Kyiv-Mohyla
Humanities Journal
KYIV-MOHYLA SCHOLARLY PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS

On Andrii Malyshko's "Second Birth"

Author(s): Volodymyr Morenets
Source: Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities Journal 4 (2017): 101–111
Published by: National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy

http://kmhj.ukma.edu.ua/

On Andrii Malyshko's "Second Birth"

Volodymyr Morenets
National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy,
Department of Literature

Abstract
The cultural policy of the USSR provided for the deliberate displacement of Ukrainian (like every other national language) to the naive provincial periphery of the "great art" of the mighty Soviet Union, supposedly possible solely in the sphere of the Russian language. The renewed Soviet ideologization of literature in the postwar years led to a sharp decline in the artistic level of all literary fields. But even against the background of this general artistic decline, the caricaturised burlesque and travesty-like artificiality of Andrii Malyshko's (1912–1970) poetry of the time is impressive. Malyshko's so-called "second birth" in his late period represents a rare in its purity instance, where we can observe an ontological conflict of language and ideology that a Ukrainian artist of the Soviet period resolves in favor of language. Malyshko created not provincial peripheral streams, but a strong artistic and philosophical alternative to the blind, technocratic, and miserable in its Russified nature, imperial reality.

Key Words: poetry, ideology, folklore, Ukraine, Andrii Malyshko.

Andrii Samiilovych Malyshko was born on November 14, 1912 in Obukhiv, Kyiv region, into the large family of a cobbler. In 1927, following seven years of schooling, Malyshko enrolled in a medical college in Kyiv, which he left in 1929 to study at the literary department of the Institute of Social Education (later transformed into the Institute of People's Education, and subsequently into Kyiv State University). After graduating in 1932 became a schoolteacher in Ovruch, worked at the *Soviet Word* newspaper (1933), and served in the Red Army (1934–1935). After being demobilized he moved to Kharkiv to work at the *Ukrainian Komsomolets* newspaper, *Literary Gazette*, and *Young Bolshevik* journal. Malyshko became a member of the Writers' Union in 1936, and joined the Communist Party in 1943.

Beginning with the summer of 1941 Malyshko participated in World War II as a war correspondent for the *Red Army*, *For Soviet Ukraine*, and *For the Honor of the Motherland* wartime newspapers (the last's chief editor was Mykola Bazhan, with Volodymyr Sosiura and Yurii Yanovskii on the editorial board). After the war Malyshko moved to Kyiv and became the managing editor of *Dnipro* journal (1944–1947). In 1960 Malyshko became Chairman of the Ukrainian branch of the *News* press agency and a deputy of the *Verkhovna Rada* (III–IV convocations). He was twice awarded the Order of Lenin Prize, the Red Banner, Red Star, Badge of Honor, and other medals. Malyshko's poema *Prometheus* and *Lyrics* verse collection earned him the USSR State Prize (1947), as did the book *Beyond the Blue Sea* and the *Road Under the Sycamores* poetry cycle

(1951, 1969). In 1964 the *Distant Orbits* poetry collection was awarded the Shevchenko USSR State Prize. Malyshko died on February 17, 1970, and was interred at the Baikove cemetery in Kyiv.

Almost 100 of Malyshko's lyrical poems have been set to music, his collaboration with composer Platon Maiboroda being especially fruitful. The tandem created over 30 songs that have become so popular as to be considered folk songs. These include the "Kyivan Waltz," "Song of the Towel," "The Path," "Teacher of Mine," "We will go where the Grass lies Low," "You are my True Love," "White Chestnuts," "The Trodden Road," "The Quiet Autumn Heavens Bloom," and others. Malyshko also translated Alexander Pushkin, O. Tvardovski, O. Prokofiev, Yanka Kupala, A. Kuleshov, Vazha Pshavela, Heinrich Heine, F. Preshern, Ya. Ivashkevych and others.

M. Rylskyi (who taught A. Malyshko at the IPE and mentored the talented youth) noted that the "spirit of folk art uncompromisingly accompanies Malyshko's poetry."[1] An organic foothold in folklore is manifested at all levels of his work, primarily being the epic key to his poetry, the favorite genres of which are the ballad and prose poem; an everyday language style (extremely rich forms of set language with special axiological meaning — idioms, phraseological units, proverbs, etc.); widely used in verse direct speech in its everyday verbal and intonational form; deep and organic melody and the intonational and stylistic orientation of poetry on the song tradition; this is also an ethics of a special view of the world that is not immediately evident and long remains a "parallel dimension" in the Bolshevik biased interwar texts of the writer.

