"**EDYTA BOJANOWSKA** confronts head on a fundamental anomaly: Nikolai Gogol was a Ukrainian, but he became a great Russian writer. She shows how Gogol, throughout his literary career, was deeply torn between his identity as a Ukrainian and his commitment to being a Russian writer. It was his mission to sear Russian hearts with his message of truth and righteousness and show them the way to purify their souls. But his Ukrainian heart was never really in it; he didn't like Russia or believe in it. This is an illuminating, impressive, and original work by a very talented scholar."

—**Hugh McLean,** University of California, Berkeley

"**A MAJOR CONTRIBUTION** to the history of Russian literary culture. Bojanowska illuminates Gogol's works in a new and interesting way, and makes a convincing case for his identification with Ukraine and his frequent inclination to compare Russia unfavorably to it. Her research is extensive, her argument fresh, stimulating, and controversial. The implications for our understanding of Gogol are enormous."

—**Jeffrey P. Brooks,** Johns Hopkins University

"**BOJANOWSKA'S** well-researched, sophisticated, and provocative analysis of the writings of one of Europe's most famous nineteenth-century authors not only offers a new perspective on Gogol's life and works but also sheds new light on the complex and often contradictory formation of modern national identities. A major contribution to the study of nationalism, as well as to the intellectual and cultural history of the region."

—**Serhii Plokhy,** University of Alberta

BOJANOWSKA

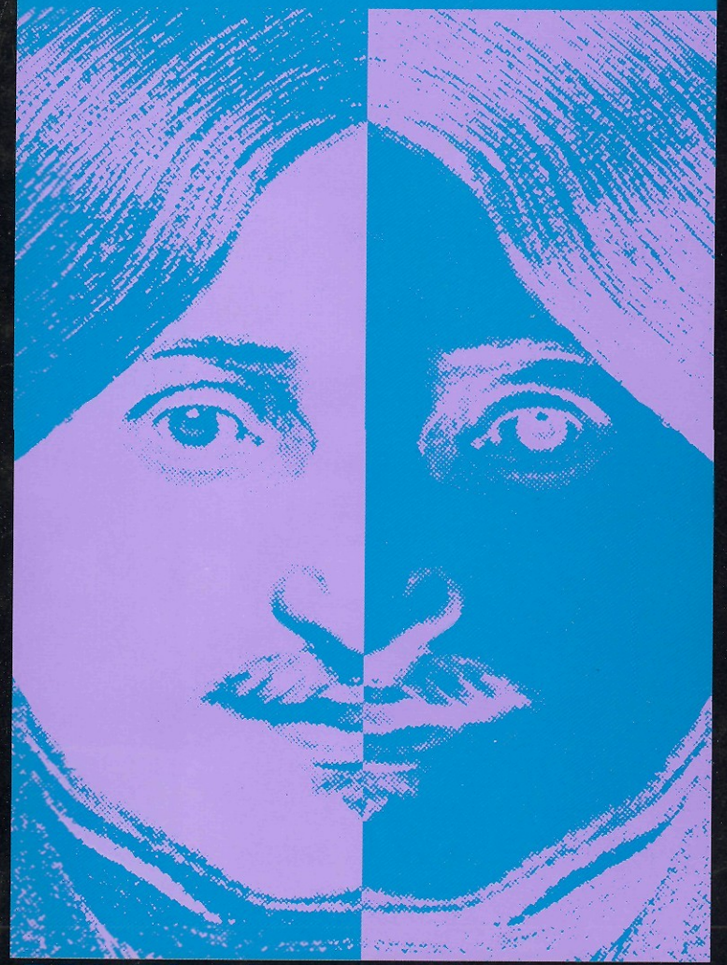
Nikolai GOGOL

BETWEEN UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN NATIONALISM

HARVARD

Nikolai GOGOL

BETWEEN UKRAINIAN AND RUSSIAN NATIONALISM



EDYTA M. BOJANOWSKA

The nineteenth-century author Nikolai Gogol occupies a key place in the Russian cultural pantheon as an ardent champion of Russian nationalism. Indeed, he created the nation's most famous literary icon: Russia as a rushing carriage, full of elemental energy and limitless potential.

In a pathbreaking book, Edyta Bojanowska topples the foundations of this Russocentric myth of the Ukrainian-born writer, a myth that has also dominated his Western image. She reveals Gogol's creative engagement with Ukrainian nationalism and calls attention to the subversive irony and ambiguity in his writings on Russian themes. While in early writings Gogol endowed Ukraine with cultural wholeness and a heroic past, his Russia appears bleak and fractured. Russian readers resented this unflattering contrast and called upon him to produce a brighter vision of Russia. Gogol struggled to satisfy their demands but ultimately failed.

In exploring Gogol's fluctuating nationalist commitments, this book traces the connections and tensions between the Russian and Ukrainian nationalist paradigms in his work, and situates both in the larger imperial context. In addition to radically new interpretations of Gogol's texts, Edyta Bojanowska offers a comprehensive analysis of his reception by contemporaries.

Brilliantly conceived and masterfully argued, *Nikolai Gogol* fundamentally changes our understanding of this beloved author and his place in Russian literature.

EDYTA BOJANOWSKA teaches at Harvard University, where she was a Junior Fellow at the Society of Fellows.

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Nikolai Gogol

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Nikolai Gogol

Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism

Edyta M. Bojanowska

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To Michael E. Kavoukjian and to the memory of Robert A. Maguire

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Abbreviations

IGR Karamzin, N. M. *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo.* 12 vols., 1816–1826. Reprint in 4 vols. Moscow: Kniga, 1988.

PSS Gogol, Nikolai V. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii.* 14 vols. Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1937–1952.

SSBel Belinskii, V. G. *Sobranie sochinenii v deviati tomakh.* 9 vols. Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1976–1981.

SS'94 Gogol, Nikolai V. *Sobranie sochinenii.* 9 vols. Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1994.

TS Gogol, Nikolai V. *Sochineniia N. V. Gogolia.* 7 vols. Ed. N. Tikhonravov and V. Shenrok. Moscow: Nasledniki br. Salaevykh, 1889–1896.

A Note on Transliteration

In the Notes and Bibliography, I use the Library of Congress transliteration system for Russian and Ukrainian. In the text proper, except for quoted Russian or Ukrainian phrases, I use a simplified version of this system: I (1) omit palatalization markers, (2) transcribe Russian surnames ending in *–skii* or *–ii/yi* as *–sky* or *–y* (for example, Belinsky and Afanasy instead of Belinskii and Afanasii), (3) use the customary spelling of Iurii as Yuri and Fedor as Fyodor, and (4) spell surnames such as Herzen or Sękowski according to their original German or Polish spelling. Certain Russian and Ukrainian first names ending in *–ii* retain both vowels, for example, Andrii, Georgii, or Mokii. In the text, I use the spelling "Kiev/Kievan" for both the ancient principality and the Ukrainian city, while in the Bibliography and the Notes I adopt the current spelling "Kyiv" as a place of publication. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

Nikolai Gogol

Introduction

When Aleksandra Osipovna Smirnova asked Nikolai Vasilevich Gogol in 1844, "In your soul, are you a Russian or a Ukrainian?" she confronted the writer with a question that puzzled his contemporaries and continues to generate debate to this day.[1] The topic had first arisen at a gathering in Russian high society, at which Gogol was accused of an apparent lack of love for Russia and excessive devotion to Ukraine. Gogol, who was Smirnova's close friend, answered her characteristically blunt query with a peculiar reply: "You say, 'Reach to the depths of your soul and ask yourself, are you really a Russian, or are you a Ukrainian?' But tell me, am I a saint; can I really see all my loathsome faults?"[2] Rather unexpectedly, Gogol associates the question of his national identity with moral imperfection. He then launches into a tirade that reveals his deep-seated insecurity about the issue: he chastises Smirnova for failing to point out his faults, gripes about mean-spirited speculations on his two-facedness, suspects his friends of ill will, complains about the insults he suffered, and stresses his desire to become a better person. In short, Smirnova's straightforward question elicits a defensive reply that reveals the embattled position Gogol saw himself occupying in the nationalistically charged climate of the 1840s. His colleagues and critics were pressuring him to be more "Russian," and in some measure he internalized this imperative. His Ukrainianness was becoming a liability, which comes through in Gogol's equation of imperfect Russianness with a moral failing.

Significantly, neither Smirnova, who grew up in Ukraine and shared Gogol's nostalgia for it, nor Gogol uses a neutral term such as "a Ukrainian" or "a Little Russian." Instead, they choose *khokhlik,* a diminutive version of the Russian ethnonym *khokhol,* which one might loosely

render with the Canadian "Uke," with strong overtones of "hick." This usage resembles the practice of embracing a society's dismissive labels by today's marginalized social groups. In the end, Gogol does engage Smirnova's question, if only indirectly: "You know that I may have more pride and may have done more wrong than others, because, as you know, I united in me two natures: that of a *khokhlik* and that of a Russian" (*PSS* 12, 360). According to this letter, the union of Russianness and Ukrainianness appears to have multiplied Gogol's wrongdoings and faults.

It took Gogol two months to pen a calm and rational response:

> I'll tell you that I myself don't know what soul I have: Ukrainian [*khokhlatskaia*] or Russian. I only know that I would grant primacy neither to a Little Russian over a Russian nor to a Russian over a Little Russian. Both natures are generously endowed by God, and as if on purpose, each of them in its own way includes in itself that which the other lacks—a clear sign that they are meant to complement each other. Moreover, the very stories of their past way of life are dissimilar, so that the different strengths of their characters could develop and, having then united, could become something more perfect in humanity. (*PSS* 12, 419)

Here Gogol celebrates his hyphenated identity, emphasizing the perfect compatibility, richness, and benefit for humanity that results from such a merger of Ukrainianness and Russianness. Rather than doubling his afflictions and faults, his binationalism doubles his advantages. Always careful about his public image, Gogol replaces the previous letter's anguish with a carefully balanced response for the consumption of Russian salon society, in which Smirnova served as one of his emissaries.

These two quotes epitomize Gogol's conflicted attitude toward his Russo-Ukrainian identity, which he alternately bemoaned and embraced. His fiction and other writings offer equally conflicted and striking treatments of national identity and nationalism. Gogol struggled with these ideas throughout his creative life and made the definition of Ukrainianness and Russianness one of his principal concerns. An analysis of Gogol's treatment of these issues is the subject of this book.

While aspects of Gogol's approach to nationalism are discussed in various general sources on Gogol, this is the first comprehensive study of this topic in any language. The probing and innovative research on nationalism and imperialism, including postcolonial theory in recent decades, has created an inspiring intellectual environment for writing it. The book is also timely with regard to the ongoing post-Soviet rethinking of Russian and Ukrainian identities. Though Gogol's relevance for Russian nationalism has remained strong irrespective of the political regime, a renewed focus in Russia today on the nationalist discourse of the tsarist era makes this a particularly important moment to reexamine Gogol in this light. Recent political events in Ukraine—its rise to independent statehood as well as the Orange Revolution that followed Russia's meddling in Ukraine's 2004 election—provide a vivid contemporary frame of reference for a work that explores Gogol's presentation of the Russian-Ukrainian cultural interface as a zone of extraordinary tension.

This book grew out of a personal need to make sense of Gogol's treatment of Russia and Ukraine, which in my reading and teaching refused to conform to standard opinions on this topic. The project began from a paper on *Taras Bulba,* in which I compared the text's two redactions and found confounding complexities lurking beneath the work's much-commented-on Russian chauvinism. Then, repeated close reading of *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* time and again revealed anti-imperial allusions and motifs that struck me as quite subversive. Teaching *Dead Souls* to American students confirmed my growing conviction that there was more to Gogol's treatment of nationalism than meets the eye. Confronted with these students' very reasonable claims that the novel's ending made no sense whatsoever in the context of the entire book, I felt quite powerless to defend the text's integrity. In their earnest reading, Gogol's satiric gallery of pathetic fools and wretches, bedbug-ridden Russian inns, and inhospitable vistas of dreary landscapes simply did not add up to an exalted message of Russian messianism. To recite the traditional explanations for this cacophony of tonalities meant to confront their tenuousness. I began to wonder to what extent the standard readings of Gogol's nationalism reflected the realities of the Gogolian text and to what extent they enacted a time-honored ritual of Russian culture that has sought to monumentalize Gogol as a national prophet.

The standard Russian view of Gogol holds that he was an ardent and sincere Russian patriot. His Ukrainian heritage, for all the fruit it provided his inspiration, amounted to no more than an accident of birth that he shed like a cocoon once he found his true place in Russian culture. A quaint ethnic flourish, Ukrainianness enriched Gogol's *Russian* works. To the extent that it matters, it apparently does so due to the writer's ability

to subsume it so seamlessly and artlessly in his Russianness. Gogol's overriding allegiance to Russian nationalism, according to this canonical view, shines through brilliantly and unambiguously in his writings, which furnish ample "proofs" for reconstructing the writer's national psyche. The artistic integrity of Gogol's works, their embeddedness in larger social and nationalist contexts, their irony, and the complex devices of narratorial misdirection and distancing that Gogol practiced with considerable skill can all be brushed aside in this grand project of nationalistic exegesis.

Far from an argued position, this view of Gogol is one of the cardinal axioms of Russian cultural criticism, implicitly underlying virtually all of Russian and Western scholarship on the writer.[3] Only recently, in the context of post-Soviet national anxiety, have some Russian scholars felt the need to affirm Gogol's Russianness explicitly, making statements such as this:

> From childhood Gogol felt close to the traditions, customs, and artistic creativity of the Ukrainian people. [But] the future writer regarded Russia as his homeland. He viewed Ukraine (Little Russia) as an inseparable part of Russia, just as he viewed Little Russian culture as an organic part of Russian culture. Gogol considered himself a Russian [*russkii chelovek*] and a Russian writer, who united, however, in his work the achievements of both the Ukrainian and the Russian nation.[4]

Western critics, skeptical as they are of other Russian myths, have failed to question this approach to Gogol. Partly due to their concern with more "timeless" and "artistic" aspects of Gogol's work, they have been more than happy to cede the topic of Gogol's nationalism to Russians and Ukrainians, who appear so unfashionably obsessed with the phenomenon.

Yet nationalism has not been merely an aspect of Gogol's posthumous reception. It constituted a key dimension in Gogol's creative process and in his contemporary reception. To ignore it is to diminish our understanding of Gogol's work and its place in Russian culture. Moreover, this topic offers many surprises that have been hiding in plain view. I mean by that the "anomalous" texts that have been available in scholarly editions of Gogol since the late nineteenth century and that to this day have not been integrated into a holistic analysis of Gogol's work. Preeminent among these texts is a fragment called "Mazepa's Meditations," which portrays the hetman who tried to separate Ukraine from Russia in a positive light. An excerpt from Gogol's "Notebook for 1846–51" called

"An Overview of the Process of Enlightenment in Russia," with its grim assessment of Russian national identity, may serve as another example (I discuss both texts in Chapter 3). Furthermore, certain "anomalous" biographical data about Gogol remain similarly marginalized. Accounts of anti-Russian pronouncements that Gogol apparently voiced when abroad and his contacts with Polish refugees from tsarism belong to this obscure category (see Chapter 5).

The Russocentric view of Gogol is thus ripe for interrogation. Indeed, this book finds this view reductive and misleading. Contrary to O. V. Novitskaia's dogmatic assertions in the quote above, Gogol's position in Russian culture was that of an outsider who tried, but ultimately failed, to establish himself as "fully Russian." Far from considering Ukraine as consubstantial with Russia, Gogol quite often treated it in his writings as a separate national paradigm, despite what, late in life and in the context of a Russian nationalist backlash against him, he told Smirnova. Indeed, Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism ran stronger than is commonly assumed, while his service to the cause of Russianness was deeply ambivalent and riddled with problems, as some contemporaries were quick to note. Gogol's gospel of Russian nationalism rings hollow when compared to his enamored celebration of Ukraine in the early stories, a contrast that greatly bothered Gogol's contemporary readers. My encounter with Gogol's works, including both public and private or unpublished pronouncements, yields a complex picture of a superimposition of national and imperial paradigms, their malleability, and Gogol's conscious efforts to negotiate their meaning with his audience.

The year 1836 stands as an important caesura in the evolution of Gogol's nationalist ideas. At some point during this year, Gogol renounced his ambition to launch a career in the civil service and in academia and decided to become a professional writer. While this led to his very public espousal of the Russian national cause, up to that point—that is, for half of what is commonly considered his "creative period" (1830–1842)—Gogol was primarily involved with Ukrainian nationalist concerns. Due to the beleaguered position of Ukrainian literature in the institutional context of the Russian empire, Russian literature offered far greater possibilities to ambitious authors. Since nationalism for Gogol was the principal form of a writer's social utility, for him becoming a Russian writer meant becoming a Russian nationalist. Yet however earnest and dogged his quest to divine a suitably flattering vision of Russia, his heart

was not in it, so he stumbled and ultimately failed. At the same time, Gogol's public espousal of Russian nationalism did not mean that Ukraine no longer mattered to him. On the contrary, the most cursory overview of Gogol's biography contradicts the often-invoked teleology of the inexorable disappearance of his Ukrainian interests and sympathies.[5]

In the continuation of his second reply to Smirnova about his national identity, Gogol includes a warning: "Do not draw from [my works] any conclusions about me." Heeding this warning, and recognizing the futility of an archeology of any authorial consciousness, this books focuses on the nationalist discourse of Gogol's *texts* and avoids the question of his personal national identity. Yet the analysis carried out in this book allows for some limited conclusions about this complex question. These conclusions do not flow from any one text or any particular grouping of them but, rather, from a cumulative examination of how Gogol handled this topic in his imaginative and scholarly texts and in his correspondence. Most important, Gogol's national identity, as the treatment of nationalism in his texts, cannot be framed as an either/or question, since ample evidence shows that he positioned himself within both Russian and Ukrainian nationalist discourses.

Gogol's Russianness was defined by imperial patriotism and a civic commitment to furthering the welfare and glory of the Russian realm. His Ukrainianness determined his cultural identity and a sense of ethnic belonging, which until 1836 he was eager to dress in the fashionable guise of Herderian nationalism and which represented his inner refuge until the end of his life. It is likely that Gogol's Ukrainian mentality doomed his civic project of Russian nationalism. It is also likely that the Herderian underpinnings of Gogol's nationalism—especially its reliance on cultural factors when defining a nation—fit well his image of Ukraine, while adhering much less to his perceptions of Russia (this in fact may also explain the Russians' own preference for Hegelian nationalism, in which the concept of the state was key). Though contemporary Ukraine, like contemporary Russia, inspired his satire, Gogol was kinder to the place of his birth, for which many Russians reproached him.

Whether Gogol was a Russian *or* a Ukrainian is thus the wrong question to ask. This book asks instead *how* Gogol's writings participated in the discourses of *both* Russian and Ukrainian nationalism. This larger question can be broken down into more concrete components. What are the characteristics of the Ukrainian and Russian nations for Gogol, and how

do these conceptions evolve in his writings? How do they interact with each other and with other models of nationhood popularized in Gogol's time? What political risks and inducements contextualize Gogol's representations of Russia and Ukraine? What political reverberations follow their dissemination? More fundamentally, how do Gogol's texts reveal a nation to be a meaningful unit of humanity? What determinants does a nation have for him? How does it come into being, "live," "die," become "reborn," and how does interaction with other nations or empires influence its development? It is a measure of how thoroughly Gogol internalized a nationalist worldview that an analysis of his texts and their reception offers answers to all these questions.

This study of Gogol's nationalism incorporates the perspective of imperialism, which facilitated such split loyalties as Gogol's but which has been lacking from scholarship on the author. Just as it is impossible to understand Russian nationalism without recourse to its imperialist history, as I discuss in Chapter 1, so do many of Gogol's choices, concerns, aspirations, and dilemmas remain unclear if viewed apart from the imperial context in which he functioned. The newest voices from Ukraine, taking a cue from postcolonial theory, offer thoughtful attempts to introduce the imperial dynamic into the study of Gogol.[6]

Exclusivist and essentialist thinking about nationalism and the highly politicized, indeed nationalistic, scholarly atmosphere of both imperial and Soviet Russia and Ukraine have adversely affected previous attempts to study this topic. Gogol's personal national allegiance—the ultimate interest of critics—was forced into a Russian or, much less frequently, into a Ukrainian identity. Despite scattered voices that doubted Gogol's sincere devotion to the cause of Russianness, the official view of Gogol as a fervent Russian patriot has not been challenged. Instead of considering the two nationalist paradigms that appear in Gogol's work dialogically—seeing their connections and points of tension—the proponents of Russifying Gogol focused on his works on Russian themes and ignored or dismissed his Ukrainian corpus. The proponents of Ukrainianizing him performed the opposite selection. This books aims to correct these errors by encompassing Gogol's entire oeuvre, that is, both fiction and nonfiction, the works on both Ukrainian and Russian topics. It also recreates how Gogol's works functioned within the imperial public sphere, which was sharply attuned to their nationalistic import. This book's comprehensive analysis of Gogol's contemporary reception and of the writer's

responses to these polemics takes the Gogolian text out of its discrete existence on the printed page and transforms it into a lively and well-attended event in the cultural life of Nicholaevan Russia.

While it is understandable why Russian critics would refuse to consider Gogol's contrast between Ukraine and Russia as a *national* juxtaposition, it is less obvious why Ukrainian critics have largely followed suit. Perhaps a testament to the robust hegemony of the Russian cultural narrative, the Ukrainians have confined themselves to rounding out Gogol's Russocentric image by stressing the formative, lifelong influence of Ukrainian culture on the writer. Focusing on Gogol's Ukrainian subject matter, their studies gloss over the ideological, nationalistic dimension in his treatment of Ukraine. Though Ukrainian critics, often engaged in postcolonial rethinking of their history within the empire, now claim that Gogol's work belongs equally to the Ukrainian, not just Russian, literary tradition, they stop short of claiming Mykola Hohol (the writer's name in Ukrainian) for Ukrainian *nationalism.*[7] This may also stem from the either/or thinking about nationalism. Since Gogol's participation in Russian nationalism cannot be denied—he made his ambitions in this regard public with great fanfare—surely he cannot be simultaneously counted among Ukrainian nationalists.

Yet Gogol's treatment of Ukraine until 1836 did have a definite nationalistic orientation. Well aware of the political strictures on this topic, however, he knew better than to be explicit, which is why his Ukrainian nationalistic message appears more subdued and indirect in the published writings, often cloaked in the Aesopian language of humor (the Ukrainian Gogol is bolder in his private and unpublished pieces). It may appear that the ideology of Romantic nationalism would consider an allegiance to two different nations a perplexing anomaly, like professing two creeds. Yet fluid, ambiguous, and strategic national loyalties abounded in the multicultural and multilingual landscape of eastern Europe, as elsewhere, especially in imperial contexts. Sir Walter Scott, an author Gogol read avidly, found it possible to champion both Scottish and English nationalist ideas. Gogol's case of multiple nationalist commitments is similar, and it deserves proper elucidation within a single Russian-Ukrainian analytical framework.

Attempts to reconcile the Russian and Ukrainian aspects of Gogol have been made in the past by Ukrainian critics, although they invariably focused on the writer's self rather than on his work. Can these hypotheses about Gogol's hyphenated national identity help elucidate his writings?

One turn-of-the-century notion held that Gogol suffered from *dvoedushie,* or a case of "double-soul."[8] According to this view, in the trauma and sacrifice of Gogol's self-Russification lurk the origins of his eventual psychological breakdown. This model of national schizophrenia smacks of an essentialist view of national identity, as if repressing one's "natural" national identity were as severe a violation of the natural order as stopping oneself from breathing. Though my analysis corroborates that Gogol's losing battle to live up to his professions of Russianness caused him great anguish, this applies only to the later Gogol and seems less a psychological problem than one of cultural politics: divided Ukrainian-Russian loyalty bothered Gogol only inasmuch as his Russian audience refused to accept it. Besides, how to tell a split identity, with its implication of unnaturalness, from a union of natures, as Gogol ultimately put it to Smirnova?

According to another hypothesis, Gogol was an "all-Russian on a Little Russian foundation."[9] This chimerical designation is based on the fact that Gogol wrote his works in Russian, here understood as the common language of the multinational empire. While an imperial context is highly pertinent to a study of Gogol, limiting nationality to language, especially the (nonexistent) "all-Russian" language, is an unreliable and long discredited proposition, as any practicing bi- or multilingual will attest. Count Cavour wrote his most impassioned arguments in support of Italian nationalism in French, the same language that Fyodor Tiutchev used in his articles on Russian nationalism. The notion of all-Russianness (*obshcherusskost'*), moreover, rests on a fiction of a supranational imperial culture, and as such it represents a screen for what in fact was simply Russian culture, the privileged culture of the Russocentric empire, however multiethnic its inspiration.

Rather than follow these outdated and narrow models for approaching Gogol, I construct a framework that incorporates the recent theories of nationalism and the histories of its Russian and Ukrainian varieties. This scholarship has advanced ideas and notions that antiquate, if not invalidate, much of what has previously been said about Gogol in this regard. Aiming for a greater contiguity between literary analysis and other scholarly disciplines that have theorized about nationalism, I harness in Chapter 1 various studies of nationalism for the task of interpreting Gogol's participation in it. This chapter explains my terminology, but I should note here that I treat nationalism as a discourse of educated elites that articulates the *idea* of nation and of national identity, a discourse

with important ideological functions in Russian nineteenth-century culture. As such, this discourse invokes various social and political loyalties and culls elements from the fields of religion, history, ethnography, and language in order to construct a new national amalgam. My use of the term "nationalism" is thus not predicated upon the existence of national political movements or national identity in either Russia or Ukraine.

It must be stressed that nationalism is not a tiny peripheral niche of Gogol's work. This theme is quite fundamental to both his fiction and nonfiction. My difficulty lay not in finding texts that relate to my topic but, rather, in finding ones whose discussion I could omit. Nationalism was also central to the contemporary reviews of Gogol's work. The appropriateness of Gogol's image of Russia may well be the single most important theme that runs through these reviews, and it was debated with all the fervor that one would expect of a society in the full grips of nationalism. Yet while nationalism, whether Russian or Ukrainian, is central to Gogol, Gogol is also central to Russian and Ukrainian nationalism. His writings typically appear in anthologies of Russian nationalism and are discussed in studies on Russian and Ukrainian national identities. Since the idea of Ukraine poses the most essential problem in considering the idea of the Russian nation, the fact that Gogol straddles this fault line further increases his centrality in Russian nationalist discourse.

As a study of nationalism's famous "literary" case, this book relies on a larger social and political context. One cannot read Gogol's nationalist ideas as if they were carefree records of his fancy. Since nationalism was a part of the government's official ideology, implicitly since 1825 and explicitly since 1834, Gogol's treatment of it must be put in the context of the official discourse concerning national history, language, and cultural heritage and of the censorship that surrounded these issues. In exploring Golden Age classics, scholars of Russian literature, especially Soviet ones, have been particularly mindful of these works' democratic, constitutional, or otherwise "progressive" ideas, often merely alluded to between the lines. They often foreground the authors' skirmishes with the censors, give great care to the recovery of censored passages, and are sensitive to the practice of self-censorship. Since the reality of censorship extended to nationalism and particularly to the topic of Ukraine, the same vigilance should be given to the problem of Gogol and nationalism, without, however, the past excesses of this approach. I therefore pay close

attention to the tone and connotation of Gogolian texts and, since Gogol textology often leaves much to be desired, to alternative publications, manuscript variants, and drafts. These are helpful in prompting certain readings, demonstrating the direction of Gogol's work, and restoring perfectly viable options that were dismissed by Soviet textologists and canonizers.

To offer just one example of what we gain by going beyond the canonical text, let me note here Gogol's use of the words *narod* and *natsiia* in his article on Ukrainian history, which I discuss in Chapter 3. While *natsiia* (pl. *natsii*) unambiguously means "a nation" and carries a political overtone, *narod* (pl. *narody*) is more vague and politically innocuous, as it may mean "a people" or "a nation," depending on the context. In the article's manuscript version, Gogol reserves the term *natsiia* exclusively for Ukrainians and labels all non-Ukrainians as *narody*. In the published version, however, Ukrainians become a *narod*, while their Russian and Polish neighbors are referred to as *natsii*. Since the article appeared in an official government journal, censorship likely influenced this reversal of terms. Yet it is certainly helpful to know the genealogy of Gogol's statements when examining his nationalist sympathies and the ideological pressures that assisted his work.

I am therefore interested in the Gogolian text as a palimpsest that records its own becoming rather than a fixed, authoritative end product. I view it as a dynamic entity, rather than a stable canon established by often tendentious editing of his works. I am interested in how Gogol's texts functioned at the time they appeared and how they looked to his contemporary readers, which is why, whenever pertinent and possible, I recover their original published version. Furthermore, I consider Gogol's entire body of works as evolving. These texts respond to changing external circumstances and reflect Gogol's changing ideas and objectives. Gogol's decision around 1836 to become a Russian writer represents just one such circumstance that had major repercussions for his art. I avoid, however, viewing Gogol's early work through the lens of the late, presumably mature and more perfect one, especially as regards ideology. This book paints a picture of growing complexity in Gogol's handling of nationalist ideology, particularly pre- and post-1836. A fairly straightforward contrasting of Ukrainian and Russian national characteristics in Gogol's early texts, even if rhetorically obfuscated due to the topic's political sensitivity, becomes later a more nuanced attempt to synthesize the two paradigms, as

in the *Taras Bulba* of 1842. The rather cursory allegiance Gogol paid to the government's Official Nationality in his historical articles in *Arabesques* (1835), grows into a deeply involved yet perilously unorthodox paean to this doctrine in *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* (1847). This complexity, however, is not inchoate in Gogol's early work. I hope to arrive at an image of Gogol's authorship that includes ruptures and discontinuities and is not a mere monolith with all edges smoothed out. These tensions are due to the development of Gogol's ideas, the changing expectations of his readers, and his own changing status in Russian culture, all of which necessitated complex adjustments of his position with regard to various ideologies of his time, both official and unofficial.

The structure of this book intentionally departs from classic studies of Gogol. I treat in one large chapter what has hitherto been viewed as the main corpus of Gogol's works: the Petersburg stories, *The Government Inspector,* and *Dead Souls.* I devote separate chapters to other, often disregarded texts, such as *Evenings on a Farm,* the historical notes and *Arabesques* articles, *Taras Bulba,* the second volume of *Dead Souls,* and *Selected Passages.* This rebalancing of the Gogolian canon throws light on some musty corners of the Gogolian oeuvre. It also facilitates a new, fuller vision of this important writer, one based on a roughly diachronic development of Gogol's ideas and writings rather than an aesthetic judgment of value. Despite the book's ambition to be comprehensive, some exclusions were necessary. I omitted two of Gogol's most famous Petersburg stories, "The Nose" and "The Overcoat," since they do not concern nationalist themes. I also refer only in passing to three of the four stories from the *Mirgorod* collection: "Old-World Landowners," "Viy," and "The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich." Their critical treatment of contemporary Ukrainian realities continues the trend that began with "Ivan Fedorovich Shponka and His Aunt" from *Evenings on a Farm,* which I discuss in detail in Chapter 2. I excluded these *Mirgorod* stories since they do not add anything new, as far as Gogol's vision of Ukraine is concerned, to the themes and patterns established by "Shponka."[10]

I begin the book by sketching out my theoretical approach to nationalism and the history of its Russian and Ukrainian varieties up to the middle of the nineteenth century. This opening chapter emphasizes the imperial context in which both nationalisms functioned. Chapter 2 examines the Herderian determinants of Gogol's conception of Ukraine in his cycle of stories *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka,* revealing the work's intertwined anti-imperial and nationalist agendas. Chapter 3 proposes a comprehensive analysis of Gogol's engagement with history, suggesting a new perspective on much of Gogol's unpublished historical notes (most articles from *Arabesques* are discussed in this chapter). It pays particular attention to Gogol's writings on Ukrainian history, which mark the height of his Ukrainian nationalism. Gogol's view of Russia emerges from my interpretation in Chapter 4 of his Petersburg tales, the comedy *The Government Inspector,* and his major novel *Dead Souls,* which reveal that Gogol saw Russia as bereft of the qualities that make up a worthy nation. Of all the chapters, this one features the largest reception component: it shows the critics' reaction to Gogol's image of Russia and Gogol's responses to his critics. Chapter 5 argues against the common view of *Taras Bulba* as an unproblematic epic by offering a comparison of the 1835 and 1842 redactions. The work represents Gogol's attempt at constructing a Russian nation out of Ukrainian historical material and ethnic specificities. Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the unfinished continuation to *Dead Souls* and Gogol's volume of epistolary essays *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends,* his last published work and his paean to the Russian government's official nationalist ideology. Here I examine ways in which Gogol's confrontation with the Russian audience over his earlier works on Russian themes caused him to search for ways of adjusting his image of Russia and rethinking his service to its national causes.

Because Gogol shied away from any active participation in politics, he never appreciated the degree to which writing on nationally sensitive topics would draw him, willy-nilly, into a political orbit. Gogol's shocked reaction to the reception of his play *The Government Inspector* testifies to this naïveté on his part. By placing Gogol's writings on a public-private continuum and in a dialogic relationship to the larger Russian debate on national questions, this book draws out the ideological aspects of Gogol's works and shows the writer enmeshed in the politics of his time. Through such layering, this book also exposes the seams of identity formation within Gogol's writings, catching him in the act of constructing nationalism—its images, values, and ideologies.

— 1 —

Nationalism in Russia and Ukraine

In stark contrast to contemporary sensibilities, nationalism and imperialism shone brightly on the horizon of nineteenth-century culture. Societies were aspiring to be nations, and empires were viewed as particularly successful states. Nationalism especially influenced every European society, and its impact on nineteenth-century European culture cannot be overestimated. It produced a fertile intellectual climate and advanced on a variety of fronts: political, scholarly, and cultural. Essentially, all aspects of human activity witnessed a call to self-reflection and rethinking in order to accommodate a new worldview according to which humanity is divided into nations, nationality being the highest social aim and the worthiest allegiance. Russia partook of this ferment. The nationalist sentiment that budded in the eighteenth century flowered in the nineteenth into a set of ideologies and embraced all spheres of Russian life. Gogol's work and its reception played an important role in this process.

Nationalism: General Theory

In keeping with the widespread view of historians and theorists that nationalisms precede nations, I consider national identity a goal of nationalism, as something that nationalism is in the process of creating. "Process" is a key term here that allows one to move away from essentialist thinking about national identity as a type of collective identity whose "essence" resides in a set of immanent characteristics that exclusively define a certain population and can be objectively ascertained. On the contrary, national identity is not an unchanging and discrete essence. The concept and form of a nation undergo a continuous process of negotiation and redefinition that responds to current social, historical, and cultural realities. National identity coexists with other forms of identity, such as class, gender, or religion. Moreover, it need not be exclusive, as shown by the example of immigration-based states or multiethnic populations of empires, like Russia in Gogol's time. As in the age of empires, so now one's passport frequently offers a hopelessly reductive image of the complex thing called "national" identity. It was certainly true of the Ukrainian-born citizen of the Russian empire, with Polish admixtures in his ancestry, who is the subject of this study.

The notion of national identity as an end result of nationalism is crucial for this book, which largely eschews the question of identity and focuses instead on the discourse of nationalism in its examination of Gogol's writings. To watch nationalism at play in these texts is to trace a construction of nationalistic ideas, to see the seams of their formation, hence to face nationalism as the human invention that recent scholarship has shown it to be.[1] That nations are invented or imagined but not (re)discovered has become a widely accepted idea in the scholarly community. Other, more debatable aspects of nationalism led to the proliferation of theories, none of which, however, can serve as the all-applicable "master variable," as Craig Calhoun rightly notes. While Calhoun considers nationalism too diverse a phenomenon for any one theory to explain fully, he nonetheless systematizes it by identifying its three broad dimensions:

> First, there is nationalism as *discourse:* [emphasis mine] the production of a cultural understanding and rhetoric which leads people throughout the world to think and frame their aspirations in terms of the idea of nation and national identity, and the production of particular versions of nationalist thought and language in particular settings and traditions. Second, there is nationalism as *project:* [emphasis mine] social movements and state policies by which people attempt to advance the interests of collectivities they understand as nations, usually pursuing in some combination (or in historical progression) increased participation in an existing state, national autonomy . . . or the amalgamation of territories. Third, there is nationalism as *evaluation:* [emphasis mine] political and cultural ideologies that claim superiority for a particular nation. . . . In this third sense, nationalism is often given the status of an ethical imperative: national boundaries *ought* [emphasis in original] to

> coincide with state boundaries, for example; members of a nation *ought* [emphasis in original] to conform to its moral values.[2]

Calhoun's elastic model of nationalism as existing in dimensions—of discourse, project, and evaluation—accommodates the simultaneity and interpenetration of various nationalistic phenomena. It also allows one to distinguish the nationalism of xenophobic preachers of ethnic hatred from the relatively innocent nationalism of folklore collectors.

What, then, is a nation? In its political aspect, a nation is a "people" understood as a locus of political legitimacy, and nationalism as a discourse helps to establish "who the relevant people are."[3] Yet even in this political sense, nations are discursive, rhetorical constructs. Among their possible features Calhoun lists boundedness of territory or population, indivisibility, sovereignty or the aspiration to it, direct membership of individuals in a nation, popular participation in collective affairs, shared culture and history, common descent or racial characteristics, and special historic or sacred relation to a territory. None of these features alone can define a nation; it is the combination and pattern that matter. Most of them, needless to say, are not empirically verifiable. Nations are what Richard Handler calls "subjective groups," which means that they are marked not so much by the features that each of the members objectively possesses as by the members' sense of themselves as possessing these features.[4] In the words of Calhoun: "[N]ations are constituted largely by the claims themselves, by the way of talking and thinking and acting that relies on these sorts of claims to produce collective identity, to mobilize people for collective projects, and to evaluate peoples and practices."[5]

The existing theories all too often separate the political and cultural aspects of nationalism. National identity, whatever its political function, is often constructed upon cultural commonalities and even civic nationalism has been shown to be no exception.[6] In fact, culture *is* politics, which is why a distinction between political and cultural nationalisms is a false dichotomy. Roman Szporluk puts it best when he claims that nationalism is

> political *ab initio*—even when those engaged in nationalist activities denied any political intent or meaning, or insisted that their sole object was a scholarly understanding of political culture, folklore, or local history. Such a view is grounded in an understanding of power as something political not only in the classic formulation (that is, a monopoly on the legitimate use of force); there is also economic power, as well as social and cultural power—power over the production and dissemination of symbols, values, and ideas. . . . Thus, "national awakeners," questioning by virtue of their endeavors established power structures, power relations, and the values upholding them, are quite obviously engaged in what is at least an inherently political undertaking.[7]

Furthermore, though political and socioeconomic factors helped prepare the ground for nationalism's emergence, it is the cultural-intellectual elites that articulated its ideas and preached its gospel, making nationalism into a force that changed the world. These elites' activities are all the more crucial in Russia's case, owing to the absence of popular political participation in Russia and a roughly 5 percent literacy rate in the first half of the nineteenth century—literacy being almost exclusively the domain of the nobility, the intellectuals, and the clergy.[8] For these reasons, this book treats nationalism as a phenomenon "from above," as a discourse of educated elites rather than a popular sentiment.

By using the term "nationalism" I thus make no claims about the degree of national self-awareness among the broad Russian or Ukrainian populations. Nor do I equate nationalism with national political movements, whose existence in Russia and especially Ukraine in the first half of the nineteenth century a historian may dispute. The term is used in this book in the sense of a discourse, as Calhoun defines it, or—when this discourse significantly involves power relations within the imperial society—in the sense of an ideology.[9] Gogol's texts richly constitute such nationalism. These texts' resonance for contemporary and future Russian and Ukrainian nationalists makes Gogol a key figure in the development of both nationalisms.

Russian Nationalism and Gogol

Russians have quested to become a nation since at least the late eighteenth century, making an attainment of this status and its recognition by other nations their principal concern. Though in the views of many this goal eludes Russians to this day, Russian nationalism has been none the weaker for it. Most scholars date the emergence of modern national consciousness in Russia to the last decades of the eighteenth century.[10] In the early nineteenth century, these aspirations acquired special terms of *narodnost'*

and *natsional'nost'*, which can be rendered in English as "nationness" or nationality.[11]

Though overwhelmingly concerned with dynastic interests, Russia's rulers often had the effect of spurring nationalism. By putting Russia on its path to modernity, Peter I (reigned 1689–1725) created conditions for the development of a modern national consciousness. He is credited with popularizing, if not indeed introducing, the concepts of a nation *(narod)* and a state. Peter also enabled limited social mobility—an important nationalizing factor—by opening the state bureaucracy to nonnobles through the introduction of the Table of Ranks (1722). It was an official hierarchy of civil service in which the nobility, however, predominated and enjoyed certain privileges. Peter opened Russia's "window" to the West by securing a foothold on the Baltic Sea. Wishing to remake Russia in the image of a Western country like Sweden or Holland, he trampled old Russian traditions that he viewed as obstacles to progress. Peter's controversial legacy determined the ideological fault lines of the Russian nineteenth-century intelligentsia. Gogol himself was ambivalent about Peter's impact on Russian culture in his official pronouncements and, in unofficial ones, openly critical.

Catherine II (reigned 1762–1796) continued Russia's territorial expansion and Peter's efforts to strengthen the state. She solidified imperial rule in the peripheries, a need for which became apparent after the revolt led by Don Cossack Emelian Pugachev. Catherine's centralizing policies aimed to establish administrative uniformity throughout the empire. She eliminated most vestiges of Ukraine's autonomy and offered Ukrainian elites a significant stake in the empire. Gogol portrayed these processes critically in his early stories on Ukraine.

Russia became a major European power and an imperial giant. Its victory over Napoleon in 1814, after all of Europe failed to stage effective resistance, manifested this new status to the world and to Russians themselves. Alexander I's campaign against Napoleon caused an upsurge in patriotic pride. The defeat of the French "Antichrist" gave rise to innumerable cultural myths and made Russians feel like the savior of Europe from a tyrant. The 1815 Congress of Vienna granted Russia the right to participate in vital matters of European politics through the creation of the Holy Alliance, as proposed by Alexander I. It was a league of Christian rulers committed, at least in principle, to preserving peace in Europe, which in practice often meant keeping the revolutionary and nationalist ferment in check.

Having become a world power that spread over a staggering mass of Eurasian land, Russia now needed a culture that would validate its importance. Yet Russia's cultural development lacked the vigor of its political ascendancy. The secular culture that emerged in the aftermath of Peter's reforms followed Western, mostly French, neoclassical models, although in the late eighteenth century critiques of excessive imitation as well as calls for subject matter closer to home began to hold sway. This culture was to a large extent sponsored and, as a result, controlled by the state.[12] Much of the cultural production served the imperial state by buttressing its ideology and constructing its image. The rich tradition of eighteenth-century odes extolling rulers demonstrates this well. In contrast to most national literatures, in which the vernacular entered through low, parodic genres, Russian literature began to be written in modern Russian in high genres by salaried state employees.[13] The tsars kept a close eye on the developments in Russian culture and acted as its sponsors and censors.

Though confident in rattling its saber and flexing its political muscle, Russia could juxtapose to the accomplished and sophisticated Western cultures only its own weak and derivative one. Nationally minded, educated Russians experienced a sense of cultural inferiority vis-à-vis their European peers. "[I]n sharp contrast to other politically strong imperializing modern states," Andrew Wachtel notes, "Russia found herself in a culturally subordinate, one might even say colonized, position entering the nineteenth century." The modernization and Europeanization of Russia, Wachtel writes, produced an ambivalent legacy. In addition to laying the groundwork for the great artistic achievements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, "it also produced a strong case of culture shock and a nagging sense of inferiority. And it was in this matrix of political power and cultural inferiority that Russian nationalist thought crystallized in the first decades of the nineteenth century."[14]

Though confronting the other helps constitute any identity, including national, the historians of Russian nationalism are right to accord it a particularly catalytic role. For precisely this reason, Hans Rogger calls eighteenth-century Russian national consciousness "compensatory." He treats it as an aspect of Russia's Westernization, brought about by intense contacts with other cultures and nations in the aftermath of Peter's reforms. In a similar vein, Liah Greenfeld argues for a seminal role of *ressentiment* in Russia's forging of national identity.[15] *Ressentiment* meant that, on the one hand, Russians accepted a Western model and realized their inability to surpass it and, on the other, rejected this model precisely

due to this inability. Jane Burbank claims that the "setting up of an essentialized 'West' as a model for the future as well as an essentialized 'Russia' as a basis for social and state construction" affected Russia adversely, since "an imagined 'West' became the model or the anti-model for an imagined Russia, and this binary rhetoric limited the possibility of other cultural projects."[16]

Russia's ambivalence about the West proved pervasive. In the nineteenth century, it bifurcated into the distinct intellectual movements of the Westernizers and the Slavophiles. Though extremely heterogeneous and evolving over time, the two movements differed most poignantly on the issue of Russia's proper attitude toward the West. The Westernizers, enthusiastic about the progressive traditions of European culture, linked Russia's future with that of Europe. The Slavophiles, by contrast, believed that Russia's uniqueness rendered Western models unsuitable and called for a turn toward indigenous values and traditions. It is important to stress that both factions pursued nationalistic agendas; they disagreed about the *content* of the national idea but not about its validity or usefulness. Alexandr Herzen, a leading Westernizer, captured this in the image of a two-faced diety of Slavic mythology, Janus: "From early on, they (the Slavophiles) and we (the Westernizers) developed one powerful, unreasoning, physiological, passionate feeling of limitless love for the Russian people, Russian life, the Russian mindset that encompassed all our being. We, like Janus, looked in different directions, but all along only one heart was beating."[17]

By the first quarter of the nineteenth century one can speak of a general consensus among educated classes regarding the *existence* of the Russian nation; it is this nation's specific identity that was being sought, imagined, invented, and contested. The eighteenth-century formulations were becoming outdated in the context of the new Romantic nationalist sensibility that was sweeping Europe. Aided by German philosophy, most notably Schelling, Herder, and Hegel, Romantic nationalists embraced the task of reinventing indigenous traditions and cultural wellsprings that could be used for a new amalgam of national values.

In pursuit of such a usable past, the Slavophiles embraced the pre-Petrine era as a time of cultural integrity and as the treasury of the Russian spirit. Gogol's principal connection to the Slavophiles was through his friendship with the Aksakov family, who were prominent members of Moscow's cultural milieu. Though he cannot be listed among

their members, Gogol sympathized with the Slavophiles' nostalgic idealization of a patriarchal social order and devotion to Orthodoxy. He had no taste, however, for their program of reversing Westernization. Having chosen to live most of his adult life abroad, Gogol did not fancy their philippics against the West, critical though he was of certain aspects of western European civilization. His Slavophile friends called for his return from the decaying West to the salubrious embraces of "mother-Russia." He heeded their appeals as little as their incessant solicitations for contributions to the Slavophile journal *The Muscovite.*

The state soon ventured to put its own stamp on nationalism, both fearing its revolutionary power and sensing its integrationist potential. The state version of Russian nationalism found expression in what later became known as the ideology of Official Nationality. It was conceived in the mid-1820s and became systematized in 1834 by the newly ascended minister of education, Sergei Uvarov. He encapsulated it in the famous triad of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality." According to this ideology, Russia enjoyed special providence from God by virtue of its loyalty to Orthodoxy, seen as the only true form of Christianity. The principle of autocracy maintained that the tsar was linked to God and that his power was absolute. The doctrine's most obscure and contested notion was nationality. It was often defined with the help of the previous two concepts (that is, the Russian nation is characterized by fervent Orthodoxy and its love for the tsar), yet in the end it proved most amorphous and controversial.[18] Uvarov's statist-dynastic conception of nationality was at odds with the Romantic view of it. As Cynthia Whittaker notes, instead of letting the people inform the content of nationality that the government would then embrace, Uvarov believed that the state should define and dictate national values to the acquiescent people. Whittaker compares Uvarov's approach to "pouring the new nineteenth-century wine of nationality into the old eighteenth-century bottle of enlightened absolutism."[19]

Yet neutralizing the creativity of the people, far from a misguided error, may have been precisely the point. Szporluk sees Official Nationality as autocracy's effort to counteract the formation of a Russian nation that would be separate from the state and instead to define this nation by its subjection to autocracy.[20] Paradoxically, many Russian nationalists found their enemy in the Russian state. In particular, many Slavophiles, who attempted a conceptual divorce between the Russian

nation and the state, were deemed ideologically subversive and were even punished by imprisonment. Official Nationality represented an effort to remake nationalism into an instrument of social control and a pillar of the dynastic rule. Since this rule extended over many ethnicities, the state juggled the claims of ethnocentric Russian and local nationalisms so as to further its own overriding goal, which was to ensure political stability. Before it felt confident enough to attempt Russification, the government exploited, for example, local Ukrainian nationalism for its anti-Polish value.

Though popularized in the domain of educational policy, Official Nationality was sanctioned and promoted by Nicholas I and his government as an overarching state ideology. It had a tremendous influence in the cultural arena through the state's education policy, censorship, and dispensation of journal-publishing privileges. Some of Gogol's closest friends, such as Stepan Shevyrev and Mikhail Pogodin, were among the chief theoreticians and proponents of Official Nationality (they also had strong leanings toward Slavophilism). The two were active in journalism and worked as professors of Russian literature and Russian history, respectively, at Moscow University. Just as his other ideologically committed friends, the men of Official Nationality placed on Gogol considerable pressure to adopt "correct" views. The writer's own deep-rooted imperative to serve his country also predisposed him toward this doctrine. Being no revolutionary, he believed, especially in his late period, that the tsar's agenda for the Russians was a worthy one. While in Gogol's early publications as a state-employed academic his adherence to Official Nationality seems calculated and strategic, his late collection of epistolary essays, *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends,* reflects a deeper involvement. Yet, heedless of the doctrine's underlying agenda to protect the political status quo, Gogol transgressed heavily against it by exposing a wide range of social problems and proposing a reformist agenda. Thus, ironically, *Selected Passages*—Gogol's strained tribute to Official Nationality—became his most censored publication.

Of the three nationalist factions, Gogol had least in common with the Westernizers. Unlike the conservative Slavophiles, the Westernizers supported Russia's pro-Western course and espoused liberal European values. They called for progressive social, political, and educational reforms and for the abolition of serfdom. They believed that the power of autocracy should be curtailed and harshly criticized what they saw as the hostility

of the Russian Orthodox Church to the cause of much-needed social change. Far though they were from the uncritical acceptance of the first two parts of Uvarov's triad, Orthodoxy and autocracy, their nationalism ran strong. It was the *kind* of Russian nation that they envisaged—more progressive, egalitarian, pro-Western—that distinguished them from the Slavophiles. Like the proponents of Official Nationality, they treated the eighteenth century as a source of national pride. Russia's strides toward progress in that century became proof of its tremendous potential, of its ability to catch up with and surpass the West. What took Europeans centuries to develop, Russians could assimilate and improve upon in a fraction of the time.

Much as Gogol kept his distance from the Westernizers, they refused to reciprocate. Their key early leader, the influential critic Vissarion Belinsky, hailed Gogol's talent and played an important role in establishing him as a major writer. Yet Belinsky failed to win over Gogol for the Westernizers' cause, which became evident upon Gogol's publication of *Selected Passages.* In response, Belinsky fired off the famous letter to Gogol in which he chastised the writer's conservatism and obscurantism, dismissed his agenda for Russia as pernicious, and portrayed him as a lackey of the establishment. The letter widely circulated in copies among the Russian intelligentsia and became one of Lenin's favorite texts of Russian nineteenth-century literature (*PSS* 8, 743). This scandal surrounding *Selected Passages* notwithstanding, future generations of Westernizing critics placed Gogol on their banner as the progenitor of the progressive trend in Russian literature, a notion that later secured Gogol's position in the Soviet pantheon of national writers.

The National-Imperial Complex

Russia had been a multiethnic empire long before it undertook to become a nation. Though imperial tactics already assisted the consolidation of the Muscovite state, Muscovy embarked on the imperial course proper in the 1550s, with Ivan IV's capture of the large, ethnically non-Russian and sovereign Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan. Russians refer to the former process by the deceptively benign and conceptually muddled metaphor of the "gathering of the Russian lands." From the middle of the sixteenth century onward, this "gathering" began to involve lands that would have appeared progressively less "Russian" to anyone but the ideologues of

imperial expansion. Ivan's conquests doubled Muscovy's territory, which in 1600 equaled that of Europe, and after the conquest of Siberia in 1639, Russia tripled Europe's size.[21] In the eighteenth century, to these undeveloped and sparsely populated expanses were added densely populated and developed regions: the Baltic provinces, the Crimea, and Poland's eastern territories. The expansion continued in the nineteenth century in Transcaucasia and Eurasia. Hundreds of ethnic groups found themselves under the tsars' rule, making Russians, in 1834, a minority within the empire (constituting less than 50 percent of the population).[22] When Peter I adopted the official title of Emperor of All Russia *(Imperator Vserossiiskii)* in 1721, he recognized his dominion as a diverse empire, though one in which the Russian component was crucial. Unlike the starker English/British distinction, the new term for the citizen of the empire, *rossiianin,* rang quite similar to, and likely derived from, the ethnic term for a Russian, *russkii.* From early on, Russian nationalism and imperialism formed a peculiar hybrid.

The complexity of Russian nationalism owes much to the unique nature of the Russian empire. Unlike England and France, with their far-flung, overseas, racially distinct colonies, Russia expanded into neighboring territory and subjugated peoples with whom it often had a history of social and cultural intercourse that the imperial framework only intensified. As Geoffrey Hosking put it, "Britain *had* an empire, but Russia *was* an empire—and perhaps still is."[23] While the Habsburgs did not make a determined effort to refashion their empire into a nation, leaving the ethnic communities largely intact, the Romanovs did espouse such a goal. This project's original site was the non-Russian East Slavic lands, especially Ukraine.

And yet the empire's management of multiethnicity resists a unitary narrative. In his groundbreaking study, Andreas Kappeler shows that the traditional early policy of pragmatic tolerance and cooperation with the elites was followed in the first half of the eighteenth century by forced integration and violence.[24] In part due to its ineffectiveness, Catherine rescinded such measures and returned to the policy of flexible and pragmatic restraint, even though this central policy and its implementation in the peripheries diverged widely throughout Russia's history. According to Kappeler, the colonial model does not entirely fit Russia's case, but he claims that Russia steadily moved in this direction in the course of the nineteenth century. While political and strategic goals motivated early

expansion, modernization and industrialization increased the importance of economic goals. Russia's gradual Westernization resulted in the adoption of Eurocentric values by the elite and the state, which bred a sense of superiority over ethnic minorities, especially in Asia. Around the mid-nineteenth century, ethnicity and nationality became more important markers of identity than the previous supraethnic categories of membership in an estate and a social class. After 1831, Kappeler notes a growing policy of oppression toward the minorities, which in the 1860s was institutionalized as the policy of Russification (however uneven its implementation). East Slavs, especially the Ukrainians, were under the greatest pressure to assimilate. Aggressive metropolitan nationalism typically aims to sustain an empire, but in Russia it largely proved counterproductive. While in some regions Russificatory measures met with success, if often temporary, in others, especially in the Western borderlands and the Caucasus, they had the opposite effect of fueling local nationalisms. Russia's boundless appetite for new territory resulted in a case of imperial indigestion.

Russia's status as a multiethnic empire had profound repercussions for Russian identity. Russian nationalism has always had to contend with the fact that the Russian state included a great many non-Russians. The strategies and objectives of reconciling the empire and the nation evolved over time. The eighteenth-century Russian nationalists took pride in the empire's ethnic, geographic, and cultural diversity and trumpeted it as a mark of national strength.[25] In the first half of the nineteenth century this multiethnic model began to give way to Russocentric conceptions, which insisted on the primacy of the Russian ethnic and linguistic component. The nineteenth-century nationalist discourse concerned itself less with the *rossiiskii* people, a notion popular in the previous century that denotes the population of the empire, than with the *russkii* people, which more narrowly refers to ethnic Russians. This adjectival shift marked a moving away from the conception of Russianness that was tied to the territorial span of the empire toward a focus on it as an ethnic category, a property of the empire's ruling group. Still, the temptation to prove Russian greatness by reference to imperial successes proved irresistible. All in all, "traditional imperial patriotism," Kappeler writes, "gradually acquired the character of imperial nationalism."[26] The coincidence of imperial and national projects, it has been argued, "fus[ed] the sense of Russian nationhood with the habit of imperial domination."[27]

Though nation and empire are traditionally viewed as antagonistic concepts, Jane Burbank claims that they were not so in the Russian context. The double project of constructing a nation and an empire resulted in the emergence of what she calls the imperial-national identity in Russia. James Cracraft similarly posits a national-imperial complex as a characteristic feature of Russian identity. He claims that "both absolutism and imperialism were inherent in Russian nationalism virtually from the beginning." Though she does not consider the possibility of a national-imperial identity, Vera Tolz shows the propensity of Russian nationalists to treat the Russian empire as the Russian nation–state. Mark Bassin makes the most forceful argument for the inextricability of nationalism and imperialism in Russia. He claims that Russian nationalists of all ilks unanimously and unquestioningly embraced the empire and its continuing expansion as proof of the Russians' superior national qualities that raised their status vis-à-vis the Westerners. He concludes: "The imperialist project thus assumed a significance for the national psychology as what Adam Ulam has called a 'mechanism of compensation for backwardness,' and its real concern was accordingly not with the object of conquest and incorporation but rather with Russia itself." This national-imperial attitude characterizes in Bassin's view the entire political spectrum of Russian society and has been present from the beginning of Russian nationalism to this day.[28]

The imperial-national complex is broadly reflected in the culture of the nineteenth century and underpins many Golden Age classics, from Pushkin to Tolstoy. Only recently have literary scholars, mostly in the West, begun to examine this important dimension.[29] For my purpose, the rise of Gogol as a writer from the Ukrainian periphery to an icon of Russian nationalism demands an analytical framework that pays equal attention to imperial and national issues. Certainly, Gogol himself overlaid an exploration of the national differences between Ukraine and Russia with an acute awareness of the imperial connection that linked them. In the *Taras Bulba* of 1842, for example, he constructs a nationalist ideology against the imperial backdrop. This imperial context also explains a great deal about the Russians' approach to Gogol and his work, with all the attendant assumptions and biases. Their reviews of Gogol attest, for example, to a belief that his work in Russian literature validated Ukraine's position under the imperial mantle and proved that Ukrainian identity could only be a constituent part of the Russian one. Gogol's

involvement with nationalism was shaped by the tangible effects of the national-imperial dynamic in the Ukrainian periphery, such as the Russificatory and pro-imperial education imparted to him at school. Yet he was also shaped by the memory of Ukraine's autonomist traditions and took pride in the ethnocultural uniqueness that characterized his milieu and the Ukraine of his time. These local sentiments conflicted with Ukraine's status as Russia's imperial possession.

Ukraine as Russia's Imperial Periphery

Contemporary Russian public opinion considers Ukraine an integral part of Russia and views the Ukrainians' claim to independence with dismayed incomprehension. It may thus seem incredible that the idea of Ukrainian-Russian relatedness was concocted only in the second half of the seventeenth century by the Ukrainians themselves.[30] The Ukrainian churchmen, who then dominated the Russian church hierarchy, developed the notion of East Slavic kinship so as not to be regarded as outsiders. The Russians found the idea so appealing that subsequent generations of Ukrainian nationalists found it hard to disabuse them of it.

And yet nineteenth-century Russian attitudes to whether Ukrainians are really Russian were conflicted. The idea of kinship collided with the actual perceptions of Ukraine, which to Russians who bothered to visit seemed surprisingly foreign. Indeed, culturally, linguistically, politically, and socially, the degree of separation between Ukraine and Russia was significant after centuries of separate political existence during which the two realms had few, if any, ties. Despite homogenizing imperial policies, these differences persisted. Much of the extensive travel literature of the first half of the nineteenth century, which tried to render this unknown land comprehensible to the Russians, exudes a sense of surprise at the degree of Ukrainian distinctiveness.[31] Gogol could play up Ukraine's exoticism in his stories of the 1830s because it *was* still so exotic to a Russian. Declarations of Ukraine's synonymy with Russia seemed to rest less on any factual assessment than on a force of conviction that it was such an excellent idea. Those who proclaimed it often did not really seem sure about it, and this uncertainty tended to correlate with the vehemence of the proclamations. After all, the Russians are the ones who, through Gogol's friend Smirnova, present the writer in 1844 with a question: are you a Russian or are you a Ukrainian? Contrary to the official discourse

of unity, the distinction clearly did matter, and from the mid-nineteenth century onward it mattered ever more.

The idea of Russian-Ukrainian kinship is rooted in the notion of common historical roots. Official Russian historiography adopted it, promoting a schema of a primordial unity of all East Slavs, their subsequent separation, and a triumphant reunion. According to this view, the medieval Kievan state, which united East Slavs and ended with the thirteenth-century Tatar invasion, represented the origin of Russian statehood. To escape the Tatar "yoke," this statehood was then transferred north to Muscovite lands, while the Kievan principalities fell victim to evil foreign domination, first Tatar, then Lithuanian, and—after the Lithuanian Duchy's 1569 union with the Polish crown—Polish. The "reunification" began when the Hetmanate republic, on the left bank of the Dnepr, became a protectorate of the Muscovite tsar in 1654. More Ukrainian lands were "restored" to the Russian fold in the late eighteenth century as a result of three partitions of Poland (1772–1795). Russian historiography presented these processes as the righting of historical evils and the restoration of the primordial Rus unity. ("Rus" and the corresponding adjective "Rusian"—not to be confused with "Russia" and "Russian"—denote all East Slavic Orthodox lands before the rise of the Muscovite state.)

This historical narrative, though amply exploited in official ideology, has had its discontents. The "confluence" *(sliianie)* of the Ukrainians with the "fraternal" Russian nation was far from a consensual and mutually beneficial union. Through violent and peaceful means, the Ukrainian Cossacks, who were a semimilitarized society, resisted tsarist encroachments on their autonomy. Though from the mid-seventeenth until the late eighteenth century Ukrainians had intellectual leadership in the Romanov empire, the metropolitan pull as well as concrete imperial policies eventually drained local cultural resources. Nor is the notion of primordial Rus unity to be taken for granted. To this day the Kievan inheritance represents a contested ground for both Ukrainian and Russian historiographies since it has singular importance for both national identities. For Russians to allow Ukrainians a separate identity that derived its historical roots from ancient Kiev would mean to forego their own claims on it, thus truncating Russia's glorious history. The Russians preferred to view Ukrainians as schismatics from the monolithic ancient Rus identity.[32] Ukrainians, however, claim Kievan Rus as their own origin and locate

Russia's beginnings in the subsequent rise of the northern principalities of Vladimir-Suzdal and then Moscow. The notion of political continuity between Kievan Rus and Muscovy has since been challenged by scholars, and Gogol himself researched the Kievan period with an eye to appropriating it for Ukrainian history.[33]

Evil foreign oppression may also not be the best way to characterize the epoch preceding the Russian rule in Ukraine. Ukraine's ties to an advanced political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with its traditions of contractual relations, representative bodies, and elective offices, had a certain positive influence on Ukrainian forms of social, political, and cultural life. Though the commonwealth did practice imperial politics toward the East Slavs within its borders, the Ukrainians who defended their autonomy after annexation to the Russian empire framed their aspirations through references to earlier laws and privileges granted them by the commonwealth. The tsars were hard-pressed to eradicate this influence. Far from being a tabula rasa prior to the introduction of Russian "civilization," Ukrainian regions had developed a host of local institutions that met the civic, political, fiscal, juridical, religious, and military needs of the population. The inclusion of the Hetmanate within Russia's borders meant an imperial incorporation of a separate polity with a different and superior culture.[34] Gogol went so far as to claim in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" that the "separation" from Russia led to nothing less than the formation of the Ukrainian nation, whose cornerstone was the Cossack republic.

The Cossacks' military services to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth for a while ensured them a degree of autonomy. They served as the republic's border guard against the Turks and the Tatars and often fought Muscovy alongside the Polish-Lithuanian army (Gogol's ancestor distinguished himself in one such venture). The proselytizing and Polonizing trends, however, fueled discontent that found outlet in Bohdan Khmelnytsky's uprising. The uprising led in 1654 to the incorporation of the first significant part of Ukrainian lands into the Russian state. Seeking a strategic advantage over the Poles, Khmelnytsky petitioned the Muscovite tsar to turn the Left-Bank Ukraine into a Muscovite protectorate. The tsar acceded, but, tragically for the Ukrainians, both parties understood what came to be called the agreement of Pereiaslav differently. The Russians took it as a unilateral submission, while the Ukrainians considered it a contractual agreement of equals, a view that Gogol voiced in his

unpublished historical notes. To the dismay of subsequent Russian rulers, the Ukrainians persisted in demanding the autonomy that was guaranteed by the Pereiaslav agreement. Though the tsars signed and periodically reconfirmed it, they did not consider it binding.

The erosion of the regional prerogatives was accelerated after the Cossack leader, the Hetman Ivan Mazepa, tried to secede from Russia in 1708 by joining Peter I's nemesis, the Swedish king, Charles XII. The tsar brutally suppressed the effort and curtailed Ukrainian autonomy. Yet contrary to the official demonization of Mazepa, Gogol portrayed him in an unpublished fragment as a prudent statesman and a Ukrainian patriot. In 1785 Catherine II formally abolished the Hetmanate and brought Ukraine into conformity with the administrative system of the empire. She began the process of equalizing the status of Russian and Ukrainian military and noble elites, which was completed in the early nineteenth century.[35] Gogol presented these developments critically in his Ukrainian stories and unpublished notes. The official imperial term for Ukrainian lands, Little Russia *(Malorossiia),* facilitated the conceptual dissolution of Ukraine within Russia. It comes from a fourteenth-century ecclesiastical designation that marks the lesser distance of the Ukrainian, as opposed to the Northern Rusian, lands from Constantinople. Muscovy adopted the term after incorporating the Hetman state. Yet in the imperial context, the term "Little Russia" stressed the "unity" of both Russias and promoted the image of Ukrainians as lacking seniority and importance, which was the prerogative of their big northern "brother."

Much like the Scots and the Irish in the British service, Ukrainians gladly accepted Russia's invitation to join its imperial venture, helping settle new territories and providing administrative know-how in exchange for land, serfs, and lucrative government posts. Many made brilliant careers in the capital and returned to posts in Ukraine. Among them were Prince Bezborodko, Catherine's personal secretary and the brother of the founder of the Nizhyn gymnasium that Gogol attended, as well as Gogol's relative Dmytro Troshchynsky, whose lavish library the future writer used. It is important to realize that in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries loyalty to the cause of Russian empire did not necessarily mean disloyalty to Ukraine. The Scottish and Ukrainian cases, as compared by Stephen Velychenko, show imperial and regional identities as quite compatible in that period. Precisely this sentiment underlies both Walter Scott's admission that his heart was Jacobite while his reason was Hanoverian and Nikolai Gogol's celebration in his letter to Smirnova of the two equally valuable parts of his identity: the Ukrainian and the Russian.[36]

Yet the dynamic of Russo-Ukrainian relations changed in the course of the nineteenth century. The increased pool of qualified ethnic Russians made provincials less desirable for the empire's bureaucratic machine. The Great North Road, to use David Saunders's term, which led ambitious Ukrainians to imperial careers, was becoming crowded. Luckily for world literature, Gogol's own journey on this road proved unsuccessful. Russians increasingly resented Ukrainians seeking imperial careers, labeling the influx as "Little Russian infestation."[37] The extreme and intolerant centralism of the imperial government and the rising ethnolinguistic Russian nationalism increased expectations that the peripheries, especially Ukraine, be Russified. Compound identities were becoming unacceptable. For Russians, loyalty to Ukraine began to connote disloyalty to Russia. They came to expect unequivocal answers to questions such as the one Smirnova posed to Gogol. His difficulties in answering it reveal that he understood very well the pressure to be "fully" Russian and to renounce his Ukrainianness. Yet that he could never do.

The policies of the tsarist government and changing attitudes in Russian society radicalized the separatist element in Ukrainian society and helped galvanize Ukrainian nationalism. The Scottish and Ukrainian patterns, according to Dominic Lieven, diverged in the 1830s and 1840s. At the time when Scots were "at their most contented" within the British Empire, Ukrainians took on a separate path from the one laid out in St. Petersburg.[38] The modern Ukrainian national consciousness that emerged in the late eighteenth century developed in the early nineteenth century through the activities of intellectuals and academics (the Ukrainian elites were largely Russified), who, as Marc Raeff notes, "systematically developed its scholarly and philosophic justification" and who sharply opposed the imperial establishment.[39] The Ukrainian identity, in Szporluk's words, was thus being constructed by " 'name givers,' classifiers, and conceptualizers," who, as I show in Chapters 2 and 3, included Gogol. Yet their venture was unmistakably political:

> Whether framed in ethnographic, linguistic, or historical terms, declarations of a distinct Ukrainian cultural identity had political significance from the first moment. Their effect was to modify the official definition of the nation in a way that was contrary to the aims and intentions of

the empire. If the official ideology held that Russia was an autocracy, then collecting and popularizing folk songs that extolled "freedom" served to question that system.[40]

The imperial center viewed Ukrainian nationalism as apostasy from the Russian nation. As far as the Russians were concerned, the Romanov tsars had restored the nation's original wholeness by "reincorporating" Ukraine, the ancient patrimony of Muscovite tsars. Due to its explosive implication for Russian identity, the Ukrainian national movement was therefore persecuted with singular ferocity. The imperial government aimed to eradicate any sense of Ukrainian separateness, be it political, religious, or cultural. The empire's southwestern borderlands, particularly Ukraine, had served as a testing ground for the policy of institutional and cultural Russification already since the eighteenth century. The repressive measures with respect to Ukrainian culture were enacted in the area of educational policy and through restrictions on publications in the vernacular.[41] The Ukrainian language was persecuted with particular severity. In 1804 it was banned from schools. Alexander II's decrees of 1863 and 1876 proscribed Ukrainian from print altogether. These measures aimed to prevent the emergence of a modern Ukrainian culture that would be capable of sustaining a separatist nationalism. The affair of the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, a group committed to a Ukrainian nationalist program whose members were arrested in 1847, was an early sign that the assimilationist policy was ineffective. Under Nicholas I's authoritarian rule, Russia was losing appeal for educated elites in the periphery. What Ewa Thompson views as Russian colonial rule was "usually based on power alone, rather than on a combination of power and knowledge." She claims that Russian imperialism failed to Russify the peripheries because it "did not succeed in replacing cannons with ideas."[42]

This exemplifies for Thompson one of many reasons why Russian imperialism evades postcolonial taxonomies. The Russian empire diverged from a classic colonial model most decisively in its Western borderlands. The appropriateness of calling Ukraine Russia's colony, or "internal colony," has therefore been called into question.[43] Nonetheless, the politics of identity in the Russian-Ukrainian sphere of contact did have colonial overtones. Though Russians wished to assimilate all Ukrainians—and no Western imperial power extended such an invitation to any of its colonial subjects—this certainly implied a hierarchy of identities, whereby

the Russian one was deemed superior to the Ukrainian one. Russians liked to stereotype Ukrainians as either bucolic rustics or brave Cossacks. When expedient, these could be negatively refocused to simple-minded yokels and anarchic bandits, respectively. Some Ukrainians internalized these stereotypes. Gogol and Smirnova play on this when referring to themselves as *khokhly* in the quotes with which I opened my Introduction, which is roughly equivalent to "hicks." Something closely resembling the superiority of a colonial master race characterized the attitudes of some of Gogol's closest Russian friends. Sergei Aksakov, writing about Gogol's 1850 birthday party, describes the Ukrainian guests—or, as he calls them, *khokhly*—as almost grotesque savages. Under Aksakov's disdainful gaze, their singing of Ukrainian folk songs becomes a horrific spectacle of whooping noises, twisty gestures, and grimaces that remind him of Russia's Asiatic subjects.[44] It appears that some of Gogol's chauvinistic Russian friends vouchsafed to forgive him his embarassing Ukrainian "id" only because of the "superego" of his artistic talent that benefited Russian culture.

The notion that Ukraine had its version of a colonial experience, particularly in the sphere of culture, has been stressed by many postcolonial critics and is gaining currency in today's Ukraine.[45] Myroslav Shkandrij claims that literary representations of Ukraine invite postcolonial analysis: "The legitimation of colonial expansion in Russian and Ukrainian literatures parallels that in texts that now hold canonical status in colonial and postcolonial studies."[46] Such legitimation, as I mentioned, also appears in Russian reviews of Gogol. Loyalist Ukrainian intellectuals flocked to Russian culture as a universal fount of enlightenment, thus internalizing Russia's typically colonial self-fashioning. Though adopting the empire's premise of universalism initially allowed for local nationalism, in the sense of patriotic pride in the region's history, institutions, culture, and customs, a perception of such symbiotic potential began to wane toward the mid-nineteenth century. Universalistic ideals were redirected into the much narrower channel of Great Russian nationalism, whereby serving Russia no longer meant support for a supranational empire.

The increasingly assertive Russian nationalism cum imperialism found a separate Ukrainian identity unacceptable and proliferated justifications for Russia's domination over Ukraine. Since in the nineteenth century all Cossack institutions had long been destroyed, and the Ukrainian elites were viewed as Russified (albeit imperfectly), Ukrainianness came to be

associated with the peasants. This bred a conviction in many Russians that Ukrainian culture and hence the Ukrainian nation were axiomatic impossibilities, since peasant masses and their "uncivilized" languages are incapable of generating high culture, on which nations necessarily depend. Though the notion of Ukrainian literature as a tributary to the Russian one was welcomed, the possibility of their split made Russians, around the 1840s, increasingly indignant. Belinsky's hostile reception of Ukrainian literature, which I discuss in Chapter 5, is indicative of this trend.[47] The state's policies and the public discourse regarding Ukraine worked together to legitimate Russian discursive hegemony and maintain Ukraine's status as an imperial possession.

And yet a sense of Ukrainian uniqueness—of not only cultural and historic but also political difference with the Russians—continued to exist, however embattled its circumstances, and continued to generate a culture that served nationalizing functions. Commenting on the "far-reaching syncretism of social and cultural life" in Ukraine, George Grabowicz remarks that Ukrainian literature "became more a carrier of national consciousness and a surrogate for political action than a form of art."[48] An imperial periphery of various states was striving to become a nation. Gogol's writings on Ukrainian history and *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* were his contribution to this process.

Gogol between Ukraine and Russia

His Ukrainian sympathies notwithstanding, Gogol belongs to the long line of Ukrainians who since the seventeenth century "put their eggs in the Russian basket" and contributed to the development of Russia's imperial-national ideology.[49] From the churchmen who dominated Muscovite ecclesiastical institutions in the seventeenth century to Peter I's ideologues of imperial expansion and the East Slavic Orthodox brotherhood, from the big and small empire builders of Catherine's age to the early nineteenth-century enthusiasts of Ukrainian folklore, history, nationalism, and all things Slavic, Ukrainians were at the forefront of defining and influencing the course of Russian culture, its orientation, and its concerns. Emerging from a culture in which Western political and philosophical ideas, often transmitted by way of Poland, had been initially assimilated or reformatted for the Slavic world, these Ukrainians found themselves in a position to capitalize on Muscovy's westward turn by

taking up service to the emperor. Nationalism became an important part of this package in Gogol's time. According to some estimates, of the nonnoble intellectuals who contributed to the rise of Russian nationalism, as many as 50 percent were Ukrainians.[50]

Contrary to the popular image of Russia as an independent agent on the stage of European culture, which came of age in the nineteenth century, Russia continued to rely on non-Russian Slavic if not mediation, then at least precedence. The very origin of the Russian word for "nationality" illustrates this trend. It was coined in 1819 by Prince P. A. Viazemsky, who in a letter to a friend wrote: "Why not translate *nationalité—narodnost'*? After all, the Poles said: *narodowość!* The Poles are not as fastidious as we are, and words which do not voluntarily jump over to them, they drag over by the hair, and the matter is done. Excellent!"[51] Viazemsky took the word from the groundbreaking Polish treatise "On Classicism and Romanticism, or on the Spirit of Polish Poetry" (1818) by Kazimierz Brodziński, who introduced it in the Polish context.[52] In Gogol's time, during the quest for a "national idea" in Russian literature, Ukraine provided an appealing alternative to the Westernized settings, such as Livonia or Estonia, with which Russian writers had been experimenting earlier. It offered a model that was most importantly Slavic and Orthodox and based on cultural, historic, and ethnic ties made fashionable by Romantic cultural nationalism gaining currency in Russia at the time.

This is the wave that Gogol rode with his *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* that struck such a deep chord with his Russian readers and launched his fame. Gogol's successful transplantation into Russian literature of a Ukrainian vision of national uniqueness and ways of encoding it in art belong to a long tradition of Ukrainian contributions to Russian culture. Rather than see it as an almost traitorous act of "sealing and delivering" Ukraine to Russia, as George Luckyj did, I propose a less judgmental perspective, one that takes cognizance of the imperial context within which Gogol operated and stresses the interface of Russian and Ukrainian cultures—their interaction and sphere of contact.[53] In addition to many narratives of imperial domination and exploitation, the case of Ukraine shows the influence of the "periphery" on the "core." This indeed represents a new direction in colonial studies, increasingly concerned with constructing a single analytical framework for examining the metropolis and the colony and more sensitive to ways in which imperial projects

influenced the core, imperializing cultures themselves.[54] Unlike Luckyj, I see Gogol's devotion both to the topic of Ukraine and to the thematic and narratological patterns of Ukrainian literature as a testament to the strength of his Ukrainian identity and culture. As the circumstances surrounding the 1842 *Taras Bulba* show, Gogol kept "delivering" Ukrainianness to Russia even when no such deliveries were wanted. At that point, his Russian public expected a flattering artistic portrayal of the Russian nation, but Gogol found himself unable to fill that order.

Gogol's Ukrainian heritage pertains to key issues involved in a study of his nationalism. The persistence of Ukraine's separate cultural and ethnic identity explains why, having spent his formative years in Ukraine, Gogol kept alive his interest in it, looked to it for inspiration throughout his literary career, and even in his last years claimed that his Ukrainianness was as important as his Russianness. Ukraine's location in the imperial periphery and the embattled position of the Ukrainian language are good reasons why, being an ambitious person, always concerned with his impact on the world at large, he chose to write in Russian. Ukraine's status as Russia's imperial periphery with a strong sense of cultural separateness and local traditions made it possible that both Ukrainian and Russian national sentiments found expression in Gogol's works. A civic, patriotic commitment to the Russian empire and a sense of Ukrainian cultural and local nationalism represented two identities that were superimposed for many Ukrainians, including Gogol. With time these compound identities became increasingly unacceptable from the viewpoint of Russian nationalism and soon thereafter for the radicalized nationally minded Ukrainian intelligentsia. But by that time, Gogol no longer actively participated in Ukrainian nationalism, though Ukrainianness remained a strong part of his identity. Instead, he joined the quest to decipher the enigma of Russianness, thus taking a thorny and uphill path for which he lacked a native's instincts.

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From a Ukrainian to a Russian Author

Gogol emerged as a writer at the height of the Romantic fashion for national specificity in art. Yet for all the enthusiasm with which the Russian audience received Gogol's first book, the nation reflected in *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* (1831–1832) was not Russia but Ukraine. Far from smoothing over this difference, the book in fact accentuated it. Though the work's early critics saw it as an emanation of Ukrainian nationalism and treated Gogol as a Ukrainian writer, its subsequent reception has deemphasized the book's Ukrainianness and diluted it in notions of folksy or Slavic phantasmagoria. Gogol's eventual status as a major Russian writer played an important role in this reappraisal. This chapter aims to reverse this trend by reading *Evenings* as a major fictional manifestation of Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism that springs from an anti-imperial impulse. Gogol's first book is grounded in a Herderian conception of nationalism, which saw nations as organic communities that were shaped by specific natural and geographic settings and linked through culture, history, and language. Herder paid little heed to states, viewing their totalizing impetus as inimical to the happy flourishing of national diversity. The Ukraine of Gogol's *Evenings* emerges as such an organic national community that struggles against dissolution in the imperial Russian state.

Gogol's Ethnic Background and His Discovery of Ukrainianness

Gogol was not born or raised a Romantic Ukrainian nationalist. He grew up within a mixture of cultures that was characteristic of the early nineteenth-century Ukrainian gentry. Gogol's father epitomizes this

milieu best. He wrote comedies in Ukrainian, subscribed to the Polish journal *Monitor* as well as *The Ukrainian Herald,* and penned letters to his wife in the Russian language of sentimentalist prose.[1] The family lived off their estate in Vasilevka, in the Poltava district in eastern Ukraine. They were imperial loyalists, partly Russified, like most Ukrainian gentry at the time. Yet this did not erase their Ukrainianness, which constituted a vital part of their culture and daily life, though it was far from any self-conscious national particularism. Little Nikola, as his mother called him in a mixture of the Ukrainian and Russian versions of the name (Mykola and Nikolai), took part in the staging of Ukrainian plays at the home theater of his uncle Dmytro Troshchynsky, a wealthy patron of Ukrainian arts, and used his uncle's extensive library.[2] The entire family spoke and corresponded in Russian, if often Ukrainianized, though with some family members and friends they used Ukrainian. Nikolai Gogol grew up bilingual, speaking Russian and Ukrainian, and like his father, he had a reading knowledge of Polish.[3] The Russian language of his prose, and even more so his letters, bears an indelible Ukrainian stamp.[4]

The family heritage also had a Polish component, but Gogol tried to distance himself from it. His mother came from the Polish-Ukrainian gentry, and as far as Gogol knew, his Cossack ancestor Ostap Hohol (Gogol) was granted nobility by a Polish king for his services in a war against Muscovy.[5] The family's name was in fact Gogol-Ianovsky (Polish transcription: Janowski), and their estate was known as Ianovshchyna (*PSS* 10, 235). Yet while Nikolai's parents mostly used the Polish "Ianovsky," Gogol was to reject it in favor of the Ukrainian "Gogol." In St. Petersburg he used the Polish surname ever less and dropped it completely around the time of the Polish Uprising of 1830–1831.[6] In his story "Old-World Landowners," Gogol ridiculed those Ukrainians who disguised their origin upon arrival in the Russian capital by adding the letter *v* to their Ukrainian last names (which ended in *–o,* hence creating the Russian *–ov* ending). Yet by dropping his Polish surname, Gogol himself had engaged in a similar act of ethnic disguise. Incidentally, before opting for "Gogol," the future author of "Old-World Landowners" experimented with Russifying the Polish "Ianovsky" as "Ianov."[7]

If only through the example of Troshchynsky, Gogols' parents were aware of the wealth and security that comes with loyal service to the empire. Unsurprisingly, they tied their hopes for their son with government service. They sent him to the newly established Nizhyn Lycée, which

trained young Ukrainian noblemen for careers in the imperial military and administration (indeed, a great majority of Nikolai's classmates chose this path). Gogol seemed certain that he was destined for a brilliant government career. He went to St. Petersburg in December 1828 in order to launch it, his budding artistic interests notwithstanding. These plans came to naught despite his connections.

Gogol's impatiently awaited move to the imperial capital proved a difficult transition, and his high hopes never materialized. Petersburg as a city disappointed Gogol. His poverty and the failure of his civil service plans no doubt contributed to this feeling, but ultimately the city itself bred Gogol's lifelong aversion. He described his initial impressions in a letter:

> Petersburg appeared to me completely not how I expected. I had imagined it much more beautiful and grand. Instead, what people say about it are lies. . . . Petersburg is unlike all other European capitals or Moscow [Gogol then knew neither firsthand—E. B.]. In general, each capital is characterized by its nation that casts on it an imprint of nationality [*natsional'nosti*], but in Petersburg there is no character whatsoever: foreigners who settled here . . . no longer resemble foreigners and the Russians, in turn, became neither one nor the other. . . . [T]here is no spirit in the people, all around one sees only civil servants who are serving time, all talk about their departments and boards, all are depressed and buried in insignificant occupations, in which their life passes uselessly. (*PSS* 10, 137, 139)

This rejection of Petersburg coincided with Gogol's newfound appreciation of Ukraine, whose roots appear as much nostalgic as pragmatic. On the one hand, he seemed genuinely to miss Ukraine, and his close circle of Ukrainian friends in Petersburg must have fanned this feeling.[8] On the other hand, he could not but take notice of the fashion for all things Ukrainian that was sweeping St. Petersburg's literary world. He decided to capitalize on it.

The stories about Ukraine that he began writing in April 1829 suited his knowledge and talents incomparably more than his first literary effort, Schillerian idyll *Hans Küchelgarten* (1829). Around this time, he asked his mother for detailed ethnographic descriptions of Ukrainian dress, customs, and beliefs and for his father's Ukrainian comedies, since—due to the craze for "all things Little Russian"—he might try to stage them. He

later renewed these inquiries, adding a request to collect Ukrainian antiquities (*PSS* 10, 141–142, 165–167). The turn to the more familiar and now highly popular realm of his native Ukraine resulted in *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka,* a two-volume collection of stories that quickly sold out and launched Gogol as a promising new talent.

