

IRENA R. MAKARYK

Ophelia as Poet: Lesja Ukraïka and the Woman as Artist

While the poetry and drama of Lesja Ukraïka (pseudonym of Larysa Kosáč-Kvitka, 1871-1913) frequently stress the heroic — and this is the note which has been most constantly sounded by critics — its counterpoint, the tragic silence and opposition which meet women's voices, is of equal significance to her work. Indeed, without this counterpoint, her work might seem naively optimistic or bombastically heroic. Her oeuvre often focuses on the complexities of crisis: her figures are torn between systems, possibilities, roles, desires. The last plot she began to formulate as she lay close to death was the story of an Arab woman who, partly Westernized, is forced to live out her life in an Oriental, and now partly foreign, environment. Throughout her works, Ukraïka examined a great variety of themes set in as many various historical periods; in all but a few women occupy her full attention.

Most frequently lauded by critics for introducing Western themes and forms into Ukrainian literature, Ukraïka "translated" the power of these texts by focussing not necessarily on what she admired most, but on what troubled her most. For Ukraïka, this meant linking three issues of great concern to her — gender politics, the position of the artist in society, and (more obliquely) the oppression of Ukrainian culture — with special "readings" of *Hamlet*.

Ukraïka uses *Hamlet* throughout much of her creative career as a touchstone to examine her poetic calling, a calling often at odds with direct political activity. *Hamlet* thus becomes a palimpsest against which her works play, frequently recoiling from their source, melding with others, occasionally in harmony with it. *Hamlet*, part hysteric (as Freud argued), and part woman (as Goethe claimed), enamoured of words, rather than deeds, weak and passive in the interpretation of many nineteenth-century critics (such as Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb), seems to be a "natural" tragic hero with whom a female poet could identify. But it is not exclusively *Hamlet* himself, the poetic intellectual, with whom Ukraïka identifies. In Ukraïka's reading, the poet is also, and more especially, Ophelia: the woman who is abandoned, destroyed, maddened, and who sings to her death. Linked in Ukraïka's imagination to Sappho, but also to a number of other literary figures (including Juliet and Lady Macbeth),

Ukraïнка's Ophelia is much more than a delicate, pathetic figure of secondary importance; she becomes the focus of interest. Complexly allusive, this Ophelia gathers up the image of troubled artist, sensuous beloved, betrayed lover, and madwoman; she is "The lunatic, the lover, and the poet/... of imagination all compact" (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 5.1.7-8).

Ukraïнка's poetic personas and her dramatic heroines, many of them madwomen, prophetesses and artists, have much in common with the views of late twentieth-century feminist theorists. To "speak otherwise" is in the nature of their roles. And, also in the nature of things, is the firm opposition, violence, betrayal or silence which meet these women. The additional and very real variable, the silence imposed not just upon women but upon all late nineteenth-century Ukrainians, needs also to be taken into account.¹ Ukraïнка's poetic personas and her dramatic heroines must be read against this political background. Her figures are triply excluded from sources of power: as women in a male-dominated society, as "abnormal" artists in a "sane" society — even when they masquerade as Greeks or Hebrews — and as Ukrainians in an Imperial Russian-ruled country.

The course of Ukraïнка's creative work indicates a clear awareness of this complex exclusion; it is revealed in the tragic duality of her characters, both in the poetry and in the drama; characters who recognize themselves as mere voices in the wilderness, who cannot but *must* speak, write, create. In the struggle of poesis against praxis, creative endeavours against social action, an alternative position consistently surfaces — women's traditional silence and the peace and apparent freedom of oblivion. If not indicative of her deep-seated doubts about the role of woman as artist, then the constant return to these questions throughout her literary career suggest at the very least her awareness of the complexity and difficulty of such a role.

1 The political context of Ukraïнка's works will not be the focus of this paper, although it forms a very important element of the way that foreign texts could be implemented in Ukrainian literature (Ukrainian literature created in central and eastern Ukraine, which came under Imperial Russian rule). For example, the Tsarist Ukases of 1863, 1876, and 1881 prohibited the performance of all Ukrainian works, including foreign plays in Ukrainian translations. As Roman Solchanyk points out, the most draconian of these was the Ems Ukase of 1876 which was "introduced secretly through the censorship committees of the government bureaucracy" (1977, 225). It was virtually unknown outside Ukraine (for the full text of the Ukase cf. Solchanyk [1976]). Contemporary attempts to inform the European world of its severe measures are discussed by Solchanyk (1977). The specific consequences for Ukrainian theatre are studied by Valerian Revutsky who writes of a "state of fear" in Kiev, and of a total paralysis of the arts. The harsh censorship lasted nearly ten years and affected not only the language but also the contents and genre of plays (for example, no satiric or romantic plays were permitted). Not officially revoked until 1906, the Ukase was, for all intents and purposes, still in practical use until the Soviet period, since Ukrainian plays needed to be granted a license for performance. Many were not.

The fate of the artist is one of Ukraïнка's life-long concerns, a concern which is perhaps most obviously expressed in her lyric poetry. It is here, in her derivative juvenalia, that the images of Ophelia and Sappho are first fused. The romantic poetry of Heinrich Heine, whom she also extensively translated in her youth, is everywhere apparent in her work of the 1880s. "Sappho" (1884), the first of many poems which deal with Ukraïнка's struggling ideas about the woman as poet, as creator, bard, or prophetess, was written when she was thirteen.²

Леся Українка

Сафо

Над хвилями моря, на скелі,
Хороша дівчина сидить,
В лафровім вінку вона сяє,
Співецьку юліру держить.

До пісні своєї сумно і
На лірі вона пригравє.
І з піснею тою — у серці
Велика їй туга встєє:

В тій пісні згадала і славу
Величню свою, красний світ,
Лукавих людей, і кохання,
І зраду, печаль своїх літ.

Надії і розпач... Дівчина
Зірвала лафровий вінець
І в хвилях шумливого моря
Знайшла свою і пісню кінєць.
(Твори I, 46)

Above the sea, on the cliffs,
A beautiful girl sits,
She is radiant in a laurel wreath,
Holding a singer's lyre.

To her sad song
She plays accompaniment.
And with that song in her heart
Her great longing arises:

In that song she mentions both her glory
Great, and the beautiful world,
Evil people, and love,
And betrayal, the sorrowful passion of her years,

Hopes and despair.... The girl
Tore off her laurel wreath
And in the waves of the foamy sea
Found an end to her song.