In fact, until the Second World War, this non-obvious, but crucial for the further evolution of the poet dimension of values and meanings was stifled by the exuberance of the heroism of the "red otamans" and their European military and Revolutionary analogues (see the "Spanish ballad" cycle, 1938), written in colloquial style, whose unrefined simple nature, which in itself should be evidence of sincerity and an "earthly truth" ("My Uncle, Mykyta the Magician," "Opanas Bida," "Harvest," 1938, "The story of Lyvon Rededia," 1940, among others). However, with a few exceptions, Malyshko's pre-war lyrics are entirely in a socialist-realist vein, with its loud pathos of "Komsomol achievements," "ordinary Soviet heroes," and the "everyday life" of these ordinary heroes. Except for perhaps the full of respect for the common man quiet voice, except for the perhaps suddenly encoded simple strands of imagery featuring a moral maximalism of great strength, present here — is modesty as a condition of true strength — a maxim directly derived from a national spiritual heritage; except for the perhaps the surprisingly rich full-bodied language and a trusting tone that distinguish these lyrics, which in sum do not rise above a strong stream of publicistic images and agitprop of the 1930s.

Today, with the distance of time, it is clear that a only a compelling and inevitable emancipation of artistic expression in the face of death, reluctantly endorsed by the Kremlin rule brought on by the Nazis in 1941–1942, enabled the appearance in Ukrainian literature of highly original, fresh in their colloquial intonation poems, such as the "My Ukraine" cycle (1942) and a number of vivid psychologised images from the years 1943–1946 ("The Kasha Maker," "Mother," "Dnipro," among others).

1 Maksym Rylskyi, "Tvorche lito [A Creative Summer]," in *Zvenyhora* by Andrii Malyshko (Kyiv: Derzhlitvydav URSR, 1959), 7.

> The fires rage beyond the valley of blue sky,
> Airplanes roar, because to the West is the front, the front.
> My Ukraine, I don't need anything in the world,
> But to hear your voice and defend your tenderness…

Even five years prior for one such appeal to mother Ukraine its author would have been arrested within days of reading the verses amongst a "circle of friends," not to mention the absolute impossibility of their publication. And now, in 1942, such verse is written by Malyshko and is published! Here we do not mean stylization, which was dominant in Malyshko's poetry of the 1930s, but a higher, third (according to V. Kubilius) level of development of folklore as an integral moral-aesthetic system, and a resonant folk ethos in Malyshko's poetry, inherited from a kind of understanding of right and wrong, good and evil.

This was clearly identified by Olena Shpylova in her emphasizing the poet's connection not as much with national folklore as with culture:

> The reason here is not only in the features of the poem's style, or in the wide use of the means of folk imagery, or in plot similarities, which ultimately can be achieved by conventional "folkloric" stylization. The affinity of Malyshko's poems with Ukrainian folk culture was evident in other spheres — in the structure of feelings, associations, ideas, and in a wider sense — in the nature of creative thinking. For Malyshko's aesthetic ideal was formed under the conspicuous influence of folk notions of beauty as harmony between man and nature; his worldview was formed on the grounds of a folk understanding of a just society.[2]

On a high wave of the spiritual upliftment of the Second World War period, along with Tychyna's "I Affirm Myself!" and M. Bazhan's "Oath," Maksym Rylskyi's "Something About Mother," "My Ukraine" and a number of beautiful Malyshko poems were also resonant. In a strange way, the nature and essence of the "war renaissance" reveals Malyshko's postwar artistic failure, if it is correctly understood (i.e. the 1949–1954 collections: *The Spring Book*, 1949; *Beyond the Blue Sea*, 1950; *The Boat*, 1951; *Gifts for the Leader*, 1952; *New Horizons*, 1953; *The Brothers Book*, 1954).