It was only St. Petersburg, where he went at the age of twenty, that made Gogol into a self-conscious Ukrainian. There he felt for the first time like a foreigner and discovered the cultural difference that separated him from Russians. It is a familiar scenario: a cross-cultural encounter catalyzes a newfound sense of national identity. While Gogol's upbringing and education fostered the identity of a Russian nobleman (who happened to live in Ukraine), he now found himself perceived as a Ukrainian, at worst a *khokhol.* Gogol's interest in Ukrainian culture and history dates from his Nizhyn school years, as his miscellany "A Book of Odds and Ends" attests (1826–1832). In St. Petersburg, however, Gogol juxtaposed his embrace of Ukrainianness to his disinterest in Russianness and developed the notion of a national contrast between the two. *Evenings on a Farm* richly thematizes this opposition, which is also evident in Gogol's letters.[9]

The Storytellers of *Evenings* in the Ukrainian-Russian Contact Zone

Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka consists of eight stories collected in two volumes, each accompanied by a preface. In the original publication, Gogol concealed his authorship under the guise of the beekeeper Rudy Panko, the stories' purported collector. In this he likely follows Sir Walter Scott, who popularized the device of simple-folk narrators and a fictitious publisher with a quaint name.[10] The invented persona of Rudy Panko playfully engaged aspects of Gogol's own biography. Far from entirely fictitious, this pseudonym came from the Ukrainian name of Gogol's grandfather, Panas (in Russian, Afanasi), whose grandson would be called Panasenko or Panko.[11] The Ukrainian word *rudy,* which means "red-haired," apparently described the tinge of Gogol's hair. The use of pen names, often based on Ukrainian places of origin, was especially widespread among writers from Ukraine, for example, Hryhory Kvitka or Vladimir Dal (Grigory Osnovianenko and Kazak Lugansky, respectively). Gogol marked his place of origin in his book's title: Dikanka in fact

bordered with Gogol's estate Vasilevka and was a favorite destination of his walks. It belonged to the magnate Viktor Kochubei, Alexander I's interior minister and a descendant of the Kochubei who had warned Peter I about Mazepa's treason. Gogol describes Dikanka in his first preface as a provincial backwater:

> When you, dear sirs, come to see me, take the high road straight to Dikanka. I have put Dikanka on the first page on purpose, so you could get to our farm faster. About Dikanka, I think, you must have heard enough. And it's true that houses there are a little cleaner than some beekeeper's. And the garden, what is there to tell: you probably won't find one like it in your Petersburg. Once you arrive in Dikanka, just ask the first boy you see, who tends geese in a soiled shirt: "Where does the beekeeper Rudy Panko live?"—"Right over there!" he'll say, pointing with his finger. (*PSS* 1, 106; the narrator continues to describe the poor condition of the roads in the area)

Since Kochubei, who was recently made prince, liked to boast about his grand estate in Dikanka, this description was likely aimed to pique the newly baked grandee.[12] Among the possible reasons for his grudge against Kochubei, Gogol's pro-Mazepist sympathies may have played a role.

Though passages of exquisite, lyrical Russian prose occur in some stories, the quote above is closer to the work's linguistic mainstay: a heavily Ukrainianized Russian idiom that reflects the personas of Gogol's simple Ukrainian narrators. In fact, both prefaces include lists of Ukrainian words with explanations in Russian. Seen in a postcolonial perspective, the language of *Evenings on a Farm* represents an instance of a peripheral patois that invades the culture of the imperial center. According to the distinction made by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back,* between English ("standard" British English) and english (a colonial variety), one could say that Gogol wrote his *Evenings* in russian.[13]

Yet this russian text targets a Russian audience, particularly in the imperial capital, as signaled by the reference to "your Petersburg" in the quoted passage. Though the book asserts Ukrainian uniqueness and accentuates its antinomy with Russianness, it is ultimately produced for Russian consumption, as the Ukrainian-Russian glossaries appended to each volume clearly indicate. As such, it also engages the imperial discourse on Ukraine in producing its own representation. Mary Louise Pratt calls this kind of dialogicity "autoethnography" and writes that such

texts often become points of entry for their authors into the metropolitan culture.[14] *Evenings on a Farm* played precisely such a role in Gogol's career. The work does its fair share of pandering to the Russians' assumptions about Ukraine through its selection of plots, conventions, and characters. In translating his native Ukrainian culture into the Russian imperial one, Gogol takes the utmost care to make his material palatable and attractive. Foremost in the prefaces, cross-cultural mediation sharply diminishes in the stories themselves, which delve more directly into the life and culture of Ukraine and challenge the imperial stereotypes more freely.

Gogol was by no means a trailblazer in this cross-cultural enterprise. The project of imperial translation had been in full swing since the eighteenth century. By his time, Ukraine had generated a rich literature in the Russian language, from travelogues, memoirs, and histories to literary works, which attests to its importance for Russians.[15] In addition, Gogol used literature written in Ukrainian, by authors such as Kotliarevsky, Hulak-Artemovsky, or Kvitka. He firmly linked *Evenings* to this Ukrainian tradition in the stories' epigraphs. The writer's indebtedness to the traditional Ukrainian puppet theater (the *vertep*), the Ukrainian baroque, and his father's Ukrainian comedies have also received wide attention.[16] The existing literature on Ukraine provided Gogol with a body of established themes, motifs, and conventions. Descriptions of the Dnepr and the steppes, Cossack exploits and tricks, the water nymphs *(rusalki),* or Kiev witches were topoi of the literature on Ukraine well before Gogol, but he made these motifs memorable.

Given the context of a fairly saturated market of books on Ukraine, the collection opens, appropriately, with an assumption of the readers' objections to its appearance:

> What sort of a wonder is this: *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka?* What evenings? And what's more, flung into the world by some beekeeper! Good God! As if not enough geese were plucked for quills and not enough rags wasted for paper! Not enough folks and riffraff of all kinds soiled their fingers in ink! And here some beekeeper also gets the urge to tag after all the others! (*PSS* 1, 103).

By preempting the readers' objections, this kind of confrontational opening tries in fact to win their favor. This discursive strategy marks Panko's preface as belonging to the genre of the *suplika,* widely practiced by Ukrainian writers since the sixteenth century. In the nineteenth century, the *suplika* typically dealt with issues of Ukrainian identity and did so in the context of the Russian metropolitan culture that posed a threat to its survival.[17] Panko's conversational idiom represents yet another trademark of the "Ukrainian school." It imitates the oral speech of the simple folk, with its anacoluthons, malapropisms, and truncations.[18]

Panko's first preface articulates cultural borders between Ukraine and Russia rather than facilitating their homogenization. It delineates the geographical and social divisions that separate Panko's milieu from that of his readers. Panko addresses the book to the "dear readers" who are not "us." His own cultural and geographic space is that of the Ukrainian *khutor,* or farmstead; his readers'—that of the "big world" of the imperial capital in which his stories were published. The culture of Panko and his fellow *khutor*-dwellers is oral, immediate, and organic. It needs not be written down in books and read in private, since it is enacted in the daily life of the community. Proud of its richness, Panko offers to share it with his Russian readers, but he wants them to be mindful of the dichotomy between the two worlds. This emerges, for example, in the explanation of the Ukrainian *vechernitsy,* or evening get-togethers:

> These are, if you will, these are similar to your balls, only not completely. If you go to your balls, then you do that just to fidget with your feet a bit and yawn into your sleeve. In our parts [*u nas*], a crowd of girls will gather in one hut with no ball in mind, but with a spinning wheel, or with combs, and at first they will take to working: spinning wheels hum, songs flow, and none of them will so much as raise their eyes. But as soon as young men with a fiddler fill the hut—noise will rise, craziness will break out, dancing will begin, and such pranks will take place that there's no describing. (*PSS* 1, 104)

Panko maintains the division into "we" and "you" throughout the preface and often presents the world of "we" in a better light than the world of "you." The roads near Dikanka may be bumpier than in the capital, but its inhabitants surely know better how to enjoy themselves. To metropolitan ennui Panko juxtaposes provincial vitality. To the extent that *Evenings* invokes imperial models and cultural institutions as equivalents for local concepts, it does so with the full sway of destabilizing ambiguity and subversive mockery that postcolonial theory ascribes to the practice of mimicry. Though the reveling villagers in the quote make no attempt to imitate a Petersburg ball, the statement of the two events'

ambiguous equivalence (similar, "only not completely") functions as deliberate misappropriation of the imperial norm (the reduction of a ball to a boring ordeal) for the purpose of asserting the peripheral culture's superiority.

The notion of a contact zone, which also comes from postcolonial critical practice but is applicable to any situation where cultures come together and interact, captures well the adversarial relation between Russian and Ukrainian cultures that the prefaces to *Evenings on a Farm* illustrate. A contact zone is what Pratt calls a "social space . . . where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination."[19] The two prefaces portray the Ukrainian and Russian cultures as such a contact zone. They foreground the tensions between the two cultures through a focus on contentious issues of narrative mode and authority that I will explore in the continuation of this section. While the prefaces, consistent with their function of pitching the book to the Russian reader, ostensibly affirm the dominant status of Russian culture, they also articulate the Ukrainians' effort to emerge above their subordinate position.

Another helpful model that illustrates this dynamic is Yuri Lotman's theory of the semiosphere. Analogous to the biosphere, Lotman's semiosphere functions as the semiotic space of a culture that allows for the existence and functioning of languages (meant broadly as codes). The relations between core and periphery within a semiosphere are asymmetrical, as the core seeks to impose its normative language on the periphery. A periphery can try to conform, but it can also become a site of contestation and revolutionary semiotic ferment.[20] If we take imperial Russian culture as such a semiosphere, then *Evenings* makes us see Ukraine as its breakaway periphery, one that conceives of itself as a semiosphere in its own right. Rejecting the norm exported by the imperial center, Gogol's Ukrainian protagonists engage in intense self-description, codifying their own cultural practices and languages, and establish semiotic boundaries with the larger imperial context. The prefaces, including the glossaries of Ukrainian terms, enunciate this effort very well. Instead of searching for a common imperial language, the Ukraine of *Evenings* resists creolization, even though *Evenings* as a published text may be seen as its instance.

The author of the comparison of a *vechernitsa* to a Petersburg ball,

Rudy Panko, straddles the semiotic boundary between the Ukrainian and imperial cultures. For Lotman, boundaries are natural domains of bilingualism and translation. He defines them as "mechanism[s] for translating texts of alien semiotics into 'our own' language."[21] Panko, however, faces the boundary the other way, translating a text of "our own" semiotics into a language of an alien culture against which Ukraine strains to assert itself. He offers equivalents for what his Russian readers may find unfamiliar. Yet he also emphasizes the untranslatable aspect of his culture, its uniqueness and embeddedness in the Ukrainian language. Ultimately, a *vechernitsa* does not resemble a Petersburg ball (as defined by Panko) in the least. Though Panko provides the Russian equivalents for the Ukrainian words in the glossary, he deems the Ukrainian terms irreplaceable in the stories themselves. Were they not integral, why not just use the Russian equivalents? The use of such "local color" authenticates the text's cultural and ethnographic basis. Again, Gogol here follows Walter Scott, who made his characters from the non-English periphery, mostly Scotland, speak in their native tongue or in a heavily dialectal English. Scottish-English glossaries, epigraphs taken from Scottish folk songs, and an elaborate scholarly apparatus, including footnotes and appendices, frequently accompany Scott's fiction. Yet beyond this authenticating function, "local color" also limits the imperial language's access to the represented culture and privileges local usage over imperial norm. Such is the function of Panko's *vechernitsa*.

Panko's awareness of Russian attitudes comes through in his allusion to the Russians' stereotype of Ukrainians as a homogenous mass of peasants. His desire to undermine this stereotype prompts him to differentiate the better Ukrainian society that gathers in his house from the peasants: "And one must say that these people are not at all of a common kind, not some kind of village peasants" (*PSS* 1, 104). This represents a clear instance of autoethnography: a periphery creates an image of itself that engages in a dialogue with its imperial image. Nonetheless, Panko almost immediately undercuts his defense of the Ukrainian society by an elaborate example that, paradoxically, grants some validity to the Russians' stereotype. In a typically Gogolian twist, Panko's praise of Foma Grigorevich, the Dikanka priest, though delivered in a tone of awe, makes clear that although not a plain village peasant, Foma is not terribly far from one:

> He never wore a gaudy robe in which you see many village priests. You visit him even on a regular day, and he will always see you in a loose gown of thin fabric, the color of congealed potato starch, for which he had paid in Poltava almost six rubles per measure [a very insignificant amount in Petersburg prices—E. B.]. And his shoes? No one in our village will say they smell of tar, and all know that he cleans them with the best lard that, I think, a peasant would gladly put in his porridge. (*PSS* 1, 105)

It is doubtful that such criteria of social differentiation as shoe polish—in particular, of the edible variety—would have led Panko's metropolitan readers to revise their low opinion of Ukrainian high society.

This passage exemplifies a palpable tension in the preface. Panko's desire to enlighten the Russian readers about life in Ukraine and show it to its advantage competes with just as urgent a concern not to condescend and thus run the risk of antagonizing them. In the prefaces, Panko makes his readers feel comfortable and superior, even as he at times gently proves them wrong. His tactics resemble those of the Greeks sending a gift of a wooden horse to Troy. For while in the prefaces Panko treats his audience as well-disposed friends from the Russian capitals, engaging in a degree of flattery and ingratiation, in the stories themselves he exposes them to rather unflattering references to Russianness. As if wishing to cushion their shock, Gogol wants his readers to delve from the preface into the stories with a benevolent chuckle and hastens to confirm their sense of superiority with regard to the simple folk of Little Russia.

The role of Panko's initial preface within the cycle as a whole corresponds to the stuffed pastry made by Panko's wife. By placing it on the table at the right moment, she dispels impending confrontation between two guests: "The hand of Foma Grigorevich, instead of folding into a *shish* [a vulgar gesture—E. B.], reached toward the pastry, and, as it always happens, everyone started praising the hostess" (*PSS* 1, 106). The disagreement that brings about this perilous moment involves the volume's two narrators, Foma Grigorevich and a gentleman in a pea-green coat. It concerns the subject of the proper narrative mode. The gentleman in a pea-green coat represents a Russified Ukrainian who opts for the fancy language of printed books, whose intricacy Panko appreciates, yet which he often finds utterly unintelligible. Foma stands for a traditional technique and the local, ancestral language. Though the words

"Russian" and "Ukrainian" are not used, these meanings are encoded indirectly.

Foma criticizes the gentleman's pretensions through the parable of a young man who, after obtaining education from a priest, becomes so "latinized" that he pretends he no longer understands "our Orthodox language." One day he claims to have forgotten the word for a rake and asks his father, "How is it called in *your* language?" He recalls it quickly when he steps on the rake, and it hits him on the head. He cries out: "A damn rake!" (*PSS* 1, 105; emphasis mine). The gentleman in a pea-green coat understands that Foma's parable is aimed at him: do not scorn the local language and custom, which are an integral part of you, and be aware that your worldly airs merely render you ridiculous. The gentleman responds to this personal assault by initiating an elaborate ritual of partaking of snuff, thus flaunting the kind of behavior that Foma has just censured. He also mutters a saying about pearls before swine, which brings him and Foma close to a fight, were it not for the well-timed deus ex machina in the form of the stuffed pastry. The gentleman's dress, manners, and language signal a Russified Ukrainian nobleman, very much resembling Gogol, who in the gentleman's image may well be taking an ironic view of himself. Foma Grigorevich, in turn, represents unadulterated and self-confident Ukrainianness.

Rudy Panko positions himself between the two. He shares Foma's view of the gentleman without sharing Foma's outrage. Glad that his wife's pastry managed to prevent a confrontation, Panko includes the gentleman's two stories in the first volume, but strikes him from the roster of storytellers in the second. This time, Panko's tone is more dismissive. He metonymically equates the gentleman's person with the vegetable that gave name to the color of his coat: from "a gentleman in a pea-green coat," he becomes, literally, "a pea gentleman" (*gorokhovoi panich*; *PSS* 1, 195). Panko also divulges more details about this "pea gentleman." He is a nobleman by the name of Makar Nazarovich, a resident of Poltava, who has connections to the authorities anointed by the imperial government. His uncle was a commissar—a salaried state official who performed policing functions—and he himself once dined at the governor's table. Makar's questionable knowledge of local culture occasions another dispute with Panko's circle. This time the contended issue is the proper method of pickling apples. Contrary to everyone present, Makar Nazarovich insists that a certain kind of grass must be added to the brine. The

idea is so absurd that Rudy Panko attempts to dissuade him from spreading it, lest he make a complete fool of himself. Perhaps since the gentleman's recipe simultaneously calls into question Panko's wife's culinary expertise, no pastry arrives this time to restore peace. Rudy Panko bids Makar Nazarovich good riddance:

> Just because his uncle was once a commissar he now puts on airs. As if commissar were such a rank that there is no higher one in the world. Thank God, there is a higher one than commissar. . . . Here's the example of Foma Grigorevich for you. It seems he's not a man of a high station, but just look at him: a certain importance glows in his face, even when he sniffs ordinary tobacco. Even then you can't help but feel respect. In church, when he starts singing—such pleasure cannot be described! You just want to melt away, all of you! . . . And that other one . . . well, good luck to him! He thinks one can't do without his tales. Well? Here's a book that is full without them. (*PSS* 1, 196–197)

This, again, is calculated for a chuckle from the Russian readers in the capital, who are meant to convert imaginatively Panko's loving description of Foma Grigorevich into an image of a fat bellowing yokel. Yet this autoethnographic farce at the same time serves as a shield for anti-imperial rhetoric. Panko's persona of a naive bumpkin gives him a safe haven from which to defend local custom against imperial politics. He subscribes to the traditional community ethos and places no stock in the imperial importation of Petrine ranks, in reality much resented in Ukraine. No matter that commissar is not a rank but an administrative function; both are alien elements in Panko's world. Rejecting the rigidly quantified system of official administrative promotions, he believes respect and status are earned by excelling in an expression of the traditional values of the community (like church singing) and a person's inner qualities (the "importance" that glows in Foma's face). In the eyes of Panko and his companions, Makar Nazarovich's status is defined by the imperial system, while Foma's status organically grows out of communal values. Makar's alienation from this local Ukrainian culture renders him an outsider in Panko's circle, while he also remains a foreigner in the society of Russians. The fancy language of his stories, which imitate the literary language of Russian books, renders him just as unintelligible to his Russian audience as he was to Panko's friends: "the best heads of even the

Muscovite people" cannot comprehend him (*PSS* 1, 195). In Panko's final analysis, once out of his native element and onto the larger imperial waters, the Poltava gentleman is doomed to a cultural no-man's land.

The question of narrative authority remains a deeply contentious issue beyond the first preface. Who has the right and the requisite knowledge to write about Ukraine? When Foma hears Makar's printed rendition of his own story, the irascible priest erupts: "Spit on the head of the one who printed this! He lies, son of a Muscovite [*breshe, suchii moskal'*]. Is that how I told the story? He lies like the devil loosened some screws in his head!" [*"Shcho-to vzhe, iak u koho chort-ma klepky v holovi"*] (*PSS* 1, 138). Makar's botched job incenses Foma so much that he slips into Ukrainian curses. These are italicized in the published text to mark clearly the linguistic switch from Russian. In reviling Makar, Foma transforms the vulgarism *suchii syn* (son of a bitch) into *suchii moskal* (roughly, "Muscovite son of a bitch"). This mildly derogatory Ukrainian word for a Russian, *moskal,* can be compared to "red coats," which was used by England's colonial subjects in reference to the English (though *moskal,* like "red coat," originally referred to the imperial troops, by the late eighteenth century it came to denote any Russian). The insult succinctly reveals that Makar appears to Foma as a foreigner, a Russified lout. It also shows that in Foma's world being a *moskal* clearly does not mean anything good. Incidentally, Gogol grew up hearing the word *moskal* used at home in reference to the Russians.[22]

These narratorial rivalries attest to an intensive process of what Lotman terms self-description—the formation of a normative language within a semiosphere. For this reason, the proper recipe for pickling brine and the proper way to tell a story are exceedingly important matters. Arguments over these issues signal the dynamic of codifying a cultural grammar that is under way in Ukraine. Yet the Ukrainian storytellers at the same time must contend with the norm emanating from the imperial center. Makar's effort to generate a "correct" form based on the center's norm causes resentment among his peers, who prefer their own "incorrect" text or, rather, aim to standardize it as correct within their own culture.

Interestingly enough, the actual author of *Evenings* has more in common with Makar Nazarovich than with any other persona in the stories. Like Makar, he is a Russified nobleman from the Poltava region. Yet one must remember that Nikolai Gogol is hiding behind Rudy Panko, an autochthon like Foma. Since Gogol comes into a literary scene that is

crowded with writers like Makar, who represent a Russified, external perspective on Ukraine, he attempts to distinguish himself by assuming the persona of a more authentic, reliable source from within Ukraine. By criticizing Makar, Gogol in fact tries to destroy the image of his competitors, though his relation to Ukraine is as removed as theirs by a generous layer of Russification. Moreover, the invented persona of Rudy Panko allows Gogol to indulge in the Romantic dream of a patriarchal existence unspoiled by modernity and civilization. While Gogol's fictional images of Ukraine exude such romanticized organicism, his vision of Russia evokes a fragmented modern world.

In his prefaces, Panko offers his Russian reader a reverie of belonging to the kind of organic community that gathers at his home, telling stories and partaking of his wife's delicacies. He creates a seductive illusion of an immediate personal contact with his reader through a familiar, intimate form of address. In a conclusion to the first volume's preface, he even invites them to visit him at his farm near Dikanka. He provides driving directions and entices prospective guests with his wife's Ukrainian dishes. Panko thus welcomes his readers into abundance, both narrative and nutritional, ethnographic specificity, and familiar closeness. Like his wife's pastry, all this is meant to smooth out the encounter with a content that is frequently uncomplimentary to Russians and to present the stories' collector as well-intentioned.

The quarrels over narrative authority between Foma Grigorevich and Makar Nazarovich present the zone of Russian-Ukrainian contact as an area of contest and clash, rather than cooperation, of antinomy, rather than homogenization. Thus the narrative frame of *Evenings* anticipates the notion of absolute disjunction between Ukrainian and Russian worlds that the stories themselves will accentuate. The society that gathers for Panko's evenings resists acculturation to the metropolitan core and cultivates a sense of its own, unique identity.

Ukraine as Herderian Nation: Geography, Culture, History

Nations were for Herder facts of nature, and they appeared this way also to Gogol. The national character of Ukraine in *Evenings* has been influenced by its natural setting, and conversely, the book describes this setting using nationalizing tropes. Despite Foma's dismissal of Makar as a qualified storyteller, it is he who authors some of the most powerful images of Ukraine, the beauty of its landscape and the wholeness of its culture.

In the opening to the first story in the volume, "The Fair at Sorochintsy," Makar treats his reader from the "cold North," as Petersburg and its environs were often regarded, to a poetic description of a summer day in Ukraine: "How intoxicating, how delightful is a summer day in Little Russia! How wearisome is the heat of these hours when the midday [sun] glistens in silent sultry heat, and it seems that the immeasurable blue ocean, having leaned over the earth its voluptuous dome, fell asleep, all immersed in languor, while pressing the earth's beauty in an airy embrace" (*PSS* 1, 111). The description of the river Psel, which flowed near Gogol's estate, is equally enchanting. Like the loving embrace of the sky and the earth in the preceding quote, Psel emerges in an anthropomorphized image of a beautiful, seductive young woman, "capriciously willful" and changing its course almost each year to "adorn herself" with ever new landscapes.

The river's feminine image foregrounds the story's depiction of the rural Ukrainian milieu. As George Grabowicz explains, Gogol saw Ukraine in two principal social modalities: that of settled, peaceful agriculturalists and that of warlike, nomadic Cossacks.[23] "The Fair at Sorochintsy" portrays the life of the former group, which for Gogol denoted a more feminine mode of existence. The Poltava nobleman reveals his remove from this class of Ukrainians through his paternalistic designation of the story's hero as "our *muzhik*" (*PSS* 1, 112). Incidentally, in this he confirms Foma's and Panko's accusations of haughtiness and alienation, yet he also resembles Gogol himself who, inquiring about the customs of Ukrainian peasants in his letters, called them with some condescension "our Little Russians" (*PSS* 10, 141).

While the rural world of "The Fair at Sorochintsy" seems to reflect fairly contemporary times, the masculine, Cossack world of the second volume's "A Terrible Vengeance" is grounded in a distant, mythically transformed past. The second story belongs to an unnamed guest at Panko's parties who presents it in a third-person narration that is no less ornate than Makar's. The river whose description bejewels this story is the mighty, majestic Dnepr. Its grandeur, untamable nature, and a combination of magnanimous generosity and destructive power correspond to Gogol's vision of the Cossack ethos that the story aims to capture. During good weather, the masculine Dnepr seems cast out of glass. The black forest wants to cover the river with its long shadows—but in vain: "There is nothing in the world that could cover the Dnepr." A silver current glittering in its surface resembles a Damask saber, a common

Cossack weapon. The narrator exclaims: "Even then it is marvelous, and there is no river in the world that can match it!" Yet when dark clouds fill the sky, the Dnepr is terrifying, and the waves that beat against the rocks resemble the anguish of a Cossack's mother sending her son to war. Overall, the river's description evokes Cossack values and references to Ukrainian history's sunny days and cloudy nights. The passage stresses the Dnepr's—and through it, Ukraine's—singularity and superiority. Through this metonymic parallel, Ukraine emerges as a self-sufficient realm that, in keeping with Herder's romantic dream, represents the particular while partaking of the universal. According to the passage, *all* the world's stars find reflection in the Dnepr (*PSS* 1, 268–269).

Gogol's pervasive "nationalization" of nature continues in "A May Night." The story represents a significant shift in Makar's terminology. While in "The Fair at Sorochintsy" he calls the summer day "Little Russian," in "A May Night," the "Ukrainian sky," "Ukrainian night," and even "Ukrainian nightingale" all make their appearance (*PSS* 1, 155, 159, 180). The word "Ukraine" *(Ukraina)* dates from the sixteenth century and was frequently used in Ukrainian folk epics *(dumy)* and Cossack chronicles. In the nineteenth century, "Ukraine" bore an association with the independent Cossack past, while "Little Russia" represented the official imperial standard that stressed the "unity" of both Russias. Gogol's shift from the term "Little Russian" in "The Fair at Sorochintsy" that describes peasant folk culture to "Ukrainian" in "A May Night," rooted in the milieu of the Cossacks, thus taps these social connotations and signals the Cossacks' rejection of the imperial idea of "Little Russia." Like the descriptions of Ukrainian rivers, the portrayal of Ukrainian nightscape in "A May Night" abounds in baroque language, elaborate similes, anthropomorphism, exclamations—in short, a style that aims to capture the sensory and emotional excess aroused by the magnificence of the landscape. As in the Dnepr passage, the particular, the Ukrainian, merges with the universal as the moon is made to lose itself in the "Ukrainian" nightingale's song.

The continuity between nature and man represents a distinguishing feature of the world of *Evenings.* In "The Fair at Sorochintsy," for example, a country fair is likened to a waterfall. Uncontrollable energy and picturesque disorder characterize both:

> You have probably happened to hear a distant cascading waterfall, when the anxious environs fill with rumbling, and the chaos of magical, indistinct sounds carries like the whirlwind in front of you. Isn't it true, won't these same feelings grip you in the whirlwind of a village fair, when all the people grow into one huge odd creature that moves around with its whole torso on the square and in the narrow lanes, and shouts, cackles, roars? Noise, swearing, mooing, bleating, howling—all coalesce into one dissonant speech. Oxen, sacks, hay, Gypsies, pots, womenfolk, gingerbread, hats—all is bright, motley, disorderly. (*PSS* 1, 115)

Man, his beast, his wares, and the village itself all merge into one effervescent motley body. A similar image closes the story. Obstacles overcome, Paraska gets to marry her Gritsko, and their wedding guests transform themselves into one dancing and rejoicing organism. The use of the singular noun *vsë* (all) in references to the merrymaking guests underscores the notion of people as a unitary body. The wedding music makes former discord instantly dissipate: "[W]illingly or not, all [*vsë*] turned into unity and concord. People whose sullen faces have probably never seen a smile were stamping their feet and jerking their shoulders. All was moving. All was dancing [singular verb forms—E. B.]" (*PSS* 1, 135). Even old women with one foot in the grave join "the new, laughing, living person" and "quietly nod their tipsy heads and dance with the rejoicing crowd" (*PSS* 1, 135–136). In the story's ending, this vision of wholeness, vitality, and joy gives way to a wistful reminder of their ephemerality; the carnivalesque dissipates, leaving only "something like a murmur of a distant sea" (*PSS* 1, 136).

Gogol's image of the Ukrainian people and their culture is rooted in his own experience of Ukrainian customs and traditions while growing up in the Poltava region and in numerous ethnographic and literary sources—Russian and Ukrainian, contemporary and historic. The embeddedness of *Evenings* in this rich matrix of influences has been discussed at length.[24] Though often analytically weak, these studies provide philologically useful lists of motifs, characters, plot devices, and stylistic elements that link Gogol's creation with this larger Ukrainian context. Most important for my analysis, however, are the intertexts with relevance for national issues. For *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* and its *Volk*-based Herderian nationalism, the most crucial Ukrainian cultural intertext is what came to be known as *kotliarevshchyna.* The term derives from the name of Ivan Kotliarevsky (1769–1838), the "father" of Ukrainian literature and author of the foundational text of modern Ukrainian lit-

erature, the burlesque *Aeneid* (1798). Three epigraphs to "The Fair at Sorochintsy" come from *Aeneid,* fragments of which Gogol copied to his "A Book of Odds and Ends" when still in Nizhyn.

Though traditionally the term *kotliarevshchyna* has pejoratively referred to Kotliarevsky's mediocre yet prolific epigones, I use it in the nonevaluative sense that George Grabowicz suggested to mean a "broadly ramified style and mode initiated by Kotliarevsky's travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*" that has provided a basic model of Ukrainian identity and self-assertion.[25] Kotliarevsky's mock epic includes a wealth of ethnographic detail about life in Ukraine through persistent cataloging of Ukrainian personal names, foods, drinks, dances, musical instruments, costumes, and even words themselves (for example, strings of synonyms). This makes *Aeneid* a veritable "encyclopedia" of Ukrainian life. The Ukrainian Aeneas and his Cossack companions provide a composite model of a sly yet brave, happy-go-lucky, freedom-loving hero. The "simple" provincial narrator imbues the work with crude and earthy humor and creates a sense of familiarity with his reader. The Ukrainian world is contrasted with that of foreign "others," who are either demonized or ridiculed. The language of *kotliarevshchyna,* in George Shevelov's apt characterization, abounds in "dialogisms, an excess of vulgarisms or diminutives, a circling around the same word, coordinate syntax and catalogues, avoidance of foreign words and their substitution by descriptive locutions or approximate *ad hoc* inventions . . . or through a folk phonetics and folk etymology, the use of purely local facts as if universally well known, an excess of exclamations, proverbs, interruptions, etc."[26] All of these elements—the ethnographic catalog, the Ukrainian character types, the humor, the "simple" narrators, the attitude to foreignness, the stylistic peculiarities—are reflected in Gogol's *Evenings.*

Kotliarevshchyna represents a strategy for capturing Ukrainian uniqueness. Yet it also responds to the larger imperial context in which it is grounded. In Grabowicz's diagnosis, the primary function of *kotliarevshchyna* is to "mock the inflated, self-important, artificial, cold, and ultimately 'inhuman' world of normative imperial society and normative canonical literature." For the author, Grabowicz points out, *kotliarevshchyna* provides a mask that "allows [him] to assume a subversive stance, mock the 'foreign' and emphasize his own separateness, his 'native' emotional and cultural code—*without direct risk.*" Grabowicz is right to see in Gogol "a powerful projection of this modality onto the literature of the 'center' " and hence an instance of the peripheral literature's infiltration of the metropolitan canon.[27] I wish to take Grabowicz's idea further to argue that in Gogol's Romantic rendition *kotliarevshchyna* as an ethnic self-assertion feeds an invention of a national identity conceived in Herderian cultural terms. The embeddedness of *Evenings* in the imperial context facilitates this invention. This is consistent with the widespread dynamic whereby imperial encounters catalyze national identity formation. By confronting its overbearing "other"—imperial Russia—as well as a host of minor "others," the Ukraine of *Evenings* gains a bounded space and an articulated self.

The images of foreignness in *Evenings* help define what Ukraine *is* by specifying what it is *not.* Such a division of the world into "us" and "them" represents for Lotman a foundational act in the emergence of a semiosphere. Most important, Ukraine of *Evenings* is *not* Russia. As the various storytellers vie for narrative authority in the two prefaces, they define imperial Russia by its book culture, urban power centers, aristocracy, and system of ranks, all of which are foreign in their world. The stories themselves, however, link Russianness with less exalted values. In the "low," folksy world of the provincial narrators, a Russian is a *moskal* (a Muscovite), a foreigner and an intruder, at best a carpetbagger, at worst a thief in cahoots with the devil. This image of a Russian had been popularized by Kotliarevsky and by writers in the tradition of *kotliarevshchyna.* One such Russian attends the Sorochintsy fair: "a *moskal,* stroking with one hand his goat-like beard, and with the other . . ." (*PSS* 1, 116; ellipsis Gogol's). The goatlike beard elicits an association with the Ukrainian ethnic slur used in reference to Russians, *katsap,* based on the word *tsap,* which means a male goat.[28] In one letter Gogol himself refers to Russia as *katsapiia* (*PSS* 10, 273). The insinuation of a licentious activity in which the *moskal* in Gogol's story engages with his other hand adds to the debasement. The word *katsap* is used twice in "Ivan Fedorovich Shponka and His Aunt." Shponka's companion Storchenko claims to have grown partly deaf after a cockroach crawled into his ear while he was sleeping in a Russian inn. He finds the Russians' filthiness outrageous: "The damned *katsapy* have bred cockroaches all over their Russian huts" (*PSS* 1, 297). He also mentions that "the damned *katsapy* . . . even eat their cabbage soup with cockroaches in it" (*PSS* 1, 291). In addition to their uncleanliness, the Russians are also known in Ukraine for their thievery. In "The Fair at Sorochintsy," Paraska's father guards his goods during the night so that "*moskali* don't by chance pinch something" (*PSS* 1, 122).

This negative perception of a Russian among both Ukrainian peasants and Cossacks in *Evenings* is shown to be so entrenched that it has become proverbial. "Expect as much benefit as from a hungry *moskal*"; "I cheered up as if *moskali* carried off my old woman"; "to carry on like a *moskal*" *(moskalia vezt')*, meaning "to lie," as Gogol explains in a footnote; and "when the devil or *moskal* steal something, you won't even remember its name"—it is in such unflattering stereotypes that the agents of imperial Russia are seen in the Ukraine of *Evenings* (*PSS* 1, 117, 133, 138, 169). The scribe in "A May Night" refuses to repeat some vulgarisms by saying: "[S]uch words—it's a shame to repeat them; a drunken *moskal* will fear to reel them off with his profane tongue" (*nechestivym svoim iazykom*; *PSS* 1, 169). The word "tongue" seems to denote both the content of a Russian's speech and his language. As such, it contrasts with Foma's respectful notion of "our Orthodox language," by which, in light of this dismissive mention of the Russian language, he likely meant Ukrainian (*nash iazyk pravoslavnyi; PSS* 1, 105). Responding to Russia's linguistic imperialism, which promoted the view of Russian as the perfect and purest Slavic tongue and denied Ukrainian the status of a language, the Ukrainian writers in the tradition of *kotliarevshchyna* frequently reversed the tables and presented Ukrainian as the standard and mocked Russian as an anomaly (for example, Kvitka-Osnovianenko or Hulak-Artemovsky). Foma's pride in Ukrainian taps this common motif. Profanity is tied to foreignness in the cycle. The Poles and their language are also called profane (*PSS* 1, 267).

The notion of Russian-Ukrainian kinship promulgated by the imperial ideologues is absent in *Evenings.* Instead, the work presents the relation between the two realms as that of fundamental difference. The costume of a *moskal* functions as a disguise in carnivalesque rituals of reversal and estrangement among costumes of Gypsies, Jews, and devils, all of whom were stock figures in the Ukrainian puppet theater, the *vertep.* In *Evenings,* these masks of foreignness make one look "unlike a man," that is, somehow "inhuman" by virtue of not being Ukrainian (*PSS* 1, 147). Even though Jews and Gypsies have long inhabited Ukraine, they do not belong to Gogol's imagined community of Ukrainians, which he defines by ethnos and religion.

Foreignness and devilry remain intimately linked. The anatomy of a devil in "St. John's Eve" represents a template of "otherness," non-Ukrainianness:

> From the front, he was a regular foreigner. His narrow little mug, continuously fidgeting and sniffing everything in sight, had a round snout, just like our pigs. His legs were so thin that if our Iareskov village chief had such legs, he'd break them the first time he danced a *kazachok.* But from the back, he was a real province prosecutor's clerk in a uniform [*gubernskii striapchii*], because his tail was sharp and thin just like the uniform's folds these days. Only by the goat-like beard on his mug and the tiny horns sticking up on his head, and because he was no cleaner than a chimney-sweep, could one guess that he was no foreigner and no province prosecutor's clerk but simply a devil. (*PSS* 1, 202)

The devil's one side emblematizes a more radical foreignness, that of a Frenchman or Swede, while his other side stands for the imperial administration ruling Ukraine, borne out by the motifs of the *gubernia* (a Russian administrative unit), the prosecutor's clerk, and his uniform. Together with horns, uncleanliness, and a goatlike beard—the last associated throughout *Evenings* with Russianness—these attributes produce a veritable devil. The mention of the creature's thin legs quite likely betokens a reference to Peter I. His draconian measures in the wake of Mazepa's rebellion, intended to solidify Russia's sovereignty over Ukraine, earned him a demonic image in Ukrainian popular culture and one that emphasized his foreignness.

The sorcerer in "A Terrible Vengeance" represents perhaps the most demonic of all foreigners in *Evenings.* After twenty-one years spent in foreign lands, where "nothing is as it should be," he returns to Ukraine to live with his daughter Katerina, her husband Danilo, and their newborn son (*PSS* 1, 244). After his foreign sojourn the sorcerer has become a stranger to all the traditional determinants of Ukrainianness, particularly culinary, that have been elaborated in *Evenings.* He refuses to partake of traditional Ukrainian foods and drinks, such as mead or vodka or roast boar with cabbage and plums. This emphasizes his estrangement from the ethnic community and signals to Danilo the sorcerer's possible alliance with abstemious aliens, such as Turks and Jews (*PSS* 1, 254–255). However, what makes the sorcerer particularly dangerous is that he represents a foreignness that cannot be linked to any of the Cossacks' traditional foes and allies; he epitomizes pure foreignness, the absolutely unfamiliar. Danilo learns this when spying on the sorcerer in his castle and notices weapons that are worn by "neither Turks, nor the Crimean

Tatars, nor Poles, nor Christian folk, nor the famous Swedish nation" and the writing that is "neither Russian nor Polish" (*PSS* 1, 257).

The sorcerer's appearance spells death and destruction for Danilo, his family, and the Cossack Ukraine that their homestead comes to represent. This metonymic equation emerges through expansion of spaces and enlargement of boundaries that Robert Maguire has noted in the story.[29] Danilo, being a frontiersman who lives at the edges of Ukraine, is particularly exposed to the threat of contamination by foreignness and its concomitant evil. The proximity of Tatars, Turks, and Poles, against whom he frequently fights, signals the precarious geopolitical location of Ukraine itself. Yet the sorcerer poses an even greater threat, since he possesses an insider's ties to the community, being Katerina's father and a Cossack. He uses this status to infiltrate the community and destroy it from within. His pursuit of an incestuous relationship with his daughter serves the same symbolic goal of infiltration.

The sorcerer's presence threatens to transform Ukraine from a space bounded by ethnic custom and natural borders into a confluence of various "others."[30] The arrival in Ukraine of a mysterious horseman who pursues the sorcerer to mete out retribution coincides with a portentous event, whereby suddenly "all ends of the world" become visible from Ukraine: the Black Sea, the Crimea, Galich, the Carpathian Mountains (*PSS* 1, 275). Like all the world's stars that reflect themselves in the Dnepr, this image foregrounds Ukraine as the absolute center of the represented world. For what the narrator describes as "all ends of the world" appears as not-too-distant "ends" of Ukraine. The Carpathian Mountains in particular function in the story as an "end" of the East Slavic world. They separate the intelligible domain of "Rusian speech" (this umbrella term for all East Slavic languages renders best Gogol's archaic term *russkaia molv'*) from areas where one cannot hear a "native word" (*PSS* 1, 272). The mountains trail south past Wallachia and Transylvania, reaching the Galich and the Hungarian peoples (*PSS* 1, 271). It is in this foreign remove that the story's apocalyptic battle will play out. The mysterious horseman will wreak his terrible vengeance and cast the evil sorcerer into the abyss where corpses will gnaw him for eternity.

Of all the foreigners, the Poles emerge in the story as Ukraine's principal foe and the gravest threat. No other nationality in *Evenings* is portrayed with as much hostility—no other being as harmful, despicable, and insidious. They mock Orthodoxy and Ukrainians and work tirelessly

to destroy Ukraine. They become allies of the scheming sorcerer in his campaign to bring down the house of Danilo. They attempt to wedge themselves between the Cossack communities by building fortresses on their territory. Danilo hears that one such fortress is planned in order to cut him off from the Zaporozhian Cossacks. Should this be true, he swears to "stamp out this devil's nest" (*PSS* 1, 247).

This theme of the Polish oppression in "A Terrible Vengeance" resonates with the November Uprising (1830–1831) of Poles against Russia. The story was most likely written in the summer and fall of 1831, the time of Gogol's visits in Pavlovsk to see Pushkin and Zhukovsky. Around the same time, these poets publicized their views on the subject of Polish-Russian relations in a brochure containing poems that wholeheartedly supported Russia's imperial sovereignty over Poland. Pushkin in his "To the Slanderers of Russia" ("Klevetnikam Rossii," 1831), occasioned by some talk in the French Parliament concerning aid to Poland, emerged as a zealous imperial apologist who threatened anyone wishing to interfere in this "family quarrel." Pushkin posed the following fundamental question: "Will the Slavic streams flow together into the Russian sea? / Or will it dry out?" The poem champions the former alternative: the inevitable confluence of the Slavic streams in the Russian sea. Whatever Gogol's own thoughts on this subject (I attempt to convey their complexity in the section "Gogol and the Poles" in Chapter 5), he seems to have echoed the general anti-Polish sentiment in Russia occasioned by the uprising, though this sentiment is also present in his principal source, *History of the Rusians*.[31] He may have intended "A Terrible Vengeance" as his contribution to the civic effort undertaken by Pushkin and Zhukovsky in their poetic brochure. In doing so, he did not neglect to relegate Ukraine's ties with the discredited Polish nation to the past. This emerges in an interpolation added as if ex post facto to Danilo's speech: "Last year, when I was planning with the Poles an expedition against the Crimean Tartars (I then still held hands with this disloyal nation)" (*PSS* 1, 260). The only instance in the book when a character's speech includes a parenthetical remark, this awkward insertion seems the most direct echo of the Polish uprising.

Despite the Poles' machinations, however, Ukraine's inner turmoil and divisions are the true cause of its downfall. After all, Danilo's Cossacks do manage to defeat the Poles. It is the sorcerer, a kinsman, who kills Danilo. Thus the "last of the Cossacks," as the story mythically treats

him, falls by the hand of another Cossack, a traitor. The song of the Ukrainian bard that closes the story explains that the origin of the sorcerer's curse lies in his perfidious murder of a fellow Cossack with whom he had been united by an oath of brotherhood. When reminiscing about the golden glory of Cossackdom under Hetman Konashevych, famous for his lucrative raids against the Turks, Danilo contrasts it with the discord that now reigns in Ukraine: "There's no order in Ukraine: the colonels and captains are fighting with one another like dogs. There's no senior chief over everyone. Our nobility has taken on Polish customs, has become, like them, crafty . . . and has sold their soul by accepting the Union. The Jewry oppresses the poor people. Oh, times! Oh, times! The time that passed!" (*PSS* 1, 266; ellipsis Gogol's). The internal divisions within Ukraine and its Polonization prove more fatal than any outside military force. This reverberates with the tension in the cycle's prefaces between those who oppose foreign contamination and those who succumb to it. Gogol's story warns against the deracination of Ukrainian identity, which constitutes a danger graver than any foreign power.

The fate of Danilo encapsulates the mythic vision of Ukraine's past.[32] Although Gogol's historical writing is the focus of the next chapter, it is important to appreciate here the historical dimensions of *Evenings,* in addition to the cultural and ethnographic ones, since only together do they provide a comprehensive vision of a Ukrainian nation. The Ukraine of *Evenings* is not merely a "dancing and singing tribe," as Pushkin condescendingly characterized it, but a community well aware of its differences with other ethnic groups and bound by a shared historical experience.[33] Danilo's references to the Cossack freedom and the fatherland (*otchizna; PSS* 1, 249, 251), like the notion of "camaraderie" *(tovarishchestvo)* in *Taras Bulba,* appear in Ukrainian locutions palpably enveloped in the air of Ukrainian history.

A nostalgic tone pervades the tragic fall of the Cossack Ukraine in "A Terrible Vengeance." The wedding in Kiev that opens the story—an occasion that in other *Dikanka* stories affirms communal unity and vitality—here coincides with the appearance of the evil sorcerer. The otherwise fun-loving Cossacks are unwilling in this story to break into song when journeying back from the wedding, troubled by Ukraine's hard times caused by Tatar advances and Polish machinations. In Katerina's lamentation, in cadence and imagery fashioned on Ukrainian folk songs, Danilo's slaughtered body emerges as "the Cossack glory" that lies trampled on the ground (*PSS* 1, 268). Their child, who in the words of Katerina's lullaby was to grow up for the glory of Cossackdom, falls victim to the sorcerer's magic. With this tragic extinction of the Cossack ethos, is Ukraine to be no more?

In answering this question, one must look to the story's ending, which glimpses the contemporary perspective removed from the events involving Danilo. It features a blind bard playing the bandura, a traditional Ukrainian string instrument, to a crowd gathered in the town of Glukhov (now Hlukhiv), which was an important site in the history of the Cossack state. Its name derives from the adjective "deaf" *(glukhoi).* This delightfully Gogolian detail—a blind bard in a "deaf" town—lowers one's initial expectations of the performance's success. Yet these handicaps are shown to be overcome. The bard appears as if he regained vision, and his music falls on keenly attuned, rather than deaf, ears:

> In the town of Glukhov, people [*narod*] gathered around an old, blind bandura-player and have been listening to him play his instrument for over an hour. No other bandura-player has ever sung so well and such marvelous songs. First he started about the former Hetman State at the times of Sahaidachny and Khmelnytsky. Oh, it was a different time: Cossackdom stood tall, trampled enemies with its horses, and no one dared mock it. The old man also sang cheerful songs and followed the people [*narod*] with his eyes, as if he could see. His fingers, with ivory plectra attached to them, were flitting about like a fly over the strings, which seemed to play by themselves. The people [*narod*] that gathered around—the old ones having hung their heads, the young ones having raised their eyes at the old man—dared not even whisper among themselves. "Wait," the old man said: "I will sing for you about what happened long ago." The people [*narod*] came together even more closely, and the blind man started his song. (*PSS* 1, 279)

In contrast to the times about which the bandura-player sings, the Cossack glory is now dead, and the Cossacks are being mocked. Yet though its golden era is over, the memory of Cossackdom survives through the art of the bandura-player. This art exerts a powerful influence over its audience, some of whom may have experienced the era's passing personally (the old ones who hung their heads). The image of young people expectantly raising their eyes to the singer suggests that the historical memory revived by the song carries potential, an inspiring force that could motivate the young generation possibly to seek its own "glory."

The bard scene in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley,* which seems a subtext for the bandura-player scene in Gogol, further encourages a reading that stresses the bard's *contemporary* significance for his community. Scott's bard also plays the role of an impassioned custodian of a national memory that functions as a motivating force for the present. His historical lays offer "exhortations to [the Scots] to remember and to emulate the actions of their forbears."[34] In "A Terrible Vengeance," the bandura-player's performance has a unifying impact on the community. In contrast to the internal divisions and discord that plague the world of Danilo and of Ivan and Petro, the image of the people gathered to hear the song stresses the communality and unity that have characterized Ukrainians in *Evenings*' other stories. In the elevated diction of the passage, the four-time repeated word *narod,* though best translated as "people," acquires overtones of "*a* people." Grammatically, its use causes "people" to appear as a singular body, as they do in so many other communal events in *Evenings,* such as weddings. The unifying power of the bandura-player's historical lay causes this "people" to "come together even more closely."

Just as Gogol's lighthearted fare dominates *Evenings,* the bandura-player's repertory also includes many cheerful songs. However, it is the historical saga that impresses the old bard's audience most deeply. Having finished it, he "started to strum the strings again, and to sing funny ditties about Khoma and Erema, about the glass-cutter Stokoza . . . but the old and the young, still unable to come to themselves, stood for a long time with their heads bowed low, thinking about the terrible events of yore" (*PSS* 1, 282; ellipsis Gogol's). The story "A Terrible Vengeance" is meant to play the same role in Gogol's cycle as the bandura-player's song does in his performance. Though surrounded by humorous and light entertainment, the story aims to cause its readers to pause and ponder the "terrible events of yore" in tragic Ukrainian history. Far from being an assemblage of yokels, Ukrainian society shares a heroic, glorious past that has seen the likes of Danilo, with his "Cossack soul" in a "nobleman's body," shed their blood (*PSS* 1, 267). This past, through the treasures of folk epic poetry, retains its animating power. In the age when a powerful potential for national self-affirmation was seen in ancient, forged or genuine, epic traditions, such as the poems of Ossian or the Finnish *Kalevala,* the image of the Ukrainian bard that closes Gogol's story cannot but play a similar role.

Ukraine within the Russian Empire

The period between the fall of Cossack Ukraine and the Russified present of the Ukrainian gentry, especially the era of Catherine II, appears in the vignettes embedded in many of the *Dikanka* stories. They portray the dynamic of Ukraine's relation with imperial Russia as fraught with tension. This issue is handled with Walter Scottian humor and a propensity for overcoming historical strife with cozy domesticity: the stories treat lightly serious social problems and the thorny issue of Ukraine's autonomy. Gogol's Aesopian language of humor, however, provides merely a thin veneer behind which there lies a vivid picture of inequalities and fractures in the Russian-Ukrainian body politic.

The first such images appear in "A May Night." The story pokes fun at a pompous and authoritarian village chief whose inflated ego has been fueled by his onetime encounter with Empress Catherine II. He incessantly brags that during Catherine's visit to Ukraine he was chosen by the commissar as "the most clever" of the Cossacks to serve as a ceremonial "guide" for the empress (*PSS* 1, 171). Years later, this event continues to send him into rapturous frenzy, but no one seems impressed or willing to listen. Some interrupt the story, referring to the chief's imperial career with unequivocal contempt: "There's no point in talking about it! Everyone already knows how you exerted yourself to gain royal favor" (*PSS* 1, 171).

The motif of the chief's encounter with the empress refers to the actual 1787 voyage that Catherine II undertook to survey her empire, particularly the newly annexed Crimea. With an entourage that included foreign observers, she wintered three months in Kiev and then journeyed south down the Dnepr amid the simulated splendor of peasant huts garlanded by Potemkin in rococo fashion. The imperial trip through Ukraine was also embellished by staged displays of picturesque local color, in which the Cossacks featured prominently.[35] Such was likely the role that the village chief from "A May Night" played in this quasi-ritual reenactment of imperial sovereignty. The narrator ironically recounts: "[The chief] held this office for two whole days and even was vouchsafed to sit in the driver's seat with the Empress's coachman" (*PSS* 1, 161). While this doubtfully grand function undercuts the chief's self-aggrandizement, it also serves as a bitter reminder of the role to which "the most clever" of Cossacks were relegated after Catherine dismantled the remnants of Ukrainian autonomy.

The villagers acknowledge the chief's authority, wary of his slave-master ways. He practices extortion and other forms of economic exploitation, assigns whomever he pleases to various public works, and carries on like a sexual predator with respect to the female villagers. The power he imposes on the village is entirely based on imperial promotion and the backing of the commissar, himself anointed by the metropolitan power.[36] The token gestures of respect mask the villagers' actual resentment.

The chief's own son, Levko, angry at his father's refusal to let him marry Galia (the chief himself is interested in her), incites other young Cossacks to a night of high jinks at the expense of the haughty tyrant whom they all wish to take down a peg. Unnerved by their pranks, which include the singing of a ribald song that disrespects him and his office, the chief fulminates: "These fools took into their head that I am equal to them. They think I am some kind of a brother to them, a simple Cossack! . . . As an example to others, this devil in a turned-over sheepscoat [one of the pranksters—E. B.] should be put in chains and punished. Let everyone know what authority means. Who gives the village chief his power if not the tsar?" (*PSS* 1, 170–171). Thus the representative of imperial power clashes with the grassroots forces in the community. To demonstrate their opposition, the village Cossacks stage what appears a fairly good-natured and nonviolent rebellion. The notion of externally imposed political authority clashes not only with unofficial distinction and prestige, such as Foma's, that organically emerge from within the community but also with the democratic principles represented by the Cossacks that Gogol was soon to portray in *Taras Bulba* and in his writings on Ukrainian history.

The overtones of these democratic Cossack values, the cornerstone of which is freedom, do appear already in the *Dikanka* stories. Levko's speech accusing the chief of abuses finds instantaneous support among the Cossacks: "He rules over us like some sort of a hetman. It's not enough that he rides roughshod over us as if we were some peasants; he even makes passes at our girls. . . . How could we, my friends, be treated as peasants? Aren't we of the same station as he? We, thank God, are free Cossacks! Let's show him, lads, that we are free Cossacks!" (*PSS* 1, 164). In contrast to the office of the hetman, elected by the Cossacks themselves (and abolished by Catherine II in 1764), the function of the chief is that of an imperial lackey. The prospect of opposing him stirs up in the young men the traditional Cossack abandon and freedom worship: " 'Have a good time, Cossack head!' said a robust lad, having slapped his knee and clapped his hands. 'What rapture! What freedom! When you start to run riot, it seems you remember old times. The heart feels such delight, such liberty, and it seems the soul's in paradise. Hey, lads! Hey, let's have a good time!' " (*PSS* 1, 164). The chief may be lured by imperially sanctioned authority, but the young generation seems to relish the more elemental power of the apparently surviving Cossack ethos.

This anti-authoritarian streak is not limited to the Cossacks in the story. The peasant Kalenik shares the sentiment. His drunken state no doubt emboldens him to inveigh against the chief's authority: "What does he think . . . because he's a village chief . . . he can stick up his nose in the air?! Fie, chief. *I* am my own chief. May God strike me down, strike me down right now, but I am my own chief" (*ia sam sebe golova*; *PSS* 1, 160). Kalenik later insults the chief to his face, unaware of the chief's presence: "What is the chief to me? May he kick the bucket, son of a cur! I spit on him! May he, the one-eyed devil, get run over by a cart!" (*PSS* 1, 166).

The chief considers these challenges to his authority in eminently political terms. He threatens his ineffective policemen that he will denounce them as rebels to the commissar. In an ending that anticipates Gogol's future comedy *The Government Inspector*, the commissar himself appears in the form of instructions he supposedly penned to the chief, ordering him to allow Levko to marry Ganna (Levko obtained the note in the story's supernatural plot line). Once boy gets girl, all political tension, power struggle, and the young lads' intoxication with Cossack freedom dissipate from the story. As in Walter Scott, romance overcomes political strife; as in *kotliarevshchyna*, comedy overcomes historical tragedy; yet just as in Shakespeare's comedies, the happy ending, far from solving all problems and patching up social rifts, merely makes them recede to the background. Thus "A May Night" closes with an image of Kalenik, the one unappeased enemy of the chief, as he wanders over the village, looking for his hut.

While "A May Night" offers an image of Catherine II visiting Ukraine, "A Lost Letter" and "Christmas Eve" exhibit reverse directionality—one that was more characteristic of the Russian-Ukrainian relations—that is, of Ukrainians making a pilgrimage to Russia's center of power. "A Lost Letter" concerns the adventures of Foma Grigorevich's grandfather,

whom a Cossack hetman sent to Petersburg with a letter to the empress. On his way, the grandfather befriends a Zaporozhian Cossack with whom he spends time drinking and carousing. Foma describes with relish the colorful figure of the Zaporozhian:

> He wore loose trousers, red as hot coals, a blue caftan, a colorful, bright belt, carried a saber on his side and a pipe with a copper chain reaching up to his heels—who else could it be but a Zaporozhian! Ekh, folks! He would rise, straighten himself up, glide his hand over his dashing mustache, clink his spears—and there he goes! His legs danced as fast as a spindle in a woman's hands. Then like a whirlwind, he sounded all the strings on a bandura, and the next moment, his hands propped on his waist, he danced a *kazachok,* then burst into song—a soul rejoices! . . . But good times have passed: Zaporozhians are no longer around. (*PSS* 1, 183)

In his stereotypical costume and behavior, the Zaporozhian is a perfect national type, one whose passing makes Foma nostalgic. As Foma's grandfather learns later, the Zaporozhian has sold his soul to the devil, who comes to claim it that very night (this may be a folksy allusion to the historical "devil" responsible for the destruction of the Zaporozhian republic: Catherine II). Unfortunately, the Zaporozhian carries with him to hell the grandfather's cap with the letter to the empress. The hapless envoy finds the band of devils and wins back the cap in a game of cards. He then manages to arrange a ride home on an infernal steed, possibly through hell itself: "He looked underneath and got scared even more: an abyss! terrible steepness! But for the satanic animal it's nothing—goes straight across it. The grandfather tries to hold on, but in vain. Through tree stumps, through hummocks, he went flying into a funnel and at its bottom grasped the earth so hard it seemed he breathed his last. At any rate, he didn't remember any of what happened to him then" (*PSS* 1, 190).

Foma's grandfather then sets out again for Petersburg, this time without stopping at fairs, and delivers the letter to the empress. At her palace, Foma says,

> [The grandfather] saw such wondrous things that he had plenty of stories afterwards: how they took him to the chambers, so tall that if you put ten huts on top of one another, even then maybe you wouldn't reach the ceiling. He goes into one room—nothing, the second—nothing, the third—still nothing; even in the fourth—nothing. In the fifth room, though, she's there alone, wearing a golden crown, a spick-and-span gray vest [*svitka,*] and red shoes, and is eating golden dumplings [*galushki*]. How she ordered his cap filled with 'signats [*sinitsami*—a pidgin version of the Russian word *assignatsia,* denoting paper money—E. B.], how . . . —one can't even remember it all. (*PSS* 1, 191)

The description of Petersburg stylistically resembles the account of the ride through hell. Both feature acute estrangement and hyperbole and conclude with the narrators' claims that they cannot remember any further details, apparently being overcome by the oddity of the experience.

The Cossack's account Ukrainianizes the empress's image, describing her in the trappings of Ukrainian material culture. While Rudy Panko in the prefaces was translating Ukraine's foreignness into Russian terms, Foma's grandfather performs the reverse operation by translating the imperial foreignness into familiar Ukrainian terms. Unlike Panko, however, the grandfather does it unconsciously. He does not *find* equivalents; he *sees* in equivalents his absolutely unified Ukrainian worldview allowing no dualities, no multiplicity of codes. Thus, to his eyes, the empress is wearing a Ukrainian vest, called a *svitka,* and eating Ukrainian dumplings, called *galushki.* The word used to describe the gift from the tsarina—*sinitsy*—represents a Slavicized version of the non-Slavic foreign borrowing in Russian, *assignatsia,* which denotes paper money (in use 1769–c. 1840). The grandfather nativizes this imperial invention, bringing it in line with his own linguistic code.

It is perhaps ironic that in receiving the hetman's envoy the empress does not even deign to postpone her meal. She rewards the envoy's service by a capful of paper money, worth much less than the traditional metal currency. This gift calls into question the imperial munificence and breaks out of the passage's fairy-tale convention. Significantly, the grandfather covers his traveling expenses by paying the innkeeper in *zolotye,* the more valuable metal coins (*PSS* 1, 185; the word also means "golden" in Slavic languages). The empress's parsimonious treatment of the envoy—no golden coins come his way—jars with her gobbling up of *golden* dumplings. This may be an opaque reference to a disadvantageous situation of the periphery in the imperial economy.

The story that opens the second volume, "Christmas Eve," develops the connection between infernal forces and Russia's capital to which "A Lost Letter" only alludes. In "Christmas Eve," the devil himself transports the blacksmith Vakula to Petersburg, where he quests after a pair of the empress's shoes. He must get them for his beloved Oksana, who has promised to marry him on this condition. In performing this labor of love, the infernal thoroughfare between Ukraine and Russia's power center proves indispensable. Like Foma's grandfather's *sinitsa,* Vakula's directions to the devil stress the foreignness of the Russian capital's name that he familiarizes in his speech: "To *Petemburg,* straight to the tsarina!" (*PSS* 1, 226; emphasis mine). The ride on the devil frightens the blacksmith incomparably less than the sight of Petersburg itself:

> [S]uddenly, Petersburg glittered in front of him, all in fire. (For some reason an illumination [*illiuminatsia*] was taking place just then.) Having passed a barrier [*shlakhbaum*], the devil transformed himself into a horse, and the blacksmith found himself on a shabby mount in the middle of a street. My God! Rumble, thunder, glitter. Four-story walls clamber up on both sides; the rattle of a horse's hooves and the sound of the wheels come from all four directions in a thunder. Each step farther, the houses grew and seemed to be lifting themselves up from the earth; the bridges trembled; the carriages flew by; the coachdrivers and postilions [*foreitory*] shouted; the snow swished under a thousand sleds that rushed from all directions; the pedestrians huddled and crowded under the houses studded with lampions, and their gigantic shadows reflected fleetingly [*mel'kali*] on the walls, reaching roofs and chimneys with their heads. The blacksmith looked all around astounded. It seemed to him that all houses directed at him their innumerable, fiery eyes and looked on. (*PSS* 1, 232–233)

Petersburg in this passage emerges eminently demonic. From Mikhail Epshtein's list of Gogol's demonic tropes, this fragments includes: a stubborn gaze (here: the houses looking at Vakula), bright light and loud sound, glittering whose origin is artificial (here: the "illuminations"), fast riding (here: sleds and carriages), and fleeting reflections *(mel'kan'e).* This passage corroborates Epshtein's claim that through such style Gogol conveys a demonic image of Russia.[37] Gogol's later story "Nevsky Prospect" will convey a similar image of Petersburg. The Russian capital's non-Slavic

foreignness is accentuated by such lexical items as *shlakhbaum* and *foreitory.* This also echoes Gogol's complaint in a letter to his mother about Petersburg's unnational character. Cultures, as Lotman claims, create not only their own types of "internal organization" but also their own types of "external disorganization."[38] The chaotic descriptions of Petersburg by *Evenings'* Ukrainian visitors represent exactly such a form of external disorganization that ultimately puts in relief their own culture's internal "order."

Terrified by the city, Vakula takes refuge in the company of Zaporozhian Cossacks who have just arrived with letters to the court, just like Foma's grandfather. Vakula had met them earlier when they were passing Dikanka. When they refuse to take Vakula along for their audience with the empress, he resorts to the services of his old servant, the devil, who influences the Cossacks in Vakula's favor.

In a scene grander than Foma's grandfather's royal reception, the Zaporozhians are led to a chamber where the tsarina awaits them with an entourage of generals and grandees. Among them is Potemkin, a Ukrainian who was Catherine II's favorite courtier and a lover, and who became famous for the villages he ornamented on her trip south through Ukraine. He is described in unflattering terms as a corpulent man wearing a hetman's uniform: "He had disheveled hair." His one eye was a bit crossed. His face expressed a certain haughty stateliness, and his every move showed a habit of giving orders" (*PSS* 1, 235).

Vakula takes Potemkin to be the tsar. A friendly Zaporozhian corrects Vakula: "What are you talking about: the tsar! That's Potemkin himself" (*PSS* 1, 236). Vakula seems unaware that Russia currently has no tsar, yet the propensity to associate the Ukrainian uniform of a hetman with the highest office seems instinctive to him. The Zaporozhian's odd use of "himself" ("Kuda tebe tsar'! eto sam Potemkin") suggests that in his hierarchy the hetman stands higher than the tsar. Russian censors who reviewed Gogol's works for a posthumous publication in 1855 apparently found this line of the story troubling, since they included it in their list of objectionable passages.[39] These subtle hints imply that Vakula and the Cossacks naturally expect that the persons in positions of authority over them would be fellow Ukrainians. Vakula's faux pas in taking Potemkin for the tsar appears doubly egregious considering Catherine II's purported participation in the assassination of her husband, Russia's rightful tsar, Peter III, and her legendary sexual promiscuity.

Upon Catherine's arrival, the Cossacks stage an act of such emphatic prostration that they embarrass even Potemkin, who had trained them in court etiquette: "The Zaporozhians suddenly all fell to the ground and yelled out in one voice: 'Have mercy, mother! Have mercy!' The blacksmith himself, [blinded by the glitter,] spread out on the floor zealously." The empress orders them to rise, but they steadfastly refuse until Potemkin persuades them to obey. In the context of the Cossacks' cult of machismo and their absolute rejection of any attempts by a woman, be it mother, wife, or daughter, to influence their actions, this infantilized behavior and servility appear pregnant with irony.

The empress is pleased to meet the representatives of one of the many nations over which she rules. She curiously looks them over and listens. Finally, one of the Zaporozhians commences to plead the case that brought them to Petersburg:

> Have mercy, mother! Why are you destroying your loyal people? How did we earn your anger? Did we hold hands with the pagan Tatar? Did we agree in anything with the Turk? Did we betray you in deed or thought? What caused your disfavor? First we heard that you ordered the building of fortresses to divide us. Then we heard that you want to turn us into *carabineers* [*karabinery*—italicized by Gogol]. Now we hear about new encroachments. Of what are the Zaporozhian troops guilty? Of escorting your army through Perekop and helping your generals chop the Crimeans to pieces? (*PSS* 1, 237)

The Cossack invokes the services of the Zaporozhian Sich for the empire, such as shielding it from the Turks and the Tatars and, most recently, facilitating Catherine's annexation of the Crimea. Instrumental in the empire's victories and security system, the Cossacks consider Catherine's efforts to curtail their rights and privileges unjust. Among the grievances, the Zaporozhian mentions the construction of fortresses by the Russians, which in fact took place in 1735 and was aimed at controlling the Zaporozhian Sich. (This echoes Danilo's criticism of the Poles in "A Terrible Vengeance" for such divisive tactics aimed to control the Cossacks.) This represents perhaps the most overtly political moment in the book and one that refers most directly to the actual historical reality: the destruction by the Russians of the last remnant of Ukrainian autonomy, the Sich republic. After winning, with the help of the Sich Cossacks, the Crimean War of 1769–1774, the Russians sought direct and free access to their

new territory, and the Sich was in the way. On Catherine's orders, the Russian army returning from the Crimea treacherously attacked the unsuspecting Sich in 1775, after which the surviving Zaporozhians were incarcerated, dispersed, or deported to the Kazakh steppe.

To the Zaporozhian's daring, straightforward complaint about Russia's policy with respect to the Sich, Catherine responds by asking solicitously what it is they desire. Vakula, seizing the moment, blurts out: "May your royal highness not get angry, but what are the shoes she is wearing made of? I think that no shoemaker in any state on earth could make such shoes. My dear God, that would be something if my wife could put on such shoes!" (*PSS* 1, 237). The Zaporozhians think that Vakula has lost his mind, while the tsarina good-naturedly laughs and presents the Dikanka blacksmith with a special pair of her gold-embroidered shoes. She then proceeds to ask the Cossacks about their customs, clearly preferring the discourse of colorful local custom to that of political rights. The subject of their grievances and possible remedies never returns after Vakula has derailed the potential for addressing it. Catherine II thus manages to "buy" the Zaporozhian Sich for a pair of used shoes and, with it, the last vestige of Ukrainian independence.

The political irony of this symbolic exchange between the Russian empress and the Ukrainian blacksmith surpasses any similar "deals" and property exchanges that conclude political conflicts in the world of Walter Scott's fiction. The irony is heightened by the fact that Oksana, having discovered her love for Vakula during his absence, loses all interest in the tsarina's shoes and confesses she would have married him without them. While the empress gets her way with the Sich, the net gain for the Cossacks is a worthless pair of shoes. In the story's closing, the Cossacks no longer appear in the flesh but in images with which Vakula, now happily married and with children, has decorated his home. The warlike past of Ukrainian Cossacks, portrayed throughout the *Dikanka* stories as the core of the Ukrainian nation, is replaced by an image of happy family life and domesticity.

The work's penultimate story "Ivan Fedorovich Shponka and His Aunt" shuttles forward to the early nineteenth century and in its tone and themes prefigures Gogol's next volume of stories, *Mirgorod*. The story represents a stark ironic contrast to "A Terrible Vengeance," which it precedes in the volume. It focuses on a Russified minor Ukrainian nobleman, Shponka, who is weak, morbidly shy, and entirely ineffectual. In

a poignant contrast to the manly national heroes of yore, like Danilo from the previous story, he remains completely under the charge of a virago of a woman, his aunt. His school curriculum, we learn, features Russian *(rossiiskaia)* grammar (*PSS* 1, 284; this adjective denotes Russia as an empire), and he chooses a career in an imperial army. He befriends another pathetic Ukrainian, the obese Storchenko who has had such bad luck in the cockroach-infested Russian inns. Unlike the traditional Cossacks, who enjoy sleeping out in the open, under the open sky of "Ukrainian nights," Storchenko exerts an uncanny amount of energy on obtaining the most comfortable sleeping arrangement inside the inn and consumes an enormous meal worthy of a glutton. The name of his estate, Khortyshche, ironically reverberates with Khortytsia, the main of the Dnepr islands that were the nest of the Zaporozhian Sich.

The small-minded, petty occupations and concerns of these effete types stand in stark contrast to the Cossack ethos celebrated in "A Terrible Vengeance" and other stories. The dissolution of this ethos, indicated earlier by Vakula's reduction of the Cossacks to an ornament, now emerges in the character of Storchenko's servant who wears a Cossack vest and is brutally commandeered by his slothful master. The magnificent descriptions of Ukrainian nature and dignified descriptions of Ukrainian abodes are replaced in the story with an image of Shponka's estate, overrun with yelping dogs licking the larded axles of the arriving carriage, boys in soiled shirts, and a grunting sow parading through the yard with sixteen piglets. The life-affirming, exuberant abundance characteristic of other *Dikanka* texts gives way to an abundance that is stultifying and numbing, and this pertains particularly to images of food. The peasants still speak Ukrainian, and the aunt lapses into it herself, but this linguistic habit appears as an anachronism, a sign of backwardness (*PSS* 1, 293, 294, 303, 306). The past times, symbolized by the aunt's image of past crops, seem incomparably better than the present: " 'I remember how in the old times buckwheat was up to the waist, and now—God knows what it is. Though they also say that now everything is better.' Here the old woman sighed" (*PSS* 1, 304). The aunt does not seem convinced that "everything is better" now, despite the propaganda to the contrary. Evhen Malaniuk captures well Gogol's image of early nineteenth-century Ukraine: "Against the background of an exuberant sun-drenched landscape, amidst ruins of a turbulent past, the farms and estates of former Ukrainian aristocracy, who now are members of a Pan-

Russian squirearchy demoralized by the policies of Petersburg, have fallen into a deathly slumber."[40]

The image of the Shponka family carriage vividly captures the notion of Ukraine's decline. The venerable vehicle, the narrator claims, had served our ancestor Adam and was purportedly saved from the biblical flood in a special compartment on Noah's ark. The carriage appears as an epitome of grotesqueness:

> [The aunt] was very pleased with its architecture and always regretted that such equipages had gone out of fashion. She very much liked the very lopsided construction of the carriage—that is, the fact that the right side was fairly higher than the left—because, as she said, an undersized person [*maloroslyi*] can sit on one side and an oversized person [*velikoroslyi*] can sit on the other. . . . Around midday, Omelko, having prepared the carriage, led out of the stables a trio [*troika*] of horses slightly younger than the carriage and began tying them up with a rope to the grandiose equipage. (*PSS* 1, 304)

The words used for the undersized and oversized persons reverberate with the terms commonly used for Ukrainians and Russians: *maloros* and *velikoros* (from *Malorossiia* [Little Russia] and *Velikorossiia* [Great Russia]). This lopsided carriage functions as an image of Ukraine itself, under the leadership of insignificant Ukrainians and weighty Russians. Compared to the later image from *Dead Souls* of Russia as a speedy *troika*—which explicitly demonstrates Gogol's associative link between carriages and nations—this decrepit, sluggish, *troika*-drawn Ukrainian carriage could not provide a more pessimistic contrast.

"Shponka" was probably written last of all *Evenings* stories, at the end of 1831 (*PSS* 1, 549). It looks forward to such *Mirgorod* stories as "Old-World Landowners" and "The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich." Yet how does it function within the larger landscape of *Evenings on a Farm? Evenings* is a story cycle, a genre whose principal feature involves a dynamic between interdependence and independence of stories within the larger whole, each one being simultaneously connected to other stories but also autonomous. A reading that privileges "Shponka" and "A Bewitched Place," the two final stories in the collection, as a teleological conclusion to the whole book thus loses sight of the way the genre operates and instead applies to it a novelistic expectation.[41] Moreover, in assigning "Shponka" a role in the cycle, one

must not ignore the context of Panko's prefaces. As an image of contemporary Ukraine, the story competes with other contemporary images, such as those provided by the cycle's narrative frame. The story of Shponka has been told at Panko's evenings by Stepan Ivanovich Kurochka from Gadiach, who wrote it down for Panko. Both to the story's author and his listeners at Panko's house, Shponka must have appeared as ridiculous as to the reader of its printed version. The values and attitudes cherished by the guests at these gatherings do not correspond to the ones that characterize the world of Ivan Fedorovich Shponka. The soulless, quotidian existence of the Shponkas of this world foregrounds the vitality, wholeness, and heroism of Ukraine as presented in the other stories.

Readers of Gogol usually assume that his portrayal of Ukraine's decline signals his support of imperialism: the Ukrainian national organism is shown not to be viable. He dwells on social rifts in Ukrainian society, particularly between the peasants and aristocratic elites. After *Evenings on a Farm,* Gogol's next collection of stories, *Mirgorod* (1835), included two more stories in the spirit of "Shponka." They portrayed contemporary Ukrainian gentry as petty and ineffectual, lacking any meaningful culture or activity. Such artistocratic, "national" old families, as the narrator calls the gluttonous protagonists of *Mirgorod*'s "Old-World Landowners," hardly appear as a sturdy pillar of a nation (*PSS* 2, 125). Because of such images, critics typically complain of Gogol's complicity in Russia's imperial project. He relegates the Cossack ethos to the past, we are told, and exposes the comical provincialism of contemporary Ukraine, thus reinforcing its colonial image.[42]

In my view Gogol's work participates in the discourse of Russian imperialism only superficially—and to read Gogol through surface meanings and main plot lines is to miss much of his point. Both Gogol's own proclivity for irony and playful narrative strategies and the tsarist government's censorship on Ukrainian topics necessitate a reading that explores details and margins, the backstage of Gogol's plots and his rhetorical innuendo. My interpretation of *Evenings* is an attempt at such an analysis. In this work Gogol contrasts the insignificant imperial present with the preimperial glory and by doing so undermines the imperial project. The imperial inclusion has not made things better for Ukrainians;

it has made things worse. The work attributes the inertia and decline of present-day Ukraine to its imperial status, even though Gogol exercises the requisite understatement when broaching this sensitive topic. The Cossacks used to uphold ideals of freedom and heroicism, but this value system has not been replaced by anything worthy. Russia's civilizing mission is shown to be an abysmal failure—not the least because of the quality of the Russian "civilization" that the empire employs. A *moskal* appears as a thieving, devilish carpetbagger. No mention is made of Russia's great poets, but much is made of cockroach infestation in the Russian land. Shponka's study of the imperial *rossiiskaia* grammar does nothing to develop his eloquence. That the Ukrainians are not in command of their country is made clear through the characters' pilgrimages to the center of imperial power, St. Petersburg, which is portrayed as demonic. The imperial ideology, which held that the extension of the Russian rule ameliorates socioeconomic conditions in the periphery and spreads enlightenment, is shown to be a sham.

This pessimistic view of Ukraine's contemporary realities coexists in the book with a celebration of its cultural wholeness and ethnic uniqueness, which function as an assertion of Ukrainian identity that has survived imperial encroachments. Dissatisfaction with the imperial present coexists in the work with nostalgia for the golden era of the Cossack Hetmanate. References to such past glory indicate that the sorry condition of contemporary Ukraine is not endemic. These contrasts continue beyond *Evenings on a Farm. Mirgorod*'s most prominent text, after all, is the first version of *Taras Bulba,* a long heroic tale with a pronounced Ukrainian angle. It directly follows "Old-World Landowners" in the collection, as if to foreground the clash of visions. To call these pathetic landowners "national" in such textual proximity to the larger-than-life Cossack heroes of *Bulba* is to reproach this class of Ukrainian society for a betrayal of tradition, a shirking of their historic responsibility.

It is true, *Evenings*' historic saga about Cossack Ukraine, "A Terrible Vengeance," focuses on Ukraine's fall. This dramatization of defeat—which may appear to go against the claim of Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism—was in fact a staple of east European nationalism and beyond, represented, for instance, in the Serbian myth of Kosovo Polje. Its Polish Romantic version, to take an example closer to Ukraine, drew powerful sustenance from the tragedy of Poland's defeat by Russia and the moral superiority of victimhood. Celebrating patriots like Danilo, who fell

while defending the nation, had a nationalistic resonance for contemporary society. The Russian authorities soon understood this well and came to oppose heroic portrayals of the Cossacks, fearing a rise in political separatism.[43] The clash between the heroic past of the Ukrainian Cossacks, whom Gogol in both his fiction and nonfiction treated as the historic basis of the Ukrainian nation, and the decay and degeneracy of contemporary Ukrainian society serves as a spur to recapture some of that past national glory.

The antiquarian dimension of *Evenings* has precisely such a nationalistic function. The glorious Cossack times have passed, and Ukraine as a Herderian community is under assault by imperial forces. However, Gogol makes its image in *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* into a powerful cultural artifact that carries significance for the early nineteenth-century imperial and Ukrainian cultures. The impulse to preserve the native ethnic culture, perceived to be in danger of extinction, inspired innumerable cultural projects in the Romantic era whose ultimate significance and meaning was nationalism. This is the impulse behind the collecting of folk songs, the unearthing of ancient epics, and the gathering of antiquities. This Romantic glance toward the past, the search of purported roots of true collective identity, unspoiled by modern fragmentation and cosmopolitanism, carried contemporary nationalistic import. Such indeed is the significance of Gogol's *Dikanka* stories. Despite Ukraine's imperial status, the community of Ukrainians gathering at Panko's house takes pride in and is sustained by the tales of the bygone Cossack heyday. Through the stories, they celebrate an image of Ukraine as a vibrant national community: bounded by its own culture, history, and language and embedded in a specific natural setting. This community is radically different from the Russians, the Poles, and all other foreigners, whom the book, in keeping with its folksy convention, portrays as mostly demonic.

In the context of Russia's imperial drive to annihilate Ukrainian alterity, this accentuation of a separate identity played a decidedly nationalistic role. Through its discourse of Ukrainian nationalism, *Evenings on a Farm* thus transcends a classic colonial scenario and inverts imperial hierarchies. While the prefaces present Ukraine in accordance with the imperial paradigm, as a provincial adjunct to the Russian metropolis, the world of the stories largely inverts this paradigm, placing Ukraine as the self-contained center of the represented world and Russia as a foreign periphery and a source of abusive, disrespected political authority. While the prefaces attempt to revise Russian stereotypes of Ukraine gently, without alienating the Russian readers, the stories themselves risk antagonizing those readers by presenting unflattering stereotypes of them. Unlike other Ukrainian-Russian writers, such as Orest Somov, Gogol is not interested in offering well-packaged peripheral specificity upon the altar of imperial abundance. Though Gogol's critics have entirely disregarded this vital aspect, the world of *Evenings* is set *against* Russian imperial culture. Gogol dwells on cultural differences and political tensions in describing the Ukrainian-Russian body politic, even though he overlays this sensitive topic with Aesopian humor and fairy-tale disguise. V. V. Gippius was right to count Gogol in this period among the defenders of the Ukrainian language and nation as alive and full of potential. (There exists a later, not entirely reliable, account of Gogol's opposition to a literary use of Ukrainian).[44] The exuberant celebration of Ukrainian nation in *Evenings* would in time become a sore point of reference for those of Gogol's Russian critics who chastised him for the inadequacies of his Russian nationalism. Indeed, nothing Gogol wrote about Russia ever matched the apotheosis of Ukraine he achieved in his first work.

A classic Russian stereotype of Ukrainians in Gogol's time and beyond was that of a "sly Little Russian" *(khitryi maloros)*. Though wary of other Russian stereotypes, Gogol fully embarced this one. In an amazing array of real-life situations and narrative postures, he used this strategic slyness to his advantage, hiding subversive actions or meanings behind a mask of naive obtuseness. This "slyness" was an excellent adaptive response to the contingencies of working in a repressive imperial state. It allowed Gogol to have his cake and eat it too. He thus composed *Evenings* as a work that passed through censorship, pleased imperial elites, and, to use Myroslav Shkandrij's formulation, presented a "resistant Ukrainian identity" as a case of "imperial indigestion."[45] Similar feats have happened. As Katie Trumpener has shown, one of Gogol's favorite authors, Walter Scott, managed to appeal to provincial nationalist, imperialist, and overseas colonial audiences alike.[46] Yet the *reception* of Gogol's sly balancing act changed over time. The Ukrainian nationalism in *Evenings* challenged Russian imperial nationalism, in whose scheme Ukraine played an important role. Pushing this particular envelope in the early 1830s was somewhat risky but ultimately forgivable, given the fashion for folksy national stylization and the lesser self-confidence of Russian nationalism.

As of the 1840s, however, after Gogol had chosen to promote himself as a Russian writer, *Evenings* became for him an uncomfortable liability, and my reading of this text suggests very good reasons why that would be so.

Evenings on a Farm and Its Critics

Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka satisfied the long-standing demand of the Russian critics for a literary expression of nationality that would appear organic, rooted in cultural commonalities and in the people, the indigenous Slavic *Volk*, rather than the Westernized elites, yet would not be merely populist or vulgar (to use the Russian terms then in use, Gogol gave his Russian audience *narodnost'* without *prostonarod'e*). For a while these critics had been noting Ukraine's special aptitude for this kind of representation, worrying that a lack of similar descriptions of Russia reflected its inherent unsuitability for an art that would be national. The great success of *Evenings on a Farm* also owed much to its fashionable Romantic handling of folklore and the supernatural, its deft balance of the familiar and exotic in depicting Ukraine, and its magnificent rendition of folksy oral speech. Gogol combined these attractive ingredients in a more accomplished artistic whole than works on Ukrainian themes by other writers, such as Vasily Narezhny or Orest Somov.

Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of the work's reception is that the author of *Evenings* was taken to be a Ukrainian, rather than a Russian, writer. Russian literary history has been very successful in forgetting this fact. Only a gradual recognition of his talent and his new fictions on Russian themes led critics later to reclassify Gogol as a Russian writer. As such, he was advised to leave the topic of Ukraine and turn to Russian themes. Gogol's emergence as a Ukrainian writer stemmed from what was praised as his "national" representation of Ukrainian uniqueness in his stories. The critics valued this representation, however, only insofar as it proved useful for nationalizing Russian culture itself. Ukraine's inclusion in the empire, according to this logic, made it a legitimate cultural resource for the ruling nationality. However, coexisting with this view of the two cultures as contiguous was a view that treated them as opposites. Some reviews thus drew national contrasts between Ukraine and Russia in ways that belittled the former. In particular, discussions of Gogol's Ukrainian humor served as a proxy for drawing national distinctions that often discredited Ukrainian specificity. Yet in the end, even Gogol's humor

was proclaimed to be purely Russian. The existence of two sets of reviews, which treat the original 1831–1832 edition and its 1836 reprint, helps document the evolution of critical opinion toward Gogol, the Russification of his authorship, and the appropriation of his achievement for Russian culture.

Among the first reviews of *Evenings* was V. A. Ushakov's article in *The Northern Bee.* Ushakov, who was a staff writer for *The Bee,* locates the work within contemporary Ukrainian literature despite Gogol's use of the Russian language, a factor that later for Belinsky constituted an irrefutable proof of Gogol's Russianness.[47] Rejecting language as a criterion of national classification, Ushakov treats the work's genuine expression of the Ukrainian national spirit as a more reliable indicator. This expression remains unparalleled, Ushakov claims, by any such efforts undertaken in Russian literature, which he criticizes as contrived and imitative.

For Ushakov, the national spirit of *Evenings* proves the existence and viability of a Ukrainian nation itself. He reminds his Russian readers, as if encouraging them to follow suit, that the Ukrainians cherish their nationality by collecting folk songs, legends, historical accounts, and antiquities. Ushakov notes that Russian writers who wish to enhance their works with "national colors" reach for Ukrainian motifs. He also claims that the expressiveness of Panko's Ukrainian words "gives them the right of citizenship in the general Russian language." Ushakov values Ukrainianness only insofar as it could help define Russianness, to enrich the Russian language and facilitate Russia's Slavic about-face. Such an instrumental, self-interested approach to other Slavic cultures was quite characteristic of Russian intellectuals at the time and featured prominently in journalistic polemics.

The historian, writer, and journalist Nikolai Polevoi suspected that the *Evenings*' author was in fact an urban Russian who feigned "Little-Russianism." Dismayed by the author's anonymity and by *The Northern Bee*'s praise, Polevoi complained in his journal *The Moscow Telegraph* about the stories' poor style, narrative technique, and even lack of humor.[48] In comparison to other reviews of works on Ukrainian themes that ran in Polevoi's journal, this one was rather short and damning. Later, from the perspective of Gogol's works on Russian themes, which Polevoi abhorred, the severe critic would come to recant, though not in so many words, his criticism of *Dikanka.* Faced with Gogol's "Russian" works, he regretted that the author had left his proper province of good-

natured humorous stories from Ukrainian life, in which he was "exquisite, inimitable."[49]

Nikolai Nadezhdin in his journal *Telescope* echoed *The Northern Bee*'s praise of the book's unsurpassed depiction of "national Ukrainian life."[50] Also like the *Bee* reviewer, Nadezhdin classifies Gogol as a Ukrainian writer and comments on Ukraine as a nation. Following the popularizers and enthusiasts of Slavic folk songs such as Dołęga-Chodakowski, Brodziński, and Maksymovych, Nadezhdin claims that Ukraine's geographical location and historical circumstances have predisposed it to be

> the most majestic expression of the poetry of the Slavic spirit. . . . The Slavic phlegmatic inertia acquired an opportunity to enliven itself to the point of Cossack daring and dashing. . . . Thus Ukraine in truth was bound to become the ark of the covenant that preserves the most lively features of the Slavic physiognomy and the best memories of Slavic life. [Ukraine's] national life, so far separated from foreign influence, sustained by the child-like attachment to native antiquities, still preserves this quality.

Like Ushakov, Nadezhdin believes that these qualities should make Ukraine even more interesting for "us," presumably: Russians.