In this poem, Ukraïнка is able to delineate, however crudely, the basic outlines of her conflict. While clearly as much a product of her teenaged years as it is the fruit of Romanticism, this four-stanza lyric already makes a number of important connections which Ukraïнка will continue to explore throughout her career. The Sappho about whom she writes is (as Ukraïнка was to become), an acknowledged and successful creator (she is both crowned with laurels and sings of her own fame and glory); she has experienced love, but has suffered and been betrayed. The sudden shift in tense, from present to past, in the last stanza seems intended to shock the reader, as does the final word in the Ukrainian

2 All of the translations in this article are the author's except where noted. They are meant to be serviceable rather than poetic renderings of Ukraïнка's works. For more poetic (but, for my purposes, less accurate) translations of "Angel of Revenge" and "The Forgotten Shadow," see Ukraïнка's *Spirit of Flame: A Collection of the Works of Lesja Ukraïнка*. For "Adagio Penserioso," see her *Hope: Selected Poetry*. There are no translations extant of "Sappho," "A Woman's Portrait," and "To Be or Not to Be?"

original: *kinets'* — end. The romantic reverie of the first three stanzas is thus dramatically overturned by unexpected death, as the poet-singer is spurred to her death by her own poetic creations which bring to her mind past injustices.

According to legend and literary tradition (including Ovid's *Heroides*), the great Sappho drowned herself when she was rejected by the beautiful young Phaon. In Ukraïuka's account, Sappho is not an older, much experienced woman rejected by a younger lover, but pointedly a *young* girl betrayed by love; in other words, she is a type of Ophelia: an innocent, full of promise, destroyed before she comes to full flower. (Throughout Ukraïuka's oeuvre "song" and "poetry" are used synonymously; this synonymy further enhances the connections between Ophelia as singer and as poet, and the link between Ophelia and Sappho.)

It is possible to read "Sappho" as Ukraïuka's mere aping of male writers' romanticized versions of the madwoman, for her image of Sappho might be interpreted as coinciding with the "sexual victimization, bereavement, and thrilling emotional extremity" (Showalter 83) of romantic literature as a whole, in which madwomen in particular are transformed into *objets d'art* (Auerbach 282); yet to do so would be to read carelessly and without reference to her work as a whole. That the Sappho theme is more than a romantic influence which Ukraïuka is merely imitating may be confirmed by jumping ahead to 1912 or 1913 (the dating is uncertain), and not long before her death, when Ukraïuka again returned to this theme. Extant is part of the opening scene of an unfinished play entitled "Sappho and Phaon" which centres on the conflict between the calling of the woman-artist (and her need for "exhibitionism" by means of a public dissemination of her work) and the demands of conventional love (which call for retiring behaviour). Phaon sits idly by as Sappho is engaged in writing a poem. Bored and ignored, Phaon urges Sappho to stop writing, at first out of apparent concern for her health: she looks pale. Then, as their loving conversation quickly deteriorates, Phaon moves on to some minor literary criticism of her poem-in-progress. Finally, when it becomes clear that Sappho interrupts rather than abandons her work in order to respond to her lover's comments, Phaon raises the larger, real issue implicit in his earlier remarks: love songs, he remonstrates, should be private, for his ears only, and not trumpeted abroad. In a fit of anger, Sappho sarcastically offers him a piece of embroidery as a more fitting gift than a poem, and then proceeds to destroy her "child" (as she calls the poem, and as the childless Ukraïuka referred to her works), by erasing the wax tablet upon which the poem was being written. What Phaon demands from Sappho, then, is an analogous effacement of self, a betrayal of her poetic gifts. Although Ukraïuka never finished this play, we may speculate, with some confidence, that such a Sappho would commit suicide because of the conflicting demands of love and of art — rather than because of the traditional reason, unrequited love.

The limitations imposed upon the female writer — the particular themes and subjects traditionally approved for women, which stressed modesty, not passion, the domestic, not the public spheres — deeply rankle Ukraïuka. The vocation of writer sharpens this age-old conflict between gender and vocation, freedom of choice and socially-approved role. In this struggle love is not a transcendent force which overcomes all such obstacles, but, rather, is closer to Simone de Beauvoir's dangerous obstacle in the path toward self-fulfillment. For Ukraïuka, women in love consistently lose, and at great cost: their identity and creativity are erased. What is indirectly suggested in the works (discussed below) which fall between the two treatments of Sappho is bluntly stated in her satirical poem "Žinočyj portret" ("A Woman's Portrait," 1906). Here, Ukraïuka bitterly and unequivocally attacks this idea of woman's surrender of self in love.³

Жіночий портрет

You are an honest woman; you don't sell
your beauty and caresses for money,
you don't give insincere kisses
for hapless greed, for luxury.

You are a proud woman; you didn't enter
a little lair, tied by friendly arms;
you took the hardest work for yourself,
silently carrying on for many years.

You are a good woman; you don't have tart words
for those who "fell low,"
even though you yourself suffered through misery,
even though temptation came close to you.

You are a sincere woman. That is why you bow
your head low, when you recall those
who sell themselves; you know how it was
both bitter and sweet for them, having fallen into
slavery.

Because you sold yourself, too. Not for silver
And not for greed, nor for gifts,
but for that caressing warmth,
for dear things and for kisses....

It was the heart's hunger which drove you after
him.

Ти чесна жінка, ти не продаєш
своє: вроди і пестощів за гроші,
неширих поцілунків не даєш
за лакомотво нещасне, за розкоші.

Ти горда жінка, ти не увійшла
в кубельце, зв'язану дружними руками,
найтяжчу працю ти собі взяла,
несеш мовчазно довгими роками.

Ти добра жінка, слів терпких нема
у тебе для таких, що апали низько,
хоч злиди і перетерпіла й сама,
хоч і тобі була спокуса близька.

Ти щира жінка. Тим своє чоло
ти хилиш низько, про таких згадавши,
що продаються, знявеш, як було
ім гірко й солодко, в неволю впавши.

Бо продalasя і ти. Не за срібло
і не за ласощі, не за дарунки,
але за те пестливеє тепло,
за любі речі та за поцілунки...

Се ж голод серця гнав тебе за тим,
у кого в очах діаманти ясні,
чий сміх тобі здавався золотим,
в кучері були, мов гроно ясні.