It is known that the renewed ("freedom before death at the front") Soviet ideologization of literature in the postwar years, this "tightening of the screws" through Kremlin created ideological campaigns first against "rootless cosmopolitans" (peaking in 1949), followed by "zoological nationalists" (peaking in 1951) led to a sharp decline in the artistic level of all literary fields. But even against the background of this general artistic decline, the caricaturised burlesque and travesty-like artificiality of Malyshko's poetry of the time is impressive. So that in a cobbled together plot, decompression sickness somehow takes a diver's life — "the young man — the sailor — lasted less than an hour, the corals ended up in a Broadway show-window," from where a "stupid and spoiled rich lady bought them with the gold of her banker husband" ("Unfinished Ballad"); a black

2 Olena Shpylova, "Andrii Malyshko [Andrii Malyshko]," in *Poetry, Literary Criticism* by Andrii Malyshko (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1988), 5.

female elevator operator seemingly endures great suffering from the contempt of elevator users, "oh if she lived back home in my homeland,— /She would grow rye, reap wheat-*ling*,/ from field to village carry her song…" In other words, this black woman would be happy if she lived not in the affected by racial segregation US, but in Soviet Ukraine. Laughter and tears!

Why so? Probably because of the poet's quest to remain equally loyal to his language (the main depository of the national ethos) and to the dominant Soviet ideology, that is, to two antagonistic principles. Accordingly, when the linguistic-cultural realities and flavor of the Ukrainian world are imposed on characters of another world (not only in a linguistic sense), we are dealing with pure travesty and unplanned burlesque. The Bolshevik pathos present earlier in Malyshko's ballads and songs, enveloped in Ukrainian folk epics, looked unnatural (so appear, for example, the family style of "The Letters of Red Army Soldier Opanas Baida" or the boldness of the Cossack *Kharakternyky*, attributed in broad strokes to the Bohun-Red Army soldiers in all four of the "Bohun" songs, 1939). But now the desire (regardless whether conscious or intuitive) to combine in verse Soviet ideology and an ethically strained Ukrainian horizon leads to grotesque, comic effects similar to a disruption in voice in an opera part, or a sudden falsetto in a song rendition. In these post-war artistically failed Malyshko rhymed subjects an anachronistic buffoonery seemingly appears, which we see, for example, in such rhetorical compositions as "The Black Woman," "In the Elevator," "The Dance," "The Unemployed Man" and others.

Indeed, this is a failure, but we can also consider it a monument of vast humanitarian force! We have before us an entirely unique case of the language used by the artist in itself opposing the ideology, which he had decided to preach, opposing, because a place had been reserved, because this language *already* was ideologically taut and a vehicle for a holistic, century old Ukrainian system of folk ethics. Because, the simple utterance of the diminutive (affectionate) form "the wheat-*ling* reaped" encodes an ideologeme of love for the nurturing land and respect for human labor, for those who lean down to their land in a sacrosanct effort to reap the fruits of their honest labors, not to seize something for themselves or to conquer. The same is seen in the joyous, sanguine jazz passages of the blacks, jazz that traditionally accompany a person's final journey in New Orleans or Louisiana — these are not greetings of death but greetings of life, an apotheosis of the living, towering over nothingness, even on the threshold of death. The African American "song*let*" and the Ukrainian "wheat-*ling*" are markers of two different independent cultures with their own senses, inherently uncombinable in Soviet cliches of "class/racial antagonism," which provides the emotion of the poem "In the Elevator." The result is like a saddle on a cow.

All these Malyshko rhymed subjects from 1949–1954 are comical because of the absurd incompatibility of the moral-aesthetic values implicitly present in the language units and forms (words, epithets, idioms, sentences, syntactic periods) to express the ideology in question. If Malyshko's language were less rich, less authentic, and ultimately less independent (in all its dimensions — lexical, syntactic, idiomatic, intonational), no vivid burlesque and travesty effect would prevail, and the verses would simply be classified along with the heaps of ideologically "correct" and artistically worthless artefacts of socialist-realist production. A heap more, a heap less — no one would notice! However, they are very visible, because there is another Malyshko, against whose background this rhymed buffoonery becomes problematic.

Malyshko's so-called "second birth," loudly announced by the critics following the publication of the collection *The Road Under the Sycamores* in 1964 and reinforced by all of

the poet's subsequent books, is completely due to the fact that by virtue of some personal inner motives and riding the wave of the (one and only) thaw (which for Malyshko began with the book "What is Written by Me" in 1956), he abandoned his previous efforts to reconcile the irreconcilable, he resigned himself from the very intention of combining his undeniably "own," the imperviously Ukrainian, kind-hearted, infused with respect for man and the world, on the one hand, and Bolshevik class consciousness and state pathos of the "builder of communism" ilk on the other hand. Between his native language and Soviet ideology Malyshko ultimately chose language. And it was this choice that caused the "second birth" of the poet, who in his later years would write a whole series of sensitive and meditative wonderful collections and poetry cycles (both lyrical meditations and Malyshko favorites — narrative genres of rhetorical character — ballads, depictions of everyday life, narrative verse).

