Rubchak (New York: Slovo, 1967), p. 127. All subsequent references to this source will appear within the body of the text.

[A bird cherry tree smokes like a candle /
in the pious hand of the evening.]

Although I have not found any references to Harasymowicz's use of the Imaginist tradition, some of his early poems obviously yield witty and attractive examples of visually determined imagery. Here is a valorized image of a flybane which transcends its inherent irony by an irresistible childlike naïveté:

Onegdaj
spotkałem muchomora
rudy
w turystycznym stroju
w pumpach[10]
[One day / I met a flybane / he was red-haired /
dressed in a tourist outfit / in plus-fours]

Most of the images in the work of the three poets which embody a valorized "seeing-well" of nature are inspired by definite geographical territories, the poets' "native" regions. It is interesting that each of those regions is marginal, culturally and territorially, to the centre of its country. Each is rural, having managed to preserve its "spirit of the place" in the literal meaning of that expression — its chthonic gods, myths, and legends. Although the poets do use urban imagery, and Khlebnikov frequently takes his images from his travels to exotic, and also "marginal," places, while Harasymowicz "describes" several areas of Poland — the poets' reveries, nevertheless, keep returning to their oneiric homes.

Khlebnikov spent his childhood in the Ukrainian region of Volyn'; Volyn', together with the rest of Ukraine, certainly is marginal with regard to Khlebnikov's Russian centre. The Volynian forests and marshes, its folk poetry dealing with the *rusalky,* as well as the Ukrainian language, culture, and history as a whole, figure quite conspicuously in his work. One can, moreover, easily trace influences of the Ukrainian Romantic poet Taras Shevchenko (whom Khlebnikov regarded as one of his heroes[11]) on a number of poems and individual passages. Antonych was born in Lemkivshchyna, an area at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, heavily populated by Ukrainians. It borders on the land of the picturesque and poetic Hutsuls, whom, incidentally, Khlebnikov mentions in his poetry.[12] The landscape of Lemkivshchyna, together with its folklore and

[10] Jerzy HARASYMOWICZ, *Wybór wierszy 1955-1973* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo literackie, 1975), p. 71. All subsequent references to this source will appear within the body of the text.

[11] Khlebnikov mentions Shevchenko in his poem *Ladomir*: "I ne boitsia dnia Shevchenko" (1:190; "And Shevchenko is not afraid of the day").

[12] See particularly "Noch' v Galitsii" (2:200-201) and, more distantly, "Mava galitsiiskaia" (2:203-204).

mythology, dominates Antonych's early work and appears time and again throughout his *œuvre*. Harasymowicz has spent much of his life among the Lemko people (whom he calls "Rusins"), not many miles southwest of Antonych's birthplace. Although he was born elsewhere, he nevertheless has adopted Lemkivshchyna as his home, and even has developed for himself an oneiric "Rusin" genealogy. Harasymowicz occasionally returns in his poetry to his actual native city of Puławy, but his oneiric memories of it are not as frequent or as striking as those of the Carpathians. These myth-invested marginal territories serve the poets as a gateway to a common-Slavic culture which becomes for them an imagined proto-Slavic community; it is thus that the poets reach their profounder myths of depth and height, of the ultimate past of the world and its ultimate future. We see that such reveries force the very periphery of those regions — their status of periphery imposed by the "unnatural" demands of politics and culture — to become poetically central.

Within such marginal landscapes valorized by desire, the poets return to their childhoods which are now not so much remembered as reimagined. According to Bachelard, authentic poetry should do precisely that. The childhood that we encounter and re-experience in valorized imagery has been enriched for us by the motionless and timeless happiness of reverie itself, in which all the difficult moments of actual childhood have been dimmed. Transcending our personal temporality, such valorized memories become the essence of all childhood (*R*, 108-109, 117, 124 *et passim*). Hence, "mediated childhood is more than the sum of our memories... The poet awakens within us the cosmicity of childhood" (*R*, 126).

We find numerous instances of the poets' imagining themselves as children or adolescents, surrounded by landscapes reminiscent of their "native" regions. Khlebnikov, for example, sees himself in two poems as a boy-prophet: in one he is surrounded by ancient trees of the deep Volynian forests, which stand in the twilight "self-importantly, like old men":

> Nash iunosha poet:
> .....
> "Naveki ia:
> Volnu ochelovechiv
> .....
> Derev'ia sheptali rechi stoletii (3:305).

["Our youth sings: / I am eternally: / Having humanized the wave... / The trees whispered speeches of centuries.]

Note that Khlebnikov's vision here is distanced by the third person (in another poem, "Ia vyshel iunoshei odin" — 3:306 — the prophet-youth already appears in the first person), by the stylized, almost Baroque diction, and a Symbolist metaphorical ambience.

Antonych also "remembers" himself as a boy-poet in the midst of his "native" landscape. His diction, too, is somewhat declamatory, but not as radically distanced as Khlebnikov's:

> V horakh, de blyzhche sontsia, pershyi raz pryhlianuvsia nebu,
> todi shchos' dyvne i neznane probudylosia u meni
> i pidneslasia holova i slova pryishly do ust zeleni.
> Teper — de b ia ne buv i kolynebud',
> ia vse — pianyi ditvak iz sontsem u kysheni (65).

[In the mountains, closer to the sun, / for the first time I gazed at the sky, / then something wonderful and strange awakened in me, / and I lifted my head, and green words came to my lips. / Now, wherever I am and whenever, / I am always a drunken kid with the sun in my pocket.]

The startling contemporaneity of Harasymowicz's work, in comparison to the other two poets, primarily consists in that he expresses his myths in colloquial diction and in an off-hand manner, often with subtle irony, as if he refused to take himself too seriously. Hence, I suppose, his admitted fondness for Konstanty Ildefons Gałczynski.[13] In several poems Harasymowicz writes about his early "education":

> Najbardziej
> lubiłem w szkole
> spoglądać
> Jak lecą za oknem
> swobodne
> chmur pisownie (336).

[I liked best / when I was in school / to watch / how beyond the window / freely / the spelling books of clouds / were flying.]

And here is a more essential reverie of childhood:

> Dzieciństwo jak Świątowid
> Legło w trawach
> Dni które lepiły jaskółki
> Pod rodzinnym dachem (387).

[Childhood like Sventovit (a Slavic deity) / Lay down in the grass / Days that swallows moulded / under the family roof.]

Reveries of their own childhoods are an element of the poets' more important attribute — the childlike or "primitivistic" quality of their poetic vision. Iury Tynianov, in his introduction to Khlebnikov's collected works, points out that in Khlebnikov not only do the child and the primitive become new lyrical heroes but that the poet breaks up the norms of meter and syntax as a child would (1:23). It is not at all difficult to see that behind many of Khlebnikov's complex and fascinating word games (*zaum'* — "trans-sense") — no

[13] See: "Słowo wstępne," *Poezje wybrane*, "Biblioteka poetów" (Warsaw: Ludowa spółdzielnia wydawnicza, 1971), p. 7.

matter with what valorized "theories" the poet surrounded them — lurks the child's delight at playing with the sounds of language and their patterned repetitions. His well-known "Zakliatie smekhom" ("Incantation by Laughter") surely sounds like a children's word game, or a nonsense poem, or perhaps a "text" that a child would improvise on the spot (2:35). Roman Jakobson, in his pioneering essay on Khlebnikov, quotes a piece of children's folklore to show how in that text words are "reconstructed" by a manipulation of suffixes almost exactly as they are in Khlebnikov's poem.[14]

Jerzy Kwiatkowski carefully discusses Harasymowicz's poetry as childlike both on the thematic and formal levels,[15] and Kazimierz Wyka justly remarks that this is not stylization but "natural discoveries of a bewitched child."[16] Wyka also points to the "primitivistic" quality of Harasymowicz's work.[17] In the following quotation about cats, particularly in its first line, it is the syntax more than the images that conveys the childlike quality of the poetry:

> Co rano robimy? A, rano to my śpimy,
> chyba że nas ktoś za ogon pociągnie znienacka.
> No, to my wtedy syrena strażacka (15).

[What do we do in the morning? Ah, we sleep in the morning, / unless someone suddenly pulls us by the tail. / Well, then we are a fire siren.]

As for Antonych, there are Ukrainian poets (Tychyna, Svidzins'ky, Holoborod'ko, Andiievs'ka) who are more pervasively "childlike" than he, particularly in language and form. Part of the reason may be that the later Antonych is not fond of formal experimentation. Nevertheless, on the level of the imagery, his tendency toward the fairy tale and consequently toward myth, is quite evident:

> Mii brat — kravets' khlopiachykh mrii
> zishyv z zemleiu nebo.
> Horiat' khustky u kramariv,
> nemov stobarvnyi hrebin'.
> Spivaiut' tesli, bubny biut'.
> Rozkryiu taiemnytsiu:
> chervone sontse prodaiut'
> na iarmarku v Horlytsiakh (145-146).