Не тіло ти, а душу пропала,

3 The idea of the woman's surrender of self as life without a story receives a thorough theoretical treatment in Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's now classic study, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (cf. especially pp. 24-26). Gubar and Gilbert also observe that part of the task of the "angel woman" is to minister to the dying, and she herself is already dead because life without a story is a life of death. These comments are even more appropriate for an understanding of "The Forgotten Shadow," discussed later.

in whose eyes are bright diamonds,
whose laughter seemed golden to you,
whose curls were as abundant as grape clusters.

Not your flesh, but your soul,
your talent and your mind you sold into bondage,
you set it into endless penal servitude, —
and for you it is both bitter and sweet unto pain.
(*Tvorj* I, 370-71)

The repetitive tactic of praise of the "honest," "proud," "good" and "sincere woman" becomes ironic in retrospect, for this woman has also sold herself. By satisfying the famished needs of love (the word "holod" means both famine and hunger), woman becomes slave. The honest woman is thus but a variant of the prostitute. The lives of both types of women tell the same story: "A Woman's Portrait" is Every Woman's Portrait. The same story is also no story, for the woman's individuality is dead, willingly effaced in her weak capitulation to the temptation of man's love.

The poignant sacrifice of woman's personal desires and talents, the "key act" of the angel-woman (Gilbert and Gubar 25), is developed in yet another poem, "Zabuta tin'" ("The Forgotten Shadow," 1898), which takes Dante's wife as its subject. The eternal fame of both Dante and Beatrice, and Dante's transcendent love for a woman he hardly knew — the subjects of the first 34 lines of the poem — are contrasted with the "forgotten shadow," Dante's wife, in the remainder of the poem:

Somewhere, far down in history's depths,
A recollection of her still lives. Who is it?
'Tis Dante's wife! No other name remains
By which she still is known — as though she never
Possessed her own name.
This woman was not a guiding star,
But, like a faithful shadow, followed him
Who was the guide of "wretched Italy".
She shared with him the hard bread of exile,
She kindled the glowing fire upon his hearth
Within a stranger's house. And more than once
His hand, reaching out to seek support,
Was laid upon her assured shoulder;
Dear to her was his singer's fame;
But she did not stretch out her hand
To intercept a single ray;
And when the fire died out in the singer's eyes,
She closed them with her pious hands.
Yes, a faithful shadow! And where is her own life?
Where is her own fate, happiness and sorrow?
History is silent, but in my thoughts I see
The many sorrowful and lonely days
She spent in troubled waiting.

The sleepless nights, as dark as that trouble,
And as long as destitution; I see tears...
And walking on those tears, like pearly dew,
Into the land of fame — the lovely Beatrice!
(*Tvorj* I, 224-25)

Пройшла в країну слави Беатриче!
(*Твори* I, 225)

Beatrice, the lovely Muse who leads Dante to a vision of heaven itself, becomes, in Ukraïna's version, the other woman who obscures for ever the devotion, sorrow, and love of the self-sacrificing, passive wife. As in "A Woman's Portrait," so here Ukraïna looks at the margins of history and literature; Dante's wife is like the other honest women in losing not only her story, but also her name. Whereas literary tradition glorifies Dante's mystical experience, Ukraïna foregrounds the personal sacrifice women have made and have been expected to make. As Shoshana Felman observes, "From her initial family upbringing throughout her subsequent development, the social role assigned to the woman is that of serving an image, authoritative and central, of man: a woman is first and foremost a daughter/a mother/a wife" (2).

Ukraïna's work challenges these socially-constructed roles. In looking for alternate models to emulate, Ukraïna appears to seek an active principle, one attentive to socio-political exigencies. Such "action" seems to preclude or at least question what her vocation demands: words, that traditional woman's weapon. While in some poems, like "Slovo, čom ty ne tverdaja krytsja" ("Words, why aren't you hard steel?" 1896), Ukraïna seeks, and recovers, a forceful role for poetry; in many others doubts remain. "Anhel pomsty" ("Angel of Revenge," 1896) which, together with a number of other works written in the same year, draws from Shakespeare, and focuses on this clash between words and deeds. Part of a cycle of poems entitled "Nevil'nyči pismi" ("Songs of Slavery"), "Angel of Revenge" brings together the nightmarish visions of *Richard III* (Clarence's prophetic dream of "A shadow like angel, with bright hair/Dabbled in blood" 1.4.53-54, and the series of avenging ghosts who visit Richard in his sleep in 5.3.118-176), the ghost scene (1.3.), and Hamlet's "antic" response to Polonius in II.ii.191 from *Hamlet*.

In the secret darkness in the middle of the night
A dubious guest often flies in to visit me;
He arouses terror by his glare and greets me,
His eyes shine brightly like the bloody star of Mars.
The dreadful messenger smiles at me,
I see both love and hatred in that smile:
On his white wings blood blushes,
Just as the evening star's crimson lies on the snow.
He speaks to me words terrible and great,
In his hands blazes a gleaming, flaming sword;
And in my heart, like a warcry,
Wild songs are aroused in me.

АНГЕЛ ПОМСТИ

У темряві таємній серед ночі
До мене часто гості неспівані приліта,
Він поглядом жахає і віта,
Мов зірка Марс крилаве, сяють очі.
Всміхається мені страшний посланець,
На його білих крилах червоніє кров,
Мов на снігу зорі вечірньої багряної.
Він промовляє мені слова страшні і великі,
В руках палає меч осяяний, огнений,
І в серці, наче похлік бойовий,
Здіймаються у мене спів дикий.

"Words, words, words!" to them my guest speaks.
"I am the angel of revenge, of deeds, not words,
Do not think that thy brave song
Will stir others, but not thyself, to war.

"I give to thee this sword; although thou art weak,
My sword is not heavy for brave hands.
Dost thou fear death, punishment, suffering,
Thou, who was always free in thy soul?"

He passes me the sword, I want to take the weapon,
But my hand does not obey me,
And the fiery fury in my heart subsides:
"Go," I say to him, "I will not go with thee.

"I do not pity life, but I pity the human
Which dwells in me, which I in others see;
When I kill that, let punishment follow the sin,
I will not want to live out that shameful hour.