Nadezhdin values especially that Gogol has found a golden mean between two extremes—the smoothing out of all "idioticisms" of the Ukrainian "dialect" and preserving them intact—by "translat[ing] the national [*natsional'nyi*] motif of the Ukrainian dialect into, so to speak, Muscovite notes, without losing its original physiognomy." The instrumental approach to Ukraine thus crops up again. Nadezhdin makes clear he values Ukraine as a repository of the unspoiled Slavic spirit because Russian writers can use it productively in their own pursuit of national expression. For him, such use of Ukrainian culture does not constitute imitation of foreign models because of Ukraine's political inclusion within the Russian state. Works like Rudy Panko's make this cultural realm accessible: they deliver the prized essence supposedly unharmed by the process of translation. The "idiotisms" of Ukraine have for Nadezhdin no value in themselves; only a translation into the Russian cultural code makes them relevant. Only then do they become transformed from mere "idiotisms" into a fountain of pristine, "majestic" Slavic spirit. Nadezhdin believes in the capaciousness of Russian culture that renders the existence

of separate peripheral cultures unnecessary: he is sure that nothing becomes lost once the Ukrainian culture becomes rendered in "Muscovite notes."

Having taken such care in the prefaces to ingratiate himself to his Russian reader, in the end Gogol managed to offend a Ukrainian one, who was actually his childhood friend and a minor Ukrainian writer: Aleksei Storozhenko. Writing under pseudonym Andrii Tsarynny, Storozhenko disagreed with his Russian counterparts as to the faithfulness of *Evenings* to Ukrainian life.[51] He contends that the work abounds in egregious errors regarding Ukrainian customs and history, which proves that its author knows Ukraine but poorly. Storozhenko punctiliously lists Panko's lapses from ethnographic and historical verity, concerned that the book conveyed a distorted and calumnious view of Ukraine. He thus incongruously imposes the standards of ethnographic correctness and documentary value on Gogol's Romantic fiction.

Storozhenko's is the response of a Ukrainian patriot who saw his country as an independent cultural realm within the empire. He protests the critics' contextualization of Panko within the tradition of Kotliarevsky, Zagoskin, Pogodin, and Somov, since such a generalization conflates two separate national literatures: one written in Ukrainian (Kotliarevsky) and the other in Russian (the others, including Panko). While Ushakov claimed that Gogol belonged to Ukrainian literature *despite* his use of the Russian language, Storozhenko denies him a place in it *because of* his use of it. Panko's supposed blurring of boundaries between Ukraine and Russia perturbed him, so he chastises the author for such cultural floundering. Like many Ukrainian nationalists concerned about Ukraine's Russification, Storozhenko wishes to see firm and stable boundaries between the two cultures. Hence he finds unsettling the "contact zone" that Panko created in *Evenings*. In his view, the work is not Ukrainian enough while not being entirely Russian, either.

The second volume of *Evenings* brought another attack by Polevoi. Like most critics, Polevoi mocked Storozhenko's pedantic ethnographic critique, pointing out that the book's author was not attempting "a Course in Archeology or a Monograph on Little Russia." Naturally, issues of great importance from a Ukrainian nationalist perspective seem mere trifles to the Russians. Perhaps embarrassed by his dismissal of what by then was undoubtedly a significant literary event, he proclaims the superiority of

the second volume and praises Gogol's Ukrainian humor. But Polevoi's theory of Ukrainian and Russian senses of humor, which is a thinly disguised theory of national differences, makes this praise double-edged:

> A Russian almost completely lacks humor like that [that is, Ukrainian—E. B.]: unconstrained, cheerful, but simultaneously shallow, not deep. A Russian likes sarcasm, and the liveliness of his character gives him no time to ponder coolly trifles, for the purpose of presenting them in a funny manner. Abuse and malicious satire are [a Russian's] gibe. In this we are the heirs of the Romans. But a Little Russian—that's something else! As if incapable of an intense feeling, he pauses with utmost calmness over a deformed turnip or a monstrous cucumber and leisurely delivers the longest lecture about it. He adorns it with all kinds of funny comparisons and pronounces his critical allusions with such passionless air that the contradiction between his speech and his serious and staid face cannot help but make the reader laugh.[52]

In short, a Russian is lively and sharp-witted, while a Ukrainian is slow-witted and phlegmatic. A Russian's satirical humor merits a comparison to the Romans, while Ukrainian humor becomes associated with deformed turnips and monstrous cucumbers. A Ukrainian's humorous manner, in which *Evenings* excels, only accentuates his inferiority to a Russian. Polevoi ultimately drops all pretense of praise when he includes Panko's humor among "all the disadvantages of a Little Russian that [the author's] mind has preserved." To Polevoi, Ukrainianness explains the author's lack of profundity.

The preeminent poet Aleksandr Pushkin also treated *Evenings* as light fare. He praised Panko for presenting believable characters with inimitable humor and later stressed the cheerfulness in Gogol's depiction of Ukraine. For Pushkin, *Evenings* presented a slice of local color rather than a vivid expression of nationality. His review, though enthusiastic, strikes a rather condescending, not to say colonially racist, tone with respect to the jolly "singing and dancing tribe" of Little Russia.[53]

The first edition of *Evenings*' standard run of 1,200 copies sold out within a few months. The bookseller Smirdin printed an additional 150 copies of the first volume in 1832, responding to the demand of the second volume's buyers. Gogol pursued permission for a second edition immediately, but the censorship granted it with a considerable delay only in 1834. For unknown yet intriguing reasons, this favorable decision was

put into effect only in 1836. By that time, Gogol's next two volumes, *Arabesques* and *Mirgorod*, had been in bookstores for a year. The latter's title page revealed that the true name of *Evenings*' author was Gogol, not Rudy Panko. These newer works solidified Gogol's position as a writer to be reckoned with and as such influenced the reception of the 1836 edition of *Evenings*. Vissarion Belinsky's lengthy 1835 essay "On the Russian Tale and the Tales of Mr. Gogol"—though it devoted only a few pages to Gogol and though the Westernizer critic had not yet earned the renown he would soon enjoy—augmented the young writer's stature, if only by announcing Gogol's centrality to the entire genre in Russian literature.

Józef Sękowski, a Polish-born scholar of the Orient and a powerful publicist whose journal *The Library for Reading* enjoyed immense following, reviewed the second edition of *Evenings* favorably but condescendingly. He insisted on relegating Gogol to the category of low literature and of Ukrainian, in the sense of anomalous and quaint, provincialism. This persistent equivocation produced a strange dynamic in his response. While Sękowski admits that one reads the book "with great pleasure," he at the same time scoffs at its lowly cast of characters, which includes mostly Little Russian peasants, Cossacks, priests, and artisans. "Ivan Fedorovich Shponka" brings relief to the haughty critic, who evidently preferred a pathetic Russified nobleman to a noble hero like Danilo, who had the misfortune of being a Ukrainian Cossack. Though Sękowski views humor as Gogol's greatest asset, he also makes his praise of it as double-edged as Polevoi did. Generically different from the French and English *humour* of Sterne and Dumas, Gogol's humor should more properly be regarded as "a Ukrainian gibe." Sękowski condescendingly advises Gogol not to abandon this manner, which so well captures "the inimitable imprint of a unique national quality of mind." Just as in Polevoi's review, the praise of Gogol's humor becomes transformed into a stick with which to pummel both the author and Ukrainians in general.[54]

Not so for the Slavophile critic and literary scholar Stepan Shevyrev, who later became Gogol's friend. Shevyrev's 1835 enthusiastic review of *Mirgorod*, which Gogol himself solicited (*PSS* 10, 354), also touches on *Evenings* and appreciates Gogol's humor without any torturous equivocations. Contrary to Sękowski and Polevoi, he considers Gogol's work in terms of high literature and goes so far as to call his humor "poetry of laughter." Shevyrev finds the term "caricature," often applied to Gogol's fictions, inappropriate, since Gogol's humor is infused with empathy. Un-

like other critics, Shevyrev does not limit this humor to Ukrainian life but sees in it universal significance. While Gogol's dissimilarity from western European humorists diminishes his stature for Sękowski, the Slavophile Shevyrev sees it as proof of Gogol's refreshing originality.

Yet Shevyrev's discussion of the provenance of this strikingly original humor introduces its own line of equivocations. Desirous of claiming Gogol's extraordinary talent for Russian letters, he approaches the Ukrainianness of *Dikanka* with a tentativeness that is quite odd in the context of the work's previous critical reception, which unanimously emphasized the Ukrainian angle. Where did Gogol find the treasure of his humor? "I think that he found it in Little Russia," Shevyrev hesitatingly answers his own question. Gogol infused Russian tales with humor, continues *ingénu* Shevyrev "having taken it, *as it seems,* from Little Russian fairy tales."[55] Gogol's humor no longer appears simply Ukrainian: it is "taken" from Ukrainian sources and put in Russian tales. This distinction is an important one for Shevyrev, as he begins to appropriate Gogol for Russian letters. For him, Gogol is not a writer who belongs to Ukrainian literature or to the Ukrainian school of Russian literature but simply a *Russian* writer, a promotion, as it were, that he earned by virtue of his talent, originality, and imperviousness to the affliction that plagues Russian literature: the imitation of European models.

Shevyrev thus presents Gogol's Ukrainianness more tentatively than his predecessors and attempts to steer Gogol toward Russia. He encourages Gogol to depict Russian high society and to abandon the topic of Ukraine and its simple folk. Shevyrev implies this would represent a career trajectory worthy of Gogol's talent and a promise of true success in the capital:

> It would be desirable if [Gogol] turned his attentive gaze and deft brush to the society that surrounds us. So far, in pursuit of laughter, he has led us into Mirgorod, or a store of the craftsman Schiller, or an insane asylum [the examples come from *Mirgorod*—E. B.]. We gladly followed him . . . [b]ut the capital has had its fill of laughing about the provinces and country bumpkins. . . . One would wish that the Author . . . made us laugh about ourselves, showed the same nonsensicalness in our own life, in the so-called educated circle, in our salon, among the fashionable frock coats and ties. . . . I do believe that Ivan Ivanovich and Ivan Nikoforovich existed, so vivid is their description. But our society cannot fathom their existence. For [this society], [the story] evokes either the past century or the Author's humorous musings.[56]

The "we" of this passage denotes Russia and its educated classes that invite themselves to pose for Gogol's "deft brush." Remaining within the realm of Ukraine means limiting oneself as a writer to provincialism, which in Shevyrev's judgment is rapidly becoming passé. In addition, the Ukrainian world being essentially alien to the Russian reader, Gogol in his view has higher chances of success by switching to Russian topics.

The de-Ukrainization of Gogolian humor begun by Shevyrev was continued by Belinsky several months later in "On the Russian Tale and the Tales of Mr. Gogol." Like Shevyrev, Belinsky classifies Gogol as a major Russian writer, his Ukrainianness being a matter of mere background or heritage that, like a cocoon, would inevitably be shed as he transforms himself from a Ukrainian chrysalis into a Russian butterfly. For Belinsky, writing in 1835, Gogol's humor appears "purely Russian" for exactly the same reasons that to others it appeared purely Ukrainian: "it is a calm humor, simple-hearted, in which the author pretends to be a simpleton," speaking with gravity about such inconsequential things as a coat.[57] Belinsky, just like Polevoi before him, focuses on the straight-face quality of Gogolian humor. The naive pondering of deformed turnips and cucumbers from Polevoi's review is here replaced with a naive ecstasy over a coat. Belinsky thus praises as "purely Russian" exactly the kind of humor that Polevoi had ridiculed as typically Ukrainian. This shows the extent to which Russian and Ukrainian national characteristics seemed to lie in the eye of the beholder. For Sękowski, a "gibe" *(nasmeshka)* represented a Ukrainian specialty, whereas Polevoi claimed it for Russian humor, in which it purportedly continued the Roman tradition.

Consistent with his journal's previous reviews, Faddei Bulgarin, a conservative media mogul on a par with Sękowski, who co-owned *The Northern Bee* and was himself a writer, welcomed the long-awaited second edition of *Evenings.* However, he gently orchestrated an editorial about-face in *The Northern Bee*'s designation of the national literature to which this by now acclaimed new talent belonged. Bulgarin now treats Gogol as a Russian rather than Ukrainian writer. In contrast to his colleague Ushakov, who stressed the Ukrainianness of Gogol's work, Bulgarin calls Gogol's stories "indisputably the best national tales in *our* literature" and places Gogol in the ranks of "our" best talents, though reluctant to call

Gogol a Russian *(russkii)* Walter Scott. Bulgarin's use of the adjective *russkii* and the pronoun "ours" "corrects" Ushakov's 1831 notion of the two literatures as separate and reclassifies Gogol as a Russian author.[58]

In conclusion, in the reviews of 1831–1832 Russian critics consistently received *Evenings on a Farm* as an expression of Ukrainian national specificity in both its subjects matter and execution (for example, the humor or narrative voice). The most enthusiastic of Gogol's reviewers, and one who appreciated this Ukrainian aspect without any ulterior equivocations, was *Northern Bee*'s Ushakov. Polevoi and Sękowski noted the book's supreme expression of Ukrainianness, yet considered it simultaneously its drawback, one they attributed to the inferior nature of the Ukrainian character. Nadezhdin dissolved this Ukrainian aspect in the ethereal Slavic spirit that brought glory to Slavic Russia. Gogol's one Ukrainian critic, Storozhenko, claimed the work was based on a deeply flawed knowledge of Ukraine. He criticized Gogol for failing to depict the Ukrainian nation truthfully, by which he meant more positively. Incidentally, a charge like Storozhenko's—a calumnious portrayal of a worthy nation—would be leveled, though with more vitriolic hostility, against Gogol's portrayal of Russia. These cries of hurt national pride among both Russians and Ukrainians attest to the readers' recognition of the charged nationalist content of Gogol's works and affirm his relevance to both national cultures.

In the second wave of reviews, in 1835–1836, Gogol's new critics Shevyrev and Belinsky reconfigured the writer's place in Russian literature by transforming him from a Ukrainian to a Russian writer. Possibly following their lead, in 1836 Bulgarin reformulated his staff reviewer's, Ushakov's, initial inclusion of Gogol among Ukrainian writers and relabeled him as a Russian author. Shevyrev approached Gogol's Ukrainian qualities more tentatively, often treating them as universal, supranational. Belinsky called "purely Russian" what had previously been unanimously proclaimed purely Ukrainian: Gogol's humor. Both urged the author to switch to Russian subject matter and leave the low and limited topic of Ukraine, assuring Gogol that this would increase his appeal among Russian readers. This advice came at a time when Gogol had already published some tales on Russian themes, and it was likely intended to encourage him in this direction. Gogol followed this advice and continued to expand his repertory of Russian themes, yet works such as *The Government Inspector* or *Dead Souls* greatly troubled his Russian readers, including some who had advocated the transition.

The overwhelming attention lavished on Gogol's humor in the reception of *Evenings on a Farm* appears quite striking and merits further comment. To be sure, apart from the tradition of popular chapbooks whose appeal was limited to lower classes, Gogol's stories represented the funniest fare that Russian literature had seen. The humor of *Evenings* also had a national flavor, which readers and critics so craved at the time. All those commenting on Gogol's humor did so in the context of national distinctions between Russians and Ukrainians. Yet the focus on humor deflected and disarmed a consideration of the serious and uncomfortable aspects of *Evenings.* These include, among others, the work's complex positioning between Russian and Ukrainian cultures; the nuance and subversiveness, considering the ruling imperial ideology, in its depiction of Ukraine's place within the Russian empire; the uncomplimentary references to Russians; and the tragic parable of Ukrainian history in "A Terrible Vengeance." A concentration on the comic aspect allowed one to dismiss all these uncomfortable issues. In effect, though praised, the book was not seriously analyzed by the critics, and unfortunately, this precedent proved enormously influential. Laughter was noted, but no one asked at what exactly the author was laughing. Yet not merely a natural inclination, laughter often served Gogol as a mask for politically subversive ideas, just as it did for Kotliarevsky. It allowed him to function in an imperial situation that imposed limits on direct expression, which is why I see Gogol's humor in terms of Aesopian language. A Ukrainian writer at that time had no choice but to be "sly."

Despite the book's enormous success and the fact that nearly all of Gogol's artistic concerns, plot devices, narrative techniques, themes, modes, and symbolic alignments are encoded in it, *Evenings on a Farm,* starting with its initial reception up to contemporary times, has been customarily brushed aside as juvenilia and trifling Ukrainian matter. In order to harmonize the author's Russian image, the interpreters of *Evenings* have largely focused on the work's folksy stylistic virtuosity in a way that has obscured its attendant nationalism. And yet the work's folklorism functions within its nationalism: Gogol casts the simple folk as the core of a nation in the Herderian sense of a community of shared language, culture, and history that remains distinct from other such communities. Most likely attempting to distance himself from this message, Gogol himself agreed to include the *Dikanka* tales in his *Collected Works* of 1842 only grudgingly, treating them then as immature youthful musings. He likely hesitated because the reviewers who chastised his later satirical

works on Russian themes demanded a national apotheosis of Russia in the manner of the *Dikanka* tales. Excluding the tales from the edition would eliminate this sore point of reference. Nonetheless, whatever was "Ukrainian" in the elements listed above, be it in humor, style, or narrative voice, remained so when Gogol transposed it to his works on Russian themes. The "Russianness" of Gogol's later works is thus made from the Ukrainian cultural fabric that originally underpinned *Evenings,* and the work itself became an important conduit in Russian culture for the Ukrainian discourse of national specificity.

— 3 —

The Politics of Writing History

Romantic nationalism and its search for the roots of nations inspired a heightened interest in history. The late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries saw the rise of the philosophy of history, universal history, and the historical novel. The spread of antiquarian societies attests to history's popularization among amateurs. In view of this Romantic fascination with history and the diversity of discourses in which it was explored, Nikolai Gogol appears a true man of his age. His historical interests spanned antiquity, the Middle Ages, and modern times; encompassed universal history, as well as western European and Ukrainian histories; and combined scholarly, journalistic, and literary genres. This chapter focuses on the nationalism of Gogol's historical writings. In his capacity as a historian of Ukraine, Gogol continues to promote Ukrainian nationalist concerns, though in other texts he also enters the sphere of the Russian ones. At times, the two clash. Drawing distinctions between official and unofficial, public and private pronouncements, between censored and uncensored, scholarly and fictional texts, this chapter explores ways in which Gogol reflected and opposed the notions of official Russian historiography.

Historiography, Historical Fiction, and Nationalism

Romanticism ushered in a new scholarly discipline, the philosophy of history. Its aim was to demonstrate the unity of the historical process and to show human history in its continuous, coherent development. In historiography proper, this tendency led to attempts at a universal history. In Louis Mink's summary, universal history maintained that human his-

tory constitutes a single story guided by a central theme or subject and treated local histories as tributaries of this master historical narrative. Universal history regarded the great diversity of human events, customs, and institution as "the permutations of a single and unchanging set of human capacities and possibilities, differentiated only by the effects of geography, climate, race, and other natural contingencies."[1]

Herder saw national histories and universal history in a dialectic relation. He viewed nations as the proper agents of history, since only through them could humanity fully develop its faculties. Herder rejected the Enlightenment tendency to see preceding epochs as "barbaric" and argued for a sympathetic appreciation of each age and each nation. His high regard for the Middle Ages especially ran counter to the prevailing Enlightenment view. Herder's view of history, like his view of the *Volk*, quickly caught the Romantic imagination of Europe and Russia. It is reflected in Gogol's articles published in the 1835 volume of *Arabesques* on which this chapter is largely based.[2]

Modern Russian historiography, which succeeded the earlier annalistic tradition, began in the eighteenth century. It was pioneered by German scholars associated with the Russian Academy of Sciences and by Russians such as Tatishchev, Lomonosov, and Shcherbatov. By "modern historiography" I mean a continuous narrative based on a critical examination of authentic documentary sources that is freed from biblical chronology and legends. It attempts to account for the totality of past social life by considering economic, geographic, and ethnographic factors.[3] None of the early Russian pioneers managed to produce a continuous and full history of Russia, nor could their attempts be deemed fully modern in the strict sense of the above definition. Nikolai Karamzin, the noted writer and the official historiographer of the empire, who came to be regarded as Russia's "first historian," reached up to 1611 in his twelve-volume *History of the Russian State* (*Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo,* 1818–1826). The work instilled pride in Russians and convinced them of their glorious past. It followed a dynastic view of Russian history and argued that autocracy was the most appropriate political system for Russia. For most of the nineteenth century, Karamzin's *History* remained the most widely read book of its kind, becoming the basis of Russian history textbooks and of western Europeans' views on Russia.[4]

In contrast to Karamzin's focus on the state, Nikolai Polevoi, a Herderian, believed that Russian history was the history of the Russian

people, which predated the Russian state(s) by a few centuries. Polevoi's unfinished six-volume *History of the Russian People* (*Istoriia russkogo naroda,* 1829–1833) represents the first example of Romantic, nationalistic historiography in Russia. The work incorporated the current ideas of the philosophy of history and considered, following Herder, legends, tales, folk songs, and sayings as legitimate historical evidence that revealed nations' mentality. Polevoi's dissent from the official historiographer earned almost universal condemnation. The poet Petr Viazemsky went so far as to write a denunciation to the minister of education criticizing the authorities' leniency with regard to those who dared disagree with Karamzin. In it, Viazemsky equates Karamzin's critics with antistate subversives and calls Polevoi's *History* a "charlatanic book."[5] By this definition, Gogol should be counted among such subversives, since he also diverged significantly from Karamzin's views, though he never flaunted his differences, as had Polevoi.

On the subject of the multiethnic mosaic that comprised the Russian state, Pushkin's colorful metaphor cited in the previous chapter typifies the prevalent view of imperial Russian historiography: by fate's decree, various ethnic streams were bound to flow into the "Russian sea." Seymour Becker notes a remarkable consensus among Russian historians regarding a " 'manifest destiny' of the Great Russians to dominate the land and peoples of the entire East European plain and to fuse them into a single political and cultural community." In Becker's overview, all Russian historiography treated imperial expansion as "the gathering of the Russian lands." These lands were the ancient patrimony that nature itself intended for Russia. Territorial expansion was imbued in these histories with humanitarian arguments that impelled Russia to intercede on behalf of its kinsmen and coreligionists or to save its neighbors from their inability to rule themselves. These works viewed the Russian empire "not as a metropolis surrounded by colonial dependencies but as a nation–state on the Western model."[6]

Vital in conceptualizing the nation itself, history also became a seedbed of nationalist literature of the period. Since Russian ethnography and folksong collecting were still in their infancy in the first decades of the nineteenth century, nationally minded Russian writers overwhelmingly turned to history. Of course, folk themes and historical plots were often connected, yet the focus of the Russian writers, in contrast to Gogol in *Evenings,* lay in history. As Caryl Emerson notes, while some criticized Kar-

amzin's ideology, his book was praised as a work of literature and an exemplar of the Russian language.[7] It supplied innumerable historical plots and "props." Its impact extended even to Decembrist writers, who criticized Karamzin's approach as too focused on Russia's rulers and silent on its liberal traditions.

Most historical plots in the literature of the 1820–1840s focused on the Napoleonic War of 1812 or the Time of Troubles (1598–1613), when Russia, upon the extinction of the Rurikid dynasty, freed itself from a plague of pretenders to the throne. These topics offered an opportunity to demonstrate the nation's deep patriotic zeal and to laud the Romanov dynasty that had emerged as the country's savior in 1613. Its royal descendants were now among this literature's audience and critics. These historical events also allowed authors to ritually enact the peril posed to Russia by foreigners, such as the Poles (during the Time of Troubles) and the French (in 1812).

Though not uncommon in poetry and drama, themes from national history were most widely explored in the prose genres of the historical tale and the novel. The period coincides with the heyday of Walter Scott in Russia, marked by numerous translations of his works into Russian (via French) and by countless imitations of his novels. The historical novel that Scott made so popular all across Europe accounted for more than half of all novelistic production in Russia (93 out of 159 titles) in the years 1831–1839.[8] The first historical novels of Zagoskin and Bulgarin were bestsellers. Russian writers turned their attention mostly to Scott's narrative devices. These included the description of details; a character of a young, inexperienced, passive protagonist straddling an ideological divide; love plots, descriptions of domestic life, of so-called local color (manners, artifacts, social structure); sideline appearances of actual historical figures; and the use of dialogue for the purposes of characterization. The inferior quality of the Russian imitations was widely noted by the reviewers. In the process of being translated into English, Zagoskin's *Iurii Miloslavsky* (1829), Russia's first historical novel, had to undergo a number of substantial "corrections" meant to bring it closer to the Scottian model.[9] Pushkin's *The Captain's Daughter* (1836) represents a rather isolated example of a successful Scottian novel in Russia. I will discuss Gogol's indebtedness to Scott in this chapter's penultimate section.

Scott's Russian reviewers, like the Russian historiographers with their deep-seated denial of what we might now term imperialism, seemed

mostly oblivious to the *British* imperial context in which Scott's fictions functioned. Stepan Shevyrev treats Scott as simply a Scottish-born English author. His Scottish subject matter does not prevent Shevyrev from seeing in his works an expression of Englishness, just as a few years later Shevyrev will proclaim the Russianness of Gogol's works despite their Ukrainian content. While ignoring Scott's—and their own—imperial dimension, Russians appeared acutely cognizant of the nationalist flavor of Scott's fiction. Shevyrev credits Scott with discovering English national identity.[10]

Yet to imbue Russian imitations of Scott with this elusive quality proved more difficult than the mimicry of narrative devices. In the late 1820s, Prince Viazemsky doubted that the material made available by Russian history, from which one could not glean the society's mores or any civic and domestic interaction, could sustain a transplantation of a Walter Scottian novel. Ksenofont Polevoi, the brother of the famous publicist Nikolai, was similarly skeptical due to Russia's lack of national specificity, a key ingredient of the genre.[11] Without adequate history and a sense of national identity, could a Russian historical novel emerge at all?

Against these odds, nationalism figured prominently in the soon-to-flourish Russian historical prose, though perhaps it lacked the fashionable Scottian guise. This nationalism was subordinated to the political concerns of the day. The nature of an imagined Russian community of yore held relevance for the identity of Nicholaevan Russia, which the state hoped to define by Official Nationality and its emphasis on autocracy and Orthodoxy. This largely explains the popularity of topics about the Times of Troubles and the Napoleonic War, which lent themselves to portrayals of patriotic triumph, national solidarity, and devotion to the tsar and religion. Russian writers pursuing the elusive "national spirit" also ventured into ethnic peripheries. After the Decembrist authors' experimentation with themes from the history of Russia's Baltic provinces, the Slavic Ukraine soon proved a more attractive destination. Most Russian historical novels located in the non-Russian imperial periphery did not, however, follow Scott's paradigm of the melding of the national identities of the center and its peripheries in a new imperial one. Instead, these Russian works celebrated, as Damiano Rebecchini has argued, the key moments in the *assimilation* of peripheral nations to the culture of the Russian core. Commenting on the "imperialist" direction of the Russian historical novel of the 1830s, Rebecchini writes that alongside a certain

"national exoticism" these works aimed "to contribute toward transforming the numerous Ukrainian, Siberian, or Caucasian readers into good Russian subjects."[12] Gogol's 1842 *Taras Bulba* celebrates the Cossacks in the moment of precisely such a transformation.

The government of Nicholas I closely watched all literary and scholarly pursuits in Russian history for the obvious reason of their current political significance. The authorities applauded those works that ignited patriotic fervor and conformed to the ideology of Official Nationality and inhibited dissemination of those that did not adhere to this doctrine. Authors, publishers, and censors were subject to severe reprisals for propagating ideas that the government found subversive. Following the Decembrist revolt, Nicholas I replaced the relatively lenient 1804 censorship code (with 47 articles) with a more stringent and comprehensive code of 1826 (with 230 articles), revised in 1828.[13]

For a monarch burdened with the task of ruling a huge country, Nicholas I showed uncannily intimate involvement in cultural criticism. He usurped the role of the supreme arbiter of ideological appropriateness of his empire's literature. Those who expressed opinions that clashed with his risked reprimand, imprisonment, or exile. After Bulgarin and Grech published in *The Northern Bee* a critical review of Zagoskin's *Iurii Miloslavsky*—the novel that the emperor, unbeknownst to them, had liked—both were punished by brief imprisonment. The novel portrayed the war during the Time of Troubles against the Poles as a patriotic rising of the holy Orthodox Russian nation. The *Bee* reviewer lambasted the description of the novel's Cossack character as a Russian patriot, pointing out that "Zaporozhians were at the time sworn enemies of Russia."[14] In defense of historical accuracy, *The Northern Bee* thus rejected the anachronistic transformation of seventeenth-century Cossacks into loyal Russian subjects, a notion that Nicholas I and many of the *Bee*'s readers found appealing (the journal was flooded with letters protesting the review).

An unfavorable review of Nestor Kukolnik's historical drama *The Hand of the Almightly Saved the Fatherland* (*Ruka Vsevyshnego Otechestvo spasla,* 1834) brought even more dire consequences to Nikolai Polevoi. (Kukolnik was Gogol's classmate from Nizhyn; Gogol detested his work.) Kukolnik's strained, officious patriotism in his rendition of the 1612 expulsion of the Poles provoked Polevoi's derision. He ridiculed Kukolnik's naive thesis of divine Providence watching over Russia and toppling its enemies.[15] Polevoi was unaware when sending the review to print that

Nicholas I gave his personal benediction to the play and its author. Since the authorities had earlier blacklisted Polevoi's activities, especially his critique of Karamzin, the review precipitated Polevoi's fall. His *Moscow Telegraph,* then widely viewed as Russia's best journal, was closed down, and Polevoi was barred from practicing journalism.

Two years later, an even greater scandal erupted on the occasion of Nadezhdin's publication in *The Telescope* of the Russian translation from French of Petr Chaadaev's first "Philosophical Letter." Though Venevitinov and Kireevsky had toyed earlier with similar ideas, Chaadaev's utterly grim vision of Russia's place in human civilization surpassed all others in its pessimism. In an era of triumphant patriotic renditions of Russia's history, whether in the sophisticated manner of Karamzin or the vulgar one of Kukolnik, Chaadaev's idea that Russia had no past and no future, being forever mired in a timeless civilizational void, could not but appear subversive, offensive, and incendiary. Chaadaev went so far as to assert that had Russia not become a point on the itinerary of the Mongol hordes en route to western Europe, its existence would have likely remained unnoted in world history. In a now-famous passage, Chaadaev characterized Russia as an exception from universal human laws: "Alone in the world, we gave nothing to the world, and took nothing from it; not a single idea did we contribute to the general mass of human ideas, in no way did we facilitate the progress of human reason, and we corrupted all that we received from this [larger] movement." Herzen compared the impact of Chaadaev's letter to "the effect of a pistol shot in the dead of night."[16]

In the aftermath of the letter's publication, the censor was relieved of his duties, *The Telescope* was summarily closed down, and Nadezhdin was exiled to Siberia. As in the cases of Bulgarin, Grech, and Polevoi, Russia's highest echelons of power took an active part in dealing with the crisis. After the minister of education brought Chaadaev's letter to Nicholas I's attention, the tsar himself directed the campaign against its author. It resulted in the official pronouncement of the author's insanity and home arrest with mandatory daily visits from a doctor for over a year. Chaadaev was denied the right to publish, and others were prohibited from mentioning his name in print. These silencing measures appear especially harsh when one considers that they were meted out against a brilliant intellectual and an exemplar of civic virtue, a man who was in Alexander I's honor guard during the Napoleonic War.

Yet in the context of the recently launched campaign of Official Nationality, Chaadaev's offense loomed large. Even though, as Mikhail Lemke reminds us, Chaadaev left the principle of autocracy from Uvarov's triad unscathed, he gave the remaining notions of nationality and Orthodoxy a most negative assessment.[17] Russia, Chaadaev claimed, never accrued any traditions capable of sustaining national life: it was not only a civilizational but also a national tabula rasa. Its grandiose new capital, St. Petersburg, emerged in Chaadaev's letter as "Necropolis," the city of the dead. Commenting on his country's isolation among civilized nations, Chaadaev put significant blame on its Byzantine heritage, which in his view alienated Orthodox Russia from Western Christianity and its beneficent intellectual ferment. This was an anathema to the official dogma that sought to portray Orthodoxy as a cornerstone of national pride, rather than a liability. The degree to which Chaadaev's ideas proved unsettling to not only tsarist but also Soviet authorities is demonstrated by the fact that the first full text of Chaadaev's "Philosophical Letters" became available in Russia only in 1987.[18] For the purpose of prefacing Gogol's engagement with history, the affair of Chaadaev's letter and others before it demonstrate the political sensitivity of the topic and the government's commitment, by the mid-1830s, to bring its treatment into conformance with its own nationalist agenda.

In 1833–1834 this agenda gained a devoted champion and an important forum: Sergei Uvarov as the minister of education and the *Journal of the Ministry of National Education*, which was to promulgate official government views. Uvarov's nationalist ideology subsumed under the tripartite slogan of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality" has been discussed in more detail in Chapter 1. Yet it deserves emphasis in the present context that Uvarov accorded the study of Russian history a vital place in his schema of national enlightenment, so much so that he called the interpretation and teaching of history a strictly "governmental task."[19] His ministry's *Journal* played a role within the larger campaign to appropriate the debate on Russian nationality already raging in the public sphere and remold it into an instrument of the state's social control. The *Journal* sought to propagate views of history that conformed to or bolstered these more immediate political aims. Among these aims was the Russification of the empire's non-Russian populations, and both Uvarov's educational policies and the *Journal*'s articles reflected it.[20] Though Gogol did not wholly subscribe to the government version of Official Nationality, his career as an academic historian necessitated that he demonstrate his support, which he did. In the first year of the *Journal*'s existence, Gogol was its most frequent contributor, publishing on its pages four historical articles that later appeared in *Arabesques*.[21]

Gogol the Professional Historian

In 1831 Gogol revised his initial plans for a career in the imperial administration and embarked on the path of a pedagogue and historian. His short-lived low-level government jobs were followed in February 1831 by an appointment as a teacher of history at the Patriotic Institute, a St. Petersburg school for young noblewomen. Between September 1834 and December 1835, Gogol embarked on a brief academic career as an adjunct at St. Petersburg University, where he offered courses in medieval and classical history. According to a student account, Gogol gave brilliant performances only when his friends, the poets Pushkin and Zhukovsky, were in attendance and dodged his pedagogic duties otherwise.[22] Between June and December 1835, Gogol lost both of these jobs.

Before assuming the position at St. Petersburg University, the dismissal from which he welcomed like a breath of "fresh air" (*PSS* 10, 378–379), Gogol pursued relentlessly, between late 1833 and March 1834, a professorship of universal history at the newly formed Kiev University. Created from the resources of the Polish educational institutions that were closed down after the November Uprising, Kiev University was intended to counteract Polish influence in Ukraine and facilitate its Russification. Gogol seemed aware of this when he wrote about the city to his Ukrainian friend Maksymovych, the famous ethnographer and historian: "it is ours, not theirs" (*PSS* 10, 288). The phrase is commonly interpreted to mean "it is Ukrainian, not Russian," though it could also have meant "it is Ukrainian, not Polish." In either case, the context of Gogol's remark is the government's campaign of de-Polonization and Russification of Ukraine in the aftermath of the 1831 Polish Uprising.

Living in Russia was becoming unbearable to Gogol. Echoing the ethnic slur that his *Evenings on a Farm* characters use in reference to Russians, he himself calls Russia *katsapiia* in one letter (roughly "land of the goats"; *PSS* 10, 273). At the same time, Gogol happily muses about his future life in Kiev: "There, there! To Kiev! The ancient, beautiful Kiev!" (*PSS* 10, 288). He paints Kiev in another letter as an idyllic refuge from the

alienation, foreignness, and foul weather of the abominable "Finnish town," by which he means St. Petersburg (*PSS* 10, 336).

Most biographies of Gogol mention this episode fleetingly, but it represents a crucial juncture in Gogol's life. The failure to obtain the post in Kiev dissuaded Gogol from returning to Ukraine, which he had been planning since mid-1833, and led him eventually to throw his lot with Russian metropolitan culture. Gogol sought the Kiev position as a sinecure that would allow him to devote himself, together with Maksymovych, to ethnographic work in Ukraine (*PSS* 10, 273). The idea of a transfer to Kiev came at the time of Gogol's deep involvement with Ukrainianness in the area of ethnographic, historical, and literary interests. In particular, Gogol hoped that a transfer to Kiev would facilitate his work on "the history of our only, our unfortunate, Ukraine," which he began before the Kiev job became a possibility.[23] Writing to Pushkin, he said: "I am delighted at the very thought of how my work [*trudy*] will come to a boil in Kiev. There I will bring to light many things that I have not read to you in their entirety. There I will finish my history of Ukraine and will write my universal history..." (*PSS* 10, 290). The Ukrainian history, which in Gogol's grand projections was to comprise "six small or four large volumes," like his universal history, never materialized, though he did publish a draft of its introduction in *Arabesques* (*PSS* 10, 297).

In an effort to secure the Kiev post, Gogol solicited the help of Pushkin, who was then still on good terms with Uvarov. In the letter quoted above, Gogol included a glowing assessment of Uvarov's intelligence and ability that was likely intended to reach the minister's ears (*PSS* 10, 290, 469–470n.). He later asked Pushkin to convey to Uvarov that his own health in Petersburg was so poor that unless transferred to Kiev, he would surely die within a month (*PSS* 10, 316). While working on Ukrainian history, Gogol tried to establish his credentials in universal history, for which the Kiev position was advertised, by publishing an article titled "On the Teaching of Universal History" in Uvarov's *The Journal of the Ministry of National Education.*

The job went to another candidate, Vladimir Tsykh. For a while, Gogol approached his failure as merely a postponement of his move. In June 1834, he expressed interest in purchasing a house in Kiev and asked Maksymovych, who did obtain a transfer, to inquire about real estate there (*PSS* 10, 328). He later renewed his request and offered to send a pre-

payment (*PSS* 10, 337–338). Yet much as Gogol's promise of a financial commitment shows his resolve about moving to Kiev, he would have been hardpressed to keep it. While living in Petersburg, he incurred personal debts, and his mother's estate was a financial ruin. In order to make ends meet and even consider repaying his debts, he depended on the St. Petersburg salary and the opportunities of additional income that the city offered, such as publishing or theater.

Instead of universal history, Gogol was offered a post in Russian history in Kiev. He rejected this offer, quoting his lack of interest and expertise. Frustrated, he wrote to Maksymovych that teaching Russian history would make him "go mad" and proposed that Tsykh take it and free up the universal history position for Gogol (*PSS* 10, 319). When Maksymovych attempted to talk Gogol into taking the Russian history post, he replied: "The hell with it; I would rather take botany or pathology than Russian history. In Petersburg I would maybe take it, since here I would be willing to give myself over to boredom for two hours twice a week" (*PSS* 10, 323). He also refused the offer of his friend Mikhail Pogodin to assume the adjunct post at Moscow University, likely in Russian history as well (Pogodin held a Russian history chair there; *PSS* 10, 325). The failure of his plan to move to Kiev and his refusal to retrain as a Russian historian finally prompted Gogol to accept the job at St. Petersburg University. When it also fell through, though not necessarily because of it, he abandoned the career of a historian.

Before this happened, however, Gogol published many historical articles and stories in Uvarov's *Journal*, then in *Arabesques*, and also penned many notes and unfinished pieces on historical themes. These materials attest to Gogol's abiding historical interests and his extensive research. His unpublished materials, such as lecture and reading notes, provide a valuable perspective on the published ones by indicating the ideological transformations that Gogol's raw data and private knowledge underwent when they were channeled into published, official pronouncements. The juxtaposition of the unpublished and published materials shows that despite public espousals of officially sanctioned perspectives, Gogol also explored history along lines that would have been deemed subversive by official historiography. The notions found in Gogol's unpublished fragments encourage bolder readings of certain ideas that Gogol stated more timidly in his published articles. While Gogol's involvement with universal and medieval history was at least in part conditioned by his professional

duties (the application for the Kiev post and the position at St. Petersburg University), Ukrainian history was Gogol's private and most passionately held interest, most integral to both his scholarly and artistic endeavors. It represents the most important area of Gogol's historical research and one in which he gained the greatest expertise. It is also the topic that most often put Gogol in collision with official imperial historiography.

To gain an understanding of the scholarship and the fiction of Gogol's history, I use Sharon Varney's discussion of Gogol's conception of the scientific and artistic discourses. She infers Gogol's views on this from his "Textbook of Literature for Russian Youth" (*PSS* 8, 468–488), begun in 1831 and left unfinished. Varney argues that Gogol demanded of scholarly discourse (I will use "scholarly" in place of Varney's "scientific") a mirrorlike, unmediated, and dispassionate representation of reality.[24] In his view, scholarly discourse should be free of all national, emotional, or rhetorical incidentals. The object of artistic discourse, in contrast, was for Gogol an *image* of the object, not its exact replica, refracted through the artist's perceptions and experience and couched in a sensuous and memorable packaging of language. Scholarly discourse should in Gogol's view be free of didacticism and "all other blushings and sweetenings that are aimed to make science palatable" (*PSS* 8, 469). However, Gogol did advocate didacticism in artistic discourse. He called poetry that employs skillful didacticism the "summit of art accessible to great geniuses alone" (*PSS* 8, 477). Varney sums it up well when she claims that Gogol revised Horace's dictum of "please and instruct" by instead aiming to please *in order to* instruct.[25] While in Gogol's view "blushings and sweetenings" had no place in pure scholarly discourse, he considered them useful in teaching and narrating. An artist-teacher, according to Gogol, makes words, as Varney says, into "Mary Poppins' spoonful of sugar" that can make the "medicine" of instruction more palatable by disguising its message.

Varney's discussion offers important insights for a study of Gogol as a historical scholar, teacher, and fiction writer. It shows that none of the *Arabesques* articles belong to what he himself would term "scholarly discourse."[26] Gogol penned almost all of them in his capacity as a pedagogue. Since their function was primarily didactic, they make ample use of the artistic "blushings and sweetenings" aimed to please and facilitate instruction. Yet Gogol also used rhetorical artistry to disguise the content of the apparently nondidactic pieces, such as his article on the history of

Ukraine, where his "blushings and sweetenings" served to dodge the censor and smuggle in risky ideological content. Instead of treating the scholarly and artistic discourse in exclusive terms, as Varney seems to do, I propose to view Gogol's materials on history—from his notes on the reading and records of private ideas to his lecture notes, published articles, and historical fiction—as a continuum of scholarly and artistic discourses with an ascending degree of the "artistic" in them. While Gogol's private notes show concern with dates, facts, and sources, in short, a technical "scholarly" apparatus, his emphasis on them lessens as he moves to the other discursive modes, and his concern with rhetorical flourish, with affective impact on the audience, and with "big" ideas and memorable images increases.

Gogol's history almost invariably touches on the present by addressing the cultural and political concerns of contemporary Russia and Ukraine. Gogol's images of Germanic tribes and Arabic rulers, so distant historically and geographically, maintain a metonymic relation to current exigencies of Russian nationalism. Likewise, Gogol's historical Ukraine is fashioned by the issues that were vital to the contemporary one. For a writer whose engagement with history was very rich and varied, Gogol's claim toward the end of his life that he never felt attraction to the past and was always concerned with contemporaneity strikes one as rather puzzling (*PSS* 8, 449). Yet besides the fact that this statement reflects Gogol's late 1840s posturing, it does correctly indicate the nature of Gogol's historical interests, consistently angled toward the here and now of the cultures in which he lived.

While *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* exclusively featured Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism, his historical texts show him develop, alongside his continued championing of Ukraine, a set of ideas that address Russian nationalist concerns. While Gogol's Ukrainianness seems connected to his feeling of a personal national identity and a sense of cultural belonging, his Russianness takes its root from his civic patriotism as a citizen of a great empire. The facts of Gogol's biography no doubt played a role in the emergence of Gogol's Russian nationalism. As I have shown, Gogol's overriding concern in the years 1831–1834, his literary success notwithstanding, lay in furthering his career as a historian and securing a university post. This position required Gogol to pledge allegiance to Uvarov's ideology of Official Nationality and assure him of unswerving loyalty upon his transfer to the educational outpost in Kiev. This had an impact

on the opinions Gogol chose to voice: one would be prudent not to risk dissenting views when relying on Uvarov's academic appointment. Yet despite it, Gogol did risk them. His historical texts often feature a duality between the gestures of support toward official ideology and points of tension with it, a duality that is most pronounced in Gogol's work on Ukrainian history. Gogol the historian—like Gogol the writer—played to the hilt the stereotypical role of the "sly" Ukrainian. He smuggled risky ideas by padding them with gestures of conformance to official ideology and maintaining a pose of a well-intentioned, if at times possibly misguided, *ingénu.*

Teaching Universal History in the Spirit of Official Nationality

Gogol's engagement with universal history grew into another, besides his history of Ukraine, unrealized multivolume historical project. In a letter to Pogodin he describes it as: "a universal history and universal geography in three, if not two volumes" titled "Land and People" (*PSS* 10, 256). Instead of volumes, he wrote an article. "On the Teaching of Universal History," which first appeared in Uvarov's *Journal* and then in *Arabesques,* served as the pièce de résistance in Gogol's campaign to show his eligibility for the Kiev post. Gogol's view of the topic is steeped in Herderian ideas. Echoing Herder's notion of *Humanität,* Gogol stresses the unity of universal history, whose aim is to embrace "all humanity" and to show the struggle by which "the spirit of man" developed. The histories of nations and states—throughout the article Gogol consistently differentiates between the two—need to be subordinated to a grand unifying system that organizes these constituent parts harmoniously and provides an overarching explanation for each incidence of history. Gogol calls for a binding idea in the history of humanity, "in reference to which both states and events are but temporary forms and images" (*PSS* 8, 26–27).

Gogol seems particularly concerned with the faithful representation of nations, calling for a history in which "each nation, each state, retains its world, its colors, so that a nation, with all its feats and impact on the world, is portrayed clearly, in exactly such an appearance and costume in which it was in the past" (*PSS* 8, 27). This concern also comes through in his unpublished "Bibliography of the Middle Ages." He organizes it by nation, stressing the insufficiency of general histories and the importance of national ones. Geography, in Gogol's view, aids a faithful presentation

of nations, since it accounts for much of their specificity. This recalls Gogol's programmatic connection between universal history and geography from his projected "Land and People" and his reliance on nature and geography in portraying the Ukrainian nation in *Evenings.*

Gogol's grand narrative of universal history is patterned on the rise and fall of world empires, seen as political and civilizational entities. The schema of successive world empires echoes the medieval theory of *translatio imperii,* which Stephen Baehr explains as "the idea that in any one period one nation will be the dominant cultural and political force in world civilization, and that this force will move from one state to another with the passage of time."[27] This paradigm of successive world empires functioned even in Gogol's time as an accepted historiographic practice when describing the ancient world (as in Herder's and Hegel's philosophies of history). It also had special resonance in Russian historiosophic tradition, which up to the eighteenth century relied heavily on the notion of the succession of world empires in explaining Russia's own place in history.

In "On the Teaching of Universal History," Gogol writes that the original, independent Asian nations were forcibly united by the Persians into one empire. The Persians exercised imperial sovereignty but left intact the peripheries' original customs, religions, and forms of government. Interaction with Persia, however, caused the Asian nations' gradual loss of national specificity. The next world empire, Greece, also led to the dissolution of national spirit among its nations, due to the unifying power of the Greek enlightenment. The Romans, by contrast, adopted "everything," Gogol claims, from the conquered nations. Lacking their own national specificity, they gained one through appropriating elements of their subjects' nationalities (*PSS* 8, 32). This overview of world history demonstrates Gogol's acute interest in the relationship between empire and nation, which he saw in tension with each other, and his perception of the deleterious impact of the former on the latter. Gogol's identification of the large social groups of deep antiquity as nations, though unsound according to today's scholarship, reflects the centrality of the concept of nation to the worldview of his own age that he thoroughly embraced.

Gogol was acutely interested in what makes nations rise and fall. In the article's section on early European history, he explores the fluctuating fates of nationalism that depend on the presence or absence of supranational unifying factors. With the fall of Roman authority, the national

specificity of nations increases, yet with the rise of the popes, it decreases. Once the papist grip over secular authority loosens, the reverse process of "nationalization" begins anew. Gogol, echoing the future Slavophile Ivan Kireevsky, claimed that European nations were interrelated to the point of forming one big nation. By contrast, he presents America as "a Babylonian mixture of nations," an artificial, inorganic construct whose most crippling handicap is the lack of a unifying religion (*PSS* 8, 37).

In his project on teaching universal history, Gogol argues that the professor's ability to captivate the audience plays as important a role as the lectures' content. Deeming students' inattention a professor's fault, Gogol promotes a "captivating, fiery" style, thus advocating a use of artistic means for didactic purposes (*PSS* 8, 28). Gogol's article "Schlözer, Müller, and Herder," also included in *Arabesques,* similarly posits a rather flamboyant ideal of a future universal historian who would unite the three historians' achievements with the dramatic skill of Schiller, the storytelling knack of Walter Scott, and the gift for concise characterization of Shakespeare (*PSS* 8, 89). Without spellbinding images and passionate flare, history for Gogol was a dry enumeration of facts that was bound to fail in the lecture hall. "On the Teaching of Universal History" itself proves the point that it makes, as Gogol displays his rhetorical artistry to summon emotional power over his audience. Perhaps a predilection for the art rather than the science of history explains why Gogol eventually found historical fiction more fulfilling than historical scholarship.

Boredom, in Gogol's view, leads students away from worthy educational content and may even inspire wrong ideas. The artistic "blushings and sweetenings" to which Varney draws attention were for Gogol an effective tool of also ideological control. When the speaker lacks passion, "then even the most holy words on his lips, such as religion and devotion to the fatherland and the ruler, transform themselves for [the students] into empty notions" (*PSS* 8, 29). Gogol implies that he would use his artistic tools in the task of guarding his prospective students' ideological correctness and obeisance to the government. In the article's conclusion, Gogol explicitly pledges to form his students into loyal subjects:

> My goal is . . . to make [students] firm and steadfast in their principles, so that no irresponsible fanatic and no momentary excitement could ever make them hesitate; to make them meek, submissive, noble, the indispensable and desirable comrades of our great sovereign, so that whether in fortune or misfortune, they will never betray their duty, their faith, their noble honor, and their vow to remain faithful to the fatherland and the sovereign. (*PSS* 8, 39)

This bombastic statement of purpose is a bow in the direction of the governmental ideology of Official Nationality, a fitting gesture considering that the article was first published in Uvarov's *Journal* and served as an extended memo in Gogol's application for the Kiev post. Uvarov and another editor/censor supplied Gogol in fact with suggestions for this article's revision, almost all of which Gogol claims to have incorporated (*PSS* 10, 294–295, 296). Gogol quite perceptively reads the significance of Official Nationality as a way to ensure the subjects' loyalty. He vows that his teaching of history will successfully counteract the influence of "irresponsible fanatics" and "momentary excitements" that might sway youth in the direction of political opposition. Considering the mission of Kiev University to further the Russification of the Right-Bank Ukraine, the undesirable political activity that Gogol was alluding to may have included Ukrainian separatism. The article shows that Gogol understood the political climate of the day and the demands it would place on him as an educator employed by the state.

Ancient Rome: Parallels to the Russian Empire and the Cossack Ukraine

By Gogol's time, the connection between Roman and Russian empires was firmly ensconced in Russian culture. Russia's rise to imperial prominence in the eighteenth century occasioned a massive effort to articulate its national greatness and world significance. A comparison with Rome proved a favorite device in this project. According to Baehr's study of the topic, the theme of Rome reemerged (possibly echoing an earlier idea of Moscow as the third Rome) in the times of Peter I and by the 1760s became a "national myth" that was used to express "nationalistic and millennial goals."[28] This myth continued to expand during the reign of Catherine II and especially in the context of Russia's protracted wars with Turkey and dreams of conquering Constantinople/Istanbul for Orthodoxy (and Russia). Baehr quotes vast evidence documenting the importance of the Rome-Russia link in the culture of the period, ranging from translations of imperial Roman history to original Russian historical and po-

litical tracts, panegyrical poetry, journal articles, and novels. St. Petersburg began to function in Russian culture as new or northern Rome, a notion that is germane to the semiotics of Peter's city.[29] N. F. Koshansky, whose manuals of rhetoric were widely used in the empire's schools throughout the nineteenth century, regarded the Romans as the highest authority. His textbooks provided wide-ranging exempla from Roman history and elegiac poetry that helped solidify the relevance of the Romans for generations of Russians.[30] The idea of Russia as the new Rome had become proverbial by the early nineteenth century. It comes through, for example, in Belinsky's matter-of-fact reference to it in 1834 (*SSBel* 1, 51).

The Roman Empire also provided Russians with an important nation-building parallel. As Robert Maguire notes, the Romans had to contend for much of their history with the overwhelming presence of a superior foreign culture of the Greeks. As such, Maguire continues, the Romans offered a compelling paradigm to the Russians of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, who contended with western European influences.[31] Paralleling ancient Rome's relation to Greece, Russia was a prominent political and military power that continued to rely on western European cultural models. The legitimacy and extent of imitation was as burning a question in the Rome of Horace as it was in the Russia of Trediakovsky and Lomonosov, the pioneers of modern Russian literature. Rome's dependency on Greek culture was of intense interest to the Russians, who hoped to outgrow their cultural tutelage to western Europe. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russian nationalists of the Slavophile persuasion resurrected the idea of Moscow as the third Rome, which testifies further to the vitality of the Rome-Russia connection.

Gogol's writings on the Roman Empire function within this broader cultural frame of reference, and though he does not explicitly draw the link between the two empires, the implicit comparison is undeniable. These texts offer an excellent example of Gogol's metonymic approach to historical topics and his penchant for contemporary parallels. Rome interested Gogol in two capacities: as a great world empire and as an early military republic. His portrayal of Rome as an empire shows parallels with the situation and concerns of the Russian empire, while his description of it as a military republic closely resembles his image of the Ukrainian military republic, the Sich.

The Roman imperial model that Gogol describes in "On the Teaching of Universal History" had close parallels with the case of imperial Russia:

an empire without a national core that, in an effort to build one, imitates the culture of the conquered nations (*PSS* 8, 32). This model of an imperial people that lacks national specificity resonated with the fretful debates about the dubious existence of Russian national character that had filled the pages of Russian periodicals since at least the 1820s. Gogol portrays the nationalizing process in the Roman Empire as in essence parasitic: Rome preys on the cultures of its dependencies in an effort to construct an identity of its own. Such an artificial process was second-rate at best and doomed at worst according to Gogol's conception of identity, which treated nationality as organic—an axiom, not a construct.

The notion of the "parasitic" nationalization of Rome, and obliquely of Russia, also appears in Gogol's unpublished university lectures on the Middle Ages ("From University Lectures on the Middle Ages," *PSS* 9, 106–144). In them Gogol criticizes Rome's superficial imitation of the more civilized nations it conquered: "All that [Rome] took from its conquered nations was brilliant and external—luxury without the refinement of these nations' thought, concepts, and way of life" (*PSS* 9, 107). In his private unpublished notes Gogol conjures up an image of Rome as an indolent and slightly sinister monster gobbling up colonial wares from around the world: "Rome, having spread out, became a heart; it kept swallowing up and drawing everything to itself: Africa was sending tigers for the circuses that amused it; Syria was sending this and that; . . . all formerly independent states turned into servants and flattering slaves, pleasing and feeding the conqueror. . . . Rome became lazy and abandoned the fields when Africa gave it bread" (*PSS* 9, 157). This is perhaps Gogol's most damning image of a great world empire in its moment of greatest political power and least vitality. The similarity between formerly independent countries enslaved by Rome that now feed it and Ukraine's role as Russia's breadbasket seems to linger in between the lines. It is worth noting that the censure in Gogol's tone when he discusses the Roman Empire's relation to its colonies magnifies in proportion to how private his pronouncements are. A fairly matter-of-fact statement in the published article "On the Teaching of Universal History" becomes a more critical one in a piece intended for a small audience and oral presentation (university lectures) and evolves into a harsh condemnation in a private entry. This exemplifies a pattern that is common to a great deal of Gogol's writings and cautions one not to assume that Gogol's published writings reflect his sincere thoughts and deeply felt opinions.

Gogol's university lecture on Rome's demise seems a cautionary tale about an empire gone bad. It was likely meant to inspire students to become responsible wardens of their own, Russian, empire. In history Gogol sought lessons for contemporary society, not a scholarly oasis. Always concerned with the *effect* of his work on his audience and its contemporary significance, he set similar didactic goals for his fictions, which were aimed to bring about large-scale social change through the transformation of individuals. In his treatment of historical subjects Gogol's metonymic mode at times approximates a parable, so central in the premodern culture of East Slavic lands. Following the biblical and medieval historicist tradition, the explanations that Gogol offers for the rise and fall of nations and empires are unfailingly moral. The virtues and vices of monarchs, social classes, and nations represent in his schema the principal causes of historical vicissitudes.

The notion of an empire seemed to connote for Gogol first and foremost the empire's periphery and only secondarily its core. Thus he opens his lecture on the Roman Empire by listing its provinces (*PSS* 9, 106). Of particular interest to Gogol is the decline of the nations that had lost their independent form of government under the Roman yoke. He puts the blame on these nations' lack of resiliency and internal corruption but also on the profiteering overseers who exploit the provinces by treating them as leased property *(arenda).* Significantly, the concept of *arenda* (or, the leasing of property) appears frequently in Gogol's writings on Ukraine. *Taras Bulba* and the historical fiction included in *Arabesques* mention the Polish absentee landlords' practice of hiring Jews to oversee the *arenda* of their property. Both the chronicles and Gogol's texts portray this system as abusive since it purportedly gave the Jews an opportunity to exploit their Ukrainian tenants. It is quite likely that Gogol's interest in the fate of Rome's colonized provinces resonated with his thinking about Ukraine's past, which he was studying intensively at the time. Like a Roman province, Ukraine had been incorporated into larger, more powerful political entities, whether Poland or Russia, that ruled it like a colony, for instrumental ends.

After the survey of the empire's colonized nations in his lecture notes, Gogol presents the "dominant nation," the Romans (*natsiia preobladaiushchaia; PSS* 9, 107). This designation reverberates with the common term for ethnic Russians within the Russian Empire as a "ruling nationality" or "nation." From the uncouth beginnings as a fierce military republic, the Romans reached a high degree of civic and political development yet failed to develop their own national character, culling national elements from the conquered nations. Greed and corruption ran rampant, and the republican form of government proved untenable for this sprawling and fragmented empire. Only a militarily strong monarchy could successfully rule over it, and Emperor Augustus executed this much-needed transition. Gogol's characterization of Augustus's role in Roman history in many ways parallels the role of Peter I in Russian history. He describes Augustus as a ruler who strengthened monarchy and built up the military, especially the fleet, yet whose political legacy resulted in despotism and corruption. The connection between Peter I and Augustus dates back to Petrine times. One of its first proponents was the chief ideologue of Peter I himself, Feofan Prokopovich (a Ukrainian like Gogol). As Baehr points out, Peter I adopted many political notions from ancient Rome, including the creation of the Senate (1711), a body that reciprocated his generosity by bestowing on Peter three Roman titles: *pater patriae, Imperator,* and *Maximus.*[32]

Discussing the aftermath of the Augustan golden age, Gogol paints the familiar image of a despotic, corrupt, and enervated empire that cares only for material goods. Religion became reduced to external rituals, and "[a]ll the Roman world fell into a kind of sleep, a life devoted to the present, not marked by any strong impulses" (*PSS* 9, 108). This characterization recalls Maksymovych's controversial notion of the Russian national spirit as distinguished by sleepy passivity and a lack of strong passions, a view that Gogol corroborated in his own article "On Little Russian Songs" (*PSS* 8, 96). This somnolent state and lack of vital stirrings set the stage for the ultimate demise of the Roman Empire that was caused by the new nations of the then-barbaric European North. The cautionary aspect of Gogol's account of the Roman Empire stresses the centrality of spiritual, moral factors for the greatness of empires and civilizations. Empires rise and flourish due to the internal moral strength of their societies rather than external or purely political circumstances. This resonates with what Gogol saw as the moral inadequacy of contemporary Russian society and is meant to serve as a warning. Shedding all metonymic veils, Gogol would soon devote himself directly to the task of addressing this perceived flaw in Russian society in his works on Russian themes, *The Government Inspector, Dead Souls,* and *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends,* all of which in one way or another aim to

bring about Russia's spiritual transformation and as a result strengthen its imperial fitness.

In contrast to Gogol's image of Rome as an empire, his treatment of Rome's humble but spirited beginnings as a military republic bears remarkable similarity to his portrayal of the origins of the Ukrainian nation. The same notions, historical patterns, and even identical locutions unite Gogol's portrayal of the Roman republic in his private "Sketches and Notes on the History of the Ancient World" and his various descriptions of the Cossacks. Of the origins of the Romans Gogol writes:

> A people whose entire life consisted of war, who were brought up by war and were severe just like it.... At the beginning, Italian shepherds who had their origin in Asia Minor ... were rounded up by Romulus for the construction of a poor little town, Rome, by a turbid little river, the Tiber. Under the seven next kings, their ranks grew as they were joined by the exiles from other countries. They occupied themselves with agriculture, from which they were constantly torn away by wars with neighbors. Having grown used to freedom [*vol'nost'*] and a life of revelry [*razgul'naia zhizn'*], they chased away the kings and formed a brotherly republic. (*PSS* 9, 156)

"A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," which I will treat in detail in a further section, portrays Ukrainians as just such Romans. The Cossacks were, according to Gogol, a "warlike people" of Asian-European ancestry, who learned from the Tatars and Turks their tactic of the Asiatic raids. It was a "motley assemblage of the most desperate people of the neighboring nations" escaping various forms of oppression, who kept pouring into the region, attracted by the "life of revelry" *(razgul'naia zhizn')*. Wars and agriculture were their main occupations: "a saber and a plow became friendly with each other" (*PSS* 8, 46–49). In *Taras Bulba,* Gogol offers a fictional image of the Cossacks along the same lines, stressing their love of freedom *(vol'nost)* and "life of revelry." When describing the Sich, the heart of Cossack Ukraine, Gogol stresses its republicanism, democratic processes of decision making, and elective offices. The 1835 text makes Gogol's associative parallel explicit, claiming that among the Cossacks "there were those who knew about Horace, Cicero, and the Roman republic" (*PSS* 2, 302).

Premodern and Medieval History: Russia's Relation to Europe and Ukraine

Gogol's interest in European history lay in premodern times, particularly the Middle Ages, which so fascinated Herder. *Arabesques* contains two articles on European history, "On the Movement of Peoples at the End of the Fifth Century" and "On the Middle Ages," both of which seem expanded nodes of Gogol's project in universal history. Captivating style, stark contrasts, and dramatic tensions abound. This is Gogol's history at its most artistic and least scholarly. Though ostensibly about Europe, these articles address very vital issues for Russian self-awareness. Most important, they respond to what Larry Wolff has described as western Europe's Enlightenment project: the transformation of eastern Europe into the West's uncivilized and barbaric "other."[33] Gogol turns the tables and shows how the now flourishing western European nations had rather uncouth beginnings. He thereby humbles their arrogance and posits the optimistic possibility that Russia will repeat its Western peers' pattern of development from barbarity to enlightenment and world prominence.

The key context for "On the Movement of Peoples" is the supercilious Western stereotype of Russians, and Slavs in general, as "Asiatics." Gogol counters this distancing conceit with the notion of the consanguinity of western and eastern Europeans. Both, claims Gogol, originated in Asia, that "nation-spewing volcano" (*PSS* 8, 116). This was no doubt intended as a confidence boost for his Russian readers, stigmatized by the Westerners as Asian barbarians. Gogol pictures Europe in this article as a seething mass of warring nations. The interaction brought about by war and constant shifting resulted, according to Gogol, in the early European peoples' loss of ethnic purity. Toward the end of this great "movement," "all nations [*natsii*] became thoroughly intermixed; only later did the constant manner of rule or of occupation manage to impart to some of them a certain specificity and differentiating marks" (*PSS* 8, 139). In the conclusion of this process, there emerged four large groups that later gave rise to modern European nations.

In Gogol's account of the cataclysms that laid the foundations of western Europe, phrases such as "a savage German," "savage Europe," and "the vulgar origins of Europe" achieve an almost incantatory power (*PSS* 8, 123–125, 135). Gogol relishes his examples of the barbaric customs of Germanic tribes: traitors were tortured and hanged, an unfaithful

wife was chased naked through the village and whipped, children were raised with cattle (*PSS* 8, 121–122). To Russian readers accustomed to the images of western Europe as a beacon of enlightenment, humanism, and gentility, this monstrous vision of Europe's barbaric origins must have struck a discordant note, yet one that alleviated their own insecurities. The role that these savage nations, expelled from Asia's nation-bearing loins, played in world history consisted in nailing the coffin of the Roman Empire, a former custodian of the spirit of human progress. By analogy, Gogol suggests that the supposedly "savage" newcomer in world history, the Russian Empire, will likely repeat this pattern and sound the death knell of the now-declining western European hegemony. This scenario was popular in Russia around 1835, Ivan Kireevsky being its chief exponent.

Perhaps the most rhetorically overblown piece among the nonfiction in *Arabesques,* "On the Middle Ages" demonstrates in practice Gogol's pedagogic dictum of assaulting the students' senses in order to grip their imagination. Exemplifying his penchant for history as a series of cataclysmic upheavals turning the world upside down, Gogol depicts the Middle Ages as a "stormy whirlpool" that pulls world events into its spin and, having mixed and changed their nature, releases them again in fresh orderly waves (*PSS* 8, 14). History in this article is written more by metaphors than by factual data or causal explanation. Addressing his interest in the epoch, Gogol writes:

> This diligence with which the European savages tailor the Roman enlightenment in their own fashion; these fragments, or rather scraps, of Roman forms and laws among the new ones as yet undetermined, lacking bounds and order; the very chaos in which are found the decomposed beginnings of contemporary Europe's awesome grandeur and its thousand-year-old power—all these are more interesting and intriguing to us than the motionless times of the universal Roman empire under the rule of its impotent emperors. (*PSS* 8, 15)

"On the Middle Ages" casts Rome as a sclerotic political entity and ascribes all the vitality and constructive energy to its successors, the European "barbarians." This reflects an alternative metonymic alignment that links Russia with early modern Europe rather than with the Roman Empire: an uncouth barbarian that by its sheer vital force builds his own edifice on the ruins of a fallen universal empire. Such were Russia's aspiration vis-à-vis western Europe in the nineteenth century. Therefore, the path from savagery and imitation to a future "awesome grandeur" would naturally be "more interesting to us," meaning Russians, Gogol seems to argue.

Sketching the medieval infancy of modern European nations in his article on the Middle Ages, Gogol stresses the centrality of the popes and the crusades. Papal power provided a nurturing matrix for the young European nations that would have otherwise fallen victim to Islamic invaders. As regards the crusades, Gogol claims that they are "in vain called an unreasonable enterprise." This was not, Gogol counters, "some war for a kidnapped wife, not a flaring up of hatred between two hostile nations, not a bloody war between two greedy sovereigns over a crown or a plot of land, not *even* a war for freedom and national independence. No! Not a single passion, not a single individual desire matter here; all was suffused with one idea: to liberate the grave of the divine Savior!" (*PSS* 8, 18; emphasis mine). Gogol here pits Christian ideal against national and political imperatives. According to him, while particular Christian religions bind nations and differentiate them from others, the Christian ideal as such trumps all national concerns. It is noteworthy, however, that in Gogol's list of legitimate motives for the outbreak of war, only religious zeal outranks a fight for "freedom and national independence."

In the article's conclusion, Gogol casts the Middle Ages as a maelstrom that transformed the old world order based on the hegemony of the Roman Empire into the new one based on the hegemony of national monarchies. Similarly to "On the Teaching of Universal History," "On the Middle Ages" ends with a bow in the direction of Official Nationality. Gogol flatters autocracy in general and Russian in particular by treating its impact on the world as inherently "enlightening." He justifies the repressive measures that tend to accompany monarchical regimes by claiming that they helped usher in such progressive developments as geographic exploration and the inventions of print and gunpowder. These regimes have used political oppression, Gogol claims, for the good cause of dragging the obstinate humanity toward self-realization and progress. Incidentally, in *Selected Passages* Gogol would soon similarly portray the effect of the Russian tsars on the sluggish Russian people.

However, Gogol distinguished between political ideas in theory and how they applied to specific cultural contexts. He praised the republicanism of the early Romans and Cossacks but considered it unfit to meet

the exigencies of ruling an empire, whether Roman or, presumably, Russian. Thus although he lauds Russian autocracy, he was otherwise drawn to the idea of limited monarchy. This comes through in his detailed outline of Henry Hallam's *A View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (1818). Hallam's work and Gogol's summary of it focus on constitutional transformations in medieval Europe and curtailment of monarchic power. Independent city–states, constitutions, elective monarchies, and representative assemblies that constrain the king's power feature prominently in Gogol's excerpts from Hallam, which, considering their size, point toward a keen interest on Gogol's part.[34] In fact, in his "Bibliography of the Middle Ages," Gogol notes Hallam's treatment of constitutional transformations as the book's central value (*PSS* 9, 102).

Considering Hallam's focus on the challenges to autocracy, a rather undesirable topic in Nicholaevan Russia, Gogol's interest cannot be explained by his pedagogic duties. While autocracy did seem in Gogol's view to suit *Russia's* needs, the notions of elective representation and a limited central rule did, on the other hand, figure prominently in his research on *Ukrainian* history. This research stressed the democratic traditions of Kievan Rus, of Ukraine within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and most important, of the Cossacks. Gogol was most likely interested in the topic as a historian of Ukraine, not Russia. Democratic and autocratic traditions functioned for Gogol as distinguishing marks of Ukrainian and Russian national histories, respectively. In the *Taras Bulba* of 1842, the dissolution of the democratic Cossack ethos in Russianness culminates in the Cossacks' invocation to the all-powerful Russian tsar.

Cognizant of the impact on history of broad social, political, and cultural factors, Gogol was also captivated by its great individuals. His historical writings focus on such leaders as Julius Caesar, Caesar Augustus, Attila the Hun, Alexander the Great, Mohammed, and Mazepa. What makes a ruler wise, effective, and popular became the topic of Gogol's unfinished drama from old English history, "Alfred," and his sketch "Al-Mamun," which was published in *Arabesques*. Both texts take the topic of ninth-century rulers, Anglo-Saxon and Arabian, respectively, and clothe it in notions, concerns, and cultural patterns of nineteenth-century Russia.

The Anglo-Saxon period in the history of the British Isles became widely popular in Europe with Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1820; Russian translation: 1826). The novel is a study in the archeology of Englishness.

Scott portrays British identity as a palimpsest of invasions and conquests, Roman, Saxon, and Norman. An anachronistic notion of the enmity between the twelfth-century Anglo-Saxon agricultural population and the Norman invaders represents the novel's key premise. Scott's sympathies lay with the conquered underdog, the Saxons. So pervasive was the influence of Scott's Saxon-Norman dichotomy that serious historians subsequently investigated it as a legitimate historical paradigm. One of them was Augustin Thierry, whose *Histoire de la Conquête de L'Angleterre par les Normandes* (1825) served Gogol as a source when he worked on "Alfred."[35]

In 1827, *The Moscow Herald* enthusiastically reviewed Thierry's book. The book's portrayal of the Saxons chafing under the Norman yoke resonated with Russia's own historic martyrology—to a large extent mythic but eagerly picked up by nationalist historiography—of the great traumas it suffered under the so-called Tatar yoke.[36] The reviewer notes Thierry's sympathy for the "subjugated and oppressed nation," on which the Normans inflicted countless "miseries."[37] *The Moscow Herald*'s publisher, as if eager to prevent any confusion as to who the victims might be if this paradigm were applied to Russian history, explains in a footnote that the Normans behaved the same way in all conquered lands, including Russia. The footnote casts Russia in the role of the subjugated nation beset by an evil oppressor. Exemplifying the imperial amnesia I noted earlier in the chapter, the anonymous reviewer admits no troubling parallels between the Normans and Russia's own current status as an enslaving power that thrusts "yokes" on other peoples.

This alignment makes early Rus into a victim of two yokes: the Norman in addition to the Tatar. The early Rus population and the Saxons did in fact share a common history of a Norman influence, though "yoke" may not be the most fitting metaphor to describe it. In Russian historiography, the controversial Norman theory held that a group of Normans called Varangians, traversing East Slavic lands while trading with Byzantium, responded to an invitation of Novgorodian Slavs to come and rule over them. They founded the Rusian state and became a civilizing influence on the East Slavs. While in the eighteenth century the Russian historian Lomonosov rejected this theory, calling it a fabrication of German historians, nineteenth-century historians by and large accepted it, merely debating its scope and significance.[38]

The Norman theory posed the vexing problem of the native (Slavic)

versus foreign (Norman) origin of the Russian nation. Gogol's friend Mikhail Pogodin, who specialized in the topic, accepted the Norman theory yet argued for the basic Slavness of early Rusian culture. Józef Sękowski in his 1834 article on the Scandinavian sagas, by contrast, argued that the proto-Russians were in fact Normans, not Slavs, who with time intermixed with the indigenous Slavic population. He claims that the Scandinavian sagas would further the study of ancient Russian history, it being basically coextensive in that period with the history of the Normans.[39] In his published article Gogol ridiculed Sękowski's views, yet in his private notes on early Slavic history, he himself described the proto-Rusians *(Rossy)* as Normans who subjugated the Slavs, thus agreeing with Sękowski.[40] This is another instance of a discrepancy between Gogol as a public and private historian, one that can be attributed to the political pressures of the day.

In portraying the Saxon-Norman conflict in "Alfred," Gogol dramatizes the Saxons' attempt to shake off the foreign yoke. Historical fiction of the time widely employed this rhetoric while portraying Russia's conflicts with the Poles and the French during the Time of Troubles and the War of 1812. Gogol accentuates the social division between the "people" and the aristocracy within the Saxon nation. The Saxon commoners remain true to their instinctive, innate patriotism, while greedy aristocrats collaborate with the Norman oppressor for material gain or political power. The unspoiled national feeling of the Russian people and the corruptibility of aristocracy in times of national crises were also popular topoi of the nationalist literature on historical themes, from Zagoskin and Glinka to Kukolnik.

Vox populi opens Gogol's play. As the Saxons await the arrival of King Alfred (849–901) from his sojourn in Rome, they complain about the oppression of the Normans and their unspeakable atrocities against the Saxons and their religion. The Saxon thanes (the aristocrats) cooperate with the Normans—whom Gogol, following Thierry, calls the Danes—in order to seize land from the free Saxon landowners (ceorls), in contravention of Saxon law. The gathered crowd hopes that King Alfred will put an end to these abuses. In contrast to English literature's image of Alfred as an ideal constitutional monarch, Gogol portrays him as a strong leader and an advocate of unlimited royal power, though he plans on using this power to further an educational rather than a military agenda. Yet the attack of the Danes/Normans necessitates that Alfred become a warrior before he can become an enlightened monarch. After the initial military loss, Alfred arouses his armies' religious fervor. He invokes Christ, the Holy Virgin, and Saint George "on his white horse," which apparently carries them to victory (*PSS* 5, 193).

Of all the possible parallels between the historical moment described in "Alfred" and Russia's history, surely St. George—Russia's patron saint, eternalized in iconography as mounted on his white horse—prompts this connection most strongly. In his study of the play M. P. Alekseev advances Chernyshevsky's thesis that Gogol may have intended Alfred as a "symbolic apotheosis of Peter." This interpretation is certainly plausible. Like Gogol's Alfred, Peter I went abroad to gain knowledge, promoted the spread of enlightenment, centralized power in the hands of the ruler, and curtailed the influence of old noble families. Similarly to the Saxon king, Peter could enact his sweeping reforms only after defeating his country's Scandinavian enemy: the Swedes. Yet Alekseev is right to consider any direct historical parallels as overly simplistic and to note the affinity of "Alfred" to Gogol's other texts.[41]

One parallel that Alekseev does not consider involves the context of Russian-Ukrainian relations. The enslavement of free Saxon landowning peasants by the Saxon thanes prompts this alignment most strongly. Cuthred (the peasant) complains in the play that he joined Ethelbald (the thane) to help him fight the Danes, but Ethelbald took his land and enslaved him. For the Ukrainians, the extension and legalization of serfdom in Ukraine under Catherine II represented just such an illegal enslavement of a free people. It was a notable step toward annihilating Ukraine's original immunities as a separate domain within the Muscovite, then Russian, empire. Catherine's serfdom policy met with strong condemnation in Ukraine. The Ukrainian writer Vasily Kapnist penned in protest the famous "Ode on Slavery" ("Oda na rabstvo," 1783), which, considering the friendship between the Kapnist and Gogol families, Gogol would certainly have known.[42]

In fact, Cuthred's complaint may be read as the grievance of the entire Ukrainian nation, not just the peasants, against the Russians who cunningly "enslaved" them through the Pereiaslav agreement. According to the Ukrainian side, the agreement represented a military alliance made for the strategic purpose of defeating the common enemy (the Poles) and did not involve Ukraine's renunciation of its internal independence, which the tsar affirmed. Once the Polish enemy was subdued, however,

Muscovy began to take away Ukraine's freedoms. Cuthred's relations with Ethelbald closely resemble Ukraine's fate within the Russian empire:

> When the Danes got to Wessex and started pillaging, I ran to [Ethelbald], the swine. . . . I promised, if the occasion presents itself, to fight in his army, bring my horse and all my armaments. And he, the scoundrel, as soon as the Danes left, made me his slave. . . . And [when I was away], he took my own land, given to me by my father. . . . But am I, you old knave, your slave? I am free [*vol'nyi*]. I am a ceorl. . . . Under Anglo-Saxon law no one can offend and enslave a free man. (*PSS* 5, 180)

Like Cuthred, Ukraine joined Russia to fight the common enemy and was cheated out of its freedom in the process. A feeling of religious affinity led Ukrainians to form an alliance with the Orthodox Russians against the Polish Catholics, yet the Ukrainians were left in disastrous straits that were not meant to be a part of the bargain. Gogol's nameless ceorl captures a perfidious arrangement of this kind when speaking of the Saxon thanes: "And if some ceorl, in order to escape from this damned rule of foreign curs, submits to the patronage of a thane, thinking that if you are to pay your dues, it's better to pay them to your own kind than to foreigners—then that's even worse! They'll make such a slave out of you that not even a Briton knew such slavery" (*PSS* 5, 176).

The ceorls hope that King Alfred will restore their rights. However, the writ addressed to Alfred that lays out Cuthred's complaint gets ripped apart while the curious crowd passes it from hand to hand. The motif of a complaint that does not reach the sovereign is a familiar one in Gogol's fiction. He uses it twice in *Evenings on a Farm,* in "A Lost Letter" and "Christmas Eve," which further connects Cuthred's plot with the plight of Ukrainians. Gogol suggests that between the righteous Saxon folk and their king, as between the Ukrainians and their Russian imperial protector, something is terribly amiss. The power grid that connects them, due to the abuse and profiteering of various middlemen, became short-circuited. The exoneration of the tsar in this schema of corruption corroborates Vsevolod Setchkarev's point that the play was most likely intended as an apotheosis of monarchy.[43] However, it is possible that Gogol abandoned what he may have intended as a politically correct apotheosis at least in part because it was slipping out of his control in the direction of risky Ukrainian-Russian parallels that stood no chance of being staged.

Though Gogol praised King Alfred as a model enlightened monarch, his *Arabesques* sketch "Al-Mamun" shows that even the best-intentioned royal luminary may sometimes harm his nation while trying to improve it. The sketch develops the idea of ruler-driven enlightenment in ways that touch quite intimately on the question of autocracy's role in the Russian version of this process. The text is quite ostensibly a parable: the ninth-century Arabian context thinly veils the concerns of post-Petrine Russian culture. Most likely anticipating censorship problems, Gogol abandoned his original title "A Treatise on Governing" ("Traktat o pravlenii," *PSS* 8, 759) and decided to clothe his idea in history (the published sketch's subtitle reads "A Historical Characteristic"). Pushkin and Zhukovsky were in attendance when Gogol read the text as a lecture at Petersburg University.

Gogol begins his sketch on al-Mamun (786?–834) by contrasting him with his predecessor Harun ar-Rashid (766?–809). A ruler of a gigantic flourishing empire with the capital in Baghdad, Harun successfully balances his political, military, and administrative functions with the patronage of arts and sciences. He exercises moderation in importing foreign models, bringing them in "only insofar as it helped to develop [the nation's] own" (*PSS* 8, 76–77). Harun has solved the problem that Alfred begins to confront and that plagued the Ukrainian-Russian relations in Gogol's view: the perennial corruption of the intermediaries between the monarch and his or her people. Harun, Gogol writes, administered his domain expeditiously. He put fear in his deputies by personally conducting covert inspections.

To Harun's pragmatism and balance Gogol juxtaposes al-Mamun's idealism and an immoderate enthusiasm for knowledge, which he prizes "for itself, not thinking about its goal and application" (*PSS* 8, 77). Gogol's rejection of knowledge as a pure value, of scholasticism unsullied by practical concerns, may well serve as a motto to all of *Arabesques*' "scholarly" articles. In each, as I have tried to show, Gogol keeps his eye on the "goals and applications" that would be relevant to his contemporary audience. In al-Mamun's ill-guided, excessive enthusiasm, as fateful for him as various petty obsessions are for the characters of *Dead Souls,* he attempts to transform the "political state" he inherited from Harun into "the state of the Muses" (*PSS* 8, 77). In contrast to Harun's judicious borrowing from foreign cultures, al-Mamun encourages a wholesale importation of the Greek learning that he admired. This causes him to neglect the admin-

istration of the empire, which opens the way for abuses. The presence of artists and scholars in the empire's political machine both weakens al-Mamun's state and corrupts the arts and sciences themselves, which, according to Gogol, belong to a separate sphere from that of the state. (Here, in a qualification most likely meant for Pushkin's and Zhukovsky's consumption, Gogol grants an exception for great poet-geniuses, who are attuned to the nation's pulse and whose advice a wise ruler will seek [*PSS* 8, 78].) Despite al-Mamun's noble reasons, the foreign enlightenment that he forces upon his nation does not sit well with the Arabs' natural proclivities and characteristics. He misses the vital point concerning the relationship of foreign enlightenment and national culture, which Gogol offers as the moral of his parable: "[Al-Mamun] lost sight of the great truth that nations draw wisdom from within, that foreign enlightenment should be borrowed only to the extent that it can aid the native development, and that a nation's development can proceed only from its national origins" (*PSS* 8, 79).

Al-Mamun's misguided reforms result in the absolute disjunction between the ruler and his empire and offer a sad lesson: "He died, not having understood his nation and not having been understood by it. In any case, he gave an instructive lesson. He showed himself a ruler who, with all his desire for good . . . was unwittingly one of the mainsprings that hastened the demise of the state" (*PSS* 8, 81). The parable of an unwise, imbalanced ruler concludes in an admonition about the fall of an empire, linking this text with Gogol's treatment of the Roman Empire. Monarchs who do not understand their nations and disregard their natural tendencies lead to the crumbling of political units that are rooted in the nation. An immoderate infusion of foreign models disrupts the delicate, organic balance of the nation's core identity on which the empire's ultimate success or failure rests.

These lessons pertain directly to the cultural traumas suffered by Russia in consequence of Peter I's Westernizing reforms. Gogol's al-Mamun is a camouflaged Peter, who wrested Russia out of its native matrix and placed it on the road to modernization and secularization based on Western models. Enamored, like al-Mamun, with foreign cultures and sciences, Peter flooded Russia with their wares, bruising its national self and stunting its organic growth. The rule of both Peter and al-Mamun demonstrates the fatal effects of a disequilibrium between alien imports and national resources in a country's cultural economy. The article posits al-Mamun's zeal in meddling with his country's religion (the most vital

"glue" of a nation, in Gogol's view) as his most pernicious reform. This strengthens the parallel between al-Mamun and Peter, who, in his drive to secularize Russia and consolidate the power in the hands of the tsar, made drastic changes in the structure of the Church and its rôle in Russian life.[44]

Gogol himself seems to have stripped Peter of his al-Mamun disguise in his unpublished "Notebook for 1846–51," written during his work on the second volume of *Dead Souls*. Both texts blame an imbalance between alien and native culture on the ruler's action. This fragment, "An Overview of the Process of Enlightenment in Russia," is egregiously underquoted in Gogol scholarship, likely due to its grim view of Russian national identity. I will therefore quote it at length:

> Peter opened for Russians access to enlightened Europe, which was developed and had traditions of statehood. He did something useful: take what best they might have [and] . . . fill in the gaps. But the Russian people are immoderate . . . and went to an extreme. They greedily grabbed both what was needed and what was superfluous. Having fallen for various luxuries and innumerable trifles, they completely forgot that they are in their own land. Admiring the originality and strangeness of European life, [the Russian people] formed an idea to transplant it, as if it were possible to forget that Europe reached this development because it developed from its own sources. Russia [also] should have been developing from its own sources. . . . If a house is already built on a certain plan, one should not damage it. One may change the decorations and redo each corner in the European style, but to demolish the supporting walls of the entire structure—that's an absurdity. It's the same as to correct the work of God's hands. This is why that which is genuinely Russian in Russia barely budged despite almost a hundred years of ceaseless retouching, alterations, troubles, and hassle. In the sciences, arts, in the way of life, and most of all in the head of the Russian, a chaotic confusion took place. All attempts [to establish] institutions were becoming futile the further they went. This is why the more the Russian entered European life, the more he forgot his own land, and the less he could know what was appropriate for it. (*PSS* 7, 389; the roughness of the quote reflects the original)

The image of a society in this note corresponds quite closely to the one Gogol presents in "Al-Mamun." The fragment supports my reading of "Al-Mamun" as Gogol's call for the rethinking of Russia's relentless

Westernizing course to achieve a greater balance between "national elements" and "foreign enlightenment," an idea voiced earlier by Venevitinov and supported in Gogol's time by Uvarov. The eventual fall of al-Mamun's empire points to the urgency of dealing with the parallel crisis in the culture of the Russian empire. Needless to say, a turn inward would mean a turn toward Russia's indigenous roots, the "genuinely Russian," to use the term from "An Overview." Europeanized Russia has lost touch with its native essence, but *Arabesques*' image of Ukraine, the cradle of Slavdom in Gogol's view, continues the rhetoric of Herderian ethnic wholeness initiated by the *Dikanka* tales. While allusions to Russia in *Arabesques* focus on its political existence as an empire (for example, in its parallels to the Roman Empire) or on its denationalized cultural limbo (as in "Al-Mamun" or such stories as "Nevsky Prospect"), it is Gogol's articles on Ukraine that provide a tantalizing fresh breath of Slavness and cultural integrity.