[My brother — a tailor of boys' dreams — / has sewn together the earth and the sky. / The kerchiefs in the vendors' stalls / burn like a hundred-colored comb. / Carpenters sing, drums beat. / I shall tell you a secret: / they sell the red sun / at the fair in Horlytsi.]

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[14] R. Iakobson, *Noveishaia russkaia poeziia: Nabrosk pervyi* (1921), p. 42.

[15] Jerzy Kwiatkowski, "Trzy razy Harasymowicz," *Klucze do wyobraźni*, 2nd ed. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo literackie, 1973), pp. 124-129.

[16] Kazimierz Wyka, "Urzecony," *Rzecz wyobraźni* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1959), p. 205.

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 196-199.

The poetic imagination breaks through the fragile walls of childhood memories into myth. The search for one's childhood in reverie implies the search for the childhood of the landscape, of nature, of the earth, of the cosmos. "How vast is life," Bachelard writes, "when one meditates upon its beginnings! Isn't meditating upon an origin dreaming? And isn't dreaming upon an origin going beyond it?" (*R*, 110). The poet's personality, in such reveries of origins, must be diminished; this implies self-externalization into nature and, to some degree, self-objectification within it. In mythical images, unlike the "Imaginistic" practice of concentrating the self in the observing eye, the self is present, but only as a being plunged into nature, as its integral part. "In reverie," Bachelard remarks, doubtless alluding to Fichte, "there is no more non-I" (*R*, 167). Hence, far from imposing his personality upon nature, and thus committing "pathetic fallacy," the dreaming poet subjects himself to its shapes and colours, simultaneously valorizing it by his "selfless" reverie.

In the following stanza, Khlebnikov, as a part of nature, is immune to death stalking his land and to the inexorable finality of its time. The surface ironic tone, with the possible parodic echo of "Wie der Vogel singt," does not hide that deep intent:

> Na nikh byvalo ia
> Sidel bespechnym vorob'em
> I pesni prezhnie chirikal,
> Khot' smerti maiatniki tikali (1:298).

[On them (the branches) I sometimes / Sat like a carefree sparrow / And twittered former songs, / Although the pendulums of death ticked away.]

For Antonych, writing a poem means slowly growing into a bush:

> Stil obrostaie buinym lystiam
> i razom z krislom ia vzhe kushch (153).

[My table sprouts thick foliage, / and, together with my chair, I am already a bush.]

And Harasymowicz seems to embody Bachelard's pronouncement to the effect that there is "an infinite exchange between vision and the visible. Everything that compels to look looks" (*E*, 44):

> Rysuję te góry
> i góry mnie rysują
> dokładnie według swej wysokości
> i byłem wczoraj górami (369).

[I draw these mountains / and the mountains draw me / painstakingly because of their height / and yesterday I was the mountains.]

The externalization of the self into nature occasionally becomes so pervasive that the poets are forced to use not only the third person singular, as we have seen Khlebnikov do, but even their last names. This reverses the mundane function of a name as the designation of a

person by a cultural code: the specificity of the poet as a person is somehow distanced. Such practice is particularly frequent and effective in Antonych. Here is an example of a happy "Metamorphosis": "Antonych buv khrushchem i zhyv kolys' na vyshniakh" (155). [In the past Antonych was a June bug and lived on cherry trees.] Khlebnikov thinks of himself as an island, inhabited by his readers: "Na ostrove vy. Zovet'sia on Khlebnikov" (2:178). [You are on an island. It is called Khlebnikov.] Although Harasymowicz also uses his last name on several occasions, most often he does so ironically, in the way that Maiakovsky would use his. Harasymowicz, too, envisions himself as a territory, entitling a long poem "Central Harasymowicz Park"; like "the island Khlebnikov," the park is a bastion against an encroaching civilization; the mythical element, however, is absent from that poem. More interestingly, Harasymowicz rejects his name as unnecessary cultural baggage, now that he has become a fox:

> Nie mówcie
>
> Młody poeta
> Jerzy Harasymowicz
>
> Mówcie
>
> młody lis
> biegnący w noc
> rudą (122).

[Do not say / A young poet / Jerzy Harasymowicz / Say / a young fox / running into / a ruddy night.]

Compare this, incidentally, with Antonych's image in which he also regards himself as a fox: "Lezhu, mov mudryi lys, pid paporoti kvitom" (121). [I lie like a wise fox under the flower of a bracken.]

On one occasion Harasymowicz does install his name within the body of nature, and he does this in two interesting metamorphoses. The first involves the word *przeobrażenie* (with Church Slavonic overtones) and its derivative *przeobrażeński*, reminiscent of *Preobrazhensky*, a common Russian last name; the second is based on a startling neologism, the verb *harasymuje*, formed from the root of his last name "Harasym" which is a Ukrainian first name; it would translate as "he is harasyming." Note that, through the Ukrainian first name, this neologism objectifies the poet's person within the Ukrainian Lemko culture which he identifies with nature; hence the last name, after these two metamorphoses, is not rejected but, on the contrary, becomes a part of nature, as in the case of Khlebnikov and Antonych:

> A może jestem po prostu Łemków patronem
> A może to tylko nowe przeobrażenia
> Nowe wcieleńia aplikuje sobie Jerzy Przeobrażeński
> Może tylko tak sobie w dymach jesieni harasymuje... (148).

[And perhaps I am simply the patron saint of the Lemkos / And perhaps it is only new transfigurations / New embodiments which Jerzy Preobrazhensky is applying to himself / Perhaps he is simply harasyming in the smokes of autumn.]

In Antonych and Harasymowicz poetry passes on its way out of nature and into writing through the stage of "primitive" folk craftsmanship; more precisely, it is compared with the construction of wooden Carpathian churches by anonymous peasant carpenters. Antonych, in several of his poems, likens his art to the craft of his anonymous (and possibly oneiric) carpenter-grandfather and the latter's "singing axe," actually coveting its uncanny powers (145, 146, 147). Harasymowicz also constructs a parallel between the anonymous art of peasant architects and the necessary anonymity of poetry born of nature:

Ważne są tylko modre kopuły pieśni
Które na górze wysokiej zostaną
Nikt nie szuka inicjałów cieśli
Gdy cieśle dom postawią (223).

[Only the light-blue cupolas of song are important / Those that will remain on the high mountain / Nobody looks for the initials of carpenters / When carpenters build a house.]

Jacek Łukasiewicz observes that Harasymowicz compares himself with village craftsmen or medieval guildmasters;[18] surely the same can be said of Antonych.

The "anonymous" poem, like a mountain chapel, blends into the surrounding landscape. By and large, however, it is an even more immediate part of nature — one of its objects or processes. Only this type of poetry will lead art back to life from its frigid Olympian heights (for Khlebnikov and Antonych) or laboratories of experiment (for Harasymowicz), compelling language to embody the prepersonal existence of the body-subject which alone communicates with the slow process of nature where the world is constantly reborn. The three poets, therefore, insist that poetry is not created by art as artifice, but is *found* in the depths of nature. Khlebnikov claims to have borrowed his melodies from the sound of water:

U shuma vod beru napevy,
Napevy slova i raskaty (3:40).

[I take the songs from the sound of water, / The songs of the word and its rolling sounds.]

Antonych advises:

Navchysia lisovoi movy
iz knyhy lysiv ta sarniat!

[18] Jacek ŁUKASIEWICZ, "Tropem Harasymowicza," *Republika mieszańców* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Ossolińskich, 1974), p. 105.

Vykhodyt' misiats' do dibrovy
pysat' elehii na pniakh (89).

[Learn the language of the forest / from the book of foxes and fawns! / The moon comes out into the grove / to write elegies on tree stumps.]

Not only does Antonych take poetry from nature but he gives it back to nature in a closed circle of exchange which excludes civilization. Like St. Francis of Assisi, he "reads" to his "brothers":

do karasiv, do koropiv i do delfiniv,
do vsikh brativ z solodkykh i solonykh vod... (153).

[to crucians, to carps, and to dolphins, / to all brothers in fresh and salt waters...]

Hence Antonych, significantly paraphrasing (or, in fact, subverting) Descartes' celebrated axiom, is able to establish the basic principle of *his* existence: "Instynktom chuiu tse: spivaiu — tozh isnuiu" (163). [I feel this by instinct: I sing therefore I am.]

I have intimated already that Harasymowicz's seeking and discovering poetry in nature — unlike Khlebnikov's majestic rhetoric and Baroque cosmicity on the one hand, and, on the other, Antonych's frequently expressed dread of the weight that poetry puts on a boy's shoulders — proceeds in play, occasionally ironical but, as a rule, childishly naive. His deep concerns are, nevertheless, similar to the other poets. Poetry is given as herbs are given: the poet needs only to walk in the forest and gather its/his images:

Snuje się tu moja duszyczka sowia
Zbiera przyprawy do swojej baśni
Zbiera czerwony pieprz października
Ostre piołuny goryczki i dziurawce (100).