"Thy servant Corday, a brave Norman,
In tyrants saw a tyrants' whole age,
Yet even in the tyrant the man appeared to her,
When the mistress shrieked over the murder."

The midnight guest disappears, but that look and
speech
Leave a bloody and terrible trace in my heart,
And in the daytime I see that strange guest,
And the unfinished conversation tears at and
oppresses my soul. (Tvorj 1, 174-75)

Although the angel of revenge castigates the poet's fears and passivity, its call to action is ineffectual before the reminder of the human in all others; it is this recognition which prevents the dreamer from taking up the angel's sword and his challenge. Even a tyrant like Marat cannot be killed without regret. While the question of action against tyranny seems to be resolved in favour of passive resistance and a kind of humanitarianism, the resolution is only rhetorical; for the poet concludes with the haunting impression of a unfinished conversation which "tears at her soul" (1.36). The dreamer thus appears to accept the position of a Turgenyev-like Hamlet: an undecided, humane intellectual who is unable to take direct action; the dreamer accepts words (poetry, art), not duty. Her sphere of endeavour will be in the feminine realm of "words, words, words" (1.13), while the night-visitor, a "Mars," operates in the male world of violence or the "active" life. If the night visitor is Macbeth, the dreamer is Lady Macbeth, able to contemplate the deed of murder, incapable of carrying it out.

The scant criticism of this poem is singularly unhelpful, but the poem begins to acquire clarity when viewed from a feminist perspective. When the "angel"-like Ophelia is suppressed, the figure which arises "like a bad dream, bloody,

Слова, слова, слова! — на них мій гість мовляв,
Я ангел помсти, вчинків, а не слів,
Не думай же, що твій одважний спів
Других, а не тебе до бою закликає.

Дав тобі свій меч, дурня, що ти не сильней,
Мій меч не тяжкий для одважних рук,
Чи ти боїшся смерті, хари, мук,
Ти, що була душею завжди вільною?

Він подає свій меч, я хочу взяти зброю,
Але не слухає мене моя рука,
І полість огледа із серця тель зника:
Іди, — кажу йому, — я не піду з тобою.

Не жаль мені життя, а жаль тієї людини,
Що у мені живе, що бачу я в других,
Коли ж її уб'ю, хай кара йде за гріх,
Не схожу пережить ганебною години.

Твоя слуга Кордэ, одважний норманка,
В тиранах бачила тирана в цілий вік,
Але й в тирані їй з'явився чоловік,
Як не дубитим крикнула коханка.

Зника північний гість, та полить той і
мова
Лішають в серці слід кривавий і
страшний,

І нині мені в сніх сниться той гість дивний,
А душу рве я гнітити нескінченно
розмова ...
(Твори I, 174-75)

envious, enraged" (Gilbert and Gubar 77) is a madwoman-witch, an angel of revenge — the author's double, the revolutionary, not the literary and passive self. When Ophelia/Dante's Wife/Woman is suppressed, then the demonic Lady Macbeth comes to the fore. Yet; as the poet insists, the conversation is unfinished. Neither the recognition of humanity and its concomitant response of passivity, nor the act of violent rebellion are finally acceptable. The poem insists that no closure is possible; for woman neither role is truly acceptable.

Ukraïka's concern with the female writer's isolation, as well as with the lack of a clear, practical response to tyranny is a recurring theme in her work.⁴ At least in part this awareness seems to have led to practical involvement in political radicalism and in the writing and translating of works (including those by Marx), which, in the early part of her career, took her away from more creative tasks. But it may also have been responsible for her turn to drama. Drama, a more "active" and pragmatic art than poetry, could very well have served to allay some of Ukraïka's own tensions and doubts about her poetic ivory tower and, as such, may have been her compromise (as well as her strength, as she was to discover) between the world of "words" and the world of "acts".

Of her dramatic "children" (as she referred to her plays), *Blakyna trojanda* ("The Azure Rose," 1896) remained Ukraïka's — although not the critics' — favourite. It also brings together the references to madness, Ophelia and Lady Macbeth. A psychological drama, it has an Ibsen-like theme: a young playwright, Orest Hrušev, is in love with an artist, Lubov (a proper name which means Love; often the diminutive "Luba" is used in its place) Hoščyns'ka. Their relationship is thwarted by society (especially Orest's mother) which firmly holds the belief that madness is inherited. Sharing this view, Lubov, while apparently quite sane at the beginning of the play, is nonetheless frightened of eventually becoming mad and of destroying Orest, as her own mad mother had emotionally destroyed her father. A strong-willed woman, Lubov is an artist whose talent is taken for dilettantism because of her sex (while Orest's skill at writing is encouraged), her passion and intellectual questioning taken as evidence of madness. Unable to marry and bear children because of society's belief in inherited madness, and thus thwarted in the only role which the late nineteenth-century society approves for women, Lubov has no choice but to turn inward.

In Act I, her mother's photograph is the object of some discussion among her rather shallow friends, who inquire about the identity of a beautiful woman in Lubov's photo album. Ostrožyn, a journalist, observes that the woman looks like

4 See, for example, "The Weapon of the Word" (48), "Moods" (52), "The Power of Song" (54), and the cycle "Seven Strings" (56), among many others in English translation in *Spirit of Flame*.

a star of the demi-monde or like an actress playing a madwoman. In one version of the text, Ostrožyn's remarks are more specific: he compares the beautiful woman to an actress playing Ophelia, and then, correcting himself, suggests that she actually looks more like Lady Macbeth.⁵

Ukraïka's awareness of the theatrical posing of madwomen and, in particular, the *imposing* of Ophelia-like postures upon them, shows an early, uneasy recognition of what a century later Showalter found in her studies of Victorian photographs of madwomen: a romanticized style of expressing emotional distress revealed by an explicitly sexual, external, sartorial shorthand of garlands, white gown and flowing locks (Showalter 1985, 86-87; Lyons 61). To some extent, Ukraïka appears to conform to this male, romanticized view of madness in her first play, when she has Lubov emulate her own mother's image in her first mad scene (III.12). Dressed in a white peignoir in lieu of a wedding dress, and her hair loose, she announces her intention to marry Orest in this theatrical garb. Proceeding to declaim Juliet's passionate soliloquy, "Come night, come Romeo," Lubov directs her clearly sexual soliloquy at Orest. She tells the assembled, uncomprehending group of witnesses to this event that she purposes to make her stage debut immediately after the wedding; Juliet will be her crowning role. The madness and sexuality of Ophelia fuse with the figure of Juliet — both victims of corrupt societies. The symbols of loss of control — the loose hair and clothing, the wild and overtly sexual behaviour — and the abandonment of "normal" or conventional modes of feminine behaviour mark her as mad; yet it is both assumed and real madness, like Hamlet's.

