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Shevchenko's Profiles and Masks: The Ironic Roles of the Self in the Poetry of *Kobzar*

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Much has been written on Shevchenko's use of irony as the literary expression of the ironical stance inherent in the folk culture of the Ukrainian people.[1] Although I have no intention of attempting to disprove that obvious fact, I should like to discuss Shevchenko's use of irony against the background of the Western romantic and post-romantic tradition. I should like to show that the dialectical movement of the poet's self which we observe in his work is energized by romantic irony as defined by Friedrich Schlegel and 'Socratic' irony as developed by Søren Kierkegaard.

Schlegel holds that in the 'new' (that is, romantic) irony all is exposed in heartfelt sincerity, while at the same time being hidden. The reason for this is that irony embodies, and hence awakens in our consciousness, the feeling of the insoluble conflict of limitation and infinity, the impossibility and yet necessity of unity of the inside and the outside. Such a seemingly paradoxical view of the world enables the ironist, particularly the poet, to stand outside his self and thus to transcend it. The external point of view upon himself, in turn, permits the poet to control his daydreams by the actuality of his life, while simultaneously enriching his daily existence with the poetry of his dreams of infinity. A reader who is 'tone deaf' to such matters does not know how to take the 'self-parody' of the poet, in which the latter expresses his desire for total unity through self-transcendence, while at the same time realizing its impossibility. Such a reader is forced to believe the poet and yet not to believe him, to take a joke seriously and a serious statement as a joke, until 'he becomes dizzy.'[2]

Kierkegaard's definition of 'Socratic irony' centres on the purgative chastisement of the hypocrite in ourselves by deliberate self-distancing

through sustained games with masks. He begins by defining poetic irony as a liberating agent:

> If I am conscious when I speak that what I say is my meaning ... and I assume that the person with whom I am speaking comprehends perfectly the meaning in what is said., then I am bound by what is said ... Furthermore, I am bound in relation to myself and cannot detach myself whenever I choose. If, on the other hand, what is said is not my meaning, I am free both in relation to my meaning and in relation to myself.[3]

Although such seemingly anarchic and 'insincere' jeopardizing of 'literal seriousness' and the resulting distancing of one's point of view on existence in total freedom (which Kierkegaard calls 'absolute negativity') is an indispensable condition of authentic poetry, Kierkegaard assures us that it should be considered only as the initial step to crucial ethical self-discoveries. The 'absolute negativity' of irony, while preserving its quality of negativity, must leave the vague metaphysical realms in which the German romantics put it and become a gesture towards actuality. Such a gesture will be significant only when the poet himself can find a sustained point of view on life, 'and in his own individual existence ... be master over irony.'[4] In other words, if the poet wants his poem to be an integral moment in his sustained view on life, rather than merely an isolated demonstration of his cleverness, wit, or even 'genius,' he should 'live poetically,' by which Kierkegaard means the poet's steady struggle for the discovery and preservation of his authentic self.[5] No matter how many masks the poet will then play with, the reader will immediately *feel* that the ironic device of negative distancing is meant not to be the final result but a way towards a synthesis and revelation of his authentic self and hence of his positive sense of authentic existence. It follows that the poet, upon his self-discovery, will use the ironic dissemination of his self not to hide it from others but to reassemble a sense of the totality of his being on a more authentic level. Deliberate poses of 'confessional sincerity,' therefore, are valuable only if they themselves are distanced by 'mastered irony,' as in Shevchenko's poetry.

It is not easy to find a poet more filled with his own self than Taras Shevchenko. The 'confessional' tone of his lyrical works seems to be so 'sincere' that it causes discomfort in his more reserved readers. Even in his

dramatic and historical poems, from which genre one expects at least some distancing of the narrative voice, the 'I' intrudes in the obligatory introductions, the frequent lyrical interludes, and the unfolding of the narrative itself. On the other hand, the poet's self is never hermetically sealed: it eagerly meets not only the world engendered and controlled by the premises of the given work but the far less predictable world of the reader. Indeed, as opposed to the introverted lyrical poetry of many late romantics, the reader's presence is constant in *Kobzar*. Shevchenko frequently addresses his reader with informal directness, as if the reader were facing the poet and listening to his words. Shevchenko, in fact, often addresses *himself* thus: by the pronoun 'thou' and in the conversational expressions presumably directed by the poet to himself, the Other as interlocutor is invariably implied. Even when the pronoun 'I' is used in the numerous *Ich-Gedichte*, the poet's lyrical voice frequently is speaking for the reader.

The presence of the reader is evident with particular immediacy when the poet tells us that he has grown tired of his audience and now will write only for himself. In the following stanza, even while pretending to renounce his audience, he addresses it:

Ne dlia liudei, tiiei slavy,
Merezhani ta kucheriavi
Otsi virshi virshuiu ia –
Dlia sebe, bratiia moia!

Not for people who would bring me fame / Do I verse these embroidered and curly-haired verses, / But only for myself, my dear friends!

An actual threat of losing his audience, on the other hand, seems to throw him into a virtual state of panic:

Mabut meni ne vernutys
Nikoly dodomu;
Mabut meni dovedetsia
Chytaty samomu
Otsi dumy!

It seems that I am fated
Never to return home;

It seems that I am destined
To read these poems
By myself.

The irony is that Shevchenko's situation, like that of many emigré writers, led him to imagine his readers not only within his work (which is normal) but also in actuality (which is dangerous). He did not really know his Ukrainian audience when he lived in Petersburg and subsequently in exile, relying on memories of his childhood and of his brief sojourns in Ukraine to recreate his readers for himself.

No matter how vague or distant Shevchenko's readers may have appeared to him, he constructed vivid images of them by the force of his direct addresses to them: 'confessing' to them, haranguing them, exorting them, flirting with them. For such unabashed theatrical attitudes towards his imagined readers, Shevchenko developed a complex dramatic self, which I will call his *expressed self*. This expressed self is not constant (as it is with many lyrical poets), but performs a set of distinctly different gestures which develop through *Kobzar* in a loosely patterned alternating progression.

Behind such patterning of divergent attitudes – all, paradoxically, as 'sincere' as possible – a totalizing conceptualization of Shevchenko's 'real' self seems to elude our grasp. There are several reasons for this. To begin with, Shevchenko rarely explores his unconscious, most frequently making only indirect use of it, to mine material for his deliberately constructed metaphors. It is plain that all his 'dreams,' 'visions,' catalogues of feelings, and the like, are simply devices, sanctified by the romantic tradition, for the embodiment of almost philosophical ways of contemplating the world. This, of course, does not conflict with his romantic attacks upon the intellect and his hymns to the power of the heart: such passages, too, are embodied in lucid images. Another reason for our failure to conceptualize the 'person of the poet' in Shevchenko's work is that the ultimate privacy of the author's 'personality' is protected not so much by a dearth of autobiographical information within his poems (as, for instance, in the case of Shakespeare) as by its apparent surfeit. Shevchenko releases series upon series of quasi-facts about himself: while we supposedly 'weep and laugh' over them, however, we are gently stopped at certain thresholds and not invited inside. An obvious example of this is the frequency of statements on

the pattern of: 'I would tell you the truth but what good would come of it?'; they effectively dramatize his control of the role that he has chosen to assume at a given moment. Another example is his rather formal portraiture of his friends, surrounded by warm protestations of friendship, in numerous epistles addressed to them. This reticence, embodied in too exuberant speech, becomes much profounder in Shevchenko's treatment of the objects of his love poetry, particularly the ever-present but elusive Oksana Kovalenko, who hovers in his verse as a figure shadowy to the point of transparency.

