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## *Tupyk or Blind-Alley: "Val'dshnepy" of M. Khvyľovyĭ*

Mykola Khvyľovyĭ (pseudonym of M. Fityl'ov) was born in 1893 in the district of Slobozhanshchyna. He was a poet, prosaist, and pamphleteer. In the vast store of poetry written in the twenties his two collections, *Molodist'* (Youth), 1921, and *Dos'vitni symfonii* (Dawn Symphonies), 1922, went unnoticed. Nevertheless, he achieved immediate fame through his first collection of short stories. *Syni etiudy* (Blue Etudes), 1923. A second collection *Osin'* (Autumn), 1924, and the unfinished novel *Val'dshnepy* (Woodcocks), 1927, complete his creative prose and establish him as "one of the most outstanding writers of the proletarian age."<sup>1</sup> Khvyľovyĭ rose to fame and notoriety however, mostly because of his pamphlets *Kamo hriadeshy?* (Whither Art Thou Going?), 1925, *Dumky proty techii* (Thoughts against the Current), 1926, *Apohety pysaryzmu* (The Apologists of Scribbling), 1926 *Ukraina chy Malorosĭia?* (Ukraine or Little Russian?), 1927. Apart from his writing career, Khvyľovyĭ founded and ideologically inspired the organization VAPLITE (Vil'na Akademiia Proletars'koiĭ Literatury — The Free Academy of Proletarian Literature), the journal *Literaturnyi iarmarok* (Literary Market), and the movement *Prolitfront* (Proletars'kyi literaturnyi front — The Proletarian Literary Front).

Khvyľovyĭ was a communist by conviction, and hailed the Revolution in the Ukraine not only as a social, but also as a national, liberation. Communism for him was a set of social and economic beliefs which did not deny or interfere with his nationalistic aspirations. He was and remained a Ukrainian despite his communist views. Unfortunately, Khvyľovyĭ soon realized that the (CPB) was incapable of establishing the Ukraine as an autonomous communist state in federation with Russia. The Party was in the hands of va-

1. Ol. Doroshkevych, *Pidruchnyk istorii ukraiĭns'koiĭ literatury* (Kiev, 1927), p. 304. All translations of Ukrainian texts are my own — D.S.

rious "—Enky" who hastened to hail Lenin as the new Tsar and whose opportunism led the Ukraine back under the cultural and political domination of Moscow.<sup>2</sup> Thus disillusioned by the results of the Revolution in the Ukraine and by its Communist Party, Khvylovyi was faced with the dilemma of reconciling his double self: the Ukrainian and the Communist. Theoretically the two could be united into one, but in practice Khvylovyi realized that the former precluded the latter and vice versa. Since Ukrainization—initiated to stem the Russification of the proletariat and to establish Ukrainian as the administrative and literary language in the Ukraine—was also falling, Khvylovyi saw that there was only one radical way to reconcile and unite the Ukrainian and the Communist: the Ukraine had to break away from Moscow at all costs, if not politically, then at least culturally.<sup>3</sup> It is at this "Titoist" stage of his political thinking that he wrote his last creative work, the unfinished novel *Val'dsh-nepy*.

2. George S. N. Luckyj, "Introduction," in Mykola Khvylovy, *Stories from the Ukraine*, trans. by George S. N. Luckyj (New York, 1960), p. 3, "In Khvylovy's view what hindered the fullest revolutionary process in the Ukraine was the activity and the mentality of the new proletarian philistines. They were the opportunists who regarded the revolution as a mere change of government and hastened to hang Lenin's picture instead of that of the tsar's." For a further elucidation of Khvylovy's disenchantment with the Revolution see also George S. N. Luckyj, *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934* (New York, 1956), pp. 112-115. Khvylovy's "disillusionment" was also noted by his contemporary critics. The best example of this is given by the Party spokesman, A. Khvyliia, who in his *Vid ukhylu u prirvu* (Khar'kiv, 1928) wrote the following: "... he [Khvylovyi] acknowledged that the Revolution... has found herself in a blind alley, that the Party has become a group of Pharisees, that there is no hope, and therefore, the only watchword should be to educate, in the spirit of Ukrainian nationalism, young men who will lead the Ukraine to her national regeneration." As quoted by Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, p. 83.