The Origin of the Ukrainian Nation

Gogol's interest in Ukrainian history dates back to his Nizhyn years and his "Book of Odds and Ends," but he worked on it most intensively in his capacity as a scholar between 1833 and 1835. The projected four large or six small volumes never materialized, yet Gogol's scholarly efforts on the topic bore fruit in the form of fiction: the 1835 *Mirgorod* version of *Taras Bulba.* Gogol returned to the study of Ukrainian history in 1839 when drafting a tragedy from the history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks and reworking *Bulba* for the 1842 edition. Of all Gogol's scholarly historical interests and planned publications, the history of Ukraine is the most important and long-standing project, to which Gogol's correspondence attests most extensively and unequivocally (see note 23 to this chapter). It is a matter of scholarly controversy that I will not attempt to resolve (hinging on how much Gogol's words can be trusted) whether any part of this work ever came into existence. However, the epistolary evidence and extant fragments, not to mention Gogol's historical fiction, prove beyond any doubt that Gogol devoted considerable energy toward reading the available literature and compiling materials.[45] In 1834 Gogol announced the imminent publication of his "History of Little Russia" in three journals, asking all those in possession of relevant sources to allow him access to them. Whether or not a draft of this book or some portion

thereof actually existed, these announcements attest to the seriousness of this project for Gogol.

Gogol's view of the history of Ukraine exhibits a tension with the official Russian historiography on this topic. As noted in Chapter 1, the Russian imperial discourse included Ukrainian history within Russian history through the notion of the continuity of the Kievan and Muscovite states. For Karamzin, Russian history began on the territory roughly corresponding to modern Ukraine and then "moved" to Russia. According to Stephen Velychenko's helpful summary, Russian historians viewed pre-Kievan and Kievan periods as the cornerstone of Russian history, which led them to focus on events in present-day Ukrainian lands through the thirteenth century. The fourteenth through the nineteenth centuries received little attention, Velychenko writes, "for in that period the Dnepr region was no longer 'the center' of the 'Russian historical process.' "[46]

Gogol also worked in the context of Ukrainian historiography. The Ukrainian *History of the Rusians (Istoriia Rusov),* which was written by an unknown author and circulated in manuscript copies from the 1820s until it was published in 1846, sought to challenge the imperial "grand narrative." It depicted Ukraine as an independent player in the international arena, stressed its heroic military past, and argued that Ukraine deserved autonomy within the Russian empire. Dmytro Bantysh-Kamensky's *History of Little Russia* (*Istoriia Maloi Rossii,* 1822, 2nd ed. 1830), by contrast, took the loyalist stance and eschewed any critiques of Russian centralism. Bantysh-Kamensky followed a Karamzinian formula of rulers' history and a focus on political events. Gogol knew both works and used them in his historical fiction.[47]

After the Polish revolt of 1831, which placed restitutionist claims on Ukrainian territory, the government felt obliged to refute them by sponsoring the study of Ukrainian history, yet of a particular kind. Historical research, as directed by Uvarov, was to show that "lands once ruled by Poland were in fact 'Russian from time immemorial.' "[48] As Velychenko notes, Uvarov proposed to prove the unity of the entire "Russian" land by evoking its cultural, linguistic, and ethnic integrity. Cases like Polevoi's, who lambasted the typical insistence of Russian historians to see Ukraine as culturally and historically consubstantial with Russia, were extremely rare.[49] The Polish revolt of 1831 marked a radical shift, as Velychenko writes, from "limited tolerance of a 'loyalist' national development toward an early form of centralist Russian nationalism, the Official Nationality

policy." Velychenko quotes the minister of the interior's instruction to the governor of Kiev about a Ukrainian newspaper: "[it] must avoid anything which might awaken sympathy for old Poland and Lithuania, or a wish to restore the old order, and on the contrary they should demonstrate how this area was . . . the second cradle of the Russian monarchy." The censorship also opposed the glorification of the Cossacks, fearing a rise in political separatism and social unrest. All in all, the political climate of the era encouraged the study of Ukrainian history, but in conformance to the Russian perspective, which Velychenko elaborates in the following way:

> Russians tended to see Ukraine and its past in a nostalgic, indulgent, and patronizing light, and the government saw no reason Ukrainian history should not be studied as part of the "all-Russian fatherland" that had returned to Moscow's fold after centuries of oppression. This image, though promulgated in general histories of Russia, had its major root in eighteenth-century "loyalist" Cossacks chronicles that presented Ukrainian history as a great but quaint prelude to an even more glorious present and future under the rational rule of the tsars. "Little Russian" history was thereby safely frozen in the past and not invoked as a model worthy of emulation in the present.[50]

Gogol was doubtless aware of the official Russian view of Ukrainian history and of the strictures of censorship, which were relatively lenient within the walls of academe but more stringent with regard to published and widely disseminated materials. These factors constitute a crucial context for understanding the radical and loyalist aspects of Gogol's published and unpublished materials concerning Ukrainian history.

Both these aspects are embedded already in Gogol's journal announcements of his forthcoming publication on Little Russian history. In January 1834, he published the first version of this announcement, titled "About the Publication of a History of Little Russian Cossacks," in Bulgarin's *The Northern Bee:*

> We still do not have a full and satisfactory history of Little Russia, the people [*narod*] that functioned for four centuries separately from Great Russia. I do not call "history" the many compilations put together from various chronicles (however useful as materials) that lack severe critical analysis and a general plan and goal, that are mostly incomplete and have not shown a place of this people in world history.
>
> I decided to take this work upon myself and to present in my history how this part of Russia separated; what political form it took under foreign rule; how this warlike nation, the Cossacks, developed—Europe's bulwark against Mohammedan conquerors—marked by a complete originality of character and exploits; how for three centuries [the Cossack nation], arms in hand, defended its rights and stood up for its religion and finally united with Russia forever; how its military life imperceptibly disappeared and changed into an agricultural one; how slowly the entire country received new rights instead of the old ones and finally completely united in one body with Russia.[51]

The bold and radical aspects of the *Northern Bee* version of the announcement include Gogol's emphasis on Ukraine's separateness from Russia; the idea that Ukrainian history is an independent tributary of world history, unmediated by its "belonging" to Russian history (a distinction afforded in universal histories only to *nations*); that in the period of its separate existence Ukraine developed a *political* organization; that it possessed certain "rights" that it subsequently lost; that Ukrainian Cossacks saved Europe from the Ottomans (a glory commonly claimed for Russia in Russian history); and that the Cossacks formed a nation possessed of "complete originality."

A number of these assertions disappear in further printings of the announcement, which appeared in Polevoi's *The Moscow Telegraph* and Nadezhdin's *Rumor* (*PSS* 9, 591–592, 76–77). The choice of the *Rumor* version as the "canonical" text is an example of a questionable editorial decision on the part of the scholars who put together Gogol's collected works. Usually quite intent on recovering the fullest Gogolian text, least compromised by censorship's tampering, in this case the *PSS* editors selected the most trimmed and censored version of the announcement. This is why I chose to resurrect the *Northern Bee* text. Since Gogol's manuscript did not survive, it is unclear whether he himself modified it to suit the various journals, whether the journals' publishers took license with Gogol's submission, or whether the objectionable phrases from the *Northern Bee* version (hereafter *NB*) caused subsequent censors to demand revisions and cuts (for each of the three publications, the announcement had separate censorship evaluations). Most likely, the cen-

sorship was responsible for at least some of these changes, all of which tend to blunt the boldness of the original announcement.

In *The Moscow Telegraph* and *Rumor* (hereafter *MT* and *R*, respectively), Gogol announces his work by the new and broader title "History of Little Russia" (not just "of the Little Russian Cossacks"). This title is more accurate, given the projected work's chronological span of the mid-thirteenth to the late eighteenth century, which can be inferred from the announcement (from the Tatar invasion to the abolition of the Cossack Hetmanate). More significantly, Gogol changes Ukraine's "separate" *(otdel'no)* existence from Russia, which implies a stark disjunction, to a gentler term "independent" *(nazavisimo)*. While the *NB* text differentiates between Little Russia and Great Russia, the *MT* and *R* versions replace the latter with just "Russia," which transforms the former, more equipolent formulation into one that pits the one all-inclusive Russia against its "subset," Little Russia. The idea of the Cossacks saving Europe from the Ottomans disappears from both later announcements. The notion of Ukraine's political organization in the period of its independence is absent in the last, *R* text. If eliminating such notions was indeed the censor's contribution, then Gogol would have carried from this experience a good lesson about the censorship's attitudes as to the preferred picture of Ukrainian history, one that stood a chance of being published. It seems plausible that one reason why Gogol stopped his work on this project, besides his seeming incapacity for a sustained scholarly effort and the Kiev job fiasco, was an anticipation that it would never be published in the form he devised for it. Self-censorship stopped Gogol from continuing other works, and it likely had something to do with his unfinished history of Ukraine.[52]

Like Rudy Panko's wife, however, whose pastry averts a confrontation between Panko's guests, Gogol also delivers some "blushings and sweetenings" in his announcement that strike a note of pleasing harmony with the official Russian view of Ukrainian history. The very paradigm of Ukraine's union, separation, and eventual reunion with Russia conforms to the writ-in-stone pattern of official Russian historiography. Similar to the obligatory invocations of Marxism-Leninism in twentieth-century Russian scholarship, the reference to Ukraine by the metonymic designation "that part of Russia" marks Gogol's (token) tribute to the idea of Ukraine's essential Russianness.[53] The closer Gogol's historical outline gets to contemporary times, the more innocuous do the fierce Cossacks be-

come (their transformation from military to agricultural lifestyle). The present times are shown as blessed with new laws that replaced the old ones and with Ukraine's complete unity with Russia. Gogol, resembling the Cossacks in *Dikanka*'s "Christmas Eve" in their prostration before the Russian empress, insists in the *NB* announcement with equal emphasis and redundance that Ukraine became "united completely with Russia in one body" *(sovershenno slilas' v odno telo)*. The subsequent versions gradually trim the zealous excess: *MT* features "completely united into one," and the *R* version states simply "completely united."

The announcements thus assure that Gogol's history of Ukraine will be "safely frozen," to use Velychenko's phrase, in the past, its present being synonymous with Russia, while at the same time they indicate the fairly risky directions of Gogol's historical thinking about Ukraine. They walk a fine line between the official Russian and the nationalist Ukrainian views of Ukrainian history. As such, they anticipate this section's centerpiece to which we now shall turn, "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," which Gogol bills in a footnote to its *Arabesques* publication as a discarded draft of an introduction to his "History of Little Russia."

Like "On the Middle Ages," "A Glance" attempts to encapsulate the entirety of Gogol's project and mark its highlights and key ideas, using a captivating style that grips the audience's imagination. The article features a tension with the official Russian dogma and the censorship surrounding the topic of Ukrainian history, all the while pledging conformance to their guidelines and attempting to placate any potential allegations of political incorrectness. That Gogol would feel compelled to articulate such "cover" seems understandable, given that the article had originally appeared in the main organ of Official Nationality, Uvarov's *Journal of the Ministry of National Education*. As Gogol knew from his previous dealings with the *Journal*, its editors/censors, including—especially in this first crucial year of its existence—the minister himself, scrutinized the submissions and demanded changes that most likely included matters of conformance to official doctrines (*PSS* 10, 294–296).

As in the announcements, Gogol makes sure in the very first sentence that the first date that jumps at the reader of "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" is the thirteenth century. He does nevertheless venture into prior times in the article, though he avoids mentioning dates on these occasions. Gogol treads gingerly in this article—in stark contrast to his notes, as the next section will show—around the Kievan period, which

according to official historiography belonged to "Russian," not "Little Russian," history. To start a narrative of Little Russian history from the thirteenth century was "safe," since even the official Russian historiographer, Karamzin, relinquished this area from any particular significance to Russian history after the mid-thirteenth century.[54]

Further establishing his conformance to the official unity-separation-reunion schema of Ukrainian-Russian relations, Gogol posits in the article's first line "Russia" *(Rossiia)* as the original historical entity from which his Little Russia will in time branch out. However, upon a closer glance this conformance appears rather superficial. Though Gogol couches the unity of ancient Rus in terms of the cultural nationalism that Uvarov recommended, he also undermines it by discussing the tribes' perennial fragmentation and *dis*unity: "Hundreds of tiny states sharing the same religion, ethnicity, and language, marked by the same common character, and united, it seems, by kinship as if against their will—all these tiny states were disconnected to an extent that is rare among peoples of different characters" (*PSS* 8, 40). The complete separation of the tribes of Rus, which exceeded that of entirely unrelated peoples, diminishes the significance of their purported cultural synonymy. The notion of a union of kins "against their will" in an article on Little Russia published in a Russian governmental journal strikes one as a rather cavalier innuendo on Gogol's part. It seems a perilous excursion beyond the official discourse of Russian-Ukrainian relatedness and brotherly love.

Despite the initial pitch of the thirteenth century as his history's starting point, Gogol proceeds to discuss the internecine strife of Kievan appanage princes that goes back to the eleventh century (*PSS* 8, 40). He claims that it destroyed the national identity of the "Russian" tribes that was only budding under Norman rulers and regrets the absence of religion among them, that most powerful nationalizing factor. Gogol claims that early Rusian monasticism did not favor nation building, by which he comes dangerously close to the assertion that got Chaadaev in trouble, about the disadvantages of Orthodoxy for Russia. Gogol quickly neutralizes this perilous line of thought by chastising the "autocratic" pope who, unlike the meek Rusian monks, usurped political power and "bound all Europe with his religious power as with an invisible spider web" (*PSS* 8, 41). In order to cast the pope in a sinister light, Gogol revises his treatment of papal power from "On the Middle Ages," where he argued that it played a constructive role in building modern European nations.

Gogol's picture of the struggles between these supposedly fraternal tribes creates a grim image of a truly savage and soulless people:

> These were struggles between relatives, between brothers, between fathers and children. Neither hate nor a powerful passion inflated them. No! Brother slaughtered brother for a plot of land, or just to show heroism. A terrible example for the people! Kinship collapsed because the inhabitants of two neighboring principalities, kinsmen, were ready any moment to rise against each other with the fierceness of a wolf. . . . [W]ho was friend today tomorrow would become foe. The people took on cold-blooded brutality, because they killed without knowing why. . . . [I]t seems that all powerful, noble human passions died within them, and even if there appeared a genius wishing to achieve great things with this people, he would not have found a single string with which to grab and shake its insensate body, excepting only brute physical force. History then froze, it seems, and became geography: a monotonous life, stirring in parts but motionless in the whole, was [reduced to] the geographical possession of a country [*zhizn' . . . mogla pochest'sia geograficheskoiu prinadlezhnost'iu strany*]. (*PSS* 8, 41)

Graciously abstaining from any claims on the Kievan period, Gogol "returns" it to Russian history in not the most flattering of forms. Instead of a vibrant and noble people, the glorious founding stock of a future great nation, early "Russians" emerge as backstabbing brutes, not quite human. The "kinship," announced in the opening sentences, becomes here explicitly deconstructed, yielding to metaphors of fragmentation and enmity. The "freezing" of history, officially recommended for dealing with Ukrainian history, as Velychenko has noted, here affects the origins of the Russian nation, destroying its fragile national stirrings like frost that kills an early crop. The Russian people becomes ahistorical, its history petrifying into geography, a mere space bereft of active stirrings of life. This association reverberates with Gogol's fictional work. While Gogol's Ukraine represents a historical and ethnic domain, his portrayal of Russia is limited to purely spatial discourse. The key images in *Dead Souls,* for example, will show Russia as a space, an immeasurable expanse traversed by rushing carriages, rather than a historic entity.

Section II of "A Glance" describes the momentous event that shook this congealed history of ancient "Russia." The steppes of Middle Asia released the Tatar hordes that plunged Russia into two centuries of

slavery. The Tatars represent the vitality and vigor that the passionless Russian tribes they overrun, mired in their purely spatial, inactive existence, eminently lack. Gogol argues that the greatest consequence of the Tatar yoke was the beginning of "a new Slavic generation in southern Russia, whose entire life was battle" and whose history Gogol proposes to portray (*PSS* 8, 42). This new Slavic generation was the Ukrainians.

In accounting for what happened to the population of the southern lands of "Russia" in the aftermath of the Tatar invasion, Gogol's printed text, especially if juxtaposed with his manuscript, becomes problematic. As Zenon Kohut notes, the imperial schema of locating the origins of Russia in medieval Kiev and then "moving" it to Muscovy could not but pose problems for explaining the existence of Ukrainians.[55] Attempting to maintain this schema in the article, Gogol naturally encountered this pitfall. He dealt with it in a creative but also haphazard and contradictory manner that may be a likely residue of the article's passage through censorship.

Many sources, including Karamzin and Bantysh, mention depopulation of Kievan lands as a result of the Tatar invasion and the refuge of many princes in other lands. Much later, in 1856, Gogol's former friend Mikhail Pogodin went further by proposing that in the aftermath of the Tatar invasion the original inhabitants of the Kievan lands, who were really Great Russians, migrated massively to the northeast, the new center of Russian history. Starting in the fourteenth century, immigrants from the Carpathian Mountains and Galicia repopulated this deserted land and formed the ethnic basis of the future Ukrainians. This migration theory, which gained great popularity among Russian intellectuals and was debunked by Ukrainian scholars, offered Russians a firmer hold on the Kievan heritage while effectively denying the Ukrainians' claim to it. It appears, however, that Gogol in some ways paved the way for Pogodin's theory, being to my knowledge the first to postulate major population shifts in the region, though on a quite different pattern than Pogodin. My aim here, nonetheless, is not to prove that the germ of Pogodin's famous idea came from Gogol, though it is possible. Rather, it is to explain the migration theory's ramifications for the discourses of official Russian historiography and Ukrainian nationalism that Gogol navigates in his article.[56]

For a Romantic historian writing a history of a people rather than

dynasties or ideas (such as statehood), some population transfer was logically necessary in order to maintain a conceptual link between Kievan and Muscovite history. Disembodied ideas could not move; people had to move. Yet Gogol at the same time attempts to outline a national Ukrainian narrative, so the coincidence of these two projects leads him to certain contradictions. He initially states in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" that after the Tatar invasion "frightened inhabitants ran away either to Poland or to Lithuania; many boyars and princes moved to northern Russia" (*PSS* 8, 42). The mention of the higher classes moving north to Muscovy appears after a semicolon, like an insertion to an already written text, and indeed it is absent in the manuscript (*PSS* 8, 592, variant to p. 42, line 17). Incidentally, the "unofficial" view of *History of the Rusians,* one of Gogol's principal sources, mentions nothing about any migration to northern Russian principalities—or Poland, for that matter. By inserting the notion of the northward migration, Gogol pays homage to the Karamzinian line that stressed the dynastic continuity of Kiev and Muscovy.

Having exported the crème de la crème of Kievan society basically to Russia "proper" (lower classes presumably dispersed to Poland and Lithuania), Gogol presents this great migration in a manner that would cause no proud Ukrainian regret that it may have taken place. Apparently reconciled with the necessity to regard these original inhabitants as proto-Russians, Gogol goes further to assert that the post-Tatar northbound migration of the ruling classes was in fact preceded by a more massive earlier wave. A large part of the population left, Gogol writes, sensing their incompatibility with the mighty and glorious landscape that surrounded them. Like all the mentions of the northward destination of original Kievans, this passage is absent from the manuscript:

> The people, as if sensing their insignificance, were leaving these places where the variegated nature became creative, where it scattered steppes, beautiful, free, with an innumerable multitude of grass, in height almost gigantic, where it frequently tipped over hills, clothed in wild cherry trees, or loosened a flowery groove, sprinkled stupendous views over all winding ribbons of rivers, stretched . . . the Dnepr with its insatiable rapids, its grandiose mountainous banks and immeasurable meadows, and warmed it all up with the mild breath of the south. They were leaving these places and crowding in that part of Russia, where the

> monotonously plain and even locality, almost everywhere swampy, pierced all over with sorrowful firs and pines, was demonstrating not a living life, filled with movement, but some sort of chilliness, staggering to the soul of a thinking person. As if this confirmed the rule that only a people powerful in life and character seeks such mighty localities, or that only brave and astounding localities develop a brave, passionate people with a character. (*PSS* 8, 42)

The southern Ukrainian locality recalls Gogol's nationalized landscapes from the *Dikanka* tales, exuding the freedom, beauty, and mighty grandeur that characterize the Ukrainian people. The northern locality, by contrast, anticipates the dreary landscapes of the Russia presented in *Dead Souls*. This geographical contrast serves to differentiate the Ukrainian and Russian nations. Since history writing featured too many hot buttons, Gogol resorted to geography to make his point. He goes so far as to affirm explicitly in the final sentence the connection between geographical place and the quality of a nation inhabiting it. According to Gogol's "rule" of a contiguity of nation and location, the power, vivaciousness, and passion that he associates with the Ukrainian land and nature are shared by its people. The pathetic, sorrowful, dull, and deadened north, by contrast, nourished a people of a character corresponding to these less glorious attributes. In short, while he exports northward Kievan grandees and then the population at large in order to assert a continuity of Kievan-Muscovite history, Gogol transforms this putative historical event into praise for Ukraine and criticism of Russia.

The next segment (IV) also differs substantially from the manuscript text. The manuscript reads:

> When the initial fear passed, then slowly the immigrants from Lithuania and Russia began settling in this land. This new population was peculiar. It did not constitute one nation. There were Lithuanians, and Poles, and Russians, even Tatars. A common fear against a Tatar attack caused them to unite almost against their will and even adopt one faith. Finally, Kiev filled with inhabitants. (*PSS* 8, 593)

The published article replaced this passage with the following:

> When the initial fear passed, then slowly the immigrants from Poland, Lithuania, and Russia began settling in this land, the true fatherland of the Slavs, the land of the ancient Poliane, Severiane, the pure Slavic tribes which in Great Russia began already mixing with the Finnish peoples, while here they remained in the former wholeness, with all their pagan beliefs, childish superstitions, songs, fairy tales, all the Slavic mythology that was getting mixed so artlessly with Christianity. The returning former inhabitants also brought in their wake immigrants from other lands, with whom they remained connected due to a prolonged contact. The population formed fearfully and timidly since the terrible nomadic people were not behind mountains: the two were separated—or, better said, united—by the steppes alone. Despite the population's motley nature, there were no such internecine struggles of the type still taking place in the depth of Russia: surrounding danger gave no opportunity to engage in them. (*PSS* 8, 43)

Since Gogol incorporated the migration theory only later and failed to revise the article thoroughly enough to bring his other ideas in accordance with it, this produced certain contradictions and unclear passages in the published text. The printed text initially identifies the population that comes to fill the supposedly vacated Ukraine as "immigrants from Poland, Lithuania, and Russia." A few lines below, however, Gogol rephrases this formulation and identifies the incomers as "former inhabitants" who had earlier migrated out of Ukraine and who returned and brought *with them* the immigrants from their host countries. While the manuscript version presents the Ukrainian nation as a melding of foreign immigrants, the published version bases it on the native stock (the "former inhabitants") that was infused with foreign admixtures (the "immigrants"). Furthermore, in a stark contradiction to the inserted migration theory and in conformance with the claim of *History of the Rusians* that the native people remained, Gogol simultaneously asserts that, far from filling a vacuum, the repatriants and migrants arrive in a territory inhabited by a native ethnos with a vibrant folk culture that has retained its "former wholeness." This raises the question of just who migrated out of Ukrainian lands either before or after the Tatar invasion and how significant this migration could have been if the remaining native people even managed to flourish. Also, if the former migrants returned, one wonders who remained in Muscovy to perpetuate the continuity of Kievan-Muscovite-Russian history. At any rate, the theory itself as well as Gogol's handling of it are rife with problems and contradictions, which supports

the idea that the theory was inserted into a text that was not quite compatible with it.

Gogol stresses the continuity and ethnic purity of the Ukrainian people and presents their land as the cradle of Slavdom. He claims that Russians, by contrast, corrupted their stock by admixtures of Finnish blood. The discourse of ethnic purity is missing from the manuscript and seems added by Gogol in the process of working in the migration theory. In order to argue this idea in the printed text, Gogol expunges the manuscript's mention of the Tatars from his list of ethnicities that migrated to Ukraine. Gogol the historian knew that Tatars participated in forming the Cossack nation, yet Gogol the Ukrainian nationalist felt compelled to exclude this information so as to present Ukrainians as ethnically pure Slavs (which Russians, he claimed, were not). To mention only the newcomers from Poland, Russia, and Lithuania (the bulk of which covered a Belorussian territory) meant to restrict the admixtures to Ukraine's pure ethnos to basically other Slavs. In this Slavocentric schema, Russia's ethnic admixtures from the non-Slavic Finns render it more "impure." Incidentally, when later in the article Gogol revisits the topic of the Cossacks' ethnic makeup, he reinserts—or forgets to eliminate—the Tatars and the mountaineers of the Caucasus, apparently forgetting his earlier assertion of the Ukrainians' ethnic purity as Slavs (*PSS* 8, 47).

In the article Gogol completely revises Karamzin's presentation of internecine feuds. The official historiographer attached this stigma to the southern Kievan lands, almost as a curse of the locality that continued to plague it for centuries. According to him, Russian history was cursed by feuds when it was centered in Kiev, but once it moved north, times of peace and quiet began to rule (*IGR* 2, 169–170; *IGR* 3, 28). Gogol in turn contrasts the continued infighting in Russian principalities with the communal cooperation in Ukraine. In opposition to Karamzin, he attaches the stigma of internecine strife to the historic entity of the ancient, "united Russia" whose princes took it with them northward, and *not* to the sociogeographic entity of the Kievan land and its people.

Apart from the origin of Ukrainians and the migration theory, another controversial issue that Gogol confronts in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" is Ukraine's historic relation to the Duchy of Lithuania. This question struck at the core of who had a legal and historic right to Ukraine. Polish chroniclers and historians alleged Poland's right to Ukraine by a variety of arguments concerning conquest, dynastic succession, union agreements, and ethnic similarity. Russian historiography based its claims on the notion of the primordial unity of all Rus, the continuity of Kievan and Muscovite states, and later also invoked ethnic and cultural factors.[57] Sixteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian historian Maciej Stryjkowski argued that the 1320 conquest of Kiev by the Lithuanian prince Gediminas gave the Duchy of Lithuania rightful claims to Ukraine.[58] Though Karamzin does not openly confront Stryjkowski's argument about the Duchy's right to Ukraine (probably in order to avoid propagating such ideas), he attempts to undermine Stryjkowski's credibility as a historian, arguing with some of his facts and dates. He calls the work "Stryjkowski's questionable narrative" and finds his assertions "false"; Bantysh-Kamensky, Ukraine's "official" historian, echoes Karamzin in this.[59] Both quote Stryjkowski on other occasions as a reliable historical source.

Gogol knew Stryjkowski's chronicle and, disregarding Karamzin's criticisms, based section V of his "Glance" on Stryjkowski's "questionable narrative" (in addition to taking some details from Karamzin).[60] The section describes the incorporation of Ukraine into the Duchy of Lithuania that resulted in a complete separation of southern Rus from the northern one and the formation in the south of a separate and original "state" (*gosudarstvo; PSS* 8, 44–45). Gogol paints Gediminas and the Lithuanian nation in the laudatory, heroic style that clearly goes back to—indeed, augments—Stryjkowski's rhetoric. While Russia languished in "inactivity and stupor" under the Tatars, "the great pagan Gediminas," Gogol writes, "brought to the stage of history a new nation": poor pagan forest dwellers dressed in animal hides (they resemble Gogol's other valiant pagan conquerors, the Normans in "Alfred"). Gediminas managed to take hold of "the entire space between Poland and Tatar Russia," including the Kievan land (*PSS* 8, 43–44).

Gediminas emerges in Gogol's description as a wise politician and a historical giant:

> And so, a Lithuanian conqueror grabbed from the Tatars the land, as if right in front of their eyes! One would expect this would spark a war between the two peoples, but Gediminas was a man of strong mind; he was a politician, despite his apparent savageness and the insignificance of his time. He knew how to preserve friendship with the Tatars while ruling the lands that he took away from them and not paying any

> tribute. This savage politician, illiterate and bowing to a pagan god, did not change the customs and the traditional rule of a single of the subjugated peoples; he left everything the way it was, confirmed all privileges, and firmly ordered his notables to respect popular laws; he never left a path of destruction behind him. The complete insignificance of the peoples surrounding him and even of historical figures lends him a certain gigantic stature. (*PSS* 8, 44)

In this glowing assessment, Gogol appreciates Gediminas's ability to wrest land and influence from a powerful neighbor, all the while keeping him appeased. (In an unfinished sketch about Mazepa, which I will discuss below, Gogol paints the Ukrainian hetman as a similar strategic genius who confronts the tricky task of outmaneuvering Russia.) Gogol places particular stress on Gediminas's treatment of the conquered peoples, his noninterference in local matters, and respect for traditional customs, rights, and privileges.

Of course, Russia's treatment of Ukraine proceeded in the opposite direction. Gogol's mention of Gediminas's paganism, despite which he was capable of such magnanimity, seems a veiled chastisement of Russia: though it shared the Christian religion with Ukraine, Russia did not muster as much tolerance as the Lithuanian "savage." In order to encourage the comparison with Ukraine's recent history within the Russian empire, Gogol changes in the section's conclusion the manuscript's "conquered peoples" *(pobezhdennye narody)* to "united" or "conjoined peoples" *(prisoedinennye narody)*. Since discussing Russo-Ukrainian relations in terms of conquest was forbidden, but the metaphors of "joining" and "reuniting" were promulgated, the second term would have reverberated with the imperial discourse of Ukraine.

Echoing in tone and angle Stryjkowski's maligned chronicle, Gogol's image of Gediminas diverges significantly from Karamzin's. While including Gediminas among great historical figures, Karamzin strains to belittle him personally, the significance of his achievements, and the nation he led. On the pages of *History of the Russian State,* Lithuanians emerge as "bandits," "fierce beasts," and plunderers and Gediminas as a "perfidious deceiver" (*IGR* 3, 40, 118, 121; *IGR* 4, 131). Karamzin scorns Lithuanians as "a people that was poor and savage," and owed their military know-how and statecraft to the Russians and the Germans (*IGR* 4, 127). Far from a savvy politician, as Gogol saw him, Gediminas appears to Karamzin merely "sly" in his ability to gain the Tatars' friendship.[61]

The significance of Gediminas's conquest of Kiev carried vital implications for Ukrainian history. Stryjkowski used it to deny Poland's separate claims to Ukraine and emphasize the primary "belonging" of Kievan lands to the Grand Duchy. Karamzin offered a woeful jeremiad: "In this way our fatherland lost, and for a long time, its ancient capital, the place of glorious memories, where it [our fatherland—E. B.] grew in grandeur under Oleg's shield, found the true God thanks to St. Vladimir, adopted laws from Iaroslav the Great and the arts from the Greeks!" (*IGR* 4, 129). While Karamzin bemoaned Russia's loss of the city, not the region of Ukraine, Bantysh-Kamensky reappraised the event as fateful for Ukraine as a whole, saying that Gediminas earned a place in its history "if not as a conqueror of this country, then as the main culprit of its subsequent tearing away from Russia."[62]

Gogol in "A Glance" interpreted Gediminas's action in the following way:

> And southern Russia [*Rossiia*], under the mighty protection of the Lithuanian princes, separated completely from the northern one. All ties between them broke; there emerged two states that have called themselves by the same name—Rus. One was under the Tatar yoke; the other under the same scepter with the Lithuanians. But no relations between them existed. Different laws, different customs, different goals, different connections, different exploits composed for the time being two completely different characters. How it took place is the goal of our history. (*PSS* 8, 44–45)

Thus Gediminas's conquest provides a spark for the emergence of Gogol's Ukraine. Gogol stresses the complete disjunction between northern and southern Rus and a protracted lack of any ties—an idea that is vindicated by modern scholarship.[63] Significantly, he discusses the entity that emerged in the south as a *state,* which certainly collided with accepted notions of tsarist historiography. By stressing that the common name, Rus, was used by completely separate cultural and political domains, Gogol argues with a popular belief that equated this onomastic synonymy with a national one. Gogol also subtly contrasts the Tatar "yoke," under which the Russians languished, with the Lithuanian "scepter," under which Ukraine enjoyed its national awakening. This passage indicates that Gogol was planning to write a proud history of a nation, and not a part of Russia, though in conformance with the union-separation-reunion

schema necessitated by the exigencies of current politics, he had to affirm that the life span of this separate national organism was short.

The topic of Lithuania also involved the sensitive problem of Ukraine's history within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The obvious implication of Ukraine's union with Lithuania was its subsequent incorporation, as part of the Grand Duchy, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Gogol's article assiduously avoids referring to it but for the mention of Jogaila's name (Jogaila was a Lithuanian grand prince whose marriage led to a dynastic union between Poland and Lithuania). Gogol's published article makes no mention of Ukraine functioning at any time or in any form as part of Poland. He did discuss it, however, in his manuscript draft by mentioning Jogaila's marriage to the Polish queen and his delivery to the Polish crown of his extensive Rusian and Lithuanian possessions. "This way," Gogol wrote, "Lithuania, southern Russia, and Poland, united together" (*PSS* 8, 600). Gogol's silence about this stage of Ukrainian history in the published version makes sense in the post-1831 anti-Polish climate and the tsarist government's anxiety about the Polish influence in the area. Either this political pressure, his own Ukrainian nationalism, or both seem to have made Gogol relegate Ukraine's ties to Poland to the dustbin of his Little Russian history.

Following the Herderian dictum of national and natural congruence, Gogol enlists the help of geography in explaining the Ukrainian nation's history. He claims that the lack of natural borders had enormous repercussions for Ukraine's political existence: "Were there but one real border made of mountains or sea, the people that settled here would have retained its political being and would have formed a separate state. But this defenseless, open land was the land of devastation and raids, a place where three warring nations collided, made fertile with bones and blood" (*PSS* 8, 46). Ukraine's loss of "political being," Gogol suggests, resulted from its vulnerability to attack against which no natural defenses existed. The neighboring three nations, which in light of the preceding context appear to be Russians, Poles, and Tatars, made Ukraine a theater of their wars (here Gogol's published text is tamer than his manuscript, which labels these neighbors, including Russia, as "enemies"; *PSS* 8, 595, note to p. 46, line 2). Interestingly, having called Ukraine just a page earlier a "state," Gogol here asserts that though Ukraine had a political existence, it did not form a state. It is likely that Gogol did not form an unequivocal view of this complex matter and on various occasions came down on different points of the political-statist spectrum.

This perilous location, however, formed a brave and sturdy nation that amazed Europe:

> This was a land of fear, and therefore only a warlike people, strong in its unity, could develop here, a desperate people whose entire life would be fostered by war. And the immigrants, free [*vol'nye*] and unfree, the homeless, those who had nothing to lose, who treated their life as if it were worth a kopeck, whose exuberant will could not stand laws and authority, who were threatened everywhere by the gallows, settled and chose the most dangerous place, in full view of the Asian conquerors, the Tatars and the Turks. This crowd, having grown and multiplied, composed a whole people that imposed its character and, so to speak, coloring on the entire Ukraine, and achieved a miracle: it transformed the peaceful Slavic generations into warlike ones. This people, known by the name of the Cossacks, represented one of the most extraordinary phenomena of European history that was perhaps alone responsible for arresting the devastating spread of the two Mohammedan peoples threatening to devour Europe. (*PSS* 8, 46)

This passage recasts once again the exact process of the making of Little Russia. Gogol neglects to insert here the migration theory that he incorporated ex post facto in earlier passages. He makes no mention of any returning "former inhabitants" but bases his genealogy of the Ukrainian nation on the native Slavic population that was transformed by a wave of immigrants, the fearless and freedom-loving outlaws. During Ukraine's separation from Russia, this population, shaped by the dangers of its geopolitical position, produced a famous nation. Attempting to fit this Cossack-Ukrainian nation in European history, Gogol appropriates the traditional claim of Russian history by claiming that the Cossacks defended Europe from Islamic invaders. He thus recovers an assertion that appeared in the *Northern Bee* announcement of his history and that disappeared from the two subsequent ones. He claims that Ukrainians were unique among Slavic nations by developing a warlike disposition.

The published article and its manuscript version feature an interesting interplay of terms "a people" (a frequent meaning of *narod,* which in many contexts can also denote "a nation") and "a nation" (*natsiia,* an unambiguous term with stronger political connotations). The manuscript version uses the stronger term "nation" *(natsiia)* and its derivative only twice, exclusively in reference to the Ukrainians, while calling *all* non-Ukrainians "peoples" *(narody).* In one instance, Gogol's manuscript adds

for emphasis that the waves of immigrants eventually gave rise in Ukraine to a people and a nation (*narod i natsiiu; PSS* 8, 596, note to p. 46, l.23). The published version reverses this tendency. It preserves only one reference to the Ukrainians' "nationality" (*natsional'nost'; PSS* 8, 48), while twice labeling Ukraine's neighbors (which include Russia) as nations (*natsii*), where the manuscript has called them simply peoples (*narody, liudi; PSS* 8, 596, notes to p. 46, l.10, and p. 47 l.12). Such word choices were in fact loaded ideological choices, on which the official imperial discourse had a preponderant bearing. Whether prompted to make these revisions by the officials of the Ministry of National Education or his own self-censorship, Gogol had to work around such constraints in order to publish his work. In spite of this reversal of terminology, however, he manages to endow his Ukrainian "people" with all the classic features of a nation, a notion that he explicitly affirms through his use of the term *natsional'nost* (*PSS* 8, 48).

In section VII Gogol depicts Ukraine as a bulwark against the infidels, and the Cossacks as Christian knights. Both the Cossacks and Europe's medieval chivalric orders, he writes, formed close-knit societies devoted to defending Christendom against the Muslims. The comparison serves Gogol, again, in embedding Ukrainian history within broader European history. Indeed, this correlation was an important enough point on Gogol's agenda to warrant an anachronism. He grossly predates the emergence of the Cossacks and postdates the emergence of Europe's chivalric orders, claiming that both took place at the turn of the thirteenth century.[64] Predating the Cossacks would have also helped Gogol to make Ukrainian nation coextensive with, or at least firmly rooted in, the Cossack society, which was clearly his goal. If the making of Little Russia is to begin in the thirteenth century, the Cossacks needed to be around then for this to happen. The exigencies of nationalistic historiography thus necessitate chronological license. Gogol's construction of the Ukrainian nation, like his tug-of-war with the notions of Russian historiography, reveals the contradictions and tensions that come with fitting complex, diverse, conflicting historical data into a monolithic narrative of a nation.

Section VII focuses on the Cossacks' "Asian" aspects: their cunning and fierceness, their art of camouflage, and their tactic of sudden and overwhelming raids, which they adopted from their Asian enemy. In section VIII, however, Gogol retreats from the Asian direction and asserts that "the greater part of this society was nonetheless composed of the

original, native inhabitants of southern Russia. The proof is in the language, which, despite the multiplicity of Tatar and Polish borrowings, always had a purely Slavic physiognomy that marked it as close to the Russian of the time, as well as in the faith, which was always Greek" (*PSS* 8, 47). Gogol further claims, inaccurately, that accepting Christianity of the Greek rite functioned as the sole membership requirement for joining the Cossack society. Gogol thus transforms the south Slavic natives and a "motley" crowd of multinational fugitives of various religious backgrounds into a Ukrainian-speaking Orthodox nation. Having established this nation's linguistic and religious identity, Gogol modestly inserts a notion of its political development: "This society preserved the features that characterize a band of robbers, but, taking a deeper view, one could perceive in it an embryo of a political body, a foundation of a distinctive [manuscript adds: "great"] people that already in its origins had one main goal: to fight with the infidels and to preserve the purity of its religion" (*PSS* 8, 47–48).

The remainder of section VIII outlines the character of this national "embryo," which corresponds to Gogol's fictional portrayal of the Cossacks in *Taras Bulba.* Though he stresses the Cossacks' devotion to Orthodoxy, Gogol hastens to distinguish them from pious monks. First and foremost, a Cossack cherishes the freedom of his will and hates any external constraints, either political or social. Unlike the Catholic knights, Gogol writes, the Cossacks did not bother with vows, fasts, or the mortification of the flesh. Uncontrollable like the Dnepr rapids, in both feasts and battles they knew no limits. True to their robberlike heritage, they owned property communally. However, an accumulation of material goods for its own sake was alien to a Cossack's nature; during rapturous feasts he would relinquish his pilfered treasures with complete unconcern. Raiding the Tatars and being raided by them, they learned to risk their lives freely: "a good Cossack cared more about a good measure of wine than his fate" (*PSS* 8, 48). Their military exploits revealed their flexibility and quick intelligence. The Cossacks' frontiersmen status was reflected in their dress: "half-Tatar, half-Polish" (*PSS* 8, 48). In the section's closing, Gogol stresses the Cossacks' "carefree nature" and a "life of revelry" (*bespechnost'* and *razgul'naia zhizn'; PSS* 8, 48).

The final section IX suggests that Ukrainians possessed all the necessary features of a great, vital nation. Their numbers always grew, the "life of revelry" constituting an irresistible attraction; their "poetic time" inspired

a life of activity; and their motley nature ultimately developed "one common character and nationality" (*natsional'nost'*; *PSS* 8, 48). There emerged a large population around the Dnepr region that wielded the sword as skillfully as it handled the plow, Gogol writes. The historical result was unique in that it united two opposed essences:

> And there emerged a nation [*narod*] that belonged by faith and location to Europe but was Asian by way of life, customs, and costume; a nation in which two juxtaposed parts of the world, two elements of a contrasting character, collided so peculiarly: European caution and Asian carelessness, simplicity and slyness, strong activity and the greatest laziness and languor, a striving for development and perfection as well as a desire to appear scornful of any improvement. (*PSS* 8, 49)

Having begun this final passage with an enigmatic sentence, "It seemed that this nation's existence would be eternal" ("Kazalos', sushchestvovanie etogo naroda bylo vechno"; *PSS* 8, 48), Gogol ends it with the fragment quoted above, never dotting the "i" as to how this expectation may have proven false. The rhetorical pattern of the sentence "It seemed that this nation's existence would be eternal" seems to demand a subsequent rounding out to the effect of "but it did *not* in fact prove eternal." This would be particularly fitting in light of the union-separation-reunion schema of Russian-Ukrainian history to which Gogol paid tribute (or lip service?). Yet Gogol withholds this expected logical continuation, leaving his Ukrainian nation suspended in the text of his article, as he likely saw it suspended in its actual existence. This recalls Gogol's earlier fictional treatment of Ukrainian history in "A Terrible Vengeance." In it, the inspiring influence of a bard's historical lay offers a similarly subtle, ambivalent image that does not allow for the comfortable closure of Ukrainian history and, consequently, for the demise of Ukrainian nationality. It may sometimes appear that the impulse behind Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism was antiquarian, of the Walter Scott variety: to recover from oblivion the separate, original existence of a nation that was dissolving in an imperial sea. While to some extent this is true, Gogol's notion of the putative demise of Ukraine as a separate nation seems much less firm and settled than the end of Scotland's history was for its novelist-historian. In six years, Gogol will turn to the idea of the rebirth of would-be dead nations in his novelistic fragment "Rome."

In conclusion, "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" presents

Ukraine's past as a history of a glorious nation. It argues for Ukraine's place in universal history on the basis of the Ukrainians' brave exploits, distinctive character, independent political organization (however timidly stated), and valuable contribution to Europe's and Christianity's history that consisted in containing the Muslims. Gogol's national assertion of Ukrainian distinctiveness, however, functions in the context of an empire and a competing, officially sanctioned Russian nationalism. Gogol's article affirms Ukraine's historic separateness from Russia and even valorizes the two nations' characteristics to Ukraine's advantage (for example, in the geographical descriptions). Yet it simultaneously reacts to official tsarist historiography, the censorship, and the policy of Uvarov's Ministry of National Education that originally published the article. This perilous course has left its imprint on the article in the form of numerous tensions, contradictions, silences, and expurgations of the manuscript version. It also deserves stressing that just as the image of Russia is constructed in the article, in order to put in relief the attractive characteristics of Ukraine, the image of Ukraine also represents a construct, in the making of which Gogol selected and enhanced the historical material at his disposal. All these are hallmark features of nationalist historiography in which Gogol engages in the article and which he apparently intended to continue in his unrealized "History of Little Russia."

While in various other historical pieces of *Arabesques* Gogol proposed ideas that furthered the cause of Russian nationalism, his Ukrainian nationalism runs much stronger and deeper in the volume. In addition to "A Glance," *Arabesques* contains the important article "On Little Russian Songs" and two pieces of nationalistically inflected fiction based on Ukrainian history. Gogol's Russian nationalism appears motivated by the civic patriotism of a citizen of a great empire and also in part by the ideological requirements placed on him as a publishing historian. His Ukrainian nationalism, in turn, seems engendered by a native's love for his homeland and a sense of mission in making manifest Ukraine's cultural, ethnic, and historic integrity as a nation.

Notes on East Slavic History: The Problem of Taxonomy

An important set of materials that sheds light on Gogol's view of East Slavic history is his private historical notes, whose subject has been variously categorized as Slavic, Russian, and Ukrainian history. These ma-

terials include excerpts that Gogol copied from other books, some chronologies, and his own comments and ideas on a range of topics from East Slavic history. Most fragments date to 1834–1835, though some could have been written as early as 1829 or as late as 1839. The available editions of Gogol's works, regrettably, do not facilitate a study of these materials. While the existence of this wide-ranging plethora of notes is an indisputable fact, ways in which they have been grouped and labeled, however, reflect assumptions and ideas of scholars that often seem formed on a flimsy hypothetical basis. While these classificatory schemas may conform to the scholars' own mental map of history, the extent to which they reflect Gogol's designs must be questioned. Indeed, I found the available editions' presentation of Gogol's historical miscellanea deeply problematic. These editions include the standard Academy of Sciences edition currently used by all scholars *(PSS)*, the 1889–1896 Tikhonravov-Shenrok edition (hereafter *TS*), and the 1994 edition of *Collected Works* (hereafter *SS'94*).[65] Another student of Gogol as a historian, Sharon Varney, had similar misgivings about, specifically, the *PSS* edition: "the order given these notes by the *PSS* editors is highly arbitrary and their listing by topic extremely misleading."[66]

Since the nature of textual evidence is directly at stake, a brief analysis of how it has been handled is necessary before I offer my own argument. In the *TS* 1890s edition these fragments are scattered in various volumes, but some are grouped independently as "Preparatory Sketches, Notes, and Extracts Relating to Russian History" (*TS* 6, 439–448). The edition does not provide a category of notes on Ukrainian history. Instead, the texts that fit this category are either classified as relating to Russian history or appear in endnotes and variants to Gogol's fiction. The Academy edition published some *TS* materials and those that were published in 1909 by G. P. Georgievsky but excluded Gogol's lengthy excerpts from the Kievan Chronicle (finally republished by *SS'94*).[67] *PSS* distinguishes "Sketches and Materials on Russian History" from "Materials on the History of Ukraine." The notes on "Russian" history include sixty-nine items printed on forty-six pages and take up almost two pages in the table of contents, while the notes on "Ukrainian" history include seven items printed on eight pages (see *PSS* 9, 29–75, 76–84, 679–681). A glance at such a presentation of Gogol's historical miscellanea in the *PSS* edition creates an impression that Gogol was hard at work on the history of Russia, his study of Ukrainian history being merely a diversion.

The newer edition of 1994 proposes an all-inclusive heading "Sketches and Materials on Slavic, Russian, and Ukrainian History" that subsumes four sets of materials. The first three divide up the *PSS*'s sweeping and deceptively impressive "Sketches and Materials on Russian History." The first set, "Sketches of an Essay on the Slavs" (*SS'94* 8, 10–21), consists of the first nineteen items from the *PSS* materials on Russian history. However, the editors provide no evidence that Gogol may have been contemplating any such essay on the Slavs (*SS'94* 8, 763). The sole raison d'être of both the title and the grouping itself is that in the minds of the editors these fragments concern this particular topic. The second set, titled "Separate Notes and Excerpts on the Initial Period of Russian History," includes the *PSS* fragments numbered 20–32, 36, 63, and 66 as well as a couple of excerpts absent from the *PSS* (*SS'94* 8, 22–43). The third set, "Notes and Excerpts Made When Reading N. M. Karamzin's *History of the Russian State,*" consists of the *PSS* fragments 33–35 and 37–62 (*SS'94* 8, 44–58; *PSS* does not specify which notes were compiled from Karamzin). The Karamzinian set also includes the chronologies of Kievan metropolitans and of the history of Kievan Rus, compiled not only from Karamzin but also from Bantysh-Kamensky's *History of Little Russia.* These two chronologies that appear in *PSS* under "Materials on Ukrainian History" are thus made part of Gogol's journey, guided by Karamzin, through the history of Russia. In fact, the 1994 edition dismantles the separate category of notes on Ukrainian history altogether, present in however skeletal a form in *PSS.* The rest of the relevant material is deposited in the untitled fourth set consisting of notes associated with Gogol's reading of the Ukrainian *History of the Rusians* and Jean-Benoît Schérer's *Annales de la Petite-Russie* (*SS'94* 8, 59–62). The 1994 edition thus attempts a more discriminating grouping of the undifferentiated mass of notes that in the *PSS* appeared as materials on Russian history. Yet it also makes a mistake in eliminating any separate category of notes on Ukrainian history, the very notion of which is preserved only in the overarching heading for the four sets that is mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph.

Such editorial policies regarding Gogol's historical fragments try to augment Gogol's involvement in what is called "Russian" history and diminish his work on Ukrainian history. As such, they attest to either tendentious distortion or negligent oversight by generations of editors. If the writer's biography and correspondence offer any insight into this

issue, then the editors clearly have not taken it into account. Forty-six pages of notes on Russian history and seven pages of notes on Ukrainian history (even less in the 1994 edition) yield a truly puzzling ratio for an author who never expressed any interest in the study of Russian history, who rejected teaching posts that would require his involvement with it, who never mentioned any historical project concerning it, who, on the contrary, called it "boredom" worse than "botany" or "pathology," the teaching of which could make him "go mad" (*PSS* 10, 323). This same author, meanwhile, discussed and even advertised in journals his work on a book called "History of Little Russia," consulted with other scholars in the field, and published in *Arabesques* two articles that demonstrate his work on it. In light of the absence of evidence for Gogol's interest in Russian history and the abundance of evidence for his interest in Ukrainian history, the status of Gogol's historical fragments as presented by available editions deserves a revision.

In fact, *all* of the fragments labeled as pertaining to Russian history and some of those that relate to Slavic history are associated with Gogol's work on Ukrainian history, which apart from medieval and universal history constitutes the only other major area of Gogol's historical scholarship in the years these notes were produced. I want to stress the word "associated": these are mostly research notes, not fragments of any actual historical narrative. I therefore propose to revise the *PSS* editors' partly evasive and partly erroneous explanation of the nature of Gogol's historical fragments, which reads:

> Some parts of these notes, the ones referring to southern Rus, may be regarded as linked to Gogol's work in 1834–5 on the history of Ukraine, for which the history of southern Rus may have in Gogol's plan served as prehistory. However, as attested by a significant number of materials, such as those devoted to the history of Novgorod and the remarks about Muscovite princes, the work on Ukrainian history went parallel in these years with intensive work on Russian history; Gogol conceived of Ukraine's history as integrally linked to Russian history as its constitutive part. (*PSS* 9, 624)

While admitting that the notes on the Rusian period may have served Gogol in his work on Ukrainian history, the *PSS* editors at the same time throw up a smokescreen that attempts to diminish this possibility. First, they claim that the notes on Novgorod and the Muscovite princes show

that Gogol conducted parallel research on Russian history. However, Gogol does not really discuss Muscovite princes in his notes; a Suzdalian prince Georgii (now more commonly known as Yuri Dolgoruky) is mentioned insofar as he waged a war against a Kievan one, Iziaslav Mstislavich. It is true that Yuri/Georgii is considered the founder of Moscow, but Gogol makes no mention of it. Moreover, in Gogol's excerpts from the Kievan Chronicle, Novgorodians are shown to act in unison with the Kievan prince against the Suzdalian one. Other Ukrainian historians, including the author of *History of the Rusians* and the "official" historiographer, Bantysh-Kamensky, included in their histories of Ukraine information about Novgorod, at various times Kiev's rival and ally, and about ancient Slavs, whom many of Gogol's notes concern. The editors of the *PSS* go on to claim that Gogol nevertheless viewed Ukrainian history as a "constitutive part" of Russian history. However, as my analysis of "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" shows, this is far from true. Gogol, on the contrary, was very adamant about Ukraine's separate historical experience. In order to fabricate the writer's interest in Russian history, the *PSS* editors impose onto Gogol their own assumptions and notions.

Taking Gogol's own pronouncements as to his interests and occupations as my guide, I argue that Gogol used his research into Slavic and Kievan history toward the goal of creating his "History of Little Russia" and never worked on Russian history at all. Semyon Vengerov mentioned this idea in passing in 1913, yet he did not put forth an argument in defense of his theory and, regrettably, has not found continuators.[68] In addition to the biographical evidence, the context of Gogol's conception of Ukrainian history and the internal evidence of the notes offer strong support for the validity of this claim. I see two possibilities of relating these notes to what one may infer from "A Glance" about Gogol's conception of his "History of Little Russia." First, having claimed the origin of his history of Ukraine in his official "Glance" to be the thirteenth century, Gogol may have researched the earlier period in order to extend his book's span backwards and to explore Ukraine's Kievan and Slavic roots (after all, even "A Glance" does discuss times prior to the thirteenth century). Second, he could have researched these early periods before writing "A Glance" and then decided to leave the Kievan period to Russian history and launch his Ukrainian history proper (that is, as a separate nation) after Russian history had supposedly safely "migrated" to Muscovite lands. In either case, the research itself was motivated by his task

of writing a national history of Ukraine that would have attained the goal, expressed in the projected book's advertisement, of embedding the history of Ukraine in universal history (*PSS* 9, 76) and *not* in Russian history.

An examination of the actual notes corroborates this hypothesis. Gogol's perspective when compiling them was that of a nationalistically minded Slavocentric Ukrainian historian. Karamzin, describing in his *History of the Russian State* the ancient population of the Russian empire of his time, lists Slavs among Scythians, Sarmatians, Goths, Huns, and others. Gogol, by contrast, focuses on the Slavs alone. Gogol's narrower interests suggest a narrower scope of research than Karamzin's, one limited to the history of Ukraine. While Karamzin asserts that the Slavs migrated to the future Russian territory from the Danube basin, Gogol strenuously opposes this migration theory ("Millions do not resettle" *PSS* 9, 29–30, 34, 42). Gogol's Slavs bear uncanny resemblance to his Ukrainians in their "freedom [*vol'nost'*] assemblies, and patriarchal republican element of governing" (*PSS* 9, 31).

Gogol characterizes Slavic nature antithetically to Karamzin. In describing the "Russian Slavs," the Russian historiographer pictures them as warriors and tradesmen and mentions their "bravery, rapaciousness, cruelty, good-naturedness, and hospitality" (*IGR* 1, 31–32). They supposedly formed no families and had quite savage customs. Yet Karamzin notes a few exceptions. The Slavs near the Baltic and the Vistula River, as well as the Poliane, a Slavic tribe related to the future Poles that settled around the Dnepr, exceeded other Slavs in sophistication, were peaceful, and formed families (*IGR* 1, 19, 38). He cites a story according to which the Greeks captured three Baltic Slavs who claimed to know no war and refused to join the Greek warriors but gladly offered to entertain them with music (*IGR* 1, 15–16). Contrary to Karamzin, Gogol does not consider Slavs as predisposed by nature to war and by geography to trading and views them as musical and peaceful, much like Karamzin's Poliane or the Baltic Slavs. Gogol cites the story about the three Slavs captured by the Greeks as referring to the Slavs in general, not just the Baltic ones (*PSS* 9, 37–38). Gogol's ancient Slavs also share certain features with his Cossacks. He describes the Slavic method of defense that involves forming a circle with carts, which protects wives and children gathered inside. Gogol's Cossacks in *Taras Bulba,* though no wives assist them, set up their camp in exactly the same way. As I mentioned before, Gogol makes "strategic slyness," this contemporary ethnic stereotype of Ukrainians, a cardinal feature of ancient Slavs and describes their art of camouflage in ways that recall his Cossacks in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" (*PSS* 9, 39).

Karamzin paints the northern Slavs as brimming with activity, a hardy stock able to withstand hunger and need, and the southern ones as indolent and weak, "softened" by inactivity (*IGR* 1, 33). Gogol, by contrast, identifies southern Slavs with Poliane and describes them as "incomparably superior to the northern ones in civilization, gentleness, and a certain sophistication of mores" (*PSS* 9, 36). He claims that religious rites in the south were more complex and developed, song and dance traditions richer, and customs and family structure "more developed" (*PSS* 9, 41–43). (Incidentally, southern Slavs were roughly equivalent with the future Ukrainians for Gogol; he viewed the Balkan Slavs as the *west* Slavic branch [*PSS* 9, 36–37].) Gogol describes the northern Slavs as "more crude": "No conveniences in life. On the lowest level of civilization. . . . Fights and quarrels often end in murder, which was unheard of among other [Slavs]" (*PSS* 9, 42–43). The ancient Slavs wore long mustaches and a forelock *(khokhol),* "which has been preserved among the inhabitants of southern Russia, in Galicia, Serbia . . . and other western Slavs" (*PSS* 9, 43). In short, Gogol reverses Karamzin's paradigm and portrays the northern Slavs negatively and southern ones positively. Moreover, he keeps noting ancient Slavic features that happen to be preserved among the Ukrainians. This suggests a Ukrainian perspective on early Slavic history and an accumulation of data with an eye toward proving the points, made by Gogol in "A Glance," that Ukraine was the cradle of Slavdom and has preserved traces of this original Slavic heritage until the present times.

Most of Gogol's notes display a definite southern orientation. One of them describes Taurus, an area roughly corresponding to the Crimea; another concerns the Pechenegs, an Asian nomadic tribe that warred with Kiev from the southeast (*PSS* 9, 43–46). Since in "A Glance" Gogol made the containment of the Asian conquerors (hence, a defense of Christianity) Ukraine's principal mission in the Cossack period, he may have attempted through his research of earlier history to embed it in south Slavic history's origins, as a prequel to the Cossacks' future battles with the Mongols. Likewise, Gogol's notes about Kievan princes all share an angle of Kiev's struggles with the steppe peoples to the southeast, an angle that anticipates a keynote of Gogol's history of Ukraine.[69]

Gogol's notes focus on the decline of the Kievan state that took place

following the death of Iaroslav the Wise, whose reign (1019–1054) marked the high point of the Kievan state. These notes span one century (1054–1154) and conclude with the rule of Iziaslav Mstislavich (1146–1154), on whom Gogol lavishes particular attention (fragments numbered 33–34, 37–42, *PSS* 9, 53–60). Gogol also copied two lengthy excerpts (eight pages in small print) from the Kievan Chronicle that concern Iziaslav's troubled reign. These come from Karamzin's endnotes to the first edition of his *History.*[70] What could account for Gogol's special interest in Iziaslav Mstislavich?

Karamzin's extensive account of Iziaslav offers clues to this question. He portrays Iziaslav Mstislavich as a courageous and wise ruler, beloved by the Kievans and concerned for the good of the land. He frequently abandoned pursuing his patrimonial claims to his fullest advantage in the hopes of avoiding bloodshed. Karamzin's Iziaslav is as a proto-nationalist ruler who has mastered the art of public relations: he actively seeks the support and counsel of the Kievan people and wishes to transform them from his personal idolaters to patriotic defenders of the "fatherland" (IGR 2, 125–160). Iziaslav was opposed by the hostile Olgovichi clan and by Georgii of Suzdal (otherwise known as Yuri Dolgoruky), the founder of Moscow, who hated Iziaslav and wished to gain ascendancy over Kiev. A war between them was followed by a peace treaty that, however, Georgii soon violated, forcing Iziaslav to renew fighting for Kiev. The Kievans welcomed Iziaslav's effort and promptly expelled its current ruler. Georgii failed to retake Kiev. The Kievans, who hated the northern prince as much as they loved Iziaslav, "never armed themselves more gladly," Karamzin writes.

The importance of Iziaslav Mstislavich becomes clear in the context of subsequent history. In Karamzin's version, he basically represented the last great ruler of Kiev before it fell into the hands of the northern prince Georgii of Suzdal. Karamzin writes that Georgii was so hated by the Kievans that after his death they pilfered his house, refused to bury him within the holy city of Kiev, and invited his enemy as their next ruler. In the course of the next three chapters, Karamzin's heretofore unitary line of princely succession becomes bifurcated into the grand princes of Kiev and the rulers of Suzdal. These chapters set up the theories of the transfer of power from Kiev to the northern principalities, and of the Kiev–Suzdal-Vladimir–Muscovy continuity. The house of Suzdal finally managed to exact revenge on the unruly Kievans: in 1169 Andrei Bogoliubsky,

Georgii's son, conducted his famous sack of Kiev yet, prompted by his "hatred of southern Russia," he scorned the Kievan throne and returned north (*IGR* 2, 192). In Karamzin's scheme of things, this marked the transfer of power to the northern principalities and the beginning of a new, northern period of Russian history, centered in the next capital, Vladimir.

Yet for most Russian historians, as Jaroslaw Pelenski explains, this event remained "a difficult and inconvenient topic which [did] not fit into the framework of the Kiev—Suzdal-Vladimir—Muscovy continuity theory." It showed the northerners' attempt to subordinate Kiev and "eradicate it from historical memory" and as such represented a break with the Kievan tradition rather than its continuity.[71] The Kievan Chronicle, which espoused a decidedly southern perspective on this issue, represented this event specifically and the Kievan-Suzdalian struggle generally in just such terms. Gogol was apparently drawn to this perspective, since out of the excerpts from other sources that Karamzin made available in his endnotes, such as Tatishchev's history and the Novgorod, Nikon, and Voskresenskaia Chronicles, he chose only the Kievan Chronicle quotes and assiduously avoided all others, even if they were included alongside the Kievan Chronicle excerpts in the same endnote.

By focusing on Iziaslav, then, Gogol directed his attention to the last great prince prior to Kiev's fall, an illustrious patriot who owed primary allegiance to Kiev, at the time when Russian history was staking new grounds in the north with which the future "Russian" rulers tied their lot. The period that captivated Gogol featured the first significant clash between the incipient northern principalities and Kiev. This rivalry led to Kiev's fall and, at least for Karamzin, served as the cornerstone of historic Russian claims on the Kievan patrimony. Yet to some Ukrainian historians, and likely Gogol himself, this historical moment demonstrated a separation and an antagonism between Kiev and its northern rival (rather than a Slavic brother), the root of the Russian-Ukrainian disjunction that Gogol emphasized in his archeology of the Ukrainian nation, "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia." Gogol's Kievan Chronicle excerpts and his note on Iziaslav also foreground the fact that the Suzdalian princes and the Kievan polity belonged to different "civilizational communities," to use Pelenski's term.[72] While the northerners join with the heathen Asiatic Polovtsians, the Kievans gain the aid of Christian central European rulers to the west of them: the Hungarian, Polish, and Bohemian princes.

The history of Iziaslav opened for Gogol a historical moment that posed vital questions for the subsequent history of the Kievan land. His sympathies, in the note on Iziaslav, echo those of the Kievan people he mentions: he praises Iziaslav and criticizes Georgii. Gogol stresses the "old love of the Kievans" for Iziaslav and calls him "an eternal subject of popular [*narodnaia*] love." He calls Georgii an "egoist," hated by the Kievans, and, in an obvious exaggeration of what he would have read in Karamzin, writes that Georgii's wars "were almost always unsuccessful" and that Iziaslav "almost" managed to "take away Georgii's possessions in southern Russia" (*PSS* 9, 60). Georgii's alliance with the pagan Polovtsians in his attack on the holy city of Kiev, frequently mentioned in the chronicle excerpts that Gogol copied, additionally demean the Suzdal prince in light of Kiev's Christian tradition. To a proud Ukrainian, the history of Iziaslav would have been incomparably more appealing than the history of Andrei Bogoliubsky's sack of Kiev; it is not surprising that Gogol makes no mention of the latter. In another note titled "The Influence of the Fall of the Kiev Principality," Gogol remains focused on the Ukrainian lands: "the influence of Russia on the Rusian southwest [*iugo-zapad rùsskii*] became significantly smaller. . . . The influence of Poland and Hungary was becoming stronger" (*PSS* 9, 65). This indicates a perspective of a historian of Ukraine who strives to emphasize Ukraine's separate existence from Russia. Where a Russian historian would have invariably recited, following Karamzin, the notion of the transfer of power to the northern principalities, Gogol remains concerned with the history that continued to play out in the southwest, rather than following the contorted northward leaps of "Russian" statehood. None of Gogol's notes concern affairs in Suzdal or Vladimir.

In a typically anachronistic extension of nationalism to ancient times, Gogol attempts to see the beginnings of a nation in Kievan Rus:

> This state based on the leases of the rulers' relatives . . . represented a strange phenomenon. Despite the disorder, the lack of binding laws, the indeterminate rights and their relations to one another, they bore a vague image of unity and wholeness of one nation [*natsiia*]. In critical moments, the Princes often said . . . that Rus is falling apart and the enemies are rejoicing. In the diet [*seim*] called by Monomakh, it was explicitly said: let the Rusian land be the common fatherland for us all. The prelates also reminded [people] of the common fatherland. (*PSS* 9, 62)

Yet which nation's beginnings, Russia's or Ukraine's, did Gogol perceive in the murky and chaotic Kievan past?

His description of the political organization of Kievan Rus stresses the same elements by which he distinguished Ukrainian Cossacks, which suggests that Gogol was engaged in constructing a cultural affinity between the Kievan polity and Ukraine. He notes that the inhabitants of the cities in Kievan Rus had a major impact on governing, which was "almost republican" (*PSS* 9, 62). He mentions their right to call assemblies and demand the prince's presence. If dissatisfied with the prince's performance, they often secretly called in another candidate. This form of rule meets with Gogol's complete approval. To bring up a recent example, Gogol presents Iziaslav Mstislavovich's cooperation with the townsmen of Kiev as a wise and noble policy. In describing Novgorod, Gogol stresses the limits on the prince's power and enumerates a variety of constraints that were placed on him (*PSS* 9, 67–68). This recalls Gogol's keen interest in the notion of curtailing a monarch's power, which revealed itself in his research on the Middle Ages and his excerpts from Henry Hallam's book on the constitutional transformation of European monarchies. Gogol's notes on the Novgorod republic, as he calls it, also include a section on this city–state's constitution, the election of mayors, and the traditions of the burgher self-rule. Gogol stresses the close links between Novgorod and Kiev by mentioning their common enemy, the Suzdalian princes (in excerpts about Iziaslav), and a special tribute Novgorod paid to the Kievan grand prince (*PSS* 9, 70). In his positive approach to limited monarchy and the notion of popular participation in governing, Gogol diverges completely from Karamzin, who in the paean to autocracy that was his *History* consistently stressed the perniciousness of such ideas and painted them as responsible for the weakness of the state and political chaos.

In addition to the internal evidence of Gogol's notes on the early Slavic and Kievan periods that in their spectrum of concerns, both ideological and geographical, reveal the perspective of a historian of Ukraine, Gogol also penned notes that overtly and unambiguously concern Ukrainian history. These include two chronologies that Gogol compiled while reading Karamzin and Bantysh-Kamensky. The first lists key events in Ukrainian history from the thirteenth through the beginning of the fifteenth century (*PSS* 9, 77–78). Despite momentous events taking place in the north in this period, such as the rise of Muscovy, Gogol's chronology remains rooted in the history of the Kievan land, its own Tatar

yoke, the conquest of Gediminas, and Ukraine's history within the Lithuanian Grand Duchy.

Gogol's second chronology lists Kievan metropolitans from the tenth to the early nineteenth centuries (*PSS* 9, 79–80). Kiev had been the traditional sacral center of East Slavic lands, and the Kievan church leaders bore the title of the metropolitans "of Kiev and all Rus" that was later adopted by their Moscow counterparts. The rivalry among the princes involved matters of ecclesiastical authority, as other principalities, such as Novgorod, Suzdal-Vladimir, Galicia-Volyhnia, and Moscow demanded from the Patriarch in Constantinople their own metropolitan sees, some of which were repeatedly abolished and restored. In 1448 Moscow appointed its own metropolitan independently from Constantinople, which marks the beginning of the autocephalous Muscovite Church that eventually led to the establishment of the patriarchate in Moscow in 1589. In the late sixteenth century, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine bifurcated into the Uniate and the traditional Orthodox branches, each with its own set of metropolitans. Between 1596 and 1632 the Orthodox Church was persecuted in Polish-ruled Ukraine, and the Kiev metropolitanate with the seat in Navahrudak, in the Lithuanian territory, reverted to the Uniates. However, in 1620 an Orthodox metropolitan was secretly installed in Kiev, where his successors continued to reside after the restrictions were lifted. Following the Pereiaslav agreement with Muscovy (1654), despite initial guarantees of autonomy, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church fell victim to Russian centralism. After 1675, Kievan metropolitans residing in Kiev were appointed by the Muscovite, then imperial, ecclesiastical establishment.

Despite this troubled history, Gogol's chronological list conveys an image of Ukrainian Christianity as a proud and continuous tradition. Even though Theopemptos was the first Kievan metropolitan (appointed in 1037), he appears fourth on Gogol's list, at the head of which stand early Kievan bishops, not metropolitans. The date listed next to the first, Michael, is the year in which Rus adopted Christianity, 988. The sheer extent of the chronology, from 988 to 1799, appears aimed to characterize as smooth, orderly, and unbroken an ecclesiastical history that in truth was marked by upheavals and ruptures, as the above overview demonstrates. Gogol's autonomist Ukrainian sympathies may well underlie his inclusion in the list of Gregory Tsamblak (1415–1419/1420). Frustrated with Constantinople's refusal to grant Lithuania a separate metropolitan

from Moscow, the Lithuanian prince Vytautas arranged for a local election of the Bulgarian Gregory as the metropolitan of Kiev. Gregory appears in Gogol's list despite having been excommunicated by both Constantinople and Moscow.

Gogol also drafted a number of notes from various historical sources on Ukraine. On the basis of *History of the Rusians,* he outlined Ukraine's position within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the aspect of Ukrainian history that he largely expunged from his "A Glance on the Making of Little Russia." The note records the 1386 union, effected by Jogaila (Jagiełło), between the nations *(natsii)* of Poland, Little Russia, and Lithuania, as equal and free members. It stresses the ubiquity of elective offices and of the senate and the general diet, *sejm* (*PSS* 9, 79). Gogol's notes on Guillaume le Vasseur Beauplan's *A Description of Ukraine* (*Opisanie Ukrainy;* Russian edition: 1832) focus on the customs and occupations of Ukrainian Cossacks, as do those on Schérer's *Annales de la Petite-Russie* (1788). The Schérer notes show again that Gogol the historian knew the facts that Gogol the nationalist ideologue occluded. For example, the presence of Poles among the Cossacks, decisively downplayed, if not erased, from "A Glance," here receives a qualifying gloss: "To remember that among the Russian and Cossack surnames there were also Polish ones, and that there were two parties, Russian and Polish" (*PSS* 9, 83). In "A Glance," exuding Ukrainian nationalism and mindful of Russia's anxiety about Polish-Ukrainian relations, there could be no room for the Polish party among Gogol's Cossacks.

From Ostranitsa to Mazepa: Abandoned Literary Projects

While Russian history did not inspire Gogol to compose a single scholarly or fictional text, the writer's engagement with Ukrainian history produced a variety of works of both kinds. Ukrainian history captivated Gogol from his days in Nizhyn and inspired his early historical novel of a Walter Scottian type that he eventually abandoned, "The Hetman" (*PSS* 3, 277–323). This thematic continued in *Dikanka*'s "A Terrible Vengeance," Gogol's scholarly research for the unrealized "History of Little Russia," its echo in the 1834 article "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," and his major historical narrative *Taras Bulba* (1835) that he radically expanded and revised in 1842. Moreover, in 1839–1841, Gogol worked on a tragedy on a theme from the history of Zaporozhian Cossacks that

he enthusiastically announced as his "best work" but later reportedly destroyed.[73] Gogol's extant comments indicate that the tragedy was meant as a lyrically effusive idealization of the Cossacks that in some measure he later realized in the revised version of *Taras Bulba* (*PSS* 5, 199–202).

This section will focus on the texts associated with Gogol's unfinished early novel "The Hetman," two of which appeared in *Arabesques*, and on his unpublished fragment that the editors of his collected works titled "Mazepa's Meditations." The *Arabesques* fragments of "The Hetman" include "A Chapter from a Historical Novel" and "A Captive." The unpublished fragments of this novelistic project are grouped in the *PSS* edition as "A Few Chapters from an Unfinished Tale" (*PSS* 3, 277–301). These texts date from 1829–1831, thus preceding most *Dikanka* stories, and concern Ukrainian rebellions against Poland in the first half of the seventeenth century.

"A Chapter from a Historical Novel" opens with an envoy of the Polish king, a man named Łapczyński, traveling to Ukraine to discuss matters of concern to the Polish crown with a Mirgorod colonel, Glechik. To protect himself in this fiercely anti-Polish territory, Łapczyński disguises himself as a Cossack. A local Ukrainian offers him hospitality. Throughout their conversation, the Ukrainian feigns obtuseness yet, using his sharp gift of observation and strategic flattery, manages to get a sense of the Pole's true identity and mission. He later reveals himself to be colonel Glechik himself, to the Pole's utter consternation. The chapter plays on the ethnic stereotype of a "sly" Little Russian, applauding this quality as a form of intelligence, strategic thinking, and a way to outsmart the enemy. In fact, in his historical notes Gogol presented "strategic slyness" as a Slavic characteristic par excellence, thanks to which East Slavs *(russkie)* could easily sell any European down the river (*PSS* 9, 39; *PSS* 3, 74). By assuming the mask of a dimwitted peasant, Glechik manages to lower Łapczyński's defenses and collect intelligence about the Pole. As noted in my discussion of *Evenings*, in an amazing variety of life situations and literary posturings, especially those concerned with his Ukrainian identity, Gogol's tactic seemed to reflect perfectly Glechik's modus operandi. Gogol's identification with his wily hero comes through in his use of the pen name "P. Glechik" in one of his fictions published around the same time (*PSS* 3, 710). Gogol also signed with a pseudonym, "0000" (four zeros), the journal publication of the very fragment about Glechik, which links the ruses and identity games of the Mirgorod colonel with those of Gogol himself.

Gogol never attempted a classic Scottian imitation, but the influence of the "Scottish magician," whom he admired and kept rereading, is deeply embedded in his work. Scott's influence on Gogol made itself felt in his treatment of the Ukrainian periphery in *Evenings* and in the historical fiction included in *Arabesques*. Scott also strongly inspired Gogol in *Taras Bulba*.[74] Though scholars habitually exclude Gogol while investigating Walter Scott's influence on Russia, it is arguable that he understood and assimilated Scott's novelistic inventions and his vision of history most profoundly and creatively of all Russian imitators.[75] While not a slave to Scott's plot formulas and narrative devices, Gogol was heavily indebted to the Scottish writer in his approach to a national-imperial dynamic. Both types of affinities, in fact, appear in "A Chapter" about Glechik. John Mersereau has summarized its correspondence to the Scottian model in plot and narration:

> [A] central figure travels on a dangerous mission; he encounters an enigmatic person who later is revealed to be someone of importance; the countryside is described by the eyes of a protagonist; there are auctorial digressions commenting on the changes between the past and present; a local legend is interpolated; the apparel of the people is detailed, the habitation fully described with emphasis on furnishings, decorations, utensils, weapons, arrangement.[76]

A deeper affinity to Scott appears in Gogol's treatment of the imperial-national dimension in "A Chapter". Łapczyński finds himself in the paradigmatic situation of a Scottian hero, as he ventures into an ethnically different periphery of an empire of sorts (the seventeenth-century multinational Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth seems at least a viable parallel for one). Gogol's Ukraine, like Walter Scott's Scotland in novels such as *Waverley*, *Redgauntlet*, or *Old Mortality*, represents political and social instability, the weakened reach of law, a proud autonomist spirit, and a rich folk culture. Gogol's historical fiction, like Scott's, explores nationalistically charged centrifugal forces that oppose the imperializing core. Moreover, Gogol's role as a Ukrainian in Russian literature corresponds closely to that of Scott in English letters, as both defended the cultural uniqueness of their respective peripheries while trying to locate them in the larger metropolitan culture.

Scott's historical novel, as Katie Trumpener has influentially argued, became in the British context "the paradigmatic novel of empire" that

gained popularity with the nationalist, imperialist, and colonial audiences alike. Explaining this phenomenon, she writes:

> Scott insists simultaneously on the self-enclosed character of indigenous societies (living idyllically, if anachronistically, outside of historical time), on the inevitability with which such societies are forcibly brought into history, and on the survival of cultural distinctiveness even after a loss of political autonomy. As he enacts and explains the composition of Britain as an internal empire, Scott underlines the ideological capaciousness of empire, emphasizes the analogies between nation formation and empire building, and argues for the continued centrality of national identity as a component of imperial identity.[77]

Scott's depictions of Scotland in the *Waverley* novels and other works presented the incorporation of Scotland into the British Empire as inevitable and irrevocable. The nostalgic mood of Scott's antiquarianism in these depictions served the double function described by Trumpener of fueling cultural nationalism in the context of the periphery and advocating political quietism in the context of the empire.[78] In addition to investigations of the Scottish identity, Scott also ventured to define the British imperial-national identity in *Ivanhoe* (1819). He constructed it as culturally and ethnically heterogeneous, a result of invasions, foreign conquests, and colonizations, which, as Ian Duncan points out, tempered England's stock, increased its "world-imperial fitness," and made English language into a supple medium able to "absorb any cultural element."[79] Though Gogol's attitude to the national-imperial identity of the Russian empire was more ambiguous, his view of Ukraine's uniqueness and its place within the empire and the nature and role of the Russian language bear strong resemblance to the Scottian paradigm.

Another text in "The Hetman" constellation, "A Few Chapters from an Unfinished Tale," features further Scottian parallels. Meant as the alternative beginning of the novel, these chapters situate the action in Ukraine around Easter Sunday in 1645, that is, three years before Khmelnytsky's Uprising against Poland.[80] Following Scott, Gogol considered starting the action of "The Hetman" prior to the well-known historical event, a strategy that allowed Scott to weave the plots into actual historical reality and to characterize the social and political underpinnings of the impending conflict. Scott's *Waverley* and *Rob Roy* foreground in this way the Jacobite Rebellions of 1745 and 1715, respectively. Quite likely, Gogol

intended Khmelnytsky's Uprising to constitute the central historical event of "The Hetman." In place of the Scottish-English conflict, Gogol emplots the Ukrainian-Polish one, yet with a crucial difference: instead of a Scottian denouement of eventual reconciliation between the warring parties, Gogol's novel would have featured Ukraine's liberation from Poland and its triumphant "confluence" with Russia, hence a reconciliation of a different order.

The initial scene of "A Few Chapters" takes place in front of an Orthodox church to which Ukrainians come to bless their traditional Easter cake, the *paskha*. The scene involves a greedy Jew who manages a lease on the church for a Polish landlord and exacts fees from Ukrainians for the *paskha* blessing; a commander of the Polish troops that prop the Jew's enterprise, who deprecates the Ukrainians and their faith; an old Ukrainian man who is ruthlessly mistreated by the commander; and a volatile crowd of Ukrainians who are ready to rebel against the Polish-Jewish abuses. A mysterious stranger, who turns out to be the former hetman Ostranitsa (Iakiv Ostrianyn), avenges the venerable Ukrainian by ripping off half of the commander's mustache. Yet he also redirects the crowd's rage from the Polish commander to the Polish king, the political force that sanctions the commander's crimes. Instead of letting the Ukrainians dissipate their anger in minor clashes, Ostranitsa advises them to save it for a more significant encounter.

The episode and "A Few Chapters" as a whole are based on the *History of the Rusians* account of Ukrainian-Polish antagonism in the wake of the 1596 Union of Brest that created the Uniate Church in Ukraine, Orthodox in rite but subordinate to the pope. *History* portrays this as the most egregious in a series of Polish abuses against Ukrainians, which eventually led to the 1648 Khmelnytsky-led rebellion against the Polish crown. The anti-Semitic tenor also originates from this source, which portrays Jews as Polish spies and an ulcer on the trampled body of Ukraine. Hetman Ostranitsa, elected in 1638, emerges in *History of the Rusians* as a great warrior against the Poles, who eventually tortured and executed him with unspeakable cruelty.

Like the unpublished "A Few Chapters," "A Captive," which appeared in *Arabesques*, focuses on Poland's oppression of Ukraine and also concerns Ostranitsa. It opens with a scene of the troops loyal to the Polish crown leading a prisoner, whose head is enclosed in an iron box. The soldiers terrorize the monks in a nearby Orthodox monastery and lead

the captive into its subterranean cavern. During an interrogation, the captive, whom the soldiers presume to be Ostranitsa, turns out to be a woman, Ostranitsa's love. They torture her, hoping to extract information as to Ostranitsa's whereabouts. Suddenly a wild, inhuman voice from the cavern's depth, which turns out to belong to the flayed bandura-player, entreats her not to speak (upon the censor's objection, this gruesome concluding image was excluded from the *Arabesques* version). "A Captive" thus accentuates the Poles' depredations against the Ukrainians, both the trampling of the Orthodox religion (the soldiers' treatment of the monks) and the political persecution of the Ukrainian population. These themes will reverberate in Gogol's historical magnum opus, *Taras Bulba.*

Gogol's fiction and nonfiction about Ukrainian history feature an interesting thematic disjunction. In his nonfictional mode—"A Glance at the Making of Little Russia"—Gogol constructs a foundational myth of the nation from which he expunges any mention of Ukraine's past within Poland. Gogol's published fictional works on Ukrainian history, on the other hand, which describe the subsequent history of Ukrainian Cossacks, focus on nothing else *but* Polish-Ukrainian relations. Why such compartmentalization? Contemporary politics likely played a role. Since Ukrainians in Gogol's time had reasons to be concerned about Russian and Polish nationalism, it made sense to construe Ukraine's origins in "A Glance" as free—inasmuch as possible, in the case of Russia—from these influences. Moreover, the Russian empire sought to refute Polish claims on Ukraine with the help from within Ukraine. In order to demonstrate their loyalty to the empire and to bolster their own nationalism, Ukrainians felt compelled to reject the Polish part of their heritage and disassociate themselves, especially after 1831, from Poland's rebellious insubordinations. Thus Gogol's account of Ukraine's origins is silent on its Polish context, and his fictions celebrate Ukraine's defiant exit from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

Moreover, the history of Polish oppression and Ukraine's ensuing fight for independence was ideal for nationalistic fiction. Apart from supplying a wealth of dramatic exploits and tragic plots, it conveniently featured the Poles as the enemy. According to Russian imperial discourse, the Ukrainians' struggle against Poland constituted their glory since it returned them to the "all-Russian" fatherland. Their fight for independence from Russia in Mazepa's uprising, in turn, marked their darkest ignominy. While the public discourse encouraged triumphant eulogies of the former, it allowed only shamefaced self-denunciations of the latter. A nationalistic affirmation of Ukraine could only be achieved by pitting Ukrainians against the Poles. Gogol exploited this potential to the hilt, creating a paradigm of Ukrainian history that nourished Ukrainian nationalism while simultaneously laying an offering to Russian imperialism.

What has escaped attention, however, is that there also exists an unofficial, private version of Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism among his historical writings. While the pro-Russian and anti-Polish version characterizes Gogol's large corpus of published texts, he also produced an anti-Russian and pro-Polish variant of it that never reached the public domain in his lifetime and continues to be ignored. I have in mind Gogol's unpublished fragment on Mazepa, which represents the most curious specimen in Gogol's miscellanea on Ukrainian history.