The reader's failure to *conceptualize* Shevchenko's 'personality' does not mean a failure to *intuit* the strong and constant presence of the poet's self in his work. Underlying the various roles of his expressed self and linking them in the continuous process of the poetical *œuvre* is a unique way of perceiving and expressing reality, and thus of appropriating it. We have here an example of the embodiment in language of an authentic style which begins on a deep level of the self, beneath the expressly conceived and deliberately formulated interests of a 'finished personality.'[6] No matter how assiduously a poet gifted with such an authentic style attempts to manipulate the manner of his writing for the purpose of distancing, it constantly shines through his text. And if the poet, as Kierkegaard advised, performs such displacements not in a desultory fashion but with existential lucidity, reflections of this style in his work will imply his authentic self that much more forcefully. Although Shevchenko deliberately hides his personality, while pretending to reveal it, an aware reader cannot help sensing in his style a particularly strong unifying current of a deep identity, from which the poet's various roles emerge to the surface of the text. I shall call this energy Shevchenko's *prepersonal self*.[7]

On the surface of the text (and supported by the deep style of the prepersonal self), the obvious unity of Shevchenko's poetical *œuvre* is achieved primarily by repetition or variation in different works of autonomous groups of lines of greater or lesser number, characterized by sharply-defined thematic motifs and stylistic features. I shall refer to such building blocks as *monads*. Occasionally the monads in *Kobzar*, particularly when they are brief and almost identical, seem to fulfil the function of medieval 'commonplaces,' or perhaps mnemonic 'control points' of Ukrainian oral poetry. As a rule, however, they are more loosely structured units, echoing each other by similarity, rather than by identity. Such simi-

larities become apparent only when the monads forming a single series are lifted out of their varying contexts (which they reflect and which are reflected in them) and placed next to each other; it goes without saying, nevertheless, that this does not diminish their effect of providing continuity throughout the *œuvre*. Isolating even a single series of monads and adequately describing the almost imperceptible transformations of the units within it – transformations conditioned by contexts – would require a lengthy study of its own. Here I merely want to show that the roles of Shevchenko's expressed self are frequently embodied in monads, and therefore the deliberate alternation of such roles is effected by the alternation of monads. This, in effect, implies a dialectical continuity of the roles throughout the *œuvre*.

We notice that within the given frame of a short poem or section of a longer work the roles of the expressed self, embodied in monads, are frequently arranged in pairs: such bifurcation creates the tension needed for irony. Each pair constitutes, as it were, two 'profiles' of the 'face' that Shevchenko presents to his readers within a given frame. I shall call the one *the basic profile* and the other *the projected profile*. The basic profile is situated within 'actuality,' as such 'actuality' is constructed within the given frame. The projected profile embodies an act of desire, an imaginative flight out of the 'actual' situation towards the farthest horizons of existence. While one profile of the pair is forwarded and illuminated, the other is in shadow but remains potentially active under the featured profile, either implicitly questioning its assumptions or modifying it even more subtly: hence the shadowed profile becomes a point from which the illuminated profile is viewed ironically.

I shall use the term *mask* to designate those clearly delimited characters in *Kobzar* which externalize and hence distance an attitude or pair of attitudes of the poet's expressed self. Not all Shevchenko's characters serve such functions: his Saul and Amon, for instance, are not in such dialectical proximity to his expressed self. I suspect that a Freudian critic could make much of Shevchenko's evil Old Testament 'tsars,' as they embody some of the poet's 'obsessive' themes and images; this problem, however, has no bearing on either the expressed or the prepersonal self of the poet, as I have defined it in this article. Shevchenko's masks exist in ironical ambiguities similar to those of the profiles. Occasionally a single mask in a narrative poem reflects both the basic and the projected profile that we see

in the *Ich-Gedichte* (Perebendia, Iarema, Mary, Christ). More frequently, however, it takes two masks to embody such a dialectic. Sometimes the required pair is found in a single narrative poem (Christ and Mary in 'Mariia'), and at other times we must search for it in different poems and even in different stages of the poet's career; in the latter case we establish it by finding dialectically related monads (Kateryna and Mary in the early poem 'Kateryna' and the late work 'Mariia'). More rarely, a single character develops such an ironical dialectic in various poems centred upon him (King David, Christ).

The most obvious connections between masks and profiles occur in 'personal' introductions to the narrative poems and in numerous lyrical interludes which interrupt and distance the narrative line by suddenly subjecting it to the scrutiny of the expressed self. It is within the masks themselves, however, that such links become most interesting: having projected himself into his mask, the poet ironically externalizes his point of view, which allows him to observe himself from the outside, in self-reflectivity even more radical than his expressed self. Such ambiguities occur particularly frequently in monads in which the mask employs the pronoun 'I' either in direct speech or in interior monologue. It is such monads (which certainly do not include all instances of the monologue in Shevchenko's narrative poems) that frequently echo monads found in the *Ich-Gedichte*. In the so-called third 'Son' (Dream), an old Cossack prays for a peaceful old age:

Shchob dav meni dobru sylu
Peresylyt hore
I pryviv mene, staroho,
Na si sviati hory
Odynokyi vik dozhyty ...

Let Him grant me the good strength / To overcome my troubles, / And bring me – an old man – / To these holy mountains / Where I would end my lonely life.

And here is a 'personal' prayer from a lyrical poem:

Dai, zhe, Bozhe, kolynebud,
Khoch na starist staty

Na tykh horakh okradenykh
U malenkii khati.

Grant me, o Lord, to live sometime, / At least in my old age, / Upon those ravaged mountains, / In a small house.

The two monads just quoted are drawn even more closely together by the fact that the adjectives 'holy' and 'ravaged' are frequently used as epithets for mountains, supporting Shevchenko's important motif of ravaged holiness. In the poem 'Nevolnyk' (The Captive) and its original version 'Slipyi' (The Blind Man), the father of the hero, also an old Cossack, brings out his weapons to give them to his son. The veteran addresses his weapons:

... Zbroie moia,
Zbroie zolotaia,
Lita moi molodii,
Sylo molodaia!

My weapons, / My golden weapons, / My young years, / My young strength!

And here is a monad, one of a long series of its own, in which the poet expresses his longing for the powerful and joyful poetry of his youth – the symbol of his virility – now lost forever:

Ne vernutsia znovu
Lita moii molodii,
Veseleie slovo ...

My young years, / My happy word, / Will not return again.

In this pair of monads we have a particularly striking example of the distancing of the expressed self by a mask, since in many *Ich-Gedichte* Shevchenko compares his poetry to a weapon; hence the tension between an old warrior and an 'old' poet, underlying the motif of poetry as a battle for justice, becomes even more apparent.

Somewhere between the fully developed masks and the roles of the expressed self in the *Ich-Gedichte* we find a category of voice which may be called a *half mask*. Its externalization is made even more ambiguous by the

use of the pronoun 'I' *throughout* the given poem; furthermore, it is not so much an individualized character (as, for instance, in Robert Browning) as a type. The most familiar half masks in *Kobzar* are those of the peasant girl, the old man, and the Old Testament prophet.

Although most of the poems spoken or sung by the peasant girl exhibit strong folkloristic stylization, deliberately creating the effect of 'entertainments,' such as Perebendia might have performed, nevertheless many monads within them are close to the more 'serious' tone of the *Ich-Gedichte*: frequently the difference between the voice of the expressed self and that of the girl is signalled solely by endings of verbs in the past tense, endings of modifiers of the given 'I,' and similar morphological designations of gender. And when the opposition between the song-like frivolity and the 'confessional' seriousness of tone becomes pronounced, this in itself creates an interesting ironical ambiguity, distancing by song the poet's desperate concerns: loneliness, unrequited love, injustices at the hands of the oppressors, even poses of pathetic dissipation as the only way out of an intolerable situation. In the following pair of examples, the first monad is sung by a servant girl, while the second is spoken by the poet's expressed self. The ironical tension created by the obvious difference in tone is enhanced by the feminine ambience in the first excerpt:

Divchatochka na muzykakh
U chervonykh cherevykakh, –
        Ia svitom nuzhu ...
Bez roskoshi, bez liubovy,
Znoshu svoi chorni brovy,
        U naimakh znoshu!..

All the young women / Have red shoes to wear to dances. / Only I am sad in this world. / Without pleasure, without love, / My black eyebrows shall fade in servitude.