To paraphrase David Leverenz on Ophelia, Lubov's madness is "not a question of repressed sexual desire, though certainly her anxieties, like Hamlet's, have to do with feelings denied. It is a question of what it means to understand oneself when the price is falseness to others" (Leverenz 119). Forced triumph of duty to authority (familial and social) over abandonment to her own desires, Lubov's madness is the result of the impossible attempt to obey contradictory impulses. Lubov's passionate and "unmaidenly" responses in Act III and elsewhere confirm for the psychiatrist, Dr. Protsenko (the apparent *raisonneur* of the play), that Lubov is mad; hers, he believes, is a madness

which is the result of too much strenuous intellectual work, too much unsupervised reading. In her deliberately provocative statements, in her passionate search for an independence from the "yoke" of middle-class love, Lubov both fascinates and yet horrifies her beloved, Orest, and the other middle-class characters of the play, who finally and simply do not understand her internal struggle. While he loves her, Orest wants to make her only his Muse; he calls her his "Beatrice." Like the other characters in the play, he fails to perceive the true nature of her struggle.

Lubov's perception of the falsity of society is allowed direct expression only in the "mad" scenes, just as in her mad scenes Ophelia can finally reveal the underlying corruption of the Danish court, and the tensions she has experienced trying to solve the incompatible demands of duty and of love. For madness, as Maurice and Hanna Charney have pointed out, "allows woman an emotional intensity and scope not usually expected in conventional feminine roles" (Charney 451). The sexuality of Ophelia and Lubov, the attack on social conventions, their rage, frustration, and sorrow are all permissible in madness. Thus, when, in an apparent non-sequitur, Lubov turns to her weak-willed friend Mylevs'kyj, and queries, "Does your wife often wash her hands?" she is not questioning her hygiene, but is obliquely glancing at Lady Macbeth's obsessive hand-washing after the murder of Duncan. Sjanja Mylevs'ka has murdered no one but herself by marrying; for Mylevs'kyj, a shallow and thoughtless character is hardly the object of Sjanja's devotion — only of her desire to conform to bourgeois ideals.

The frustration with such comfortable and false ideals spills over in scenes of "hysteria" which are completely incomprehensible to her friends, family, and physician alike. Overhearing many of the vicious remarks which Orest's mother, Maria Hručeva, makes, Lubov later responds with a self-conscious posturing, even when she is most hysterical: "nur ein kranker Mensch ist Mensch," she insists in Act III.13. Intending to shock her immediate audience, Lubov also directs the unseeing eyes of society at its own darkness.

In act IV, Strindberg-like, Orest and Lubov begin to exchange traditional sexual attributes: as Orest becomes ill, passive, and "femininely" weak (because Lubov has attempted to repress her love and has left him), so Lubov acquires strength, determination and purpose, even as she uses these in a distinctly and traditionally feminine way.⁶ She chooses to go mad to escape the impasse posed by the conflict between society's expectations and her own desires. Later, in a scene of disturbingly cool "reason," Lubov again chooses, this time to commit suicide by using drugs (a contemporary variant of drowning), but also encourages Orest to follow her. She thus both fulfills her society's beliefs in

5 The conflated reference to Ophelia-Lady Macbeth occurs in only one extant printed version of *The Azure Rose*, the five-volume edition of Ukraïka's work (Kiev: Xudožnja literature, 1951-56. Vol. II, 11). Unfortunately, the bibliographical notes are obscure; without consulting the archives in Kiev, it is impossible to say to which version of the text the Ophelia-Lady Macbeth references belong. We do know that the manuscript underwent many revisions and that additional and extensive changes in blue ink were also made by Myxajlo Saryts'kyj. None of the published versions of the play indicate whose changes these are, although it is probably safe to assume that these particular ones are Ukraïka's. The yoking of these two Shakespearean figures is of a piece with interests and concerns, as this article attempts to show.

6 For an examination of the Strindbergian themes in this play, especially of the vampire motif, see Makaryk (1984).

inherited madness and also rebels against that society by progressively stepping out of it: at first through madness, then through suicide.⁷ In attempting to suppress her love for Orest throughout Acts I-IV, Lubov resembles Ophelia who is forced to comply with her father Polonius's wishes and to deny Hamlet her love (cf. my note 8). Orest, in turn, echoes Hamlet's words from Act I, scene two (11.141-42) when he promises always to love Lubov, and care for her so that "the winds of heaven/[Will not] Visit her face too roughly" — Hamlet's idealized view of his father's love for his mother, Gertrude. The theme of madness, the internal struggle and mental anguish of the lovers, the hostile environment, the tragic conclusion of the play all recall moments from *Hamlet*, most especially in the "extraordinary and unremitting array of 'mixed signals' that separate role from self, reason from feeling, duty from love" (Leverenz 111). The tragedy for Lubov is that even her beloved Orest fails to understand her, and wishes to marry her so as to take up socially constructed roles: he will be the protector, the breadwinner, the artist; she, his Muse. Lubov's vision of a something else, love as an azure rose, seems dangerous and baffling to him.

Lubov's madness allows Ukraïka to explore in a more oblique, literary and "safe" way many of the issues found in her earlier verse; but it also permits Ukraïka the possibility of disassociating herself from this assault on society. Like Ophelia, Lubov could be (and was) interpreted as merely an unbalanced, pathetic creature. While unpopular with nineteenth- and many twentieth-century critics, *The Azure Rose* seems to foresee contemporary feminist concerns and, in its particular use of madness, anticipates the idea of the madwoman as a heroine, "a powerful figure who rebels against the family and the social order; and the hysteric who refuses to speak the language of the patriarchal order, who speaks otherwise" (Showalter 91).⁸

The poem "To Be or Not to Be?" (also written in 1896) suggests an alternative to madness, oblivion, suicide: the escape offered by art. First printed

7 I am indebted to Roman Weretelnik, who discussed some of these ideas with me when he worked on his doctoral dissertation under my direction (cf. Weretelnik).

