

для «розваги». Навпаки, Д.Конрад пропонував «відкрити» структуру, бо символістське бачення не може бути однозначним, відтак завжди вимагає творчої співпраці з читачем.

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HOW TO MARRY A SONG: ANALYSIS OF BOHDAN-IHOR ANTONYCH'S POEM «WEDDING»

In the last decade, critics have paid considerable attention to the poetry of Ukrainian author Bohdan-Ihor Antonych (1909-1937), who had been neglected earlier. Literary scholars, however, tend to examine Antonych's entire poetic heritage while analysis of single poems is virtually unavailable. Close analysis should greatly expand our understanding of the nature of Antonych's poetic worldview. This paper examines the poem «Wedding,» which, in my opinion, is one of Antonych's key works. The poem reveals certain secrets of the poet's craft and reflects on Antonych's unique vision of the modernist artist. In effect, «Wedding» may help to understand Antonych's process of creation which, according to Paul Valery, is one of the fundamentals of poetry <1>. Even though there are several studies of Antonych's creative impulses (see for example D. Kozij «Three-Fold Source of Antonych's Poetic Inspiration»), the topic often escapes scholars' close attention. Referring to this lacuna, Magdalena Laszlo-Kutsiuk notes: «Bohdan-Ihor Antonych is apparently the greatest Ukrainian poet of the 20th

century, and little has been done to study the sources of his poetics and to determine his place in the Ukrainian and world literature» (Laszlo-Kutsiuk 227). My presentation aims at filling out the blank.

For the purpose of making the further discussion clearer, let me begin my analysis with citing the poem:

Весілля
Почалось так: упився я
від перших власних строф похмілля.
Був тільки місяць дружбою
на мому з піснею весілля.
Як сталося те, як задзвеніло,
сказати не вмів оцього вам би,
коли б так серце не горіло.
Так народились перші ямби.
Слова не тесані в гамарні,
слова, осріблені в вогні.
Складають радісні пісні
в весни завітчаній друкарні.

Wedding

It began this way: I became drunk
With my own strophes of intoxication
Just the moon was a witness
на мому з піснею весілля.
Як сталося те, як задзвеніло,
сказати не вмів оцього вам би,
коли б так серце не горіло.
Так народились перші ямби.
Слова не тесані в гамарні,
слова, осріблені в вогні.
Складають радісні пісні
в весни завітчаній друкарні.
At my wedding with a song.
How that happened, how it rang with me
I would not have been able to tell you
Had not my heart burned so much.
This way the first iambs were born.
Words not carved out in the smeltery
The words turned silver in the fire.
Compose joyful songs
In the flower printing shop of spring.

Antonych wrote the poem in late 1933 or early 1934 and published it in 1934 in his second anthology *Three Rings*. While Antonych's first anthology *Greeting Life* (1932) was proclaimed by critics to be largely imitative, the second collection did not have that shortcoming and, in fact, is considered to be the best of the Ukrainian poet's works. Compositionally, the anthology recalls an academic lecture. Antonych opens with «Auto-Portrait» in which he introduces himself. Then, in «*Three Rings*» he makes a general statement about the main three-fold subject of the anthology. Afterwards, he focuses on historical background and on each of the subjects in particular. Immediately after, the poet describes the

processes of creation in «Wedding.» Then, he goes to core of the collection that consists of 41 poems and, finally, closes with «Conclusion.» Such a structure was deliberate since the available dates of certain poems prove that the order of the poems was not chronological, but apparently the result of a conscious choice.

The poem «Wedding» is written using iambic tetrameter and exact rhyme (zadzvenilo — horilo, vam by — iamby, vohni — pisni, hamarni — drukarni, etc). Masculine and feminine rhymes alternate one another. Structurally, the lyric consists of 12 lines (6 sentences) that are grouped into 3 stanzas. The rhyme scheme is

ABCB
ABAB
ABBA

Iambic tetrameter gives the poem a philosophical mood. In effect, this poetic meter is widely employed in many elegies and songs of mourning written in Slavic languages. For example:

Рече та стогне Дніпр широкий,
Сердитий вітер завива,
Додолу верби гне високі,
Горами хвилю підійма...
(T. Shevchenko «Ручушнна»)
Фонтан любви, фонтан живой!
Принес я в дар тебе две розы.
Люблю немолчный говор твой
И поэтические слезы.
(A. Pushkin «To the Fountain in Bakhchisarai»)
Ta lza, co z oczu twoich splywa,
Jak ogien pali moja dusze,
I wciaz mnie dreczy mysl straszliwa,
Ze cie w nieszczesciu rzucic musze.
(A. Asnyk «Ta lza...»)