Ohni horiat, muzyka hraie,
Muzyka plache, zavyvaie ...
...
I vsi rehochutsia, smiiutsia,
I vsi tantsiuiut. Tilko ia,

Nenache zakliatyi, dyvliusia
I nyshkom plachu, plachu ia ...
Choho zh ia plachu? Mabut, shkoda,
Shcho bez pryhody, mov nehoda,
Mynula molodist moia.

The lamps are lit, the music sounds, / Weeping and wailing ... / And everyone is laughing, / Everyone is dancing. Only I, / Like a cursed outsider, look at them / And weep in secrecy. / Why do I weep so? Perhaps because I regret / That my youth has passed without passionate escapades, / Like a grey, rainy day.

Let me remark incidentally that while the half mask of the peasant girl is obviously close to the expressed self, it approximates such full masks as Kateryna or Naimychka.

Shevchenko often addresses the peasant girl as his favourite imaginary reader, his imaginary lover, and even his muse. When we consider such apostrophes together with the peasant girl as the half mask, we see hints of identification between her and the poet – a sort of spiritual androgyny, or the Jungian unity of *animus* and *anima*. The poet identifies himself still more closely with the half mask of the old man: here even grammatical gender fails to differentiate between the two voices. The thirty-year-old author refers to himself as an old man so often that his reader may indeed picture him as a greybeard, utterly ruined by a long life. We may speculate that the young girl and the old man became the poet's most intimate *alter egos*, embodying temporal projections of his self, respectively his past and his future. As I shall attempt to show below, this temporal sequence reverses itself in Shevchenko's later poetry: the young girl becomes a projection of the poet's future and the old man of his past.

The two sources of energy behind the ironical bifurcation and the potential synthesis of the profiles and masks of Shevchenko's expressed self are time and space. These modes are in dialectical opposition to each other, negating and yet underlying each other, and thus implying a potential synthesis of their own – the precisely imagined *future space* of desire (based on the dream-invested space of the past) for a timeless personal and national utopia, in which projected and basic profiles will become one, the ex-

pressed self will become *openly* steadfast to the prepersonal self, and hence ironical ambiguities will become superfluous.

In the mode of spatial directions, Shevchenko's expressed self is bifurcated by imaginary flights of the projected profile and the corresponding 'actuality' of the basic profile. Frequently, particularly in the early poetry, the projected profile takes a vertical direction into metaphysical reverie. Although such images of vertical flight never vanish altogether, they soon enter into an ironical dialectic with horizontal flights of the projected profile, supporting its public function of 'reporting' what is seen on earth, rather than 'beyond the clouds.' The tension between vertical and horizontal directions of flight thus embodies the ambiguity between the private and public functions of the expressed self.

Images of spatial directions are supplemented by images of open versus closed space. In Shevchenko's early work, limitless space opens up before the projected profile, while delimited space encloses the basic profile (the sky, the sea, the steppe, versus the humble hut). In later stages of *Kobzar*, vast expanses threaten the basic profile (the sandy steppes – death's domain – of the North), while the projected profile longs for a delimited and civilized space (reveries of a warm family home, surrounded by a cherry orchard): the outsider who sleeps under other people's fences (*popidtynniu*) now wants to be master of his own enclosed space. In an interesting ambiguity, the empty, lonely hut in Shevchenko's later poetry – the basic profile's 'actuality' – serves as the counterpoint to, or the negative reverse of, the projected profile's reveries of a civilized enclosure, filled with the presence of loving people.

Images of open spaces, particularly in the early poetry, imply wide, expansive gestures not only on the part of the projected profile but also of various personages (Cossacks, haidamaks); images of enclosed spaces, on the other hand, imply concentrated contemplation. I am even tempted to apply that scheme to the formal aspects of the poetry, although this cannot be done systematically: images of open spaces are frequently embodied in longer lines, restless changes of meter, informal syntax; images of enclosed spaces, on the other hand, often appear in compact 'well-made' lyrical poems or such passages in longer narrative works.

We observe in *Kobzar* a pervasive ironical tension between the cyclic and the linear temporal movements. In the introduction to the narrative

poem *Haidamaky*, for example, the cyclic temporality of natural sequences, imagined in personal reverie, ironically offsets the historical, and therefore linear, temporality of the action of the poem, thus putting the failure of history into the stoic perspective of *sub specie æternitatis*. Later in the *œuvre*, the cyclic temporality of nature distances and thus underscores the inexorable flight towards death of the poet's autobiographical (hence historical and linear) temporality: while seasons rotate in the unbearably slow monotony of exile, years fly by rapidly, taking with them the poet's hopes for the future. Again we see the perspective of *sub specie*, but now desperately fatalistic, rather than stoically reassuring.

The dialectic between linear and cyclic temporality becomes more pertinent when we consider *ek-static* displacements of time in the private history of the expressed self and in the public history of the Ukrainian people.[8] Here the promised synthesis of a timeless utopia causes the temporal direction to appear as a linear progression towards a personally or socially fulfilling resolution, and yet finally is a cyclic journey, returning to its origins. Generally speaking, in the early work the poet's personal future founds itself upon the dream-invested national past: the poet hopes to become not only the participant but also the progenitor of his people's future, founded on overdetermined (by the needs of that future) models of its history. In the later poetry, the future of the nation is predicated upon the personal and equally dream-invested past of the poet's own life.

As we have seen already, Shevchenko's expressed self divides its activity between private and public functions. Frequently, these functions exist in an ironical tension, and the bifurcation of the expressed self and of its masks adjusts itself to accommodate such dialectical ambiguities. In the dimension of temporality, the more frequently the projected profile *in its public functions* assumes the half mask of the prophet, in order to cast a desperate glance into the bleak future of Ukraine, the more often the projected profile *in its private functions* flies backward in time, towards the imagined warm enclosure of a peasant house. In the later poetry, such images of house and hearth become a model for the sacred institution of the state, according to which the social and even political future of the nation should be built. Hence, in temporal cyclicity, the future is forced to repeat the past and public history to become autobiography; the future is embodied in the image of the happy child that the poet presumably once

was. It is that image, fostered by the projected profile, that the basic profile is called upon to attack.

Let me illustrate my models of the temporal/spatial movement of Shevchenko's expressed self, and the ironical tensions that such movement implies, by a few examples from the early poetry and the poetry of *Try lita* (Three Years), with relevant allusions to the prison poetry and the late poetry.

As early as 'Dumy moi' (My Thoughts-Poems) – the first poem of the established canon[9] – Shevchenko originates an ironical relationship between the basic and the projected profile of his expressed self which will continue, with some readjustments, until the last poem of the *œuvre*. The basic profile in 'Dumy moi' is 'a poor orphan,' an outsider living in a foreign land, either ignored or despised by his environment. This profile soon engenders its own antithesis and projects it into desire, while at the same time preserving essential connections with it. The projected profile represents the romantic poet at the peak of his uncanny powers: the expressed self becomes a shaman-magician, capable of resurrecting warriors of past centuries, capable of exploding the confining walls of a tiny hut into vast spaces, in which long-silent battles ring again, capable of transforming, in an act of *fiat*, the dead snows of Russia into the fertile fields of Ukraine.

The most mysterious gift of the projected profile, from which all his powers stem, is the poet's secret of 'looking at people with his soul.' The source of such visionary power is the heart. A central symbol throughout *Kobzar*, the heart is constantly opposed to the circumspect intellect, which weighs, measures, apportions, and rigidly controls experience, and which intimidates men into betrayal. The poet's talent of looking with the eyes of the soul enables him not only to resurrect the past but to intuit the very essence of the present, and hence to divine the future, both personal and national: this will soon engender the half mask of the prophet, which dominates Shevchenko's subsequent periods.

As early as 'Dumy moi,' the expressed self plays complex games with the imagined reader; they are based, as elsewhere in *Kobzar*, on the bifurcation of the two profiles. Each profile deals with its own circle of readers. The basic profile imagines itself in the midst of indifferent, cruel 'people,' who will scoff at *Kobzar*, while the projected profile associates itself with an

equally projected image of distant Ukrainian readers, led by a peasant girl – the poet's ideal reader – for whom he performs his miracles, in expectation of her imaginary favours ('lasky divochi').