3. Mykola Khvylovyi. "Apolohety pysaryzmu," *Rozstriliane vidrozhennia*, ed. by Iurii Lavrinenko (Paris, 1959), pp. 827-828. "In a word, Union remains only a Union and the Ukraine is a separate entity... Is Russia an independent country? Independent! Then we too are independent. Therefore, since our literature is about to follow an independent path of development, since we have before us a question: on which one of the world literatures shall our literature chart its course? In any case not on the Russian one. This is definite and without any conditions... Ukrainian poetry [literature] has to depart from Russian literature and its style as soon as possible." These and similar views which Khvylovyi expressed in his other pamphlets prompted a response from no less an authority than Stalin himself. In the now famous letter to Lazar Kaganovich written on April 26, 1926, Stalin said: "... such a movement [away from Russian culture]... may assume in places the character of a struggle for the alienation of Ukrainian culture from the all-Soviet culture, a struggle against "Moscow", against the Russians, against the Russian culture to mention greatest achievement, Leninism, altogether... I should only like to mention that even some Ukrainian Communists are not free from such defects. I have in mind that well known article by the noted Communist, Khvylovyi, in the Ukrainian press. Khvylovyi's demands that the proletariat in the Ukraine be immediately de-Russified, his belief that 'Ukrainian poetry should keep as far as possible from Russian literature and style,' his pronouncement that 'proletarian ideas are familiar to us without the help of Russian art,' his passionate belief in some messianic role for the young Ukrainian intelligentsia, his ridiculous and non-Marxist attempt to divorce culture from politics—all this and much more in the mouth of this Ukrainian Communist sounds (and cannot sound otherwise) more than strange." As quoted by Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, p. 67. The letter appeared for the first time in its entire form in 1948, I. V. Stalin, *Sochineniia*, VIII, pp. 149-54.

*Val'dshnepy* was written while Khvył'ovyi was spending a summer among the German colonists near Kherson<sup>4</sup> and the first instalment of the novel appeared in the fifth issue of the journal *Vaplite* in 1927. The second instalment appeared in the sixth issue of the same magazine; however, that issue was confiscated by the Soviet authorities before it reached print. There are rumours that some copies of *Vaplite* No. 6 were smuggled out in time and were circulated in manuscript form among students. Be that as it may, this rumour is substantiated by the fact that Khvył'ovyi's attackers cited parts of the second instalment in their polemic against him. The attack led Khvył'ovyi to a public recantation and persuaded him to destroy whatever manuscripts he had of the work and to abandon it altogether. The first part of the novel was republished in book form in Salzburg in 1946. It is this extant part of *Val'dshnepy* which is the subject of this paper.

Judging from the first part of the novel and from the scraps of information about the rest,<sup>5</sup> one may safely claim that Ukrainian literature suffered a great loss in having the work destroyed. Although working with only part of a novel is, at best, difficult, one can see in the extant edition that *Val'dshnepy* was a work full of complex, shaded, and allegorical meanings. Partially this is due to the aesopism of Ukrainian literature of the time and partially this can be ascribed to Khvył'ovyi's own peculiar style.

The experimental style of Khvył'ovyi's early prose, vibrant, flip-pant and always effervescent, which can be labeled as stenographic or telegraphic prose, can still be felt in *Val'dshnepy*. Although somewhat subdued, although the sentences are now more complete and flow more smoothly, the prose of *Val'dshnepy* is still vibrant and energetic. It can be best compared to Burgundy Champagne in the way it flows — rich and bubbling, full of sparkle. This comparison may perhaps be too poetic, but it nonetheless best characterizes Khvył'ovyi's opaque ornamentation.