The *PSS* editors incorrectly identify Gogol's piece on Mazepa, which they titled "Mazepa's Meditations," as belonging to his notes on Ukrainian history (*PSS* 9, 83–84). The more recent 1994 edition classifies the fragment even more whimsically as coming from Gogol's "History of Little Russia," a project whose "fragments" no Gogol scholar has ever managed to produce (*SS'94* 7, 151). In my view, this text represents a piece of *fiction* that *grew out of* Gogol's historical research, rather than a scholarly note. In fact, it contains within it a record of this transition. A late nineteenth-century Gogol scholar, Tikhonravov, stated a similar view in his edition of Gogol's works, saying that the text represents "a fragment from the middle of some story" (TS 6, 793). Despite the fact that the Tikhonravov edition represents the cornerstone of Gogol textology, to which the *PSS* routinely refers elsewhere, this supposition has been completely ignored in Gogol scholarship. The fragment's anomaly, considering the paradigm of Ukrainian history that Gogol established in his published fiction, may explain the scholars' unwillingness to entertain the possibility that Gogol contemplated a literary work that stood this paradigm on its head. Relegating it to scholarly notes helps sustain a monolithic view of the patriotic author of *Taras Bulba* and allows Gogol the researcher an indiscretion that would be unacceptable in Gogol the artist. The silence of *Ukrainian* scholars about this text, until very recently, is particularly puzzling, as if proving the efficacy of Peter's anathema.[81]

By attempting a fiction about Mazepa, Gogol was tapping a rich Romantic tradition in both Russian and European literature. Ivan Mazepa (1644–1709) was a Ukrainian hetman who tried to extricate Ukraine from

Russia by betraying Peter I and entering an alliance with his military foe, Sweden's Charles XII. After defeating the hetman under Poltava (1709), Peter ruthlessly quashed the Mazepist rebellion and decreed a ritual anathemization of Mazepa in all of Russia's churches, a practice that survived until 1917. A similarly devilish image of Mazepa obtains in the historical fiction of the time. Unique in refusing to participate in the state-ordered demonization of Mazepa was a Decembrist author Kondratii Ryleev, who portrayed the hetman in the long poem *Voinarovsky* (1825) as a national freedom fighter rather than a traitor. Pushkin polemicized with Ryleev and upheld the official condemnation of Mazepa in his poem "Poltava" (1829). His Mazepa is a perfidious Machiavellian schemer and ingrate. Consistent with the official ideology, Bulgarin in his historical novel *Mazepa* (1830) depicted the hetman as evil incarnate. A Shakespearean Richard III figure, Bulgarin's Mazepa is spiteful, backstabbing, demonic. Gogol mentions Bulgarin's *Mazepa* critically in one letter, irritated that a non-Ukrainian is handling the topic. A certain national possessiveness about Ukrainian themes that revealed itself already in the *Dikanka* prefaces seems to resurface here as well. Perhaps what Gogol saw as Bulgarin's presumptuousness prompted his own fictional experiment.[82]

The figure of Mazepa also inspired many European artists and writers, such as Voltaire, Byron, Delacroix, Victor Hugo, and Słowacki.[83] Unlike the western European sources, the Polish and Russian works typically embedded Mazepa's story in historical and political circumstances. Many of these Western works constituted a discourse to which the Russians were responding; the motto to Pushkin's poem, for example, comes from Byron. One other vital stimulus for the Russian, especially Pushkin's, treatment of Mazepa came from Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz's *Konrad Wallenrod,* first published in St. Petersburg in 1828. The work was very popular among the literati and widely excerpted in Russian journals. It tells of a Lithuanian prince who, in order to liberate his fatherland from the oppression of the Teutonic Knights, infiltrates their ranks, eventually becoming their Grand Master, and orchestrates their crushing defeat at the hands of the Lithuanians. "Wallenrodism," as it came to be called, represented a nationalistic application of the notion that the goal justifies the means; that is, treachery and deceit are permissible measures of last resort to achieve national liberation. This idea held explosive political implications for the Russian empire, and some, like Pushkin, did perceive it this way (the work's passage through tsarist censorship represents one

of the system's major failings). As Grabowicz notes, Pushkin broke off his translation of Mickiewicz's poem and wrote instead his own poem "Poltava." He thus "answered Mickiewicz by an excoriation of Russia's own, historical, real 'Wallenrod,' " that is, Mazepa.[84]

Gogol's text about Mazepa radically departs from the denunciations and personal vilification that were the staple of Mazepa's Russian image. He portrays Mazepa as a statesman and a prudent politician, motivated not by greed, treachery, or revenge but by thoughts of his people's welfare. Far from a Machiavellian schemer, Gogol's Mazepa is a national leader. In contrast to Mickiewicz's Konrad Wallenrod, Gogol's Mazepa does not sacrifice his moral integrity or develop inner conflict and Romantic angst. Capturing Mazepa at the moment when he decides to unite with Charles XII, Gogol depicts his thought process as rational and lucid, and his decision as justified by the interests of the nation, *raison d'état* being Mazepa's sole motivation. Politically, Gogol's Mazepa engages in "Wallenrodism" from which the author removes the stigma of immorality.

While "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" was tentative and evasive on the issue of Ukrainian statehood, "Mazepa's Meditations" unequivocally affirms it. This blatant disparity, one of many that Gogol's writings feature, manifests the appropriateness of reading "between the lines" of Gogol's published texts, which exposes a tension between Gogol's ideas and Russia's official ideology. Gogol's fragment on Mazepa thus begins:

> This power, this gigantic force and might, plunged the independent state [*samobytnoe gosudarstvo,*] remaining merely under the protection of Russia, into despondency. The people that belonged to Peter as private property, demeaned by slavery and despotism, submitted, though with grumbling. It was not only necessity but need, as we shall see later, that led them to submit. Their extraordinary ruler strove to elevate them, but his medicine was too strong. But what could be expected of a people so different from the Russians, who breathed freedom and robust Cossackdom [stylistic awkwardness in the original: *dyshavshemu vol'nost'iu i likhim kozachestvom*—E. B.] and wished to live their own [way of] life? They were threatened by a loss of nationality [*natsional'nost'*] and by having their rights made to a greater or lesser extent equal with the people who were personally owned by the Russian autocrat. Without it,

> Peter would have had no impact on them. All this preoccupied the delinquent hetman. (*PSS* 9, 83–84)

The passage presents early eighteenth-century Ukraine, that is, a region of the Russian empire since half a century, as an "independent state" with its own "nationality," sharply different from that of the Russians. This fundamental national difference and overwhelming love of freedom set Ukrainians apart from the Russians, inured to slavery under their tyrants and owned by them as personal property. Precisely the autocrat's personal ownership of Russia as a patrimonial estate prompts Gogol to cast the prospect of equalizing the status of Ukrainians with that of the Russians as a step down for Ukrainians, rather than a promotion.[85] Gogol stresses that Ukraine did not belong to Russia but remained only under its protectorate, which shows that Gogol understood the agreement of Pereiaslav as a Ukrainian of autonomist leanings, not as a Russian imperialist. All these ideas were unprintable according to a Russian view of history.

While the quote above opens in the prose style of what seems like nonfiction, it evolves into a fictional discourse by its last sentence. The phrase "as we shall see later" found in the third sentence represents the kind of guidance given to the reader of nonfiction. Yet the abstract ideas that Gogol amasses in the passage imperceptibly transfigure into someone's thoughts: "All this preoccupied the delinquent hetman." From this moment onward, what plausibly began as history proceeds as historical fiction. An impersonal historical account metamorphoses into a character's internal monologue:

> All this preoccupied the delinquent hetman. To secede? To announce independence? To oppose the terrible force of despotism with the force of unanimity, to assume the task of a steadfast repulse [*otpor*] by ourselves? But the hetman was already very old and brushed aside the thoughts that tempestuous youth would boldly grip. The autocrat was too powerful, and besides it was uncertain whether the entire nation [*natsiia*] would arm itself against him, a nation that was free and was not always peaceful, while the autocrat was always able to act without answering to anyone. (*PSS* 9, 86)

Gogol's fictional Mazepa decides that the liberation of Ukraine from Russia can only be achieved with the assistance of an ally and evaluates various options. He notes that the Crimean Khan is too weak, lacks respect among the Cossacks, and can be bought for the right price by anyone. Ukraine, Mazepa concludes, needs a reliable ally who is in no danger of striking a friendship with Russia: "Who else could do it if not Poland, a neighbor and kin" (*sosedka i edinoplemennitsa; PSS* 9, 86). Needless to say, the notion that the Ukrainians may have been ethnically closer to the Poles than to the Russians was another of Gogol's challenges to the imperial ideology, which insisted on seeing Ukraine as Russia's long-lost kin who had suffered under a foreign, Polish, yoke. Despite avoiding any such allusions in his published works, Gogol clearly considered, if not believed, the idea.[86] Though Poland would make a trusted ally, it has been brought to the brink of collapse by its unruly magnates. Mazepa ultimately concludes:

> There remained one state that the Cossacks always greatly respected, even though it did not border with Little Russia. . . . [This state] could be very useful to Little Russians by constantly troubling Muscovy's borders and holding it in check. At the same time, the Swedish armies that amazed all Europe with their exploits could, having torn into Russia, lead the tsar into indecision as to whether he should act in the south against the Cossacks or in the north against the Swedes.
>
> Amid such thoughts, Mazepa was greeted by the news that the tsar had broken the peace and started a war against the Swedes. (*PSS* 9, 86)

Mazepa's strategic analysis points to Sweden as a logical ally and the best guarantee of the Cossacks' success in their military action against Russia. He reaches this conclusion through reasoned thinking characteristic of a statesman and a patriotic leader of a nation, rather than out of personal spite and devilish ambition. He aims not to harm Peter but to help Ukraine, even at the price of becoming a "delinquent." This historiography-turned-fiction ends with a new plot node introduced by Peter's military action. This fact emerges as a story event: a piece of news that interrupts the fictional Mazepa's meditations. It carries dramatic suspense: how will the character reconcile his plan with this new variable? Since this seems a perfect chapter break, answers may have been coming in the next one. The extant fragment ends here.

In its use of fictional narrative techniques and the creation of an interior image of a hero, "Mazepa's Meditations" represents a fictional attempt. Once Gogol switches to the fictional mode, the text ceases to resemble any of his historical notes or articles. Gogol's approach to Ma-

zepa as a patriotic national leader contrasts starkly with the unlucky hetman's official vilification and marks a highlight of Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism. Given the radical ideological incompatibility of this view of Mazepa with the official imperial discourse, it is not surprising that this text remained but a brief unpublished fragment. An assertion of Ukraine's statehood, an emphasis on its difference from Russia and ethnic consanguinity with the Poles, the criticism of autocratic despotism, the justifiability of Ukraine's drive for independence and its alliance with the Swedes—the censor would have found all of these ideas subversive. Gogol must have known it, which may have caused him to nip this fiction in the bud. Its existence among Gogol's writings, however, has enormous significance since it offers a valuable contrast and corrective for the images of Ukraine's history in Gogol's published works. "Mazepa's Meditations" reveals a dimension of Gogol that directly contradicts his monolithic image as a Russian nationalist.

Fragments like this, as well as the manuscript or draft variants that I have recovered, enlarge the spectrum of Gogol's pronouncements about Russian and Ukrainian nations. The heterogeneity of Gogol's historical ideas across this panoply of texts makes manifest the processes of selection and articulation, of emphasis and silencing, that went into Gogol's creation of the published texts. The numerous contradictions between his research and privately noted ideas, on the one hand, and his public pronouncements, on the other, force one to consider such notions as Gogol's self-censorship, his uneasy relation with Russia's nationalist and imperialist ideologies and the institutions that worked to enforce them (the Ministry of National Education, the censors), and finally, his own conception of a writer's civic mission. Gogol's struggle with these various constraints as he tailored his intellectual, ideological, and artistic fancies into published texts left an imprint that reveals a great deal about both Russian and Ukrainian nationalism, the official treatment of each, and Gogol's service to both.

For this reason, I have analyzed Gogol's texts as palimpsests of the ideological tensions and dilemmas that went into creating them. They demonstrate that, when writing on politically sensitive topics such as Ukrainian history, Gogol's authorial journey resembled a course between Scylla and Charybdis rather than a carefree recording of whatever thoughts came to his head. His characteristic "slyness" ensured a relatively safe passage and allowed him to smuggle in much that ran counter to

official tsarist ideology, most notably, the cause of Ukrainian nationalism. Gogol's passionate involvement with this cause permeates his treatment of Ukrainian history. This is evident from the ways in which Gogol disassociates Ukraine from Russian and Polish influences, creates nationalistic foundational myths and martyrologies, defends Ukraine's historic rights to autonomy, and embeds it in universal, rather than Russian, history. My analysis of the entirety of Gogol's historical writings, including the unpublished notes and sketches, demonstrates that Gogol's engagement with Ukrainian history represented the pinnacle of his Ukrainian nationalism.

A New Calling

From his arrival in St. Petersburg in 1828 to his departure from Russia in 1836, Gogol searched for his calling and attempted to establish a career, first as an imperial bureaucrat, then as an academic historian. While both ended in failure, the occupation that he at first treated as a hobby—literature—brought him success and fulfillment. Until the staging of *The Government Inspector* in 1836 and the fiasco of his academic career, Gogol's literary, ethnographic, and historical interests overwhelmingly concerned Ukraine. The sense of his own Ukrainianness, first sparked by his experience of the Russian capital, grew into a consciously fashioned self, a cultivated identity. It manifested itself not only in Gogol's publications but also in personal correspondence with other Ukrainophiles, such as Maksymovych or Sreznevsky. The prospect of a position at Kiev University represented a crucial fork in the road of Gogol's life. By going to Kiev, Gogol would have most likely remained active in the sphere of Ukrainian interests and continued his ethnographic and historical work on Ukraine, perhaps becoming a Ukrainian nationalist of a loyalist variety. This was not to be.

The sense of 1834 being a crucial turn in his life comes through in Gogol's unpublished note "1834," written at the height of his enthusiasm about the Kiev post. In it, Gogol muses about how the year 1834 will decide his fate: "My past murmurs at my feet, and my unknown future shines above indistinctly in the mist. . . . What will you be like, my future? Will you be splendid, grand, do you keep great feats in store for me?" (*PSS* 9, 16). The mysterious year also seems to hold the answer to what seems like Gogol's permanent destination. He asks the personified year

about St. Petersburg and Kiev: "Where will I distinguish you with my great works? Amid the heap of piled-up houses, roaring streets, seething mercantilism, this formless heap of fashions, parades, bureaucrats, savage Northern nights, glitter, and lowly colorlessness? Or will it be in my beautiful, ancient, promised [*obetovannyi*] Kiev, garlanded with fruit-bearing orchards, girded with my beautiful, wondrous Southern sky, intoxicating nights?" (*PSS* 9, 17). The "great works" *(velikie trudy)* in question allude to Gogol's scholarly work on Ukrainian history, not to any literary plans he may have had. According to epistolary evidence, Gogol did not treat literature as his main occupation until later.

The decision to become a professional writer came after his hopes for a transfer to Kiev collapsed, and he was sacked from his teaching jobs in Petersburg. It also followed the brilliant literary success of *Evenings on a Farm* and the lesser one of *Mirgorod,* Gogol's growing appreciation by Russian critics, a lively reception of *The Government Inspector,* and the inspired beginnings of his work on *Dead Souls.* After the Kiev-bound path and the career of a historian proved unfeasible, Gogol decided to continue his work within Russian culture and pursue the career of a writer. A letter from Paris of November 28, 1836, to his friend Mikhail Pogodin captures the sense that Gogol finally divined his calling in the world, that his fate, to which he had so fervently prayed in the "1834" fragment, finally revealed itself to him. He mentions *Dead Souls,* which he claims will be his first "decent work," and announces:

> My lot is cast. Having left the fatherland, I have also abandoned all contemporary cares. An insurmountable wall stood between me and my lot. A pride that only poets know, that grew within me from the cradle, finally could bear no more. . . . I am dead for contemporaneity. . . . I only see stern and true posterity, pursuing me with an arresting question: "Where is the work [*delo*], according to which we could judge you?" And in order to prepare an answer to it, I am ready to sentence myself to everything, to a life of poverty and wandering, to deep and sustained seclusion, which now I carry with me everywhere. (*PSS* 11, 77–78)

Between December 1835, when Gogol "spit a good-bye to the university" (*PSS* 10, 378), and November 1836, when he dated this letter, Gogol embarked on the ambitious path of a serious writer. His letter to Pogodin exudes a sense of purpose and mission that is absent from Gogol's earlier

pronouncements about his literary activities. The overwhelming need to "matter" and to do so on a large scale no doubt impelled Gogol to "cast his lot" not merely with literature but specifically with Russian literature concerned with Russian life. Gogol's strong involvement with Ukrainian nationalism in his "folkloric" and "historical" periods came at a time when he did not treat his literary activities as functions of his actual profession. The newfound calling of a writer, however, prompted him to enter the sphere of Russian nationalist concerns—and do so more decisively than in his capacity as an applicant for a university post. Unlike the cozy but provincial Ukraine, only Russia could provide this new, prophetlike Gogol with the proper cultural matrix in his quest for universal significance.

— 4 —

Confronting Russia

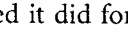
Gogol fully ventured into the Russian thematic only after his transformation from an amateur to a professional man of letters, which took place around 1836. That year marked the staging of Gogol's play *The Government Inspector* and the publication of his stories "The Nose" and "The Carriage." Prior to 1836, Gogol filled more than three volumes with fiction on Ukrainian themes and wrote only three stories that took place in Russia.[1] While folkloric stylization and historicity, the two principal modalities of nationalist Romantic fiction, characterize Gogol's fictional portrayal of Ukraine, they are absent from his depictions of Russia. Only contemporary Russia existed for Gogol, and as such it inspired in him the social satirist rather than the folk or antiquarian nationalist.

Gogol formed his view of Russia on the basis of scanty experience. He had a very limited knowledge of Russian history, of folk culture, and of the country at large beyond the capitals and the roads that connected them.[2] Until after *Dead Souls*, he also had little interest in learning about Russia. Yet he did live seven years in Petersburg and immerse himself in Russian life. Gogol's observations from this period led him to regard Russia as an inorganic culture, imperiled by the ruptures of Peter I's cultural revolution. He formed a view that Russia lacked a national character. In contrast to the culture, customs, and history that shaped Gogol's fictional Ukraine, the one phenomenon that encapsulates Russia for Gogol is its huge and corrupt government bureaucracy. This aspect of Russian life underpins every one of Gogol's works on Russian themes except "The Portrait" and "The Carriage."

Gogol's Russian thematic evolved from the stories centered on the imperial capital, St. Petersburg, through *The Government Inspector*, which

stages a confrontation between Petersburg and the provinces, to *Dead Souls*, which focuses exclusively on Russian provincial life. Since Gogol failed to find Russianness in the imperial capital, he hypothesized its possible existence in the vast social and cultural space beyond it. This centrifugal directionality led the writer into a blind alley of sorts: he hardly knew this mystifying, distant space, and whatever perceptions of it he formed hardly qualified as fodder for nationalistic fiction. Yet nationalism was in vogue, and Gogol's readers expected it of his works on Russia after he had shown a talent for it in *Evenings*. But to fit these newer works of Gogol within a nationalist framework proved a daunting task for these readers, since Gogol depicted Russia in eminently *unnationalistic* spirit. Instead of proud affirmation, we get acerbic ridicule. Having portrayed Petersburg as a denationalized locus of venality and corruption, Gogol failed to imagine Russia's provinces as a matrix of a worthier national essence.

Though the negative aspects of Gogol's portrayal of Russia are typically discussed in terms of the author's *social* critique, I will demonstrate that—to some extent in the Petersburg stories but especially in *Dead Souls*—the critique is *national*. *Dead Souls* makes ample use of nationalistic terms and concepts but withholds nationalistic content, offering a grim account of the national status quo. The novel's prognosis of the nation's future glory collapses upon contextualization. While *The Government Inspector*, by contrast, is free of nationalistic discourse, the play's reception hinged on nationalism, on the question of Gogol's verisimilitude in what was seen as his portrayal of the Russian nation. Indeed, fervid debates surrounded Gogol's image of Russia, and this chapter will closely trace them. While some argued for the correctness of this image and crowned Gogol as an original Russian talent, others accused him of caricature and antinational calumny. Thus as Gogol moves into Russian themes, he simultaneously enters Russia's nationalist cultural politics. This perilous association promised the big prize—becoming a national icon—yet it also made Gogol vulnerable to attack, should his image of the Russian nation be deemed improper, as indeed it did for many.



Petersburg in Gogol's Tales: A New Babylon

> After all, my heart is Russian. Despite the fact that . . . the thought of Petersburg makes my skin crawl and pervades me through and through with awful dampness and a hazy atmosphere, I would fancy taking a railway ride and listening to the confusion of words and speeches of our Babylonian population in the passenger cars.
>
> GOGOL'S LETTER FROM ROME TO HIS RUSSIAN FRIEND, M. P. BALABINA, NOVEMBER, 1838

In contrast to the popular image of St. Petersburg as a new Rome—the grandiose capital of a great empire—Gogol's fiction casts the city as a new Babylon: the seat of corruption and an unnatural confusion of languages and nationalities (the Russian word for "Babel" is the same as for "Babylon": *Vavilon*).[3] Gogol's Petersburg stories continue the demonic portrayal of the city initiated by *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka*. Yet while the blacksmith Vakula, thanks to the devil forced to serve him, can arrange for a speedy transfer back to Ukraine, the characters of Gogol's Petersburg stories appear trapped in the evil city that consumes and dehumanizes them. Each of these stories features a character going insane. Gogol's personal dislike for the city, which reverberates even in the muted sneer to his Russian friend quoted in the epigraph, revealed itself fully in his fiction. Abominable weather, lack of national wholeness, and rampant careerism all came to stand for Gogol as defining features of the imperial capital.

The story "Nevsky Prospect" transforms the eponymous boulevard into a synecdoche of the city itself. Gogol activates a popular eighteenth-century odic tradition that portrayed the city as a proud achievement, a testament to national greatness.[4] By the mid-1830s, eulogistic descriptions of Petersburg were also becoming popular in the journals and ethnographic publications, such as the multivolume *Panorama of Petersburg* (*Panorama Peterburga*, 1834) by Bashchutsky, whose description of a day on Nevsky Prospect may have inspired Gogol. Gogol's rhetoric of praise in the story, however, superficially masks ample layers of irony and in the end subverts the eulogistic genre from which it stems. A favorite place for strolls, the street is initially described as "the only place where people appear not perforce, where they have not been chased by necessity or the mercantile interest that envelops all Petersburg" (*PSS* 3, 9). The continuation of the story, however, shows Nevsky's congruence with, not exception from, the "mercantile interest," greed, and profit seeking that characterize the city as a whole. On Nevsky one of the two protagonists, the artist Piskarev, meets a beautiful woman, whom he idealizes as the height of feminine perfection. When she turns out to be a prostitute, he finds the realization so crushing that he goes mad and commits suicide.

The main communication thoroughfare and meeting place, Nevsky Prospect, paradoxically, emerges as the icon of Russia's social rifts. The daily activity on Nevsky is regulated by an unofficial schedule according to which certain groups of people take over the street for a period of time, being replaced by, but never mingling with, the group that occupies the neighboring "slot." Before noon, the poor and the working class traverse the boulevard without giving the place much thought. Nevsky's afternoon visitors, however, cultivate their presence in the fashionable spot. First the tutors and governesses "of all nations" bring their pupils for the stroll. After "pedagogic Nevsky Prospect" dissipates, the children's parents start their strolling shift. They are slowly replaced by the government clerks returning from work, whose comportment is diversified according to their position within the Table of Ranks. At dusk the street enlivens again, this time with the nether side of urban life, providing a meeting place for bachelors and streetwalkers and luring all into sin. In contrast to the communal spirit and social cohesion that characterize Gogol's Ukrainian localities, Petersburg embodies disunity and fragmentation. Each social group remains within the orbit of its own world.

The upper classes transform Nevsky into a veritable vanity fair. The tone of naive fascination thinly veils a scathing image of this class as superficial, false, and beholden to a value system whereby social rank and trappings of wealth determine the worth of a person. On Nevsky Prospect, the narrator says, one's worth is determined by the quality of one's shoes or the cut of one's coat. One also encounters the kind of mustache to which "a better half of life is devoted": pomaded and perfumed and carefully tended at all hours of day and night (*PSS* 3, 12–13). The narrator presents the human gallery on Nevsky through a synecdoche—the trope so central to the story as a whole—of elements of clothing or body parts. The strolling high society emerges as a dehumanized procession of hats, sideburns, noses, coats, waists as thin as a bottleneck, sleeves as enormous as balloons. This sardonic enumeration coincides with the narrator's ironic eulogy that "this blessed time" on Nevsky witnesses "the main

exhibition of all the highest creations of man" (*PSS* 3, 13). The idea of human greatness is reduced to complete superficiality.

In sum, the rhetoric of praise heightens the irony. The boulevard mirrors Petersburg as a place of social rifts, superficiality, dehumanization, and fragmentation that stand in opposition to the cultural wholeness and communality of Ukraine as depicted in the *Dikanka* stories. In contrast to the moral standing in a community that bestows status in Rudy Panko's Ukraine, in the Petersburg of "Nevsky Prospect," wealth and rank define people and their place in the social hierarchy. Petersburg, as G. A. Gukovsky notes, represents "the center of evil," and "what is said of Nevsky applies to the Russian empire as a whole."[5]

The story portrays the Russian capital as a multinational rather than a "Russian" locus. This is due to Russia's imperial status, which opens it to foreignness. Taken from another perspective, the story shows Russian specificity to reside in precisely its *lack* of nationalness, in a preference for the foreign over the native that attests to the weakness of Russian culture. Curiously, in this section's epigraph, Gogol attempts to assure his Petersburg correspondent that his heart is Russian by claiming that he could conceivably bring his intense loathing for Petersburg under control in order to enjoy observing the "Babylonian"—*not* Russian—population of the capital. Is Russianness, then, defined as a lack of national self-respect? The story's second plot line, about Lieutenant Pirogov and the German artisan, seems to answer this question in the affirmative.

The story emphasizes the presence of foreigners in the city. English "Joneses," the French "Cocques," and the "pale Misses" (as opposed to "rosy Slavic women") raise Russian children (*PSS* 3, 11). The civil servants rush home, passing porters and artisans dressed in "German jackets," in anticipation of the food prepared for them by their "German cooks" (*PSS* 3, 15; the word *nemetskii* also meant simply "foreign" at the time). The artist Piskarev procures opium from a Persian. Lieutenant Pirogov, following a lady he spotted on Nevsky Prospect, enters a street of "German artisans and Finnish nymphs" (*chukhonskie*—a slighting ethnonym for the Finns; *PSS* 3, 36). The remainder of the story recounts his dealings with the cobbler Hoffman and the tinsmith Schiller, both Germans. These namesakes of the famous German authors, however, produce shoes and metalwork during their residence in Russia rather than belles lettres. "Diary of a Madman" similarly foregrounds the "Babylonian" character of the Petersburg population and the infusion of foreignness in Russian

culture. Its main hero, Poprishchin, notes that his boss's bookcase is filled exclusively with French and German books (*PSS* 3, 196). He calls his landlady "a silly Finnish woman" (*PSS* 3, 201). His particular form of madness, whereby he pictures himself the king of Spain and in his deranged mind spins various scenarios of international intrigue, seems a perfect outgrowth of the insalubrious, multinational Petersburg climate.

In fact, the manuscript versions of both stories stressed this aspect even further; the printed texts tone down some "foreign" motifs or replace them with more "native" equivalents. In "Nevsky Prospect," the manuscript's tautological liuteranskaia kirka (*kirka* from the German "Kirche" means "Lutheran church"; *PSS* 3, 378) is replaced in the printed version by the Russian "church" (*tserkov'*; *PSS* 3, 46). The manuscript's "rosy Mesdemoiselles" become "rosy Slavic women" (*PSS* 3, 342). In the manuscript of "Diary of a Madman," the house of the bureaucratic dignitary Zverkov is said to contain multitudes of clerks and Poles (*PSS* 3, 196; higher officials often operated public offices out of their homes). The printed version substitutes Poles with "out-of-towners" of unspecified origin (*priezzhie; PSS* 3, 555).[6] The *PSS* editors attribute this change to censorship. Most likely, the censors did not welcome the image of their government as being run by non-Russians, especially Poles, who since the times of Alexander I were suspected as traitors. This may also explain why the most famous of Gogol's lowly clerk characters, Akaki Akakievich Bashmachkin from "The Overcoat," ended up with a Russian-sounding name, even though his original name was Polish: Tyszkiewicz (*PSS* 3, 451).

"Nevsky Prospect" cultivates the image of Petersburg as a tower-of-Babel confusion of nationalities through the recurrent motif of foreign speech and moments of cross-linguistic incomprehensibility. In a dream about his visit to the brothel, where a party of sorts is taking place (Gogol's satire on a polite society salon gathering), Piskarev is struck by a profusion of French and English words (*PSS* 3, 24). His talk with the mysterious lady with whom he is smitten is rudely interrupted by an elderly man who addresses her "in a language that Piskarev did not understand" (*PSS* 3, 26). The Persian opium dealer speaks Russian ungrammatically, referring to himself in the feminine gender (*PSS* 3, 29). Pirogov gets a sample of a Russian-German patois in an exchange between Schiller and his wife, which in the printed text was transcribed in Cyrillic but in the manuscript version appeared in the Latin script: "'Mein Frau,' he

shouted. 'Was wollen sie doch?' The blonde replied, 'Gehen sie to the kitchen!' " ("Genzi na kukhnia"; *PSS* 3, 40 and 371). Schiller's Russian, like the Persian's, is ungrammatical. The story thus foregrounds the theme of multiple languages and their "unnatural" confusion.

A nationalist rather than a multiculturalist, Gogol perceived such lack of unified identity and organic culture as unsettling and even demonic. Indeterminate nationality composed of characteristics of various nations unequivocally marks Gogol's devilish villains, such as Katerina's father in "A Terrible Vengeance." In a subtler manner, this demonic quality also attaches to the multinationalism of Petersburg. The concluding image of Nevsky Prospect in the eponymous story, in a reversal of the opening rhetoric of eulogy, stresses the ominousness of Petersburg's—and Russia's—most famous street:

> O, do not believe this Nevsky Prospect. . . . It is all a lie, all a dream, all is not what it seems! . . . Farther, by God, farther away from the street lamp! Faster, as fast you can, cross the street. You'll be lucky if you get away with a spill of its smelly oil on your smart jacket. But even besides the street lamp, all breathes falsity. It lies at all times, this Nevsky Prospect, but most of all when the night weighs down upon it with its thickened mass and separates the white and pale yellow walls of the houses, when the whole city transforms itself into thunder and brightness, the myriad of carriages descend from the bridges, the postilions yell and leap around on their horses, and the demon himself lights the lamps, just to show everything not in its real form. (*PSS* 3, 46)

According to Mikhail Epshtein, roar, bright light, fast movement, and a distorted view of things are standard features of Gogol's demonic portrayals of Russia.[7] The appearance of "the demon himself" who illumines the Petersburg landmark rounds out the infernal image of the city, where the glittering surface hides the abyss of destructive forces that can undo a person in an instant.

Due to its lack of national wholeness, Petersburg emerges as a classic Gogolian "unbounded" space, to use Robert Maguire's term: its borders are porous and allow an intrusion of inimical foreign elements.[8] Though Gogol is far from demonizing all individual foreigners, the multinational population of Petersburg certainly contributes to his vision of an existential instability at the heart of imperial Russia. The moneylender in "The Portrait" epitomizes a fiendish foreigner, the essence of non-Russian otherness. He wears a "wide Asian cloak," has a "vividly southern," olive-hued physiognomy, and is of an indeterminate nationality: "Was he a Greek, an Armenian, or a Moldovan—no one knew" (*PSS* 3, 431). A quintessential outsider, he stands for an intrusion of foreignness that Petersburg, to its own peril, welcomes and accommodates. By extension, this quality of Petersburg is shared by Russia as a whole. This troubling imperial condition problematizes Russia's status as a nation and likewise imperils and "unbounds" its space, making it vulnerable to hostile external forces.

While portraying the multinationalism of Petersburg as unsettling, "Nevsky Prospect" also offers a fairly jovial and sympathetic image of the Germans, the tinsmith Schiller and his friends. In fact, the confrontation between the German artisans and the Russian officer functions as a comparison between Germanness and Russianness, to the disadvantage of the latter. While the Russian beauty whom Piskarev follows turns out to be a prostitute, the "dumb" German blonde (*glupaia Nemka*; *PSS* 3, 43) who smote Pirogov turns out to be a faithful and honest, if indeed not particularly smart, wife (the manuscript referred to the German woman more endearingly: *glupen'kaia Nemka; PSS* 3, 375). The narrator ridicules Schiller's pathologic money pinching, seen in his willingness to rid himself of his nose to save on snuff, and his methodical pursuit of long-term economic goals, a quintessentially un-Russian trait.[9] However, the German artisan's skill and his pride at doing his job solidly are portrayed as respectable, positive characteristics. Unwilling to have dealings with Pirogov, who had seen him in an embarassing situation (when he was about to have his nose cut off), Schiller tries to discourage the Russian from placing an order for the spurs by naming an exorbitant price and a long period of wait. Yet when he fails, he "became pensive and started thinking how to best do his job so that it would really be worth fifteen rubles" (*PSS* 3, 40). Despite his dislike for the customer, he does manufacture magnificent spurs. Though Schiller indeed counts his pennies and, unlike a Russian, scrupulously controls his alcohol intake, his German drinking habits place him above other foreigners: "He drank completely unlike an Englishman who immediately after dinner bolts his door and tanks up alone. On the contrary, he, like a German, always drank with inspiration: either with Hoffman the cobbler or Kuntz the carpenter, also a German and a big drunkard. Such was the character of the noble Schiller" (*PSS* 3, 42).

Schiller is the only character in the story who exudes national pride and self-confidence. Despite living in Russia, he considers himself completely German and boasts of Germanness every chance he gets. At the same time, he is thoroughly contemptuous of all things Russian. He resents the fact that his economizing makes him reliant on the "nasty Russian snuff," much inferior to the German product that he reserves for holidays. He regrets contributing to the profits of the "nasty Russian store" where he buys the Russian snuff—no respectable German stores carry such a foul product (*PSS* 3, 37). It is this economic nationalism that prompts Schiller's drastic decision to rid himself of his nose. He perceives this appendage as the source of his costly addiction and thus the culprit of his deplorable reliance on the disgusting Russian product. He rants comically: "Twenty rubles and forty kopecks! I am a Swabian German; I have a king in Germany. I do not want a nose! Cut off my nose!" (*PSS* 3, 38). In his view all things German surpass all things Russian. In response to Pirogov's complaint about the high price of the spurs (fifteen rubles), the German artisan haughtily replies: " 'German work,' Schiller coolly pronounced, stroking his chin. "A Russian will take the job for two rubles' " (*PSS* 3, 39).

Schiller's contempt for Russian products extends to his contempt for the Russians. When Pirogov inopportunely intrudes on Schiller's libation with Hoffman, thus saving the hapless German nose for the continued consumption of "nasty" Russian snuff, the German tinsmith does not mince words when addressing the Russian officer. His behavior indicates that he considers his German nationality in itself, without any further distinction of social status, as superior to Russianness, regardless of the Russian intruder's nobility and rank:

> Meanwhile Pirogov bowed slightly and said with his characteristic pleasantness: "I beg your pardon." . . . "Get out of here [*Poshel von*]!" Schiller replied with a drawl. This took lieutenant Pirogov aback. Such treatment was quite novel to him. A smile that began to emerge on his face suddenly disappeared. With a feeling of offended dignity, he said: "It seems strange to me, dear sir . . . you obviously did not notice . . . I am an officer." . . . "And what of it! I—am a Swabian German. Me myself" (here Schiller slammed his fist on the table) "will be an officer: a year and a half a cadet, two years a lieutenant, and tomorrow already an officer. But I do not want to serve. I will does [*sic*] with the officer like this [*Ia s ofitserom sdelaet etak*]: phoo!" Schiller raised the palm of his hand and blew at it. (*PSS* 3, 38)

Schiller rebuffs Pirogov's pleasantries and appears completely unimpressed by his army rank, alleging an inflation of Russian military distinctions. While Pirogov attempts to establish his superiority by referring to his rank, Schiller feels that his mere identity as a "Swabian German" trumps all Russian social distinctions. Having discounted Russian military honors as worthless, Schiller also expresses disdain for the very idea of Russia's system of civil service, with which he proudly wants nothing to do. Significantly, unlike Schiller, Pirogov never evokes his Russianness as a distinction that might help him gain the upper hand over the German. He draws his sense of self-worth solely from his rank, not his nationality.

This asymmetry represents a voluble statement about Gogol's conception of Russianness, which in this story is reduced to a perverse captivation with the artificial system of ranks that hierarchizes a society and places its citizens in rivalry with one another. Such a notion of Russianness goes against a more common dynamic of nationalism that consists in a degree of democratization, a certain leveling of social difference inherent in the very notion of a national community to which all members of a society belong equally. While Schiller exudes confidence and pride due to his belonging to a community of "Swabian Germans," it does not occur to Pirogov to assert his Russianness in such terms. His rank in the social hierarchy completely defines—and confines—his identity.

Pirogov explains away Schiller's rudeness by his inebriation. Resolved to seduce Schiller's attractive wife, he insists on ordering Schiller's product to gain an excuse for visiting their shop. He takes considerable liberties with Mrs. Schiller, such as stealing a kiss in her husband's presence, but Schiller, though perturbed by such audacity, patiently restrains himself. Yet when one day he walks in on Pirogov kissing Mrs. Schiller's lovely foot, amid her desperate cries for help, the "phlegmatic" German restrains his rage no longer:

> "You boor!" he shouted at the height of indignation. "How dare you kiss my wife? You are a scoundrel, not a Russian officer. The devil take it, my friend Hoffman, I am a German, not a Russian swine!" Hoffman replied in the affirmative. "Oh, I do not wish any horns! Take him, my friend Hoffman, by the collar. . . . I have lived eight years in Petersburg, I have a mother in Swabia, and an uncle in Nüremberg, I am a German,

not horned beef ! Take everything off of him, my friend Hoffman! Take him by *die* hand *und die* foot [*za ruka i noga*], my *Kamerad* Kuntz!" (*PSS* 3, 44)

The "rowdy Teutons" rip Pirogov's clothes off and give him a rather painful flogging. Just as German snuff, German craftsmanship, German origin (Swabia), and the German king represent vital national values for Schiller, so does the sanctity of his marital union. He will not be cuckolded precisely because he is a German and not "a Russian swine." Though Gogol pokes fun at the German's inexhaustible reserves of national pride, the elements of which are as ostensibly meaningless in this situation as a mother in Swabia, the overall image of Schiller in the story is that of a sympathetic, if rather silly, figure. The narrator seems to relish the idea of German workers giving a Russian officer a sound thrashing. The reader is made to root for the Germans and against the Russian, who is shown to receive his just deserts.

As if to mitigate the disrespect that the Russian officer has suffered, the narrator hastens to establish Pirogov's private person, rather than his official capacity as an officer, as the target of the Germans' assault. He surmises that the nonofficial attire that Pirogov wore that day must have emboldened his captors. Were they confronted with the majesty of the full Russian uniform with the epaulets, the beating "probably" (*veroiatno; PSS* 3, 44) would not have happened. Isolating a heretofore principal marker of Pirogov's identity and removing from it the stigma of assault achieves two goals. It constitutes Gogol's conciliatory gesture toward censorship, which was sensitive to offensive treatment of members of higher ranks. Yet it also draws attention to the very fact that it tries to deny, that is, that a Russian military man of considerable rank has suffered grievously at the hands of a German tinsmith, cobbler, and carpenter who whipped his naked behind. This is a common rhetorical ploy of Gogolian narrators: whenever they protest too much, they seem to be asserting the opposite of their stated goal. The hypothetical nature of the narrator's pronouncement (*veroiatno*) further decreases his efficacy. Moreover, though the epaulets are nowhere in view, the German seems perfectly aware that he is dealing with a Russian officer. He addresses Pirogov as officer in his angry rant, though only to demean him by redefining his self-image: "you are a scoundrel, not a Russian officer."

When reporting on Schiller's feelings after the incident, the narrator

continues a hypothetical line of thought initiated by "probably" in the preceding quote, which contrasts with his earlier omniscient treatment of the German. He writes: "I am certain [*ia uveren*] that Schiller was in a high fever the next day, that he trembled like a leaf, expecting the police to come every minute, and that he would give God knows what so that all that took place yesterday were a dream" (*PSS* 3, 44). Such fearfulness would seem completely out of character for Schiller, in light of how the story portrayed him. The narrator's switch to a conjecture (*uveren* comes from *verit'*, "to believe") does not seem particularly persuasive: why not just state factually that such was Schiller's condition?

The sudden distance between the narrator and Schiller's consciousness contrasts with the uninterrupted narratorial omniscience with regard to Pirogov. The narrator straightforwardly reports Pirogov's initial outrage and his plans to file a formal complaint, to the tsar if necessary, that would send Schiller to Siberia, his subsequent visit to a coffeeshop and a stroll down Nevsky Prospect, and other pleasant distractions that gradually eliminate all thoughts of redress. The Russian officer simply forgets the insult and goes on with his life. A true creature of Petersburg, he moves along the superficial surface of life, caring not a whit about his personal, professional, and national dishonor. The German artisan ends up behaving honorably. The Russian, whose national pride is nonexistent and whose sense of social superiority proves insufficiently sensitive, lets the flogging go unrevenged and immerses himself in the vacuous Petersburg existence. The conclusion of the Pirogov plot, like that of the Piskarev plot, proves the story's thesis about the deceptiveness that reigns in the imperial capital. Nothing is as it seems: the German tinsmith acts more justly and honorably than the Russian officer, who, though he may look impressive while promenading on Nevsky, is no more than a cowardly and dishonorable scoundrel.

"Diary of a Madman" develops the "Nevsky Prospect" themes of the obsession with rank and the Babylonian confusion of nationalities. The lowly clerk Aksenty Poprishchin, the diary's author, develops a form of madness whereby his futile dream of climbing up the ranks of Russia's civil service eventually catapults him out of the Russian context and into the international one: he forms a conviction that he is the king of Spain, Ferdinand VIII. This happens when he realizes that he will never advance within the tsarist bureaucracy. The daughter of a high-ranking bureaucrat, whom he had absurdly unrealistic hopes to marry and thus advance his

career, is about to be wedded to a certain Gentleman of the Bedchamber who outranks Poprishchin. Having found this out, Poprishchin muses about the ephemeral nature of social distinction and in effect deconstructs the very idea of a rank system:

> So what if he is a Gentleman of the Bedchamber. It is nothing but a title and not a visible thing that one can take in one's hand. A third eye will not appear in one's head because one is a Gentleman of the Bedchamber. His nose is not made out of gold, but is just like mine and like everyone else's; after all he smells with it and not eats, sneezes, not coughs. I have tried already several times to figure out where all these differences come from. Why am I a Titular Councilor and by what right am I a Titular Councilor? Maybe I am some count or a general and just seem to be a Titular Councilor? Maybe I don't know myself who I am. After all, there are so many examples from history: some simple person, not even a nobleman, but some burgher or even a peasant—and suddenly it turns out he is some sort of a grandee, and sometimes even a ruler. If a peasant may become something like that, what can a nobleman become? (*PSS* 3, 206)

The passage reduces social rank within bureaucratic hierarchy to an empty signifier. Though the system had formerly been an idée fixe for Poprishchin, who had objectified high rank as the worthiest human goal, a long chain of disappointments causes him to question the system's legitimacy, indeed reality. Of course, not realistic about his own talents and prospects, Poprishchin merely sets up an alternative reality for his injured ego. His earlier hopes for a promotion had been as groundless as his imaginary royal transformation: though approaching the age of forty, his office duties had not gone beyond sharpening quills. Having set up the logic of transformation—if a peasant can become a grandee, a member of the gentry like himself should be able to do the same and more—Poprishchin deals with his social and sexual rejection by "becoming" the king of Spain. After reading about Spain's vacated throne, he one day pronounces: "There is a king in Spain. He has been found. I am that king. . . . I do not understand how I could imagine that I was a Titular Councilor" (*PSS* 3, 207). Leaving behind his rivalry with the heads of bureaucratic departments, Poprishchin elevates himself to the society of heads of state. His delusional escape from the Russian rank system propels him also out of time: the entry that marks his transformation bears the fantastic date of Year 2000, April 43.

Awaiting the arrival of Spanish deputies, Spain's new "king" for the time being chooses to remain incognito. Purely for amusement, he vouchsafes to show up at the office one day and to the amazement of everyone signs an official document "Ferdinand VIII." He remakes his uniform into a "Spanish national costume" (*PSS* 3, 568, variant of l.18). Finally, he ends up in an insane asylum, which he imagines as a transfer to Spain. Brutal treatment at this institution causes Poprishchin to wonder about the strange national customs in what he continues to regard as Spain: he is cruelly beaten and subjected to a cold water cure. This ordeal sparks a series of further displacements and transformations. Poprishchin claims that Spain and China are really the same country: "I advise everyone to write intentionally on a piece of paper 'Spain,' and it will come out 'China' " (*PSS* 3, 212). He pronounces that the moon is made of cheese in Hamburg by a lame cooper and prophesies that the earth is about to sit on it. He suspects that the hospital staff, whom he regards as the Inquisition, torments him because of some French conspiracy against him. The French, in turn, are the puppets of the English: "An Englishman is a great politician. . . . It is already known to the whole world that when England takes snuff, France sneezes." Poprishchin transforms his main tormentor into the Grand Inquisitor, "a machine, the tool of the Englishman" (*PSS* 3, 213–214). Spain becomes displaced in his ravings into something that each rooster has under his feathers. Finally, completely broken down by the onerous burden of the Spanish crown, Poprishchin sets up the logic for yet another transformation by focusing on the poor physical shape of another ruler, whose demise might vacate another governing position: "and do you know that the Dey of Algiers has a boil under his nose?" (*PSS* 3, 571).

The international character of Poprishchin's schizophrenia seems integrally linked to the disorienting and unsettling multinationalism in Gogol's image of Petersburg, the story's locale. National identity in Poprishchin's ravings emerges as elusive and deceptive: Spain becomes indistinguishable from China; France's actions arise as a result of English machinations. What should be unitary and whole, such as bodies and nations, appears disjointed and fragmented. The story's noses offer a particularly bizarre metaphor in this respect. Poprishchin builds an image of England as a nose that partakes of snuff, yet he exports the sneezing effect beyond its borders, to France. His idea that noses reside on the moon increases this displacement from a merely international to an interplanetary dimension. Having deconstructed rank to make it an empty signi-

fier, Poprishchin proceeds to do the same to nations. Their objective existence in the world proves just as illusory: Poprishchin ceases to regard Spain as a country and reduces it to a thing that each rooster has under his plumage. No firm boundaries between "self" and "other" exist. Petersburg proves easily susceptible to an intrusion of foreign forces, an aspect of the Gogolian image of the city that later captivated Andrei Bely. The Petersburg environs provide an operational base for insidious agents of foreignness. Poprishchin claims that a certain barber and a midwife lead a global conspiracy to effect a worldwide victory of Islam (*PSS* 3, 210, variants 568; in the manuscript version the barber is sponsored by the Turkish sultan). In sum, the pattern of Poprishchin's delusions and obsessions takes root from the characteristic of Gogol's Petersburg: a disjointed, multinational locus that lacks an organic and distinctive identity, a place where forces inimical to an individual conspire to topple him.

Even though Poprishchin's mind wanders out of Petersburg's civil servant rat race into progressively distant international and interplanetary spaces, in the moment of his greatest anguish, his desperate imagination transports him somewhere very close to home. Unable to withstand the torments of the cold water cure, he exclaims:

> Save me! Take me away! Give me three horses as fast as the wind! Sit down, my driver; ring, my bell; rise up, horses, and carry me from this world! Farther, farther away, so that I can see nothing, nothing. Here the sky swirls in front of me; a little star [*zvezdochka*] glitters afar . . . the sea on one side, Italy on the other; here the Russian huts [*russkie izby*] appear. Is it my home that shines bluish in the distance? Is it my mother who sits in front of the window? Mommy [*matushka*], save your poor son! drop a tear on his poor little sick head [*uroni slezinku na ego bol'nuiu golovushku*]. Look how they're torturing him! Press to your breast the poor little orphan [*bednyi sirotka*]! He has no place in this world! they're after him!—Mommy! have pity on your sick little child [*o bol'nom ditiatke*]! (*PSS* 3, 214)

The asylum's brutal efforts to restore Poprishchin to his senses cause him to seek comfort in an imaginative trip back home, which seems to be in Ukraine. "The sea on one side and Italy on the other" refers to Poprishchin's—and Gogol's—true homeland: between the Black Sea and Italy, with which Gogol, and many before him, frequently associated Ukraine ("the Slavic Ausonia"). The *russkie* in "Russian huts" denotes in this instance an all-inclusive ethnic, not a national designation (in the sense in which all East Slavs could then be termed *russkie*). The "Russian huts" contrast with the "non-Russian" Petersburg architecture. Significantly, this is the first and only reference to "Russianness" in the story. It appears only after Poprishchin has imaginatively "left" the Babylonian Petersburg and visited his southern home between the sea and Italy. For as long as he remains in Petersburg, the multinational kaleidoscope of his illusions builds its patterns from references to all countries *but* Russia: France, England, Finland, Germany, Holland, China, Algiers, and, in the manuscript version, also Poland and Turkey. Reserving *russkoe* for the empire's southern periphery reveals the importance Gogol placed on Ukraine's strong ethnic identity and on its role as the cradle of Slavdom, a bulwark against Westernization. He considered Petersburg antithetical to such conceived "Russianness."

The sudden revelation of Poprishchin's Ukrainianness comes on the wave of typically Ukrainian linguistic forms in the quoted passage, especially the heavy use of the diminutive (*ditiatka*, *slezinka*). In an impulse reminiscent of the reversion to the ontogenetic past of the fetal position, Poprishchin deals with his pain by revisiting his cultural past: his home in Ukraine and his Ukrainianized Russian idiom. Indeed, his persistent focus on the foreignness of the Petersburg world may well stem from Poprishchin's own foreign status in it. This did not escape the attention of Gogol's early Ukrainian translator, Olena Pchilka, who saw Poprishchin as a paradigmatic Ukrainian in Petersburg.[10]

For all its fantasy and surrealism, the story does possess autobiographical verisimilitude. It seems to capture Gogol's own experience of the capital: his alienation, a frustration with his career in the civil service, an obsession about finding his calling, his *poprishche*, and a discovery of his own foreignness in Russia's capital that inspired bouts of nostalgia about Ukraine. Like Poprishchin, Gogol held mindless clerk jobs that clashed with his much higher aspirations and, like him, sought refuge from the abhorrent city through real and imaginary trips to Ukraine. Like Poprishchin, he saw himself in rivalry with a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, Pushkin.[11] Gogol's characteristic Spanish-style beard had gained him a nickname of a "Russian Spaniard."[12] In the end, Gogol found a more real Spain than Poprishchin when he transplanted himself to Italy, his "second homeland" (*PSS* 11, 109), which for him resembled his native Ukraine.[13] (The story presciently encodes this Italian-Ukrainian proximity before

Gogol even saw Italy for the first time.) Thus Poprishchin's escapist fantasies parallel, though not exactly mirror, Gogol's own impulses.

The manner in which the story introduces the motif of Ukraine also corresponds to Gogol's attitude at the time. Ukrainianness is not an identity that Poprishchin flaunts but one that he hides, naming his homeland by a poetic but cryptic "the sea on one side, Italy on the other." As I have shown in Chapter 3, Gogol's activities as a historian at the time the story was written were also characterized by evasion and concealment. He tempered his Ukrainian sympathies in order to fit within Russian imperial culture. Though Poprishchin tries out many other identities, he returns to the Ukrainian one in his moment of greatest anguish. Gogol similarly tries to make a career out of the Russian identity, and around the mid-1830s, Ukrainianness ever more becomes for him an inner refuge rather than an aspect of his public persona.

"Nevsky Prospect" and "Diary of a Madman" dramatize the absence of nationality in St. Petersburg, which comes to represent an imperial, rather than a national, capital. Equipped with a Herderian conception of organic, cultural nationality that suited his Ukrainian theme, Gogol finds Petersburg's "Babylonian" population bereft of qualities that mark a Herderian nation. His stories portray the city as a multinational colony, an inorganic graft on the body of Russia from whence extends a corrupt and dehumanizing bureaucratic apparatus that holds the empire in its grip. Far from any enthusiasm for ideas such as the more recent American notion of a "melting pot," Gogol found the infusion of foreignness unsettling and even demonic. Nor did he detect any signs of "melting" among the capital's diverse elements. Gogol's tinsmith Schiller, despite years of residence in Russia, regards himself wholly German and shows no desire to acquire Russianness, which he thoroughly despises. To Schiller's high-pitched German nationalism Gogol juxtaposes Pirogov's boasting about his standing in a bureaucratic hierarchy. The obsession with rank that characterizes Gogol's Petersburgers and Russians leaves no room for a cultivation of nationality, which remains evanescent.

The reviews of *Arabesques*, though derisive about the scholarly pretensions of Gogol's nonfiction, singled out as praiseworthy "Nevsky Prospect" and "Diary of a Madman." Reviewers for *The Library for Reading* and *The Northern Bee* noted Gogol's talent for caricature and comic characterizations, and both advised the author to stick to fiction.[14] *Arabesques* and *Mirgorod* earned Gogol critical acclaim through Belinsky's long article

"On the Russian Tale and the Tales of Mr. Gogol," in which the young critic hails the young writer as the leader of Russian literature. Belinsky asserts that the era of poetry was over and the age of prose has dawned, that Pushkin was finished, and that Gogol had unseated the laureled poet. He makes the novel and the tale the principal contemporary genres and crowns Gogol as the master of the latter.

Belinsky presents the "nationalness" of Gogol's fiction as a function of realistic representation, which demonstrates that everyone should stop worrying about nationality and instead focus on being true to life. Belinsky actively participated in the Russianization of Gogol in the round of 1835–1836 reviews of *Evenings*. In "On the Russian Tale," he praises Gogol for not restricting himself to Ukraine but crafting fictions about Russian life. In "Nevsky Prospect" and "Diary of a Madman," Belinsky is pleased to note that "everyone is Russian" (*SSBel* 1, 172). Contrary to all of Gogol's early *Dikanka* reviewers who saw Gogol's humor as purely Ukrainian, Belinsky finds it "purely Russian" (*SSBel* 1, 175). According to Belinsky, Gogol's fictions on Russian themes search for "poetry" in the life of the Russian middle estate. Since he cannot quite claim Gogol's rapture over this slice of Russian life, he seems to make up for it with his own rapture: "My God, what a deep and powerful poetry did [Gogol] find there! We, the Muscovites, did not even suspect it!" (*SSBel* 1, 178). In "Nevsky Prospect" Belinsky finds this "deep and powerful" poetry in the contrast between the high and the comical sides of human life, exemplified by the Piskarev and Pirogov plots, respectively. He is untroubled by Gogol's uncomplimentary portrayal of the Russian capital, nor does Gogol's penchant for caricature, which he does note, complicate his thesis about Gogol's verisimilitude. But most important, Gogol's status as a Ukrainian writer has been redefined: he is now seen as a major Russian author of Ukrainian provenance.

Gogol's "Petersburg Notes of 1836," published two months before Gogol left for the self-imposed exile that led him to Italy, provide a fitting postscript to the writer's treatment of the Petersburg theme. Designed as a review of the Petersburg stage, the article opens with an elaborate comparison between Petersburg and Moscow, Russia's new and old capitals. Aleksandr Radishchev's celebrated *A Journey from Petersburg to Moscow* (1790) encoded the comparison between the two cities as a traditional device in Russian culture for commenting on the country's social and cultural condition, a "state of the nation" analysis of sorts.[15] The very

existence of two such centers palpably reflected the rift caused by Peter's reforms and, unsurprisingly, the discussion of these cities proceeded by way of contrast. Moscow was traditionally regarded as the seat of old patriarchal ways, a bulwark of pre-Petrine Russia, and a domain of non-service nobility. Petersburg, on the other hand, epitomized Russia's modern self that was fashioned according to Peter's Westernizing decrees, the heart of imperial power and its extensive bureaucracy. This basic dichotomy, which survived until the Bolshevik coup d'état and after, also characterizes Gogol's treatment of the topic. Though Gogol's polarity favors Moscow, which Gogol visited for the first time in 1832, neither city expresses national specificity. Both exist in suspension from Russia proper and represent the extraordinary and the atypical rather than the essence of the characteristic.

Gogol paints the space between Moscow and Petersburg as desolate and barren, which recalls the characterization of the unprepossessing Russian nature from "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" and "A Few Words about Pushkin": "But what a wasteland [*dich'*] between the mother and the son! What views are these, what nature! Fog pervades the air; on the pale, grayish-greenish earth stand scorched tree stumps, pines, small firs, hummocks. . . . Thankfully, at least a road, straight as an arrow, and Russian *troikas* [carriages drawn by three horses], singing and ringing, fly past at full speed" (*PSS* 8, 177). This pitiful body of Russia that lies between the capitals emerges as a barren space one hastens to traverse in order to get somewhere else. This is Gogol's basic image of Russia that he will elaborate in *Dead Souls*, connecting Russianness not to the body of Russia but to the movement of the *troika* that carries one across it and somehow past it. Contiguity is lacking between the desolate expanse and the big capitals that punctuate it. The linkages, if any, are economic: Russia goes to Petersburg in order to make money but shows up in Moscow for spending sprees. Gogol sums up the relationship in a famous formula: "Russia needs Moscow; Petersburg needs Russia" (*PSS* 8, 179). Yet even here "Russia" appears ontologically distinct from either Petersburg or Moscow; it is an entity that exists outside them, presumably in that mystifying foggy space of scorched tree stumps and stunted vegetation. Or perhaps under a rooster's plumage?

Moscow and Petersburg form a perfect dichotomy in Gogol's article. Moscow still wears a Russian beard (which Peter I ordered shaved), appears rather "uncombed," and resembles an old housewife who learns

about the distant world from stories, without budging from her chair.[16] Petersburg, in contrast, resembles a "meticulous German," a foppish youth who never sits at home but, having put on his best clothes, "pranc[es] in front of Europe [and] exchanges bows with the foreign folk." At midnight, Petersburg starts baking its French bread, to be eaten the next day by its "German" (or "foreign") population (*PSS* 8, 178).

In a parallel to Gogol's fiction, "Petersburg Notes of 1836" draws attention to Petersburg's foreignness and its orientation toward nations other than Russia. The metaphors describing Petersburg society emphasize fragmentation and a lack of national uniqueness. For Gogol the city resembles a European colony in America in its lack of indigenous nationality and an abundance of heterogeneous foreign elements. While Gogol's fictional Ukraine abounds in organic localities and tight communities, Petersburg reminds him of a hotel. What stops the city from actually becoming one, Gogol conjectures, is "some kind of inner element" that somehow has not become obliterated in the Russians' constant intercourse with foreigners (*PSS* 8, 180).

Yet Gogol does not probe this hypothetical "inner element" any further. It eludes him in both the article and his Petersburg fiction, and Gogol will devote the next decade and a half to a dogged and at times desperate search for it. While a literary expression of Ukrainianness seemed to come to him rather effortlessly, his pursuit of Russianness became a journey in a confoundingly unfamiliar realm. Since the Russian capitals in Gogol's view did not express the Russian spirit, he grew determined to seek it in the vast expanse outside of them, which was largely unknown to him. Writing in 1834 from Petersburg to his Moscow friend Pogodin, Gogol, invoking Russia's preimperial and poetic name Rus, said: "in our capital there is the Finnish folk, in yours—the merchants, and Rus exists only amid Rus" (*PSS* 10, 293–294). In *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls*, Gogol will approach this mysterious space of Rus through acts of literary imagination.

Petersburg Meets the Provinces: *The Government Inspector*

Like comparisons between Petersburg and Moscow, confrontations between Petersburg and the provinces constituted a familiar topos in the literature of the time, especially journalistic. They often took the form of letters of a provincial from or to the capital.[17] A perfect estranging device,

such letters were typically very critical of Petersburg and commented on the city's negative influence on young unformed people. Ukrainian writers made frequent use of the contrast between the capital and the provinces. Kvitka-Osnovianenko's comedy *A Visitor from the Capital* (*Priezzhii iz stolitsy*, written in 1827 and published in 1840; Gogol knew it in manuscript) portrayed a con man who pretended to be a high Petersburg official in order to dupe provincial civil servants.[18] While the comparisons typically focused on Petersburg, Antoni Pogorelsky repositioned this device to describe the provinces to a Petersburg reader. His popular novel *The Girl from the Convent* (*Monastyrka*, 1830) featured a young graduate of an elite Petersburg school for girls who travels to Ukraine and amusingly describes her culture shock to her Petersburg friend. Gogol juxtaposes Petersburg and the provinces in his comedy *The Government Inspector*, staged in Petersburg in April 1836, then in Moscow, and published as a book the same year. Like the genre of the provincials' letters, it portrays Petersburg as a corrupting influence on those dwellers of the provinces who become seduced by the city's siren song of rank and high living.

The play marked Gogol's debut as a professional, civic-minded writer. Much later, in "An Author's Confession," Gogol claimed that the play marked his departure from the carefree laughter of his earlier works to goal-oriented, satirical laughter (*PSS* 8, 440). Though this characterization seems overly simplistic and reflects Gogol's management of his public persona in the late 1840s, it does correctly diagnose the nature of the play's comedic spirit. While Gogol also used satire in his depictions of contemporary Ukrainian reality in such stories as *Dikanka*'s "Ivan Fedorovich Shponka and His Aunt" or *Mirgorod*'s "Old-World Landowners," Belinsky was right to note that in them Gogol "laughs without malice" (*SSBel* 1, 169). In *The Government Inspector*, however, Gogol laughs maliciously, or, to put it more precisely, Gogol's scathing satire is not balanced by the layer of sympathy that characterizes his portrayal of provincial Ukraine. The milieu depicted in the play is a circle of corrupt government officials in an unnamed provincial Russian town to the southeast of Moscow. The locality is the paradigmatic Russian backwoods, from where, as the town's Mayor says, "you ride a horse for three years and you won't reach another state" (*PSS* 4, 12).

What connects the provinces with Petersburg in the play is precisely the bureaucratic machine that endows the town officials with their power.

Expecting an incognito government inspector from Petersburg, the town officials take a traveler who stops at a local inn for this inspector and lavishly bribe him. It proves to be a case of mistaken identity: the traveler is in fact a young man named Khlestakov who, having failed to rise to prominence in the Petersburg civil service, has been ordered back home by his angry father. Khlestakov gratifies the town's desire to treat him as a Petersburg grandee, especially since he has lost all his money at gambling and is being starved by the innkeeper. He is a stereotypical young wastrel, superficial and indolent, yet his cheap Petersburg glitter and his uncanny gift for the most fantastic bragging easily impress the country bumpkins. Khlestakov collects a small fortune from the bribes and proposes to the Mayor's daughter, after which he leaves town, falsely promising to return soon. The play ends with an announcement that a man calling himself an inspector has arrived and demands the officials' presence. The conned civil servants freeze in fearful, astonished poses, and the curtain goes down.

The play's two most radical departures from the traditional comedies of the time are the marginalization of a love plot and the absence of positive characters. The plot of *The Inspector* hinges on the workings of the governmental system rather than love; the petty villains have no redeeming qualities and are not counterbalanced by exemplars of virtue. In "Leaving the Theater after the Performance of a New Comedy," written to refute his critics, Gogol argues against basing a comedy on love intrigue: "Nowadays a stronger element for dramatic emplotment is the striving to obtain a comfortable post, to shine and eclipse another person at all cost, to take revenge for the contempt and ridicule one has suffered. Is there not more electricity now in rank, financial capital, a profitable marriage, than in love?" (*PSS* 5, 142). Such "electric" social comedy would be far more effective than one based on a love intrigue since it directly links all characters, rather than just the lovers, to the engine of the plot.

The obsession with rank, money, and social status that had come to characterize the Petersburg society in Gogol's stories also imbues his image of the provinces in *The Inspector*. The same venality, corruption, and pretensions that Gogol attributed to Russia's capital exist, in a coarser form, in Russia's small-town heartland. *The Inspector* depicts the provincial civil servants as cogs in a vast and inefficient machine of governmental bureaucracy. They abuse the system through various schemes aimed at personal enrichment and the retention of power. Bribery is the

key determinant of interpersonal relations, a basic function of social existence; the life of the town—as of the play—seems to revolve almost exclusively around it. Gogol's focus on bribery, incidentally, continues the tradition of his Ukrainian predecessor and friend of the family, Vasily Kapnist, and his Russian comedy *Chicanery* (*Iabeda*, 1798). Civil institutions function in Gogol's comedy antithetically to the Petrine ideal of service and civic duty and resemble instead a system of medieval fiefdoms. The custodians of the town's various institutions regard them as havens from which to launch their extortion schemes.

Though in response to criticisms Gogol later described the play as a critique of the system's abuses rather than of the system itself, the play offers support for a contrary interpretation. The town officials' temporary transformation from bribe-takers into bribe-givers represents a reversal that is part of the natural cycle of their social life, like a carnivalesque one, though with less predictable timing. Though frightened of the Petersburg bigwig, they slip into these reversed roles very smoothly, like into well-worn slippers. While they cannot be sure, they expect the envoy of Petersburg to treat them as his own source of personal income—a solution they would prefer—just as they normally treat the town's inhabitants this way. Petersburg officials represent just another layer in the pecking order of extortion that defines Russian government bureaucracy. Khlestakov's complaint about his financial straits is instantly recognizable to the Mayor as fishing for a bribe. He promptly offers a "loan" to Khlestakov, whom he takes to be the Petersburg inspector, and is very proud that he cleverly folded in the wad of bills twice the requested amount. The Mayor's comments to himself in the scene suggest that he finds the situation familiar and has practiced handling it many times before (*PSS* 4, 33–39). He evaluates Khlestakov's cues as either hackneyed devices or ingenious inventions of a social ritual that he, the wily Mayor, will do his best to enact well. The extortion does not represent a regional plague in the comedy but starts at the top, in Petersburg. Khlestakov's conversations with the officials and merchants in Act IV, during which he asks for further "loans," feature bribery as a schematic ritual that surprises none of Khlestakov's guests. All but the obtuse Bobchinsky and Dobchinsky, who are not civil servants but landowners residing in the town, show up for the interview with their pockets well lined with money and, naturally, request no promissory notes.

The scathing critique of the town extends beyond the fundamental vice of bribery. The institutions headed by the corrupt officials are completely

out of joint. The sick in the hospitals are dirty like blacksmiths and kept without medicine; in order to improve health-care statistics, the Mayor orders that some be released. The doctor is an inept German, Christian Hübner, who speaks no Russian and emits only a nondescript sound, between "ee" and "eh." A whip, rather than blindfolded Justice, adorns the office of the local judge. The postmaster opens and reads all incoming and outgoing correspondence, simply out of curiosity, and even retains the letters he likes best. Upon the Mayor's request, he intercepts denunciations. The Mayor, a relentless scourge of the merchants, provides for his family's needs by treating himself to anything he likes from their stores. He has defrauded government funds for the construction of a church and plans to lie that it burned down. Those who fail to buy his favor are sent away as army recruits; he orders an innocent woman flogged. The local inn's gargantuan bedbugs—vermin being a permanent fixture of Gogol's associations with Russia since the *Dikanka* tales—"bite like dogs" (*PSS* 4, 36).

The play combines this unflattering portrayal of the small-town order of things with an equally negative picture of Petersburg. The Russian capital reflects itself in the notions and ideas of the provincials as in a crooked, yet in a way faithful, mirror. As with the governmental system, Gogol's irony is bidirectional. He ridicules the rustics' vulgarity, pretensions, and crass fascination with superficialities, yet he also presents Petersburg with an unenviable assessment. *The Government Inspector,* as Donald Fanger notes, is about the power of Petersburg. This power, however, is far from a civilizing influence.[19] The play's Petersburg premiere was meant not only to show, in a comedic light, the provinces to Petersburg society but also to show Petersburg an image of itself that it had justifiably earned. Considering the conception of the city from Gogol's tales, it is impossible to imagine how his Petersburg could be transformed into a beacon of enlightenment, an agent for the amelioration of mores, and an ethical standard for the country at large. Instead, there is a continuity between the tales and the play in the image of the capital, which emerges as the locus of corruption, careerism, venality, and superficiality. The province, entranced by the lure of Petersburg, picks up on exactly these characteristics and adopts them as its own values. Though the country vulgarians distort many aspects of life in the capital, they also present Petersburg with a very real—because shown as a tangible effect of its influence—account of its value.

The first image of Petersburg is filtered through the perception of

Khlestakov's serf servant, Osip, who reminisces about his life with the master in the capital. Though he prefers country living—more peaceful and secure, if less exciting—Osip considers Petersburg life superior so long as one has money to pay for its conveniences. He enjoys the gentility of life in the capital while being oblivious of its mercantile interest. The sexual promiscuity in the city, a motif Gogol developed in "Nevsky Prospect," also appears to Osip's liking. The most important disadvantage of Petersburg life for Osip is highly irregular nutrition: "one time you stuff yourself, another time you almost drop from hunger" (*PSS* 4, 27). He blames his young master for this predicament. Osip's monologue paints Khlestakov as an example of Petersburg's corrosive influence over unformed young people that flock to fill its myriad offices. The Petersburg environment exacerbates, rather than eradicates, what seem like Khlestakov's natural proclivity for profligacy, self-indulgence, and laziness. He spends his father's money for expensive finery that he must pawn the next day for a fraction of its value. He is an inveterate gambler and a fop, conscientious about strolling on Nevsky Prospect but far less so about his duty and career.

Khlestakov attributes his father's disapproval of a Petersburg lifestyle to his ignorance of a supposedly grander notion of life's meaning: "My father is stubborn and dumb as a post. I will tell him straight out: do as you will, but I cannot live without Petersburg. Really, why should I waste my life among peasants? Nowadays there are different needs; my soul craves enlightenment" (*PSS* 4, 36). Yet Khlestakov touched only the worthless veneer of enlightenment during his residence in Petersburg. His ersatz culture reveals itself in its full banal glory in the tall tales he spins for his provincial audience in Act III. His picture of wonderful Petersburg life features such pathetic thrills as being slapped on the shoulder by a jovial department head and being chased by a janitor, eager to shine Khlestakov's boots. Giving full rein to his fantasy, he then brags about consorting with ministers and even his visits to the court.

Untroubled by the mutual contradiction between various stories, Khlestakov treats the gaping yokels to a fizzy cocktail of delusion and self-aggrandizement fashioned on Petersburg's system of values. He brags about having the finest house in Petersburg and giving sumptuous balls: "On the table, for example, a watermelon worth seven hundred rubles. The soup in the pot came straight from Paris on a ship—the aroma the likes of which cannot be found in nature" (*PSS* 4, 49). He claims that

once 35,000 pages chased him around the city to beg him to take over the administration of some government department. When he enters his office, the clerks' fear and trembling supposedly creates an illusion of an earthquake. Khlestakov also brags about rubbing shoulders with Pushkin: "I'm on friendly terms with Pushkin. I often tell him, 'So how is it going, brother Pushkin?'—'So-so, brother,' he sometimes replies, 'somehow everything' [*tak kak-to vse*] . . . A very original person" (*PSS* 4, 48; Gogol added this motif only after Pushkin's death). Khlestakov knows Pushkin's works too insufficiently to improvise the poet's reply beyond "somehow, everything." His actual literary tastes resemble those of Poprishchin, an addict of vaudeville theater and light entertainment. In short, rank, wealth, capacity to inspire fear in subordinates, and a superficial veneer of culture constitute for Khlestakov, as they did for the characters in Gogol's Petersburg stories, the determinants of Petersburg life.

Khlestakov's Petersburg extravaganza leaves his provincial listeners speechless. The Mayor, "shivering with his whole body," is reduced in his eloquence to a Dr. Hübner and utters only meaningless sounds: "A va-va-va . . . va" (*PSS* 4, 50). Bobchinsky shares his view of Khlestakov with Dobchinsky: "Here, Petr Ivanovich, is a man. This is what a man means. My whole life I've never been in the presence of such an important person. I almost died from fear" (*PSS* 4, 51). High rank instills instinctive and irrational fear among the provincials, including the landowners who are not subject to inspection. When the Mayor's wife earlier in the play reminds Dobchinsky that he has nothing to fear, he replies: "Well, you know, when a grandee speaks, one feels fear" (*PSS* 4, 42). The townsfolk grovel and tremble before the very idea of high rank; they scarcely take a look at the person bearing it.

Petersburg transforms people in the play like a devilish temptation. The Mayor and his wife, though far from virtuous at the play's beginning, descend to the level of reptiles once they realize the ramifications of their daughter's impending marriage to a Petersburg grandee. The Mayor's speech is replete with references to the devil (*PSS* 4, 81–83). The prospect of a higher rank inspires vengeful thoughts in the Mayor to pursue his denouncers and to send whomever he pleases to Siberia. Both he and his wife immediately make plans to move to Petersburg and establish the grandest house in town, the sight of which will make people squint (*PSS* 4, 82, 83). The Mayor hopes for no less than the rank of general and already begins choosing his medals. His reason for wishing to become a

general—not having to wait for horses at coach stations—displays the full triviality of his provincial mind-set. Dobchinsky's image of Petersburg life offers another example of provincial banality. He tells the Mayor's wife: "You will be very, very happy. You will wear a golden dress and eat various delicate soups, and will have a very jolly time" (*PSS* 4, 86). The satire operates in both directions: apart from provincialism, it also attacks Petersburg for failing to establish a reputation for anything more than an amusement fair for richly dressed gourmands.

The prospect of a Petersburg life and a promotion wreaks havoc on whatever human relationships one can speak of in the play. The Mayor and his wife used to maintain amicable relations with the other civil servants; a certain camaraderie characterized their common enterprise of malversation. This changes once the evil wand of the Petersburg dream touches them. The wife immediately plans on jettisoning their old friends, whom she suddenly deems contemptible, and on making new ones, obligatorily from high society. During the celebratory meeting in Act V, the Mayor and especially his wife gloat with self-importance. Strained officiousness replaces former familiarity. The guests bow and kiss the ladies' hands and prostrate themselves in front of the future Petersburgers (while some whisper on the side, "Such swine always find happiness"; *PSS* 4, 87). The Mayor and his wife instantly become a potential source of protection for the friends-turned-supplicants. Like in the bribery scenes, the requests for protection resemble a well-ensconced social ritual rather than a novel situation. The Mayor's wife chills her husband's willingness to grant such requests by reminding him of the need to disassociate himself from "small fry." While the play's opening scene, which reveals the provincial town's rampant corruption, inspires good-natured laughter, the final act's gathering at the Mayor's home only turns one's stomach. In the memory of one witness of the premiere, all laughter ceased by the end of Act IV (Khlestakov's "interviews" with the townspeople); Act V brought the pinnacle of the audience's indignation.[20] In view of the insidious and demonic Petersburg connection, the make-no-bones-about-it petty provincial improbity seems like a benign rustic idyll.

The Government Inspector shows Russia as infected with the Petersburg ethos. Like in the Petersburg stories, the capital stands for such values as rank, money, social climbing, superficial refinement, ostentation. It lacks such values as morality, honesty, personal integrity. The play's provincials conceive of Petersburg in exactly such terms, translating them into banal

metaphors that reflect their narrow mind-set (a golden dress, a house that makes one "squint," or Khlestakov's watermelon worth 700 rubles). Though Gogol's irony is focused on the provinces, it is also directed at Petersburg itself, a dialectic that the play's interpretations have not sufficiently appreciated. Each holds up a mirror to the other. The sins of the province attach to Petersburg, and vice versa. The play presents the link between the two realms as a most insalubrious relationship. Though the mission of Petersburg was to civilize the periphery, the comedy shows that it corrupts, rather than civilizes, the Russian heartland. The national capital is a cancer on the body of Russia. The provincial bureaucrats misuse Petersburg's mandate for self-interested goals that make a parody of the calling of civil service. Gogol's nimble satire touches on everything and absolves no one. As such, the comedy presents a scathing critique of Russian society and institutions and a hopelessly grim vision of Russia.

While treating *The Government Inspector* as a political pamphlet *à clef* seems overly simplistic, Gogol's play stretches its moorings to a small town and does float onto larger waters. The dichotomy of Petersburg and the provinces, connected by a hierarchical political machine, functions as the play's key structural and ideological principle. This framework certainly encourages, if not demands, a reading that posits a link between the small-town swindlers in positions of political authority and their Petersburg equivalents. This overarching dialectic renders unconvincing any attempts to relegate all the corruption and Philistinism of Gogol's characters to the status of an exclusively provincial aberration. Fundamentally, *The Government Inspector* is about the relationship between the provinces and the capital, both of which function as targets of Gogol's satire. As such, the world portrayed in the play serves as a microcosm of Russia, of its social and political order and the culture that binds the country. Gukovsky is correct that the play revealed Gogol as a political writer.[21] Politics, as I will show in the next section, also played a large role in the play's unpublished reception. Even the tsar saw himself personally implicated in the events on stage. Leaving his theater box, he reportedly said: "Quite a play! Everyone got a beating—and me most of all!"[22]

The Inspector and Its Audience

It is a testament to how intensely Russia craved a national self-image that this contemporary social satire, hardly a genre that can gratify patriotic

pride, came to be viewed in terms of a national icon. In part, the author's Ukrainianness inspired a feeling of defensiveness about being portrayed in such an uncomplimentary way by an outsider, and this appears to underlie the widespread charges of slander.[23] However, what was seen as Russia's national image in *The Government Inspector* piqued both the critics and admirers of the play. The overall theater reception was quite good: the audience applauded vigorously and called the author on stage (he did not acquiesce).[24] Yet the play left many uneasy. Pavel Annenkov's reminiscences of the first performance mention ever-increasing indignation among the audience and ever-quieting laughter. He claims the play was seen as "an impossibility, a slander, and a farce," a characterization that corresponds to many other accounts.[25] Some found the play subversive and wondered why the government promoted a comedy that so ostentatiously ridiculed it. Prince Viazemsky mockingly ventriloquized the criticisms of the play: " 'As if such a town existed in Russia.' 'Why isn't one honest, decent person portrayed? As if there are none in Russia?' "[26] F. F. Vigel's philippic offers an interesting record of a reaction based entirely on word of mouth. Not having seen the play himself, Vigel writes:

> [F]rom what I heard, [this comedy] smelled to me from afar. The author thought up some kind of Russia, and in it, some kind of a town, on which he heaped all the abominations that are only infrequently found on the surface of real Russia. How much swindling, vileness, ignorance! I, who have lived and served in the provinces, can safely call it a slander in five acts. And the mob chuckles, the boyars are pleased. All these idle drones who know nothing of Russia beyond Petersburg and Moscow, who spend half their lives abroad, who are ready to mix with mud both us, middling gentry and civil servants, and all our administration—they are ecstatic to have acquired a new right to despise their fatherland and, pointing to the stage, to say: here is your Russia! Madmen! I know Mr. Author—this is young Russia, in all its insolence and cynicism.[27]

Gogol's "slander in five acts," many thought, presented a maliciously distorted image of Russia and an insolent attack on its government.

Ironically enough, this government's highest echelons were quite pleased with the comedy. The tsar himself was present at the Petersburg premiere, reportedly laughed heartily, and later presented the author with a ring worth 800 rubles. Recent archival research has confirmed an earlier hypothesis that Nicholas I, prompted by Zhukovsky's appeal, read the

comedy in manuscript and was instrumental in ensuring its remarkably swift passage through the censorship.[28] The arrival of the real inspector at the end of the play, announced by the gendarme, likely secured the tsar's favor. Since Nicholas I created the gendarme corps as a form of political police under his direct control, the gendarme's appearance in Gogol's play sent a message that the rightful order, whose guarantee is the tsar himself, would be restored. The gendarme in Gogol's play was in fact meant to be so real that he does not even appear in the cast of characters.[29]

The Russian public found it harder to come to grips with *The Government Inspector*'s unsettling image of Russian reality. The editors of the most popular journals, *The Library for Reading* and *The Northern Bee*, pursued a variety of arguments aimed to reject the comedy as a statement on Russia's national characteristics. Józef Sękowski claimed that petty administrative abuses in provincial towns represent a problem that is common to all times and nations, so *The Government Inspector* cannot be said to represent a picture of Russia specifically.[30] Faddei Bulgarin believed that Gogol grossly exaggerated his negative portrayal of Russia. He complains that Sodom and Gomorrah compare to Gogol's little town like a rose to a thistle. Gogol's characters lack all human attributes except for the ability to speak, which they waste on nonsense. All town officials are portrayed as rogues and fools; they openly steal and take bribes. He sneers: "The spitting image of the Sandwich Islands in the times of Captain Cook!"[31]

The most sensational aspect of the comedy's reception was an effort to attach the world represented in *The Government Inspector* to a non-Russian ethnic sphere. The media moguls ingeniously asserted that the comedy portrayed not a Russian but a Ukrainian or a Belorussian town. For Sękowski, the proof lay in such supposedly un-Russian peculiarities as the Mayor's wife's forward manner in her conduct with men. Bulgarin, in his review's second installment, found Ukraine or Belorussia a more fitting correspondence than the Sandwich Islands:

> [The author] dragged the landowners out of Little Russia. This is a true Little Russian or Belorussian petty nobility in all its beauty! There are no such noblemen, with such mores and such manners, in Great Russian districts. In general, the author of *The Government Inspector*, wishing to portray a [small] Russian town . . . pictured a Little Russian

> or a Belorussian town. His merchants are not Russian people but simply Jews. Feminine coquetry is also not Russian. The mayor himself could not have such free reign in a Great Russian town. . . . In a word . . . there was no use slandering Russia.

In order to salvage Russia from aspersions cast on it by Gogol's comedy, Sękowski and Bulgarin displace its subject matter to Ukraine or Belorussia. For the purpose of accommodating a negative representation, these regions are somehow separate from the rest of Russia; not so, however, when Russia could benefit from the affinity. For these critics, Gogol is a shoddy realist of Russian life, yet a supreme realist of Ukrainian or Belorussian life. Bulgarin insists that Russia is free from such abuses just as he reminds his readers, like Sękowski, that such abuses exist everywhere—which would seem to include Russia. Before "exiling" *The Inspector* to Ukraine, Bulgarin also displaces it temporally by saying that Gogol's outdated images concern the previous century rather than the present. The notion that the comedy depicts Russian reality thus elicits multiple, haphazard, and often mutually inconsistent defense strategies. The moment the stuff of *The Inspector* becomes ascribed to non-Russian regions, the comedy suddenly becomes a very faithful image of social reality. It is ironic that at the time when Gogol was being transformed into a Russian writer and the Ukrainianness of works such as *Evenings on a Farm* was being deemphasized, some were eager to forcibly inject it into a text that in no way fashioned itself as regarding Ukraine.

An effort to detach the comedy from Russia and shift it like a disfiguring garment onto the body of Ukraine found its continuators in the twentieth century. The turn-of-the-century scholar Semyon Vengerov, for example, argues that the impressions that gave rise to both *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls* were based on Gogol's experience of provincial Ukraine, not Russia.[32] Vengerov bases his argument not on any intrinsic nature of these descriptions and their correspondence to Ukrainian reality but on biographical evidence that does in fact convincingly show Gogol's limited experience of Russia. For Vengerov, the possibility that Gogol may have put his observations of Ukraine into a comedy about Russia nullifies it as a fact of Russian culture to be concerned about. In his privileging of truth over representation, fact over image, it matters not that the play makes no mention of Ukraine.

While Vengerov implies conscious dishonesty to Gogol, another contemporary reviewer for *The Northern Bee* thought that the author simply lacked control over his material and imagination. He deems Gogol's descriptions of Ukraine delightful yet notes that "the moment Gogol steps onto Russian soil the enchantment disappears." He claims that Gogol can never really shake off his Ukrainianness, even when "no particular desire to portray Little Russians is apparent." In *The Inspector,* Gogol unwittingly peopled with Ukrainians what he attempted as a Russian comedy.[33] Ironically, on the pages of the same journal a few months previously, Bulgarin participated in the opposite critical trend of Russifying Gogol, rather than confining him to Ukrainianness.

Playing the "Ukrainian card" was a popular strategy among those who wished to dismiss Gogol's critical image of Russia. Reviewing the comedy's second edition in 1841 for *The Russian Herald,* Nikolai Polevoi also tried to confine Gogol to the role of a Ukrainian, and hence provincial and insignificant, author. "His plot of land," Polevoi writes, "is a good-natured joke, a Little Russian *zhart* [a short, humorous story—E. B.]," Gogol's talent being "embedded in the characteristics of the Little Russians."[34] Those of Polevoi's readers who remembered his review of the second volume of *Evenings* would have realized that by Ukrainian humor and specificity Polevoi had in mind things far inferior to their Russian equivalents. Polevoi implies that Gogol was ill advised to leave his Ukrainian poetic habitat and discusses *The Inspector* as a farce, a grotesque distortion, and a tiresome anecdote.

The poet and critic Prince Viazemsky staged a full-scale defense of the play in *The Contemporary.* He ridicules the demands that the author offer a verifiable "statistical," as he calls it, representation and criticizes those who would seek in the comedy an insult to national honor. He is positive that people such as Gogol's characters do exist in Russia, and he does not care whether the author found their prototypes on the banks of the Volga, the Dnepr, or the Dvina.[35] The mention of the major Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian rivers signals Viazemsky's polemic with Bulgarin and Sękowski's thesis of the comedy's non-Russian place of action. Viazemsky reports that a similar incident did indeed occur to a person he knows (most likely Pushkin; *PSS* 4, 525–526), and it took place in a district that was not at all a distant one. An excess of what Viazemsky terms "patriotic prickliness" stifles the arts, especially comedy and satire that by their very nature address a nation's vices rather than virtues. National feeling should not shield the wrongdoers that deserve castigation. Viazemsky rejects the

accusation that Gogol's play shows not a single wise person: the author is wise, he claims, as is the government that allows a talented writer to use laughter for socially sound goals. Viazemsky defines *The Government Inspector* as a national comedy and puts it among the four best Russian comedies ever written.

The play's Moscow success brought Gogol new defenders. Nadezhdin and Belinsky applauded the play in *The Rumor* and appeared unconcerned by the degree of its truthfulness or the suspicions of libel. According to them, Gogol's play represented original Russian theater, and that was all that mattered. The play was solidly rooted in the life of Russian society and rendered it in an original artistic form. Belinsky praised it for being miraculously free from foreign mannerisms or witticisms that had plagued the Russian comedy for decades (*SSBel* 1, 510–511). Nadezhdin, obliquely alluding to the comedy's two detractors, according to whom Gogol portrayed a Ukrainian or Belorussian reality, emphasized the play's Russianness, calling it "a Russian—all-Russian—play that emerged not from imitation but from the author's own, perhaps bitter, feeling."[36] V. P. Androsov in *The Moscow Observer* likewise placed Gogol's work among the greatest achievements of modern Russian literature.[37] He argued that a contemporary comedy was a high genre that aimed to reveal man's failings that were allowed to flourish due to his position in society. Though Gogol's comedy did not represent any external actuality, it nonetheless did possess a deeper inner truth in that it captured social mores through convincing characters and situations.