It is not difficult to trace in all this a faithful example of romantic irony. The orphaned outsider, a nonentity in fact, has the secret power to transcend his 'basic' existence in the projection of the poet-magician. Although such a projection is real enough in the metaphysical sense, the very existence of the basic profile implies that the projected profile is, after all, *created* and ephemeral. The poet knows, moreover, that the desire for the ultimate horizons of existence, invested in the projected profile, will bring him nothing but disappointment: the basic profile implies that the poet might be happier living the calm, anonymous life of a peasant on his land. As the *œuvre* progresses, that implication becomes increasingly overt (suggesting at times and with appropriate adjustments a model for the future of all Ukrainians), and enters into an ironical conflict not only with the elated activities of the projected profile but also, within the framework of the basic profile itself, with the poet's freely admitted desire for the mundane comforts that literary fame brings. In the 'vicious circle' of romantic irony, the projected profile opposes, by its implied example and overt sneers, such craving for the comforts of anonymity on the one hand and, on the other, for the comforts of fame. Hence the projected profile implies the inevitability of the curse of selfless sacrifice to the unattainable Ideal, whether private or public.

The mask whose own bifurcation corresponds to that of the expressed self in 'Dumy moi' is at the centre of the early poem 'Perebendia.' In the eyes of society Perebendia is an 'orphan,' an outsider without a home or family of his own. In contrast to the basic profile of 'Dumy moi,' however, he is far from anonymous: he is a clever professional entertainer who plays and sings what his public demands. His 'professionalism' is enhanced by a characterization which rests on the sentimental conception of a clown 'laughing on the outside, crying on the inside,' and which thus prefigures the ironic bifurcation of his profiles:

Vin im tuhu rozhaniaie
Khoch sam svitom nudyt.

He diverts them, / Although he himself is weary of the world.

Perebendia is an essentially romantic poet whose only 'public' is nature and God. In that profile, Perebendia not only addresses *essential*, alchemical questions to natural phenomena but is even capable of flying up into the sky and perching upon the sun:

Spochyne na sontsi, ioho zapytaie,
De vono nochuie? Iak vono vstaie?
Poslukhaie moria, shcho vono hovoryt?
Spyta chornu khmaru: Choho ty nima?

He rests upon the sun and asks it / Where it spends the night and how it rises. / He listens to the sea, to what it says. / He asks the black cloud: Why are you mute?

Hence the functions of the profiles of 'Dumy moi' and 'Perebendia' are reversed, prefiguring the important dialectic of the public and private functions of the expressed self. While the basic profile of 'Dumy moi' is resigned to anonymity, the projected profile longs for imaginary readers. In 'Perebendia,' on the other hand, the basic profile is known to the people, while the projected profile of the knower is utterly unknown; the poet, moreover, advises his hero to preserve his mystical anonymity at all costs. The poet, in fact, approves both Perebendia's basic, public profile and his projected, private one: here we see an ironical distancing of the self by the mask, since there is little doubt that the author addresses his advice primarily to himself.

An important development in the ironical relationship between the basic and the projected profiles of the expressed self, and of the parallel dialectical movement within the corresponding mask, occurs in Shevchenko's early quasihistorical poem 'Haidamaky' (The Haidamaks). In the introduction, the expressed self becomes bifurcated in a pattern very close to that of 'Dumy moi.' In his projected profile, the poet calls himself father of the rebels of some eighty years earlier (addressing them as he addressed his poems – his children – in 'Dumy moi'), whom he has resurrected in his hut and for whose enlightenment he has opened a vista upon a still earlier century, so that they might learn bravery and grandeur of demeanour from the glorious Cossacks. He ironically implies that such proceedings are predominantly literary, particularly when he complains that he has trouble 'finding' a leader for his boys within his poem.

In the polemical part of the introduction, where he sneers at his Russian critics, the poet complicates his basic profile by the pose of a naïve rustic (this ironical device appears in eighteenth-century Western satire as the 'naïve innocent,' usually a provincial or a traveler), whose down-to-earth sarcasm unmasks the 'refined' hypocrisy of the 'learned Russian gentlemen' hiding behind their fake liberalism:

Teplyi kozhukh, tilko shkoda,
Ne na mene shytyi,
A rozumne vashe slovo
Brekhneiu pidbyte.

The sheepskin coat [of a profitable literary career that you offer me] is warm / But unfortunately not cut for me, / And your wise words / Are lined with lies.

This elaborate pose, with its appropriate 'peasant' expressions, will be developed in the second part of 'Son' (The Dream). Incidentally, it exists in its own right in an ironical relationship with the poet's 'serious' dreams of rustic anonymity.

The mask, bifurcated to correspond to the two profiles in the introduction, is embodied in the hero of the poem itself. The action is reminiscent of a *Bildungsroman*, based as it is upon the 'discovery' and the moral education of a leader, a romantic hero, with whom Shevchenko identifies openly:

Otakyi to mii Iarema,
Syrota bahatyi.
Takym i ia kolys to buv ...

Such is my Iarema, / A rich orphan. / Once upon a time I was like him ...

Iarema, a poor orphan (and yet, paradoxically, a 'rich' one) begins at the lowest level of his society, as a meek servant of a tyrannical taverner. But even in the initial stages of the action that basic profile of the mask implies its own projected profile, characteristically embodied in images of flight which in turn are offset by the opposite direction – the basic profile's lot – of bending to the ground:

Ne znav, siromakha, shcho vyrosly kryla,
Shcho neba dostane, koly poletyt,
Ne znav, nahynavsia ...

He did not know, the poor wretch, that he was growing wings, / That he will reach the sky once he begins to fly; / He did not know, he bent his back ...

Iarema joins the haidamak rebellion for the sake of booty, so that he can afford to marry his beloved Oksana, whose name immediately reminds us of Oksana Kovalenko (indeed, Iarema's initial motive can be compared to the poet's own dreams of personal happiness, expressed in the *Ich-Gedichte*). Later on, the hero's decision to go on fighting is motivated by his desire for military glory (which, in turn, reminds us of Shevchenko's own hankering after literary fame). It is only in the final stages of the action that Iarema recognizes his destiny: he is even willing to abandon his beloved, who now has become his wife, for a while longer – or perhaps forever – in order to win freedom for his people (we may read this as a parallel to Shevchenko's own awareness of his mission as a political poet). Hence it follows that not only in the introduction and the lyrical interludes but in the development of the action itself the poet constructs a network of systematic parallels between the mask and the expressed self.

I have alluded earlier to the most important ambiguity between the introduction and the main part of *Haidamaky*, generated by the two directions of time. The Introduction contains a hymn to cyclic temporality; mighty empires emerge only to vanish, and petty human strivings and failures dissolve in the light of the indifferent moon. This seems like a strange prelude to a poem in which the linear temporality of history dominates the action. One may speculate that with the help of such ironical distancing of linear temporality Shevchenko wishes to examine Ukraine's own moment under the sun. We know that later he will similarly examine the time of his own life by looking at it not only from the standpoint of the cyclicity of nature but from the distanced point of view of the historical time of his nation. More important, in some later works he ironically questions the morality of cyclic time from the standpoint of historical temporality. In a late lyrical poem, for example, Shevchenko speaks of the

wealthy father who yearly clothes the grove – his daughter – in the sumptuous garments appropriate to each season. This seemingly innocent and even playful occupation, however, leads to a surprising conclusion. The mysterious father:

Spat liazhe, vtomyvshysia
Turboiu takoiu.

Will lie down to sleep, exhausted / By such troubles.

Judging by the numerous monads and more extensive passages throughout *Kobzar*, in which the indifferent God sleeps, while innocent people suffer and die – even while his own Son is hanging on the cross – we may read these lines as charged with profound irony: instead of undertaking the demanding 'troubles' of caring for humanity, the 'wealthy father' indulges in the gratuitous supervision of the seasons, and thus condemns the downtrodden to the injustices of their national and personal situation.