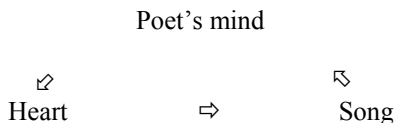
In Antonych's poem, the lyric self is overshadowed by the impersonal form of the verbs and passive voice. The predominance of such verbal forms as *pochalos'*, *stalos'*, *zadzvenilo*, *tesani*, *osribleni*, *zakvitchaniy* places the poet's self on the periphery of the poetic space. Instead of actively participating in the creative process, the poet turns into a passive observer. Moreover, he eventually becomes a victim of the process as he can not control it. The reflexive verbs (i.e. the verbs that refer to an action affecting the subject) such as *upyvsia*, *narodylys'* reinforce the effect of the poet's estrangement.

The prevalence of past tense (*pochalos'*, *buv*, *zadzvenilo* — only the last sentence is written in the present tense) indicates the author's preoccupation with the past. The poet looks back at his past to find clues for his future. Obsessed with time on a syntactical level, Antonych is not interested in it on a semantic level. In fact, time is indefinite in his poem — one can not tell where the starting point is — it is somewhere in the indefinite past. This recalls the Eastern philosophy (Indian in particular) where the cyclical character of life makes it impossible to determine the beginning or the end. However, since the poet comprehends his existence, he realizes that he is in the middle of the cycle and approaching the end. Trying to be retrospective, the author apparently attempts to escape that inevitable end. For him, the unique, the unrepeatable have remained in an earlier period for which he longs. This longing explains

Antonych's emphasis on initiation by using the numeral pershyi and prefixes of initiation (za — zadzvenilo) or verbs indicating the state of beginning (pochalos').

While being unconcerned with present time markers, Antonych is very careful about defining space. Thus, the transformation occurs for him when he was at [the] wedding with a song, his words pass by the smeltery and undergo fire, and his songs emerge from the flower printing shop of spring. Therefore, unlike time, the place for creation is very specific and definite.

The analysis of the content provides us with certain observations about the creative process. The process seems to be three-fold. At first, the poet totally relaxes his mind. Then, he liberates his heart (the unconsciousness). Finally, the material result, the songs, influences the poet again. Therefore, we have a cycle that can be represented in the following scheme:



The role of the poet's mind is virtually insignificant. The mind symbolizes the conscious processes and the lyric self. The poet can not create and think at the same time. In fact, Antonych clearly distinguishes these two processes. Moreover, he regards them as opposite. The poet in contact with the transcendental reality is not able to transmit that reality by means of his mind. Only his heart can be a transmitter. Therefore, the author needs to release his mind to set his heart free and, for this very reason, the poet intoxicates himself with his own songs (upyvsia ia vid pershykh vlasnykh strof pokhmillia). Antonych metaphorically calls the process of intoxication the wedding with the song. In fact, this is a union with the immaterial, the eternal, that will eventually bring immortality to the poet. At first, though, the poet's material self must cease to exist. As a result, for Antonych, cogito ergo sum (to think means to exist) turns into creo ergo morio (to create means to die). The appearance of the moon as a witness reinforces the death symbolism. In accordance with folkloric beliefs, the moon is a symbol of eternal death and rebirth. For example, Edwin Krupp, explaining this cyclical recurrence, remarks: «We say the moon dies, but it is not the moon that dies. We die. We tell stories about it because we die, and we describe the moon in terms that are familiar to us, using it to symbolize what matters most to us» (Krupp 78). Slavic mythology regards the moon as a planet on the way to hell. Additionally among the ancient Slavs, «there was a widespread conviction that the luminary of night was the abode of the souls of the departed; and later she came to be regarded as the dwelling-place of sinful souls which had been transported thither by way of punishment» (The Mythology of All Races 273).

The moon is opposite to the sun. Antonych <2> even calls the moon «the sun of night (sontse nochi)» (Antonych 101). Given the long tradition of associating night with death, the moon is also the sun of the dead. The moon additionally stimulates the process of creativity since it is a source of inspiration. The literary critic Oleh Ilnytzkyj explains the connection among the moon, creativity, and death as follows: «The art (embodied in the 'word' or 'night') is a sin; it is like eating the forbidden fruit from the tree of knowledge. Such eating results in spiritual death. That's why images connected with creativity are simultaneously the images of death and cold (Mystetstvo [uosoblene v 'slovi' chy 'nochi'] tse akt hrikha, tse te kushtuvannia plodu dereva znan', shcho pry nosyt' dukhovnu smert'. Os' chomu obrazy, poviazani z aktom tvorchosti, ie vodnochas obrazamy smerti i kholodu)» (Ilnytzkyj 7). Antonych in his other lyrics often describes the process of creativity as the murder of an author. Poems are born with