In this Khvył'ovyi is the direct descendant of Gogol. Like Gogol, he enhances the lightness and the vivacity of his prose by the special type of language that he uses. The peculiar quality of the Gogolian vocabulary, full of bad Russian and Ukrainianisms, had made him famous. The same can be said of Khvył'ovyi. He was not afraid to use Russian words (*val'dshnep* instead of the Ukrainian *valiushen'* or *slukva*, *iacheika* instead of the Ukrainian *klityna*), French words, phrases, and even sentences, or old and very rare Ukrainian words (*zherdelia* for *abrykosa*), when he thought that such usage would en-

4. Arkadii Liubchenko, "Spohady pro Khvył'ovoho," *Lehkosynia dal': Vapli-tians'kyi zbirnyk* ed. by Iuri Luts'kyi (New York, 1963,) p. 12.

5. Iur. D. [Dyvnych], "Roman, shcho isnuie lyshe v lehendi," [The afterword to M. Khvył'ovyi, *Val'dshnepy* (Salzburg, 1946), pp. i-viii], expresses the same idea as to the development of the novel.

hance the ornamentalism of his prose or greatly contribute to the plasticity of his characters. Perhaps these words would do neither, but would only add sparkle to his prose — this was sufficient reason. For Khvyl'ovyi words were like flowers. He loved them for their beauty and their smell. As Iurii Sherekh has pointed out:

Khvyl'ovyi loved the smell of words... He braided them into arabesques and designs, deployed them into mournful processions, and ordered them into choreographic groups. At times Ukrainian words were insufficient; he wanted greater contrasts and more intoxicating bouquets of fragrances so he turned to French and Russian words.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, Khvyl'ovyi loved to embellish his prose with many and various literary allusions. Thus in *Va'dsnepy* Khvyl'ovyi casually refers to François Villon, Gustave Flaubert, Nikolai Gogol, Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi and Fedor Dostoevskii. These references are not merely name-dropping on his part; every author mentioned is there for a specific reason. Khvyl'ovyi names each author as a means of evoking a certain situation or characterization. That is, by naming a certain author, work, or character, Khvyl'ovyi forces the reader to draw the necessary analogy. This provides him with an otherwise impossible laconism. One picture is worth a thousand words; an allusion to one author is worth many paragraphs of description. Thus in a few sentences, using this technique, Khvyl'ovyi manages to give his readers a very specific image of the world in which his two heroes Ahlaia and Dmytrii live:

...Ahlaia kept assuring Dmytrii that here it smells of Flaubert and even of old-French life... Karamazov, of course, knows the poet Villon?... And then he can't dislike the fantastic elements of Gogol. Ahlaia is certain that one can superbly stylize our time.<sup>7</sup>

What has Khvyl'ovyi managed to convey to his readers in these few lines? For one, by invoking the "smell" of Flaubert, Khvyl'ovyi suggests to the reader the world of *Madame Bovary* and *L'Éducation sentimentale* where in both cases a life of bourgeois boredom leads the hero (Emma Bovary in one and Frédéric Moreau in the

6. Iurii Sherekh, "Khvyl'ovyi bez polityky," *Ne dlia ditei* (New York, 1964), p. 55.

7. Mykola Khvyl'ovyi, *Va'dshnepy* (Salzburg, 1946), p. 30. Henceforth, all references to this work will be given in the text as *Va'd.*, followed by the proper page number.

other) to a search for an escape in amorous adventures which result in a physical (for Emma) and a spiritual (for Frédéric) suicide. In the same way a secondary meaning reveals itself in the rhetorical question that Ahlaia poses about Dmytrii's knowledge of Villon. For it is Villon who "has revealed a life never questioning itself, and yet aware of everything, of God and immortality, of vice and death."<sup>8</sup> The contradiction between the spiritual sterility of Flaubert's heroes and the spiritual perception of Villon is the dichotomy between the world of Gogol's stories and Gogol himself, producing the fantastic elements in his creations. Thus is explained Ahlaia's second rhetorical question. And she is convinced that one can superbly "stylize" their time, for she has just done so by the three literary allusions in the quotation.