[Here my owlish soul wanders / And gathers spices for its fable: / it gathers red peppers of October / Sharp wormwood, bitter berries, and St. John's warts]

Creativity is as spontaneous as the awakening of nature and as miraculous as Antonych and his table turning into a bush:

Same wiersze ze stołu wyszły
I jak jemioły na topoli same (240).

[Poems sprang up from my table all by themselves / like mistletoe climbing a poplar all by itself]

Also, an exchange between nature and poetry, similar to the example from Antonych, quoted above, occurs in Harasymowicz:

I tylko świerszcze
tłumaczą pośpiesznie
mój poemat
na łąki (333).

[And only crickets / rapidly translate / my poem / onto meadows.]

With the same gesture with which they reject bookish learning, the poets embrace the Book of Nature. All three develop that medieval commonplace in many striking images, although with an intent radically different from that of the medieval scholars. In Khlebnikov we find:

> Vesny poslovitsy i skorogovorki
> Po knigam zimnim popolzli (3:31).
>
> [The proverbs and tongue twisters of spring / Went crawling along the winter books.]

The pun *knigam* — *krigam* (books — sheets of ice) strengthens the ambiguity of this image. Even the time of day becomes a book:

> V knige poldnia, seichas
> Lastochka pela tsivit'! (1:293).
>
> [Presently in the book of noon / A swallow sang tsivit'!]

Images of the Book of Nature occur particularly frequently in Antonych. His swallows, for example, write not at noon but in the morning:

> Os' lastivky v knyzhkakh ptashynykh
> zapysuiut' pochatok dnia (80).
>
> [Here swallows in bird-books / write down the beginning of day.]

In the following example from Harasymowicz, we see the image of books of autumn leaves combined with the poet's pan-Slavic interests which I shall discuss later:

> Pod nogami wiatr rozwiewa stare księgi
> Pisane czerwonym patykiem cyrylicy (171).
>
> [Underfoot the wind blows away old books / Written with the red stick of the Cyrillic alphabet.]

The ground that engenders foxes, trees, and poetry is always in the feminine. "For any human being, man or woman," Bachelard writes, poetic reverie "is one of the feminine states of the soul" (*R*, 18). Such unification within the feminine (Bachelard calls it "primitive androgyneity" — *R*, 60) will give birth to deep archetypal memories whose ground is the slow life of the Earth Mother, "the great tranquility of the inanimate feminine being ... this Gynaeceum of remembrance which comprises all memory, very ancient memory" (*R*, 19). Therefore all authentic poetic creativity — the creation of writing, as well as the creation of reading — is under the sign of the *anima*: it is in such reveries of the *anima* that man and nature are reconciled.

The feminine myth — the sexual myth — pulsates through the work of the three poets, involving ancient Slavic beliefs and rituals the centre of which has always been the feminine. Witness Khlebni-

kov's powerfully dynamic image of the mysterious, wild rites of Kupala:

> Ty, po razboinich'i vskinuvshi kosy,
> Ved'moi sygaesh' cherez koster,
> Kriknuv: srubai!
> Vsiudu teplo. Noch' goluba.
> Devushek tolpy temny i bosy,
> Temnoe telo, serye kosy.
> Veet liubov'iu ... (3:113).

[Tossing your tresses bandit-like, / You, a witch, jump over the bonfire, / Shouting: Cut (me) down! / It is warm. The night is light-blue. / Crowds of girls, dark and barefoot, / Dark body, dark tresses. / It wafts of love ...]

Beneath the laughter of the assorted *rusalki, mavki, villy* and other feminine chthonic demons which dominate Khlebnikov's early poetry, we hear the voice of the Earth Mother herself. In one image, she feeds on insects:

> Sosnovaia mat'
> Kushaet sinikh strekoz (3:113).

[The pine mother / eats blue dragonflies.]

In another passage, a powerful prayer, she is addressed as the Creatress of the Universe who now has hidden herself:

> Gde ty, izgnannitsa?
> Gde, bespridannitsa?
> Povstanitsa nebnei bezvirnykh,
> Vosstanitsa pevnei sverkhmirnykh?
> Kolduet, strakhuet moi slukh,
> Zybuet, volnuet moi dukh (2:279).

[Where are you, o exile? / Where are you, o dowerless bride? / O rebel of whirlless skies (a possible pun, through Ukrainian, on "faithless heavens") / O revolutionary of transuniversal songs? / My hearing bewitches and fears, / My spirit wavers in waves.]

Antonych imagines his beloved as a mythical queen or priestess, in the midst of valorized nature — a priestess who negates death by the power within her flesh:

> V ustakh zori trostyna fleity. Nich vinchaie chola,
> zakonam prystrasti poslushni. Dub sviatyi. Mchyt' lania.
> Lezhysh na hutri nochi tepla i virna. Mudre kolo
> zhyttia doversheno. Za smert' — syl'nishe lysh kokhannia (160).

[The reed of a flute between the lips of a star. / Night crowns the brows, / obedient to the laws of passion. The holy oak. A doe runs. / You, warm and faithful, lie on the pelt of night. The wise circle / of life is complete. Only love is stronger than death.]

Projecting his reverie more deeply into antiquity, Antonych, like Khlebnikov, envisions some mysterious female ritual: "Tantsiuiut' tatuiovani divchata na maidani mrii" (120). [Tatooed girls dance on the village green of reverie].

Harasymowicz, in a strange reverie about medieval troubadours, imagines the poet-knight's wife as somewhat of a chtonic deity, part woman, part bird:

A moja żona
Gilopiersna
stroszy pasowe pióra
tu i tam pióro
ześlizguje się
po jej rozrosłym udzie (65).

[And my wife / Finchbreasted / ruffles her bright-red feathers / here and there a feather / slides down / her broad thigh.]

In another rather startling poem, primeval femininity threatens the fragility of Western culture (possibly in an act of reimagining Henri Rousseau):

murzynka naga
czarna skóra nie dopięta
na białe guziki
uchyla u dołu poły
ukazuje się kozie
długowłose udo
.....
murzynka jest głodna
mandolinę przełamuje
chce dostać się
do botticellego rąk
delikatnych jak kurczak (63-64).

[The naked negress / the black skin not buttoned all the way / with white buttons / the flaps at the bottom are opened / and there shows a goat's / longhaired thigh ... / the negress is hungry / she breaks the mandolin in two / she wants to get at / botticelli's hands / as delicate as chicken meat].

An interesting embodiment of the oneiric intuition of the life of the earth through the *anima* which we find in Khlebnikov, Antonych, and (marvellously developed) in Harasymowicz is what one might call the paganization of the Virgin Mary. Khlebnikov, for example, brings together the poet, the Virgin, and a *rusalka,* and has them wander through the desolate streets of a post-revolutionary Soviet city. The poet addresses the two women as sisters, calling the one a maiden of the stars and the other a maiden of the waters. He bemoans their exiled state; neither has a place in the new Soviet society or indeed in the civilized world:

Obeim vam na nashem svete
Sredi liudei ne znaiu mesta
(Nevesta vod i zvezd nevesta) (1:158).

[For neither of you in our world, / Among people can I find a place / (Maiden of the waters and maiden of the stars).]

Antonych celebrates the Virgin Mary at various stages of his career. As this *œuvre* progresses, She increasingly becomes a part of the landscape of Lemkivshchyna and hence of the natural world:

Teshut' tesli z sribla sany,
sniat'sia vesnianii sny.
Na tykh saniakh Jasna Pani,
ochi, nache u sarny.

Khodyt' sontse u krysani,
spyt' slovians'keie Dytia.
Idut' sany, plache Pani,
snihom stelyt'sia zhyttia (86).

[Carpenters make a sleigh of silver, / dreams of spring are dreamed. / On that sleigh (sits) the Bright Lady, / Her eyes like a doe's. / The sun walks in a Lemko hat, / the Slavic child sleeps. / The sleigh rides, the Lady weeps, / and life is strewn with snow.]

Harasymowicz developed the cult of the paganized Slavic Madonna in the collection *Madonny polskie* (Polish Madonnas) and elsewhere. Most of the nineteen poems in the collection are verbal reimaginings of primitive representations of the Madonna in village and town churches. The general mood is that of sadness: as in Khlebnikov and Antonych, here too the Virgin Mary is an exile, rejected and alone. Harasymowicz adds an interesting reason of his own for Her unhappiness: She would like to shake off the metaphysical shackles that alienate Her from the earth, and become a simple village maiden, planting flowers and singing songs; in the following excerpt She would like to take off the sheets of gold that encase Her in Her ikon:

Jakżebym zdjęła
te blachy złote
rozpuściła włosy
blachami zabite
są ciała urody (208).

[If only I could take off / those heavy golden plates / and shake my hair loose / the beauty of my body / is boarded up by plates.]

Close to Antonych's reverie, quoted above, is Harasymowicz's image of a Slovakian Madonna being taken to a Lemko village:

I gdzie tak gospodarz jedzie
w jednym z grudniowych dni
wóz jedzie
korona jedzie
Madonna śpi[19].

[And where is the farmer going / on a December day / the wagon rides / the crown rides / the Madonna sleeps.]