And beyond the years,
        with earthly temperatures,
In the round dew,
        not covered with sad mists,
My orchard bursts into song
        In youthful coloration,
There, behind the river,—
Youth,
There, behind the river…
Dreams, and love,
        And searches for separation,
And rye fields, like rivers,
Behind the expanses of lake
My heart, my heart,
Do not fight your anguish,
We will return to *sweet* home,
We will return!

(From *The Road Under the Sycamores* collection, 1964).

Where does, for the poet, extend into eternity *his* shore? Where in the world is this sole refuge of the heart and soul, its ecumene, the equivalent of "Youth"? *Where is my softly caressed "sweet home,"* to where, I have no doubt, my soul, we shall return, inevitably return?! There — "beyond the summer-years, with earthly temperatures in drops of dew, not covered by a bitter haze," where "dreams, and love, and quests and separations, and rye fields, like rivers, beyond an expanse of lake … where the bitter land gently beckons by hand" and "the sun settles, hot over my imperishable soul…" This image contains no Soviet ideological marker, moreover, this "*sweet* home," a locus of truth and the eternally native stretches "beyond space launch pads … woods … trenches," where "rye fields are like rivers…" And rivers in Ukrainian folk-song culture — represent the central topos of Destiny.

There is no denying that in part, and in those years (1956–1964), Malyshko occasionally wrote panegyric texts with the appropriate Soviet paraphernalia (the Kremlin, stars, leaders, etc. — "To Lenin," "The Youngster Sensed or the Youngster Dreamed, I do not Know…," "My Country" and others), but this is clearly peripheral production, written by the poet for "anniversary needs." What is of most value is defined in the monochrome tones of a poster, not in the polychrome colors of thought and its development; imagery here is blank, remote rather than poetic, lacking the vibrant intimacy defined by "*sweet* home":

> And the people greet with strength
> In intense labor, not war,
> My starry-winged Ukraine,
> My Soviet homeland!
>
> ("My Ukraine," 1959)

With the publication of *The Road Under the Sycamores* in 1964 until the end of Malyshko's earthly journey in 1970 even such verse in his work is difficult to find. We have memoirs of World War II (in Malyshko's discourse — The Great Patriotic War) in line with Soviet ideological patterns, typical of the sixties moral-philosophical motifs of the "socialism with a human face" kind, but direct poster-like apologetics for "socialist bliss" no longer appear.

To repeat: Malyshko's creativity of his "second birth" period represents a rare in its purity instance, where we can observe an ontological conflict of language and ideology that a Ukrainian artist of the Soviet period resolves in favor of language. And we have much evidence regarding the conscious nature of this choice including direct, albeit polemically presented, authorial admissions ("I lived those years behind a deaf heavy wall, I will speak what is recorded in my heart," 1956).

As a result, Ukrainian poetry of the 1960s was enriched with a number of very strong in artistic terms works ("The Sunflower," "My Mother Weaved Canvases…," "The Path," "The Craftsmen," "The Icon Painters," "The Gray Goose" and others). "The Sycamore Song," "Maksym Rylskyi's Song," 1964, "Sonnets of an Obukhiv Autumn," "Sonnets of a Blue April," "Evening Sonnets," "Ostap Vyshnia's Song," 1966, and others became exemplary of the newest genre — the lyrical cycle, and a colorful and unfettered colloquial texture, quiet tone, trusting conversation "between one's own," rooted in a ritualistic closeness to land-heavy metaphor and a vocabulary peculiar to Dnipro region formed a style in clear contradiction to a stale faux-literary smoothness.

> Beyond the Romaniv sky — blue berths,
> Beyond the Romaniv sky — geese honk.
>
> Pure mint lay under the house,
> And majestic music played.
>
> In the dark nights by Rylskyi's house
> "The Embroidered Towel" sounded on horns.

If you look, it is easy to see in this picture organically defined features of iconography,— folk iconography, visions, all the strangeness of which is in that it is completely removed from its historical time, the Soviet landscape.