8 As Felman points out, the critical tendency in European, especially French feminist, theory has been to "glamorize" madness as political protest and social and cultural contestation (2). Elaine Showalter, in her *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (147) also notes that madness may be viewed as both "mental pathology" and "mode of protest for women deprived of other social or intellectual outlets or expressive options." On the connections among hysteria, the telling of stories, and femininity cf. Mary Jacobus's *Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism*. Jacobus observes that hysteria is inseparable from femininity: it is the "translation of psychic metaphors into the language of the body" (199). Pace Freud, she argues that the "hysterical language attempts to recover a lost, literal dimension of language" (209). On similar themes see Maggie Humm, *Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics*, especially chapter three, "Language and Psychoanalysis." On the more relentlessly theoretical level, the writings of Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray examine femininity as irrationality, negativity, chaos, darkness.

in the cycle of poems entitled *Dumy i Mrii* ("Thoughts and Dreams"), this is the first poem which carries an overt reference to *Hamlet* in its English title, "To Be or Not to Be?"

Hold, my heart, hold! do not beat so madly.
Calm yourself, my thoughts, do not fly so wildly.

Do not beat your wings in empty space.

You, my guilt-seeing Muse do not blind

Me with the fire of your immortal eyes!

Give me your hand, hug me to your bosom.

I gave you everything that I had,

Give me your great counsel.

Look: around us are great fields newly
ploughed up.

And wild thickets, and steep precipices,

And dark, quiet waters. Look:

There are no highways, only here and there

Confused footpaths leading to obscurity.

Over there are people — a meagre few —
ploughing those fields,

Over there, from the thickets, is the barely-heard
knocking of a hatchet,

From the high precipices echo eagles' cries.

Only the quiet waters always silently stand by,

And, only sometimes, does a rock break off from
its summit.

Fall and disappear into the dark, quiet waters, —
The trembling circle separates and disappears.

Tell me, my unearthy counsellor,

Whither into space should I give myself?

Should I take off the silver-gold

Of my lyre and temper it into a plough,

And tie up these wings with the strings

So that a shadow will not fall on the narrow
furrow?

Should I take up a place next to those people,

Plough up the fallow, and sow, and then —
And then await the harvest, but not for myself?

Or, should I throw myself over there, into the
thicket.

And from the wild labyrinth carve a road

With a hatchet and a line saw in my hands,

Until some rotting, great trunk

Falls and chokes me among the dark thickets?

Or, should I, eagle-like, fly up high,

Way above all the precipices, into limitless space,
Snatch bright lightning from a cloud.

Break off the golden wreath of a star

And blaze up in light during midnight?

But, what if in a second that light goes out,

Like a meteor, and the darkness seems even
blackier.

Even more terrifying than it was before?

To Be or Not to Be?...

Стій, серце, стій! не бийся так шалено.
Вгамуйся, думко, не літай так буйно!
Не бий крилами в порожньому просторі.
Ти, музо винозора, не сліпи мене
вогнем твоїх очей безсмертних!
Дай руку, притули мене до свого лона.
Тобі я віддала усе, що маю,
Поддай мені велику пору.

Дивись: навколо нас великі перелісти,
І дикий шум, і високі кручі,
І темні, тихі води. Подивись:
Шляхів нема, а тільки де-не-де
Поступтані стежини ідуть на безвість.
Он люди — мало їх — орють ті перелісти.
Он з пушистого чутного сокири,
З високих круч луна оринний кліт,
Дітих і води все стоять мовчазно,
І тільки часом камінь з круч зривається,
Впадає і хане в темних, тихих водах, —
Розшавляється і зникає круг тремтливий.

Скажи мені, пораднице напечена,
Куди мені податись у просторі?
Чи маю я здійснити срібло-злото
З своїх ліри і скувати релю,
А струнами сі крила прив'язати,
Щоб тілько не падала на вузьку борозну,
Заняти постать поряд з тими людьми,
Орати переліг і сіяти, а потім —
Апотімждати живити не для себе?
Чи, може, кинутись туди, у пугу,
І в диких нетрях пробивать дорогу
Зсокирою в руках і з тонкою пилотою,
Поки який гнилий, великий стовбур
Впадає й задавить серед темних хвощів?
Чи, може, злінути орлицю високо,
Геть понад кручі, у простор безмежний,
Вхопити з хмари яскраві блискавицю,
Зірвати з зірки золотий в'янець
І запалити світлом опівночі?
А що, коли те світло миттєво згасне,
Як метеор, і темрява чорнішає,
Страшніше за темряву ніби була раниша,
А що, коли не стане в мене сили,
Вогонь обпалить крила й впаду,
Неначе камінь, що зривався з кручі,
Туди, у темні води, в глибину,
В холодну тишу, і недовго буде
Тремтяти круг на площині води?
Мовчи ти, горда музо! тільки очі
Спалахнули вогнем, барвисті крила
Широким помахом угору здійнялись
І сплеснули... О черівнице, стій!
Взявши мене з собою, лийнью разом!
(Твори I, 184-85)

And what if no strength remains,
The fire scorches my wings and I'll fall
Like a rock, which breaks off in the precipices,
There, into the dark water, into the deep,
Into the cold water where, not for long,
The circle will tremble on the surface of the water?
You are silent, proud Muse! Only her eyes
Were inflamed by fire, with a great sweep
the variegated wings were lifted up
And clapped.... O sorceress, stay!
Take me with you, let us fly together! (Tvoru I,
184-85)

Although Ukrainka's "To Be or Not to Be?" is written in blank verse and is shaped by a series of questions, it deviates radically from its famous namesake. For Ukrainka, "To be or not to be" is not a question of metaphysics but a question of creativity, and hence perhaps is a distinctly woman's response to *Hamlet*.

The poem, an apostrophe to her Muse, raises some of the same questions as "Angel of Revenge," but in a different key. The poet seeks advice, refuge, and finally a mystical transportation from her Muse. Should she join the people who plough and gather the harvest? Or, should she fly like an eagle, above the precipices, into limitless space and snatch a lightning bolt from a cloud, encasing herself in fire? The "not to be" is thus transformed into the quotidian practical activities of working, harvesting for others, and of being "lost in the thicket."⁹ "To be" is equated with poetic fancy, romantic transmutation but also with solitude, fear and self-destruction. The poet's assertion of her desire to fly with her "sorceress," poetry, and her clear preference for art over duty and social responsibility seem to bring this topic to its close; and yet it ends with yearning, not with resounding affirmation.