The second stage of Shevchenko's *œuvre*, constituted by the group of poems under the heading of *Try lita* (Three Years), is dominated by desperate searching and painful doubt. Such tortuous internal quests continued until his last poem, although in later works they occasionally were mellowed by more mature scepticism. Hence from the second period on the projected profile will not emanate from the basic profile in a harmonious gesture, with the former always superior to the latter, although implicitly challenged by it: the two profiles will now be in open conflict, cuttingly interrogating each other. One may say that here Shevchenko leaves the 'romantic irony' of Schlegel and approaches the 'Socratic irony' of Kierkegaard.

The 'crisis' of the second period is evident as early as 'Try lita,' which introduces the group under the same title. (Such introductory poems, which appear at intervals throughout the *œuvre*, frequently feature similar monads and thus dialectically develop the first introductory poem, 'Dumy moi'; indeed, 'Try lita' may be read as an anthitesis to that poem.) The ironical tension in 'Try lita' is energized by clashing images of temporality. Personal time now heads forward in a destructive stream, without the implied foundation of 'the eternal return.' The cyclicity of time, in fact, is now embodied in negative imagery; it becomes the tedium of days that

repeat each other with unbearable monotony and *over* which the years gallop forward, towards the dangerous abyss of the future:

I kydaiut na rozputti
Slipoho kaliku ...

And [the years] abandon a blind cripple / At a crossroads ...

Note that here blindness symbolizes not Perebendia's role as a mystical visionary but the expressed self's role as a helpless beggar, standing bewildered at the crossroads of national and personal history.

Embittered by personal and political disappointments, and threatened by an uncertain future, the expressed self in 'Try lita' directs its projected profile neither into verticality nor into the dream-invested *national* past of Ukraine, but into its own imagined *personal* past. This vision includes Shevchenko's own early poetry and the process of its creation; it is as if the projected profile now identified itself with the basic profile embodied in the youthful poems as an innocent, happy, anonymous singer. Obviously, all we have to do is turn quickly to the beginning of *Kobzar* to see that not all is so cheerful there. At a time of crisis, even the memories of the beginning of the poet's career must be altered by desire.

The regression of the projected profile beyond the dream-invested vision of the poet's early work and into an idealized pastoral childhood, shared by an imagined female playmate, reinforces the longing for the closed space of a peaceful, anonymous familial existence, which will soon enter into ironical conflict with the longing for personal fame. The important moment here is that such longing culminates in the intense desire *to repeat* the anonymity of a dream-invested pastoral childhood *in the future*. 'Postavliu khatu i kimnatu' (I shall build a house with a parlour), the poet promises himself. That house will be populated by a family, patterned after his reverie of the past family that presumably blessed his childhood and after his desire for a future family, born out of the dream of an innocent relationship between himself as a child and his little female friend. Hence we notice, from 'Try lita' on, that the movement of personal time of the expressed self forms a circle, in which the past is perpetually transformed into the future; that cyclic direction is meant to supplant the now lost belief in the metaphysical validity of nature's cyclic temporality for individual or national destiny.

Throughout the later sections of *Kobzar*, the basic profile will ironically check the pastoral dreams of the projected profile, while the projected profile will mitigate such sarcasm of embittered experience by its own 'songs of innocence.' The basic profile, for example, will view the illusions of the projected profile as they are shattered by the social conditions of the Russian Empire, idiomatically expressing those illusions as the void of absence:

I vyris ia na chuzhyni,
I syviiu v chuzhomu krai,
Ta odynokomu meni
Zdaietsia – krashchoho nemaie
Nichoho v Boha, iak Dnipro
Ta nasha slavnaia kraina ...
Azh bachu, tam tilko dobro,
De nas nema ...

And I grew up in exile, / And I am going grey in a foreign land. / So, it seems to me / That even God's paradise is no better than our Dnipro / And our glorious land ... / But suddenly I see that goodness exists / Only where we don't live [an idiom paralleling the English 'the grass is greener ...']

As for the temporal regression of the projected profile into childhood, the basic profile will sneer at its potential infantilism. The original of the following example is expressed in an ironically informal, bantering tone:

Na batka bisovoho trachu
I dni i pera i papir!
A inodi to shche i zaplachu,
Taky azh nadto. Ne na myr
I na dila ioho dyvyvshys,
A tak – mov inodi upyvshys,
Didus syvesenkyi ryda
Toho, bachte, shcho syrota.

Only the devil's father knows why / I am wasting my days, pens, and paper! / And on top of it, once in a while / I break out in tears, and quite copiously at that. / Not because I contemplate the world and its affairs, / But just so, for no reason at

all. / As if a drunken greybeard started / Bawling because, you see he is an orphan.

In the following excerpt, we find an ironic blending of the basic profile (in the role of an old man) and the projected profile (in the role of a child). Fate has abandoned the poet, and he again finds himself at a crossroads:

... kynula maloho
Na rozputti, ta i baiduzhe ...
A vono, ubohe,
Molodeie, syvouse,
Zvychaine, dytyna!
I podybalo tykhenko
Popid samym tynom
Azh za Ural ...

[Fate] left the little boy / At the crossroads, and didn't care ... / And he, so poor, / So young, so greybearded – / A child, you understand – / Toddled off quietly, / Along the fence, / Way beyond the Ural Mountains ...

The mask paralleling 'Try lita' can be traced in the narrative poem 'Slipyi' (The Blind Man), from the same second period. As in *Haidamaky*, the connections between the mask and the expressed self are implied in the introduction. Also, the introduction is again in ironical opposition to the narrative, inasmuch as in it the poet vainly longs for the fulfilment of love which his hero, no matter how battered, finally finds. The hero sets off to battle not as the outcast Iarema but from the midst of a warm familial environment: his past thus corresponds to the dream-invested past of the poet's expressed self. Conversely, the hero does not end his exploits as a leader but as a broken cripple and a minstrel, as if here Shevchenko took up and developed his own 'self-portrait' from 'Try lita.' In spite of his handicap, however, the hero returns to his village, marries his sweetheart (who, almost incestuously, comes from his own family), and settles down to a peaceful rural existence. In the conclusion of the poem, the poet repeats the cyclic direction of human life, reminiscent not only of his reveries of a calm termination of his own broken life but also of his hopes for the future of his nation, as expressed in his late poetry.

The projected profile of the hero, in contrast to that of Iarema, turns out to be a rather passive participant in the military exploits of the Cossacks. Moreover, the hero relates his adventures first in a *duma* and then in a narrative for the benefit of his family, rather than directly taking part in the action, as Iarema does. Such deflection of direct action into relation, and the resulting removal of the sphere of the projected profile into the background, supports my supposition that in the second period of Shevchenko's *œuvre* the closed domestic space begins to take precedence over the open space of battle. Neither does this blind minstrel share the gift of mystical insight with blind Perebendia. 'Slipyi,' then, is in ironical opposition to the body of *Haidamaky* on the one hand and to 'Perebendia' on the other, as 'Try lita' is in opposition to 'Dumy moi.'

In the second period of his development, Shevchenko fortifies the framework of the public functions of his expressed self, which henceforth will be ironically opposed to his private hopes and reveries. The poem that establishes those functions is 'Son' (The Dream). Here the basic profile of the orphan pretends to be cynically embittered, striking the pose of a desperately profligate underground man who dissipates his life in protest not only against social injustices but also against the universal Absurd, of which the grievous social conditions are merely evidence. Corresponding changes occur in the projected profile of the poet-magician: its public functions force it to assume an ironical relationship not only to its own basic profile but also to the projected profiles in 'Dumy moi' and 'Perebendia.' To begin with, its flight is now not vertical (like Perebendia's) but horizontal, although vertical flight still tempts the poet, and he has a conversation with his soul about its possibility:

Choho tobi shkoda? Khiba ty ne bachysh?
Khiba ty ne chuiesh liudskoho plachu?
To hlian, podyvysia! A ia polechu
Vysoko-vysoko za synii khmary.
Nemaie tam vlasty, nemaie tam kary,
Tam smikhu liudskoho i plachu ne chut.