In another instance Khvylo'vyi gives one of his minor characters a breadth, a dimension, a past life and history—all by just one precise reference to a given literary work. In describing Dmytrii's maid Odarka, Khvyl'ovyi writes:

She reminded Dmytrii of the known cook from the no less known *Smikh* [Laughter], and when she stared at him in silence, he always felt awkward.... She was very silent and from her the Karamazovs heard only the short: 'at your service.' (*Val'd.*, p. 8).

One really cannot know much about this cook Odarka from what Khvyl'ovyi gave above, were it not for the fact that he directed the reader to the short story of Mykhailo Kotsiubyn'kyi, *Smikh*. Knowing this story the reader sees before him the cook Varvara such a "fabulous servant... quiet, reasonable, friendly,"<sup>9</sup> who works for four years at three *karbovantsi* per month. It is she who willingly submits to the outrageous exploitation and inhuman conditions of her life. Silent and obedient, even when outside the home of her "employers," the infuriated mass of exploited people rages and wants to kill people like her masters. She manages to give out but one hysterical laugh at this "just retribution" but then quickly burns out and remains the ever-true servant and slave. Dmytrii hates her passionately. He hates her for the same reasons that he hates his wife Hanna:

...I hate her because she is quiet and gentle, because she has gentle eyes, because she has no will, because, finally, she is incapable of killing a human being. (*Val'd.*, p. 15).

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8. Renato Poggioli, *The poets of Russia 1890-1930* (Cambridge, Mass, 1960), 1960), p. 217.

9. Mykhailo Kotsiubyn's'kyi "Smikh," *Tvory* (New York 1955), II, p. 174.

Why Dmytrii Karamazov feels this way is a question which can be answered only by an analysis of his character. But here one must mention the greatest of all the literary allusions in *Val'dshnepy* and that is the allusion to Dostoevskii. The two main characters in Khvyl'ovyi's novel, Ahlaia and Dmytrii Karamazov, are both from the novels of Dostoevskii. In the light of the significance of the other literary references this borrowing is of cardinal importance for the understanding of the characters of the two heroes and for the understanding of the work itself.

Khvyl'ovyi wanted his readers to realize the direct connection between his heroes on those of Dostoevskii. He pointed this out quite clearly in the novel. Already on the second page he writes

*Brothers Karamazov* he [Kakasyk the owner of a soft drink bar was asked whether he knew Mr. and Mrs. Karamozov], one can say, read, but it never crossed his mind that these brothers (or one brother) could visit his remote country. (*Val'd*, p. 4).

and a little later in the novel, Dmytrii himself reminds the readers of his literary ties:

It seems that my "relative" [on familets'], Alesha Karamazov placed the stress somehow on the love for the distant ones. (*Vald's*, p. 43).

Although no such specific references are made about Ahlaia's literary origins, the uniqueness of her name and certain traits of character coupled with the fact that she admits to being a native of Moscow, strongly imply that she is indeed the Aglaia from Dostoevskii's *The Idiot*. Khvyl'ovyi "borrowed" his character from Dostoevskii for the same reasons which prompted him to link Odarka with Kotsiubyns'kyi's Varvara. He wanted to give a depth, a life, to his characters and yet to be as economical as possible, for a character study was not the prime reason for his novel. Khvyl'ovyi's keen eyes saw the inherent similarities between the characters which he had in mind and the two characters of Dostoevskii. He provided them with a necessary background simply by giving his characters the same names that Dostoevskii had given his.

On the whole, however, Ahlaia is somewhat clouded in mystery. Perhaps Khvyl'ovyi did not want his readers to identify her totally with Dostoevskii's Aglaia. One cannot, however, agree with G. N. S. Luckyj when he claims that "unlike her namesake in Dostoevskii's *The Idiot*, she is a kind of Ukrainian Jeanne d'Arc."<sup>18</sup>

10. Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, p. 115.