In another poem, the Virgin Mary (as in Khlebnikov) is an exile in an industrialized Communist city. "You are not employed, Madonna?" She is asked brusquely. "With whom shall I leave my baby son," She answers. "With the crows?" (218). The Virgin Mary, in a poem from a later collection, seems to blend with the Earth Mother herself. In

[19] *Madonny polskie* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo literackie, 1973), p. 38.

that poem She appears with Harasymowicz's god Rok, of whom I shall speak later.

> Turkawką lasów jest Madonna
> i uschłą brzozę płodną zrobi
> nakrapiane cudami jelenie
> Madonna z wielkiej piersi poi (432).

[The Madonna is a ringdove / she will make a dry birch tree fertile / she feeds with huge breast / deer spotted with miracles.]

Poetic reveries, inspired by the elemental feminity of the earth, open from valorized personal childhoods onto vistas of the childhoods of the poets' peoples which merge in a reimagined primeval Slavic myth. Harasymowicz stated in an interview that he regards poetry as a profoundly irrational affair, and hence "concerned with dead or fading cultures."[20] We have seen in the poets' various embodiments of the chthonic feminine principle that only occasional details of actual Slavic mythology find their way into their valorized visions: what possesses the reader's imagination is rather a unique essence or root of ancient Slavic cultures, with their specificity taken up by the universalizing process of reverie.

The ambience of Slavic paganism, as we have seen in examples centring on the Virgin, forces the Judeo-Christian God and His Saints down from Heaven, to join the authentic or invented pagan deities. In an early "epic" poem on the Christianization of the Kievan Empire *Vnuchka Malushi* (Malusha's Granddaughter), Khlebnikov becomes the champion of the banished gods (2:63-76). In another poem, *Sestrymolnii* (Sister Lightnings), the first lightning, which seems to embody Perun's supreme will, switches to Church Slavonic in order pronounce the First Commandment and thus usurp God's power (3:155). And in the poem *Tri sestry* (Three Sisters), Khlebnikov opposes the indifferent coldness of the blue sky to woman and clay. After being abandoned by the High, to what "lord" does the clay address its mysterious and rejuvenating prayers?

> I golod golubogo kholoda
> Ostavit zhenshchinu i glinu.
> I vnov' tainstvenno i molodo
> Molilas' glina vlastelinu. (1:163).

[And the hunger of the blue cold / Will abandon both woman and clay. / And again, mysteriously and youthfully, / The clay prayed to the lord.]

After his earliest period of orthodox devotional poetry (which remained uncollected after his death), Antonych insists, perhaps more frequently than the other two poets, that all religious impulses grow below, in the earth. At the end of his first published collection, for example, he proclaims: "Ia — zakokhanyi v zhytti pohanyn"

[20] "Słowo wstępne," pp. 11.

(66). [I am a pagan in love with life.] While Lada, goddess of love and fertility, casts love spells, the peasants in a Lemko church pray to an empty sky:

> V taiemnykh kruchakh davnia Lada
> vorozhyt' khloptsiam molodym.
> V tserkvakh horyt' Khrystovyi ladan
> i kuryt'sia molytvy dym.
> Na nebi til'ky syni zori
> vyslukhuiut' blahal'nyi spiv
> liudei, shcho prosti ta bezkryli... (70).

[In the mysterious ravines the ancient Lada / tells young lads' fortunes. / In churches, Christ's incense burns, / and the smoke of prayer rises up. / Only the blue stars in the sky / hear the prayerful song / of people who are simple and wingless...]

In another powerful image, reminiscent of Khlebnikov, Antonych contrasts the dead emptiness of the sky with the lush vegetation of the earth and the pagan holy oak that proudly reigns over it:

> Bezumna bezlich form. Bahatstvo, shcho pryznachene dlia mar,
> a vvysh pustelia neba — liuds'kyi liaki i zakhvat, mertve svitlo;
> lysh dub — roslynnyi lev, nad lisom hordyi i skupyi monarkh... (149).

[A mindless multitude of forms. Wealth meant for the bier, / and above, the desert of the sky — human fear and ecstasy, dead lights; / only the oak — a vegetable lion, a proud and miserly monarch above the forest...]

Harasymowicz is as anxious to close the abyss between the metaphysical and the physical as the other two poets are:

> Już czas jest wielki aby wyruszyć
> z cedrowych lasów Solomona
> na drzewa grzybnia wierszy wchodzi
> jesiennie dzwonią na jesionach słowa
> .....
> W niebie są pustki może nie ma
> między brzozami wcale nieba
> może w kulbace bożej baśni
> nie zaznał Dymitr wcale jazdy (426).

[It is high time to depart / from Solomon's cedar groves / the fungi of poems appear on tree trunks / and words ring autumnally upon ash trees... / There are wastelands in the sky perhaps there is no / sky at all among birch trees / perhaps Dymitr did not have his ride / in the saddle of a godly fairytale.]

Nature, together with poetry as its emanation, replaces the cultural text of the Song of Songs; they even replace Slavic Christian legends about the ride of St. Demetrius up to Heaven. Slavic saints now search for a healthier, more virile god than our accepted image of Christ. From her ikon:

> Ze świecą szuka Teodora
> Mocnego i zdrowego Boga (243).

[Theodora with a candle / searches for a strong, healthy God.]

Finally in Harasymowicz, as in Khlebnikov, the old pagan religion (embodied by Harasymowicz in Div as that god appears in the *Song of Igor's Campaign*) directly challenges the new:

> Dusza moja — czerwona wiązka gromów
> Poznaję — pośród rozpędzonych chmur
> Na walkę z Bogiem zlatuje z jodel
> Inny brodaty krasnopióry Bóg (240).

[My soul is a red bundle of thunders / I recognize — in the midst of scattered clouds / From pine trees flies down to do battle with God / a different bearded and beautifully feathered God]

The bull in Slavic mythology may have symbolized the sun and therefore may have been the representation of Svarog; stylized bulls' heads appear in ornaments as early as the Trypillian culture. Khlebnikov proclaims the bull a supreme god; he imagines it, moreover, as a region, or perhaps the whole earth: "Byk byl bog, liudi bogomoltsami" (3:220). [The bull was a god, the people worshippers.].

> Na bokakh
> Serebrilas' reka
> Cherno-belogo gliantsa,
> Solntsa potomki zdes' zhili na rebrakh byka (3:218).

[On (his) sides / A river shone silver / Polished in black and white, / The descendants of the sun lived on the ribs of the bull.]

Harasymowicz, like Khlebnikov, takes the divinity of the bull for granted; he also believes that the bull created life in an act of Genesis characteristic of the habits of its species. The poet, furthermore, imagines the bull as the antagonist of the Holy Trinity and sees it as finally resurrected and victorious over the "waxed heaven" of Western cultural tradition and over our own "heretical" adherence to that tradition:

> Buhaj jest bogiem wszyscy wiemy
> że padnie pchnięty w mrokach sieni
> bowiem wygrzebał nam kopytem
> ten piołun złoty zwany życiem
> .....
> I wtedy Trójcy Gotyk który
> na woskowanym siedzi niebie
> czcimy — kiedy niewdzięczność nasza
> zapisywana jest powoli
> .....
> i zmartwychwstaną rogi boże
> na wypalonej gromem trawie.[21]

[We all know that the bull is a god / that he is falling pushed in the shadows of the antechamber / because with his hoof he dug up for us / that golden and bitter wormwood called life / And now we worship the Gothic Trinity which / sits in the waxed heaven / as our ingratitude is recorded slowly ... / and the god's horns will be resurrected / on grass that is scorched with lightning.]

[21] *Poezje wybrane*, pp. 126-127.

Although in Antonych the most frequent totemic embodiment of pagan divinity is the singularly un-Slavic lion (here, I think, the poet turns to alchemy rather than to Slavic myths), he nevertheless also proclaims the divinity of the bull in several poems. In the following stanza, for example, the Slavic bull oversees from the un-Slavic zodiac a spring night of universal ritualistic mating; the passage is similar to Khlebnikov's of the night of Kupala, quoted earlier:

> Divky piani, mov hrim, prokhodiat',
> reve iz zodiaka Byk.
> Zemlia zaplidnena i vody
> u kuriavi masnykh muzyk (230).

[Drunken girls, like thunder, pass by, / the Bull bellows from the zodiac. / The earth is impregnated, and the waters / are smoking with oily music.]

We see in the first line of this quotation the development of the folk epithet "hrim-divka," or "baba iak hrim" ("thundergirl," "a woman like thunder"), meaning a strong, hefty female. In the last line, "oily" is a pun on lewd sexual desire or obscene language. The example of the bull is one of many that the three poets take from the world of Slavic myths. The holy tree or the sacred deer would have done just as well.

Faithful to the cyclical temporality implied by the worship of the earth and its myths, Khlebnikov, Antonych and Harasymowicz celebrate the supreme divinity of Fate. Khlebnikov and Harasymowicz hymn the god Rok, whose various meanings in Slavic languages imply both fate and temporality, while Antonych invokes Bios — a deity with biological powers similar to those of Rok. In Khlebnikov, for example, Rok is the god of love and bread:

> Vidno, tak khotelo nebo
> Roku tainomu sluzhit',
> Chtoby klich liubvi i khleba
> Vsem byvaiushchim vlozhit' (1:90).