What are you sorry for? Do you not see? / Do you not hear human weeping? / So look, see! And I shall fly high up, / Beyond the blue clouds. / There is no mighty rule nor punishment there, / There neither human laughter nor weeping are heard.

The possibility of vertical flight is now considered from the standpoint of ethics, which was certainly not true of the alchemical inquiries into the secrets of nature by Perebendia's projected profile, echoing as they did the aesthetic interests of the early romantics. Hence such 'pure' views on nature in Shevchenko's youthful poetry are now 'marred' by ethics: the earth is now wounded by the ugly holes of silver mines in which people suffer, and the mountains are contaminated by blood. In short, magical inquiries into the secrets of nature, although still a cherished possibility, have become morally unaffordable. The poet's very soul has become the instrument of ethical questioning, and consequently 'looking at people with the soul' has turned into a source of unavoidable suffering. Hence various emphases must be reversed: Perebendia's projected *private* profile (which he hides from the people) has to recede, and the new magician's *public* profile (which will instruct the people) must take the centre and be projected. It follows that, as far as the public functions of the expressed self are concerned, the dream of Ukraine as an idyllic paradise must also be revised for the sake of ethical considerations. The poet's ironic debate with his soul continues:

On hlian: u tim rai, shcho ty pokydaiesh,
Latanu svytynu z kaliky znimaiut,
Z shkuroiu znimaiut ...

Look! In this paradise which you are leaving, / They strip a patched shirt off a cripple, / Together with his skin.

The direction of flight *must be forced* into uncompromising horizontality; the 'double standard' applied to Perebendia, allowing him to masquerade as a humble entertainer, would now be in bad faith. A different kind of 'masquerade' is called for, since the flight of the projected profile is not that of a blind seer anymore, but that of a mercilessly wide-eyed, lucid 'spy' of the human conscience. Hence the bird that symbolizes this new direction is neither the high-hovering eagle nor the nightingale, which we saw in the early poetry, but the repulsive owl. The poet resents the owl's kinship to his inspiration in several instances ('I vyiu sovoiu' / 'And I howl like an owl'), but he nevertheless needs such an unclean Muse because its eyes pierce the darkness of human duplicity and hypocrisy. And yet, while the

poet perceives the shoddy prospects of social injustice, his sight is ironically 'covered up' by the pretence that such painfully etched visions are nothing but vapid emanations of a drunken dream (as opposed to Perebendia's pure ecstasy). However, the poet assures us that the ink-stained 'sober' Ukrainians in Petersburg, busy aspiring to clerical careers, cannot hope to realize such 'drunken' dreams. The political vision of the projected profile as an angry poet is thus 'masked' by an alcoholic hallucination of the basic profile which masquerades as an anonymous drunk. The projected profile itself, moreover, must also be anonymous and *invisible* in order to *see* better, to fulfil more efficiently its task of *spying*. The purpose of such anonymity is the opposite from that of Perebendia's projected profile, what with his hiding behind clouds to get a better view of the roots of universal existence. As we see, the magic of a poem dealing with the social conditions in the Russian Empire has to become black; this, I suppose, is the central cause of Shevchenko's frequent evocations of the myth of his 'innocent' and 'pure' past, beginning with the second period of his *œuvre*.

'Son' is the grotesque embodiment of the poet's lucid vision of the public present and its public space. In later poems the expressed self in its public function begins to assume the half mask of the prophet, in order to examine not only the present but also the future. The temporal orientation correspondingly becomes the apocalyptic direction *forward*, as opposed to the apparently *backward* pastoral glance of the poet's private reveries. The half mask of Jeremiah, weeping at the crossroads of history, sees the future space of the Ukrainian nation as a wasteland; such passive visions are ironically counterbalanced by the half mask of Isaiah, who castigates his people for their past mistakes and calls them to future conquests. Both these prophets' half masks parallel the half mask and the full mask of *iurodyvyi* (the holy fool), which symbolizes the 'irrational' hope against all reasonable odds.

While the expressed self in its *private* functions regresses into the myth of a 'pure' childhood, that self in its *public* functions repudiates the myth of colourful – as aesthetically imagined – Cossacks and hetmans, whom Shevchenko delighted in resurrecting only a few years before. The prophet's inexorable vision, as it unveils the future, pierces the theatrical trappings of romantic historiography (in which Shevchenko's contemporary Ukrainian historians had indulged with such abandon, and which the young poet him-

self adopted so uncritically), to expose the fatal errors of Ukrainian leaders of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, such as their naïve trust in the honesty of their Russian 'Orthodox brothers' or their frequent disregard of the needs of their own dispossessed peasants. Shevchenko's condemnation of his nation's past in the name of the future on the one hand, and, on the other, his idealization of his personal past in view of the bleak future ahead of him as an individual, strengthen the temporal ambiguities which pervade his later work.

In the late poem 'Iurodyvyi,' Shevchenko sketches a skeletal plot, based on an actual episode, dealing with a young rebel – a 'holy fool' – who slaps the face of a high Russian official in a church.[10] Although such an incident did happen, a parallel with Christ's banishment of the money-changers from the temple immediately suggests itself. This parallel is supported by the poet's apostrophe to God the Father, which boldly identifies Him with a 'napping' despot:

A ty, Vsevydiashcheie oko!
Chy ty dyvylosia zvysoka,
Iak sotniamy v kaidanakh hnaly
V Sybir nevolnykiv sviatykh,
Iak morduvaly, rozpynaly
I vishaly. A ty ne znalo?
I ty dyvylosia na nykh
I ne osliplo? Oko, oko!
Ne duzhe bachysh ty hlyboko!
Ty spysh v kioti ...

And you, O all-seeing Eye! / Did you not see from above, / How hundreds of holy prisoners / Were being driven in chains to Siberia? / How they were being tortured, crucified, / And hanged? And you did not know? / And you looked at them / And did not go blind? Oh, Eye! Eye! / You do not see very deeply! / You sleep behind your ciborium.

Upon pronouncing this harsh judgment of the obtuse, indifferent God, the poet declares that he himself will fly to Siberia, in order to undertake, in the *human* way, the task of the ineffectual all-seeing Eye: he will look in order to witness and to speak.

A ia polynu na Sybir,
Azh za Baikal; zahlianu v hory,
V vertepy temnii i v nory,
Bez dna hlybokii, i vas –
Spobornyky sviatoii voli –
Iz tmy, iz smrada i z nevoli,
Tsariam i ludiam na pokaz,
Na svit vas vyvedu ...

But I shall fly to Siberia, / All the way beyond the Baikal; I shall look / Into the mountains, the dark caverns, and bottomless holes, / And I shall lead you into the light, / Out of the darkness and stench of your dungeons, / O defenders of holy liberty, to show you to the tsars and to the people.

The similarity of this monad to central monads in 'Son,' written thirteen years earlier, is immediately apparent: the horizontal flight, the look of an inexorable witness, the holy prisoners in caverns and holes (in 'Son' they include Christ Himself).[11] Nevertheless, in 'Iurodyvyi' the projected profile surrenders its role of a sarcastic but essentially passive observer; instead, it dares to act: to lead out into the light, to resurrect. That activity, in turn, is reminiscent of 'Dumy moi,' with the crucial difference that now the poetic logos resurrects not the aesthetically imagined past glory of the Cossacks but the ethically interiorized present misery of their 'grandchildren': the roles of prophet and magician are united by the energy of a temporal orientation towards the future as political and spiritual liberation.

In Shevchenko's later poetry the projected profile as prophet-magician frequently assumes the mask of Christ as rebel, martyr, defender of the meek, advocate of universal love, suffering son of an institutionalized father, and finally as supreme prophet, master of the logos. The functions of the Christ mask suggest the obligatory ironical bifurcation of profiles. Christ's basic profile is of an illegitimate child;[12] it is characteristic of Shevchenko's development, incidentally, that while Kateryna's illegitimate son is destined to become a minstrel ('Kateryna'), the illegitimate Son of Mary is destined to become the most exalted fighter for freedom. Christ, in his basic profile, is also a martyr: he appears thus in 'Son' and in a number of subsequent works. The following lines from 'Son' embody this basic

profile as martyr, with his projected profile implied in a complex ironical move by the designation 'tsar':

V kaidany ubranyi
Tsar vsesvitnii! Tsar voli, tsar
Shtempom uvinchanyi.