She is indeed very much like her namesake in character and her role as the Ukrainian Jeanne d'Arc is only *one* possible interpretation. The very mystery which shrouds Ahlaia is the same which envelops Aglaia. Dostoevskii heroine is a constant mystery. Prince Myshkin, who has an uncanny perception, refuses, or is unable, to pierce Aglaia's secret. By looking at the faces of her sister and her mother, Myshkin is able to perceive the essence of their character. When it comes to Aglaia, he says:

You're so pretty that one is afraid to look at you... It is difficult to pass judgement on beauty. I'm afraid I am not ready yet. Beauty is a riddle.<sup>11</sup>

A riddle she remains throughout the work. One knows that she is beautiful, erratic, at times uncomfortably frank in her expressions, self-willed, capricious, insolent, and unpredictable. The best summation of her character is given in the final episode from her life:

...after a brief and extraordinary attachment to an émigré Polish count, she had suddenly married him against the wishes of her parents, who had only given their consent at last because the affair might have ended in a terrible scandal.

It turned out that the count was not a count at all, and if he really were an émigré, it was because of some dark and dubious affair in the past... even before [Aglaia] married him she became a member of some committee abroad for the restoration of Poland, and, furthermore, had found herself in a Catholic confessional of some famous priest who gained an ascendancy over her mind to quite a fanatical degree.<sup>12</sup>

Almost the same type of inconclusive information is given about Ahlaia. The only major difference between the two is that Dostoevskii's heroine has a maiden name Epanchyna, is a native of St. Petersburg, and has a family. Khvyl'ovyi's Ahlaia, on the other hand, is a native of Moscow, an orphan, and although it is hinted that her origin, like Epanchyna's, is to be found in some cultured petty gentry, no maiden name is given (*Val'd.*, p. 88). In all other respects the two heroines coincide. Ahlaia is presented as extremely beautiful; she is characterized as a capricious and stubborn" girl (*Val'd.*, p. 72),

11. F. Dostoevsky, *The Idiot*, trans. by David Magarshack (London, 1958), p. 105. For the original text cf. F. M. Dostoevskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v desiatykh tomakh*, VI: *Idiot* (Moscow, 1957), p. 89.

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 659-660; Dostoevskii, p. 695.

who claims that "by nature I was called to a boiling activity, and I want to create life." (*Val'd.*, p. 82). She is no less embarrassingly frank than her counterpart. A typical instance where her outspokenness literally shocks is at the time when she meets Dmytrii's wife from whom Dmytrii has withheld the exact nature of his relationship with Ahlaia. Although Dmytrii tries to hide the intimate nature of their affair by addressing Ahlaia in the formal you (*Vy*) she purposefully unmasks him by referring to him by the intimate you (*ty*) (*Val'd.*, p. 73). When the question of whether they all should have a drink arises, she blurts out, "Why not drink? Did you yourself not suggest to me a drinking party?" (*Val'd.*, p. 76) — and thus unmasks his secret desire to have a drunken orgy with her, without his wife's knowledge, of course. Ahlaia Epanchyna quite similarly embarrassed Myshkin throughout *The Idiot*.

An even stronger analogy between the two heroines is found in the fact that Ahlaia Epanchyna, at least in the eyes of Dostoevskii, by her marriage to the Polish count and by her falling into the hands of Roman Catholicism, had betrayed Russia, where she, with her restless soul, could find no purpose or mission in life. These she found both in her work for the restoration of Poland and in Catholicism which is far more aggressive than her original Orthodoxy. This Ahlaia, this traitoress, is the type that Khvylovyyi needed for his novel. Epanchyna betrayed Russia for Poland, Ahlaia betrays her for the Ukraine; the former was captivated by Catholicism, the latter by the Ukrainian cultural revival. The reasons for both are the same, for as Ahlaia explains:

And why not suppose that I was suffocating in my country? ... In such instances one can even become a Kirghiz ... if in Kirghizia there is an air-hole. (*Val'd.*, p. 118.)