Though the political dimension of the play's reception hardly surfaced in the press, it was a vital aspect of its *unofficial* reception. Republishing his review in his collected works, Viazemsky attached to it a note from 1876, which states that many at the time considered *The Government Inspector* a "political *Brandkugel*" (a fire bomb) with a "secret intent."[38] According to them, Gogol's choice of a small town masked a subversive attack that was "aimed higher," at the foundations of the Russian state. Some cheered this critique; others condemned it, regarding the author as a "dangerous rebel." Though Viazemsky considers the very possibility of a political dimension to the play sheer nonsense, it seems to have been widespread enough to warrant a refutation on his part four decades after the play's premiere. Alexandr Herzen, the famous Russian émigré intellectual, attests to this dimension in the reception as well.[39]

The congruence of Gogol's comedy with actual Russian life—this most hotly debated issue—occupied the minds of both the play's admirers and critics. Yet some attempted to reject this issue as a legitimate critical criterion and claimed that the play is not about reality, or about anything specifically Russian. Belinsky, strangely enough, originated this tradition. A thorough analysis of the play that he promised in his note in *The Rumor* never materialized, but something most resembling one appeared in his 1840 article about Griboedov's comedy *Woe from Wit* (*Gore ot uma*, 1833). The article is anomalous in view of Belinsky's later approach to Gogol as a supreme realist of Russian life. Here, Belinsky draws attention to the uncanny verisimilitude in Gogol's portrayal of life in general—not *Russian* life. He uncovers deep psychological truth in Gogolian characters, and where Gogol's text is wanting, he improvises thought processes or parts of life stories, such as the Mayor's childhood, which he presents as almost scientifically deduced from Gogol's own characterizations. Random terms of German idealist philosophy loom large in the article. Belinsky puts Gogol's comedy on the rack of his half-digested notions such as the inner and the outer, subjective and objective reality, and the absolute. No longer about Russia or Petersburg or a small town, Gogol's brilliant work represents a self-enclosed aesthetic universe, and it conveys "the rejection of life, the idea of illusoriness" that Gogol's genius endows with "objective reality." It portrays "emptiness, filled with the activity of petty passions and petty egoism." The Mayor is punished by an "apparition" personified by Khlestakov and awaits another punishment from "reality" (which Belinsky defines later, untroubled by the apparent contradiction, as a "chain of apparitions"; *SSBel* 2, 212–214). Belinsky's disembodied, ethereal *Inspector* makes all grounding in Russia's social reality secondary and nearly dissolves the play into nonexistence.

Wresting Gogol's play out of Russian reality has gained popularity in the twentieth century. The poet and scholar Vyacheslav Ivanov asserted that Gogol's place of action represents a paradigmatic comedic town of Aristophanes and portrays a social microcosm that "stands symbolically for any social confederation."[40] Vladimir Nabokov found laughable the notion that what he cleverly renamed as *Government Specter* was once viewed as "a skit on actual conditions in Russia." Far from any social reality or "ideas"—Nabokov viewed all of Gogol's work exclusively as a phenomenon of language—he sums up *The Government Inspector* as "poetry in action," that is, "the mysteries of the irrational as perceived through rational words."[41] Poetry in action, Aristophanesville, illusori-

ness—all these plausible approaches to Gogol's work share a culturally significant tendency of divorcing Gogol's play from Russian reality or, conversely, of freeing Russia from its image. These interpretations seem as intent on proving that Gogol's play *is not* about Russia as they are on showing that it *is* about "poetry in action," and so on. Though far less crass than Bulgarin's attempt to sweep this image outside the borders of the Great Russian nation, these approaches also testify to just how uncomfortable Gogol managed to make his countrymen feel.

Though the play's overall reception was good, Gogol was taken aback by the criticisms and perplexed at his inability to control the public discourse around his work. He was crushed that instead of introspection and repentance, he inspired indignation and resentment; his vision of an instantaneous total moral regeneration of Russia went up in smoke. He formed a conviction that everyone either misunderstood his work or was against him, and nothing would disabuse him of this notion. An embittered prophet vilified by his compatriots, Gogol left Russia in June 1836 for western Europe, claiming that a contemporary comic writer should keep at a remove from the country he describes (*PSS* 11, 40–41). He did not even bother to oversee the Moscow staging of his comedy.

In this first major encounter with the Russian audience, Gogol handled the criticism badly and dismissed the praise as insignificant. His friend historian Mikhail Pogodin tried to talk some sense into him:

> They say you are angry at the talk. Well, brother, you should be ashamed! You are becoming a comical character yourself. Imagine this: the author wants to bite the people, not in the brow, but straight in the eye. He reaches his target. The people screw up their eyes, turn away, swear, and it stands to reason, cry out: "Certainly not! We aren't like that!" You should be happy, because you see that you reached your goal. What better proof is there for the truth of the comedy! And you are angry?! Really, aren't you funny?[42]

Gogol replied that the chafing of those who recognized themselves in his characters did not bother him. He was troubled by the reception of the educated classes and government officials who took his work as subversive of the political order and made him into a rebel: "They say that to call a scoundrel a scoundrel is to undermine the state apparatus" (*PSS* 11, 45). Gogol appears frightened by the play's interpretative potential, especially the political one, which might harm his public image. He maintains that *The Inspector* does not undermine the state machine, does not extrapolate beyond the six provincial officials, and does not concern Petersburg society. Of course, the play can be said to do all of these things, Gogol's protests notwithstanding. Nabokov was right to marvel at Gogol's practice of distorting the meaning of his own works or imbuing them with extraneous meanings long after they were written. According to Nabokov, Gogol may have been apprehensive that the polemics would cause the Court to withdraw its support or the censors to become more vigilant and obstructionist.[43] It is important to add, however, that allegations of national slander must have appeared particularly incommodious to him, since at the time he was transforming himself from a Ukrainian into a Russian writer and craved acceptance in this new role.

Gogol's response to criticisms was to contain them in his own discourse. He echoed, parsed, and fought them in a series of appendices and explanatory texts aimed at ex post facto elucidation and at times disingenuous redefinition of the play's meaning. As such, these satellite texts represent Gogol's reaction to his critics and an effort to reconcile with his audience. However, Gogol's desire to reach this reconciliation had its limits. Although he continued to revise the play for the next sixteen years, he never substantively changed it. Moreover, he finally parried the attacks with one fell swoop by appending a pithy epigraph to the play in his *Collected Works* of 1842: "No use blaming the mirror if your mug is crooked."

The explanatory texts to *The Inspector* are less incendiary and more solicitous. One of them appeared alongside the comedy in his *Collected Works* of 1842. Begun immediately after the premiere, "Leaving the Theater after the Performance of a New Comedy" is a dramatic scene featuring audience members who exchange opinions about a comedy they just saw (*The Government Inspector,* though it is not mentioned). Some characters in the scene call the new comedy a "loathsome mockery of Russia" and an oblique attack on the authorities, for which the author should be exiled to Siberia (*PSS* 5, 145, 166). A Very Modestly Dressed Man, a civil servant from the provinces, though entitled most of all to take offense, defends the comedy from the charge of political subversion. He argues that by showing the imminent punishment of the scoundrels by the real inspector, the play increases faith in the government. He insists on a distinction between the authorities and their fallible plenipotentiaries. Though the comedy does not augment Russia's national pride, he

applauds both the author and the authorities that allowed its staging, a point that echoes Viazemsky's conclusion (*PSS* 5, 146–147).

A highly placed Petersburg dignitary, Mister A, impressed with the uprightness of the Modest Dresser from the provinces, offers to take him under his wing. The man refuses, citing his duty to carry on his civic work in the provinces, which, as the comedy has shown, could use honest officials. Awe-struck Mister A waxes rhapsodic: "May God bless you, our Russia that we know so little! In the backwoods, in your forgotten corner, there hides such a pearl, and, probably, it is not the only one. They are like sparks of a golden ore, strewn through your coarse and dark granite" (*PSS* 5, 149). This example shows how Gogol is using "Leaving the Theater" as a form of damage control after *The Inspector*. Criticized for not including a single positive character in his comedy, Gogol creates one in this dramatized debate about the play and puts a glowing praise of his virtues in the mouth of a Petersburg grandee to ensure that all take notice.

Gogol tackles the accusation about his comedy's lack of veracity—not all people in Russia are so thoroughly corrupt—by having another character disclose that the play represents an ideal, not real, "frontispiece" (a possible echo of Belinsky). In it, the author gathered from all of Russia "exceptions to the truth, delusions and abuses" for the purpose of inspiring in his audience a disgust for everything low (*PSS* 5, 160). True love for the fatherland, another character asserts, consists in revealing evil, not hiding it (*PSS* 5, 151). "Leaving the Theater" also alludes to the notion that the comedy reflects the status quo of the empire's non-Russian provinces or some distant half-mythic localities. One character—echoing Bulgarin's gibe about the Sandwich Islands—claims that only in the Chukchi Peninsula (in northern Siberia) could such goings-on take place. Another character deplores that the author dragged onto the stage his "grannies and aunties" (presumably from Ukraine, considering the author's origin). Gogol does not dignify these charges with a counterargument. However, the play's mention of a three years' ride that would not suffice to reach a foreign country had put it outside of Ukraine and Belorussia emphatically enough.

The character of the Author listens in on all these conversations and offers his own opinion at the end. In the Author's final monologue, Gogol orchestrates a discursive reconciliation with his audience. The Author starts with flattery (Rudy Panko's strategy): "Happy is the comedian who was born amidst a nation, where the society has not yet congealed into one immobile mass . . . where each person means a new opinion. . . . What variety in all these views, and how a firm, lucid Russian mind shone through everywhere!" (*PSS* 5, 168). The Author regrets, nonetheless, that the lucid Russian mind did not perceive the one positive character of his comedy: Laughter. Echoing Androsov, the Author claims that a comedy can have as high a goal as tragedy. He rejects efforts to trivialize his comedy as merely a whimsical tale. Gogol defends his right as a comedic author to be treated as a serious writer.

Gogol takes his cue from another reviewer, Belinsky, in a text published only posthumously, "A Notice to Those Who Would Wish to Perform *The Government Inspector* as Is Proper" (*PSS* 4, 112–120). He uses Belinsky's strategy of psychologizing and universalizing in order to deflect the play's politics. Advising against staging the comedy as a caricature, Gogol tries in "A Notice" to round out the psychology of his characters, supplying the human depth and motivation that the original play avoided. He makes them into fallible wretches, pathetic rather than comical. He reinterprets his characters as mere embodiments of various notions rather than as examples of actual human types. Thus Khlestakov, according to "A Notice," represents "genteel empty-headedness that carries people in all directions on the surface of everything" (*PSS* 4, 118).

Gogol continued neutralizing the politics of his play in another dramatized discussion of it, written in 1846, which featured the actors right after the performance. Gogol intended to include this text in the play's fourth edition, which never materialized due to the fiasco of his *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* (the text appeared only posthumously in 1856). In "The Denouement of *The Government Inspector*" (*PSS* 4, 121–133), Gogol has the First Comic Actor provide the "key" to the play. The town, he claims, is not any Russian town but "the spiritual city." The inspector announced at the end of Act V is not any Petersburg functionary but "our awakened conscience" that awaits us at our grave. The civil servants personify Passions. "The Denouement" almost made Gogol's longtime friend and his chief Moscow actor, Mikhail Shchepkin, go on strike. Shchepkin positively refused to include it in his benefit performance of *The Government Inspector* (the proceeds from such a performance were given to the retiring actor). He said he had grown to love and play *The Inspector*'s characters as living people, not abstract passions. After his retirement, Shchepkin writes in his letter, Gogol can go ahead and change them into whatever he wants, "even goats," but until then, he implored Gogol to leave them the way they were.[44]

Vengerov was right that Gogol seems a unique writer in the history of

world literature to wage such fierce frontal battles with his own works.[45] Gogol seems to have been afflicted with what one may describe as an autoimmune reaction to his own works, though politics certainly played a role in triggering it. His struggle with *The Government Inspector* is marked by persistent reinterpretations of the work's meaning in order to make it less noxious to Russian national pride. This struggle reached its pinnacle around the comedy's proposed but unrealized fourth edition of 1846, in which Gogol planned to include his "Denouement." He intended to devote the proceeds from the edition for the benefit of the poor, low-ranking civil servants, at whose expense he had amused his readers in Petersburg tales and *The Inspector*. While "The Denouement" attempted to assuage Gogol's caustic social satire, the charitable donation of the comedy's fourth edition was meant to alleviate in a very material way the purported social harm that the play's staging may have caused (Gogol was also right that these people were grossly underpaid). Taken together, these two actions show the degree to which Gogol came to regard his comedy as a sin to be expiated.

While in "A Notice to Those Who Would Wish to Perform *The Government Inspector*" Gogol tries to deflect the politics of his comedy by psychology, in "The Denouement" he does so through Christian eschatology. Moreover, he tries to redeem the maligned comedy as a nationalistically constructive, rather than an injurious, phenomenon. Hiding behind the First Actor throughout his concluding speech, Gogol refines his earlier argument about the lofty purpose of laughter by calling it a scourge for fighting the passions that lead one astray. The First Actor-Gogol invites his countrymen, who had once found distasteful the Mayor's famous line directed at the audience, "What are you laughing at? You are laughing at yourselves!" (*PSS* 4, 94; the line was included only in the 1842 edition), to embrace this as an invitation: "We will proudly respond: 'Yes, we are laughing at ourselves, because we feel our noble Russian nature, because we feel a higher calling to be better than others!' " (*PSS* 4, 132). The First Actor-Gogol implores his fellow Russians to believe his love for Russia and to appreciate his comedic work as a worthy service for the benefit of the nation:

> Countrymen! Russian blood flows in my veins as in yours. Look: I am crying! A comic actor, I used to amuse you and now I am crying. Let me feel that my calling is just as honorable as yours, that I serve my land just as you do, that I am not some empty buffoon, dedicated to the amusement of empty people, but an upright civil servant of the great divine state [*velikogo Bozh'ego gosudarstva*] who inspired laughter in you not of a dissolute kind . . . born from the idle emptiness of idle times, but a laughter born of the love of man. Together, we will show the whole world that in the Russian land all that exists strives to serve that which all that exists on earth should serve, and strives there, up high! toward the supreme [*verkhovnoi*] eternal beauty! (*PSS* 4, 132–133)

One of the most bizarre examples of Gogolian rhetoric, the passage transforms the Christian cosmos into an ideal government bureaucracy, a "great divine state" with the comedian as a "civil servant" who serves the "supreme" beauty (the word *verkhovnaia,* meaning "chief, supreme," has an administrative ring to it and is not normally associated with "beauty"). All this is calculated to ennoble both Gogol and his comedy. Apparently unable to define Russia in the ethnic or cultural terms that he had reserved for Ukraine, Gogol conceived of it as distinguished by its religiosity, which reverberated with his own proclivities at the time. The Russian nation, according to this passage, derives its uniqueness from being the most Christian of all Christian communities. Gogol imbues it with a universalistic Christian message, attributing Russia's specificity not to the national form of its religion (Orthodoxy) but to its destiny to serve God with greater zeal than other nations.

In "Leaving the Theater," the Author, who obviously personifies Gogol, hints in his concluding monologue at his plan to leave Russia yet promises to bring his compatriots a positive vision of the nation: "I will distance myself from you. . . . But do not think that my soul will be darkened by this heavy memory. No, it will all fall off, darkness will leave my purified remembrance, and you will appear before me only with the eternal, bright side of your soul. The temporary and opaque darkness will fly away in front of my eyes, and Russia will arise before me in just its brilliance and its proud purity" (*PSS* 5, 390). Gogol must have been referring to his work on *Dead Souls* with which he hoped to salvage his patriotic image that had suffered as a result of *The Government Inspector*. Yet when publishing "Leaving the Theater" in 1842, he excised this passage. At that point he must have realized that Russia failed to arise before him in all its purity and brilliance. What *Dead Souls* brought was the stuff of *The*

Government Inspector, brightened only cosmetically, more darkness that simply refused to "fly away."

Dead Souls: A Parody of a National Novel

> There was such a large collection of ugly mugs in Russia that I could no longer bear to look at them. I still want to spit when I remember them. Now before me and around me are foreign lands, but in my heart there is only Russia [*Rus'*], not repulsive Russia, but a beautiful one: you and some other close friends, and the few of those with a beautiful soul and the right taste.
>
> GOGOL'S LETTER FROM GENEVA TO M. POGODIN, SEPTEMBER 22, 1836

Among the joys of the life in the capital listed in the conclusion to "Petersburg Notes of 1836," Gogol mentions the facility of leaving it for other places: "Happy is the one for whom at the end of the Petersburg street emerges the outline of the Caucasian Mountains, or the lakes of Switzerland, or Italy, garlanded with anemone and laurel, or Greece, beautiful even in its emptiness" (*PSS* 8, 190). Having received 2,500 rubles for the staging of *The Government Inspector* and a grant from the empress, Gogol realized this blissful reverie and set out for western and southern Europe in June 1836. Except for two winters, he spent the next twelve years, including some of the happiest time in his life, as an expatriate. He eventually settled in Rome, the city he came to love even more passionately than Ukraine, to which he frequently compared Italy. Though begun in Petersburg, the projected national panorama of all Russia, *Dead Souls,* was written mostly in sunny Italy, his "darling" and his "beauty," the "motherland" of his soul, a place where his soul had lived "before [he] was even born to this world" (*PSS* 11, 111, 141). While professing in letters his continued love for Russia, Gogol preferred to worship it from afar. He came to believe that a long-distance relationship was the best kind of relationship to have with his native country, which, incidentally, also applied to Ukraine.

The complex circumstances surrounding the creation of Gogol's magnum opus, awaited as not only a major literary but also a national event, are difficult to reconcile with Gogol's image as an ardent Russian patriot. This section's epigraph palpably illuminates the reasons for this difficulty. In it, Gogol can hardly contain his loathing for Russia, yet he

pledges his art to it, scorning the gorgeous foreign lands that surround him. He makes a curious distinction between Russia as he experienced it, the thought of which still makes him cringe, and the beautiful Russia in his heart. Presumably, the topic of his novelistic panorama would be the second, beautiful Russia.

Yet the Russia that rose up in *Dead Souls* proved the contrary. Its portrayal contained little, if any, beauty and a great deal of "ugly mugs." Russia's "beautiful souls" failed to make an appearance, leaving the stage to its "dead souls"—a phrase that captured well Gogol's portrayal of contemporary Russian society as bereft of any moral and creative stirrings. What began as a project of nationalistic affirmation, aimed to redeem the sin of *The Government Inspector,* ended up as another social satire. The planned nationalistic novel ended up resembling a parody of one. A glorious national image of Russia simply refused to materialize.

Gogol's gradual integration in Russian metropolitan culture meant a definite promotion from his earlier association with Ukrainian, hence provincial—from the imperial viewpoint—culture. Yet it also came with personal and public demands that Gogol found difficult to satisfy. His correspondence with Smirnova, with which I opened my Introduction, shows this tension well. Smirnova asks Gogol whether he considers himself Russian or Ukrainian. Gogol, at first skittish, finally admits he could not choose one nationality over the other and settles for a hyphenated one. Yet as far as the Russians were concerned, Gogol's Ukrainian background was becoming a liability in the 1840s, all the more so since his works on Russian themes failed to conjure up the nationalistic affirmation that Russia craved. The author's Ukrainianness encouraged his Russian readers to interpret the social critique as the national prejudice of a non-Russian. Gogol's self-imposed exile further exacerbated his precarious position. The steadfast refusal of this national bard manqué to return to the embraces of mother Russia chagrined many of his friends and supporters, particularly the Slavophile Aksakov family, who warned Gogol repeatedly of the harm his absence might cause to his public image.

In addition to his émigré status, Gogol's uncomplimentary literary images of Russia made it all the more imperative for him to prove his love for it, as if his personal patriotism could compensate for, or somehow attach to, his unflattering artistic portrayals of the fatherland. Once abroad, Gogol thus started a campaign aimed to convince his Russian friends and supporters of his loyalty to Russia. He painted the task of

writing *Dead Souls* as his highest patriotic duty, which he was capable of carrying out only abroad. In order to function as a national bard, Gogol claimed he needed a distance from his supposedly beloved homeland.

He stressed different reasons to various correspondents regarding his need to stay abroad. To his mother, he focused on health reasons (*PSS* 11, 118–120). To Pogodin, he vented bitterness and disappointment with his Russian experience and alleged that as a comic writer and a national prophet he had to stay away from Russia's factious climate (*PSS* 11, 40–41). (Later, following the death of his likely lover, Iosif Velgorsky, Gogol bitterly commented that only "swine" manage to survive in Russia, [*PSS* 11, 224].) To Pogodin's apparent accusation that Gogol had no love for Russia, Gogol replied that his literary work, centered on Russia despite the "better skies" that surround him, proved Pogodin wrong. Gogol tempered his bitterness in his letters to Zhukovsky, his principal court connection, and accentuated his patriotic fervor. He explained his exile to Zhukovsky as ordained by a providential design and vouched that his work would always serve his country (*PSS* 11, 49). When asking for the royal funds that would enable him to complete *Dead Souls,* Gogol asked Zhukovsky: "Tell [the tsar] that I am all filled with such a love for him as only a Russian subject could be" (*PSS* 11, 98). He pointedly did not describe this love, trusting Zhukovsky to fill out this circular and evasive superlative. Gogol received 5,000 rubles as a result of Zhukovsky's intercession.[46] When writing to the Aksakov family, Gogol dutifully recited the Russophilic formulas that he knew they would find congenial but that sound rather insincere in his prose. He credited them with arousing his strong passion for Russia and kept reporting its fluctuations, gauging it like a temperature reading, as if it were a condition external to his self. "Yes," he wrote, "the feeling of love for Russia, I can sense it, is strong within me. Much that had previously seemed unpleasant and unbearable now appears insignificant" (*PSS* 11, 323). He complimented Konstantin for a letter that "strongly seethes with Russian feeling and exudes the smell of Moscow" (*PSS* 11, 324). Gogol's wording is vague; the "feeling" and "smell" appear as indeterminate as a Russian subject's "love" for the tsar in his letter to Zhukovsky. Assuring Sergei that Moscow (the center of Slavophilism) had become his fatherland, Gogol promises to press them soon to his "Russian"—he feels compelled to specify—breast (*PSS* 11, 331).

Dead Souls became a bartering chip in Gogol's game to get his friends to do what he wanted. He implored Sergei Aksakov, his Slavophile friend,

to keep importunate Pogodin away from him by claiming that those who possess the "Russian feeling of love for the fatherland" should guard his peace during his labor on *Dead Souls* (*PSS* 11, 333). Asking Zhukovsky to arrange for financial support from the tsar, Gogol evoked his work on *Dead Souls,* a sacred task supposedly bestowed upon him by Pushkin (*PSS* 11, 98). Yet if Gogol was "using" his friends, they also hoped to get some "use" out of him. For many, Gogol became a source of the national advantage that Russia could gain from his art.[47]

All the while Gogol cultivated his feeble love for Russia, or at least pretended to do so, he kept referring to his actual experience of it as a nightmare. Of Italy he wrote "It is mine! No one in the world will take it away from me! I was born here." He added, "Russia, Petersburg, snow, scoundrels, the department, the faculty, the theater—all that was a dream" (*PSS* 11, 111). During his brief trip back to Russia in 1840, he wrote to Zhukovsky: "How strange is my existence in Russia! What a heavy dream! O, to wake up soon!" (*PSS* 11, 268). It appears Gogol could be Russian only through the act of writing about Russia, as an imaginative exercise. He confessed as much to his close Ukrainian friend and classmate from Nizhyn, Aleksandr Danilevsky, saying that the work on *Dead Souls* was making him "more Russian" (*PSS* 11, 72). Meanwhile, despite declarations of love aimed for his well-positioned friends' consumption, Gogol was gleeful about cutting ties with Russia. He triumphantly announced to Nikolai Prokopovich, another Ukrainian friend and Nizhyn classmate who later became his editor, that his last Russian possession, his coat, finally disintegrated ("the last product of my fatherland"; *PSS* 11, 110).

The patriotic posturing and the promises to satisfy Russian national pride in *Dead Souls* clashed with Gogol's unfavorable view of the realities of Russian life and the nature of Russian society. The contradictions that surface in Gogol's correspondence reflected themselves in his novel. While the novel opens like another Gogolian social exposé, in its second half it acquires a lyrical sweep and what William Mills Todd calls "increasingly sermonical interludes."[48] Elements of the second kind appear tacked on to the original narrative. Instead of conferring a "lyric and epic unity" on the work, as Vasily Gippius claimed, they are manifestly jarring.[49] Gogol himself later admitted that the "lyrical ecstasy" in the novel might strike one as strange since its full meaning could be revealed only when all of the projected three volumes had been written (*PSS* 12, 93, 96).

The novel's two pulses correspond to discrete phases of Gogol's creative

work. While the angle of social critique characterized the initial stages of Gogol's work (1835–1839), most of the so-called lyrical digressions were penned in the later stages (1840–1841; *PSS* 6, 884). In the aggregate, *Dead Souls* portrays Russia as a drab, fragmented, soulless realm, inhabited by scoundrels and idiots, as it simultaneously strains to send an awe-inspiring message about Russia's greatness and future potential. As such, the work has functioned as a kind of sphinx in Russian culture, its widely divergent messages and tonalities becoming the subject of interpretive projects intent on reconciling them. In my view, *Dead Souls* is a novel of perplexing fractures and discontinuities. Gogol the comedic artist and satirist of Russian life competes with Gogol the acolyte of Russian nationalism. The incompatibility of these two authorial personas has left its imprint on the novel. The form of national fiction, that is, the discourse of explaining the customs of the nation and capturing its characteristic features, combines with the kind of content that can hardly gratify national pride. The novel continuously balances on the edge of parody.

Certainly, as "national novels" of other traditions show, such works need not be naive encomiums. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,* to take one example, offers a wide-ranging critique of antebellum America. However, it does at least feature sympathetic protagonists. When Huck Finn lies to Mrs. Loftus that he is a girl, the narrator does not proclaim that lying is an American national peculiarity. *Dead Souls,* by contrast, features no sympathetic characters and is perhaps unique in marking its heroes' failings as specifically *national* traits. Despite its humor, *Dead Souls* is unsurpassably grim as a national panorama. Despite its lyrical digressions—which, as I will show, are quite problematic—it is singularly ineffective as a nationalistic paean. The novel fails as both a national and a nationalistic novel.

The setting of *Dead Souls* is the capital of a Great Russian district. Anticipating the allegations that had been leveled against his comedy, that is, that Gogol tried to pass off as Russian what were really Ukrainian or Belorussian provincial irregularities, Gogol hastens to preclude any doubt as to the Russian location of his novel: "the city was not in the sticks but, on the contrary, not far from both capitals" (*PSS* 6, 206). The novel's persistence, indeed obsession, with defining and characterizing Russianness makes itself felt from the very first pages. The reader is presented

with Russian peasants, a Russian inn, a Russian landscape, and various discussions of the qualities of a Russian. The attributes denoting Russianness (russkii, Rus', Rossiia) pepper the novel with the astonishing frequency of one occurrence per each 2.9 pages (in the *PSS* Academy format of 241 pages). Were such statistics a reliable gauge of nationalism, *Dead Souls* could likely claim the title of the world's most nationalistic work of literature, as one would be hard-pressed to find a French or American novel that could beat these numbers. However, the usage of these words more often than not remains in the province of nationalistic form, not sentiment.

The Russian inn whose description opens the novel offers rooms with cockroaches the size of prunes (*PSS* 6, 8). The entryway has the usual smoke-blackened ceiling and monstrous paintings. The menu features such delicacies as a pie several weeks old. The pillows are stuffed with "something remarkably similar to bricks and cobble-stones" (*PSS* 6, 10). The imperial stamp adds to the town's natural ugliness through the garish yellow paint of government buildings and the dirty two-headed imperial eagles above the town's most common establishments, the state-licensed liquor bars. Scraggly brush-size trees adorn the pathetic local park. All this is presented as a well-known norm, a familiar image. The town of N. is Russian Everytown.

Gogol's gorgeous "nationalized" landscapes of Ukraine do not find their Russian equivalents in *Dead Souls.* In describing the space outside the city, along the road of Chichikov's traveling carriage, Gogol replays the paradigm of Russian nature that he developed in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" and "Petersburg Notes of 1836" (*PSS* 8, 42, 177). "Hardly the town passed by," the narrator writes, "there unrolled on both sides of the road (as is usual among us) rubbish and wasteland [*chush' i dich'*]: hummocks, small firs, low sparse undergrowth of pine, charred stumps of old ones, wild heather, and suchlike trash" (*PSS* 6, 21). In contrast to the static gaze that slowly contemplates and revels in the majestic beauty of Ukraine, the pitiful Russian landscape is apprehended in passing, glided over, as the narrator accompanies Chichikov's moving carriage—which in turn mimics Gogol's own method of surveying Russia. The hypotactic, ornate style of Gogol's Ukrainian nature descriptions contrasts with the spare parataxis of their Russian equivalents in *Dead Souls.* Gogol strings together the elements in a linear, predicateless enumeration: mileposts, grayish villages, a passer-by in torn slippers, bridges under

repair, crows resembling flies, a horizon without end (*PSS* 6, 220). The Russian landscape also emerges in the following apophatic description:

> Rus! Rus! I see you, from my wondrous, beautiful distance I see you. Everything in you is poor, scattered, and inhospitable. One's gaze will not be cheered or frightened by audacious wonders of nature, garlanded by audacious wonders of art, by towns with high, many-windowed castles snuggled up to the mountain cliffs, by picturesque trees and ivies, grown into houses. One's head will not tilt back to look at stone blocks piled up high above.... You are open, even, and desert-like; your low towns punctuate your plains unremarkably like points, like marks; nothing delights and bewitches the eye. But what inscrutable, mysterious power draws one to you? (*PSS* 6, 220)

The author-narrator gives luscious concreteness to what Russia is *not*, while he transforms into austere abstractions what Russia *is* (points, marks, lines). Russia offers no enchantment to the eye, and its power eludes the author-narrator.

Just as Russian nature fails to provide a feast to the eye, Russian society fails to nourish a belief in its moral and cultural viability. The novel's gallery of Russian types includes corrupt government officials and the grotesque landowners whom Chichikov visits on their estates. The source of the officials' largesse is corruption. The town's social life revolves around the policemaster who, by preying on the merchants like the Mayor in Gogol's comedy, provides lavish food and entertainment for local society. The prosecutor's conscience is so unclean that the prospect of an inspection causes him to die from fright. The chairman of the court of law where Chichikov goes to register his purchase deeds discusses the institution's bribing etiquette without the slightest embarrassment, generously granting Chichikov an exemption. Fraud, deftly disguised bribery schemes, and a high-grossing smuggling operation represent some of Chichikov's career highlights. The personal enmity of the wrong people, rather than any counterbalancing force of goodness and honesty in the society, causes his downfall in these ventures.

The landowners of *Dead Souls* fare no better and, like the government officials, are unable or unwilling to recognize and resist Chichikov's petty evil. The sentimentalist addict, Manilov, lives in a world of mawkish drivel that effectively insulates him from anything that might be considered reality. Chichikov's smokescreen of vacuous pleasantries and his assurances that a transaction involving deceased serfs "won't contradict the civic statutes and the most far-reaching interests of Russia" (*PSS* 6, 35–36) suffice to convince the gullible man of feeling. Nozdrev is a volatile bully, an inveterate gambler, and a liar. A shoulder-slapping, instantly informal companion, his friendly manner dissipates once he cannot get his way. Unable to cheat Chichikov at a game of checkers, he orders his peasant henchmen to treat his guest to a sound thrashing. The obtuse widow Korobochka, though perhaps the most positive landowner, who takes good care of her estate and her serfs, is consumed by greed. Her uncontrollable desire for government contracts finally wins her over to Chichikov's scam. It is also her greed rather than any moral or legal objections that causes her to spread the news of Chichikov's unorthodox business dealings: she is worried that the market value of dead souls is higher than what Chichikov has offered her. A two-faced boor Sobakevich slanders his friends behind their back. His bearish body and personality, the nightmarish architecture of his house, his Pantagruelian diet, as well as his tightfisted drive toward accumulation sicken even the resilient Chichikov. Yet while Sobakevich at least enjoys the comforts his wealth provides, the pathological horder Pliushkin, the richest of all the landowners, lives like a beggar and a recluse. He starves his serfs to death and, along with the valuable goods his estate produces, accumulates each worthless piece of trash he chances to find, like a rusty nail or an odd shoe sole. A grotesque ruler of a rotting kingdom of trash, dead to all human stirrings, a "Russian Midas," as Richard Peace calls him, "who turns all he touches into dust," Pliushkin represents the lowest circle in the banal hell of Russian provincial life through which Chichikov tours in *Dead Souls*.[50]

In sum, the panorama of Russian society in the novel, just like the images of Russian nature, offers a gloomy, disturbing vista that would not make any nation proud. Yet far from protecting his Russian readers' sensibility by avoiding the language of nationalism when presenting them with such images, Gogol, on the contrary, harps on it. While the critical literature considers Gogol's satire as targeting discrete aspects of Russia—the Russia of Nicholas I, bourgeois Russia, unenlightened Russia, provincial Russia—its reach seems more all-encompassing.

The vices described in the novel are not just social or political but pointedly *national*. The groveling before members of higher ranks constitutes one of them. "Such is a Russian," the author-narrator proclaims. "He has a strong passion to become acquainted with a person who is at

least one rank higher, and values a nodding acquaintance with a count or a prince above any close relationships with friends" (*PSS* 6, 20–21). When Chichikov's drunken driver, Selifan, misses all the right turns, his choice of the first turn that comes along, completely wrong yet undertaken with great conviction, is also presented as a noteworthy national peculiarity: "Just as a Russian, who in a decisive minute finds what to do without engaging in any further reasoning, [Selifan], taking a right turn at the first crossroads, yelled out, 'Giddy-up, my estimable friends!' and started at a gallop, concerning himself little where the chosen road will lead" (*PSS* 6, 41–42). Incidentally, in his comments on Peter I, both disguised as al-Mamun and appearing in person in an unpublished note, Gogol presents Russia's headlong rush on the path of Westernization as a similar venture: ill considered as regards consequences and yet pursued with great impetus (see Chapter 3). Foresight is not a Russian's forte (*russkii chelovek zadnim umom krepok; PSS* 6, 105), the narrator announces when the postmaster realizes his mistake in identifying Chichikov as the double amputee Captain Kopeikin. To make matters worse, "a Russian does not like to admit that he was wrong," we learn after Selifan's inattention has caused an accident with another carriage (*PSS* 6, 90). A peculiar national indisposition causes the Russians' unsuitability for representative bodies (*PSS* 6, 198). The narrator condemns all such institutions in Russia, beginning from a peasant gathering, through scholarly committees, to charitable societies, claiming that beyond socializing and entertainment, they uniformly fail to reach their stated goals. The novel's study of the Russian physiognomy, to use the term fashionable at the time, conjures up a "collection of ugly mugs" about which Gogol complains in the epigraph to this section. His analysis of the Russian psyche yields merely a catalog of faults or shortcomings, consistently couched in the rhetoric of national specificity.

The novel presents certain deplorable characteristics of social life as exclusive to Russia. Commenting on Nozdrev's rows with his gambling companions, which often result in physical harm to his person since they catch him cheating, the author-narrator claims that "only in Russia" both parties after such incidents immediately resume their previous relations as if nothing had happened (*PSS* 6, 70–71). The novel passes off as Russian specificity also those features that are obviously universal, true of each nation, such as the lower classes' addiction to gossip about the higher classes (*PSS* 6, 191). Some national peculiarities blend apparently positive

qualities with a subversive twist. For example, the narrator presents the scarcity of female charm in Russia by phrasing it in a way that seems attractive at first sight. In Russia, he says, "everything likes to turn out on a large scale: mountains, forests, steppes, faces, lips, legs" (*PSS* 6, 166). Though the grandeur of high mountains may appear enchanting, this same oversize quality of a lady's random body parts smacks of the grotesque. Gogol achieves irony also by citing as a national feature a seemingly positive trait yet providing a lowly action as an example of it. A "purely Russian inventiveness" reveals itself on the pages of *Dead Souls* through the example of Chichikov's perverse bribery reform. A leader in the campaign to stamp out corruption, he introduces a bribing system whereby the lower officials collect all the money and then pay off the higher-ups. This new system shifts the criminal responsibility for bribery onto underlings, yet just like the old one, it keeps the big fish amply provided for (*PSS* 6, 230–231). Having conceived his scam of mortgaging the deceased serfs that still appear as alive on the census rolls, Chichikov, "according to the Russian custom," crosses himself and moves to execute his plan. In the context of the venture it is supposed to bless—the defrauding of the government—this very common religious gesture becomes blasphemous. Gogol's discourse of national specificity ("purely Russian inventiveness," "according to the Russian custom") serves goals that are antithetical to nationalist affirmation.

The concept of national specificity is clearly overdetermined in the novel. The author-narrator seems conscious of it. As if mocking his own excess, he launches a long tirade that ponders Selifan's random gesture—his scratching of the back of his head—in an ostensible effort to divine its deep national significance:

> What could this gesture mean? And what does it mean in general? Is it vexation that a meeting planned for tomorrow in some government tavern with his brother in an unsightly jacket, tied around with a girdle, will not take place? Or maybe he already found some sweetheart and now had to abandon the evening wait at the gate, the politic holding of the white little hand . . . ? Or, simply, he felt sorry to leave behind the warmed-up place in the servants' kitchen, under the sheepskin coat, near the oven, and the cabbage soup with a soft city pie, only to drag himself in rain and sleet and all manner of adversities of travel? God only knows, one cannot guess. Many and sundry are the meanings of the scratching

of the back of the head among the Russian people. ("Mnogoe raznoe znachit u russkogo naroda pochesyvan'e v zatylke"; *PSS* 6, 215)

A discussion of an entirely trivial gesture is couched in the discourse of national specificity and cast in an incongruously solemn tone. Gogol makes fun here of his novel's over-the-top, burlesque brand of nationalism that seeks national significance in such trivialities as scratching one's head.

Indeed, this burlesque poetics infects all the principal discourses of Russian nationalism that are invoked in the novel. These include: Russia's comparisons with the West, its military might, and its geographic vastness. All were familiar topoi of nationalistic literature of Gogol's time, and all are subverted in the novel.

The comparison of Russia to the essentialized image of "Europe"—its everpresent, overwhelming "other"—was a staple of Russian nationalism. In *Dead Souls,* this comparison is not to Russia's favor. The Western civilized norm—since this is how the novel treats it—does not transplant well onto Russian soil. The Westernized manners of polite society that the provincials strive to emulate fail to erase their natural proclivity toward crudeness. The vacuous politesse at Manilov's dining room table coincides with the serving of a vulgar peasant dish: cabbage soup. Mrs. Sobakevich's hand, which she offers, very comme il faut, for Chichikov to kiss, smells of pickling brine. The pond in Manilov's garden, with pretensions to English-style horticulture, is completely covered with scum—which is "customary in the English gardens of Russian landowners." Instead of doormen one is greeted in Russia by howling packs of dogs. The function that the newspaper and the club serve in Germany are taken up in the Russian countryside by carriage collisions, which provide an occasion for the peasants to congregate and discuss the mayhem (*PSS* 6, 22, 30, 43, 91, 96). The Russians' understanding of the Western model is superficial, to say the least. It comes through in Manilov's naming of his thickheaded son by an incongruous hybrid of Greek and Latin: Themistoclius. Sobakevich, being a foe of European enlightenment, understands it equally poorly. He equates it with dietary restrictions that he finds pernicious for his gluttonous "Russian stomach."[51] Offering Chichikov a whole side of mutton, Sobakevich sketches out his kitchen theory of the enlightenment:

> This is not a fricassee, like they make in the manor kitchens from mutton that for four days or so was lying about at the market! German or French doctors came up with that. I'd hang them all for it! Thought up some diet: to heal by starvation! Just because they have a weak German nature, they think this will do for the Russian stomach! . . . They say enlightenment, enlightenment, but that enlightenment—psha! I'd say a different word, but it would be impolite at the table. I do differently. When I have pork, let's bring out the whole pig on the table; if mutton—the whole sheep; if goose—the whole goose! I'd rather eat just two dishes but eat to my heart's content. (*PSS* 6, 98–99)

Neither Sobakevich's culinary Russocentrism nor Manilov's horticultural cosmopolitanism represents a viable national option for Russia. When Russia imitates the West, it does so either ineptly or unnecessarily; when Russia rejects the West, it does so in defense of the wrong homegrown ideals, unworthy of perpetuation.

Moreover, the novel parodies the very desire to establish superiority over the West. The narrator undermines his own ambition to prove this superiority when commenting on Chichikov's unceremoniously familiar address to Korobochka, who, unlike Chichikov's other potential suppliers of dead souls, has the smallest estate, is a woman, and is of a very low rank:

> We in Russia, even if we have not yet caught up with the foreigners in this or that, we have surpassed them by far in our manners. One could not list all the nuances and niceties. A Frenchman or a German will never grasp all these peculiarities and varieties; he will use almost the same tone and language when speaking to a millionaire and to a small-time tobacco salesman, even though, certainly, in his soul he will always cringe before the former. With us it is different. We have wise men who will speak quite differently with a landowner who has two hundred souls than with one who has three hundred, and will speak with one who has three hundred differently than with one who has five hundred, and still differently with one who has five hundred than with one who has eight hundred. In a word, you can go up to a million and you'll still be able to find nuances. (*PSS* 6, 49)

Though the narrator ostensibly sets out to demonstrate the superiority of Russian manners over Western ones, in the end he proves the opposite. As with Gogol's paean to Nevsky Prospect, the praise is ironically inverted. Though the Westerners may be just as classist in their hearts as the Russians, they have the politeness and solicitude to conceal this, while the

Russians make no bones about rationing out their politeness by the yardstick of the interlocutor's socioeconomic status. The Westerners' incomprehension of such "nuances and niceties" speaks well for them. The narrator's irony relegates Russian manners to exceptions to the civilized norm.

Finding little food for national pride in the juxtaposition of Russia and the West, the narrator treats the next item on the Russian nationalist agenda—Russia's great military might—with equally cavalier impertinence. A juxtaposition of *Dead Souls* with *Taras Bulba,* which Gogol was revising at the time, could not be starker. While Gogol's epic Cossacks defend their fatherland in a war against Poland and lay siege to a fortress, Nozdrev attacks the portly and quite defenseless Chichikov, who is a guest at his own home, a fellow Russian, who simply refused to be cheated in a game of checkers. Instead of resolving the conflict in a gentlemanly manner, by challenging Chichikov to a duel, Nozdrev turns his beefy peasants loose on him. Gogol's heroic military simile could not be more mocking:

> "Beat him!" [Nozdrev] yelled out in a voice in which some desperate lieutenant during a major attack cries, "Forward, lads!" to his platoon, his eccentric valor having become so famous as to elicit an order to hold him back by his hands in the heat of the battle. But the lieutenant has already felt the enthusiasm of war; everything whirled in his head; the vision of Suvorov soars in front of him; he launches to accomplish great deeds. "Forward, lads!" he cries in rapture, not realizing that he does harm to an established plan of general assault . . . and that a fateful bullet is already whizzing, on its way to stop up his clamorous gullet. But if Nozdrev resembled a desperate and misguided lieutenant, the fortress that he was attacking hardly resembled an impregnable one. On the contrary, the fortress was feeling such fear that its soul hid in its heels. (*PSS* 6, 86–87)

The traditional stuff of nationalistic novels—glorious military battles—appears in *Dead Souls* in a reference to an abominable action. No lofty ideals inspire Lieutenant Nozdrev, just nasty, petty spite. Gogol's "inverted simile," as Peace has observed, becomes the "simile of subversion."[52]

The mention of Suvorov, commonly regarded as Russia's most celebrated military commander, highlights the incongruity. One of Catherine II's chief empire builders, Suvorov distinguished himself in Russia's wars

that greatly expanded the empire's south and west borders. An author intent on weaving uplifting nationalistic motifs in his narrative might, for example, include a noble veteran of Suvorov's campaigns in his cast of characters. Gogol, however, mentions the great Russian hero only in a mock-heroic simile referring to cowardly Nozdrev. A hero of the Napoleonic war, Prince Bagration, who fell in the battle of Borodino, makes his appearance on the pages of *Dead Souls* in Sobakevich's grotesque picture gallery. It depicts the virile heroes of Greek antiquity, "all with such fat thighs and unbelievable mustaches that one trembled looking at them," and a female hero Bobelina, "whose one leg seemed bigger than the entire torso of those fops that crowd the salons these days." Sandwiched between these elephantine titans is Bagration: "gaunt, very thin, with tiny banners and canons at the bottom, and in the most narrow of frames" (*PSS* 6, 95).

The Napoleonic war, next to the Time of Troubles the most fruitful topic of Russian nationalist historical literature at the time, also resurfaces in Gogol's inserted "Tale of Captain Kopeikin." It tells a story of an armless and legless veteran of the 1812 campaign who seeks a disability pension from the state. Having failed to break through the red tape, half starved and penniless, Kopeikin manages to procure merely transport out of Petersburg. Following the advice of one Petersburg functionary to fend for himself, he forms a band of robbers in the forests of Riazan. In the tale's uncensored version, Kopeikin assembles a sizable fortune and emigrates to the United States of America, from where he writes a touching letter to the tsar, imploring him to ameliorate the situation of Russia's veterans. While still operating in the Riazan forest, Kopeikin develops a peculiar robber ethic whereby he exclusively targets the monies belonging to the state treasury. He thus de facto replaces the tsarist government, to the point of issuing receipts for the "repossessed" funds. He becomes a familiar figure of the impostor (*samozvanets*), whose grievance toward the tsarist authorities turns him into a rebel (see the story's uncut version in *PSS* 6, 528–530). The Napoleonic Campaign, this gold mine of nationalistic topics, becomes transformed in *Dead Souls* into an anecdote about a bureaucratic malfunction and, in its uncensored version, into a subversive tale of civil disobedience. Gogol derails the topic's potential and instead sends a message that would aggrieve, rather than cheer, a Russian patriot.

In a continuation of this parodic vein, the novel presents the idea of

the vastness of the Russian empire as a tired, meaningless cliché. It emerges as an example of a banal pickup line used by socially inept civil servants (*PSS* 6, 170). Chichikov uses it, cheekily, to talk Sobakevich into selling him dead souls:

> Chichikov began in a roundabout way, generally touched on the entire Russian state and spoke with great praise about its vastness. He said that not even the Roman Empire was so great and that the foreigners are right to be amazed . . . Sobakevich listened, having bowed his head. And that due to the existing statutes of this state, whose fame has no equal, the registered souls that had left their worldly lot grow, however, in numbers until the next census, on equal footing with the living ones, and, in order not to burden the public offices by the multitude of petty and useless petitions and not to increase the complexity of the state apparatus, quite complex even without it . . . Sobakevich continued to listen, having bowed his head. (*PSS* 6, 100; ellipses Gogol's)

Though Sobakevich needs no coaxing to sell his dead serfs, the passage shows how nationalistic rhetoric can be used for nefarious ends, to blind people. The notion of Russia's—dully proverbial circa 1842—vastness, of its unprecedented imperial greatness, and of the foreigners' supposed admiration do not represent for Gogol points of national pride. He rejects them by making them part of a con man's repository of tricks.

Yet the passage also introduces a sneaking suspicion that Chichikov's tactic mimics the author's, just as Khlestakov's bragging about his acquaintance with Pushkin echoes Gogol's own. After all, in his historical essays from *Arabesques,* Gogol himself had committed the commonplaces about Russia's vastness and its superiority to the Roman Empire. Is Gogol's own Russian nationalism—like Chichikov's—also a pretense, a gimmick, a ruse? Are the readers of *Dead Souls* in the position of Sobakevich: is the author-narrator pulling wool over their eyes, conning them with lyrical nationalistic digressions, yet in the process asking them to accept a demeaning image of Russia? In short, is the lofty strain merely the seductive packaging of a much coarser deal?

In order to approach these questions, let me now turn to *Dead Souls*' three lyrical digressions that celebrate the Russian word, the Russian song, and Russia as *troika,* a traditional carriage drawn by three horses. Taken together, these digressions represent the novel's idealized counterpart to all the earthy, concrete detail regarding Russian life that I have discussed so far. As such, this duality recalls Gogol's bipolar attitude toward Russia from the epigraph, which he saw as "repulsive" in light of his actual experience and "beautiful" in light of an idea he formed in his soul. A judgment as to the extent to which these digressions counterbalance, or perhaps even overcome, the predominant repulsive or comical concreteness may well lie in the eye of the beholder. Generations of Russians, schooled in the atmosphere of official nationality, first tsarist, then Soviet, have held that these three short passages redeem the negative images of Russia. Gogol's foreign audiences, reading him without the rose-tinted spectacles of Russian nationalism, have been less sure of it. However, before placing the novel's two modalities on the interpretive scales, one must first confront the fact that the lyrical paeans to Russia are *in themselves* profoundly ambiguous. The novel, always hovering on the verge of parody, also destabilizes its few moments of nationalistic uplift.

"The Russian people have a powerful way of expressing themselves!" the author-narrator announces in conclusion to Chapter 5 (*PSS* 6, 108). A Russian finds the right word instantaneously: "And how apt is everything that issues forth from the depths of Russia [*Rus'*], where there are no German, or Finnish, or any other tribes, just the native ore, the lively and spry Russian mind that is never at a loss for a word, never broods over it like a hen over its eggs, but slaps it on for eternal use, like a passport" (*PSS* 6, 109). This revelry in the Russians' facility of expression leads to a digression on the Russian word:

> A knowledge of the heart and a grasp of life resound in the word of a Briton; a fleeting word of the Frenchman will flash like a fop and fly off; a German will think up intricately his wise and gaunt word, accessible not just to everyone. But there is no word that would be so sweeping and spry, that would break out from the very heart, that would so seethe and flutter like the aptly uttered Russian word. (*PSS* 6, 109)

While comparisons with other nations generally do not flatter Russia in *Dead Souls,* the case of the Russian word proves the exception. The catalog of comparisons with other "national words" in the passage shows the superiority of the Russian one: the most soulful, energetic, lively. The passage relegates the English wisdom in matters of the heart, the French lightness, and the German intellectual precision to less impressive qualities. The superiority of the Russian word signifies the superiority of the Russian nation.

Taken in isolation, the passage represents the kind of nationalistic affirmation that Gogol has up until this point consistently denied his readers. Unfortunately, grounding this excerpt in its context—something that nationalistic interpretations of the novel avoid doing—compromises this uplifting message. For the celebrated rapture over the Russian word grows out of an unprintable swearword of a peasant whom Chichikov asks about the whereabouts of Pliushkin's estate. The lofty apotheosis of the Russian word thus hinges on a swearword used to describe a pathological miser. The wise and gaunt German word and the life-knowing English word lose the competition in national superiority to a zesty Russian expletive. Chichikov finds the curse colorful—and so might the readers, were they told what it is. As it stands, they are asked to take the author-narrator at his word. The discourse on the superiority of the Russian word hinges on a blank. It is the ultimate *creatio ex nihilis.*

The larger context of the novel further complicates the passage's linguistic nationalism. For the Russian word seems to reside exclusively in the lower classes, and therefore though apt, it remains coarse, as the author-narrator implies on the occasion of putting a "street-level" word in the mouth of Chichikov (*PSS* 6, 164). Rehashing the old Karamzinian complaint, the Gogolian narrator chastises the higher classes for shunning the Russian word in favor of just those French, German, or English words that the lyrical digression has proclaimed as inferior (*PSS* 6, 164). The Russian word is shown to occupy an unenviable, embattled position in Russian culture. The example of the higher classes trickles down to the lower ones that attempt to emulate them. The provincial ladies in the town of N., in an effort to make Russian more refined, end up depriving it of the aptness and vigor that has been proclaimed as the source of its power. Instead of saying, "I blew my nose," they come up with flaccid and ridiculous circumlocutions in the manner of, "I managed by means of my handkerchief" (*PSS* 6, 159). At the same time, they interlace their speech with far more vulgar expressions from French, which they know so little as to be oblivious to the impropriety.

In short, the commentary on the status of the Russian word beyond the lyrical interlude presents a far more complex picture. Apt, vivid, soul-gripping expression is absent from the speech of the ladies in the town of N., not to mention the town's officials and the landowners. Their words lack the kind of piercing insight into the nature of the object that the lyrical digression has established as distinctively Russian. Though the lowly peasant's curse is said to exemplify such qualities, it is ostensibly missing from the text.

The aptly uttered word in *Dead Souls* is Gogol's own. Its "Russianness," however, is a complex matter. As analysts of Gogol's language have pointed out, Gogol habitually used the syntactic, phraseological, and morphological patterns of Ukrainian, often adapting them to Russian. He lowered Russian fictional diction by infusing it with the more "folksy" style of Ukrainian literature. He exploded the more monolithic and bookish Russian language by way of a polyglossia of dialects and sociolects, transforming it into exactly the spry, apt, and lively medium that his narrator celebrates in the praise of the Russian logos.[53] Gogol's Russian word thus derives its strength from the linguistic and stylistic heterogeneity, not the least of it of Ukrainian provenance, with which he himself infused it.

In the second lyrical digression, the narrator associates Russia with song and space. This passage grows out of the comment on the unattractiveness of the Russian landscape that I discussed above. Like the first one, this digression is similarly ambivalent. The author-narrator apostrophizes Rus: "Why does one keep hearing your unceasing anguished [*tosklivaia*] song, carried across your expanse, from sea to sea? What is in that song? What calls, and wails, and grabs the heart? What kind of sounds painfully caress and aim for the soul and weave themselves around my heart?" (*PSS* 6, 220–221).

Could Gogol's Russian song in this passage correspond to its Ukrainian variety? In his article "On Little Russian Songs" Gogol stated his agreement with the Ukrainian ethnographer Maksymovych, who upheld *toska,* or anguish, as a distinguishing feature of Ukrainian folk songs. After all, Gogol the folklorist never had a good word to say about Russian folk songs, while the Ukrainian ones were the subject of his lavish praise and until his death were "weaving themselves" around his heart.[54] It is possible that the Italian remove when writing *Dead Souls* facilitated the blurring of boundaries between the Russian and Ukrainian traditions, which he had earlier strove to separate. Or in search of the elements with which to rev up the nationalistic pitch of his novel, Gogol may have reached for Ukrainian particulars that were dear to him, only to dissolve them in an all-Russian sea, following the Pushkinian recipe for Slavic rapprochement. This would not be the only instance of such national miscegenation in the novel. Another example of a Russian peculiarity of distinctly

Ukrainian provenance is Chichikov's enjoyment of fast driving. "What Russian does not like fast driving?" asks the narrator, "if [a Russian's] soul, eager to get in a whirl and go off on a spree [*zakruzhit' sia i zaguliat' sia*], were to be told 'the hell with it all!'—would it not like [fast driving]?" (*PSS* 6, 246). This quintessentially Russian thrill recalls the kind of abandon that Gogol in his earlier works had presented as the essence of his Ukrainian Cossacks. Similarly, Gogol made Chichikov earlier in the novel into a typical Russian by having him ponder "the revelry of free life" (*PSS* 6, 139). Revelry (*razgul*) and a soul that carouses (*guliaet*) are all commonplaces of Gogol's writing about the Cossacks. This tendency of Gogol to define Russianness by way of Ukrainianness culminates in the 1842 edition of *Taras Bulba*.

The mysterious power of the Russian song leads the author-narrator in the continuation of the second digression to ponder the inscrutability of his connection to Russia: "Russia! [*Rus'!*] What do you want of me? What incomprehensible link lurks between us? Why do you stare so, and why has everything that is in you turned its expectant eyes upon me?" The indeterminacy of this relation to Russia reflects quite well Gogol's position as a Ukrainian aspiring to the status of a Russian writer. The sense of the author's centrality to Russia's expectant gaze echoes the critical storm that followed *The Government Inspector*. Perplexed and immobilized, with an ominous cloud over his head, he appears transfixed by Russia's expanse and seeks meaning in it:

> What prophesies this immense space? Is it here that a limitless thought is to be born, since you yourself are without end? Is this a place for a mighty hero [*bogatyr'*], where he could spread out and stroll freely? The mighty expanse will threateningly embrace me, having reflected itself in my depths with its terrible force; my eyes have become infused with an unnatural power. O, what a glittering, awesome distance, unknown to the world! Rus! (*PSS* 6, 221)

The passage adumbrates tentative answers to Russia's self-questioning, yet they remain just that: provisional conjectures, uneasy speculations that open up further questions. The praise of Russia emerges as profoundly ambivalent due not only to its interrogative form but also to such ominous images as stormy clouds, "terrible force," glittering, and "unnatural power." As Mikhail Epshtein noted, Gogol's demonic imagery invades his conflicted apotheosis of Russia. This "embrace" between the Gogolian

narrator and the threatening, overpowering Russian expanse resembles the nocturnal cavorting of Khoma Brut with a witch in Gogol's earlier story "Viy."[55] The heroic character from Russian legends, a *bogatyr*, reappears later in the novel in a tongue-in-cheek reference to the clumsy oaf, Mokii Kifovich, who breaks everything he touches. "That's what they call a *bogatyr* in Russia" (*PSS* 6, 244), the author-narrator explains, thus retroactively diminishing the stature of the mythic *bogatyr* whose coming the digression anticipates.

Just as the passage reaches its rhetorical climax in the prophecies of the "limitless idea" and a "mighty hero" to be born in the midst of Russia, the author-narrator's rhetorical crescendo is most rudely brought down to earth by the intrusion of a snippet of dialogue:

> "Stop, stop, you fool!" Chichikov yelled out to Selifan.
> "Wait 'til I show you my sword!" yelled a courier on horseback with mustaches a yard long. "Can't you see, may the devil tear your soul: it's an official carriage!" And the *troika* disappeared like a ghost amid thunder and dust. (*PSS* 6, 221)

A carriage collision involving his protagonist averted, the narrator resumes the stage, though in a lower rhetorical register, this time extolling the pleasures of the road.

Why would Gogol embed such a bizarre passage at the moment of lofty sublimity? Whatever Sternean play with convention he may have aimed for, why compromise nationalistic pathos by inserting such play in this of all possible places? A lapse of literary craftsmanship is an unlikely explanation, since the interjection survived in the next edition. Its role in the passage must be viewed in terms of irony. The crass exchange undermines the preceding digression's nationalism and jolts the readers out of the lull of highfalutin rhetoric, encouraging a more guarded reception of the text's lyrical high notes. For how can the readers believe the digression's sincerity, seeing it so undercut? How committed is the author-narrator to his nationalistic message if he allows a vulgar altercation between two coachmen—completely meaningless in term of plot—to intrude upon it so brazenly?

However, the nationalistic digression and the drivers' exchange, far from being entirely disjointed, do seem to relate to each other, if rather perversely. Though critics habitually omit this exchange when analyzing the passage, I propose an integrated reading that flows from the very

dynamic of the text, from a natural impulse to relate the unexpected "Stop, stop, you fool!" to the preceding content. Before the situation to which these words relate can be sorted out, Chichikov appears to be yelling out his warning to the author-narrator who has galloped too far and too fast. The lack of transition creates an impression of a character reigning in the author-narrator, curbing his headlong rush to nationalistic revelation. Refracting the digression on Russia through the prism of this brief dialogue suggests a metonymic relationship between the digression itself and the "official carriage" that threatens to run over and displace from the novel Chichikov and his plot line. The digression *is* the novel's "official carriage" in the sense of a nationalistic affirmation that was expected of literary works in a culture that had instituted nationality as part of its official ideology. The snippet of dialogue that forces its way into the digression destabilizes it and signals Gogol's disjunction from its message. Like a bucket of cold water, it destroys the impression of a heartfelt effusion that the digression labored to create.

The most emphatic and famous digression comes in the novel's concluding image of Russia as a rushing *troika*. It appears in the context of Chichikov's flight from the town of N., after an investigation into his shady dealings made his continued stay ill-advised. Fast driving—which Chichikov, as all Russians, so loves—epitomizes "something marvelously rapturous," as one is carried by an "invisible force" in an unknown direction. As in the previous digression on Russia, so here the demonic, ominous tones accompany the praise of fast driving: "and something terrifying is hidden in this quick flickering, so quick that there is no time for an object to make its mark, and only the sky over one's head, the light clouds, and a moon that peeks through them seem motionless" (*PSS* 6, 246). The "terrifying flickering" in effect erases all Russian—and earthly, for that matter—reality along the road from the novel's picaresque sections. Fast driving elevates one above these earthly minutiae, making the celestial firmament the only stable point. What this peculiarly Russian thrill achieves, in short, is jolting one out of Russian reality, making it flash by so rapidly that it does not manage to assume a viewable form. Russianness crystallizes in the novel in the moment of one's flight from Russia.[56]

The very equipage that enables the national thrill of fast driving also reveals certain aspects of the Russian self: "Ekh, *troika!* the bird-*troika*, who invented you? It seems you could have appeared only among a spirited nation, in a land that does not like to play around but has evenly and smoothly spread itself over half the world, so go ahead and try counting the mileposts until you can't see straight" (*PSS* 6, 246). While earlier in the novel treated as a banal cliché, Russia's sheer size is now restored as a reliable indicator of national greatness. A national artifact, the *troika* reflects the spirit of the nation that conceived it. This no-nonsense Russian vehicle, unlike fancy products of other nations, was made in a slapdash manner by a peasant from Iaroslavl. Its driver has no German boots, but only a beard and gloves. Whatever fumbling accompanied its making and however poorly accessorized its driver, the *troika* flies like the wind. It embodies a disdain for decadent Western finery and manifests the raw power that is Russia.

The famous concluding paragraph of the novel makes the metonymic relation between the *troika* and Russia explicit:

> And you, Rus, aren't you soaring like a spry *troika* that cannot be outdistanced? The road is smoking beneath you, the bridges thunder, everything steps to the side and is left behind. An observer has stopped, struck by God's wonder: is it lightning thrown down from heaven? What signifies this terror-inducing movement? And what unknown power resides in these horses, the likes of which are not known to the world? Ekh, horses, horses, what horses are these! Do whirlwinds hide in your manes? Is there a sensitive ear in each of your veins? Having heard from above a familiar song, you tensed up your bronze chests instantly, all together, and, almost without touching the ground with your hooves, you transformed yourselves into straight lines gliding in the air, and [the *troika*] rushes onwards, inspired by God! . . . Rus, whither are you rushing? Answer! It gives no answer. The little [carriage] bell peals with a magical ring; the air, cleft into pieces, roars and turns into wind. All there is on earth flies past, and other nations and states, looking askance, step sideways and give it the right of way. (*PSS* 6, 247)

Russia becomes a disembodied idea, a mystical, inscrutable essence. Just as the *troika* that leaves behind all concrete reality, finally to transform itself into abstract lines that cleave the air, Russia becomes the realiora that transcend the coarse realia that overflow the novel. In the end, the novel upholds the fundamental disjunction in Gogol's thinking about Russia between the "repulsive" Russia as such and Russia as a "beautiful idea." The ideal vision closing the novel, however, remains ambiguous

like all other lyrical interludes. The direction of Russia's tempestuous onrush is unknown: has it neglected to ponder its destination, just as Selifan, reportedly in a quintessentially Russian fashion, has earlier taken a random turn, unconcerned where the road might lead him? The inscrutability of its direction makes Russia's manifestation as pure energy and movement less unequivocally positive, for energy can conceivably be spent toward unworthy goals, and movement can conceivably lead to a blind alley. Indeed, some contemporary readers were also perturbed by this indeterminacy.[57] Though the passage announces its primacy among nations and states, Russia remains an unstable enigma, a heedless, unpredictable elemental force—for better and for worse. Pushkin in his poem "The Bronze Horseman" (1833), perhaps originating the tradition of aligning Russia with equines, asked: "Where do you gallop, proud horse, / And where will you plant your hooves?" A decade later, in Gogol's novel, which alludes to Pushkin's poem in the image of the horses' "bronze chests," these hooves are still up in the air.

Though it is easy to submit to the rhetorical grandeur of the passage, to let oneself be carried by the seductive sway of its language and imagery, what happens if we retrace the steps that led to it? How does contextualization, so crucial in interpreting the digressions, impact one's reading of this grand conclusion? The metonymic equation of Russia and the *troika* ultimately stems from a description of Chichikov's *troika*. Just as Chichikov's revelry in fast driving becomes transformed into a typically Russian characteristic, his own *troika* transmogrifies into Russia. This alignment opens up an interpretive can of worms that mars the sublimity of Russia's final image. For Russia-*troika* grows out of the image of a vehicle that carries a con man escaping tar and feathers. The ethereal *troika* of the digression, capable of such incredible speed, bodies forth from Chichikov's decrepit and unreliable carriage. The list of its necessary repairs is so long that Chichikov's flight from the town is delayed for a whole day. The image of nearly airborne steeds propelling Russia-*troika* in the digression hinges on Chichikov's three nags. Far from a harmonious and energetic team, the trio includes a lazy dappled horse that simply refuses to pull his share of the load (*PSS* 6, 40–41). Selifan implores Chichikov to sell it, calling it a "scoundrel" and a "cunning" one (*lukavyi*), a term that connotes the devil (*PSS* 6, 217). Before they become transformed into fiery steeds drawing a national icon, the horses acquire the titles of "Chairmen" and "Secretaries" given to them by drunken

Selifan, the mundane administrative designations that Gogol found so empty in his portrayal of bureaucratic Russia (*PSS* 6, 40, 42).

In sum, each of the three nationalistic digressions in *Dead Souls*, while problematic in itself, is also profoundly called into question by its context. The glory of the Russian word hinges on an unprintable swearword. The lyrical apostrophe to Russia as song and space is undercut by the bathos of coarse dialogue. The magnificence of Russia as a dashing *troika* is sharply diminished when juxtaposed with the actual carriage that motivated the metaphor. In each instance, irony deflates nationalistic fervor. The relation of these digressions to the novel as a whole resembles enormously elaborate baroque paintings in the most cumbersome of frames that hang precariously on tiny wobbly nails. Gogol goes out of his way to destabilize the points of connection between the digressions and the narrative that supports them. This signals the necessity of a more circumspect reading, one that heeds the pervasive irony, the playfulness, the narratorial misdirection, the subversive unsaying of what was said, in short, the staple repertoire of Gogoliana. The digressions, contrary to a century and a half of critical tradition, are not exempt from it.

What does this mean for the nationalism of *Dead Souls*? First, as I have shown, this nationalism is profoundly tenuous in all nondigressive parts of the novel (roughly 99 percent). The rhetoric of national revelation combines with the kind of content that, paradoxically, appears antinationalistic, injurious to any self-respecting nation's ego. What makes Russians Russian according to *Dead Souls* is a set of rather uncomplimentary traits like obsession with rank, inability to admit mistakes, or reckless lack of foresight. The superimposition of the nationalistic lyrical digressions onto the antinationalistic (in its sentiment) main body of the novel results in a text that is, ideologically, profoundly out of joint. Yet upon closer inspection, the digressions themselves prove deeply equivocal, their nationalistic tribute double-edged. Despite appearing intent on flattering the national ego, Gogol at the same time injures it. The body of the novel rejects the digressive "grafts," much as Chichikov shatters the effect of the narrator's apostrophe to Russia by yelling out an order to his coachman. Most fundamentally, Gogol subverts the nationalism of his novel by injecting it with irony, a mode that is radically incompatible with nationalistic discourse. He will do the same in *Taras Bulba*.

Gogol himself appears to have been aware that the nationalism of his novel might appear problematic. This is why *Dead Souls* contains within

itself a polemic with its reception, as Gogol anticipated it. The authorial trauma caused by the critiques of *The Inspector* continues to make itself felt in *Dead Souls,* especially since Gogol seems aware of not having reformed his literary ways. An author's right, indeed, obligation, to expose unseemly aspects of life and to bother with low, unvirtuous characters; the elevation of "high, rapturous laughter" to equal status with "high lyrical movement" (*PSS* 6, 134); the applicability of social satire (the readers are encouraged to ask themselves, "Is there not a part of Chichikov in me too?"; *PSS* 6, 245)—all these issues that the author-narrator addresses on the pages of *Dead Souls* connect with the concerns raised by the reception of *The Government Inspector.*

In addition, Gogol ventriloquizes accusations that *Dead Souls* may elicit from "so-called patriots." He describes them as reclusive moneybags who "crawl out like spiders from all corners" whenever some "bitter truth" is uttered on the topic of the fatherland (*PSS* 6, 243). They protest public tarnishing of Russia's image, particularly vis-à-vis the foreigners. The author-narrator counters these ludicrous accusations with a parable about a father and a son, Kifa Mokievich and Mokii Kifovich. The son Mokii was a pathologically clumsy oaf who used to break everything and harm everyone he met. His father Kifa, an indulgent parent given to vacuous philosophizing rather than the labors of child rearing, refused to satisfy the plea of his son's hapless victims to reform his progeny. He claimed Mokii was too old to change and worried about spreading the news of his handicap. He rejected glasnost in family matters: "If he is to remain a dog, let others find out about it not from me" (*PSS* 6, 244).

The "so-called patriots" who might recoil from the novel's portrayal of Russia are likened to Kifa Mokievich. Like him, they engage in utterly insignificant philosophizing and in practical life condone evil, concerned only to prevent public talk about it. In the context of widespread accusations of *The Government Inspector*'s "mimetic malfeasance," in William Todd's graceful formulation, the author-narrator of *Dead Souls* strikes a defiant note by preemptively referring to the novel in terms of "bitter" and "sacred" truth (*PSS* 6, 243, 245).[58] Gogol insists that his denunciation of Russia's ills makes him precisely a Russian patriot, concerned about the welfare of his country.

Much as Gogol defends his novel's satirical image of Russia, he appears, however, to have felt insecure enough about its reception to insert in its second half previews of a seductive sequel. The novel thus emerges as a

truly synthetic text, consisting of the narrative itself, a discussion of its anticipated reception, and advertisements of future volumes. According to these advertisements, the future volumes will deliver exactly what the author so demonstrably shunned in the first one: a straight and simple nationalistic boost. As such, these previews clash with Gogol's passionate defense of the unidyllic volume one. Having failed to do so after *The Government Inspector,* the author swears again to cater to his audience's standing order: just give us a glorious image of Russia; hold the social critique, please. Like the digressions, these previews represent rather late additions to the novel: the *PSS* editors date the idea of a sequel as late as December of 1840 (*PSS* 7, 396). This strategy of damage control was so much of an afterthought that Gogol never bothered to indicate on the novel's title page that it was the first of three volumes, which one astute reviewer did point out.

The first preview appears in chapter 7, as the following bombastic forecast: "And distant is the time when from a resplendent chapter clothed in sacred terror the awesome storm of inspiration will rise in a different key, making felt, in confused trembling, the majestic thunder of other speeches" (*PSS* 6, 134–135). The passage is so over the top that one really wonders how serious Gogol could have been in writing it. Yet throughout the next decade, Gogol prayed for this "sacred terror" to descend upon him and even made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to ask God for inspiration. It never came, and a "different key" and the "majestic thunder" failed to materialize, leaving posterity with the far less majestic, irreverent volume one.

While earlier the author-narrator portrayed as difficult but honorable and socially useful the "unhappy lot" of a writer who refuses to pander to the public taste for positive characters, in the novel's conclusion he appears less defiant, willing to satisfy such demands. This time sympathetic to what he perceives as his readers' impatience with roguish protagonists like Chichikov, he tantalizes them with a future duo of Super-Russians:

> But . . . it may be that even in this very tale strings as yet untouched will be heard, the immeasurable richness of the Russian spirit will present itself, a man will appear, gifted with divine prowess, and a marvelous Russian maiden, such as is not found in the world, with all the wondrous beauty of a female heart, filled with magnanimous striving

> and devotion. And all virtuous people of other tribes will appear dead in comparison to them like a dead book before a living word! Russian stirrings will rise up and all will see how deeply that which merely touched the nature of other nations impressed itself on the Slavic nature. (*PSS* 6, 223)

This is as clear a pledge of the forthcoming nationalistic apotheosis as can be. Yet despite the author's pained, decade-long labor, Gogol's Russian material simply refused to body forth this apotheosis. The best manifestations of "Russian" heroic prowess, the "richness of the Russian spirit," and the fortuitous qualities of a Slavic nature are provided by Gogol's Ukrainian Cossacks in the Russified *Taras Bulba* of 1842.

In the next two volumes, the novel's concluding pages announce, "[T]here will appear colossal images . . . the secret levers of this broad tale will be set in motion, its distant horizon will unroll, and it will all assume a majestic lyrical flow" (*PSS* 6, 241). This basically announces fictions made entirely of the kinds of lyrical digressions that Gogol sparsely added to the first volume. Gone will be the corrupt helmsmen of Russia's monstrous bureaucratic machine, the banal provincial bumpkins and traveling con men, the depressing vistas of Russia's decrepitude and ugliness, in short, all that makes Russia less than a paradise and that has featured prominently in the national Inferno of *Dead Souls,* volume one. The author will provide instead the unadulterated national myth, just refulgence and splendor, the Russian Superheroes who will put to shame all other nations.

The previews of such a total national narrative appear intended to make up for the nationalistic deficiencies of the present volume and beg for discontented readers' patience. Yet some proved disinclined to give the author the benefit of the doubt and graciously wait for the next volumes' correctives. Others—taken in by the lyrical digressions or influenced by the author's statement of purpose in the previews—engaged in mental gymnastics to explain away the grim picture of Russia, to make Gogol's novel more nationalistic than it really was. In either case, *Dead Souls* was debated like a major event in Russian literary, social, and national life.

"Living" Russia Debates *Dead Souls*

The sharply divided reception of *Dead Souls* flowed from the fault lines of the novel itself, ruptured by negative portrayals of Russian reality, on the one hand, and lyrical encomiums to a disembodied idea of Russia, on the other. The weight one chose to put on the digressions to a large extent determined interpretive angles. The conservative press put little stock in them and firmly condemned the novel. Echoing the charges leveled against *The Government Inspector,* it saw in *Dead Souls* a slander on Russia and despised the vulgarity of its language and subject matter. The Slavophile and Westernizing journals, reading the novel through the prism of the lyrical digressions, generally hailed it as a masterpiece of Russian literature and an eminently national work, even though they clashed on specific interpretive issues. Despite his attempt to preempt certain criticisms in the very text of the novel, Gogol proved unable to lift the debate on his art out of the rut established by *The Government Inspector,* though he did manage to equip his admirers with arguments in his defense. Gogol's protestations notwithstanding, thorny questions about his uncomplimentary image of Russia and uncertainty as to his true patriotism continued to trouble his readers, as they had after the appearance of his comedy.[59]

Gogol's friend Sergei Aksakov writes in his memoir that *Dead Souls* only strengthened the hatred of the party of Gogol's enemies that formed after *The Government Inspector*: He claims that the famous Count Tolstoy the American (F. I. Tolstoy), at a crowded salon gathering, voiced a widely circulating opinion by calling Gogol an "enemy of Russia" who deserved to be sent to Siberia in shackles.[60] Gogol's other close friend, Aleksandra Smirnova, who heard Count Tolstoy during an evening at Countess Rostopchina's, reported his vociferous remarks to Gogol in more detail:

> Tolstoy remarked that you portrayed all Russians in a negative light, just as you gave all your Little Russians something that inspires sympathy . . . that even their funny sides have something naively pleasant about them. [He said] that none of your Ukrainians is as vile as Nozdrev, that Korobochka is not disgusting only because she is Ukrainian. He, Tolstoy, thinks that your lack of brotherly feeling [*nebratstvo*] involuntarily revealed itself when you said of two conversing muzhiks [Russian peasants—E. B.] "two Russian muzhiks". . . . Tiutchev . . . also observed that Muscovites would never say "two Russian muzhiks." They both said that your whole Ukrainian soul revealed itself in *Taras Bulba,* where with such love you presented Taras, Andrii, and Ostap. [The term for "Ukrainian" used in these remarks is the derogatory *khokhol*—E. B.][61]

Smirnova said that one could conclude from these remarks that Gogol harbored "that deeply hidden feeling which reigns in Little Russia," by which she meant an anti-Russian sentiment.

The editors of Russia's most widely read journals, *The Northern Bee, The Library for Reading,* and *The Son of the Fatherland,* were also unhappy with Gogol's direction, though not to the point of recommending, at least in print, Count Tolstoy's drastic measures. Nikolai Grech dismissed the novel in *The Northern Bee* for its caricatures and its "barbaric," "non-Russian" language. Far from a great work of art, much less a "poem" (*poema*), as Gogol called his work in the subtitle, the novel struck Grech as lowbrow amusement and a regrettable waste of talent. *The Bee*'s publisher, Bulgarin, continued to criticize Gogol for his lack of verisimilitude with respect to Russian life. In his view, *Dead Souls* slandered Russia in general and its provincial society in particular. Even in its censored form, the book appeared so politically objectionable to the head Moscow censor that he requested an official backing from the minister of education before allowing journal reviewers to quote freely from the book (the journal censorship was more stringent than book censorship).[62]

While Bulgarin seemed to think that Gogol, being a Ukrainian, simply knew no better, Sękowski in *Library for Reading* imputed malicious motives to Gogol. He protests the author's habit of taking any trifle and making it into a Russian national trait. He mentions the description of Chichikov's servants, Selifan and Petrushka, truncated by the narrator's comment about the Russian readers' aversion to portrayals of the lower classes. If the Russians are wary of closeness with the kind of rabble with which Gogol peoples his novel, Sękowski claims, this proves only their good sense rather than "a national vice." The outraged reviewer accuses the author: "To reproach, on the occasion of Petrushka, the entire nation for the passion of giving oneself airs implies that the entire nation is no better than this vulgar and dirty man and only in vain, from haughtiness, does not recognize in him its equal! But this is not true. You systematically demean the Russian people."[63] Sękowski quotes the description of the pathetic Russian landscape of "rubbish and wasteland," of Manilov's scum-covered pond, and sarcastically exclaims: "Here is . . . a picture of the customs and characters in Russia, a poem about Russian life." He scoffs at the author's plea to suspend judgment about the novel until its future parts have come out, apparently doubting their potential to redeem the filthy volume one.

Nikolai Polevoi was equally shocked by Gogol's distorted, one-sided picture of Russia. Gogol's habit of casting every imaginable vice of his heroes as a Russian national trait incensed him. The lyrical digressions did not in his view redeem the novel but merely typified Gogol's characteristic rhetorical excess that amounted to nothing more than hot air. Gogol's apostrophe to Russia, in which the country turns its expectant gaze upon the author, appeared to Polevoi as the height of hubris.[64]

K. P. Masalsky's review in *The Son of the Fatherland,* much less cantankerous in its tone, criticized the novel's lack of universally human verisimilitude. Gogol ignores the simple truth that life is the struggle of good and evil and features only the forces of darkness. Masalsky was most decidedly unmoved by Gogol's lyrical digressions and prophecies of future vistas of nationalistic glory. He compiled many quotes from the most feverishly exalted passages and, the beat of his Russian heart apparently not quickened, presented them merely as Gogol's shortcoming: "the author talks too much about himself and his poem."[65] There probably could not be a more stunningly flat rejection of the novel's nationalistic pathos.

In the eyes of the conservative press, the author's Ukrainian identity to a large extent explained and magnified his transgression against the Russian people. The "media moguls" snidely stressed the writer's "Little Russian origin" and persistently "downgraded" him to the status of a Ukrainian writer. *The Library*'s review of Gogol's 1842 *Collected Works* linked the "tons of excess filth" in Gogol's work to the traditions of "Little Russian poetry," thus dismissing both Gogol and Ukrainian literature in one stroke. The term "Ukrainian humorist" resounds in the article like a dismissive incantation; after the publication of *The Inspector* and *Dead Souls* it could not but have a pointedly polemical edge. The reviewer blames Gogol's Ukrainian national prejudice for his image of Russia, characterizing his works as "strained Little Russian satire against Great Russian civil servants."[66]

Their vituperative tone aside, such views of Gogol and his works did in fact include valid points. Gogol was indeed to a large extent shaped by Ukrainian language, literature, and culture, which inspired him throughout his lifetime. He did transplant to Russian literature certain Ukrainian modalities, like its brand of humor or a manner of encoding nationality in art. His knowledge of Russia, as even he repeatedly admitted, was fragmentary. And the image of Russia that he bestowed on his countrymen was indeed critical and satirically oriented. A Russian

nationalist unwilling to accept Gogol's excuses did indeed have legitimate reasons to see him as "systematically demeaning" the Russian nation. In sum, the arguments of Sękowski, Grech, Polevoi, and Bulgarin are based on reality. It is the critics' malicious attitude and their use of these arguments as a way to dismiss Gogol that we now find objectionable. However, at the time they constituted a predictable and very much "normal" nationalist backlash. After all, readers from other ideological camps, even those very sympathetic to Gogol, also found reasons to feel hurt in their national pride.[67]

In fact, Gogol's assumption into the pantheon of Russia's glorifiers appears far more anomalous and surprising. That a work projecting such a negative picture of Russia as a nation should establish itself as a national novel demonstrates the unpredictable ways of Russian literary history and Gogol's uncanny luck with posterity. To be sure, more than luck was involved. Gogol's strategic placement of lyrical passages and alluring promises of future volumes proved immensely successful. The positive reviews lifted the nationalistic digressions out of their compromising contexts and presented them as proof of the author's true feelings and a successful antidote to the petty and ugly minutiae that flood the rest of the novel. They made the previews of future volumes the centerpieces of the current one. Moreover, making *Dead Souls* into a fragment, a work in progress, rendered all judgment about it provisory, a mere speculation. More than anything, this proved a brilliant stratagem on Gogol's part. The novel's actuality was thus overcome by its potentiality. *Dead Souls* became not a thing coextensive with the printed volume but a mystical, malleable essence loosely tethered to it.

The positive reviews did not find Gogol's image of Russia offensive or view the author as a Ukrainian fifth column in Russian culture. However, apart from Belinsky, with whom Gogol was merely acquainted, all of Gogol's major defenders were his personal friends, certainly inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt (Pletnev, Shevyrev, K. Aksakov).[68] In fact, Gogol personally solicited Shevyrev's and Pletnev's reviews (*PSS* 12, 89, 115).

The Slavophiles found the digressions very congenial. Stepan Shevyrev's long article in *The Muscovite* best elaborates the Slavophiles' approach to the novel. Shevyrev's evident desire to reconcile both himself and his audience with Gogol's picture of Russian life leads him to discuss *Dead Souls* heroes as fairly human, innocuous, and even sympathetic. Though

he admits that Chichikov is a scoundrel, Shevyrev nonetheless sees in his scheme a not unattractive "boldness of genius," so typical of legendary Russian heroes. Shevyrev's Sobakevich, though an epitome of "gobbling Rus," is also "a solid, strong man and knows how to protect his interests." Of all the things one could say about Gogol's landowners, Shevyrev singles out their typically Russian hospitality: even Pliushkin goes through the motions. Alone among the reviewers, Shevyrev even manages to find one shining exemplar of "fresh, unspoiled Russian nature": Selifan, Chichikov's driver, supposedly the one fully human hero in Gogol's gallery of half-brutes. Shevyrev sees Selifan's humanity in his willingness to get sociably drunk, in his treatment of the horses as if they were his kin, and in his meek submission to the master's blows.[69] In Shevyrev's view, Gogol's artistic act ennobles the low reality he portrays and aesthetically redeems it. By struggling to accommodate himself to the novel's gallery of characters, Shevyrev encounters an interpretive problem that is perennial for the novel's nationalistic interpreters, who tend to rely on extraordinarily far-fetched arguments. Recently one Russian critic has claimed that Gogol's heroes stand for sound national values precisely by being their antithesis.[70]

For Shevyrev, Gogol's portrayal of lowly characters—far from being a shortcoming—plays an important function of binding a nation. The critic posits *Dead Souls* as the midwife of a national community that actualizes a link between educated, sophisticated readers and the lower classes and provincials, so faithfully depicted in the novel. He sermonizes to Gogol's discontented readers: "[T]he Sobakevichs, the Nozdrevs, the Chichikovs, the Korobochkas are your fellow countrymen, members of the same people and state to which you belong. You comprise one united whole with them. They constitute necessary active links in the great chain of the Russian kingdom, and their power, like electricity, affects you too." Shevyrev castigates a desire to insulate oneself in a small circle of friends as fundamentally non-Christian and non-Russian. Readers should be grateful to Gogol for acquainting them with compatriots whom they may have never known otherwise, for electrifying with his novel this Great Chain of Russian Being.[71]

Shevyrev had reasons to be lenient with Gogol:

> The vulgar, animalistic, material side of our Russian life resides deeply in the content of the poem's first part and endows it with a very im-

portant contemporary significance, superficially funny, yet sad at its core. The poet promises to present us also with the other side of our life, to reveal to us the treasures of the Russian soul: his poem's ending is filled with noble, elevated presentiment of this other, bright half of our being. We impatiently await his coming inspiration.[72]

The radical critic Nikolai Chernyshevsky put it perfectly when he observed that Shevyrev forgave Gogol the first volume of *Dead Souls* only because of the forthcoming ones.[73] For Shevyrev, only the potentiality of the sequel redeems the negative, hence necessarily fragmented, vision of Russia in volume one. As proof of the author's actual feelings about Russia, Shevyrev quotes the digression on Russia as space (omitting Chichikov's rude interjection) and the previews of the future volumes. Despite his protestations to the contrary, Shevyrev's reading of the existing volume and his view of Gogol's conception of Russian life as having a brighter side are based entirely on these previews. His interpretation of *Dead Souls* as a constructive nationalistic feat hinges not on what the novel was but on that which it never became.

Shevyrev imagines the *Dead Souls* trilogy through the metaphor of a storm. The first volume, like wind before the storm, lifted all manner of garbage in the air; the second volume, like the storm proper, will bring the dramatic climax; and volume three will reveal the undisturbed blue sky, the full majesty of the Russian spirit eternally hovering over whatever storms may ruffle Russia's earthly surface. Shevyrev finds support for this theory in the evolution of Gogol's Ukrainian works. If Gogol moved from the stories about Shponka and the two Ivans to "Old-World Landowners" and finally to *Taras Bulba* (presumably: satire-reconciliation-glorification), one can expect him to go through the same stages in his work on Russian themes. If *The Government Inspector* and the first volume of *Dead Souls* correspond to the Shponka-Ivans phase, the Russian *Taras Bulba,* "taken from the Russian world," will surely come as well.[74] It is noteworthy that in his schema of Gogol's Ukrainian stages, Shevyrev conveniently forgets all *Dikanka* stories other than "Shponka," which happen to show Gogol boundlessly enamored with Ukraine.

Shevyrev struggles to reconcile the novel's image of Russian reality with his own notion of it and with his belief in the author's nationalism. Previously willing to forgive Gogol his negative one-sidedness in anticipation of the future volumes, in the article's conclusion he begrudgingly

admits that Gogol's comical humor sometimes prevents him from "encompassing fully the Russian world." Shevyrev refers to a scene in the novel where two muzhiks try to disentangle a carriage collision and end up only making matters worse. Shevyrev wishes Gogol had accentuated the good nature of the Russian peasant seen in his willingness to help, on which one cannot count in the West. He informs Gogol that Russian peasants have a practical, sound mind and would not fumble in such a situation. But in the end, Shevyrev finds consolation in his certainty that, as he says, "Gogol loves Russia."[75] He presumes a firm knowledge of Gogol's true feelings and treats them as if they constituted an a priori fact or the ultimate interpretive compass, more reliable than any realities of the text.