The cultural policy of the USSR provided for the deliberate displacement of Ukrainian (like every other national language) to the naive provincial periphery of the "great art" of the mighty Soviet Union, supposedly possible solely in the sphere of the Russian language. Malyshko, bound to these rules of the game, created not provincial peripheral streams, but a strong artistic and philosophical alternative to the blind, technocratic, and miserable in its Russified nature, imperial reality. The richest and perhaps the most complex component of Malyshko's "second voyage" is the image of his Homeland, revealed in space and time, merged with the category of fate — bitter and happy, eternal and painfully short, fate, in which a person's life in an instant moment transforms into the life of the Homeland. This is an unreachable world divided between "me, you and a third party," divided and indivisible, for "the third party" here is reasoned as "one's own" in its immortal historical endurance.

The subject of Malyshko's lyrics is in constant motion — on the road under maples, green in the summer and the Podillia autumn. Here he returns to himself in a higher — historically ethno-cultural dimension ("Do you Remember? We have passed like thousands and millions / Along your chest, under the great heavens, / And I am with you in the sleepless nights, / Road under the sycamores. With you as well"). Here Malyshko re-establishes himself in his human essence, recognizable, self-sufficient ("and I also … am born thrice, engulf myself in flames myself thrice, because the journey is long! The journey is long…"). Here under stress he seeks to understand himself — materialized as part of his country ("I am here myself, embracing the distance, expanding, multiplying, breathing grass"), he cannot meet the himself of yesterday — already unreachable in heartfelt feelings of love that were, that were! ("For where the sky slowly flows, / Wait golden eyes. / And I am five minutes late, / Like a comet on its way").

Malyshko's poetic voice is indeed likened to the vibration of a string "stretched between the sun and man alive." The world's existence and the spiritual life of the lyric "I" here are mirror-like, here not only people observe their dewy environment, but the reverse occurs as well: a poet was once enchanted with lilac clusters held by the twisted hands of bushes, "and now … the lilac raises its blue eyes and gazes into my root-like hands" ("When the Lilacs Bloomed," 1962). A spiritual, visible, conscious of its own self, image of the Motherland and the spiritual world of the lyric "I" — are inseparable planes of a singular linguistic-poetic painting created by Malyshko in the last years of his life, and still remain undeciphered.

Crucial here are the already mentioned higher folk ethics and aesthetics — the moral-aesthetic grounding of Malyshko's poetry, genetically linked to the national mentality. As in traditional Ukrainian culture, nature for the artist is the source of everything good in life, its nourishment. It is the native home of man the laborer, farmer, who in his respectful attitude towards nature, to the land, is true to himself, and is not a biblical demiurge ("Here where goats grazed and cows mooed, / Potatoes baked and the orchard resonated like a bow, / Everything bloomed and lived in harmonious love, / In the creation of wonders by warm manly hands"; here "rains gathered, like children for dinner, gods chewed bread on gray canvases…"). The centuries old agrarian understanding of good and evil is transposed in Malyshko to all spheres of existence,

becoming a criterion for the assessment and new, yet unknown phenomena. For V. Kubilius — this represents the third, higher stage of development of folk culture and folklore.[3]

Everything that promotes the bearing of fruit — from industrious zeal to a cool wet April — is wonderful and appropriate. Everything that prevents vitalizing ties between people and earth, people and nature — ranging from migrations and industrial emissions to nuclear rain — are foreign and unacceptable. The world of nature, concerned with the eternal pulse of the growing cycle is understandable and close for Malyshko, and an unbalanced urban industrialized world — is not. In understanding reality, the subject of Malyshko's poetry of his "second voyage" takes the side of life-giving nature, the random generosity of the earth and clear sky. It is also the source of the special apologetics of the Kyivan Dnipro region as a personal ecumene and a rejection of the STR (Scientific Technical Revolution) epoch. Admittedly, Malyshko was the first in Ukrainian literature to so strongly concern himself with moral-philosophical, social, environmental, and spiritual-cultural problems of the scientific-technological revolution and technological progress and expressed a whole mass of warnings on scientific and technological progress, even negative judgments. In his rejection of feeble imperial anonymity, he took on a clearly oppositional position regarding the STR.