[It seems that heaven wanted / to serve mysterious Rok / so that the slogan of love and bread / be put to all that live.]

Harasymowicz stated in an interview that for him Rok has by no means merely decorative functions: "My god is ROK, that magical mysterium ... Rok takes us away from this world, and Rok gives us life. It seems to me that the mysterium is more real than all the pomp and circumstance of the Christian ritual."[22] For Harasymowicz Rok is present in the mistletoe, in the pine tree, in the maple tree (233). In the poem "Świety rok" ("Saint Rok"), the poet mentions Rok together with Kupala, the old Ukrainian and Byelorussian god of love and sex, and also gives him the attributes of Perun:

[22] Słowo wstępne," p. 10-11.

Zza zielonych gór Kupały
Gromami rzuca Święty Rok[23]
[From behind the green mountains of Kupala / Saint Rok hurls his thunderbolts]

Finally Harasymowicz proclaims that Rok is the landlord of the world (428).

Antonych's Bios, Life, although not as complex and not as intriguingly Slavic as Rok, extends his rule over the whole earth — man, animal, plant, stone — and, moreover, fuses the various levels of existence into an indivisible unity. Here is a stanza from a poem dedicated to Bios:

Hodynnyk sontsia kvitam bie hodyny
i stuliuiut'sia maky vvechori bentezhno.
Otak pid nebom nedosiazhnym i bezmezhnym
rostut' i rodiat'sia zviriata, liudy i rosylny (137).

[The clock of the sun strikes the hours for the flowers / and poppies fold in the evening, as if in fear. / Thus under the unreachable and limitless sky / animals, people, and plants are born and grow.]

Poetic images have no life outside language, although they are not exclusively the property of language: Bachelard writes that language gives poetic images duration, thus humanizing them (*A*, 20). But while language sustains the poetic image, the image, in its turn, gives life to language, providing old words with new meanings. This, however, is only the first step: poetry should also invite language to dream. Hence the two functions of poetic language are to signify differently and to make us dream in different ways (*A*, 283). These two functions, needless to say, eventually blend into one.

Poetry, by such renewal, returns language to its own origins. Together with Heidegger, Bachelard believes that by liberating language from grammatical (hence logical) and semantic servitude, the poet will find the language by which the world speaks to man. "Everything lives with a secret life," he writes, "so everything speaks sincerely. The poet listens and repeats. The voice of the poet is the voice of the world" (*R*, 188). The more "unforeseen" the poet's language is, the closer it is to the eternally unchanging language of the world: "Poets speak the world in original words, in original images. They speak the world in the language of the world" (*R*, 188). In order to reach that altitude of listening to the world while writing or reading poetry, one should enter into a state of peaceful oneiric ecstasy or ecstatic reverie: "A light delirium makes the dreamer ... pass from human vocabulary to the vocabulary of things" (*R*, 189).

Markov makes an observation on Khlebnikov's use of language which immediately recalls Bachelard's ideas: "Khlebnikov, as it were, suddenly 'forgets' what a certain thing is called in Russian, as

[23] *Poezje wybrane*, p. 92.

he also at times 'forgets' standard grammar ... This practice ... produces the dreamy quality so fitting for the mythological contents of his poems, or 'renovates' the word, making it 'a stranger with a suddenly familiar face.'"[24] Khlebnikov's linguistic experiments, ending in *zaumnyi iazyk* (trans-sense language), radically renovate language by taking it back to its sources, to its dark and deep "common-Slavic" origins.

Because I am concerned here with the study of imagery, I must limit my discussion of the complex problem of Khlebnikov's poetic language to a few rather random remarks. Let me first examine one of his central images of poetic language. By taking language to its origins, the poet himself travels back in time; the origins of language reveal to him not only the childhood of his own people but the childhood of the universe:

> Usnuvshuiu rech' ne zabyli my
> V strane, gde nazvanie mesiatsa — Ai (3:124).

[We have not forgotten the sleeping speech / In the land where they call the moon Ai.]

These lines offer both an image of (an) ancient language and its actualization within that very image: "Ai" seems to be the most primitive sound of wonderment, deeply suited to the ancient mysteries of the moon. In order to unlock such oneiric vistas of the distant past, Khlebnikov must learn the "archword" which he calls *sloveso*. Here we see an example of the poet's valorized morphology, working together with the archeology of an actual language on the one hand, and on the other, with what Jakobson calls a "poetic etymology."[25] The oblique cases of *slovo* (word) in Church Slavonic have a variant paradigm with *-es* endings which is particularly active in the plural, as in *slovesa*. The rectus case, however, always remains *slovo*. Khlebnikov subjects that case to the remainder of the paradigm, creating a neologism with an imposingly ancient and majestic sound. Such a word — the sonic image of ancient speech — gives the poet magical powers of cosmic reverie:

> Miroosi dannik zvezdnyi
> Ia omchus' kak koleso, —
> Proletaia v mig nad bezdnoi,
> Zadevaia kraem bezdny,
> Ia uchus' sloveso (2:271).

[The starry sacrificer to the hub of the world, / I shall spin around myself like a wheel — / Flying in a flash above an abyss, / Touching abysses with my circumference, / I am learning the archword.]

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[24] MARKOV, p. 94.
[25] IAKOBSON, p. 45 *et passim*.

Even in the relatively few examples from Khlebnikov quoted throughout this article, the great number of ancient words cannot be missed. Such rejuvenation of language by its systematic "antiquing," however, is only the first step toward the creation of a language of the earth. Khlebnikov not only goes deeply into the valorized history of the Russian language but also annihilates spatial borders of linguistic geography in an attempt to resurrect a "common-Slavic" or to engender a pan-Slavic language as the tongue of myth, of nature, of the earth. Eventually, as he himself said, he wanted to create a poetic language that would embrace all the languages of the world (2:9). He got only as far as antiquated Russian with a generous admixture of dialectisms, Church Slavonic, old and modern Ukrainian, and a smattering of Polish which evidently he did not know well enough to use significantly. The following excerpt is a rather inaccurate "transcription" of a Ukrainian humorous song:

Slavni molodtsy pany Zaporozhtsy.
Pobachili vony tsapliu na bolote.
Otaman kazhe: "ot zhe, bratsy, divka!"
A esaul kazhe: "ia z neiu kokhavsia."
A koshevoi kazhe: "a ia i povinchavsia" (2:153).

[The gentlemen Zaporozhians are good fellows. / They saw a heron on a marsh. / The leader says: "What a woman, brothers!" / And the captain says: "I made love to her." / And the general says: "And I married her."]

Khlebnikov quotes the above stanza in a prose piece; more interesting are topical and unexpected Ukrainian words and passages within poems, particularly when they occur in the neighborhood of words belonging to both languages:

"Chto ty robysh', pechenezhe,
Molotkom svoim stucha?"
"O, prokhozhii, nashi vezhi
Mech zabyli dlia miacha" (2:222).

["What are you doing, Pecheneg, / Banging with your hammer?" / "Oh, passerby, our towers / Have exchanged the sword for the playing ball."]

And here is an even more distanced example. The witches and the *rusalki* hold the following "conversation":

Pesnia ved'm: La-la sov! Li-li sob!
Zhun-zhan — sob lele.
Sob lele! La, la, sob.
Zhun-zhan! Zhun-zhan!
Rusalki poiut: Ia io tsolk.
Tsio ia patstso!
Pits patso! pits patso!
Io ia tsolk!
Dzynza, dzynza, dzynza! (2:200)

[The song of the witches ... The *rusalki* sing...]

Although this may look like an example of pure "trans-sense" language, and does remind us of pure-sonic experiments by Kruchonykh or Kamensky, it is, in fact, authentic witches' language (see Note, 2:316-317), known particularly among Western Ukrainian peasants.

The most exciting and indeed "oneiric" element in Khlebnikov's "pan-Slavic" vocabulary is the numerous neologisms whose sound does seem to reach the essence of Eastern-Slavic, and on occasion, all Slavic, languages. We find long passages and even whole poems composed of such words; their literal meaning is always vague but, because they are constructed on the principle of "poetic etymology," it is never lost completely: on the contrary, they finally "mean" more profoundly, more mysteriously than "normal" words would. "Zakliatye smekhom" ("Incantation by laughter"), mentioned earlier, is an excellent example of such practice. The following lines, although untranslatable, convey sonic images (or, more precisely, lexical root images) of a powerful, earthy eroticism:

> Ia negeishna neguta, smeiavistaia smeiavitsa
> Milykh negochei zovu: vy begite ko mne
> Rezvoi stopoi, milachi... (2: 265).