In the same way, Khvylovyyi needed the Dmitrii Karamazov type for his novel. Dostoevskii's Dmitrii (Mitia) Karamazov, however, is two types in one, and Khvylovyyi used both for his own Dmytrii (Dimi). Unlike his brothers, the saintly Alesha and the Mephistophelean intellectual Ivan, Mitia appears as an enigmatic and a dual figure. On the one hand he is the affable child and the other the passionate man, torn between hate and love, honor and moral cowardice. As R. L. Jackson pointed out:

What Dostoevskij attempts in the *Brothers Karamazov* is to realize in the figure of Dmitrii this awakening from sensuous slumber, to realize at the very least the transition from naive, and therefore tragic,,



Schilleresque humanism (as we find it in Dmitrij) to a condition of mature self-consciousness.<sup>13</sup>

Khvyl'ovyi's Dimi is both the typical Ukrainian and the new man of the Ukrainian renaissance. The first, like Mitia the child, is naive, good hearted, easily excitable, and at the same time rather a bunderhead. For, as Dimi recommends himself at his first meeting with Ahlaia after she had called him an awkward bear. "[My] whole nation is somewhat boorish." (*Val'd.*, p. 7). This Dimi is the not too educated officer Mitia, and Ahlaia tells him as much with her characteristic frankness:

...You, Dmytrii Karamazov, are a dreadful ignoramus. In a word, you, Dmytrii Karamazov, are a premature baby of the thirties... (*Val'd.*, p. 98).

Finally this Dimi, this incomplete, premature man, is the Mitia whom Alesha considered capable of being ruled by a woman:

For only Dmitry could (though perhaps after a long time) submit to her at last "For his own happiness..."<sup>14</sup>

Katerina Ivanovna's belief, which Alesha paraphrased in the quotation above, that this submission was for Mitia's "own good" is the same belief that Ahlaia has when she claims that Dimi needs her as a pastor to guide him "for his own good."

At the same time, Mitia can be quite the opposite, as the prosecutor at the trial points out:

Because we possess broad, unrestrained natures, Karamazov natures — ... capable of accommodating all sorts of extremes and contemplating at one and the same time the two abysses—the abyss above us, the abyss of the highest ideals, and the abyss below us, the abyss of the lowest and most malodorous degradation.<sup>15</sup>

or as the attorney for the defense formulates it:

Karamazov is just such a two-sided nature, a nature balancing himself precariously between two abysses,

13. R. L. Jackson, "Dmitrij Karamazov and the 'Legend'," *Slavic and East European Journal*, N.S. 9 (1965), p. 263.

14. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. by David Magarshack (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1960. I, p. 217; Dostoevskii, IX, p. 234.

15. *Ibid.*, II, p. 824; Dostoevskii, X, p. 243.

one that when driven by the most uncontrollable craving for dissipation can pull itself up if something happened to strike it on the other side.<sup>16</sup>

This is the Mitia who would have killed his father, but did not; this is the Dimi who could kill a man but cannot hate his neighbors, for he sees in the face of each the Mother of God. The second type of Dimi is the one who ultimately captures Ahlaia's fancy, who is the new man of the renaissance, who in the name of "ideals went to his death and would have gone to a thousand deaths." (*Val'd.*, p. 114). Both Dimi, the new man of the Ukrainian renaissance, and Mitia after the trial, are aflame with a new ideal. The first is consumed with the love for the idea of a reborn nation; the second accepts as his creed the image of man reborn through suffering, which Alesha asks him never to forget. Both authors use this second type of their heroes because of this Faustian striving in their natures. R. L. Jackson is quite right when he claims that:

What is important for Dostoevskij—in matters of ethical judgement—is that man never lose sight of the ideal, the good, the beautiful. Dmitrii can look simultaneously into two abysses. What is crucial for Dostoevskij is that this moral breadth evokes horror in Dimitrii. The cardinal sin in Dostoevskij's world is inertia... Dostoevskij does not condemn man because he has evil in him (man *must* experience evil): he condemns indifference to evil, the absence of the ideal, that is, moral stagnation, inertia.<sup>17</sup>

How close Khvyl'ovyi stood to this attitude of Dostoevskii's can be readily seen from the following quotation:

Our motto—reveal the duality of the man of our time, show your real "I"... if you are a revolutionary, then you will more than once split your "I". But if you are a Philistine [like Hanna, the wife; or Odarka, the cook] and serve, let us say, in some department, then no matter that objectively you have a tendency to be the king of nature, subjectively you are a Gogolian hero.<sup>18</sup>

Without the "splitting of one's I," without searching for the ideal, one returns to the first type of Dimi and Mitia, to the countless Karama-

16. *Ibid.*, p. 864; Dostoevskii, p. 286.