Whereas "To Be or Not to Be?" draws on its resonances from *Hamlet*, "Adagio Penserioso," part IV of a cycle of poems entitled "Rytmy" ("Rhythms," 1900), turns directly to Ophelia, and the figure of the female poet for whom madness, silence and oblivion are lulling and magnetic possibilities. The five-stanza poem begins with the poet wishing that she could flow with the water like the mad, *bezumna* (literally, without a mind) Ophelia, bedecked with flowers.

Oh, I should like to float upon the water
Like Ophelia, garlanded, mad.
My songs would float in my wake,
agitated like that gentle water,
Always farther, farther....
And the water would slowly

Ритми

IV (Adagio Penserioso)

Хотіла б я уплисти за водою,
Немов Офелія, увіквітчена безумна,
За мною волниплили б мої пісні,

old me in its light waves
like a child in thin swaddlings,
and would rock me, like a dear dream,
so quietly, quietly....

I, so powerless,
could let myself be carried and hugged,
floating with a quiet, barely audible song,
ascending into an azure, bright water
ways deeper, deeper....
Later, on the waves
we'd remain only the indistinct echo
of my songs, like a memory that fades of
forgotten ballad of olden days;
contained something sorrowful and bloody,
at how to recollect it? The song echoed
long ago, long ago....
And even later the echo would disappear,
and on the water only my flowers would rock,
use that didn't follow me to the bottom of the
river.

they'd float until, in a quiet cove, they'd fasten
onto white water lilies;
are they'd stay. Over the drowsy waters
art branches of weeping willows would bend,
to the quiet shelter the wind would not blow,
on the sky onto the lilies and the flowers,
which I, mad, had gathered, would descend only
peace, peace.... (Tvoru I, 248)

хвилюючи, як та вода легідна,
все далі, далі....
І вода помаху
мене б у легкі хвилі загортала,
немов дитину в тонкий сповиток.
І колихала б, наче любя мрія,
так тихо, тихо....

Я ж така безвладна,
дала б себе нести і загортати,
пливучи з тихим, ледве чулим співом,
спускаючись в блакитну, ясну воду
все глибше, глибше....

Потім би на хвилі
зостався тільки відгук невіразний
моїх пісень, мов спогад, що зникає,
забутої балади з давніх часів,
в ній щось було таке смутне, криваве,
та як згадати! Пісня та лунала
давно, давно....

А потім зник би й відгук —
і на воді шебехолихалися тільки
мої квітки, що не пішли зо мною
над річки. Плили б вони, аж поки,
в яку сагу спокіяну не прибилися
до білих водяних лілій, — там стали б.
Схилялися б над сонною водою
беріз плакучих нерухомих віти,
у тихий захист вітер би не віяв;
спускався б тільки з неба на лілії
і на квітки, що я, безумна, зрвала,
спокія, спокія....
(Твори I, 248)

Here, the verbal portrait which Ukrainka paints most closely resembles the usual languor of Delacroix's lithographs of *La mort d'Ophélie* (1848) and Veret Millais's *Ophelia* (1857). Yet, of note is Ukrainka's peculiar deviation from the nineteenth-century idyllic view of the drowning madwoman: the echoes of her song recall both sad and bloody events of an antique ballad. It is this hint of violence along with the conditional tense of the poem which jars and, further, which suggests that oblivion and erasure will not mark the final point of rest in the cycle. In fact, the remaining four lyrics which conclude the sequence move away from this nadir to attempt once again the heights already observed in "To Be or Not to Be?" While there is something forced about the remainder of this sequence, "Adagio Penserioso" seems almost to persuade the poet herself; the various images linger in the mind long after the rest of the poems emphasize a positive alternative and strive for a Keatsian ecstasy and faith in the poetic thing.

Ukrainka's complex, allusive, and radical use of literary figures such as Ophelia and Sappho in her search for a new woman's role deserves a much closer study than this article allows. In her plays, seventeen of which follow *The Purple Rose*, Ukrainka explores versions of passionate but, ultimately, destroyed woman: the prophetesses Cassandra and Tirsia; the religious martyr Priscilla;

⁹ This particular theme is prominently featured in her play *U puičci* ("In the Wilderness"), which contains some verbal echoes from this poem.

the uncompromising apostle of Christ, Miriam; the proud Lady Macbeth, Dona Ana; the selfless Dolores. These are women torn between the demands of love and their own beliefs, desires, and principles. Most audaciously, *Nobleman's Wife*, set in the seventeenth century, Ukraïuka has her husband Oksana, die from nostalgia for her Ukraine. Having followed her husband to Muscovy, where boyar customs demand a harem-like segregation of women, Oksana suffers both national and gender domination, and seems almost to die of her own death. Banned from 1920 to 1989, this play was too dangerous to publish until a second "revolution" was underway.

In Ukraïuka's last and most popular play, *Lisova pisnja* ("The Forest Song," 1911), she returns once again to a version of the Sappho/Ophelia/Woman in the Forest story. The forest nymph, Mavka, at first a Muse, betrays herself by abandoning her poetic gift, her playfulness, her forest, in order to dwell in the miserable, toiling human race — all for love. But, in the practical world of reapers and sowers, Mavka's love for Lukaš seems brazen, and her desires, songs, affection, and play, at best, childish. As her woodland friend, the Elf, reminds her in a phrase reminiscent of "To Be or Not to Be?", she betrays herself by giving up "dwelling in high tree tops/And came down low to work the peasant-widow, Mavka is taken by Him Who Dwells in a Rock to sleep and forgetfulness." In depths profound, in blackness, damp and cold" (*Spirit* 232). Images reminiscent of the drowning Ophelia in "Adagio Penseroso." Mavka, to free herself by her love for Lukaš, Mavka, dressed in black and covered in an opaque grey veil, returns to Lukaš's cottage to be greeted by his wife, who calls her insane. When Kylvina wishes that Mavka "stood amidst [her] flowers and spells" (*Spirit* 246), the nymph is transformed into a willow tree — a tree by which Ophelia drowned. By the end of the play, Mavka becomes the singer (a type of native Ukrainian Ophelia), taking on the attributes of a spiritually-destroyed mortal lover, Lukaš.¹⁰ She will bear witness to and sing of love, betrayal and death:

I'll answer them
with the quiet rustling of my willow branches,
with the gentle voice of a delicate flute,
with the sad dew of my boughs.