Harasymowicz, like Khlebnikov, would wish to take poetic language to its primeval Slavic sources. He says about one of his collections that its most important innovation is the introduction "of ancient words, out of currency today, whose sonic values raise the level of musicality of a stanza and which, because of their obscurity that hides their meanings, become magical signs, deepening the metaphysical strata of a given work." [26] While moving in time toward the childhood of language, Harasymowicz, again like Khlebnikov, negates linguistic geography, in order to mine several Slavic languages. He comments on another cycle of poems that in them "I entered the region of Slavdom. After all, I am interested primarily in Slavic fantasticality, the fantasticality of ancient words. My dream is to create pan-Slavic poetry." [27]

In practice, Harasymowicz's "pan-Slavic" language, like Khlebnikov's, turns out to be rather limited; in his case, to a rich vein of old Polish (witness his recent experiments with the Baroque), Polish dialects, including interesting examples of street *patois*, Ukrainian and its Lemko dialect, with a smattering of Russian (which he does not seem to distinguish from Ukrainian), and Slovak. In Harasymowicz's powerful poem *Pascha Chrysta (The Easter of Christ)*, for example, we find numerous stylizations of the Ukrainian language; like Khlebnikov, he modifies a Kozak song:

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[26] Quoted in: Jadwiga BANDROWSKA-WRÓBLEWSKA, "Nota biograficzna," in *Poezje wybrane*, p. 143.

[27] *Ibid.*

Ech nasz hetman Sahajdaczny
Żinku predał nieobaczny (360).

[Ekh, our hetman Sahaidachnyi / Sold his wife, the careless fellow.]

(The original is more inventive, although perhaps less politically subtle: the hetman exchanges his wife for a pipe and some tobacco). And here is a more "comprehensive" Slavic prayer by one of Harasymowicz's Madonnas:

Błogosław nam
Da placka
da rydżyky
da mieda
tu wielika bieda (203).

[Bless us with / some flat cake / and some mushrooms / and some honey / there is great want here.]

Antonych, as I mentioned earlier, is not given to linguistic or formal experimentation. Only rarely he indulges in "poetic etymology" or "poetic morphology"; from the word *troianda* (rose), for example, he forms a neologism *troiandyty* ("to rose") and *troiandnist'* (the state of being a rose, "rosehood"). More romantic in this respect than Khlebnikov and Harasymowicz, however, he prefers to speak *about* poetic language in arresting images scattered throughout his *œuvre*: here his work provides not only more spectacular but profounder results than in the other two poets.

Antonych intimates in several images that linguistic usage kills by naming. In the following rather Wordsworthian image, we find that even a new, Adamic language, building a pristine poem, is such a murderer:

Khryshchu novym naimenniam kozhen kvit naimenshyi
i kozhen ubyvaiu nazvoiu nebachno (106).

[I christen each smallest flower with a new name, / and I carelessly kill each of them by naming.]

The poet, nevertheless, must, by the only means afforded him, go on to express the "sweet and precise wisdom" of the world:

Ty — vedenyi znattiam solodkym i dostotnym, dvoish
i troish slovo i slovo zradzhuie tebe udruhe
i utretie; slovo, nache kvit bez zmistu i barvy siryi.
Chuzhe natkhnennia slovu, iak chuzhe usiakii miri (108).

[Led by wisdom, sweet and precise, you double / and triple the word, and the word betrays you a second / and a third time; the word is like a flower, grey without content or color. / Inspiration is foreign to the word, as it is foreign to any measurement.]

Perhaps it is this basic distrust of language that kept Antonych away from linguistic experimentation. Be that as it may, he proceeds to speak about the "re-formation" of the word in images: the authentic

poet must force language to shed the codes of "measurements," of superficial designation, and thus to lift the object to the status of phenomenon. Only such "ecstatic definitions" signify authentically:

U dno, u sut', u korin' rechi, v lono,
u nadro slova i u nadro sontsia!
V ekstaznim shali, v chas, koly naitonsha,
rozderty vhylb svidomosty zaponu...
.....
... i do dna tsupkoho slova
vdyraiusia zavziato i uperto... (147).

[To the bottom, to the essence, to the root of a thing, to its womb, / to the centre of the word and to the centre of the sun! / In a rage of ecstasy — when it is thinnest — / we must tear the veil of consciousness to the depths... / To the bottom of the earth, / and to the bottom of the knotty word / I tear stubbornly, tirelessly...]

In order to find a way of penetrating to the root of the word and hence to the kernel of the earth, one must return language to its own childhood. Antonych mentions in several works *praslovo* or *prarich* which may be provisionally translated as "archword," "arch-language"; the similarity between this and Khlebnikov's *sloveso* is obvious. Also, as in Khlebnikov, the turning back of the earth to its childhood means returning it to the childhood of language:

Zemlia v orbiti zavertaiet'sia nazad
u molodist' svoiu, v prymarnyi son prarechi (104).

[The earth in its orbit spins backwards / into its own youth, into the ghostly reverie of arch-language.]

Finally, like Khlebnikov and Harasymowicz (and, in their own way, Bachelard and Heidegger), Antonych advises the poet to listen to the earth, to the world:

Oi, nakhylysia, nakhylysia til'ky,
pochuiesh naitainishi z vsikh slova (155).

[Oh, bend, only bend, / and you will hear the most mysterious of words.]

Compare this with Harasymowicz's statement: "For weeks I dragged myself through forests, but the secret language was not given to me yet." [28] Needless to say, the myth of the language of the world takes us back to the poetry that the earth dictates and to the "Book-of-Nature" imagery.

Through personal childhood, through the childhood of their peoples, and through the childhood of language, the three poets attempt to reach the childhood of the world. Reveries of such origins, Bachelard writes, imply unification: the dreamer returns to a temporal region of stillness, before the surface forces of life were made to

[28] "Słowo wstępne," p. 8.

oppose each other. That is why such reveries "unite, fuse together. The winged being which turns in the sky and the waters which are going on their whirls make an alliance" (*R*, 205). Bachelard writes in another work: "If the Creator listened to the poets, he would create a flying turtle that would carry off into the blue the great safeguards of the earth" (*P*, 54). It is now the poet, in his own act of *fiat*, who must valorize the discrete and even the mutually antagonistic forms of nature with the unifying energy of myth. That energy unifies spatial and temporal directions. If the dreamer penetrates far enough into the shadowy realm of the childhood of the world, he will dispense with the rigid boundaries between the past, the present, and the future. As his reveries of his own childhood valorize his future, so his dreams of the mythical origins of the world will valorize his desire for the farthest possibilities of the world, or even for future worlds, as we occasionally see in Khlebnikov.

As I mentioned above, reveries of origins imply height and depth, eventually uniting them. Reveries of depth, if they are penetrating enough, will reach vast substances that sleep in the earth, as reveries of height will reach the mysterious movements of transparent masses. Eventually, however, in order not to become too ephemeral or too idealized, reveries of heights must find their own solid substance in the earth (*R*, 176). The dreamers of such profound dreams will be masters of what Bachelard calls the material imagination. Most commentators agree that his distinction between the formal and the material imagination is the key to his philosophy of poetry and his most important discovery in the area of the creative process as such.[29] Formal imagination, when left to itself, creates forms profusely, haphazardly, borrowing its material from whatever is at hand. Material imagination, although it too must express itself in forms, in-forms them with qualities which originate in the substances that sleep in the depths, or in the air, light, clouds, that freely turn in the heights but also rely on stable substances. The given material will then live within the form and shine through it, as it actually does in sculpture (*E*, 1-3).

Bachelard groups the potentially countless materials underlying the countless images in countless poems around one of the four "elements" — water, fire, air, and earth (*E*, 4-5; *R*, 176-177 *et passim*). The peace that one finds on the surface of a pond "where the universe has lost all functions of against" (*R*, 196) deepens as the reverie immerses itself in the slow life of the watery depths. The relationship between the surface of the earth and its depths, however, is not so continuous: on the surface the wanton profusion

[29] See for example: Mary Ann Caws, *Surrealism and the Literary Imagination: A Study of Breton and Bachelard*, "Studies in French Literature, 12" (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p. 18.

of natural forms obtains (which, although they themselves are subtly organized by the depths, do not always evoke reveries of repose, but frequently call for movement, action, will), while in the depths of the earth minerals sleep eternally, dreaming their immobile dreams. Hence the earth beneath its surface, together with water, evokes calm and deep reveries, differentiated only by solidity as against slow fluidity; air and fire, on the other hand, are completely volatile: fire is a narrow but intense upward striving, and air is the ceaseless churning motion of immensity, cosmicity.

Both through the immersion of reverie in the "bottomless depths of mystery" and through its soaring into the "limitless heights of miracle" (*E*, 3-4), the dreamer participates in the life of the cosmos: it is in the absolute openness of the cosmos that the two opposite directions ultimately unite, as the past becomes the future and as "immensity" becomes "the movement of motionless man" (*P*, 184). This is essentially what Bachelard means by his term "cosmic reverie." Frequently he applies that term to images based on air: then cosmic reverie is an idealizing imagination, removing itself from the earth and striving toward oneiric cities at the limits of possibility, or toward futurity. Hence, as we have seen, it too must be fused with a substance, in order not to abstract itself out of life.