In a time of a widespread fascination with scientific-technical progress, and even STR euphoria (which has led to environmental hopelessness, multiple crises, ultimately, to the Chernobyl catastrophe along with its accompanying formula stating that "Science requires sacrifice") Malyshko appealed to us to measure good and evil not by temporary instant benefits, not by the minute but by the historical infinity of national existence. "I have, to be frank, not entered, with my word, into the silence of the laboratory where strontium is converted like submissive clay" — the poet writes in a 1961 poem. But the point is that he will never enter those laboratories (other poets — Ivan Drach, Dmytro Pavlychko, will…). STR realities, and along with them in passing — the entire new "builder's of communism code" — will not take on for him ontological value and aesthetic weight, and not become a symbolic locus for the positive "I." He will sense "the laboratory's breathing" through a naked nerve of trees, animals, fields and waters, not finding comfort and catharsis in urban vibration, but rather in the gentle and defenseless image of nature, at that typically and recognizably — in Ukrainian, even more, Dnipro region nature: "Oh, my brothers — behold the beautiful red poppies, in a storm, in summer, in November sing, so that I weep and not endure a fourth sleepless night."

Among other things the artist finds troubling is the moral unrooted character of the new age from which he, due to language, was already distanced and was noticeably increasing this distance by the construction of his own ecumene. It is widely diffused in the poetry of his final years: here we find no apologetics for Soviet reality or the poeticization of STR achievements, instead we immediately sense alarm about the negative consequences of the latter ("Request," 1962). Distancing man from his native land — from the ethical foundations of national existence — leads, according to the poet, to moral impoverishment, and moral blindness. In this, his "thematically permitted" conversation, with the new age, which includes a number of poems

3 V. Kubilius, "Formirovanie natsionalnoi literatury — podrazhanie ili khudozhestvennaia transformatsiia? [The Formation of the National Literature — Imitation or Artistic Transformation?]," *Vorosy literatury* 8 (1976): 53.

in the *Blue Chronicle* collection, 1968, Malyshko repeatedly appeals to common sense, calling to conserve "the green home of nature" and the sensitive spiritual world of a contemporary: "Do not destroy my years, those narrow fields, / You will not replace swarms of bees with thistles, / Do not burn the branches of trees on earth, / So that my soul can regenerate."

Malyshko's poetic world was always based on traditional ethics, and now the poet virtually refers to them, convincing the searching "I" in their usefulness, moreover — in them as a prerequisite for the spiritual health and moral salvation of the contemporary world; he is clearly concerned with the lack of spiritual support for scientific-technological progress, that leads to blind technocracy, and in this critical stance simply no room remains for Soviet concepts and ideologemes. But the poet has a means to contradict this blindness of technocracy, a personal antithesis — consisting of spiritual development of the self, based on national culture that demands not a return to, but *striving* for. Moreover for today's marginals — uprooted and not adopting any others. Malyshko acutely sensed and condemned the marginal ("Ours is to Love — Love Unreservedly...," 1966); The sign and symbol of these ethical orientations in the poem "Antithesis," 1968, are lines from Shevchenko at the end of the poem, not coincidentally graphically detached from the present dimension and rendered by this present "in brackets":

> Earth is disturbed by galaxies of chords.
> Transposed engrams of hordes.
> Videotrons. Protons. Photons.
> Cybernetic Fultons scream.
> Syntheses. Abstracts. Compressed formulae.
> Tr. Pr. Hr. Huh!
> Tr. Pr. Hr. Huh! — abbreviations,
> Like nightingale songs in nature.
> From angles and faces, from thought and complexity
> We search for ways to urgency,
> And cataracts of horror cover the top,
> Thermoscopic, atomic crusts.
>
> ("...Grow, Grow, my Poplar,
> Higher and Higher!")

Space orbits and expanses lacking their earthly roots remain glittering golden threads of human aspirations, a whimsical game of practical potential, if they are not ethically provided for, and for the "late" Malyshko the Ukrainian system of folk ethics remains the sole vitalizing and trustworthy option:

> And when we tire of mapping the heavens
> According to zodiacs and horizons,
> We will be drawn to that house,
> That in youth gave requests and wings.

— Give me, mother, the plant that clings,
For without it, the cosmos is tight.
— Give me, mother, bread at the good dawn,
For without it we cannot breathe or live!

("And When We Tire of Mapping the Heavens…," 1968)

Malyshko's last poetry collection, *The Book of Being*, is composed of natural, ethnographic expressive imagery that reflects the undoubtedly appropriate and meaningful, in terms of the vital needs of a free person. The natural landscape and its realities here act not only as the subject of imagery, but also the subject of the appreciation of the "too human," the judge of human error and iniquity and simultaneously the benchmark for overcoming them. Such is the "gray goose" in a reflection on the integrity of the artist and art:

The gray goose with its wings
Two rivers in song embraces.