17. Jackson, p. 264.

18. M. Khvyl'ovyi, "Kamo hriadesy?," *Rozstriliane vidrozhennia*, ed. by Iurii Lavrinenko (Paris, 1959), pp. 806-807.

zovs, to that frightening moral inertia which Dimi hates so much in Hanna and in Odarka.

Corresponding to Khvyl'ovyi's two sided Dimi is a two-fold meaning of the novel *Val'dshnepy*. Both planes essentially reveal the dual nature of Khvyl'ovyi as an artist: "the romantic and the satirist."<sup>19</sup> Thus the first interpretation of the novel can be called an allegory of disillusion, where *Val'dsnepy* is no more than a satire on Khvyl'ovyi's own hopes for a favorable solution to the problem: "Ukraine or Little Russia?" The first hint that *Val'dsnepy* is a satire comes from the belief itself. Why *Val'dsnepy*? What relevance does the title have to the work? What or whom does it refer to? Khvyl'ovyi certainly had to have a reason to call his work by that unusual title. There is one possible explanation. It lies in the woodcock as a species. Woodcocks are very easily caught. So easily that in English the word "woodcock" has a secondary meaning: "a gullible fool." Although it is doubtful that Khvyl'ovyi knew of this English double meaning, he certainly knew the nature of the bird, the name of which he was using for his title.

The emphasis here is on the childlike and naive Dimi, on the one who comes from a nation of "muddleheads," on the oafish, bearlike, "dreadful ignoramus." In this instance Dimi is no better than the other Philistines in the novel, his wife Hanna, the symbol of the new bureaucracy, and the silent Odarka, the ever enduring mass of people. The only thing which differentiates Dimi from them is that he does have in him this streak of the other type Dimi. In short, he does fall in love with ideals. Yet, unfortunately, as the title reveals, he is a woodcock; he can very easily be snared. He had been snared by the ideal Revolution, which turned out to be a Russian sham. He is about to be snared again by the captivating idea of the rebirth of his nation. But who is the one who entices him with this idea? None other than the beautiful Russian Ahlaia. She wants to be his shepherd. One immediately recalls Khvyl'ovyi's own statement that "without a Russian conductor our culturist cannot think himself out."<sup>20</sup> Compare this to Ahlaia's:

These Karamozovs forgot that they are Karamazenny [N. B. The change from Russian—ov to the Ukrainian—enko], that they need a shepherd. They (often intelligent and gifted) are not capable of being creators and formulators of new ideologies, because they lack a wide individual initiative and even the proper terms to establish a program of their new world outlook. [Notice the subtle insinuations: if they are—enky (Ukrainians) they need a shepherd. They

19. Liubchenko, p. 19.

20. M. Khvyl'ovyi, "Dumski proty techii," *Rozstriliane vidrodzhennia*, p. 816.

lack "proper terms", i. e., the Ukrainian language is too poor and underdeveloped to be used to express everything—an old argument of Russian chauvinists from Belinskii onwards, therefore they, they-enky, need a Russian to guide them, etc.] (*Val'd.*, p. 116).