I do not need, for the purposes of this article, to search for a specific "native" element of each poet. All three are essentially poets of the earth: Antonych is the poet of its depths, Harasymowicz of its surface (the material imagination is the least evident in his work), and Khlebnikov of its heights: while his imagery is frequently that of soaring, he never completely gives himself over to the air, which would mean idealizing his images out of touch with the earth; quite the contrary, his flights, as productive cosmic reverie demands, always originate in the earth and are constantly implied by it. Ultimately my "classification" is merely a matter of stress, because the three poets are really of the same "family," and images of depth, surface, and height frequently occur in each of them.

Beyond reveries of the childhood of their people, in the realm of some nascent universal myth of origins, Khlebnikov and Antonych liquidate chronology by personal, or rather "transpersonal," participation on the one hand, and, on the other, by visions of *primitive* societies emerging *in the future*. Such mythical temporality is most evident in Khlebnikov. He announces, simply and directly, that the futurity of desire is rooted in fairy tales:

> Veriu skazkam napered:
> Prezhde skazki — stanut byl'iu (3:130).
>
> [I believe in fairy tales on principle (this puns on "ahead of time") / Fairy tales before — they will become actuality...]

The following stanza embodies transpersonal participation simultaneously in the past and the future, the latter, significantly, appearing as depth:

Na shkure mamonta liubliu
Voronei stai chet i nechet,
Proobraz v zavtra uglubliu,
Poka mne startsy ne perechat.
.....
To, chto pozzhe sbudetsia,
Im proshloe razbuditsia.
Kakaia glubina — potonesh'! (3:211).

[I like the game of "even-and-odd" / of a crowey flock on the pelt of a mammoth, / I shall sink the protoimage into tomorrow, / as long as the elders do not prevent me... / That which will happen later, / With it the past will be awakened. / Such depth — you will drown!]

What is interesting about this passage, although incidental to my argument, is that it is Khlebnikov's vision of the future of the Soviet Union. In another image, the poet envisions future generations of victorious warriors marching over his skull, thus awakening his longing for further horizons (3:130).

In the course of this article we have seen several strong examples of Khlebnikov's images of the surface and the depth of the earth — its caves, abysses, ravines. And here is an epic passage of "Whitmanesque" declamatory rhetoric about the womb of the earth being ravished by the hammer of civilization. Notice how the reverie of materials blends with myth, and seems to neutralize the thrust of the present, capturing it into its own irresistible being:

Udary molota
V mogilu moria,
V kholmy rusalok,
Po podzvonkam kamnei,
Po pal'tsam mednykh ruk,
Po kamennym voronkam...
.....
V miateli kamennykh rusalok,
Ch'i volosy prolilis' vetrom po kamniam...(3:90).

[Blows of a hammer / Into the grave of the sea, / Into the mounds of the *rusalki*, / Upon the vertebrae of rocks, / Upon the fingers of copper, / Upon stony funnels... / Upon the feet of petrified *rusalki*, / Whose hair flows like wind over the rocks...]

Finally, we find in Khlebnikov numerous images of the unification of height and depth. I believe that in such visions of cosmic reverie the poet reaches the apex of his talent: as "Imaginistic" images were his beginning, so these images signify the final destination of his *œuvre*. In a poem about a *kamennaia baba*, one of the numerous stone effigies of the steppes, reputed to be steles on the graves of ancient warriors, we come across a rather startling image of

height-depth unification, and the resulting transformation of the "stone woman:"

> Hop! Hop! v nebo prygai grob!
> Kamen' shagai, zvezdy kruzhi hopakom.
> V nebo smotri motyl'kom.
> .....
> Bolee radug v tsveta!
> Burnogo lëta leta!
> Deva stepei uzh ne ta! (3:35).

[Hop! Hop! Jump into the sky, grave! / Step lively, stone, whirl the stars in a *hopak* (a Ukrainian folk dance). / Look into the sky like a butterfly... / More rainbows into colors! / Years of stormy flight! / The maiden of the steppes is not the same anymore!]

In a powerful image of futurity, Khlebnikov seems to differentiate between the earth and the world, almost previsioning a similar differentiation in Heidegger's later philosophy; notice that the language of this fragment is based on old words and "antiquating" neologisms:

> Budet zemlia bezpovelikaia!
> Predzemsharvelikaia! (3:296).

[The earth will be masterless! / It will be as great as before the globe!]

In another image which reaches the borders of mysticism, the poet envisions the world not as a concrete entity but as energy, flowing through the concreteness of the earth. It is this energy — this mind of the world — that unifies the earth and everything on and in it (with some possible help from Russian messianism):

> Ia veriu: razum mirovoi
> Zemnogo mnogo shire mozga
> I cherez nevod cheloveka i kamnei
> Edinoiu techet rekoi,
> Edinoiu prokhodit Volgoi (1:302).

[I believe: the mind of the world / Is far wider than the brain of the earth, / And through the fish net of man and stones / It flows like a single river, / It passes like a single Volga.]

By passing through the network of men and stones, the energy of the mind of the world finds its forms in the concrete phenomena of the earth. One can put this in Bachelardian terms: the earth and the self are dissolved in immensity, in order to return to concreteness valorized by such cosmic reveries, thus blending cosmicity with the material imagination.

Antonych, like Khlebnikov, projects his transpersonal self into a mythical environment, thus bringing the past into the immediate present — a process which, as in the following quotation, is supported by the use of the present tense. Note, however, that this past, now become present, has its own past "from before hundreds of centuries." Note also that the present absorbs the future into itself: the maidens' dances *will be* covered by bracken:

Tantsiuiut' tatuiovani divchata na maidani mrii,
pisok paliuchyi pid stopoiu, mov smola chervona, tane
i ia z-pered sta soten' lit riz'bliu na bubni sontsia tanets',
lopochut' dva kyiky, mov kryla ptakhy, shcho z pokhmillia mliie.

Proshchal'nym spivom spalakhnuvshy, hasnu, nache sonna khmara,
tanky divchat prykryie paporot', nemov zemli dolonia.
Vertaiut'sia z uzhir'iv tyshi dyvni khorovody i kloniat'
oblychchia z midi pid buketamy vechirnioho pozharu.
.....
maiestatychno skhodiat' buivoly chervoni na pidzemni
levady, de zhasaie im umerle sontse — dysk z ebenu (120).

[Tatooed maidens dance on the village green of reverie, / the hot sand melts like red resin under their feet, / and I, from before hundreds of centuries, carve the dance of the sun on my drum, / two sticks, like the wings of a bird, fainting in ecstasy. / Burst into flames of a farewell song, I grow dim like a sleepy cloud, / like the hand of the earth, bracken will cover the maidens' dance. / The strange rings of dances return from the slopes of silence and bow / their copper faces under bouquets of the evening fire... / Red bulls majestically descend into a mysterious region, / onto underground pastures, where a dead sun — an ebony disc — dims for them.]

The energy of poetic reverie reverses the course of time far beyond ancient rituals, toward the origins of the earth and the "rustling of the elements":

Shchabliamy proidenymy povertaiu dni
pryrody v mriakovynnia i pervniv pershi shumy:
mov Bozhyi stovp, stoit' mil'ionolitnia nich,
v pradavniomu khaosi zemli i vody vsumish (104).

[I return — by rungs already climbed — the days / of nature into primeval fog and the first rustling of the elements: / like God's pillar, the million-year night emerges; / lands and waters are confused in primordial chaos.]

We have seen in a preceding quotation that Antonych subtly suggests, with the help of morphology, a blending of the past and the future. In many of his poems such blending proceeds more openly, in strikingly valorized imagery. In some works he, like Khlebnikov, envisions future cities, grounded in myth, "on the blue squares of which fire-lions play" (172). Most frequently, however, his visions of the future are darker, as if implying a punishment that the past is preparing for the future. A good example of this is the following passage, with its complex temporal relationships, and the added dimension of time spatialized in layers, as if in a reverie of some temporal geology:

Odne na odnomu sharamy spliat' stolittia.
.....
Vpered! Fosforyzuiut' neprokhidni bahna,
i farboiu tsehliastoiu maliuie ianhol
novyi potopu plian na zoriakh, mov na mapakh.
Ia zhyv tut. V neoliti... mozhe shche davnishe...
Moi maliunky buivoliv zamazav misiats'.
I fosfor nochi i olyvo zemli hnituche,
shcho sertsevi tiazhat', ta sertsia ne pomistiat' (120).

[Centuries sleep in layers, one on top of the other... / Forward! Impassable morasses phosphorize, / and an angel drafts, with chalk the colour of brick, / a plan of new deluge on stars, as if on maps. / I lived here. In the neolith, possibly even earlier... / The moon erased my cave drawings of buffaloes. / And the phosphorus of the night and the oppressing lead of the earth / that lie heavy on the heart but cannot contain the heart.]