The gray goose walks the garden,
The blue sky in its trail.

The main word here is "can't be bought": the older among us can recollect, how when in the midst of a friendly gathering Malyshko walked up to a number of shelves of his own books, passed his hand over them and suddenly asked aloud: "Will even one of them remain?!" He knew and understood everything. It is from that knowledge that the image of a thin, "can't be bought" flute, emerges as both a benchmark and reproach under Malyshko's August heavens…

Thus, Malyshko conducts his personal search for and selection of moral guidelines on permitted content territory in a seemingly quite harmless, from the state's point of view, motif sphere, namely in terms of relations with modern industrial civilization and with the scientific-technological revolution and its consequences for the earth and humanity. As noted, in the opposition of "STR — Nature," Malyshko with all possible intensity and directness takes the side of the latter. Clearly, in this he patently eliminates the Ukrainian world, as opposed to, say, Ivan Drach, for whom a *pryzba* (foundation embankment) of village house simultaneously represents a threshold into the world of synchrotron radiation. However, for the poet the cost for such elimination unreservedly denotes "the personal," which has ontological and historical sense only for him, and which in language stands completely separate from the entire Soviet array of symbols and meanings. A good example here is the poem "Sunflower," whose symbols, gentle joking manner, imagery, and first of all — phraseological linguistic truthfulness are rooted in the very essence of millennial Ukrainian existence:

Where winds have pierced
Evenings and dawns,
Oh, you're like gold
Of a vivid engraving.

In a roundish beret,
Only tilted a little
My little amulet
At the edge of the era...

(From "Sunflower," 1970)

It is today clear that Malyshko's "earthly expanse" as an alternative to urbanism and the STR implicitly became an alternative to the dominant ideology of the era in all of its socio-historical concreteness, just as Malyshko's linguistic picture of the world had become. The poet both linguistically and artistically creates his own country, his personally preferred and valuable reality, his own "*sweet* home" ("Our names of villages — are like striking flint, / Like hammer forged anchors: / Bezradychi, Trypillia on a hill, / Kaharlyky and Krenychi paired; / Beautiful Slobidky, with the moon in clouds, / Karapyshi in the glow of stars, / Where Polovtsian cliffs / Stole into the cherry brown gardens..."). Such becomes, in an aesthetic and ontological sense, Malyshko's sensitively spiritually formed ecumene of the Kyivan Dnipro region, windy and hilly — because by the river — is the land of the buckwheat farmers, cobblers, coopers, wheelwrights, potters, icon painters, and also the sun, water, geese, *chornozem* (black earth) and clay cottages that smell of potions and honey, the land where "heavy winds do not drink dew, crimson grasses ferment a strong brew, and above the distant high horizon warm voices in the autumn meadows are heard."

Present here are "racing winds," "summer before harvest brings serene days to the still waters," the native sunflower — hope on the brink of civilization's thunder — "my little amulet at the edge of the era." These late lyrics feature beauty and strength, right and wrong as understand by our people in their millennial existence. This spiritual experience of the Ukrainian world, ultimately fully open to the heart and mind in its own native words, is implicitly opposed to the embellished Pharisaic present — through a tense expectation of the natural, true, primordial, "own": "The birds go to get the blue waters, / White mildew, and strawberries. / My soul walks in the heat and bad weather / They will drink from the same well"; "Arise, oh word, the heart's wonderful ravine!" Thus the poet initiates a widespread and powerful stylistic flow of rustic poetry (later taken up and developed by B. Oliinyk, M. Shevchenko, V. Osadchyi, D. Ivanov, M. Tymchak, P. Hirnyk and others). This is how Malyshko manages to write great poetry, in his 50s becoming aware of the bitter irony of his "second birth": "I simply haven't lived enough. Believe me."

Professor Volodymyr Morenets is a literary scholar, critic, and translator. He is laureate of many awards, most notably the Shevchenko National Prize (1996). He has taught at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (where he also served as a Vice-President) and the University of Ottawa, and was a Fulbright scholar at Columbia University (1999; 2007–2008). His main research interests include both Polish and Ukrainian poetry, and he is the author of numerous articles, chapters in books, and monographs.