Chained in fetters is the universal tsar! / The tsar of liberty, the tsar / Crowned by a prisoner's brand.

The following quotation from 'Neofity' (The Neophytes), written thirteen years later, begins with a similar monad. The quotation includes a startling comment on God's and his 'helpers'' attitude to Christ's sacrifice:

... I za shcho
Ioho, sviatoho, morduvaly,
Vo uzly kuvaly;
I hlavu ioho chestnuiu
Ternom uvinchaly?
I vyvely z zlodiiamy
Na Holhofu horu;
I povisyly mizh nymy –
Za shcho? Ne hovoryt
Ni sam syvyi Verhhotvorets,
Ni ioho sviatii –
Pomoshchnyky, pobornyky,
Kastraty nimii!

Why did they torture and enchain Him in fetters – / Him, Who is Holy – / And crown His noble head with thorns? / Why did they lead Him together with some thieves / Onto the hill of Golgotha, / To hang Him among them? / For what purpose? The grey-haired Supreme Creator does not answer, / Nor do his saints – / The confessors, the defenders of the faith – / The mute *castrati*!

When we read such passages alongside reveries of Christ's pastoral childhood ('Mariia'), parallels between Christ's destiny and that of the poet himself become quite plain. Even Shevchenko's doubts as to the ultimate

purpose of his own sufferings, particularly their historical justification, are implied in the disturbingly irreverent but wholly sympathetic interrogation of the Son of God:

Narobyv ty, Khryste, lykha!
A pereinachyv
Liudei Bozhykh? Kotylysia
I nashi kozachi
Durni holovy za pravdu,
Za viru Khrystovu,
Upyvalys i chuzhoi,
I svoiei krovy!
A poluchshaly? Ba, de to!

You have really started some trouble, Christ! / But have you changed the Christian folk? / Our Cossack heads, too, / Rolled for Christ's truth and the Christian faith, / Having gotten drunk on foreign blood / And on our own! / And did we improve by it? In no way!

The projected profile of Christ's mask is the master of the logos in His final victory, resurrected from the dead to wield His Word on the side of the downtrodden. It is easy to see here parallels to the poet's own attempts to rise above the lethargic scepticism of his basic profile and to consecrate his own word as a weapon in the service of the future. For example, Ukrainians invariably quote the following lines as from Shevchenko's 'I,' although the context quickly shows that they are really spoken by Christ. Hence this excerpt puts the power of poetry and prophecy – the magic of the poet's and of Christ's projected profile – into a particularly acute ambiguity:

... vozvelychu
Malykh otykh rabiv nimykh!
Ia na storozhi kolo ikh
Postavliu slovo!

I shall raise / And ennoble these mute, petty slaves! / And I shall place the Word / To guard them.

The mask of Mary exists in an interesting dialectical relationship to Christ on the one hand and, on the other, to the poet's own expressed self. Although we see instances of this in several moments of the *œuvre*, it is in 'Mariia' that they stand out most plainly. In her basic profile, Mary is a simple, innocent, and rather earthy village maiden; the reader cannot help comparing her to the peasant girl who so frequently plays the role of the poet's ideal reader, muse, and lover, finally becoming a half mask of his expressed self. After Mary, because of her childlike trust in the power of the heart (which likens her to Kateryna), is seduced by an 'institutionalized' prophet, she lovingly rears her son in pastoral surroundings that remind us of the poet's myth of his own childhood. But when she is condemned to witness His execution – the more horrible betrayal of her trust in love, since it ends not in birth but in death – she cannot afford to continue to preserve her rustic anonymity, and her projected profile comes into play: she becomes a public person, gathering together her son's rather shiftless apostles (Ukrainian intellectuals from Shevchenko's environment?), and vigorously disseminating His logos. Parallelling the poet's dismal view of his own future, she finally dies as a forgotten beggar. Mary's public life suggests that she becomes Christ's projected profile, more publicly active than He himself. Shevchenko makes it quite plain, moreover, that without her, Christ's word would have remained unheard: here he reiterates his high regard for the symbol of the mother, and, more important for us, assigns a cardinal role to the feminine principle of spiritual existence, to the *anima* of Christ's and of his own genius.

Earlier in this article I attempted to show how the basic profile ironically 'checks' the projected profile of the poet's expressed self within its private functions. After the above discussion of half masks and full masks of the self in its *public* activity, it will be easier to establish how in that public sphere the basic profile as the martyred poet interrogates the projected profile as the revolutionary prophet. I have already suggested that the scepticism of the basic profile is frequently based on a dim view of Ukraine's historical past and its possible uses in the future. Here is an example of such self-interrogation, which is a part of a long series of monads:

Za shcho zh borolys my z liakhamy?
Za shcho zh my rizalys z ordamy?

Za shcho skorodyly spysamy
Moskovski rebra?

Why did we fight the Poles? / Why did we battle the Tatar hordes? / Why did we rake / Russian ribs with lances?

Time and again the poet wonders if it would not have made more sense to have *whole-heartedly* embraced the private sphere of existence, with its promise of a future in the dream-invested pastoral past, instead of yielding to the temptation of being witness and ultimately prophet. The nadir of such disillusionment occurs in passages in which the poet curses those older friends who have abducted him from the imagined paradise of innocence by teaching him to write poetry; one may compare this to the seduction of Mary by the 'institutionalized' prophet in 'Mariia.' In such passages we perceive an ironical ambiguity between personal and national freedom, which will ultimately resolve itself in the poet's realization that the one cannot exist without the other. Bewailing his lost childlike purity, the poet curses those who 'besmirched' him by artistic and intellectual encouragement, and now accuse him of 'wavering':

Bo vy mene z sviatoho neba
Vzialy mizh sebe i pysat
Pohani virshi nauchyly!
Vy tiazhkyi kamin polozhyly
Posered shliakhu ...
...
Teper idu ia bez dorohy,
Bez shliakhu bytoho ... A vy!
Dyvuietes, shcho spotykaius,
Shcho vas i doliu proklynaiu.

Because you brought me down from holy heaven / Among yourselves and taught me to write bad verses! / You put a heavy rock in my path ... / Now I wander without a way, / Without a high road. ... And you! / You wonder that I stumble, / That I curse you and my fate.

Note, incidentally, that in the image 'holy heaven' the vertical flight of Perebendia is directly substituted by reveries of an idealized purity of

childhood and youth. In an epistle to his fellow prisoners, on the other hand, the poet's projected profile in its public functions makes an ironical comment on 'irresponsible' reveries of an anonymous country life:

Roziidemos, roznesemo
V stepy, v lisy svoiu nedoliu,
Poviruiem shche trokhy v voliu,
A potim zhyty pochnemo
Mizh liudmy iak ludy.

We shall go our separate ways and / Carry our common grief into the steppes and into the forests. / For a while we shall go on believing in freedom, / And then we shall begin to live / Like people among people.

In 'Saul,' the public self seems to remind the private self that *it is too late*, and therefore immoral, to dream of such rural anonymity:

... A teper
Pluhamy, ralom ne rozorem
Prokliatu nyvu: prorosla
Koluchym ternom ...

Now we are unable to plow the accursed field / Either with wooden or iron plows. / It is overgrown with prickly thistles.

The obvious implication is that plows must be hammered back into swords.