When it comes to spatial directions of height and depth, Antonych uses many images of air — idealizing images that seem to remove themselves, step by step, from the earth, without completely losing contact with it (note the "anchoring" function of moss in the following quotation; witness also the image of layering, this time upward):

Terasy svitla — hamy shchoraz vyshchykh zvukiv
odna na odnii vhoru ponad mriaky mokhom (105).

[Terraces of light — scales of ever higher sounds — / one on top of the other, higher, over the moss of mist.]

But it is the depths of the earth, with the minerals sleeping in them, and the depths of the waters which yield much more memorable images in Antonych than heights do. His poem "Pisnia pro neznyshchennist' materii" ("The Song of the Indestructibility of Matter") is a truly impressive example of this: the poet not only implies materials through the forms of his images but also sees *himself* as slowly becoming a substance under the surface of the earth and thus contributing to the material eternity of nature:

Zabryvshy u khashchi, zakutanyi u viter,
nakrytyi nebom i obmotanyi pisniamy
lezhu, mov mudryi lys, pid paporoti kvitom
i styhnu i kholonu i tverdnu v bilyi kamin'.

Roslynnykh rik pidnosyt'sia zelena povin',
hodyn, komet i lystia bezperervnyi lopit.
Zallie mene potop, rozchavyt' bilym sontsem
i tilo stane vuhlem, z pisni bude popil.

Pokotiat'sia, iak liava, tysiachni stolittia,
de my zhyly, rostymut' bez naimennia pal'my,
i vuhil' nashykh til tsvistyme chornym kvittiam,
zadzvoniat' v moie sertse dzhagany v kopal'ni (121).

[Having wandered off into the thickets, wrapped in wind, / covered by the sky and entwined with song, / I lie like a wise fox under the flower of a bracken, / and I cool, and become cold, and harden into a white stone. / The green flood of vegetative rivers rises, / an uninterrupted rustling of hours, comets, and leaves. / The flood will drown me, will crush me by the white sun, / and my body will become coal, my song will turn to ashes. / Thousands of centuries will roll like lava, / nameless palm trees will grow where we lived, / and the coal of our bodies will bloom with black flowers, / miners' picks will ring out upon my heart.]

In Antonych, as Khlebnikov, we find numerous images of the unification of height and depth. For Antonych, moreover, the synthesis of the Above and the Below becomes an Orphic synthesis,

with the ecstasy of poetry itself serving as the agent of unification:

> Vyruiut' kola svitliani — nevlovni motovyla.
> Os' blahovishchennia svitanku — i sontse nich rozmele.
> Pyi siomu charku radoshchiv! Khai sertsiu khmil' i kryla!
> Poezii kypuchoi i mudroi, mov zelen'!
> .....
> Pid shkaralushcheiu zemli bul'kochut' rviini vody,
> krainebo v mlakh fiialkovykh za rankom, mov za murom.
> Vid'idu vzhe z doloniamy na liri sontsia skhodu,
> spivaiuchy khvalu nadliuds'kym i roslynnym buriam (163).

[Circles of light spin like elusive reels. / Here is the annunciation of dawn — and the sun will mill the night. / Drink the seventh cup of joy! Give the heart the headiness and wings / of poetry, boiling and wise like verdancy!... / Impetuous waters bubble under the shell of the earth, / the horizon is in violet mists, behind the morning as behind a wall. / I shall go now, with my hands on the lyre of the rising sun, / singing praises to superhuman storms and storms of plants.]

Although, as I have mentioned, in Harasymowicz's images the materials do not shine through the forms as immediately as they do in the other two poets, this does not mean that the foundation of the material imagination is entirely absent from his poetry. Wyka, for example, compares his imagination to a crosscut of geological strata: under the shallow covering of modern metaphors one soon discovers layers of ancient nature imagery.[30] Travelling back in time, Harasymowicz reaches the mythical embodiment of an imagined collective — possibly his own Slavic clan, possibly all humanity — in order to become an intimate part of it. Here is an oneiric image of the "family home," reminiscent of Bachelard's idea of a poetical dwelling: "Cosmic reverie causes us to inhabit a world. It gives the dreamer the impression of a home... in the imagined universe. The imagined world gives us an expanding *home*, the reverse of the *home* of the bedroom" (*R*, 177):

> Tam gdzie dom nasz wywija
> Żółtą chorągwią jesieni
> Tam leży nasz wół święty
> Który nie nosi stuły[31]

[Where our house flutters / Like the golden flag of autumn / There our sacred ox lies / carrying no yoke.]

The house — an object that should evoke associations of massive solidity — is frequently associated in Harasymowicz with height and flight. Among his numerous poems on houses, for example, no fewer than three deal specifically with attics. And the following stanza, in which the poet's transpersonal participation in myth is more evident than in the preceding example (the house is now *mine*), height acquires the quality of cosmic immensity:

[30] WYKA, p. 203.
[31] *Poezje wybrane*, p. 92.

Dom mój woły ciągną święte
I w kokorycz każdy wierzy
Na czerwonej kołdrze zorzy
Stary Bóg w walonkach leży (233).

[Sacred oxen pull my house / And everybody believes in the lungwort / On the red quilt of the morning star / And old god lies in felt boots (Russian footwear).]

Reveries of cosmic expanses — Bachelard's cosmic reveries — abound in Harasymowicz's imagery. We have seen in the example quoted above that the most usual mode of transit, if not of repose, of his Slavic gods is flight. But because those gods themselves stem from the womf of nature, being essentially chthonic, they provide Harasymowicz's cosmic reveries with the basis of the material imagination. Following is a cluster of striking images, involving the blending of the sky and the earth, as well as of the past, the present, and the future. What makes this passage particularly interesting is the "unfinished" shapes, shimmering in cross-metamorphoses, in the primeval chaos of a bio-biblical Genesis. Note that here again Harasymowicz paganizes Christianity and unceremoniously grounds its Heaven. Note also how the poet's characteristic ironical tone functions as a stylistic counterpoint to the mythical profundity of his theme:

Dopiero z ptaków się wyłoni
i rogi byka wzniesie Bóg
i zakołuje nam u lampy
puhacza lotem święty duch
.....
W chmurach jest jeszcze rodzaj skłębiony
ludzi i zwierząt — niepodzielne mgławy
dopiero z ptaków się wyłoni
cały gołębnik niebios wiary
W chmurach jest jeszcze nie zapisane
komu są skrzydła komu dłonie
uczą się latać nad młakami
dwa światy sobą zadziwione (430-431).

[Soon God will be born of birds / and will lift His bull's horns / and the holy ghost will circle around our lamp / flying like an owl ... / In the clouds is still a wholesale genus / of men and beasts — a nebular unity / only from the birds will be born / a whole dovecot of the heavens of faith / In the clouds it is still not written / who will get wings and who hands / above the mists are learning to fly / two worlds amazed at each other.]

When, in the authentication of the formal imagination by the material imagination, nature becomes valorized in the imagery of our three poets by a transtemporal and hence transpersonal perspective, even a minature image-poem (what at the outset of this article I called their "beginnings") — a poem on a grasshopper, a mushroom, or a tree — will contain for the reader potentially limitless cosmic reveries. One wonders, finally, whether there is any justification at all for

placing such "beginnings" in the proximity of the tradition of Imaginism, even as reluctantly as I did. The poets' strong Slavic substratum allows us, perhaps, to speak of a unique, purely Slavic "movement" in modern poetry, remotely reminiscent of the "Neoromantic" modification of Surrealism in Spanish poetry, or in the work of Dylan Thomas (that poet, in fact, has some obvious affinities with Antonych), or in the contemporary American Robert Bly, but ultimately discouraging any ready-made labels.

I should like to conclude by remarking that the three poets are by far not the only ones that could have been chosen for this discussion, in spite of the numerous similarities between them which become so obvious when their work is examined from a certain point of view. They have fathers (Leśmian in Polish, Tychyna in Ukrainian, Blok in certain periods of his career, Gorodetsky, and, more distantly, Bely and Remizov in Russian), they have brothers (Svidzins'ky in Ukrainian, Tadeusz Nowak in Polish), and they have children (Zabolotsky and Tsvetaeva in Russian, Emma Andievs'ka or Ihor Kalynets in Ukrainian). Moreover, it is the three poets' common Slavic heritage, and the specificity of Slavic nature myths, which makes them so congenial to the philosophy of "the child of the forests of Champagne,"[32] the philosopher "with the slow gait of a farmer,"[33] Gaston Bachelard. If he had known their work, he surely would have chosen many examples from it to support his grand vision of the poetic imagination.*

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[32] Paul GINESTIER, *La Pensée de Bachelard* (Paris: Bordas, 1968), p. 3.

[33] Colette GAUDIN, "Introduction," *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie: Selections from the Works of Gaston Bachelard,* "The Library of Liberal Arts" (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971), p. x.

* The prose translations of the quoted passages are mine. In the case of Antonych, I have borrowed a few lines or parts of lines from: Bohdan ANTONYCH, *Square of Angels: Selected Poems*, tr. Mark Rudman and Paul Nemser (Ann Arbor: 1977).