Khvyl'ovyi had an uncanny ability to fortell the future.<sup>21</sup> Was this another of his predictions? Was he satirizing his own dearest hopes to show his contemporaries that Ukrainization was just one more snare for the woodcock, that all the Ahlaias (the Kaganoviches learning Ukrainian), no matter how favorably they seem disposed toward the Ukrainian revival, deep down are still Russians? Was Khvyl'ovyi warning his contemporaries to beware of the Russian Ahlaias no matter how sincere they sound? Was he, in the final analysis, only repeating his plea: "Away from Moscow!"? V. Iurynets' seems to suggest something of the kind:

He [Khvyl'ovyi] is the expression of disbelief that we will succeed, with our materials, and first of all our human resources, in attaining the socialist ideal.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, this seem to be the way that A. Khvyliia understood *Val'dsnepy* for he attacked Khvyl'ovyi in his article "Vid ukhylu—u prirvu" (From Deviation Into a Precipice) for having developed "in artistic form all those political mistakes that... [Khvy'ovqi]... made in... [the] unpublished article Ukraine or Little Russia."<sup>23</sup>

The fact that the novel is but a fragment of the intended whole does not allow more than a speculation on whether this satire of self-belief is what Khvyl'ovyi really had in mind. Moreover, the other level of understanding, the one which may be called the romantic view, is just as plausible, although perhaps too literal. The interpretation of Odarka and Hanna does not change, but on this level the emphasis is on the second type, the redeeming aspect, of Dimi. Karamazov is seen as an oppositional force in Ukrainian Communism. Ahlaia represents the young, actively creative force of the Ukrainian cultural renaissance, who is trying to lead Dimi out of the grey marasmus of the unsuccessful Revolution, in short, out of the hands of Hanna. This theory is suggested by Iruui Dyvnyich in the afterword to the novel.<sup>24</sup>

21. Liubchenko, p. 15.

22. V. Iurynets', [no title], *Desia' rokiv ukrains'koi literatury 1917-1927*, ed. by A. Leites and M. Tashch (Kar'kiv, 1928), I, p. 527

23. M. Khvyl'ovyi, "Lyst do redaktsii 'Komunist'," *Desia' rokiv ukrains'koi literatury*, II, p. 209. In his own defense Khvyl'ovyi quoted Khyvyliia's attack. The latter's article was unavailable to me.

24. Iur. D. [Dyvnyich], p. iii.

A variation on this approach, and a sound one, was suggested by Khvyl'ovyi's contemporary, M. O. Skrypnyk:

Khvyl'ovyi in his work, *Val'dshnepy*, reveals himself with two faces: that of Karamazov and Ahlaia.<sup>25</sup>

The fact that Khvyl'ovyi saw himself in the role of Dimi is substantiated by the fact that many of Dimi's ideas are the same as those Khvyl'ovyi expressed in his own pamphlets. An interesting touch is provided by the fact that both Khvyl'ovyi and Dimi in moments of anguish knocked their head against the wall.<sup>26</sup>

That Dimi and Ahlaia are both just two faces of one is also supported by a statement she makes to Dimi: "[referring to herself] Here sits your antipode." (*Val'd.*, p. 81). If Skrypnyk is right and *Val'dshnepy* represents the splitting of Khvyl'ovyi's "I", then Ahlaia is the incarnation of his most cherished dreams. She also is his daemon, goading him on, and promising to lead him to his goal.

Whatever the interpretation, the basic problem for Khvyl'ovyi, the *tupyk* in which his hero finds himself, is still the same. This blind-alley is so well understood by Ahlaia when she explains Dimi's dilemma:

...There is no exit. One cannot tear the ties with one party, because this is not only a betrayal of the party but also of those social ideals, for which they so romantically went to their death; finally it will be a betrayal of self. But neither cannot one tear those ties. In a word, they stopped on some idiotic crossroad. (*Val'd.*, p. 115).

Finally Khvyl'ovyi realized that whether Ahlaia was a Russian enticing him with a new snare, whether she was the new creative force of the nation, or whether she was a figment of his own imagination, his daemon, his hoping self, made no difference. He realized that no matter which way he turned, there was always the blind-alley, that no matter what he did, he was still a woodcock. Being a Communist and a Ukrainian at one and the same time was irreconcilable. The only possible escape from his blind-alley was a bullet in the head on May 3, 1933. The Woodcock was caught for the last time.

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25. M. O. Skrypnyk, "Nasha literaturna diisnist", *Desiat' rokiv ukraiins'koi literatury*, II, p. 227.

26. Liubchenko, p. 20; *Val'd.*, p. 12.