The ironical bifurcation of the expressed self between its public and private spheres of activity, together with the corresponding bifurcation of its profiles, continues until the last poem of *Kobzar*. In that poem, the private sphere – with the projected profile unhesitatingly entering the reverie of a pastoral childhood – is ultimately victorious. After a moving attempt to forestall death, the poet finally declines the kind of old age that literary fame, once so fervently desired, now has to offer: the writing of vapid odes to the throne, probably in the manner of old Derzhavin, or the churning out of honeyed sentimentalist prose. Shevchenko is surprisingly silent on the possibility of a future as prophet, if even an accursed one, implying perhaps that 'prophetic fire' would eventually burn out, leaving only the ashes of hackneyed 'literary production.' Instead, the poet wishes to build

a model of his dream-invested past in the absolute futurity of death; he dreams of the intimate space of a small house, transcending and yet implying the grave, on the shores of his beloved Dnipro. It becomes plain that the synthesis of the public and private spheres of activity of the expressed self, let alone the synthesis of its profiles, never occurs.

There is, nevertheless, an implication of such a synthesis, a parched desire for it, on the philosophical level of *Kobzar.* The future of humanity in general and of Ukraine in particular, envisioned by the poet as prophet and as Christ, is based on the model of a village family, particularly mother and son, as epitomized by Mary and Christ. Here is an example of that wish, expressed in words of monumental simplicity:

I na onovlenii zemli
Vraha ne bude, supostata,
A bude syn i bude maty,
I budut liudy na zemli.

And there will be no enemy on the renewed earth; / There will be the son and the mother, / And people will live on the earth.

Even the angry words of the half mask of Isaiah imply a similar vista of transfigured peasant huts, when the prophet transforms, in the future tense, the harsh hills of Judea into a bucolic Ukrainian landscape:

I pustyniu opanuiut
Veselii sela

And the desert will be mastered / By happy villages.

The potential unification of personal past and national future, suggested by the potential unification of the poet's private and the public spheres, implies a unification of linear and cyclic temporality. We may think of it as an arrest of historical time or a utopian transcendence of temporality. On such an ideal level of temporality (or atemporality) history itself will atrophy, stifling the violence and the hatred that it itself necessarily generates: only in such a dream-invested, myth of the national future – as in the dream-invested myth of the personal past – will violence be replaced by universal love.

In the meantime, one is condemned to live among other people, condemned to strive, to suffer, and to die. This in *Kobzar* is the final ironical check of heedless utopian temptations of timelessness. In the early poetry the cyclicity of nature had been translated, provisionally, into the stream of human time by the projected profile of poet-as-magician. But soon that safe framework was shattered by the projected profile's sense of responsibility towards society, which old Perebendia could dispense with but which the young poet could not afford to dismiss. Hence it follows that he could not allow himself the bad faith of total immersion in the past (be it the imagined national past or the equally passionately imagined personal past), since his commitment to his imagined and real readers – to living among people which means caring for them – was much too tenacious for such escape.

Although the synthesis of the expressed self could not be completed for such demanding moral reasons, another and more authentic synthesis calms us by a sense of completion as we close Shevchenko's *Kobzar*. It is founded upon our intuition of the poet's strong prepersonal self, whose energy constantly flows in the various binary oppositions of profiles, masks, temporal dimensions, spatial directions, and spheres of activity. While the bifurcations of the poet's expressed self ironically distance the submerged energy of the prepersonal self, this energy gives the totality of his work a more authentic cohesion than any ideological or formal syntheses could do, embodied as it is in the unity of the writing – the unity of poetic utterance – which makes it possible to treat his entire *œuvre* as a single poem. But such a unity of expression is not sufficient by itself. The relentless interrogation of the 'sincerity' of the various poses by each other – a 'sincerity' posited only in order to be questioned in the mode of romantic irony which here is a tool and nothing more – is a quest of the prepersonal self for itself as it is progressively unconcealed in language. It is this quest that not only founds but finally transcends the unity of *the book* into the unity of *an authentic life*, as Kierkegaard defined it.

(1974, 1979)

NOTES

1 This is a revised and expanded version of a paper presented at the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in New York on 7 April 1974 and at the Uni-

versity of Michigan in Ann Arbor on 17 March 1979. The Ukrainian texts of quotations are taken from the first four volumes of *Povne vydannia tvoriv Tarasa Shevchenka*, 14 vols, eds Pavlo Zaitsev and Bohdan Kravtsiv (Chicago: Mykola Denysiuk 1962-4). All English paraphrases are my own, with the exception of three expressions borrowed from Watson Kirkconnell's translations in *The Collected Works of Taras Shevchenko*, ed. C.H. Andrusyshen (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1963).

2 Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften*, ed. Wolfdietrich Rasch (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag 1971) 21.

3 Soren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony, with Constant Reference to Socrates*, trans. Lee M. Capel (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press 1968) 264-5. Although Shevchenko and Kierkegaard, who were contemporaries, could not possibly have known each others' work, the similarity of their thought in many instances is astonishing, and a comparative study of those two minds is sorely needed. Readers familiar with Kierkegaard will recognize several important parallels, outside the sphere of irony, implied in this article.

4 *Ibid.*, 337.

5 *Ibid.*, 338.

6 According to Merleau-Ponty, who based this observation on the thought of Gabriel Marcel, style is the uninterrupted connection between my body and the world: the unity of the body-subject, expressing itself and thus communicating itself to the world by the unity of its habits, manifests a common style of action. From this basis arises the style of my life in which there is expressed a continuous motif. Style both borrows from environment and shapes it. Merleau-Ponty is convinced that the style of a painter's, a poet's, even a philosopher's work is based directly on the style of the life of the body-subject: we 'recognize' his or her style by opening ourselves to those primary levels of experience on which our own deep self can meet his or hers. This conception of style goes directly against the accepted definition of style as a surface assembling and ordering of aesthetic values and devices. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith, International Library of Philosophy and the Scientific Method, 144-5, 168-9, 327, *et passim*.

7 Ortega y Gasset is one among many (for example, Marcel, Merleau-Ponty) who define the 'deep' self on the basis of interest or desire. 'Pressing interest,' he claims, is the product of reflective consciousness and hence exists on the surface of 'personality.' The interests of the self *before* personality and its deliberate characteristics, dictated by situations, on the other hand, create a

field of *primal vision*, upon which reflective or thetic consciousness can rest. Fortifying Ortega y Gasset by existentialist thought, we may say that to live authentically, avoiding the self-delusion and bad faith that victimize our 'personality,' means to open ourselves as widely as possible to the influence of our 'deep' self, which never deceives. Needless to say, such a 'prepersonal' level of the self should not be confused with the Freudian subconscious or any of the numerous psychological categories related to it. See Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Art, and Other Essays on Culture and Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1968) 84 *et passim*. Also see note 6 above.

8 According to Heidegger's complex notion of temporal *ek-stase*, man is capable of standing outside his own present, while at the same time remaining in it – at a distance from himself and yet being himself – in order to experience care (*Sorge*) for the time of others. The human being, in other words, transcends his own present, reaching out beyond himself into his own future, which must be the future of others and which comes towards him already charged with his own past, which he shared with others. Hence an individual's present, future, and past create a dynamic system of references and forms, in which a single form implies all the others, thus bracketing the 'chronological sequence' of past, present, and future. Even such a simplified report as mine shows that Heidegger's concept of temporality is closely related to ironic distancing. For the central definition of *ek-static* temporality, see Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Brothers 1962) 377-8.

9 Shevchenko placed 'Dumy moi' as the opening piece of his first published collection, obviously intending it as a prologue. It is not the first poem written by him, however: dated 1839, it follows such poems as 'Perebendia,' 'Kateryna,' and other important early works.

10 The incident is somewhat changed in 'Iurodyvyi.' A young revolutionary did indeed slap a high official in a church. The 'victim,' however, was not the governor of Ukraine, Dimitrii Gavrilovich Bibikov, as the poem has it, but his secretary, Nikolai Erastovich Pisarev. The event occurred not in Kiev, as Shevchenko claims, but in Petrozavodsk.

11 The fact that commentators have attempted to identify the several appearances of Christ throughout the *œuvre* with various actual dissenters of Shevchenko's time does not invalidate my argument but, in fact, strengthens it, sharpening as it does the ironical ambiguities between the human and the divine.

12 See Luckyj's article in this volume.