pain and suffer. Each poem takes a part of the poet's energy, a part of the poet's essence. Therefore, with every creation of a new verse, a part of the author dies. Meanwhile, the moon observes both the formation of new poems and the death of the author. Paraphrasing Mircea Eliade, we can say that the moon's destiny consists in helping the poet reabsorb forms and to recreate them. In this process of transformation, the artist functions as a filter between the past and the present. This kind of function recalls the nature of the moon in ancient Greece. Some sects there believed that the souls of the just were purified in the moon. Thus, the moon's status can be comparable to that of the poet, who is doomed to deal with the dead and with those who have passed.

Having intoxicated his mind, Antonych allows his heart to speak. By indicating that he can not tell anything (*iak stalo's te, iak zadzvenilo/ skaza't ne vmiv otsioho vam by*), Antonych defines the point of losing control over his conscious self. His mind has no power over the creative process, and Antonych would not be able to say anything at all had not [his] heart burned so much (*koly b tak sertse ne horilo*). Only because his heart is burning, can the poet express himself. It is the flame in his heart that forces the poet to speak. The metaphor of the flaming heart is significant. Fire has the ability to destroy itself along with the material that supports the fire's combustion. Given this, Antonych points to his impermanence. He could have used the slogan of ancient Roman writers: «*Allis inservendo ipse consumor*» (By giving the light to others I am burning myself). Indeed, the poet burns himself in order to let the iambs be born.

Antonych provides the following description of those iambs:

Slova ne tesani v hamarni

Slova osribleni v vohni

In the description, the metaphor *hamarnia* stands for the mind, consciousness, and the fire stands for the heart, the unconscious. By saying that the words are not carved in the smeltery, Antonych suggests that the words were not tempered by the brain. Instead, the words were silvered (i.e. refined, improved) by the heart. These words themselves compose cheerful songs in the flower printing shop of spring. The image of a printing shop used here stands for the physical ability of the poet to put those words on paper. Consequently, the work of the poet is very mechanical and the physical poet is only a printing shop — he receives ideas, material from the transcendental and makes those ideas available to a larger audience. The image of spring indicates seasonality, cyclical characteristics, and also underlines the temporality of the poet's existence. In the spring, a poet harvests and produces the bitter wine of poetry that he and other poets must drink, intoxicating themselves and producing new songs. Here is the end of the cycle and the starting point of the next one.

The poetry, as Antonych sees it, can be compared to an Amazon who recreates herself through the poet and then kills him. The marriage to the song means death. The song attracts the poet, enchants him, intoxicates him with its beauty, and then makes the poet lose control. On the periphery of his mind, though, a poet feels the trap that the Amazon-song prepared for him, but his brain is already weakened and he refuses to think of the danger. The poet enjoys the moment of being with his song. His heart burns, his ability to consciously express himself gradually decreases. The poet stops to think and, therefore, to physically exist.

In sum, the entire poem demonstrates a mood of melancholy and three tendencies of development: 1) from the past to the present; 2) from the particular, the unique, the unrepeatable to the general, the habitual, the repeatable; and 3) the intention to slow down the process of approaching the end.

1 In 1937, Paul Valéry noted in his «*Discours sur l'Esthétique*»: «What in effect is Poetics or rather Poietics? You shall be told. It is everything that concerns the creation of

works, of which the language is at once the substance and the means. This consists, on the one hand, of the study of invention and composition, the role of chance, that of reflection, that of imitation, that [those] of culture and the environment; and, on the other, the examination and analysis of techniques, processes, instruments, materials, means and agents of action» (Pommier, Jean.. Paul Valéry et la création littéraire. Paris: Editions de l'Encyclopédie française, 1946: 7-8).

2 Regarding the significance of the image of the moon in Antonych's poetry, Ihor Kachurovs'kyi points out: «Among Ukrainian poets, Bohdan-Ihor Antonych was the most devoted 'worshiper of the moon' and we can hardly imagine his poetry if we take out lunar motives and images from his works (*Z-pomizh ukraïns'kykh poetiv naizavziatishym 'misiatsepoklontsem' buv Bohdan-Ihor Antonych, chyieï tvorchosti my vzhali ne mohly b uiavyty, iakby z neï vyluchyty misiachni motyvy i misiachnu obraznist'*).» See Kachurovs'kyi, Ihor. «Antonychiv misiats' i problema ukraïns'koho imazhynizmu.» *Suchasnist'* 6 (1997): 28.

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