ЛІСОВА ПІСНЯ

Я ОБІЗВУСЯ ПО НИХ
ШЕЛЕСТОМ ТИХИХ ВЕРБОВИХ Г

10 Mavka, or forest nymphs, are traditionally associated with vampires in Ukrainian folklore. Ukraïuka avoids overt reference to this belief and makes her Mavka a sympathetic and positive creature. However, like Lubov Hošyn's 'ka (also referred to as a vampire in *The Azure Rose*), Mavka seems to take on some subtle vampire characteristics when, at the end, she saps her lover of his artistic talents, and secondarily of his physical strength. This psychic exchange appears to have more to do with the spiritual superiority of Ukraïuka's female characters than with folk belief.

I'll then sing through
all that you sang for me,
in the early spring when you played here,

Gathering dreams in the grove...

Play, my beloved, I beseech you! (*Lisova pisnja*).

My translation)
Грай же, коханий, благові!
(Твори V, 295-96)

Racked with tuberculosis, Ukraïuka at various times fled the damp climate of her Western Ukrainian home for Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Egypt, the Crimea, and Georgia. While engaged in curing her body, she constantly observed — as her correspondence attests — woman's condition. What she found were Ophelias. For her, the central Shakespearean text of *Hamlet*, so much a "Slavic" play that it is the most frequently translated of his works in Eastern Europe, spoke yet again of the cost of woman's love and the erasure of her identity. The female creator, implicit in Ophelia and explicit in Sappho, was, in the eyes of the world, an odd and presumptuous being only fully acceptable when romanticized and destroyed. Always clear-eyed, Ukraïuka believed that nothing short of a revolutionary restructuring of society would change this state; and yet, like her own heroines, she continued to tell her story.

Université d'Ottawa

Works Cited

- Auerbach, Nina. *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts*. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
- Bida, Constantine. "Shakespeare's Entrance into the Slavic World." *Proceedings of the IIIrd Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*. The Hague: Mouton and Gravenhage, 1962. 340.
- Charney, Maurice and Hanna Charney. "The Language of Madwomen in Shakespeare and in His Fellow Dramatists." *Signs* 3 (1977): 451-60.
- Felman, Shoshana. "Women and Madness: The Critical Fallacy." *Diacritics* 5.4 (Winter 1975): 2-10.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Women Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1979.
- Humm, Maggie. *Feminist Criticism: Women as Contemporary Critics*. Brighton: Harvester, 1986.
- Jacobus, Mary. *Reading Woman: Essays in Feminist Criticism*. New York: Columbia UP, 1986.
- Leverenz, David. "The Woman in Hamlet: An Interpersonal View." Murray M. Schwartz and Coppelia Kahn, eds. *Representing Shakespeare: New Psychoanalytic Essays*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins UP, 1980. 110-28.
- Lyons, Bridget Gellert. "The Iconography of Ophelia." *English Literary History* 44 (1977): 60-74.

- Makaryk, Irena R. "Lesia Ukrainka's *Blakytina troianda*: Apropos the Theme of Psychic Murder." *Studia Ucrainica* 2 (1984): 25-32.
- Revutsky, Valerian. "The Act of Ems (1876) and Its Effect on Ukrainian Theatre." *Nationalities Papers* 5.1 (1977): 67-77.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Riverside Shakespeare*. G. Blakemore, ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1974.
- Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985a.
- . "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism." Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, eds. *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*. New York and London: Methuen, 1985b. 77-94.
- Solchanyk, Roman. "Lex Jusephovicia 1876," *Suchasnist'* 16.5 (May 1976): 36-68.
- . "Mykhailo Drahomanov and the Ems Ukase: A Note on the Ukrainian Question at the 1878 International Literary Congress in Paris," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1.2 (1977): 225-29.
- Ukrainka, Lesja. *Tvory v desjaty tomax*. Kiev: Xudozhnia literatura, 1963-65. 10 Vols.
- . *The Azure Rose*. Kiev: Xudozhnia literatura, 1951-56. 5 Vols.
- . *Spirit of Flame: A Collection of the Works of Lesya Ukrainka*. Percival Cundy, trans. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood P, 1971.
- . *Hope: Selected Poetry*. Gladys Evans, trans. Lviv: Dnipro, 1975.
- Weretelnik, Roman. *A Feminist Reading of Lesia Ukrainka's Dramas*. Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, forthcoming.

Malcolm Lowry and the Tao

... at such a time of stillness, at the brief period of high tide before the ebb, it was like what I have learned the Chinese called the Tao, that, they say, came into existence before Heaven and Earth, something so still, so changeless, and yet reaching everywhere, and in no danger of being exhausted: like "that which is so still and yet passes on in constant flow, and in passing on, becomes remote, and having become remote, returns." (*Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place* 236)

Although critical works on Malcolm Lowry are voluminous, only one article has done some justice to the influence of Taoism on his novella, "The Forest Path to the Spring" (hereafter abbreviated as "The Forest Path") (cf. Cross; Grace 1982; Vice). Barry Wood's "At the Edge of Eternity," initially published in *Canadian Literature* and re-published in W.H. New, ed. *Malcolm Lowry: The Writer and His Critics*, deals mainly with three issues in relation to the Tao.¹ It correctly identifies the *I Ching* and the *Tao Te Ching*, especially the latter, with its "yang-yin [sic] Tao symbol" (190) and principle, as a fresh source of Lowry's inspiration; it also competently explains what the yang and the yin mean when applied to concrete objects; and finally, it correctly analyzes a number of major images and symbols in illustration of the circle-center structure and the "total fusion of opposites" (191), a fusion which enables the narrator to achieve enormous artistic creativity.

However, upon close examination, Wood's handling of the Tao errs regrettably on three crucial points. First, he makes a close connection between

1 Tao should be pronounced *dow* as in the word dowager. A variation of this spelling from the Wade-Giles system is Dao, the way an educated Chinese would write it. The Chinese idioms or set expressions, *daojia* and *daojiao*, respectively signify Taoism as a school of philosophy and Taoism as a secularized form of religion. All subsequent Chinese proper names and words will be presented in the *pinyin* system, excepting those already established in current use.