Shevyrev believes that Gogol will "rise up to a full grasp of all sides of Russian life. He himself promises us to portray further all the 'immeasurable richness of the Russian spirit,' and we are convinced that he will keep his word splendidly."[76] Characteristically, the potentiality of *Dead Souls* in its future volumes overrides the actuality of the existing one. It makes for an interpretive prism that blurs to dissolution Gogolian satire, thus rendering the whole novel palatable to a nationalist. Shevyrev proceeds to list all the lyrical digressions and calls them "presentiments of the future that should be powerfully developed" in the work's continuation. Without the future volumes, Shevyrev's interpretation of Gogol's conception of Russia falls apart. This may be why in his letters to Gogol over the next years Shevyrev kept pressuring him to produce the continuation, making the writer's patriotic feat conditional upon that publication.[77] In closing, Shevyrev notes the typically Russian richness of Gogol's imagination and the typically Russian earthy humor, evidently forgetting his own review of the second edition of *Evenings* in which he recognized, albeit begrudgingly, the Ukrainian origin of Gogol's humor.[78]

Another Slavophile, Yuri Samarin, in an epistolary exchange with Konstantin Aksakov, rejected Shevyrev's criticism that some of Gogol's characters may not be well rounded and ridiculed Shevyrev's lessons to Gogol, presumably about the nature of the Russian peasant. In contrast to Shevyrev, Samarin does not use the crutches of the next volumes in explaining away Gogol's negative portrayal of the fatherland. Staying within the province of the existing one, he asserts that Gogol's elevation of Russia's low existence into an artwork of such caliber ennobles this existence and distinguishes Russia from the obsolete nations that cannot boast of such

art. Samarin writes that even without the lyrical moments and the future volumes, he would still draw patriotic sustenance from the first part. Were he to meet a real-life Sobakevich now, he would not despair, cherishing the memory of Gogol's beautiful novel. Somewhat defiantly, he claims that there is "not a shadow of satire" in the entire novel.[79]

Samarin's Slavophile correspondent Konstantin Aksakov, a son of Gogol's close friend Sergei, also penned an encomium to *Dead Souls.* When *The Muscovite,* upon Shevyrev's prompting, rejected it, Konstantin published it separately as a brochure. In his boundless enthusiasm Aksakov casts *Dead Souls* as a resurrection of the ancient epic, a modern Russian *Iliad* of sorts, and pronounces Gogol a universal genius. Homer and Shakespeare, in Aksakov's view, were barely fit to keep Gogol company. While Shevyrev focuses mostly on the projected continuation of the novel, Aksakov makes the digression about Russia as a *troika* the cornerstone of his interpretation. He takes it as the key to the entire novel that unlocks the incredible fullness and depth of Gogol's characters. The Russian enigma, opined Aksakov, by which he seemed to mean Russian national identity, was locked within Gogol's novel and would be fully solved in its subsequent parts.

Like Shevyrev, Aksakov believed that Gogol's novel activated a national community. Yet instead of social divisions, Aksakov worried about imperial ones. Leaving the novel aside, Aksakov focuses instead on the author's identity as a Ukrainian, which he deems an "important circumstance" and around which he constructs an entire theory.[80] He claims that Gogol determined the proper relation of a Ukrainian to the Russian empire by enacting Ukrainianness as an integral element of Russianness. By investing his Ukrainian resources in trust of the Great Russian culture, Gogol effected its transformation from an imperial, internally divided entity into a unified, harmonious Russian nation. In doing so, however, Gogol had the wisdom not to challenge the leadership of the Great Russian ethnicity, which will continue to oversee this larger Russian organism as a head oversees a body. Gogol's example proves the correctness, the efficacy, and the beneficence of a larger imperial policy of dissolving Ukraine in the all-Russian sea. It also intimates a possible attainment of the Slavophile dream: the transformation of the Russian empire into a Russian nation. Though unworthy of the annals of great literary criticism and mercilessly derided by rival critics, Aksakov's review solidified, as

Peter Christoff observed, both the Slavophile and the Westernizer orientations. Andrzej Walicki calls it "the first document of Orthodox-Christian Hegelianism."[81]

The poet, critic, and scholar Petr Pletnev, the rector of St. Petersburg University and another of Gogol's close friends, called *Dead Souls* the best work of the leading contemporary Russian author. Reviewing the novel in *The Contemporary* under a pseudonym (perhaps to conceal his tie to the author), Pletnev presents the novel's nationalism as a function of its realism, whereby a truthful depiction of Russian life is by the same token a national one. His very positive review does regret, however, that some of the novel's characters seem to embody universal rather than national types. Yet in the next breath he also mentions the novel's lack of universal significance, "a certain quality of our conversations, thoughts, and deeds that, without diminishing their national specificity, adds to them a general value and brings them into contact with the interests of other nations." While Aksakov proudly proclaimed Gogol the universal genius on a par with Homer and Shakespeare, Pletnev, whom Belinsky would soon echo, sees Gogol's significance on a much narrower scope. Pletnev attempts to evaluate Gogol from a non-Russian's perspective: "For a foreigner, who is unable to appreciate the author's artistic mastery, all delight disappears due to the insufficiency of a more valuable and generally comprehensible life." Pletnev comes close to a set of mutually contradictory accusations: Gogol is not Russian enough yet is simultaneously too Russian to reach a foreign audience. However, the author, Pletnev claims, "returned to the society that which it itself could give him."[82] In other words, Russian life itself lacks universal significance; Russian authors are not to blame.

Belinsky, the most bellicose and indefatigable defender of *Dead Souls,* tied the novel to the Westernizers' agenda, just as Shevyrev and Aksakov tied it to the Slavophile one. He makes the novel the cornerstone of his conception of contemporary Russian literature's direction and value. His early response to the novel was very nationalistic. Reviewing *Dead Souls* in *The Notes of the Fatherland,* Belinsky calls it no less than

> a purely Russian creation: national, torn from the recesses of national life, as truthful as it is patriotic, mercilessly tearing the cover from reality and exuding passionate, unending, kindred love towards the fertile seed of Russian life; a creation immeasurably artistic in its conception and

execution, in the character of the protagonists and the details of Russian life—and simultaneously deep in its social and historical thought. (*SSBel* 5, 51)

In Belinsky's view, *Dead Souls* marked such a huge stride in Gogol's development that it rendered insignificant everything he had written before. Specifically, it made all of Gogol's Ukrainian fiction insignificant. In fact, Gogol's second "important stride forward" is that he supposedly "renounced completely the Little Russian element and became a Russian national poet to the full extent of the term" (*SSBel* 5, 52). Though Belinsky had earlier treated Gogol as a Russian writer despite his Ukrainian thematic, he seems to have considered a "complete renunciation" of Ukrainianness necessary for Gogol's full transformation into a Russian. *Dead Souls* wrested Gogol from the province of Ukrainian culture and made him Russian genuinely, unequivocally, and irrevocably.

For Belinsky, a Russian spirit pervades Gogol's humor, irony, characters, the strength of his feelings, and the lyricism of his digressions. He denies that the novel's portrayal of low aspects of Russian existence disqualify it from the distinction of nationalism. A novel is not a fairy tale, he reminds those who might demand of Gogol pleasing scenes and happy endings. Belinsky joins many other reviewers who—incredibly—denied the novel's satirical and comic spirit in order to assert its profundity and nationalism. He quotes the digression on Russia as space (like all reviewers, he leaves out Chichikov's rude interjection) and the final one on the Russia-*troika*, calling them "the singing dithyrambs of national self-consciousness, blissfully reveling in itself" (*SSBel* 5, 55). If anything, the work suffers from an excess, rather than a deficit, of patriotism—seen in Gogol's idea of Russia's superiority over other nations in the novel's closing sentence.

Only later did Belinsky's polemics with the Slavophiles, especially Konstantin Aksakov, lead him to temper his nationalistic euphoria.[83] He rejects Aksakov's comparison of *Dead Souls* to *Iliad*. He states that Gogol's novel negates rather than affirms the life it portrays; an epic poem makes the nation's substance positive and concrete, not merely predicted. Belinsky consolidates his view of Gogol as social critic, rather than benevolent glorifier. Instead of applauding Gogol's promises of an optimistic continuation, Belinsky expresses his apprehension. For him, Gogol's prophecies of "the richness of the Russian spirit" are too audacious. He

doubts the author will manage to keep his word, since contemporary Russian reality does not furnish a writer with material for this kind of affirmation: "Much, too much has been promised, so much that nowhere can there be found that which is needed to fulfill this promise" (*SSBel* 5, 146, 153). According to Belinsky, Gogol's "Russian maiden" would scarcely succeed in putting to shame all western European nations. Finally, he objects to Aksakov's crowning of Gogol as a universal genius. According to Belinsky, Gogol is "a great Russian poet, no more; only in Russia and for Russia can *Dead Souls* have an infinitely great importance." Belinsky rehashes Pletnev's point that a translation into a foreign language would render the novel "dead and incomprehensible." Though he initially put Gogol on a national pedestal, Aksakov's exaggerations and the Slavophiles' effort to appropriate Gogol for their own aims now cause the bellicose Westernizer to take Gogol down a peg and to deemphasize the novel's nationalism.

Belinsky was convinced that Russia had some catching up to do with respect to western Europe and could not afford letting naive nationalist agendas lull it into complacency in its project of sociopolitical perestroika. The Russia that he loved was a bold self-reforming entity, a country unafraid to chart a new course. Therefore, the Slavophiles' attempt to portray Gogol as shedding grace on Russia *as it is* unnerved Belinsky, who championed the view of Gogol's novel as a diagnosis of Russia's problems that needed fixing. He finds laughable Aksakov's notion of the fullness of Gogol's characters and refuses to see the likes of Sobakevich and Korobochka as well-rounded, beautiful human beings. However, he also argues against Sękowski's opposite complaint that Gogol portrays Russia as a nation of scoundrels by claiming that Gogol's characters are simply limited by their "upbringing and ignorance" and are not scoundrels by nature.[84] It is not their fault, he writes, that they live only 116 and not 300 years after Peter I's reforms, by which he implies that the amelioration of social conditions will in time produce a better nation. He derides Aksakov's identification of a Russian's love for fast riding as "the substance of the Russian nation," apparently finding it too trifling for the honor. He also lampoons Shevyrev's unhappy choice of Selifan as the representative of the unspoiled Russian spirit (*SSBel* 5, 58, 157–158).[85] In the eyes of Belinsky, Gogol belonged to the Westernizers.

In addition to Belinsky's polemics, *The Notes of the Fatherland* published a review by a reader from Ekaterinoslavl, who claimed not to be a

professional critic. The initials under the review point to the authorship of Nikolai D. Mizko, a writer and teacher from Odessa. Since Gogol put more stock in the views of his regular, especially provincial, readers than in those of professional cognoscenti, he singled out this article as one of the best things written about *Dead Souls*.[86] Long obsessed with the word of mouth about his work, Gogol likely took interest in the review's account of the provincial audience's reception. Mizko reports that the best circles of provincial society received Gogol's novel very well, rejecting the views of the conservative press. However, some were dissatisfied that the author did not announce on the title page that the present volume was the first part of a trilogy. Others objected to the author's satirical, overly one-sided treatment of provincial society. Gogol's recent novel, some said, "besmirched our nationality by a purposefully exaggerated portrayal of contemporary reality in its unfavorable aspect."[87]

Mizko denies these accusations. To exonerate the novel from the charge of antinationalism, he argues that art becomes a conduit for universal and national ideas through an artist's subjectivity, not the subject matter. He demonstrates this point by pairing some of the novel's most offensive depictions of Russia with the lyrical digressions that in his view redeem them. Since Gogol seems to have inserted these digressions precisely as such an antidote, he must have been gratified to see them noticed. The review juxtaposes the passage on pathetic Russian nature with the digression on the ineluctable draw of Russia's boundless expanse. The commentary on the troubled status of the Russian language is redeemed by the digression on the aptly uttered Russian word. The final digression on Russia as a *troika* shows most fully the "national significance" of *Dead Souls*, its "deeply national pathos." The review equates attacks on the novel with a lack of patriotism, just as it pronounces them moot: "Despite the shouting of some critics, all Orthodox Rus has long ago accepted this valuable gift of one of its sons, who cherish a pure, *not hypocritical*, and reasoning, not unaccountable, love for her, our common mother."[88] The suspicion that Gogol's love for Russia might be hypocritical must have been widespread enough to warrant its explicit refutation.

The very existence of such a reviewer from the provinces seemed the best defense of Gogol's work. Far from an ignorant hillbilly, Mizko delves into fashionable philosophy and art theory and makes a showy display of his erudition in beefy footnoted quotations in French, German, Greek, and Italian. The review thus proves to the public the existence of worthy,

sophisticated provincials who happen to be absent from the novel. It also gives Gogol's novel an important mandate: if such an educated member of the kind of society that Gogol's novel supposedly misrepresented did not take offense at *Dead Souls*, why should the readers in the capitals get upset on the provincials' behalf?

Gogol's preface to the novel's second, 1846 edition, edited by Shevyrev, opened a new phase of polemics. In a move that puzzled his admirers, Gogol now declares his novel deeply flawed. His view of its shortcomings, to the chagrin of his liberal defenders, echoes the critiques of the conservative press. The novel's national image of Russia, he seems to agree with them, is inadequate:

> [The hero] moves around in our Russian land, meets people of all classes, from noble to simple. He was chosen by and large to show the shortcomings and vices of a Russian, and not his virtue and goodness, and all people that surround him were also chosen to show our weaknesses and shortcomings. Better people and characters will appear in the next parts. The book describes much incorrectly, not how it really is, and how it actually happens in the Russian land, because I could not learn everything. A man's life is not enough to learn even a hundredth part of what takes place in our country. Moreover, as a result of my own blunders, immaturity, and haste, there appeared many mistakes, so there is much to be corrected. I ask you, my reader, correct me. (*PSS* 6, 587)

Specific instructions follow. While perusing the novel, the readers should jot down ways in which Gogol's portrayal corresponds to and clashes with the truth of their own Russian lives. Elaborate language and stylistic panache are discouraged, as the author desires just raw, undigested data about life in Russia. The reports are to be sent to Pletnev or Shevyrev.

Through this preface Gogol transforms *Dead Souls* into a collaborative project he shares with the entire Russian nation. He goes so far as to make the publication of the subsequent volumes contingent upon receiving the requested information from his readers. Though the ostensible goal of such national teamwork is to get at the truth about Russia, Gogol also seems to aim at dissolving the onerous authorial responsibility for the novel. He as much as admits that he cannot see Russia any other way and appeals to his readers to enlighten him. In this plea for his readers' cooperation, Gogol resorts to a topos of medieval prefaces, most typically

in saints' lives that he was reading at the time, in which monks-scribes proclaimed their own sinfulness and petitioned their readers to correct them. Gogol presents himself as just such a humble, well-meaning servant of the truth, attributing his narrative's inadequacies to his own blunders and limited horizons. He also emphasizes that he is a Russian at heart, rather than a prejudiced Ukrainian. He repeats the word "our"—as in "our state," "our Russian land," or "our shortcomings"—four times on the first page, emphatically including himself in the same national community with his audience. The preface is calculated to deny some critics' characterization of Gogol as a subversive outsider. Gogol pleads innocence to the charge of purposeful calumny and professes himself guilty of mere ignorance.

Playing the fool was a defensive strategy not uncommon to Ukrainian writers, an aspect of their stereotypical "slyness" that constituted a response to the exigencies of working in an imperial culture. Gogol seems to revert in the preface to a kind of Rudy Panko persona: a simpleton and a chummy friend (he addresses his readers informally in the second-person singular) who makes his readers feel superior. A view of the preface as a mere mask, a Gogolian subterfuge, is indirectly supported by Gogol's self-presentation in a text published just months later, *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*. In direct contradiction to the authorial self-image from the 1846 *Dead Souls* preface, *Selected Passages* shows no hint of Gogol's hesitation or ignorance in matters concerning contemporary Russia. On the contrary, it projects an image of competence, prescience, and excessive, if not hubristic, self-assurance, a desire to teach Russians about Russia rather than seek lessons from them.

The preface outraged the Westernizers. *The Notes of the Fatherland* addressed the author's intention of "correcting" his mistakes through a snide remark that the present edition's greatest value consists in the unchanged original text.[89] *The Notes* also published an open letter from a reader who responded to Gogol's invitation. However, rather than supply Gogol with information about Russia, the reader critiques Gogol's preface, petulantly pointing out its absurdities and contradictions. For one, he is puzzled why Gogol would republish the first volume unchanged while confessing to its numerous mistakes.[90]

An attempt to defend the novel from its author, to declare its immunity from his condemnation, also characterizes Belinsky's review of the second edition that was published in *The Contemporary*. Belinsky calls Gogol's

preface "fantastic" and a "farce" (*SSBel* 8, 512–513). Continuing the trend initiated in his response to Aksakov's brochure, he further diminishes his original euphoric praise of the nationalistic digressions and now views them as troubling indications of Gogol's imminent crisis. What he originally viewed as "singing dithyrambs of national self-consciousness" now become places where "the author strains to become a prophet and descends into a somewhat inflated and pompous lyricism." Belinsky recommends skipping these passages in one's reading. The critic holds on to the view that *Dead Souls* is an eminently national work but sees its nationalness in a realistic and deeply artistic depiction of Russian life and not in the digressions or previews of future volumes. Belinsky reiterates his apprehension about Gogol's plans to reengineer the novel, in the glorification of which he invested considerable energy and reputation, and implies that no one would want to read the corrected version.

Belinsky's fears about the textual integrity of *Dead Souls*' original text proved unfounded, since Gogol never emended it. He did, however, continue the debate on the novel in an article published in *Selected Passages*, under the title "Four Letters to Various Persons concerning *Dead Souls*" (*PSS* 8, 286–299). The first letter focuses on Gogol's knowledge of Russia. This time, Gogol explicitly invokes the names of Bulgarin, Sękowski, and Polevoi, calling their remarks on *Dead Souls* largely justified. Though he is grateful to professional critics for their opinions, he again regrets, echoing his 1846 preface, that regular people had not responded to his novel: plain civil servants, merchants, and landowners. For how is a writer, whose life is by its very nature sedentary and isolated, to learn about Russia? Being "forced" to live abroad, he professes to have found this task especially difficult. The writer's only teacher, Gogol notes, is his readers, people immersed in practical life—and Gogol's readers failed him by remaining silent, as if Russia were truly inhabited by dead souls. Gogol implies that the professional men of letters' views on Russia were skewed and that only regular Russians could serve as sources of reliable information—hence, he would accept their correctives.

In the second letter, Gogol discusses the lyrical digressions, which according to him were misunderstood by both his admirers and attackers. He agrees that they were unclear and unconnected to the rest of the novel, and yet he objects to seeing them as signs of his hubris or hypocrisy. Though he published *Dead Souls* prematurely in a flawed form, Gogol reassures his readers that his prophecies of Russia's grandeur and its pri-

macy among nations were "from the heart." Yet he also defends his portrayal of Russia's unattractiveness. Russia's progress since Peter I has been insignificant in Gogol's view; the tsar's revolution has stalled:

> To this day our spaces remain just as empty, sad, and unpopulated. Everything around us is just as inhospitable and bleak, as if we still were not in our own home, under our native roof, but stopped somewhere along the road shelterless, and Russia welcomed us not with a warm brotherly reception but with some kind of cold, storm-beset post-house, where a lone, indifferent post-house keeper greets you sternly with "No horses." (*PSS* 8, 289)

The Russian nation, Gogol seems to be implying, has not yet fully formed but remains stranded on its journey to self-realization.

The third letter confronts the problem of *Dead Souls*' heroes. Why should such despicable characters be close to your soul? Gogol's imaginary correspondent asks. The author replies: "because they *are* from my soul" (*PSS* 8, 292; emphasis mine). Gogol transforms his flawed heroes into emanations of his own anguished psyche. Such an internalization of the world portrayed, making the work of art into a record of the artist's inner struggle, recalls Gogol's effort in the aftermath of *The Inspector* to diffuse the politics of his play by transforming it into the staging of a spiritual battle of good and evil. This attempt to erase the novel's correspondence to any outside reality, in an effort to redeem that reality, sharply reverses Gogol the satirist's bold finger-pointing at his audience in his comedy: "What are you laughing at? You are laughing at yourselves!" (*PSS* 4, 94). In "Four Letters" Gogol turns his finger at himself: "laughing at my heroes, the reader was laughing at me" (*PSS* 8, 293). Gogol shields Russia with his own breast from the shot he himself fired.

In the fourth letter Gogol addresses his reasons for the purported burning of the second volume of *Dead Souls*. He explains it as a necessary act in view of the work's imperfection. Wary of causing any more social harm, Gogol has decided to start anew. He also complains about the critics, often his friends, who idealized him as a writer and then protested if the real Gogol refused to conform to their ideas. "I was not born to create a literary epoch," Gogol writes. "My work is: the soul and the solid business of life" (*PSS* 8, 298–299). This signals Gogol's refusal to participate in the fierce battles of literary parties, whether Westernizing or Slavophile, and his effort to redirect the public's obsession with his picture

of the externals of Russian life to an investigation of its inner, eternal content, the truth of the soul.

Belinsky's 1847 review of *Selected Passages* made public the ultimate fall of Gogol from his grace (*SSBel* 8, 222–239). The enraged critic singled out "Four Letters" as the volume's worst article. He lambasts Gogol's renunciation of the very works that had made him famous all over Russia and had inspired Belinsky himself to put Gogol at the head of the new, Natural School of Russian literature. Belinsky deems it an unforgivable betrayal. For to agree with Bulgarin and Sękowski meant to agree with their idea that Gogol wrote nothing of value after *Evenings on a Farm*, while for Belinsky the great Gogol began with *The Government Inspector*. In the eyes of Belinsky, Gogol made him, his greatest, most unabashed supporter, into a fool and sided instead with his own enemies.

As the reception of *Dead Souls* and *The Government Inspector* shows, an involvement with Russian themes meant for Gogol stepping into nationalistically charged territory. While initially this development was applauded by critics, Gogol's works on Russian subjects made some of these critics regret that Gogol did not stick to Ukrainian topics. Gogol's negative image of Russia outraged his opponents and discomfited many of his admirers. His personal friends and Belinsky defended the works' patriotism and insisted on trusting Gogol's love for Russia, which they attempted to deduce from Gogol's life and works by a variety of more or less tenuous arguments. One thing is certain: the reception of Gogol's "Russian" works invariably revolved around Gogol's treatment of the question of Russia's national character, which proved a contentious, difficult, and uneasy subject. As such, these contemporary voices perceived the genuine complexity at the heart of Gogol's approach to Russia and offer a refreshing contrast to the axiomatic conviction of Gogol's unquestionable love for Russia that later formed in Russian culture. Gogol's early readers, by being less sure of it or at least considering it a debatable proposition, were truer to the spirit of Gogol's work, in which this issue is far from obvious.

I have shown in this chapter that Gogol's treatment of Russia represents a national critique rather than an affirmation; it offers a catalog of the nation's vices, rather than an idealization. Though Gogol describes Russia using the *category* of a nation—either as a country lacking nationhood

(as in the Petersburg stories) or as one whose national characteristics are uncomplimentary (as in *Dead Souls*)—he does not describe it as an ardent *nationalist*, with love and pride. To the extent that we can speak at all about Gogol's Russian nationalism, it represents a reform-minded civic commitment to Russia's much-needed social, economic, and cultural improvement. Gogol realized that his Russian audience craved a different kind of nationalism, a "feel-good" variety for which Gogol showed ample talent in his works on Ukraine. Despite promises, he failed to deliver it. Russia is circumscribed in Gogol's vision by a corrupt imperial bureaucracy, an artificial system of administrative ranks, irremediable social and geographic rifts, inorganic culture, and a lack of national self-awareness. Gogol's qualifications about Russia's future potential and greatness that he added ex post facto to *Dead Souls*, while in themselves equivocal, only accentuate the imperfections in Gogol's image of present-day Russia.

Gogol's difficulty in satisfying his Russian readers' nationalist imperative stems from a fundamental disjunction in his thinking about Russia. While he found Russia repulsive in light of his actual experience, he relied on his inner world as the source of its beauty. When personal demons began to oppress Gogol ever more toward the end of his life, he equated the imperfections of his works' nationalism with the imperfections of his soul. Following *Dead Souls*, he launched a major spiritual-patriotic inner perestroika. Yet the high seriousness of the endeavor proved deadly to his fiction. Instead of the next installment of *Dead Souls*, all that Gogol could muster was a volume of sermonical passages from his correspondence.

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Nationalizing the Empire

Though Gogol solemnly vowed in the first volume of *Dead Souls* to produce a continuation that would reveal Russia's greatness, his only fiction that glorifies Russian nationalism remains the 1842 redaction of *Taras Bulba*. While reworking the tale's earlier version from the volume *Mirgorod* (1835), Gogol infused it with nationalistic Russian sentiment, embedding it—though not without certain ambiguities—in the narration and the characters' speech. This is the only fiction in which Gogol makes the ideology of Russian nationalism integral to the actual narrative and does not relegate it, as in *Dead Souls*, to mere previews of forthcoming volumes or to ironically compromised digressions. A different kind of irony, nonetheless, presents itself in that instead of glorifying Russian nationalism through a suitable portrayal of Russia itself, Gogol embeds it in a theme from Ukrainian history, the topic on which his Ukrainian nationalism had run at its highest. Gogol's Russian national costume is made of Ukrainian fabric: it is spun from the ethnocultural specificities and historic struggles of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Apparently unable to see Russia in these terms, Gogol instead Russifies his Ukrainian Cossacks. It has been convincingly argued that Gogol's Russification of *Taras Bulba*'s early version was meant to preempt the accusations of lack of patriotism that Gogol expected from the reception of *Dead Souls*.[1] Yet in addition to being a defensive tactic, it was also an admission of a certain impotence that proved long lasting. Realizing full well that the Russian public expected nationalistic fiction in the manner of *Taras Bulba* but taken from Russian life (Shevyrev says as much in his review of *Dead Souls*), Gogol nevertheless proved unable to satisfy this demand. In the 1842 *Taras Bulba* Gogol offers his public what *Dead Souls* failed to provide.

In an ongoing campaign to establish his public image as a Russian, the 1842 *Taras Bulba* marks a crucial turn for Gogol, as he sacrifices his Ukrainian nationalism on the altar of the Russian one. In the 1842 edition the Cossacks no longer celebrate their Ukrainian uniqueness but rather their loyalty to the concept of Rus. Rus here is not primarily a historic entity, though such were its origins, but a supratemporal cultural community of Orthodox East Slavs. This is precisely the sense in which this chapter's analysis of *Taras Bulba* will use the terms "Russia" and "Russian." Under the leadership of the mighty Great Russian tsars, such "Russians" are projected onto the past and come to represent the Russian nation of Gogol's own day. Gogol aims to reconcile empire and nation in the work. He carves out of the Russian empire a certain cultural space that can be defined as a nation according to the religious, ethnic, and cultural criteria of kinship that he viewed as essential. By doing so, he at once broadens the concept of the nation and restricts it. On the one hand, Gogol makes the ruling nation, composed of ethnic Great Russians, a more inclusive category by uniting them with the culturally, religiously, and ethnically compatible Ukrainians (the Belorussians would presumably also qualify). On the other, he excludes the rest of the empire's populations. Thus Gogol's concept of a Russian nation deals with the country's imperial condition by admitting more than one population into the mix, while at the same time it assures a viable core identity by barring entrance to non-Orthodox, non-Slavic ethnicities.

The heyday of Ukrainian nationalism behind him in 1842, Gogol came to regard Ukraine's interests as best served by securing it a more respectable place within the Russian empire. A membership in a more loosely defined Russian nation would achieve this goal, he now believed, renouncing his earlier autonomist leanings. In the *Taras Bulba* of 1842 he transforms the historically separatist and unruly Cossacks into shining exemplars of loyalty to the "greater" Russian nation. From a mistrusted minority, a group branded as outsiders, Gogol's Ukrainians transmogrify into the pillars of the nation and martyrs for the cause of unification with their Russian brethren. The rift between Russia proper and Ukraine that "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" celebrates is bridged by the second edition of *Taras.* The cultural realms of Ukraine and Russia that Gogol separates in *Evenings on a Farm* here become united. Yet the *Taras Bulba* of 1842 achieves an affirmation of the "greater" Russian nation without having a single ethnically Russian character in it.

The Russified *Taras Bulba* of 1842 contrasts starkly with its Ukrainofile 1835 version. As such, it demonstrates the distance that Gogol traveled in his national allegiance as a writer. While the Gogol of *Evenings on a Farm,* "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," and the 1835 *Taras Bulba* participated in the first stirrings of Ukrainian nationalism, the Gogol of the 1842 *Taras Bulba* lost all connection to the national ferment in Ukraine, which in the 1840s was entering a new energetic phase. The year 1840 marked a major event in the development of both Ukrainian literature and Ukrainian nationalism, with the appearance of Taras Shevchenko's *The Minstrel (Kobzar).* Shevchenko, who became Ukraine's national bard, wrote impassioned poetry in Ukrainian that defended his compatriots' right to a nation of their own. His political outspokenness and his choice to write in Ukrainian made him an antithesis of Gogol. The intellectuals in Ukraine increasingly resisted the policies of official Russian nationalism. In 1845 some of them founded an informal group, the Cyril and Methodius Brotherhood, committed to a nationalist program. In Austro-Hungary, Ukrainian culture received a major recognition with the founding of the first chair of Ukrainian language and literature at the University of Lviv in 1848. The folkloric, ethnographic, and historical studies aimed at shaping a sense of Ukrainian distinctiveness continued unabated in the 1840s, but Gogol no longer participated in these efforts. Though Ukrainianness remained a vital part of his personal identity, Russia now claimed his allegiance as a popular artist and a public figure. He had thrown himself entirely into Russian literary life, espousing its concerns and values, Russian nationalism preeminent among them. The Russified 1842 *Taras Bulba* puts this in perfect relief.

Following the pattern established in his historical fiction, Gogol pits *Taras Bulba*'s Cossacks against the Poles. As I argued in Chapter 3, this served several politically expedient goals. The Cossacks' rejection of "the Polish yoke" and their incorporation within Russia buttressed the ideology of Russian imperialism. Unlike such historical events as the Mazepist rebellion, in which the Cossacks turned against Russia, the Ukrainian-Polish wars facilitated portrayals of the Ukrainian side as noble, heroic, and "on the right side of history," to use a propagandistic phrase of current political discourse. The Poles also made a convenient enemy in the context of the 1831 November Uprising, in which they demanded independence from Russia and made restitutionist claims on parts of Ukraine. By battling these most recalcitrant foes of Russian su-

premacy, Gogol's Ukrainians prove their loyalty to the Russian crown. The theme of the Ukrainians' hostility to Poland also allows Gogol to combat the stereotype that linked Ukraine's language and culture to those of the insubordinate Poles.

Some of Gogol's unpublished fragments and notes, however, "Mazepa's Meditations" preeminent among them, affirm the exact opposite view of Ukrainian history, making the Russians into Ukraine's enemies and the Poles into its kinsmen and allies. That Gogol expressed such antithetical views introduces the very real possibility that his published texts were to some extent disingenuous. They likely reflect what Gogol thought was expected of him as a Russian citizen and represent support for the reigning ideology of the Russian empire, which he wanted to be seen as serving. How Gogol "really felt" about Russo-Polish-Ukrainian relations is a complex matter that cannot be easily sorted out on the basis of selected published works. The juxtaposition of biographical data with Gogol's writings shows stunningly contradictory personas. Gogol's correspondence features sly posturing, responses tailored to please a particular correspondent or to get Gogol what he needed at the moment, even outright lies, not to mention a clear awareness of postal censorship. In the case of Gogol, a traditional critical study of the "man and his work" appears next to impossible owing to the frequent incompatibility of the "man" and the "work," not to mention the multiple incarnations of the "man" and the contradictory nature of various aspects of his "work." The masks, evasions, and dissimulations that characterize both the author and his writings resist unified critical narratives. A century after Gogol's death, Dmytro Chyzhevsky marveled at the continued viability of the notion of "the unknown Gogol," despite his centrality to Russian culture and the sheer bulk of critical work devoted to him.[2] Now, another half a century later, many unknowns remain.

As regards nationalism, the disparity between Gogol's public and private pronouncements, his published works and unpublished fragments, is particularly difficult to reconcile. The previous chapter has shown that Gogol's letters reveal little enthusiasm for Russia and its people, yet in his capacity as a Russian writer, Gogol made Russian nationalism his supreme task. Perhaps because he regarded it as part of a writer's social service, Gogol's Russian nationalism does not strike me as a deeply felt conviction but, rather, as an artificial aspect of his public persona. It did not flow smoothly from his pen. In his fiction on Russian themes, the

execution of Gogol's nation-affirming goals fell short of his promises. Yet Gogol's self-consciousness about the project makes a study of his nationalism all the more interesting. His case demonstrates exceedingly well the basic tenet of the modern theory of nationalism: that nationalism is a constructed discourse, not an a priori essence. A lack of credible personal involvement in the idea of Russian nationalism makes Gogol's conscious construction of it all the more apparent: the nuts and bolts are plainly exposed, revealing a record of the making. An insight into this process is also facilitated by drafts, unfinished pieces, redactions, and manuscript versions that I have incorporated into my study of Gogol's fictions. The comparison between the 1835 and 1842 versions of *Taras Bulba* that I propose in this chapter is part of this strategy. It exposes a nationalist discourse *in statu nascendi.* However, this comparison also reveals that the later version features complexities that have not been fully appreciated.

I prefaced my analysis of *Dead Souls* by citing Gogol's correspondence that reveals his disgust with Russia. I did this in order to dramatize one of many moments of incompatibility between Gogol the man and the ostensible goals of his work. I would like to dwell on another such incommensurability as a way of approaching *Taras Bulba.* Before delving into Gogol's fiction on his Russianized Cossacks' fight with the tyrannical and treacherous Poles, I will briefly explore Gogol's own connections with various Poles as well as aspects of his biography that jar with his Russified apotheosis of Cossackdom. Yet I will also argue for conceiving *Taras Bulba* differently. Despite a considerable tradition of regarding it as a straightforward epic glorifying the Cossacks and their war against Poland, I propose a reading that shows the ideology of the 1842 version as nuanced and ambiguous.[3] Gogol worked on revising *Taras Bulba* for three years (August 1839–May 1842; *PSS* 2, 708), which makes the final text's complexity unsurprising, as it shows the importance that Gogol attached to this work. The nationalism of *Taras Bulba* is no less complex and contradictory than that of *Dead Souls,* as both works feature multiple levels that are often at odds. Intricate webs of irony, the narrator's misdirections and dissimulations, jarring incongruities of style and theme—in short, all the Gogoliana that readers have come to associate with the author's other works also pervades *Taras Bulba,* if more subtly. Just as the digressions in *Dead Souls* collapse upon contextualization, *Taras Bulba*'s glorification of the Cossack ethos and militant Russian nationalism is simultaneously

subverted by disharmonious, often ironic, discourses that run throughout the narrative. As I have argued throughout this book, the inconsistencies and incongruities in Gogol's biographical data correspond in fact to the points of tension in his fiction. Gogol's contacts with the Poles and what they reveal about Gogol's posturing in Russia's nationalist politics anticipate the complexities of his works.

Gogol and the Poles

Gogol was disinclined to accept the Polish aspect of his heritage as part of his identity. As I mentioned in Chapter 2, Gogol's family on his mother's side had Polish roots, and his father's ancestors received nobility from the Polish king as a reward for fighting the Muscovites. Yet Gogol concealed this aspect of his heritage and was anxious to drop the Polish part of his surname, Ianovsky (Janowski), shortly upon his arrival in St. Petersburg. However, he had a reading knowledge of Polish and followed Polish literature and Polish publications on Ukraine.

Gogol maintained friendly relations with Polish political émigrés in Paris and Rome, though he left scanty evidence of them in his letters. Details became available only with the publication of the Polish sources half a century after Gogol's death. Since they testify to Gogol's critical attitude toward Russia and his friendliness toward the Poles, the Russians soon dismissed them as fabrication. Yuri Mann's 2004 biography of Gogol represents the first attempt to evaluate these accounts more objectively and incorporate them into a story of Gogol's life.[4] Indeed, the primary and circumstantial evidence is credible and ample enough to corroborate at least the main gist of the Polish accounts. It is not surprising that while living abroad Gogol may have indulged in various freethinking ideas about which he was reticent in Russia. Russian governments have always tried to control citizens' travel abroad due precisely to the possibility of contact with ideas and people that oppose ruling Russian ideologies. And Russian travelers have typically been more willing to question these ideologies openly while abroad. Furthermore, emerging from a phase of Ukrainian nationalism that revealed itself in his *Evenings on a Farm* and historical writings, it is not at all inconceivable that Gogol would express these same sentiments more boldly in the freer intellectual climate of western Europe. Neither are anti-Russian overtones unattested in Gogol's correspondence and fiction. Considering the political realities within

Russia, it seems only natural that Gogol would try to conceal this aspect of his stay abroad. Socializing with Polish political exiles who had fought against Russia in the 1831 November Uprising and continued to lobby in western Europe against the Russian annexation of their country hardly qualifies as the kind of news one shares with preeminent Russian nationalists who are the guardian angels of one's career and sources of financial support (I have in mind individuals such as Pletnev, Zhukovsky, Sergei Aksakov, Pogodin).

Gogol's first important encounter with Polish exiles took place in 1837 in Paris. Gogol stayed in the apartment of Józef Bohdan Zaleski, a Polish-Ukrainian poet from Right-Bank Ukraine who had participated in the November Uprising and to whom Gogol later left a note written in perfectly fluent idiomatic Ukrainian. He signed it with the Ukrainian version of his name, Mykola Hohol (*PSS* 11, 88). Much later, in 1859, Zaleski wrote a letter to Polish political writer and historian Franciszek Duchiński, in which he described in detail Gogol's participation in the 1837 meetings. Wasyl Hryshko has analyzed this letter and Gogol's ties with the Polish community and has presented a strong case for the credibility of Zaleski's account. Zaleski wrote: "Of course, we talked mostly about Russians who were as much distasteful to him as they were to us. The question of their Finnish origin was always the subject of our discussion. Gogol corroborated this vehemently with all his Ukrainian wholeheartedness." Gogol reportedly wrote an article that compared various Slavic folk-song traditions, in which he argued that the Russian ones—"morose, wild, and not seldom cannibal"—were anomalous and thus corroborated the theory of the Finnish, non-Slavic, origin of the Russians (I would add that a connection between the Russians and the Finns appears also in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia"). Zaleski wondered whether the article could be found in posthumous collections of Gogol's works and regretted the loss of "many racy anecdotes and jokes about Russians, which only Gogol could know and he alone would be able to narrate with that sharp wit so peculiar to him." Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz, who attended these meetings, later used an example of a cannibalistic Russian folk song in his lectures on Slavic literatures at the College de France, and such songs also appear in Kireevsky's collection, to which Gogol donated a few specimens.[5] The letter offers a glimpse of Gogol's participation in a Ukrainian-Polish rapprochement in the context of their common opposition to the Russians.

The 1837 Parisian sojourn brought Gogol quite close to Mickiewicz. Gogol's childhood friend who was with him in Paris, Danilevsky, claims that Gogol delayed his departure to Rome, loath to part with Mickiewicz and Zaleski. Mickiewicz's ideas at the time, as Hryshko notes, centered around the political and moral-religious concept of a "Slavic union on the basis of the Polish concept of democratic freedom and Christian brotherhood, as opposed to Russian autocratic power and worship of it under the disguise of Christian orthodoxy."[6] In the years 1835–1836, Hryshko reports, Mickiewicz was involved in the formation of the movement of "Resurrectionists," which included Zaleski as well as Piotr Semenenko and Hieronim Kajsiewicz, former "Novembrists" from Ukraine who later in Rome tried to involve Gogol in their cause. The Resurrectionists' agenda of Slavic union had a distinct anti-Russian bias: following Mickiewicz, they considered Russia the oppressor of nations. It would be rash to assume that Gogol shared this agenda, yet Zaleski's account, compounded by the circumstantial evidence amassed by Hryshko, does convincingly suggest that Gogol and his Polish friends found much that they could agree on and that Gogol gladly joined them in their Russia-bashing.

Gogol's friendship with Mickiewicz outlived their Parisian encounter in 1837. In the fall of 1838 Gogol frequently met the Polish poet in Geneva, and the next summer he visited Mickiewicz in Karlsruhe.[7] He asked Danilevsky to bring him from Paris an "amazing" new work, *Pan Tadeusz* (1834), Mickiewicz's national epic that glorifies the Poles' fight for independence and their joining of Napoleon in his march on Russia (*PSS* 11, 133, 152). In 1839, Gogol asked Shevyrev to give Mickiewicz "a big hug" if he saw him in Paris (*PSS* 11, 233). In 1844 Smirnova, who enthusiastically describes to Gogol Mickiewicz's Paris lectures on Slavic literatures, mentions that she was bringing Gogol, who requested Mickiewicz's books, a copy of the Polish poet's play *The Forefathers' Eve (Dziady)*, hardly a pro-Russian work.[8]

Another set of documents concerning Gogol's contacts with the Poles comes from the two priests-Resurrectionists whom Gogol met in the Roman salon of Princess Zinaida Volkonskaia, a Russian convert to Catholicism. Semenenko and Kajsiewicz left a record of their conversations with Gogol in their diaries and in correspondence with their patron, published only in 1893. According to their account, Gogol discussed with them various "Slavic matters" as well as contemporary Polish literature, of which he spoke highly. They hoped to convert him to Catholicism and found him receptive to the idea.[9] For a while Gogol did indeed seem to flirt with Catholicism: he claimed Rome to be the only appropriate place for prayer, read Catholic theological writings, made a point of celebrating Easter at St. Peter's, and seemed generally taken with the atmosphere of Catholic churches, much like Andrii in *Taras Bulba* (*PSS* 11, 96, 140; *PSS* 12, 278). Yet he probably never seriously contemplated converting. When such rumors reached his mother, he denied them, claiming—incredibly, for the author of *Taras Bulba*—that Orthodoxy and Catholicism were basically the same, so there was no point in changing one religion for the other (*PSS* 11, 118–119). V. V. Veresaev may well be right that Gogol humored the two priests in order to please his hostess, Princess Volkonskaia.[10]

However, according to Kajsiewicz's and Semenenko's letters, Gogol also had rather harsh words to say about Russia. One cannot dismiss them as an effort to please the princess, since she herself was Russian. One letter said: "[W]e had a very nice chat with Gogol. It is amazing: he said that Moscow is a rod with which a father punishes a child and then breaks it! And many, many other encouraging things [did he say]." On the subject of the Russian nation, Gogol reportedly expressed the following opinion: "He sees very well that there is no cement that could bind this formless monstrous building [*niekształtowne gmaszysko*]. Power oppresses from above, but inside there is no spirit."[11] Though the account may be exaggerated or Gogol may have sharpened his criticism of Russia to mesh with the attitude of his interlocutors, it is very likely that he did express such ideas. Though I have never seen it mentioned, Gogol is cited in a similar manner by his artist friend Aleksandr Ivanov: "The Russians are in trouble! Gogol says that the Russians are deprived by nature of a basis on which one could safely build."[12] There is also the indirect evidence of Gogol's writings. As I show in Chapter 3, Gogol did consider the Russian nation stunted in its development as a result of Peter I's reforms and in various pieces alluded to its lack of a core identity. The national specificities of the Russians in *Dead Souls* consist mainly of shortcomings. The 1842 *Taras Bulba* confronts precisely the problem of the Russian nation as a "formless mass" by attempting to give it shape and spirit, which Gogol fashions on his Ukrainian material. Since the letters of the two Polish-Ukrainian Resurrectionists, just like Zaleski's letter, were part of a private correspondence, even Veresaev admits that there are no reasons to suspect fabrication or an outright lie.[13]

One other mysterious Polish connection surfaces in the mid-1840s in Rome. Between late October 1845 and early May 1846 Gogol stayed in a third-floor apartment at Via de la Croce 81 (currently Strada della Croce; *PSS* 12, 536, 540). The house belonged to the Poniatowski family (it was called Palazzo Poniatowski), who, like most other Poles with whom Gogol associated abroad, were post-Novembrist political exiles. Poniatowski and other Polish refugees who lived there (Zaniewski and Potocki) were engaged at the time in conspiratorial work for the liberation of Poland.[14] The Italian sources I consulted give rather sketchy details about these figures (they omit even their first names, which, considering the popularity of their surnames, makes it hard to identify them). Neither do the Polish histories of the Great Emigration, as it was called, mention them. However, these works tend to focus on the Parisian émigré community, rather than the much less numerous and active Roman one. Regrettably, the nature and scope of Gogol's contact with the inhabitants of Palazzo Poniatowski remain unknown, yet they are highly intriguing.

The final seemingly incongruous biographical detail with a Polish twist concerns Gogol's alleged participation in the scandal caused by the publication of Countess Rostopchina's allegory "The Forced Marriage" ("Nasil'nyi brak").[15] Rostopchina claimed that she submitted the poem to *The Northern Bee* upon Gogol's prompting. Its publication in December 1846 caused an uproar. In the poem, a knight-baron accuses his wife of not loving him, to which she replies that he is in no position to demand love, since he married her against her will and made her into a slave. What seemed like a titillating insight into the countess's widely known marital problems was now perceived as a political allegory on Russia's rapelike annexation of Poland. The censor and critic Aleksandr Nikitenko notes in his diary: "Now it turns out that the baron is Russia and the forcefully taken wife is Poland. The poem fits both relationships amazingly well, and since it is very good, everyone is memorizing it."[16] The tsar threatened to close down Bulgarin's journal, and a large-scale investigation ensued. Rostopchina was banned from residing in St. Petersburg.

The countess claims she read the poem to Gogol in Rome, and he impressed upon her the idea to publish it: "They won't understand it, and they'll publish it. I'll bet my life on it!" When she protested that even a child would understand it, Gogol insisted: "I tell you, they won't understand it! Go ahead and send it off! You don't know how stupid our censorship is, but I do. Send it off!"[17] Why would Gogol encourage the

publication of this politically incorrect poem at the time when he was loudly proclaiming his Russianness and loyalty to government policy? Louis Pedrotti posits Gogol's motive as revenge on Bulgarin for unflattering reviews. Yet quite soon, in *Selected Passages,* Gogol would agree with Bulgarin's criticisms of his work, and even earlier in all earnestness he recommended his reviews to his mother. At any rate, he never seemed to carry a grudge against Bulgarin.

Pedrotti also proposes another line of thought, though he does not follow it through. Gogol, he reminds us, himself indulged "in a mystifying kind of cryptography" that hardly masked his anti-Russian satire. "How should we interpret the aims of a writer," Pedrotti asks, "who creates the magnificent runaway *troika* of Russia at the end of *Dead Souls* (Part 1), a coach before which all nations stand aside and make way, when inside this triumphant carriage rides the prince of *poshlost'*, of mediocrity, of vulgarity, and of materialism, Chichikov himself?"[18] Building on Pedrotti's observation, which is consistent with my own analysis of *Dead Souls,* I would conclude with three points. First, Gogol may have suggested Bulgarin's archconservative and loyalist paper because it was the least likely place for seditious poetry. A censor might be less vigilant in dealing with submissions to an organ with such a profile. Second, Gogol must have found the message of the poem congenial and worthy of dissemination. His own works, though not political allegories, smuggled plenty of anti-Russian sentiment just as he himself always publicly maintained the best of intentions. His own country, Ukraine, was also in a relationship with Russia that hardly resembled a harmonious marriage of equals. Third, Gogol reveled in a game of dodging the censor and himself smuggled politically subversive content masked by loyalism or naïveté. After all, he had the temerity to bill to the Russian public as a patriotic feat perhaps the most unflattering anatomy of Russianness ever *(Dead Souls).* After Moscow censors banned his novel, he had the gall to seek the tsar's intercession (*PSS* 12, 27) and to appeal to Uvarov's "Russian soul," which would surely appreciate Gogol's "gift to the fatherland" (*PSS* 12, 39–41; the petition was never delivered). When Gogol told Rostopchina that he knew how stupid censorship was, he as much as confirmed his own feats of dodging the red pencil. Yet since instead of allegory Gogol used masterful irony and Aesopian language, his own writings did not produce a scandal on the scale of Rostopchina's poem, though, as voices that he be sent in chains to Siberia attest, he walked a fine line in this regard.

Gogol's connections with Polish political refugees and conspirators, his

involvement in the publication of Rostopchina's allegory, and accounts of conversations with Gogol left by Zaleski and the two Polish priests give a glimpse of Gogol that does not mesh easily with the established view of the writer as a loyal and devoted Russian. The Gogol that emerges from these accounts is markedly more pro-Polish and less pro-Russian than his fictions. While the earlier instances of such "anomalous" biographical data could conceivably be viewed as youthful rebelliousness, the later ones hardly lend themselves to such a characterization. It is truly puzzling that as late as 1845 or 1846, the celebrated author of *Dead Souls* who labored to glorify Russia in its sequel, and who by that time had fashioned himself as an ardent Russian patriot, would be staying in the home of Polish conspirators or encouraging allegories that question the right of Russia's imperial expansion. It comes as a surprise that an author whose fiction mostly ridicules the Poles and portrays them as the quintessential enemy had friendly contacts with them. Their accounts of Gogol's anti-Russian pronouncements give one pause. It seems that Gogol's only "stable" national attitude, contradicted by neither fiction nor biographical data, was his love for Ukraine. The same cannot be said about his attitudes to either the Russians or the Poles, which seem variables that Gogol felt free to adjust, depending on the nature of his given public relations project.

The Cossacks as Ideal Russians

When preparing his works for publication in a four-volume 1842 collection, Gogol greatly expanded the *Mirgorod* version of *Taras Bulba* and changed its national profile. In the 1842 redaction, the nine chapters grew to twelve, and the text increased by two-thirds of its original volume. The 1835 version celebrated the Cossacks as freedom-loving Ukrainians fighting for the preservation of their religion and customs that had come under assault from Catholic Poland. The word "Ukraine" *(Ukraina)* appears frequently (*PSS* 2, 283, 285, 299, 310, 311, 327, 344, 349); the concepts of a "nation" *(natsiia)* or a "Cossack nation" are also mentioned (*PSS* 2, 348, 349). The Ukraine of the 1835 *Taras* is contiguous with the Ukraine of Gogol's historical writings whose echoes resound in the narrative: an entity that was a nation by virtue of its cultural specificity and unique historical experience. This changes in 1842. Though in the least reworked passages some references to Ukraine remain, Gogol's overall

strategy is to eliminate them and to identify the place of action as "Russia" ("eastern Russia" or "the original Russia"; *PSS* 2, 64, 46, 78) and the protagonists' national identity as "Russian" or "southern Russian" (*PSS* 2, 41, 46, 47, 48, 65, 124, 133, 138–140). The Cossacks' "physiognomy" remains unique, yet this no longer signals their national separateness. Gogol now presents this uniqueness as a peculiar stamp, a flourish that the Cossacks impart to a general Russian nature. The Cossacks come to express Russianness, which the text bounds, as I mentioned, to Orthodoxy and East Slavic ethnic ties that have historically united the Muscovites, the Ukrainians, and the Belorussians. Their heirs all form a nation of "brothers" (*PSS* 2, 65).[19] The linguistic Ukrainianisms of the original tale were also Russified, possibly by Stepan Shevyrev, who edited the 1842 text for publication (*PSS* 2, 713–714).

These significant changes in the national angle of the text, did not, however, involve any changes to the basic plot of the *Mirgorod* tale. The titular hero, Taras Bulba, brings his two sons to the seat of the Cossack army, the Zaporozhian Sich. He wishes to transform them into real Cossacks by complementing the education they obtained at the Kiev Academy with rigorous military training. Soon the Cossack army becomes embroiled in a war with Poland. The portrayal of the war centers on the siege of Dubno, a Polish stronghold that the Cossacks wish to crush by sealing off its food supplies. Taras's younger son, Andrii, discovers that a Polish woman with whom he was infatuated when still in Kiev is inside Dubno. He runs to her rescue and crosses over to the Polish side. When Taras finds out about Andrii's betrayal, he seeks him out in battle and kills him. Unfortunately, his other son, Ostap, is taken prisoner by the Poles. After the Cossacks suffer a defeat at Dubno and Taras recovers from battlefield wounds, he undertakes a trip to Warsaw to see Ostap one last time. He is aided by the Jew Iankel, whose life he once saved. In Warsaw, Taras ends up witnessing Ostap's torture and execution. Upon his return to Ukraine he joins Hetman Ostranitsa's rebellion against Poland. Later rejecting Ostranitsa's ill-considered peace, Bulba launches his own vicious campaign against the Poles to avenge Ostap's death. He is eventually defeated and dies a martyr's death.

Gogol Russifies this basic story by changing the national parameters in the narration and the characters' speech. On the very first page, the footnote that in 1835 explained the word *svitka* as "a type of an overcoat worn by Little Russians" in 1842 becomes "a type of an overcoat worn

by southern Russians" (*PSS* 2, 279, 41). While "Little Russians" was an official name for Ukrainians in the Russian empire, the designation "southern Russians" stresses the unitary category of "Russians," making their southern variety a secondary characteristic not exclusive to Ukraine.

The tale's historical parameters and the milieu of its heroes underwent similar changes. The narrator now places the action in the "southern original Russia" *(iuzhnaia pervobytnaia Rossiia),* projecting the modern concept of the Russian empire-state *(Rossiia)* onto the medieval entity of Kievan Rus. The warlike Cossacks now represent "the broad, robust [*razgul'naia*] manifestation of the Russian nature" (*PSS* 2, 46). Gogol continues to claim, as in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," that the Cossacks saved Europe from the Islamic invaders, yet he now presents these saviors not in opposition to the Russians but as "an extraordinary phenomenon of Russian power" (*PSS* 2, 46). The revelry that Gogol made such a distinguishing feature of the Cossacks here represents a feature of the Russians, as the Cossacks are shown to excel in the ability "to carouse, to drink and revel as only a Russian can" (*PSS* 2, 47). The "Russian character," the narrator sums up, received among the Cossacks its "powerful, broad sweep" (*PSS* 2, 48). Even the characteristic Ukrainian straight-face humor that Gogol had used elsewhere to set the Ukrainians apart from the Russians here becomes attenuated within a statement that asserts the kinship of the two ethnicities ("a sharp feature that even now distinguishes a southern Russian from his other brothers"; *PSS* 2, 65). Unlike in the *Taras Bulba* of 1835, the Cossacks are thus subsumed in the larger category of the Russians.

Gogol also made subtle but revealing changes in the role he accords the Poles in Cossack history. In the 1835 text, Taras emerges as one of the Cossack colonels serving the Polish king Stefan Batory, who organized the Cossacks into a regular, registered army that then helped him fight Muscovy (*PSS* 2, 284). In the 1842 text, the reference to Batory disappears and with it any hint that Taras may have been serving a Polish king.[20] Though the narrator acknowledges that the Polish kings ruled Ukraine, he appears intent on stressing their remove from it. Thus he mentions their "distant sabers" and "distant rule" (*PSS* 2, 47), eager to keep the Polish and Ukrainian realms absolutely separate despite the historical reality of a social, political, and military relationship that existed at the time that his tale concerns. The 1835 text claims that in the Sich "[t]here were many officers from the Polish troops; however, from which nation

weren't there some people?" (*PSS* 2, 302). In 1842 Gogol eliminates any suggestion that there were any Poles in the Cossack ranks and merely mentions nationally unmarked officers that "later distinguished themselves in the King's troops" (*PSS* 2, 66). Apart from the presence of foreign merchants (who are not Cossacks), the idea of the Sich as a multinational body disappears from the 1842 text. Gogol instead makes it into a purely Ukrainian phenomenon (or Russian, in the sense that all Ukrainians in the later text are Russians). Gogol needs to keep the future foes neatly compartmentalized; admitting a Polish element within the Cossack body would tarnish its Ukrainianness/Russianness and muddle the lines of the ensuing conflict.

Moreover, the later version eliminates an image of Ukraine as surrounded by three enemy nations (*PSS* 2, 283), which, according to "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," where the same reference appears, would mean Russia, Poland, and the Tatars. Now the Cossacks have only two sets of enemies: the Tatars and the Poles; Russia no longer counts as a foreign nation that is hostile to Ukraine.

Gogol's early works celebrated the Cossack period of Ukrainian history as a living national memory. The *Mirgorod* fictions, with the major exception of *Taras Bulba,* showed the decline of the Cossack ethos and portrayed the Cossacks' descendants as petty and unheroic. Nonetheless, the historical layering continued to play a role, for example, in the Cossack accoutrements aired on a fence by Ivan Nikiforovich's servant in the story "The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich."[21] The 1842 version of *Taras Bulba,* by contrast, attempts to erase the links between the Cossack past and the life of contemporary Ukraine. The Cossack past becomes hermetically sealed, no longer capable of threatening the imperial status quo. At the end of "A Terrible Vengeance," a blind bandura-player sings a historical lay that glorifies the Cossack exploits. The crowd of Ukrainians that surround him is deeply moved by the song, which suggests the continued relevance and potential of the historical memory. In *Taras Bulba* of 1842, Gogol, as if entering in direct dialogue with his earlier story, adds the following statement: "the living hints [about the Cossack times] remained only in the songs and the national lays, which are *no longer sung* in Ukraine by bearded, blind old men surrounded by the people, to the quiet accompaniment of the bandura" (*PSS* 2, 43–44; emphasis mine). *Taras Bulba* thus celebrates an absolute past, congealed history, with no links to the present. This is the

kind of Cossack past that the Russian government promoted, eager to erase from historical memory the notion of Ukraine's autonomy that the Cossack period symbolized.

Gogol endeavors to change this symbolism by having Cossackdom stand for loyalty to the Russian nation. He patterns this nation on the nineteenth-century political needs of the Russian empire and the affinities of Orthodox East Slavs united in one state with the Russians. The eponymous hero does much to enunciate the ideology of this Russian nation, which I will examine in more detail in the next section. Essentially, it assumes the unity of the "Russian land," which is the area inhabited by the "Russian people," who are ethnically related and whose chief priority is the preservation of the holy Orthodox faith. The Cossacks who fall in the epic struggles at Dubno, the segment that Gogol greatly developed in 1842, evoke in their last words not Ukraine or the Cossack glory but "the Russian land." They die as exemplary Russian patriots. "May all the enemies fall and may the Russian land rejoice forever!" or "May the Russian land live in glory until the end of times!"—these are the parting words of Stepan Guska and Bovdiug (*PSS* 2, 139–141). Even Mosii Shilo who just had his throat cut, in a somewhat unlikely laryngeal feat, manages to proclaim: "May the Orthodox Russian land stand forever, and may eternal glory be with it!" (*PSS* 2, 138). In his dying hosanna, Taras sends a threat to his captors and the rest of the non-Russian world: "What have you gained, you devilish Poles? You just wait, the time will come . . . when you'll learn what Russian Orthodox faith means! Already the near and distant nations feel that in the Russian land its own tsar is rising, and there won't be a force in the world that will not submit to him!" (*PSS* 2, 172). Taras Bulba prophesies that Russian autocracy will rise to world prominence and closes the tale in much the manner of the *Dead Souls* conclusion: on the note of Russia's future superiority over other nations. All these premortem nationalistic formulas represent the 1842 additions.

Gogol's 1842 emendations have had an interesting reception in independent Ukraine. The work's newer Ukrainian translations Ukrainianize the tale in reverse by recovering certain 1835 fragments and eliminating some 1842 Russifying additions. For example, they render "the Russian land" as "the Ukrainian land" (for which a linguistic rationale in fact exists) and cut Taras's final invocation to the Russian tsar. The Ukrainian-Russian tug-of-war over Gogol flared up again: a noted Russian Gogol scholar protested this outrage in print, and a Ukrainian scholar challenged

his view.[22] In a way, Gogol's own reengineering of *Taras Bulba* established a precedence and a repertiore of choices for tampering with the nationalistic angle of his narrative.

Taras: The Evolution of a Nationalist

In contrast to the Cossack masses, which act on impulse and are easily manipulated, Taras Bulba stands out as a savvy political leader. He understands how history and politics are made and is able to promote an ideology, rather than just blindly follow one. Though his single-mindedness makes him an exemplary patriot, Gogol's portrayal of him is more complex than a simple affirmation of his values and actions, as is commonly assumed. Gogol complicates the image of the tale's heroic colossus through subtle irony and even humor. The 1842 redaction fashions Taras more consistently into an impassioned nationalist, yet it also questions the morality of his actions and exposes troubling selfish motives behind his apparently suprapersonal agenda of augmenting the glory of Orthodoxy and the Russian land.

The 1835 version introduces Taras as a bit of an anarchic bandit who seeks out opportunities for raids and rebellions. Taras's code of war in the initial chapter lacks an overtly national angle. He claims that the Cossacks are in the right to go to war if a neighboring nation steals cattle or land, to defend Orthodoxy, or to vanquish the infidels (*PSS* 2, 284). In the 1842 text, the mention of cattle and land disputes disappears, indicating Gogol's effort to raise Taras above such mundane concerns. Moreover, Gogol replaces Taras's economically based anti-Polish agenda with a nationalistically motivated one. While in the 1835 version Taras quarrels with the Cossacks since they allowed a greater share of the war spoils to go to the Poles, in the 1842 text he breaks with them because they adopted Polish customs. Taras resents the influence of Poland on "Russian nobility," by which in the Russified 1842 version he means the Cossack elites. In the later version Taras no longer seeks out brawls or squabbles over war booty and cattle; his concerns are those of a mature nationalist, opposed to Polonization and anxious to see his country's religion and customs respected and preserved.

Nonetheless, in portraying Taras's actions, Gogol reverts to, and even accentuates, the 1835 text's image of him as an unruly warmonger. The greater national good concerns Taras less than his need to transform his

sons from seminarists into warriors. The events that lead to the Cossack-Polish war have been conspicuously neglected in interpretations of *Taras Bulba,* despite the fact that they occupy a third of the work (chapters 1–4). These chapters expose in detail Taras's crooked politicking and offer a mercilessly skeptical anatomy of the war's emergence that questions the idea of "popular" uprisings and "national" decisions. As such, they provide an important ironic context for the story's further developments. Instead of excising or emending these chapters during his 1842 revisions, Gogol, on the contrary, magnified the extent of Taras's devious machinations. This large initial segment plays an integral role in the work and is not merely a sideline one can proceed to forget once the story hits the nationalistic high notes.

Taras's confrontational, militant personality reveals itself already in the story's first sentence, when he greets his sons by ridiculing their seminarian garb. Instead of an embrace or a handshake, the scene features a fistfight between father and son, as the older Ostap, provoked by Taras's insults, attempts to silence him by force. Elated to see Ostap's show of manliness, Taras reproaches his younger son, Andrii, for his lack of mettle. The scene is not innocently comical, as is often suggested. Taras's affection, expressed in the form of confrontational rhetoric and, however mild, violence is unsettling more than amusing. The scene presages the rift within the Bulba family and the theme of more bloody violence to come. It emphasizes that Taras thrives on conflict. Instead of sending his sons to the military camp of the Sich alone, he decides to join them: "what enemy can we find by sitting at home?" (*PSS* 2, 45). Fighting the enemy is not a brutal necessity for Taras: it is a vital part of life that must be sought out if lacking.

In the Sich, Taras's quest for war assumes a more concrete shape. After Ostap and Andrii have tasted the Cossack spirit, Taras urges the *koshevoi,* the commander in chief of the Cossack army, to engage the Cossacks in a war. The existence or identification of the enemy is secondary for Taras; what matters is that there be war. When the *koshevoi* answers that the Cossacks at the moment lack suitable targets, Taras suggests the Tatars or the Turks. The *koshevoi* rejects this proposal, since the Cossacks promised peace to the sultan. Taras does not consider the promise binding and cites a higher authority that in his mind overrides the promise: God and the Scriptures order the killing of infidels. The *koshevoi* concedes that normally this would be an acceptable loophole but for the fact that the

Cossacks swore the peace on their own faith. Having himself evoked religion in his argument, Taras finds himself in a quandary. Since he cannot counter the *koshevoi*'s final argument, he abandons the strategy of reasoning altogether: "Look here, I have two sons, both young. Neither has yet seen war, and you tell me that we have no right" (*PSS* 2, 69). Thus the discussion bluntly shifts from collective rights to personal needs. Since the *koshevoi* remains unconvinced, Taras implies the congruence of his personal need with communal benefit: "So it means that the Cossack power should go to waste for nothing, that a man should die like a dog, without a good deed, so that neither the fatherland nor all of Christianity would have any gain from it? Then what do we live for?" (*PSS* 2, 69). The notions of Christianity and the fatherland come up only as a mask of Taras's more immediate wish to provide his sons with military training. In the end, the *koshevoi* upholds his initial verdict, and Taras secretly swears revenge.

His revenge takes the shape of a slyly orchestrated coup d'état that he masquerades as a popular rebellion. First, he gets the Cossacks drunk and provokes them to demand that the current *koshevoi* relinquish his authority. The *koshevoi* follows the order without so much as an attempt to find out the charges against him, much less to change the volatile Cossacks' mind. In the summary "election," which is really a drunken brawl, Taras whispers to some Cossacks the name of Kirdiug, his old war comrade, thanks to which Kirdiug becomes a candidate. In the end, a fistfight rather than a vote decides the election in Kurdiug's favor (*PSS* 2, 71). The new *koshevoi* is more amenable to Taras's war initiative: "[W]e will not break the oath, but we'll think something up. Only let the people gather, not as if on my orders, but just so, by their own will. You know well how to organize that" (*PSS* 2, 73). Within an hour Taras produces a crowd of Cossacks who complain of their power going to waste. The new *koshevoi* finally gratifies Taras's desires and incites the crowd into declaring war. In a rather methodical manner, Gogol shows Taras overthrow the Cossacks' leader and install a new one, whom he can manipulate more easily. It comes as a surprise that Gogol would make such a travesty of the democratic principles of the Sich, which he otherwise treated deferentially. It shows an effort to undermine the Cossack ethos and to undercut the stature of Taras. Though, on the one hand, Gogol spins his tale toward a nationalistic idealization of the Cossacks, on the other, he weaves into it disharmonious motifs that go against this message.

Before transforming Taras into an epic hero and a national martyr, Gogol portrays him as a cunning Machiavellian who spins his intrigues on the political backstage. Taras's role in instigating the war cannot be overstated. Gogol in the first four chapters goes to great lengths to illustrate this point, and the 1842 changes stress it even further. The 1835 redaction features one and the same *koshevoi* who, at first unresponsive to Taras's wishes, changes his mind when presented with the crowd's demands. In the 1842 version, Gogol makes Taras responsible for overthrowing the old *koshevoi* and planting his own stooge. In either case, Cossacks take up their swords because of Taras's political machinations that have selfish motivations. Though the Cossacks end up attacking the Poles rather than the Turks, they are revved up for war as a result of Taras's incendiary tactics. By engaging in backstabbing actions with respect to fellow Cossacks, Taras violates the Cossack ethos as established in the work. The Cossacks pride themselves on being "straight shooters," speaking their mind freely, despising elaborate stratagems, and confronting any opposition face to face. Taras later grows into this role, but the story's beginning shows him acting in a manner that does not befit a Cossack. He behaves pragmatically and resorts to lowly subterfuge. The future nationalist rises to prominence through despicable tactics.

Gogol also subverts Taras's monumental image by comicality. His very name, Bulba, strikes one as funny: it means "potato" in Ukrainian and Belorussian. "Taras Bulba," which could be rendered in English as "Johnny Potato," surely sounds like an incongruous name for a national hero even in a potato-loving culinary culture like Ukraine. Nonetheless, the name does seem fitting since Taras's body in fact resembles a bulky and round tuber. In chapter 1, Gogol treats us to a delightful scene of Bulba mounting his horse, which "violently reared, having felt on itself a twenty-pood weight, for Bulba was extremely heavy and fat" (*PSS* 2, 52). Gogol here takes the idea of a larger-than-life hero to a literal extreme: twenty Russian poods correspond to over 700 pounds! The image of Taras's colossal corpulence nearly crushing his horse puts a jarring blemish on his subsequent image as romping about and dashing through the battlefields. Initially Gogol was contemplating a name even funnier than Bulba, Kulbaba, which appears in the manuscript of the 1835 version (*PSS* 2, 596). Though meaningless in Russian, the word contains the root *baba*, which denotes a peasant woman or a wench, quite incongruous with Taras's professed contempt for all things female. *Kul'baba* means

"dandelion" in Ukrainian, a frail flower whose spores can be shaken off with one blow (Gogol lists it in his "Materials for a Dictionary," *PSS* 9, 480).

Taras's trip to Warsaw inverts his grand stature. The passage provides a brief comic relief in the work, a counterweight to the grim portrayals of the military battle and Ostap's execution. It starkly reveals that brainpower is not the Cossack's forte. Though Taras despises Iankel and his cunning, he is now at his mercy, begging the Jew to transport him to Warsaw so he can see Ostap. Aware of this irony of fate, Taras attempts a face-saving excuse: "I am not good at clever inventions; that's what you Jews are created for" (*PSS* 2, 151). This sounds rather disingenuous in the context of Taras's demonstrated inventiveness in manipulating the Cossacks' electoral and legislative process, if one may call it that. Perhaps the efficacy of Taras's cunning is restricted to his own milieu: is a Cossack taken out of Ukraine like a fish out of water? At any rate, Gogol shows Taras at his most obtuse in his conversation with Iankel. The wise Jew demonstrates the absurdity of Taras's naive ideas about a safe method of transportation through the Polish border. He strikes down Taras's proposal to hide in a vodka barrel or under a pile of fish, since these popular commodities would only attract the Poles' attention. Instead, Iankel proposes covering Taras with bricks. The irony could not be starker: the larger-than-life Cossack sneaks, rather than marches, into Poland, entombed in a pile of bricks by a Jew who, in the Cossack view, represents the bottom end of creation.

Only in war is Taras in his element. A brave warrior himself, he rejoices in seeing his sons follow in his footsteps when the conflict with Poland begins. Yet the Cossack festival does not last forever. Polish reinforcements break through the siege of Dubno and take some Cossacks prisoner with them into the town. Meanwhile, Taras hears from Iankel about Andrii's betrayal and is anxious to find out whether his son really joined the Poles. Suddenly, news from the Sich arrives that the Tatars have stolen the Cossacks' treasury and taken captives. The *koshevoi* advises that the army leave Dubno: tedious sieges are not the Cossacks' specialty, and the starved town is unlikely to yield much booty for the victors. Taras opposes the *koshevoi*'s decision, invoking Cossack captives locked in Dubno who will meet a terrible death if not rescued. The Cossacks eventually split their army of 4,000 into two fronts: some will stay in Dubno under Taras's command; others will pursue the Tatars. Though this time Taras has

stated his opposition directly, altruistic principle again masks compelling personal reasons. What are the old Cossack's true motives: his stated concern for the Cossack prisoners of war or his secret desire to verify Andrii's defection and to mete out punishment? His musings about capturing the Polish seductress and dragging her around the field tied to his horse until her body is rent to pieces hint at powerful personal reasons that compel Taras to stay at Dubno.

Taras's development as a national leader reaches its climax when he takes command over the Dubno forces. His inspiring speeches before the fateful encounter with the Poles transform the Cossacks into the epitome of nationalistic zeal and patriotic sacrifice. On the eve of the battle, Taras proposes to toast traditional Cossack values: the holy Orthodox faith, the Sich, and Cossack glory. This special moment emerges as the most solemn celebration of the Cossack ethos and their self-aware identity. In enacting this ritual Taras becomes a true leader. The event has indelible religious overtones. It evokes Christ's sharing of wine with his disciples at the Last Supper. Probably to accentuate this aspect, Gogol replaces the vodka with which the Cossacks toasted in the 1835 edition (*PSS* 2, 327) with old wine. The narrator calls the wine *zapovednoe* (*PSS* 2, 129), which means "precious" or "reserved," but also reverberates with the notion of Christ's commandments *(zapovedi)*. Bulba in effect commands the Cossacks to fight for high Cossack ideals, rather than for any immediate, down-to-earth goals.

The next morning, Taras delivers a more elaborate speech, which Gogol added only in 1842. While the previous evening's wine drinking celebrated Cossack values, Taras's speech before the battle transforms Cossacks into Russian nationalists. Taras embeds a traditional Cossack ideal of comradeship *(tovarishchestvo)* within a larger notion of a Russian community. First, Taras explains the notion of comradeship: "No ties are holier than those of comradeship! The father loves his child, the mother loves her child, the child loves the father and the mother. This is not it, brothers: even an animal loves its child. But only man can relate to one another by the kinship of soul, rather than blood" (*PSS* 2, 133). Taras claims that such soulful comradeship as exists in the Russian land surpasses by far the bonds that tie other nations. He then chastises those among the people who mind only their material well-being, who sold their soul to the Polish magnates, and who despise their native language and customs. But even in the lowest of such creatures, Bulba assures, there lives on a

"grain of the Russian feeling" (*PSS* 2, 134). He prophesies that this powerful grain will awaken such a person to renounce his abject subservience, to redeem his dishonor with suffering. Referring to the enemy his soldiers are about to face, Bulba appeals to them: "Let them all know what comradeship means in the Russian land." Taras's encomium to the Russian community of the soul imprints itself on his warriors. In the ensuing battle, the dying Cossacks proclaim not their Cossack values but their loyalty to the Russian land.

Yet despite this nationalist rhetoric and his responsibility as the army's commander, Taras does not lose sight of his personal mission. His ferocious pursuit of Andrii, when he spots him in battle, further supports the idea that self-interested motives claim a lion's share of Taras's reasons to stay behind. He sets up an ambush for Andrii with the help of thirty Cossacks and greets him sarcastically, "So, sonny, did your Poles help you?" (*PSS* 2, 143). He kills Andrii in cold blood: "Stand still! I gave you life and I will kill you" (*PSS* 2, 144). Andrii obeys and remains silent throughout the scene, forfeiting any attempts at self-defense. While Taras does not pity Andrii and, unlike in the 1835 version, goes so far as to leave his body unburied, he soon incurs a loss he will mourn much more. Ostap is taken prisoner right after Taras's execution of his younger son. The 2,000 Cossack comrades under Taras's command suffer a total defeat at the hands of the Poles. Taras loses in one sweep his sons and his army, barely managing to survive himself. Of course, he fails to liberate the Cossacks imprisoned in Dubno, the thought of whom somehow never crosses his mind again.

Having recovered from war injuries, Taras bemoans the tragic loss of his brothers in arms, but though he regrets the outcome, he never explicitly blames himself for any wrongdoing. The narrator likens him at that moment to a master of a house after a wild party: "broken dishes, not a drop of wine anywhere, all expensive pottery taken piece by piece by the guests and the servants—and the master is sad, thinking: 'It would have been better if the feast had never taken place' " (*PSS* 2, 143). Just like such a master, Taras surveys the tragic losses of his Dubno campaign and the party that pursued the Tatars, imagining his comrades' bodies overgrown with grass. Yet after witnessing the torture and execution of his dear son Ostap in a Warsaw square, his blood boils up again. He joins Hetman Ostranitsa's rebellion against Poland and carries out his vengeful campaign long after the Cossack army, heedless of his warnings against

Polish treachery, has concluded peace. He manages to burn eighteen towns and forty Catholic churches, sometimes with the congregation inside; his Cossacks impale infants on their spears and throw them in the flames. Taras does all this in the memory of his son: "Here you have, Polish foes, a funeral service for Ostap" (*PSS* 2, 169). The 12,000 men under Taras's command become reduced to a handful of Cossacks who barely manage to escape. Yet this time Taras does not regret the losses; on the contrary, in his parting words, he summons his fleeing soldiers to return next spring for another harvest of Catholic blood.

The narrator portrays Taras in the tale's conclusion as a heroic Christian martyr. His Polish captors chain him to a tree whose top has been struck off by thunder, nail his hands to it, and proceed to burn him alive. Just as the flames are beginning to reach him in his crosslike elevation, Taras prophesies the rising tides of Orthodox faith and the imminent dominance of a Russian tsar. Between this scene and the earlier comradeship speech, Gogol's Cossack martyr ends up extolling, *avant la lettre*, the nineteenth-century ideology of Official Nationality, with its tripartite slogan of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality." Yet does Taras's moral standing at the end of the tale match his rhetorical triumph?

The circumstances of Taras's capture introduce subtle irony and an overtone of retributive justice. Taras does not fall wounded in a fierce combat but is apprehended in flight, as a result of stopping to look for the pipe he dropped. The word Gogol uses for "pipe," *liulka*, also denotes a child's cradle, a sense in which Gogol did use this word elsewhere (*PSS* 1, 271; *PSS* 12, 486). Read symbolically, this suggests that Taras's fall is a punishment for his paternal shortcomings, for dropping the "cradle" that contained his sons. He is guilty of filiocide, and the narrator explicitly calls him a "son-slayer" (*PSS* 2, 144). He also indirectly causes Ostap's death. Besides orchestrating the war itself, he causes the split of the Cossack army into two fronts, which weakens them and causes their defeat. The very proximity in the text of Andrii's execution with Ostap's capture, Taras's nearly fatal wounds, and the Cossack army's defeat spells out something ominously portentous. Richard Peace has also proposed a reading of this passage that activates the double meaning of *liulka*. He writes: "Taras is betrayed by an object which, while symbolizing his masculinity [in the sense of a pipe—E. B.], also has overtones of 'wife and family': it is indeed through woman and a descendant that he does feel himself to have been betrayed."[23] But in my view, Taras is also guilty of

betraying his descendants, particularly Andrii. Though Andrii did betray the Cossack cause, he never raised a hand against his father, meekly submitting to his authority even at the moment of his death. Gogol's portrayal of Andrii in the scene of his killing, which I will discuss below, further indicates the narrator's censure of this act. Taras's heedless pursuit of Cossack glory compromises his ability to guard his "cradle."

In fact, the tone of retribution extends to the Cossacks in general, not just Taras, in the tale's conclusion. While escaping their Polish pursuers, Taras and his detachment find themselves besieged in a crumbling fortress, and their predicament resembles quite closely the fate of the Dubno Poles (*PSS* 2, 170). Like them, the Cossacks end up defending themselves with bricks and stones. Their sustenance, like that of the Dubno Poles, soon dries up. When Taras blames his capture on old age, the narrator, uncharacteristically, hastens to contradict him: "But old age was not the blame: power overcame power" (*PSS* 2, 170). Is the moral of the story that he who lives by the sword dies by the sword? Is it the nature of violent solutions that they can never be final? These are questions I will consider in the next section. While the nationalistic strand of the narrative ends with triumphalist rhetoric, its human dimension features a record of profound losses and moral blindness. The Bulba clan has expired. The Cossacks, imagistically associated throughout *Taras Bulba* with proud eagles and falcons, appear in the tale's closing in the company of low-flying river-rush birds, the snipes and red-cropped ruffs.

Religious Conflict and Ethnic Cleansing

The Orthodox Christian faith occupies the supreme place in the Cossacks' system of values, just as it headed the three ideals of Official Nationality in Gogol's time. The Cossacks' religiosity is militant: besides defending their faith with their lives, they also consider it their duty to augment its glory and to perform military feats in its name. The Cossacks divide their enemies into non-Christians (Tatars, Turks) and those who are not-properly-Christian (Catholic Poles, often called *nedoverki*, which literally means "not believing fully"). Gogol's increased focus on Orthodoxy in the 1842 edition meshes easily with the Russification of the text, since it allows him to stress the common characteristic of Russians and Ukrainians. The Muslim Turks and Tatars appear so thoroughly "other" and hostile to the Cossacks that an attack on them is justified in any circum-

stances (unless Orthodox faith was invoked as a guarantee of peace). The Catholic Poles are less alien but, according to *Taras Bulba,* much more insidious and dangerous. Unlike the Muslim infidels, they infiltrated Ukraine and became an internal enemy that corrodes the Orthodox Russian land from within. They brought with them, as the tale presents it, a group of landless Jewish infidels, who serve as their lackeys, as moneylenders, and as middlemen in oppressing the Orthodox population (the *arendatory,* or overseers to whom Polish magnates supposedly leased their estates).

Gogol's narrative is said to begin around the time of "the Union," which stands for the 1596 Union of Brest that established in Ukraine the Greek Catholic, or Uniate, Church, which followed the Orthodox rite but recognized the pope. This event was widely resented in Ukraine, especially by the Cossacks, as Poland's attempt at proselytism. The ethnic and religious antagonism ripened into the battles over the Union, which Gogol puts at the center of his tale. It ends around 1641, after Hetman Ostranitsa's death (Gogol's name for Hetman Iakiv Ostrianyn), a few years before Khmelnytsky led the main Cossack rebellion against Poland. This rebellion led to Ukraine's incorporation within the Russian empire by the dubious authority of the 1654 Pereiaslav agreement. Like Walter Scott, Gogol thus focuses on a prelude to more momentous historical events, in which, however, all the parameters and determinants of the more famous history are already embedded. Just as *Waverley* unfolds on the eve of the Jacobite Rebellion but concerns the social and political realities that are central to it, so does *Taras Bulba* stop just short of 1654, yet it explores the underpinnings of exactly this important event. It casts the religious conflict as the key factor of Ukraine's break with Poland and makes the Ukrainians' religious and ethnic bond with the Russians a rationale for the greater Russian nation that became possible as a result of 1654. Gogol also scatters subtle links with Khmelnytsky's Uprising throughout *Taras Bulba.* For example, Taras's famous comradeship *(tovarishchestvo)* speech is based on Khmelnytsky's *tovarystvo* speech to the registered Cossacks as it appears in *History of the Rusians,* Gogol's principal historical source.[24]

How does *Taras Bulba* portray the genesis of the Polish-Ukrainian conflict? Surprisingly enough, the narrative does not open with a depiction of grievous Polish abuses. Though in the 1842 version Taras resents the Polonization of Ukraine, in his campaign to orchestrate a war, he never

brings up the Poles as the potential enemy. As I have shown in Chapter 3, Gogol opened his earlier historical fictions with concrete portrayals of Polish abuses: a Polish soldier slapping the face of a venerable Cossack, a Jewish lessor of an Orthodox church excising a tax for Easter celebrations, Ukrainian captives tortured by the Poles, and so on. No such images set the stage for the national conflict in *Taras Bulba;* seriously presented grievances of this sort emerge only in the final chapter, once the war is fully under way. Gogol reverses the common presentation of the origins of military conflicts between nations. His Cossacks first make a decision to go to war and only secondarily ponder the selection of the enemy. A vague itch for aggression precedes the production of the rationale, as if it could always be easily fabricated. Gogol also goes to great lengths to demonstrate the role of one fanatic, such as Taras, in inciting violence and manipulating the Cossack masses.

Gogol slows down the wheels of his epic narrative to show how Taras's puppet *koshevoi* leads his volatile constituency into declaring war. The *koshevoi*'s speech to the Cossacks is a blatant example of demagoguery and manipulative political innuendo (*PSS* 2, 74). His state-of-the-Cossackdom address transforms the happily drinking and carousing Cossacks into bloodthirsty hounds. The *koshevoi* reminds the Cossacks of their debts in Jewish taverns, by which he implies that they could use fresh booty for drink. He then mentions that many young people have still not seen war, a condition intolerable for a true Cossack. Though he denies suggesting that the Cossacks break the peace with the sultan, he almost in the same breath mentions that their church is poorly decorated, thus pointing to another budgetary need. Again, he backpedals and recalls the holy oath that prevents them from starting a war. Yet in conclusion he proposes a compromise: without officially starting a war the Cossacks could send the "novices" along with a few experienced Cossacks on an "unauthorized" raid against the Turks.

The crowd's response represents a crucial nexus in *Taras Bulba*'s genealogy of war. Visibly warmed up to the idea of war by the *koshevoi*'s falsely innocent speech, the Cossacks demand that all Cossacks move to war, not just the young ones, since "[w]e are ready to die for the faith!" (*PSS* 2, 74). Though the *koshevoi* never mentions faith, the Cossacks form an idea that faith is the reason for the war they are about to undertake. Something very closely resembling a misunderstanding takes place between the leader and the crowd he addresses. The entirely petty pretexts

for entering war from the *koshevoi*'s speech, such as booty for vodka and church decorations, suddenly and inexplicably assume a lofty religious superstructure. Once the desire for war is awakened, a grand rationale simply writes itself. This is a crucial counterpoise in the text for all subsequent references to religious faith as the reason that drives the Cossacks to war. The religious motive is shown in this scene to be an empty formula and a cover-up for the actual, more down-to-earth reasons, whose ultimate source is one man: Taras. Gogol emphasizes in this scene the devious ways in which religious zeal can be awakened.

In response to this unpredictable turn of events, the *koshevoi* cunningly plays on the Cossacks' vanity in order to diffuse the responsibility for the decision and place it on the deindividuated crowd: "I am a servant of your will" (*PSS* 2, 75). Having exonerated himself, he then exonerates the Cossacks en masse by asserting that even the Scriptures regard the people's voice to be God's voice (incidentally, the Scriptures say nothing of the sort). Thus the fantastically convoluted process of devising a rationale for the war is triumphantly completed in the assertion that it is God himself who wills it. Since the Cossacks, as portrayed in *Taras Bulba,* are a hot-blooded mass rather than an assemblage of rational individuals, it is Taras and his puppet *koshevoi* who in fact bear the responsibility for starting the war. The Cossacks may in fact believe that they fight for their faith, but, as the introductory chapters show, the mechanism of such a war's emergence is far from holy.

In ignoring the peace they swore on their faith and in going to war to provide the youth with military training, the Cossacks are clearly in the wrong. The religious motive is a sham. The 1842 version offers no redeeming factor or positive justification for the Cossacks' decision. Significantly, the 1835 version did posit extenuating circumstances, but Gogol eliminated this passage when revising the text in 1842. The passage in question read:

> Thus all believed that they were completely in the right in their undertaking. Such conception of the law was completely excusable in a nation that had dangerous borders with violent neighbors. And it would be strange if they acted differently. Ten times or so did the Tatars break their unreliable truce and thus served as a compelling example. Besides, how could such exuberant knights in such an exuberant time pass a few weeks without war? (*PSS* 2, 306)

In the version of 1842 the narrator makes no such defenses on behalf of his heroes. If Gogol were eager to present the Cossacks' action as justified, he would have kept this passage. The instability of borders with violent neighbors and ample precedence established by the Tatars for breaking peace treaties would at least partly exculpate the Cossacks. The omission of such extenuating circumstances proves that despite glorifying the Cossacks Gogol also wishes to portray them as warmongers and that even in 1842 he works toward complicating the story.

Despite their decision to fight the Turks and the Tatars, the Cossacks end up waging war against Poland. What causes this sudden change of targets? As the Cossacks prepare for their expedition, a delegation from the Polish-dominated Ukraine arrives with the news of abuses that the Poles and the Jews have perpetrated with regard to the Ukrainian Orthodox population. While the critical literature on *Taras Bulba* typically treats these grievances seriously, as a sound ideological basis for the Cossack-Polish conflict, there is an undercurrent of grotesque Gogolian humor that runs through them. The first two complaints still maintain a balance between the credible and the uncanny (even though historically they were not true): the Jews hold leases on Orthodox churches and charge Ukrainians a fee for Easter cake blessing, marking the cakes with their "unclean hands." The allegations that follow tip the balance toward the uncanny, fantastic side: "Listen! . . . I'll tell you more: the Catholic priests now drive all around Ukraine in gigs. The gigs are not the problem, but the trouble is that they no longer harness them with horses but Orthodox Christians. Listen! I'll tell you more: already, they say, Jewesses make skirts for themselves from Orthodox priests' chasubles. Here's what is going on in Ukraine, sirs" (*PSS* 2, 77). The report soars to the level of sensational, colorful gossip of which Gogol was so fond and which he found in a rich source for this sort of thing, *History of the Rusians.*[25] The passage resembles the piling up of ever more fantastic attributions to Chichikov in *Dead Souls.* While at first the reporters suspensefully ration their news, maintaining the appearance of gravity, in the end they let their tongues loose. The nature of the stories and the accelerated tempo of reporting them mark the passage as a typically Gogolian discourse that spins out of control. The 1835 version featured a seriously worded grievance: "So maybe you don't know that unclean Catholics want us to renounce even our Christian faith?" (*PSS* 2, 308). Again, it is telling that Gogol removed it from the 1842 text. Incidentally, the mes-

sengers have no personal knowledge of any Jewish women making skirts out of Orthodox garments; they only heard it from others ("they say . . .").

The messengers' credibility appears suspect already in their initial description as bedraggled ragamuffins: some wear torn overcoats; others have no possessions beyond a shirt and a pipe (*PSS* 2, 76). The narrator speculates that they either escaped a misfortune or squandered their belongings on carousing. Naturally, the guests invoke the first reason, but the readers can recall from the *koshevoi*'s speech that a Cossack whose entertainment resources have dried out is prone to opt for war. Thus by offering an alternative reason for the guests' sorry state, the narrator opens a possibility that they may be lying.

Whatever the reasons, the Ukrainian-Polish conflict has already taken a bloody turn. We learn from the messengers that their hetman put up armed resistance but was defeated and executed by the Poles along with other leaders. Now the Poles reportedly show decapitated heads and cut-off limbs at the fairs, and the hetman himself has been placed in a copper bull and roasted alive (another colorful detail Gogol lifted from *History of the Rusians*). While the public display of quartered corpses seems a standard antiterrorist measure of the time, the hetman's fate, again, smacks of the fantastic in a macabre sort of way. In short, *if* the Cossacks are telling the truth, they may also be exaggerating or creating a folk metaphor of the truth. Yet none of this matters for the Zaporozhian Cossacks, since they do not engage in the careful weighing of grievances and credibilities. They act on instinct, and what they want is war.

The allegations of the Poles' and Jews' mistreatment of the Cossacks are never *shown* in eyewitness accounts or episodes. The question of whether or not they were historically true is quite beside the point here. I refrain from judging Gogol's fiction by the measure of historical accuracy, since he makes no claims of historical verity and, on the contrary, favors folksy stylization and epic exaggeration. Yet Gogol's artistic choices do matter for the story he tells. It is noteworthy that he had at his disposal his own fictional portrayals of the Polish/Jewish abuses of Ukrainians that are part of the unfinished "The Hetman." I mentioned some of them above, like the Jewish management of Orthodox churches, or despicable Polish carpetbaggers who mistreat the Ukrainian population and ridicule their religion and customs (*PSS* 3, 278–285, 302–304, 315–320). A great deal of such ready and concrete material, worked out in specific scenes

and characters, remains unused when Gogol writes and then reworks *Taras Bulba.* At the same time, he draws on *other* fragments of "The Hetman" while working on *Taras.*

The overtone of comicality in the anti-Polish grievances and their status as hearsay show that the Cossacks make their decision lightly. Taras's Machiavellian plots, the farcical portrayal of the Cossacks' "electoral" and "legislative" process, and the suggestion that the Cossacks' decision may rest on unconfirmed gossip all provide a tragically ironic context for the nationalistic and religious pieties that the Cossacks subsequently profess amid the war's carnage and destruction. Gogol's complex and in-depth portrayal of the genesis of the Cossack-Polish conflict is thus fraught with important *un*idealistic and *anti*nationalistic subtexts. Rather than affirm the Cossacks' rationale for starting a war, the narrator undermines it.

The wrath awakened in the Cossacks by the story of Polish-Jewish abuses in Ukraine finds its first outlet in the pogrom perpetrated on the Jewish traders in the Sich. Specific, concrete grievances, such as those regarding the *arendatory,* get translated into the culpability of an entire ethnicity, be it Jewish or Polish. Iankel's plea for mercy underscores a vital point: "We are not the same as the ones who hold *arendas* in Ukraine" (*PSS* 2, 79). Yet the Cossacks need to vent their anger immediately, so the Jews living in the Sich become the first scapegoat. Again, as with Taras's role in instigating the war, it takes only one person to steer the hot-blooded Cossacks to violence: " 'Let's hang all the Jews! So they don't make skirts for their Jewesses from the priests' chasubles! So they don't mark signs on holy Easter cakes! Let's drown all these infidels in the Dnepr!' These words, spoken by someone in the crowd, flew like lightning over everyone, and the crowd descended on the town's outskirts to slaughter all the Jews" (*PSS* 2, 78). The narrator's description of the pogrom mirrors the Cossacks' spiteful and amused attitude.[26] He mockingly refers to the "poor sons of Israel" hiding in vodka barrels or under their wives' skirts. The pogrom provides the Cossacks with great fun, especially on the occasion of tossing the Jews into the Dnepr and watching them flail about (*PSS* 2, 79). Bulba saves Iankel's life, since the Jew once did his brother a favor, but after the Dubno campaign, Bulba turns to Iankel for help. Despite Iankel's attempt to disassociate the Sich Jews from the Ukrainian *arendatory* during the pogrom, Iankel now turns out to have become an *arendator* himself. The reader may wonder whether a near death at the hands of the Cossacks may not have compelled Iankel

to conclude that *arenda* represented a safer method of earning a living than trading in the Sich.[27]

The Cossacks' treatment of Poles reveals a similar policy of indiscriminate "ethnic cleansing." Significantly, when describing the Cossacks' victims, Gogol eliminates in 1842 the 1835 text's mention of the *arendatory* and the Catholic priests, who were the two most likely culprits according to the reports (*PSS* 2, 312). The Cossacks turn their attention to Dubno not because of any particular concentration in it of an anti-Ukrainian element but because the city had "a big treasury and a lot of rich citizens" (*PSS* 2, 85). In the 1842 version, Gogol's Cossacks do not seek out the guilty Poles or Jews but kill everyone in their path and raze everything to the ground. Nor does the narrative show that the purported wrongs that led to the war have been confirmed once the Cossacks had a chance to survey the situation. The narrator's language does not seem entirely approving when he describes the Cossacks' broad campaign of destruction: "Nowadays the terrible signs of the viciousness of that half-barbarous age that the Cossacks spread everywhere would make one's hair stand on end" (*PSS* 2, 83).

The 1842 catalog of the atrocities perpetrated by the advancing Cossack army greatly expands the list of 1835. In 1842, for example, Gogol adds the following passage: "Slaughtered infants, women's cut off breasts, the skin flayed up to the knees on those who were let free—in a word, the Cossacks were paying old debts with a big coin" (*PSS* 2, 83). In 1842 Gogol also expands a description of how the Cossacks wreak havoc on the villages surrounding Dubno to distract themselves during the boring siege: "The army . . . from having nothing to do took to laying waste the surrounding areas, burning the nearby villages, the stacks of wheat that were not gathered, and chasing horses into the fields that have not yet been reaped, where, as if on purpose, heavy ears of wheat swayed, a fruit of an extraordinary harvest" (*PSS* 2, 86). The narrator singles out the defenseless people among those fleeing the Cossacks in terror: "The fleeing masses of monks, Jews, and women suddenly crowded into those towns where there existed any hope for a garrison or a town-dwellers' defense" (*PSS* 2, 84). While in the 1835 text soldiers were among these refugees (*PSS* 2, 312), Gogol eliminates this detail in 1842. The Cossacks' victims are the civilian population.

When a delegation of monks from a nearby Catholic monastery appeals to the Cossacks by evoking law and their duty to the king, the *koshevoi*

responds that the Poles have not seen anything yet. Soon the flames engulf the monastery: "And soon the destructive flames gripped the grandiose abbey, whose colossal Gothic windows stared sternly through the waves of fire" (*PSS* 2, 84). The monastery windows' "stern glance" initiates a series of motifs that suggest an undercurrent of unease about the Cossacks' vengeful campaign. The image of the burning monastery resurfaces shortly before Andrii's meeting with the Polish woman's servant, which precipitates his betrayal of the Cossacks. It occupies a central place in Andrii's contemplation of the enchanting nightscape illumined by smoldering villages. The narrator, aligning his viewpoint with Andrii's, offers a superbly sensual and aestheticized image:

> The scorched black monastery, like a stern Carthusian monk, stood menacingly [*grozno*], revealing with each glimmer its dark grandeur. The monastery orchard was burning. It seemed that the trees were hissing, as they were becoming enveloped in smoke, and when a flame flickered, it would suddenly illumine with a phosphoric, purplish-fiery light the ripe clusters of plums, or would turn into red gold the pears that yellowed here and there, and among them there hung on the wall or a bough of a tree a black body of a poor Jew or a monk that was being consumed together with the building by fire. High above the flames, the birds were flying, appearing like a cloud of tiny dark crosses on a fiery background. (*PSS* 2, 88)

The images of the "stern Carthusian monk" and the monastery's undiminished "grandeur," despite its ruinous state, as well as its "menacing" expression suggest a silent but powerful reproach and portend Polish retaliations (the word "stern" [*surovyi*] appears later in the context of "an avenger" [*mstitel'*]; *PSS* 2, 104, 119). The bodies of monks and Jews, jarringly aligned with clusters of fruit, add to the passage's horrific ominousness. The image of birds that appear as tiny black crosses against a fiery background may be linked to the souls of the butchered victims. A tone of unease creeps into the narrative voice when it distances itself, as it does in this passage, from the Cossack perspective.

In describing the starved Dubno inhabitants Gogol also greatly expands the parallel 1835 passage. In the 1842 version, Gogol adds scenes of Andrii's encounters with victims of starvation: an old woman propped against a gate, asleep or perhaps dead, a body hanging from a roof, and a man gone mad from hunger who attacks Andrii to get some bread,

only to die in terrible convulsions after a few bites. The 1835 text featured an image of a moribund woman lying on the street and biting on her own desiccated hand (*PSS* 2, 317). In 1842 Gogol makes the woman Jewish and expands the passage on the basis of the 1835 manuscript version (*PSS* 2, 638), heightening its horror and pathos. The following is the 1842 passage:

> It was a dead body of a woman, apparently Jewish. She still seemed young, though it was impossible to see in her distorted, emaciated features. She had a red silk scarf on her head, two lines of pearls adorned her ear-flaps, from under which two or three locks of hair fell on her long neck with stretched veins. Next to her was lying a baby boy who clutched convulsively at her thin breast and twisted it with his fingers from involuntary anger for not having found any milk in it. He was no longer crying or screaming, and only by his quietly rising and falling belly could one tell that he has not yet died, or at least was only readying himself to let out his last breath. (*PSS* 2, 98)

Just as the narrator has dwelled earlier on the Machiavellian process of the war's emergence, so now he shows in painful detail the gruesome harvest of war and the cruel fate of the victims of Cossack wrath. Having read much about the purported Jewish persecution of Ukrainians, we are made here to feel sorry for the Jewish victims. Significantly, at this point in the tale Gogol does not counterbalance this record of Jewish and Polish suffering with any depictions of Ukrainian victims, nor does he corroborate their oppression at the hands of the Poles and Jews. This seems strange since atrocities such as the cutting off of women's breasts, of which the Cossacks are guilty in the tale, appear in Gogol's main historical source, *History of the Rusians*, as the Poles' specialty. Why would Gogol not make the Polish side responsible for such crimes? Or even portray a single *arendator* who has received his comeuppance? I would argue that this demonstrates narrative ambivalence about the Cossack ethos and about the righteousness of a war based on ethnic and religious hatred. Instead of allowing for a clear division between the "good guys" and "bad guys," Gogol blurs the line. Though the narrative voice reflective of the Cossack view of things predominates, the work also features a voice that distances itself from their militant nationalism to ponder the weight of human sacrifice.

Gogol focuses the war in *Taras Bulba* on the Cossack siege of the Polish

town Dubno. Why Dubno? There exist historical parallels between Gogol's tale and the history of the actual town of Dubno, but it is unclear how much of this history Gogol knew.[28] The tale gives only one reason for the Cossacks' choice of Dubno: the prospect of rich booty. The siege's beginnings are far from glamorous. The Cossacks prove unable to crush the inhabitants' resistance. They are especially annoyed by the participation of women in the town's defense, who shower them with "stones, barrels, pans, boiling water, and, finally, bagfuls of sand that blinded the eyes" (*PSS* 2, 86). In response to this overwhelming force of mostly household items, the Cossacks retreat, seal off the town's food supply, and await the surrender. The image of valiant warriors being discouraged by women armed with pots, stones, and boiling water is comical. The narrator volunteers a "face-saving" comment on their behalf: "The Zaporozhian did not like to deal with fortresses, to conduct a siege was beneath their dignity" (*PSS* 2, 86). In light of Dubno's staunch defiance, the idea that the Cossacks are beneath such tedious and unmanly pursuits appears like an excuse. Besides, a siege is exactly what the Cossacks conduct after they fail to take the town by force. The surrender never comes. The Cossacks lose to the Poles in large part due to one drunken unit's negligence in guarding access to the town, as a result of which the Poles gain reinforcements.

Though Gogol's description of the Dubno siege has no clear sources in the Cossack chronicles, it shows pronounced similarities with the siege of Tillietudlem in *Old Mortality*, one of Walter Scott's most popular novels in Russia (1816; Russian translation 1824, titled *Shotlandskie puritane*). Like *Taras Bulba*, *Old Mortality* concerns a bloody religious conflict. The Tillietudlem fortress in Scotland finds itself besieged by John Balfour of Burley, one of the most cruel, bloodthirsty, and Machiavellian of the Protestant insurgents (a fanatical extremist like Taras). Burley's servant Cuddie knows a secret passage to the castle yet is prevented from using it by a potful of scalding porridge thrown by a woman servant. A love interest connects young Morton, one of the Presbyterians, with Edith who is trapped inside the fortress. Burley schemes to split the army and send Morton away, accusing Morton of loving Edith more than the cause. Like the Dubno inhabitants, the dwellers inside the Tillietudlem fortress soon suffer from a famine.[29]

Indeed, Gogol's debt to Walter Scott runs deep in *Taras Bulba*. The motif of filiocide motivated by a split of political allegiances seems to

come from Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824; Russian translation 1828). The novel tells the story of Alberick Redgauntlet, a forbear of a Jacobite clan whose son abandons the cause to join an English-backed claimant of the Scottish crown, Baliol. Father and son meet on the battlefield. Redgauntlet recognizes his son in a knight he threw off a horse, yet instead of stopping, he lunges forward in pursuit of the usurper Baliol, his horse dealing a deathly knock to his son's head. Since then, a curse lands on the house of Redgauntlet: the wife dies, the next son is born with a horseshoe mark on his forehead, and the family seems doomed to keeping on the losing side of any civil strife in which it participates.[30] This Scottian subtext further invites a reading of Taras's end in terms of retribution for killing his son.

Following the Dubno campaign, Taras mourns only Ostap's fate and never mentions Andrii again. Taras's image in the tale changes. From an underhanded political schemer, he becomes an illustrious national leader when holding command over the Dubno front. Later, his image as a brutal son-slayer becomes refocused, after his loss of Ostap, to that of an aggrieved father and an avenger of Ostap's death. Though the narrator's sympathy in the scene of Taras's murder of Andrii lies with the victim, Taras recovers dignity and gains pathos in his campaign to avenge Ostap's death. After a brief comic relief during Taras's deliberations with Iankel about safe passage to Poland, Taras emerges as rather touchingly pathetic in his helplessness and the degradation, as he would see it, of having to rely on Jewish intermediaries. It is pitiful to see this proud Cossack don a Western costume and blacken his mustache and eyebrows in preparation for his secret incognito meeting with Ostap in the Warsaw jail.

Yet no measure of such demeaning cross-dressing compares to the magnitude of sacrifice in letting the Orthodox faith be reviled. Despite all the trouble and expense that went into organizing the meeting between father and son, Taras eventually blows his cover by reacting angrily at a Polish jailer's insult to the Orthodox faith (*PSS* 2, 160). The pattern that Taras has established in his dealing with Andrii repeats itself now with Ostap: Taras's fanatical devotion to his politics takes precedence over human and familial bonds. The Cossack cause requires Taras to violate these bonds by killing Andrii, just as it forces him to launch a defense of Orthodoxy in the middle of a Polish jail, which prevents him from visiting his son before his death.

Ostap's execution provides a tragic finale to the entire phase of the

Polish-Cossack struggle that centered around the Dubno siege. The narrator gives a scathing portrayal of the Poles gathered to watch the gory spectacle, which accentuates the dignity of the Cossack martyrs and the psychological torment of Taras, who is present. The throng of spectators includes a fat butcher, who appraises the proceedings with an air of a connoisseur; a young flashily dressed nobleman explains in a very delicate language the fine points of the torture to his lover Józysia; vendors sell refreshments. When led to the execution stand, Ostap appeals to his Cossack brethren to die bravely and with dignity, like true Christians, which makes Taras proud. The narrator heightens the aura of Ostap's Christian martyrdom by noting that he was "the first to drink this heavy cup" (*PSS* 2, 164), which recalls Christ's words before his crucifixion. Ostap bears his tortures silently, and only in a final moment his spirit wavers and he cries out, again, resembling Christ, "Father! where are you? Do you hear me?" Taras responds to him, "I do," and then disappears before the Poles can apprehend him (*PSS* 2, 165).

These brutal reprisals cause a fresh wave of Cossack revenge. The final, twelfth chapter shows a new phase of war, now a full-scale national uprising. Hetman Ostranitsa leads against Poland a force 120,000 strong, and Taras Bulba reappears as one of his colonels. In this final chapter, Gogol infuses his multifaceted, ambiguous narrative with the more straightforward stuff of nationalistic fiction. To catch up before the grand finale of Taras's symbolic crucifixion, Gogol endows this new stage of hostilities with the kind of justification of the Cossack cause that he has withheld in the preceding chapters. While in portraying the war's genesis the narrator undermined its putative causes, through the portrayal of the Cossacks' decision-making process and the untrustworthy status of Ukrainian grievances, he now presents them in earnest, as legitimate and grounded in genuine realities:

> A whole nation rose, because the measure of its suffering overflowed. It rose to avenge the mockery of its rights, the humiliation of its people, the assault on its faith and custom, the defilement of its churches, the excesses of foreign masters, the oppression, the Union, the disgraceful power of Jews on Christian land, and everything that for a long time caused the Cossacks' severe hatred to grow and multiply. (*PSS* 2, 165)

Rather than harassing the civilian population, the Cossacks now fight Polish soldiers; the Jewish *arendatory* are finally found (*PSS* 2, 167). In

its eleventh-hour streamlining of the narrative to make it conform to the author's preconceived notion of its purpose, *Taras Bulba* resembles *Dead Souls,* with its inserted digressions and ad hoc jingles about the forthcoming images of nationalistic glory. So too *Taras Bulba* in its final chapter mutes ideological complexities and unidealistic incongruities to summon the spirit of nationalistic apotheosis.

The final chapter consolidates the image of the Cossacks as Christian knights, no longer booty-hungry beasts. The war with Poland is cast unequivocally as a religious war:

> It is well known what kind of war is taken up for the faith in the Russian land: no power is greater than faith. It is indomitable and severe like a rock not made by hand amid a stormy, eternally changeable sea. From the very bottom of the sea it raises to the heavens its unbreakable walls, all made of one solid piece of stone. It is seen from everywhere and stares straight in the eye of the waves that flow against it. And woe to the ship that sails into it! (*PSS* 2, 166)

The Cossacks are aligned with the indomitable power of religion. Though they had derided the Catholic monks' pleas for mercy and razed their abbey to the ground, they now respect the Orthodox priests' pleas on behalf of the Polish military that took refuge within their town. Once faced with an Orthodox procession with holy icons, the Cossacks bow their heads and pay respect. Confronted with their own priests' intercession, the Cossacks agree to conclude peace with Poland on the condition that their ancient rights and privileges be restored. Only Taras and his regiment refuse to negotiate treaties with the treacherous Poles.

Against the background of the Cossacks' more mature political and ideological agenda, Taras appears motivated by one idée fixe: a desire to exact vengeance for the death of Ostap. Even to the Cossacks themselves, Taras's zeal and fierceness seem excessive (*PSS* 2, 166). After he separates from Ostranitsa, he orders his soldiers to spare no one, calling these raids "funeral services for Ostap" (*PSS* 2, 169). Taras's dogged pursuit of a personal vendetta for Ostap's death complicates his image as an ideologue; it casts a doubt as to his true driving force.

While nationalism and hatred based on religious antagonism provide the ideological impetus for the war in *Taras Bulba,* what fuels its vicious mechanism of destruction is a chain of very concrete personal retaliations. While in the *Mirgorod* text the Dubno battles are portrayed largely in

terms of mass army movements, the 1842 *Taras Bulba* introduces a detailed individual focus reminiscent of classical epics. The clashes between the Polish and Cossack soldiers in the battle of Dubno emerge as chains of retaliatory acts. For example, after Borodatyi has wreaked havoc in the Polish ranks, the red-nosed Polish standard-bearer cuts off Borodatyi's head, for which the Pole gets his comeuppance from Ostap Bulba, who lassos him and drags him around the field. The sequences are almost formulaic: Degtiarenko kills a few Poles, another Pole kills him, Mosii Shilo kills Degtiarenko's slayer, whose servant in turn kills Shilo. Every new killing represents a response to the previous one, and the vicious circle of war rolls on. Each warrior avenges his comrade's death and is drawn into the chain of killing by a personal motive. Ideology resurfaces only later, in the Cossacks' last-breath formulaic hosannas to the glory of Orthodoxy and the Russian land. However, these pronouncements sound somewhat incongruous in the context of the much more elemental, eye-for-an-eye struggles that precede them. Similarly, Taras's encomium to the Russian tsar that he delivers from his tree of death seems to veil what is really a campaign of personal revenge. In this context, as in the scenes describing the war's origin, the ideological motives are shown to be empty, abstract formulas. Once the blood has been spilled, the basic force that keeps the war going is vengeance.

This pattern of retaliations corresponds to the tale's general dynamic of war. As each side accumulates its share of war atrocities, the desire for vengeance increases. The news of the Poles' bloody reprisals becomes the reason for the Cossacks' vengeful Dubno campaign. The Poles, enraged by the Cossacks' brutality, gather their forces and defeat them. The Poles' cruel reprisals against the defeated Cossacks, particularly the barbaric execution of Ostap and his fellow prisoners, causes another, much stronger, wave of Cossack revenge. Though eventually peace is reached, the Poles violate it by treacherously murdering the Cossack leaders. Taras, shouting from his "cross" in the final scene, challenges the escaping Cossacks to renew their attacks next spring. He also warns the Poles that the invincible Russian tsar shall soon arise from the Russian land and that no force in the world will stop him. This reference to the future in the tale's closing suggests a scope that transcends the confines of the closed epic time that many critics argue is maintained in the work. Taras forecasts a broadened scope of the war, with the Russian tsar as its new participant. In its finale, the tale points grimly forward: although the weight of the human sacrifice

at times necessitates a cease-fire, the religious and ethnic conflict shows no prospects of ever being resolved. Unlike in a Scottian romance, no happy domesticity brightens the finale; no reconciliation between opposing parties is made possible.

However, though the level of the plot denies any reconciliation, hints of it body forth from the symbolic structure of the work. Grigorii Gukovsky put his finger on a vital aspect of Gogolian texts when he wrote that Gogol develops the ideology of his works not only through plot "but also by way of grouping details, juxtaposing strokes."[31] In my view, these two levels are often at odds in Gogol's fiction. *Taras Bulba* is written in two registers, the resounding official tenor that glorifies the Cossacks and Russian nationalism and the discordant minor key that undermines, questions, and complicates things. It is on this second level that *Taras Bulba* ends up contradicting its message of militant Orthodoxy. I will treat it in depth in the next section and will limit myself at this point to a discussion of one scene: Taras's sharing of wine with his soldiers on the eve of the main Dubno battle.

Prior to the wine's consummation, Taras proposes a solemn toast: to the holy Orthodox faith, to the Sich, and to Cossack glory. The scene is portrayed in a highly ritualized form: after the toast's initial proposal, Taras repeats each of its three parts, while the Cossacks echo his words. However, when reiterating the toast's final part, to Cossack glory, Taras changes it to: "Now, comrades, the last mouthful, for glory and for all Christians who live in the world" (*PSS* 2, 131). All the Cossacks drink to it, and the idea of all the world's Christians is said to linger in the air for a long time afterward. While it is true that for the Cossacks the notion of Christianity denotes specifically Orthodoxy, all other kinds being heretical, the phrasing in this context is emphatically vague. Though they could easily drink to "our Orthodox faith," which is invoked often enough on many occasions, the Cossacks end up celebrating all of Christianity. Whether Taras's tongue has merely slipped is beyond the point. The spoken, especially ritualized word is endowed in Gogol's fiction with enormous power and often becomes ontologically independent of its utterer (for example, in "The Two Ivans"). The Cossacks unwittingly celebrate the idea of Christian unity, though their actual religious convictions are decidedly divisive and antagonistic.

Before they get "nationalized" into Russians the next morning by Taras's comradeship speech, Gogol's Cossacks appear for a moment as

simply Christian, not just Orthodox, knights. The force of this quasi-religious sacrament of wine drinking unites them with a larger Christian community that includes their enemies in the next day's battle. This sacrament has a profound effect on the Cossacks, whose thoughts became like eagles, surveying everything, even death, peacefully and confidently from high above. The narrator becomes so carried away that he even revives the bandura-playing bard that he consigned to a closed chapter of Ukrainian cultural memory at the tale's beginning (*PSS* 2, 43–44). He now avers: "There will be, oh there will be a bandura-player . . . who will say about them their deep, powerful word. And their fame will spread around the world. . . . For a powerful word travels far, being similar to the humming brass of a bell, to which a master added much pure precious silver, so that a beautiful sound resounds farther to towns, hovels, and palaces, calling everyone to holy prayer" (*PSS* 2, 131–132). Needless to say, Gogol himself fulfills the role of this bard. In contrast to Gogol's earlier images of such figures as custodians of historical memory, this new image stresses the bandura-player's religious significance.[32] His presence activates the Cossacks as a religious rather than a historic community, which simultaneously deemphasizes their nationalness. Only the next day will these Christian knights be ordained into soulful Russians by Taras's comradeship speech.

Andrii's Choice, or Alternative Forms of Comradeship

The section devoted to Andrii falls within the middle of *Taras Bulba* as its sixth chapter. The narrative voice shifts in it from the Cossack perspective to a reflection of Andrii's individual perception, which is abandoned only in the transitional final paragraph. The chapter's central positioning within the text parallels its ideological centrality to the work. The chapter develops ideas that counter the Cossack ethos of the surrounding text by questioning the notion of inherited loyalty to an ethnic and religious community, the rightness of "ethnic cleansing" and war in the name of religion, and the insignificance of individual rights vis-à-vis collective imperatives. In the 1842 version, in addition to developing the nationalistic pieties of his Cossacks, Gogol also significantly expanded and changed his portrayal of Andrii, making him into a noble and sympathetic character. This further supports my claim of the greater ideological complexity of the later version. The minor key of which I spoke above be-

comes a major one in this chapter. Andrii's values and his choice to renounce Cossackdom receive a powerful, positive manifestation in this chapter, which continues to linger over the continuation of the tale. In my interpretation of Taras's fall, Andrii comes to haunt him as his nemesis.

Andrii's difference from the paternally sanctioned image of a Cossack appears at the very beginning of the tale. Unlike Ostap, he refuses to engage his father in a fistfight. He is aligned with a feminine world through a bond with his mother and a sensitivity to female charms that culminates in his affection for the nameless Polish lady during his seminarian years in Kiev. While Ostap is cunning, even-tempered, rational, and sociable, Andrii is aesthetically sensitive, impetuous, sensual, and withdrawn. Unlike Ostap's fairly transparent character, Andrii's internal life is mysterious. Though a fearsome soldier, he is deeply disturbed by the Cossacks' savage laws. The narrator singles out his horrified reaction to the scene of the Cossack punishment for murder that involves burying the perpetrator alive with his victim's coffin placed on top of him (*PSS* 2, 67–68). The moving images of the starved victims of the Cossack siege also come through Andrii's experience. In his temperament and internal complexity, Andrii resembles a Romantic artist. This can be felt whenever the narrator describes a scene through Andrii's eyes, be it a June night, the Dubno church, or the Polish woman. Andrii engages with the outside world aesthetically even in battle: "Andrii submerged himself *in the enchanting music* of the bullets and swords. He did not know what it means to reason and calculate, or measure ahead of time one's own or the enemy's forces. He saw in battle a mad voluptuousness and delight" (*PSS* 2, 85; emphasis mine). Artistic sensibility aligns Andrii with Gogol himself.

Andrii's decision to come to the rescue of his former Polish sweetheart also comes as an impulse rather than premeditated choice. Andrii abides first and foremost by the stirrings of his heart, which dictate what he must do and which he implicitly considers moral. Andrii's meeting with the Polish woman inside Dubno is portrayed in the 1842 version in highly spiritual, religiously charged tones. The Polish woman is said to have changed entirely from the flighty, spoiled child that she was and became a mature beauty that commanded respect. The narrator, again, finds an artistic metaphor for Andrii's perception: "Before there was something unfinished, incomplete in her; now she resembled a composition on which the artist had put his finishing touches" (*PSS* 2, 101). A sight of her beauty, her eyes filled with feeling, her paleness that gave her "something purposeful, something irresistible and victorious," puts Andrii in a quasi-religious trance: "And Andrii felt in his soul a reverent apprehension *(blagogoveinaia boiazn')* and stood motionless before her" (*PSS* 2, 101). The 1835 version featured manifestly sexual overtones, such as "submitting to a devouring flame of passion he covered her with kisses" or "kisses—oh, what kisses—joined their lips that seethed to touch each other" (*PSS* 2, 318). In 1842 Gogol eliminates this steamy and somewhat kitschy ardor. The scene is maintained in a passionate yet decorous language that stresses the soulful rather than carnal aspect of Andrii and the Polish woman's love.

This love takes Andrii across the barricade and makes him the enemy of his father and brother. As V. Ia. Zviniatskovsky notes, Andrii is a Ukrainian Romeo who goes against his father for the sake of his beloved.[33] The conversation of the star-crossed lovers in *Taras Bulba* concerns precisely the problem of their families' opposing political allegiances. Yet Andrii comes to claim his right to choose his own values rather than live by those into which he was born. Ideologically, his conflict with Taras represents a clash between individual freedom and sociohistorical determinism. Andrii looks within himself for values congenial to his soul, while Taras maintains the supremacy of the traditional collective values that allow no possibility of a choice. The Polish woman reminds Andrii of his allegiances: "You are called by your father, your comrades, your fatherland, and we are your enemies" (*PSS* 2, 106). Andrii responds:

> Who said that my fatherland [*otchizna*] is Ukraine? Who gave it to me as a fatherland? The fatherland is what our soul seeks, what causes it to rejoice. You are my fatherland! And I will carry this fatherland in my heart; I will carry it so long as I live and let any Cossack try to tear it out! And I will give away anything, I will lose all for such a fatherland! (*PSS* 2, 106)

Andrii's soul seeks love, and when he finds it, it becomes his one and true patria, replacing the Cossack values bequeathed by his father. Andrii deconstructs the notion of national allegiance in ways that recall Poprishchin's deconstruction of the notion of rank, making it into an inauthentic, socially constructed value that does not correspond to any individual, human reality.

Andrii finds Cossack values constricting. His reciprocated love for the

Polish woman liberates him: "Suddenly his soul felt light; it seemed as if everything became untied. All that until now had been restrained by some heavy bridle now felt free . . ." (*PSS* 2, 102). Once Andrii renounces the oppressive regimen of Cossack imperatives, he gains a freedom he had never felt before. Andrii's sense of liberation recalls Gogol's letters from his Italian exile, and it is quite likely that Gogol shared with his protagonist a relief at leaving behind an oppressive, rabidly nationalistic climate. After the consuming battles for the Kiev professorship and the accusations of insufficient patriotism in *The Government Inspector,* Gogol found his sunny sojourn in Rome and the lightness of being that it brought out in him quite to his liking. This connection between Andrii's Polish experience and Gogol's Roman holiday may well be alluded to in the image of the Polish woman's Dubno house, which the narrator claims was built by an Italian architect and which he describes as an Italian villa (*PSS* 2, 99).

It is one of the unappreciated ironies of *Taras Bulba* that Andrii's rejection of nationalistic constraints and his union with the Polish woman are granted legitimacy, paradoxically, by Taras's own words. In his speech to the troops on the morning of the Dubno battle, Taras contrasts comradeship with familial relationships. Comradeship creates a relationship not contingent on the ties of blood: "only man can relate to one another by the kinship of the soul, rather than blood" (*PSS* 2, 133). These same words happen to sum up the nature of Andrii's deed. Andrii also establishes a community of sorts, though his is with a Pole and a woman. It is not based on bonds of blood—which naturally would link him to Taras and all he represents—but on the communion of souls, which he himself invokes when explaining his decision. If the communion of souls is the essence of what makes the Russian comradeship noble and sublime, Andrii's union with the Polish woman would seem noble and sublime by the same definition. The juxtaposition of Taras's comradeship speech with Andrii's speech about finding his "fatherland" in his love for the Polish woman puts both ideologies on a par. Taras's own words justify Andrii's alternative form of comradeship with a woman of a hostile nation.

Striking parallels of this sort extend to the work's Christian symbolism. The resonance of the Cossacks' wine-drinking ceremony with Christian transubstantiation has been widely noted. What has not received attention is that Andrii's sharing of bread with the Polish woman, while less ostentatious, belongs to the same Christian subtext of the work. Taras's Eucharist of wine/blood with his fellow soldiers is counterbalanced by Andrii's Eucharist of bread/body with his beloved. Like so much else in this important chapter 6, this juxtaposition gives weight to Andrii's choice and makes it into an important discourse that rivals Taras's ideology.

Andrii's efforts to obtain bread before going into Dubno are expanded in the 1842 version into a major event: instead of two sentences as in the *Mirgorod* edition, the passage grows to a page. The narrator describes Andrii's three—a highly ritualized number—attempts to get *the right kind* of bread. He specifically rejects Cossack black bread as unsuitable for the Polish lady's delicate constitution. On his third attempt, he remembers the loaves of white bread that the Cossacks have stolen from the Catholic monastery. He finds the sack with the monastery loaves under the head of Ostap, who is sleeping. When he pulls it out, his half-awake brother cries out a warning that a Pole has sneaked into the camp, to which Andrii replies: "Quiet, I will kill you" (*PSS* 2, 92). The bread becomes symbolically charged in the scene. It comes to represent the Catholic Eucharist and Andrii's renunciation of his Cossack bonds.

The bread-eating scene symbolizes Andrii and the woman's communion. The white pieces of bread are brought in by a servant woman on a golden plate. This resembles the sacrament of the Eucharist in a Catholic church during which a white wafer is passed over a paten. Andrii becomes for the Polish lady a Savior figure as well as a priest. He administers to her "the sacrament," which parallels Taras's role in the Cossack's wine-drinking ritual. The Polish lady breaks the pieces before eating and raises her eyes full of gratitude to Andrii. Confident in the ability of an artist's "powerful word" to glorify the Cossack feats and call Christians to a prayer (asserted after Taras's wine-drinking ceremony), the narrator now proclaims an artful word powerless to describe the bliss of a beloved woman's gaze: "If someone's word could reveal . . . but neither chisel nor brush nor an elevated powerful word can express that which can sometimes be seen in a woman's eyes . . ." (*PSS* 2, 103). Andrii addresses the Polish woman "Tsaritsa!" and puts his fate in her hands. In light of Taras's last-breath evocation of the Russian tsar, Andrii's choice of the word accentuates his devotion to his beloved as much as his shift of political allegiance.

In addition to renouncing his family and the Cossacks' "Russian" comradeship, Andrii's defection also has a religious significance. His journey to meet his beloved at the beginning of chapter 6 functions as a metaphor

of conversion. After a dark and narrow corridor, Andrii and the Tartar servant woman encounter an icon of the Catholic Madonna that hangs over a little stool that "looks like an altar" (*PSS* 2, 95). Andrii's guide lights a candle from a lamp next to the Catholic icon, and this light illumines the rest of their subterranean trip. After she does that, the passage becomes wider and reveals niches that contain human bones, apparently of Catholic monks. This reminds Andrii of the Kievan Caves Monastery (founded in 1051), one of the holiest sites of Orthodoxy, where early Kievan monks were buried in a similar fashion. The narrator's comment underscores the equation of two religions that Andrii's association is meant to serve: "It appears that there had been holy people *here as well,* hiding themselves from worldly storms, sufferings, and seductions" (*PSS* 2, 95; emphasis mine). While the Cossacks set unbridgeable divisions between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, Andrii detects points of contact, evident in his sacrilegious—from the viewpoint of militant Orthodoxy—association. At the entrance to the Polish woman's house, Andrii beholds a Polish equivalent of a Cossack—a warrior holding a prayer book—a Catholic knight.

The passage leads Andrii and his guide to the Dubno Catholic monastery. Significantly, Andrii is the one who knocks, requesting entrance. A meeting between Andrii and a Catholic monk who opens the door reminds both of them of the antagonism raging above ground: "Andrii involuntarily paused at the site of a Catholic monk, whose kind inspired such hateful disdain in the Cossacks, who treated them more inhumanely than they treated Jews. The monk also took a few steps back, seeing a Zaporozhian Cossack, but a word spoken by the Tatar woman reassured him" (*PSS* 2, 96). Upon entering the church, Andrii notices people who were quietly praying: a priest kneeling at an altar, emaciated women who rest their heads on the pews, and a few men propped, kneeling, against the pillars. They petition God to save the town, to support their faltering spirit, and to give them the strength to resist faint-hearted complaints about the sorrows of this earth. As is clear from the tone of the narrator, who surveys the scene through Andrii's eyes, Andrii sees these people compassionately as suffering humans rather than as despicable Polish heretics. Perhaps a hint of Gogol's own sympathy for the Poles, which revealed itself in the friendships I discussed above, underpins Andrii's attitude toward them.

The church appeals greatly to Andrii's aesthetic sensibility:

> The rosy blush of the morning brightened a stained-glass window above the altar, throwing on the floor circles of blue, yellow, and many-colored light that suddenly illuminated the dark church. The entire altar in its deep niche suddenly appeared radiant; incense smoke drifted in the air like a rainbowed cloud. Not without amazement did Andrii look from his dark corner at the miracle created by light. (*PSS* 2, 96–97)

As has often been noted, the description of the church resembles Gogol's experience of Rome's churches. It may be based on St. Peter's Basilica, which features a similar interplay of light through the windows above the main altar. Andrii is stunned by the church. The sounds of the organ heighten the awe produced by the spectacle of light. Organ music distinguishes Catholic churches from Orthodox ones, which allow only the human voice to celebrate God. Andrii's revelry in the "enchanting music of bullets and swords" becomes replaced by his appreciation of a distinctly Catholic "heavenly music":

> Suddenly a majestic roar of the organ filled the entire church. Ever thicker, it grew out, turned into heavy peals of thunder and then, having suddenly transformed itself into heavenly music, it lifted high toward the vaults the singing tones that resembled high virginal voices, only to turn again into thick roar and thunder and then fall quiet. For a long time thunderous tremors vibrated under the vaults and Andrii, with his mouth agape, marveled at the majestic music. (*PSS* 2, 97)

Andrii's entrance to Dubno abounds with Catholic imagery. Gogol shows that Andrii becomes receptive to Catholicism through his aesthetic sensibility, which appears to have been the point of contact between Gogol himself and the Catholic ritual that impressed him in Rome.

If we take Andrii as an image of Gogol's own straying from Orthodoxy, Gogol may have in a sense been exorcising his own demons by executing Andrii in chapter 9. Yet the scene of his killing does not convey censure for Andrii even though technically the narrator has shifted back to the Cossack perspective. While Taras seethes with vengefulness, contempt, and derision, the son behaves "meekly, like a child" (*PSS* 2, 144). Gogol significantly changed his 1835 portrayal of Andrii. In the earlier text, upon seeing his father, Andrii hides himself behind his soldiers like a "vile coward," realizing that "his soul was not exactly clean" (*PSS* 2, 321). In 1842, by contrast, Gogol portrays Andrii in the moment of his death as

an embodiment of wronged innocence: "Like a stalk of wheat undercut by a sickle, like a young lamb that felt under its heart a deathly iron, he hung his head and fell on the grass, without having uttered a single word" (*PSS* 2, 144). Andrii never acts cowardly but maintains his valor and nobility. Instead of struggling with an unclean conscience, as in the 1835 version, in the revised text Andrii remains completely at peace with the choices he has made: "His lips were quietly moving and he was pronouncing someone's name. But it was not the name of the fatherland, or the mother, or the brothers—it was the name of the beautiful Polish woman. Taras fired a shot" (*PSS* 2, 144). Andrii dies nobly and remains loyal to his "comradeship" with the Polish woman.

The scene's symbolism is richly interwoven with Christian and specifically Orthodox contexts. Andrii's meek submission to fate has powerful positive valencies in Orthodox Russian culture. The famous early Rusian princely saints Boris and Gleb similarly greeted their death at the hands of an evil family member, their brother. The scene also reverberates with the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. Andrii's utter submission to his father's will and his image as a meek lamb bring out his similarity to Isaac, who was meant to replace the sacrificial lamb. Both of these aspects also liken Andrii to Christ, who is often represented in the Christian tradition as the meek "Lamb of God." Taras's character, on the other hand, represents a significant reinterpretation of Abraham's part. While Abraham's readiness to kill his son is inspired by his obedience of God, who only tests Abraham's faith, Taras ends up actually murdering Andrii because of the political and personal vendetta. In Taras's moral system, revenge has taken the place of divine sanction. He usurps God's place as the giver and taker of life. He orders Andrii: "Stand still! I gave you life and I will kill you!" (*PSS* 2, 144). Significantly, the story of the prodigal son does not enter into the scene's Christian symbolism. Taras never offers Andrii the option of atoning for his "sin."

The implications of the religious imagery in *Taras Bulba* are enormously complex. It makes the text problematic, rather than simplifying it into recognizable formulas and neat classifications of the righteous and the unrighteous. The image of Taras as a reprobate Abraham resonates ironically with his final image as a Christ-like, crucified martyr. His Christ-like depiction and his martyrdom are counterbalanced in the work by Andrii's sacrificial death and his alignment with Christ, the Lamb of God. At the same time, the image of birds as tiny crosses against the

nocturnal sky illumined by the burned monastery carries overtones of the martyrdom of the Cossacks' victims. Taras's "sacrament" of wine drinking with his comrades is counterbalanced by Andrii's sharing of Catholic bread with the Polish woman. The balancing of these scenes transcends the sharp antinomy that determines the entire world of *Taras Bulba:* that of religious difference. The Orthodox, Cossack communion of wine and the Catholic, Polish communion of bread become symbolically united as parts of the same all-Christian sacrament. The Catholic Polish and Orthodox Cossack sides, portrayed throughout the work as politically irreconcilable, become symbolically united in these parallel reenactments of the most fundamental Christian ritual. It is therefore very fitting that the Cossacks, following Taras, end up toasting all the world's Christians and not specifically the Orthodox faithful. Similarly, Andrii's connection between the underground niches of the Catholic monastery in Dubno and the caves of ancient Kievan monks fits in the same symbolic discourse that counters the louder but internally more compromised message of chauvinistic religious nationalism.

The central chapter that Gogol devotes to Andrii and his worldview is the ideological nexus of the entire work. It posits a serious challenge to Taras's nationalism and to nationalism in general. While throughout the work the narrator maintains an appearance of upholding these values—just as he subverts them on the sly in a variety of ways that I have attempted to show—in the character of Andrii he asserts an individual's freedom to reject their absolutism. Andrii's union with a Pole liberates him from the Cossacks' nationalistic imperatives that he finds constricting. Andrii's love that takes him across the enemy lines causes him to form a bond that by Taras's own exegesis of comradeship qualifies as a noble union. Andrii is not just a wayward youth who has taken the wrong path. The values that he embodies represent a viable alternative to the Cossacks' national-religious ethos.

Taras Bulba's Conclusion

The conclusion to *Taras Bulba* contains Gogol's most overt bow in the direction of Russian messianism, which was gaining popularity in the 1840s. Like the ending of *Dead Souls,* this one also receives much weight in the work's interpretations. Yet even here Gogol cannot do without embedding certain perilous ambiguities that compromise the nationalistic

pieties, so pronounced in *Taras Bulba*'s final chapter. The message of Russian messianism is famously elaborated by Taras's final threat to his captors: "You just wait, the time will come when you'll learn what Orthodox Russian faith means! Already the near and distant nations feel that in the Russian land its own tsar ("svoi tsar'") is rising, and there won't be a force in the world that will not submit to him!" (*PSS* 2, 172). Ukrainian scholar Yuri Barabash was right to wonder:

> What does it mean "its own tsar," who is only now "rising in the Russian land"? The Muscovite tsar? But by then he had long "risen" and stood quite firmly on his Muscovite land, and even was peeking into lands not his own . . . For Taras he could not have been "his own" *(svoim)*: the tale's chronological frame, even given its arbitrariness and moveability, concerns the period from the fifteenth to the first half of the seventeenth century, before the Pereiaslav Council. In light of this, what is meant by the words about *its own* tsar, the tsar of the "Russian land"? Could it be the ancient dream of Ukrainian Cossacks about *its own* statehood—the direct descendant of the state traditions of Kievan Rus?[34]

Since instead of using *"rossiiskii"* to describe the "Russian" land, which would unambiguously mean (Great) Russian, Gogol opts for *russkii*, this can in fact be read to mean Ukrainian, since "Rus," from which this adjective comes, was also an old designation for Ukrainian lands. Given the work's overall ideology of amalgamating East Slavic Orthodox domains into a "greater" Russian nation, this reading of *russkii* does not seem the most plausible. However, Barabash has valid reasons to regard the mention of the Russian land's rising tsar as ambiguous and, in a way, nonsensical and anachronistic. The troubling incongruities to the nationalistic message creep even into its grand conclusion.

Following Taras's prophecy of the victory of Orthodoxy and Russian autocracy, the narrator, with a glance toward Taras's imminent demise in the flames, asks: "Is there in the world such fires, tortures and such power that could prevail over Russian power!" ("Da razve naidutsia na svete takie ogni, muki i takaia sila, kotoraia by peresilila russkuiu silu!"; *PSS* 2, 172). This reference to Russian power, like all of the work's Russified emendations, appears only in the 1842 text. Gogol's most fervid attempts at extolling Russian nationalism, as in the conclusion to *Dead Souls*, come mostly in the form of rhetorical questions ("Aren't you, Rus, soaring like a spry troika that cannot be outdistanced?"; *PSS* 6, 247).[35] Though emphatically punctuated with an exclamation mark, Gogol's conclusion to *Taras Bulba* is also kept in an interrogative form. While the implied answer to the question about the supremacy of Russian power is that it has no equal, this proposition nonetheless invites interrogation.

Power has been invoked throughout the work. The power of alcohol toppled the Cossacks after Kurdiug's election and during the siege of Dubno when drunken Cossacks were tied up like chickens by the Poles and taken inside the fortress (*PSS* 2, 73). The work's opening cast the Cossacks as "the extraordinary phenomenon of Russian power" (*PSS* 2, 46), yet in the tale's conclusion, after many a battle, they scuttle away on their boats, fleeing Polish pursuers. Before this unfortunate denouement of the Cossacks' military effort, the narrator declared that "no power is greater than faith" (*PSS* 2, 166). But what if two faiths clash? Do the alternating fortunes of the Orthodox and Catholic knights imply an impasse? When Taras blames his old age for falling prey to the Poles, the narrator emphatically contradicts him: "But old age was not to blame: power overcame power" (*sila odolela silu; PSS* 2, 170). This statement comes just two pages before the question-exclamation about the existence of a power that could rival the Russian one. If the Russian power embodied in the Cossacks suffers a defeat at the end of *Taras Bulba,* and if Taras's supposedly indomitable power is indeed overcome by a different force, where does this leave the Russian power in the narrator's rhetorical question?

In spite of the fact that the question's rhetoric encourages an answer in the negative (the use of *razve*), the discourse of power in the narrative suggests an affirmative reply: a power will quite likely appear that will overcome Russian power. Since the narrator dogmatically asserts as a matter of course that one force overcomes another, Russian power, or any other power, for that matter, can never be permanent. *Taras Bulba* shows that a violent conflict of two powers yields only temporary victories since its inherent dynamic consists in cyclicality. Gogol's portrayal of the bloody Polish-Cossack hostilities shows no prospect of abatement or reconciliation, which Ostap's execution and Andrii's death symbolically nullify. The war grows ever more vicious and encompasses ever greater circles.

If *Taras Bulba* idealizes the Cossacks, their war with the Poles, and their ideology of militant nationalism, it does so while continuously sub-

verting itself. The crescendo of chauvinistic Cossack discourse in the text coincides with a steady flow of disharmonious subtexts that render this discourse if not empty, then at least suspect. These subtexts ironize the nationalistic ideology and the glorious image of the Cossacks. What seems like a holy and just war has very tainted origins. Taras's Christ-like death follows a plethora of evil deeds, such as instigation of war and filiocide, and is at the same time counterbalanced by the Christian symbolism surrounding Andrii. The Cossacks' display of heroism in the battles for Dubno is preceded by their comical encounter with the Dubno women and the Cossacks' savage treatment of defenseless people. It would be oversimplifying to see these unheroic and unglamorous aspects of the Cossacks' portrayal as redeemed by their subsequent valiant exploits and martyrdom. The final chapter introduces the overtones of retribution rather than redemption in the circumstances of Taras's unit's defense from inside the fortress and of Taras's capture. The invocation of nationalistic formulas is belied by a personal campaign of revenge that drives Taras to lose his troops and his sons.

It has often been noted that the image of the golden-eye duck *(gogol')* in the closing paragraph of *Taras Bulba,* also reworked and expanded in the 1842 version, represents Gogol's signature in the text. Yet in addition to this Hitchcock-like appearance, Gogol creates an image of the work itself in the description of the river, which he added only to the 1842 text: "The river Dnestr is not small. It has many inlets, dense rushes, shallows, and deep places. The river's mirror glitters, filled with the sonorous crying of the swans, and a proud golden-eye duck is speedily flying over it" (*PSS* 2, 172). Frederick Griffith and Stanley Rabinowitz, attempting to link the river's description to *Taras Bulba* itself, claim that Gogol excludes irony from his text; he "simply glid[es] over the glassy surface of things . . . and subjugat[es] Cossacks, similes, and his own persona to the overriding imperatives of Russia and Orthodoxy."[36] I would argue that the critics themselves mistakenly glide over the glassy surface of the work. Just as the treacherous inlets, dense rushes, the shallows, and the deep holes are contained by the Dnestr's mirrorlike surface, so do the complexities and numerous ironies of *Taras Bulba* reside under its deceptively smooth veneer of heroic aggrandizement and patriotic pathos.

Taras Bulba's Reception

Taras Bulba remained one of Gogol's most consistently praised and least controversial works. When asking Zhukovsky to petition the tsar for money in 1837, Gogol asked his friend to draw imperial attention to the work, calling it his readers' favorite along with "Old-World Landowners" (*PSS* 11, 98). Unfortunately, reviews of both the 1835 and 1842 redactions provide little in terms of literary analysis. *The Library for Reading* and *The Northern Bee* praised *Taras Bulba* in their reviews of *Mirgorod.* They singled it out as the best tale in the volume and provided long excerpts, without, however, venturing any critiques.[37] Pushkin, briefly announcing the volume in *The Contemporary,* mentioned that *Taras Bulba*'s beginning is "worthy of Walter Scott." Belinsky praised the work in "On the Russian Tale and the Tales of Mr. Gogol," calling it an epic about "an infancy of a nation," by which in 1835 he must have meant the Ukrainian nation. Shevyrev also praised the tale's "imprint of nationality" but limited himself to a minute retelling of the plot.[38]

The second wave of reviews increased the attention given to *Taras Bulba* only slightly. Gogol's *Collected Works,* in which the revised version appeared, followed by a few months the publication of *Dead Souls,* which stole the critics' thunder. A review of *Collected Works* in *The Literary Gazette* found the tale's new text much improved but focused on Gogol's new works, such as the story "The Overcoat."[39] *The Library for Reading,* in contrast, did not appreciate the 1842 revisions, complaining that Gogol took his tightly constructed 1835 tale and blew it up into a "whole Ukrainian wilderness" and drowned it in "steppe grass." The review breathed anti-Ukrainian hostility. It equated Ukrainian poetry with "filth," ridiculed Gogol's aspirations to profundity, and insistently categorized the author of *Dead Souls* as a "Ukrainian humorist."[40] Polevoi, in his review of *Dead Souls,* briefly derided Gogol's attempt in *Taras Bulba* to pass the Cossacks off as exalted knights.[41]

In 1846 *The Contemporary* published reflections on Gogol by a minor Polish writer living in Ukraine, Michał Grabowski.[42] The Pole was pleased with Gogol's turn to Russian themes, since in his view the rich ore of Ukrainian history was clearly not Gogol's type of material. Grabowski focused on *Taras Bulba,* which he considered weak and historically inaccurate. He criticized Gogol's portrayal of Polish cruelty as in the scene of Ostap's execution. The Pole's dismissal of *Taras Bulba* on the

grounds of Gogol's insufficient knowledge of Ukraine's and Poland's history resembled an earlier review of *Evenings on a Farm* by a Ukrainian, Tsarynny, who accused Gogol of ignorance about Ukrainian customs. Gogol's fiction on the subject of Ukraine, Poland, and Russia met with accusations of lack of verity from all national sides.

Despite the paucity of commentary and analysis by Gogol's intelligentsia readers, who preferred realist fiction to epics, *Taras Bulba*'s popularity in the second half of the nineteenth century was enormous. Prior to the revolution, it was the most widely printed of Gogol's works, both in number of editions and of copies. This testifies to the general reader's taste but also to the work's conformance to Official Nationality, thanks to which its publication was party sponsored by the Ministry of National Education.[43]

Yet as regards the published reception, it is fair to say that Gogol missed the mark with his contemporary readers by straining to make *Taras Bulba* into an apotheosis of Russianness. This message seems to have fallen on deaf ears. While national issues were parsed and debated in the reception of *Dead Souls,* the Cossack epic failed to inspire such a reaction. If *Taras Bulba* was meant as a proclamation of Gogol's Russian patriotism, it proved unsuccessful, and Gogol was never patted on the shoulder for it. As an experiment with nationalistic fiction, it demonstrated to Gogol that his Russian audience was not likely to be taken with Russian nationalism that springs from Ukrainian subject matter. For the Russians to get a nationalistic boost, he would have to deliver it in Russian topics, or no one would take note.

The mute reception of the work's notion of a "greater Russian nation" manifested a palpable failure of this imagined community, which would only be picked up by Russian nationalists in the second half of the nineteenth century (it happens to coincide with the period of the work's greatest popularity). In 1842, the Russian nation craved individual attention and was not congenial to the idea of intermixing with the "tribes" of its internal colonies, however Slavic and Orthodox they may be. Though Gogol found epigones and continuators that traced their lineage to his other works, themes, and modalities, *Taras Bulba* proved no such evolutionary progenitor in Russian literature. Writers, like Dostoevsky, may have come from under Gogol's "The Overcoat," but no one came from under *Taras Bulba.* The work did, however, prove important for Ukrainian writers, beginning with Panteleimon Kulish. In the epilogue to

his historical novel *Black Council* (1847), written largely as a response to *Taras Bulba,* Kulish claims that Gogol and his Cossack epic inspired the Ukrainians to study their past and aim for national self-knowledge. In Kulish's view, Gogol instantiated Ukrainian nationality while making it compatible with the larger imperial framework and with the cause of fraternal Russian nationalism.[44]

Though Belinsky reviewed both *Mirgorod* and the *Collected Works,* he did not offer much on the subject of *Taras Bulba* beyond general praise. Gogol's personal identity as a Ukrainian and the Ukrainianness of his subject matter did, however, feature significantly in Belinsky's reviews of other Ukrainian writers and his general view of Ukrainian literature. Since the Russian-Ukrainian relation lies at the core of the Russified 1842 *Taras Bulba,* this seems like a fitting place to discuss Belinsky's appropriation of Gogol for his treatment of this subject.

Belinsky's encounter with Hegelianism, which he tended to oversimplify, led him around the early 1840s to proclaim Ukrainian literature as an axiomatic impossibility. His Hegel-inspired theory of nationality, about which Andrea Rutherford has written, stressed the concept of statehood and demanded that a true nation leave behind the era of "tribal" self-centeredness and orient itself toward supranational civilization.[45] The Petrine revolution effected this transformation in Russian culture, connecting it with European civilization. In Belinsky's view, Ukraine could enter civilization only by "riding Russia's coattails," as Rutherford puts it, by its total absorption into Russia. In his incredibly hostile attacks on Ukrainian literature in the early 1840s, Belinsky used Ukraine's lack of statehood to deny the possibility of its ever developing a national culture. This resulted in a truly paradoxical situation, whereby the cultural manifestations of an incipient national culture ostensibly under review by Belinsky—written in the Ukrainian language, concerned with the life of Ukraine, and clearly in touch with what one might term "civilization," as in the case of Shevchenko—served Belinsky to disprove the very existence of such a culture. He thus argued the impossibility of Ukrainian national culture even as it was staring him in the face. Axiom overrode praxis.

In his 1841 "Articles on National Poetry," Belinsky hammered at his idea of Ukraine's necessary reliance on Russian mediation in its aspiration to universal significance. Visibly irritated at the evidence emerging from Ukraine that was spoiling his paradigm, Belinsky resorts to a tone of proscription:

> The literary language of Little Russians should be the language of their educated society: the Russian language. If a great poet can emerge in Little Russia at all, then only under the condition that he will be a Russian poet: the son of Russia, eagerly taking to heart its interests, suffering when it suffers, and rejoicing when it rejoices. A tribe can only have folk songs but cannot have poets, and especially great ones. Great poets appear only in great nations, and what sort of a nation is it if it does not have great, independent political significance? (*SSBel* 4, 163)

As living proof of this evident "truth," Belinsky puts forth Gogol: "his poetry features many purely Little Russian elements that do not and cannot exist in the Russian one, but who will call him a Little Russian poet? It was not whim or chance that made him write in Russian and not Ukrainian, but a deeply rational inner cause." To translate Gogol's artistic sublimity into Ukrainian would mean to make it "peasanty." Belinsky notes that Ukrainian appears exclusively in *Taras Bulba*'s dialogue; the rest is maintained in the kind of literary language (Russian) that Ukrainian, being provincial and coarse, "can never become." Belinsky makes Gogol into the standard-bearer not only of realism and a Westernizing brand of nationalism but also of Russia's cultural supremacy over Ukraine. Gogol epitomizes for Belinsky the correct way for a Ukrainian-born writer to be, which basically means being a Russian writer who occasionally dabbles in Ukrainian plots. Such an appropriation of Gogol for the larger political agenda of affirming Ukraine's status as Russia's imperial possession aligns Belinsky with his adversary, Konstantin Aksakov, who put Gogol in a similar role in his brochure on *Dead Souls.* Propping an imperialist agenda through recourse to Gogol continues to this day. Noted Gogol scholar V. A. Voropaev, for example, indulging in post-Soviet and postimperial nostalgia, recently treated *Taras Bulba* as a statement of Gogol's belief in the integrity of the Russian empire united under Orthodox faith. Voropaev goes so far as to brand the proponents of Ukraine's independence as "separatists-traitors, Gogolian Andriis."[46]

In his review of a Ukrainian almanac and an opera, Belinsky poses a set of somewhat contradictory questions: is there such a thing as a Ukrainian language, and should Ukrainians write in it? He answers both in the negative. Following the Russification of Ukraine's higher classes, the surviving remnants of the Ukrainian language are accessible only to the lower classes that cannot fathom sophisticated art. Educated Russophone readers represent a more desirable and comprehending public. Gogol's example again comes in handy for Belinsky. Raising the topic of peasant life to artistic heights requires a great talent like Gogol,

> who was able to find the universally human in Little Russian life, who found in a simple life the play of the sunny ray of poetry, who in a limited milieu saw a diversity of passions, situations, and characters. But it is so because for Gogol's creative talent there exist not only Ukrainian lads and lassies, not only Afanasy Ivanovich and Pulkheria Ivanovna, but also Taras Bulba with his mighty sons, not only Little Russians but also Russians, and not only Russians but also man and humanity. A genius is a full master of life, and he takes from it full tribute, whenever and wherever he desires. What a deep idea resides in the fact that Gogol, passionately loving Little Russia, nonetheless began writing in Russian and not Little Russian! (*SSBel* 4, 417–418)

Gogol's example proves for Belinsky what it would take for a great artist to emerge from Ukraine, as it simultaneously demonstrates that it will never happen. For even Gogol realized that the only path to universal human values leads through Russia.

Gogol's Ukrainian fictions came to stand for Belinsky for a certain closed chapter of Russian literature. The theme of Ukraine in Russian literature reached in Gogol its greatest manifestation but also its exhaustion. Reviewing a collection of tales that appeared in 1841 in the pro-Ukrainian journal *The Beacon,* Belinsky derides the authors for touching the subject matter that "belonged" to Gogol and was already familiar from *Evenings on a Farm.* There was no point in reading these newer works: "These gentlemen were foolhardy enough to take up the idyllic life of rural Little Russia after 'The Fair at Sorochintsy' . . . and 'Christmas Eve'! To rival Gogol came into their heads! . . . Away with this silly little book!" (*SSBel* 5, 489). Gogol's work allows Belinsky to assert with confidence that Ukraine "has been done." Let us move on.

Similar sentiment surfaces in Belinsky's review of Gogol's *Collected Works.* Belinsky speaks of *Taras Bulba* as a work that crowns and seals the topic of Ukraine: "He exhausted in it all historical life of Little Russia and in his strange, artistic creation forever sealed its spiritual image: thus a sculptor captures in marble the features of a man and gives them eternal life" (*SSBel* 5, 382). Having found in Gogol's fiction a vision of Ukrainian history that he can live with, Belinsky hastens to arrest the process of

representation and immobilize Ukraine's image. References to exhaustion, sealing, and marble sculptures all underscore this desire to establish Gogol's picture of Ukraine as the one fixed, stable, and authoritative discourse on Ukraine admissible in Russian culture.

Belinsky certainly treated it this way. This came through in his 1843 review of Mykola Markevych's *History of Little Russia* (1842), which dared assert Ukraine's history of political and cultural separateness from Russia and the Ukrainians' seniority over the Great Russians. Belinsky corrects Markevych's misguided view of Ukrainian history, which the critic reads through the prism of Gogol's historical fiction. The review shows a perverse use of *Taras Bulba,* though neither the tale nor its author is mentioned, to retell the plot of Ukrainian history in a way that denigrates the subject.

Belinsky touches on all the key leitmotifs of Gogol's treatment of Ukrainian history. He denies that the Cossacks ever formed a republic or a state due to Ukraine's geopolitical position (lack of natural borders and hostile neighbors). The Cossacks knew only two delights, "vodka and butchery"; theirs was a "parody of a republic," if anything. True, they were brave warriors who valued comradeship *(tovarishchestvo)* and knightly conduct (*lytsarstvo;* both terms, calques from Ukrainian, appear in *Taras Bulba*). But the Cossacks went to war, Belinsky writes, out of boredom or to provide their sons with military training. The plot of *Taras Bulba* flowers before our eyes in the review: "Whom to fight, though? Peace with the Turks, peace with the Tatars. No matter, it is never a sin to fight the infidels, nor to break peace treaties or oaths given to them." On their Asiatic raids, half of them would die, and the other half would triumphantly return to the Sich with rich booty (see *Taras Bulba, PSS* 2, 148–149). Despite their bravery, the Cossacks appear to Belinsky as bandits and drunken idiots, "drinking and carousing . . . to the full content of their broad Cossack soul. . . . And this is politics for you." He claims the Poles were to some degree justified in despising the uncivilized Ukrainians. He finds Markevych's "panegyrical" tone inappropriate, given Ukraine's brief and accidental role in universal history and the Ukrainians' status as a "semi-savage tribe."

This is Belinsky's lesson to Markevych about the proper attitude for writing a history of Ukraine. In writing his own version of it, Belinsky draws on Gogol's formulas and motifs, putting a malicious twist on them. Gogol's 1842 Cossacks in particular fitted Belinsky's conception of

Ukrainian history, since they expend their energy in revelry and not Ukrainian nationalistic aspirations, while yearning for a brotherly embrace with their Russian brothers.

Dead, Living, and Reviving Nations: "Rome"

In March 1842, while *Dead Souls* was being evaluated by the censor and Gogol was putting the finishing touches on his revised *Taras Bulba,* the Slavophile journal *The Muscovite* published Gogol's novelistic fragment about an Italian prince titled "Rome." The prince visits Paris, which disappoints him, and returns to Rome a changed man, with a new appreciation for Italy and the Roman people. The fragment contrasts Paris as an embodiment of the spirit of the nineteenth century and the French nation, with an Italian culture that may appear backward and moribund but is in fact endowed with a vitality and historical heritage that give it a new lease on life. While disputing Belinsky's criticism of the fragment's portrayal of Paris, Gogol denied in a letter to Shevyrev that his hero reflected his own sympathies: "I belong to a living and contemporary nation, and he [the hero] to an obsolete one. The novel's idea was not stupid. It was meant to show the significance of an obsolete nation and one that grew obsolete beautifully by comparison with living nations" (*PSS* 12, 211). Gogol explores in "Rome" what can happen to a "dead" but once historical nation, charting an alternative to the scenario he envisaged for Ukraine in the 1842 *Taras Bulba.* In *Taras,* the historical Ukrainian nation merges with another one to form a more powerful, synthetic, contemporary nation. In "Rome," a historic though now "obsolete" Italian nation revives independently, from its own roots and for itself alone.

Paris and the French nation as portrayed in "Rome" resemble Gogol's image of St. Petersburg and its society. The Roman people, on the other hand, remind one of Gogol's Ukrainians. The alignment is not wholly allegorical, but it is there, and it shows Gogol playing with elements of his thinking on nationality that interestingly involve Russia and Ukraine. Robert Maguire has drawn a parallel between the Italians in "Rome" and the Russians.[47] Yet if applied literally, this would create an anomaly out of everything else Gogol ever wrote about the Russian nation and is explicitly denied by Gogol himself, who in the letter I quote above identifies himself as belonging to a "living and contemporary nation," by which in

1843 he could only mean Russia. Gogol's Romans are an "obsolete" nation just on the verge of a revival, not a modern one. Yet Maguire is right to the extent that the text sends messages that concern the Russian nation. The Italian nation in "Rome" is supposed to prompt a reevaluation of the Russian simple folk and its natiogenetic potential, a notion that the Slavophiles held dear. The Italian nation in the text does not, however, correspond to Gogol's image of the Russian nation but instead resembles Gogol's Ukrainians. Gogol, in other words, imagines the ideal Russian folk according to Ukrainian patterns. He makes a trial run of the strategy that he will pursue in *Taras Bulba,* that is, of imbuing the Russian nation with the qualities that he appreciated in Ukrainians. The melange of possible parallels resists neat allegories. Nonetheless, an opposition between Russia as France and Ukraine as Italy figures most prominently in the text.

Paris appears like a twin of Gogol's fictional Petersburg. Upon entering the city, the senses of the Roman prince are shocked by movement and glittering light, by human crowds and apparent chaos, by the dim hum of the city, and by the "bewitching gas illumination" (*PSS* 3, 223)—all of which recall blacksmith Vakula's impression of Petersburg and the famous images of Nevsky Prospect from the eponymous story. The modern urban center materializes through estranging Gogolian grotesque just as Petersburg did. The prince soon comes to see all this hustle and bustle as empty and fruitless. The falsely exaggerated political activity as reported by the newspapers rests on a mere illusion of reality, just as Petersburg's bureaucratic system in Gogol's stories seemed to run on ink and paper. Low calculation, the cult of fashion and luxury, a lack of genuine human closeness—all these distinguishing features of Parisian society in "Rome" may as well have come from "Nevsky Prospect." The prince, though initially dazzled, soon becomes bored from overstimulation and finds little he can respect in the city that he had long cherished like a Mecca. This echoes Gogol's own pilgrimage to St. Petersburg and the disenchantment of his great expectations.

Though disappointing in this sense, the prince's sojourn in Paris has the unexpected effect of increasing his appreciation of his native land and awaking his own national identity as an Italian. This mirrors quite closely the role that Gogol's experience of St. Petersburg played in stirring his Ukrainian nationalism. The Rome that had appeared to the prince in Paris like a "dark moldy corner of Europe" now reveals ever new charms

(*PSS* 3, 226–227). He is able to see it with new eyes, a perspective that his stay abroad made possible. The prince's road to a national affirmation of the Roman folk leads through an immersion in his country's proud history, just as historical research on Ukraine helped stir Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism. The prince finds inexhaustible resources of dynamism in Roman history, in the Italians' diversity of languages, forms of government, military exploits, artistic accomplishments, and expressions of religious zeal. Yet nowadays, the prince reflects, Italy does not reveal any of this greatness, being "deprived of political significance and, with it, of influence on the world" (*PSS* 3, 241). This statement clearly does not allow for drawing a parallel between the Russian and Italian nation, since Russia's preeminent political significance constituted perhaps the most consistently invoked proof of its greatness. Ukraine offers a far better parallel to the Italian nation and its fall from political existence. The narrator paints Italy as clothed in "beggar's clothes" covering the bedraggled "pieces of former royal garments." This resembles the image of Ukraine from *Mirgorod:* contemporary decrepitude with sad remnants of former Cossack glory.

At this juncture the prince asks the crucial question: can Italy revive? His "higher feeling" tells him that "Italy has not died," its spirit being eternal (*PSS* 3, 242). He recalls its role in Christianizing Europe, in initiating "worldwide trade, sly [*khitraia*] politics, the complexity of civic springs, and intellectual brilliance" (*PSS* 3, 242). This encapsulates the highlights of Gogol's conception of Ukrainian history: Kievan Rus as the Christianizing center, the wide reach of Kievan trade, the Cossacks' "sly" politics, and the dawn of Ukrainian enlightenment as seen in the rise of the Kievan Academy, the first institution of higher learning in East Slavic Orthodox lands. The Roman people, in the prince's view, contain an eternal seed of life, unspoiled by modern education, noble and proud, given to excess and impulse, and filled with natural gaiety. As I have by now shown in many places, these were for Gogol eminently Ukrainian attributes. The Russian folk, by contrast, were characterized in Gogol's view by sleepy indolence, blind submission to authority, and lack of humor. Yet this is precisely the point. The Russian readers of *The Muscovite* were most likely intended to see in the robust Italians a parallel with the Russians and to put their hope for a national renaissance, following the setbacks caused by Peter I, in the potential locked in the simple Russian folk, the true custodians of the national spirit. Yet what Gogol

threw in the bargain, and what his readers likely ignored, is that in imagining this national Russian core into existence, Gogol summoned his most cherished ideas about the Ukrainian people and liberally used them in his national fantasia. Both in *Taras Bulba* and in "Rome," Gogol cross-dresses his Ukrainians into Russians. This has profound subversive implications. While Gogol consigns independent Ukraine into a dead end of history in the 1842 *Taras Bulba,* he seems to resurrect it almost concurrently in "Rome." A text fashioned to boost Russian nationalism simultaneously ponders the revival of a nation very closely resembling Ukraine.

— 6 —

The Failure of Fiction

> What national philosophy can be deduced from the observations about people in Russia—about the Russian way of life and nature? This will most likely result in a philosophy of total despair.
>
> A. V. NIKITENKO, *DIARY,* JUNE 30, 1839

The critics' accusations that Gogol lacked the requisite knowledge to write about Russia finally sank in. Gogol accepted that in order to be a Russian writer it was not enough simply to write down in the Russian language the fruits of one's idle fancy: one needed to educate oneself consciously about one's homeland. Following *Dead Souls,* he undertook just such a project of self-education and continued it until his death. In its massive scale, this project surpassed even Gogol's historical research. His notebooks from the years 1841 to 1850 include entries on such subjects as: Russian travelogues; words and phrases, often linked to a specific province; snippets of peasant dialogue; prices of various goods; names and classifications of birds, plants, fish, insects, and horses; notes on an agricultural calendar; duties of administrative offices; and—how Gogolian!—a description of bribing etiquette, organized by government post (*PSS* 7, 317–391; *PSS* 9, 539–576). In addition to the "Notebooks," Gogol compiled the material that the *PSS* editors grouped into "Notes on Ethnography," "Notes on Farming and the Life of the Peasants," and "Materials for a Russian Dictionary" (*PSS* 9, 415–486). Gogol also compiled a bibliography on the philology, history, and geography of Russia, based on the catalog of Smirdin's library (*PSS* 9, 491–492). By far the longest extant abstract that Gogol ever made is based on P. S. Pallas's five-volume *A Journey to Various Parts of the Russian State in the Years 1768–1773;* it approximates in size his *Dead Souls* (*PSS* 9, 277–414).

When writing to his friends in these last years, Gogol frequently requested books about Russia and pressured them to become in effect his

research assistants. Such an epistolary course on Russia resembles the earlier crash course on Ukraine, albeit much shorter, provided by his mother and aunt at the time he was writing *Evenings on a Farm.* It also recalls Gogol's plea to his readers in the preface to the second edition of *Dead Souls* to send him information about the country. Now Gogol urged his sisters to become such helpers, even though they lived in Ukraine and his subject was Russia. He requested from them all manner of detail concerning the life of the estate and its peasants. He presented this tasks as their "holy" duty, the shirking of which would amount to a "sin" (*PSS* 12, 311–315, 548–551). When Alexandra Smirnova's husband was appointed governor in Kaluga, she became another potential source of information and likewise received precise questions and instructions from Gogol (*PSS* 12, 528–529; *PSS* 13, 31–36). Her husband was enlisted to procure books in which "one can in any way sense Rus, even in a bad-smelling form" (*PSS* 13, 211). Yuri Samarin, who worked at the time in a department that dealt with non-Russian Livonia, was asked by Gogol to deliver "registers, notes from the Senate meetings, and lists of decisions concerning the Livonian peasants."[1]

Gogol needed these "material and spiritual statistics of Russia," as he called them, to write the further volumes of *Dead Souls* (*PSS* 13, 52). Since many deemed the first volume's image of Russia false, these "statistics" were to aid Gogol in creating a "truer" image. While Gogol's unenlightened, impressionistic views of Russia rendered merely a record of its faults, a solid study would provide him, or so he hoped, with positive material. Though many Russian intellectuals at the time complained about their ignorance of the country beyond the capitals, Gogol's dogged quest for such knowledge seems additionally motivated by his insecurity as a Ukrainian and in some ways resembles an education about a foreign country. As is characteristic of Gogol's dysfunctional relationship with Russia, despite his patriotic effort to learn about it, he refused to set foot in it until 1848, ignoring the prompting of his friends, such as Pletnev, Shevyrev, and the Aksakov family.[2] Though he preached in *Selected Passages* the need to acquaint oneself personally with Russia, Gogol's monthlong visit to Smirnova and her husband in Kaluga in July 1849 remained his only exposure to the Russian heartland.

Gogol's letters from this period show that the task of learning about Russia was closely interwoven with his moral perestroika. He conceived this inner reconstruction as preparation for the completion of *Dead Souls,*

which had became for him the work that would define him. Gogol came to believe that his excessively negative former depictions of Russia stemmed from his own spiritual and moral inadequacy. This strange connection between nationality and morality reverberates in his 1844 defensive letters to Smirnova quoted in my Introduction, where Gogol describes his Ukrainian-Russian nationality. The troubling problems of this hyphenated identity, of his social role as a writer, and of his mastery of Russia formed one painful complex for the writer. He nagged his friends for their detailed impressions of him, especially their reproaches. He claimed he needed them to build his self, which, unlike theirs, was still "under construction" (*PSS* 12, 266–269). He confessed that when he left Russia after the publication of *Dead Souls,* he realized that without perfecting his soul his talent would be powerless to work toward the "good and advantage" of his fellow citizens. He therefore made the task of artistic creation contingent upon that of self-creation (*PSS* 12, 290, 434). Artistic creation, in turn, was for him a form of social utility, which determined his moral worth and justified his secular existence on this earth. A specifically national creation was most socially useful in his view. In an 1848 letter to his confessor Matvei Konstantinovsky, Gogol explicitly linked national literature with social utility. He argued that literature was able to raise people's awareness of what makes up the true Russian spirit and as such could dissuade civil servants from many an evil deed (*PSS* 14, 40). By writing a continuation to *Dead Souls,* Gogol wished to perform a patriotic service parallel to that of the civil servants who worked in government posts (*PSS* 13, 33–34). The following quote from Gogol's somewhat rambling but earnest letter to Konstantinovsky demonstrates the interconnection of all these issues in one tight nexus of related concerns:

> I think that if I learned more about many things in Russia and about what takes places in it, I could lead my reader, using my talent for capturing characters, to a better knowledge of a Russian. And if I myself, by God's love, gained a better insight into man's duty on earth and to truth, then good Russian traits and human qualities would unwittingly become more attractive, and the evil ones would become so unattractive that the reader would not love them even if he chanced to find them in himself. This is what I thought and why I studied everything that pertained to Russia, why I studied people's souls and the human soul

in general, beginning with my own. . . . I believed that I would be able to accomplish this if I myself became better. This is my conception of my writing. (*PSS* 14, 40–41)

To complete *Dead Souls* in the form that would reveal the inner worth of Russia, Gogol needed to spark love for it in himself. He came to regard the absence of such love as symptomatic of his moral failings. Once he learned more about Russia, he seemed to think, he would come to love it. Only then could he fulfill his role as a sacred vessel through which Russia's essence is delivered to the world. How crucial such love was for Gogol in order to create the appropriately positive continuation of *Dead Souls* comes through in a prayer he wrote down in his notebook: "Dear God, let me love all people more. Let me gather in my memory all that is best in them, to remember all my fellow men and, having been inspired by the power of love, to gain the power to create. Oh, let the love itself be my inspiration" (*PSS* 7, 381).

Gogol set up his return to Russia in 1848 as a highly symbolic journey. He believed that the "sin" of his previous fictions would be redeemed by *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, the publication of which would set the stage for his return.[3] A special itinerary would complete his quest for "national purification." Gogol planned to "earn his right to return to Russia," as he wrote to his mother, by cleansing his soul in the Holy Land, which would finally make him fit to begin his "true service to the fatherland" (*PSS* 13, 193). His national atonement would be completed publicly through *Selected Passages* and privately by expiating for his sins at the Lord's Tomb. Unfortunately, Gogol's symbolic return as a national Messiah was not meant to be. *Selected Passages* failed by far to produce universal euphoria, and Gogol did not become a better man in the Holy Land, as he himself confessed (*PSS* 14, 167).

Filled with inner torment, Gogol came to the brink of death, or at least claimed that he did, quite a few times. Deeply dissatisfied with his work, he reportedly burned the manuscripts of two redactions of *Dead Souls*' second volume (in July 1845 and February 1852, shortly before his death). It is commonly assumed that paroxysms of Gogol's mental or psychosomatic illness led him to these and other drastic steps (*PSS* 7, 400). Yet while sickness may have ruined Gogol's writing, it appears equally plausible that the writing made him sick, as he realized that he set himself impossible goals. However sincere his desire to give Russia a nationalistic

uplift, the love that was needed never materialized. Though as a citizen he cherished the idea of Russian nationalism, as an artist he proved incapable of delivering its message. In an 1844 letter to the poet Nikolai Iazykov, Gogol complained that *Dead Souls* was not coming along as he wished, since he lacked both the requisite knowledge and the inner development that alone could propel the work forward. He said: "I absolutely cannot write against myself" (*PSS* 12, 332). Yet "writing against oneself" defines Gogol's work on the sequel and in the end likely led him to destroy it. In 1849 he wrote to his friend Danilevsky about his inability to work: "my soul is sad, the future appears terrible, everything seems false" (*PSS* 14, 104). Gogol's nagging sense of falsity when confronted a few days before his death with his crowning opus may well have been the reason why it ended in the flames.

The Aborted Sequel to *Dead Souls:* The Demise of Satire

Despite two acts of incineration, fragments of the second volume of *Dead Souls* survived. Though these remnants do not allow one to reconstruct the novel, they nonetheless indicate the directions of Gogol's work, much like notes and discarded drafts of other fictions. The extant fragments include the first four chapters of the second redaction and the final chapter of the first redaction. The middle of the novel disappeared, but reports of those present at Gogol's readings, especially Smirnova's brother Lev Arnoldi and Shevyrev, who relayed the contents of the chapters that Gogol read to him to Prince Obolensky, give some insight into the main plot developments of this section. All these materials indicate that Gogol genuinely tried to offer a positive vision of Russia and ground it in contemporary realities. Yet since he viewed these realities as far from ideal, this made him stumble. Instead of satire, which provided the mode for addressing such shortcomings in his earlier works, Gogol strove to provide constructive solutions and positive examples. The history of Gogol's work on the second volume of *Dead Souls* can be summed up as his struggle with his own talent and propensity for satire, which he castigated in *Selected Passages* as a socially harmful literary modality. Yet for Gogol, to write nonsatirically about contemporaneity at the same meant to write "against oneself."

Judging by the remaining fragments, Gogol wanted to combine two incompatible goals: to avoid criticizing Russia and to suggest ways of

improving it. He implied that Russia's golden age had not yet dawned but lay within reach, not unlike the future Communist ideal in Soviet times. It would be ushered in once the greatness of the Russian spirit, now dormant, became fully activated and recognized by the entire Russian people. By framing the issue this way, Gogol merely asked his compatriots to become more Russian, rather than to become different.

Gogol came to see the reconstitution and strengthening of the landowners' economy as the key to this transformation. Reinforcing the message of *Dead Souls*' previous volume, the second one shuns St. Petersburg and its bureaucracy and locates Russia in the heartland and its people. Gogol's earlier works showed St. Petersburg, Russia's administrative center, as a Mecca of those seeking social promotion, such as Poprishchin, or as an exporter of corrupted dandies and frauds, such as Khlestakov. In the second volume of *Dead Souls*, St. Petersburg appears not as a place to which Russian noblemen flock but one they leave in order to lead a truly Russian and genuinely useful life on their estate: tilling the land and supervising the moral improvement of the peasant. Tentetnikov, one of Gogol's new, positive heroes, effects just such an exodus from the evil city, rejecting the "dead papers" for the "earthly paradise" of his ancestral land (*PSS* 7, 19). A nobleman fulfills his civic duty by overseeing his estate, not by climbing the ranks of the demeaning and pointless government service.

In Gogol's view, the relationship between the landowner and his peasants served as the foundation of Russia's social structure, since the landowner bound the peasant masses to the highest state rule. The landowner's economic viability, in turn, was essential for his ability to perform this vital task. While religion sets the tone for *Selected Passages*, economy does so for the sequel to *Dead Souls*. The novel frames the theme of material riches as not merely the question of how to amass wealth but of how to combine wealth with moral goodness and civic service. Kostanzhoglo, one of Gogol's bizarrely named characters in the volume, rises as the ideal landowner in this sense. He extracts a substantial annual income from his estate, just as he takes good care of his land, keeps his peasants working and rich, and builds churches in his village for the glory of God. His speeches about estate management portray village life as inherently noble and potentially profitable. When Chichikov, cutting to the chase, asks Kostanzhoglo how to get rich, Kostanzhoglo replies that one gets rich by working hard and laughs off the notion of get-rich-quick schemes (*PSS* 7, 72). He gives Chichikov the gospel about the need to work hard and abandon scheming. Such overt moralizing, unthinkable in the first volume of *Dead Souls*, abounds in the second. In this second act, satire exits; edification enters. Gogol now views satire as an accursed affliction and in one letter even attempts ex post facto to exorcise it from the first volume, denying its satirical aspect (*PSS* 12, 144).[4]

Gogol contrasts Kostanzhoglo with two other landowners. One of them is Khlobuev, who exemplifies a fashionable, profligate lifestyle and complete neglect of a landowner's responsibilities. Kostanzhoglo gets Chichikov interested in Khlobuev's ruined estate, which he is forced to sell in order to settle an enormous debt. The second foil to Kostanzhoglo is Koshkarev, who in a misguided attempt at innovative management establishes a number of institutions, committees, and offices. Instead of making the estate run smoother, this "Petersburg solution," so to speak, ends up creating a paralyzing bureaucratic maze. Kostanzhoglo scoffs at Koshkarev's school for the peasants, claiming that in order to enlighten the peasant all that is needed is to "make him a rich and good proprietor, and he'll learn himself" (*PSS* 7, 68).

A solid economy is the first condition of progress. Although accused of being politically reactionary by Belinsky and others, Gogol was deeply concerned with Russia's progress during his last years. Progress was to prove Russia's inner capabilities and manifest its national greatness in the second volume of *Dead Souls*. Emerging from a conservative position, Gogol believed that it could be achieved within the existing social and political framework, with the help of the religious, moral regeneration that he preaches in *Selected Passages*. The narrator of *Dead Souls*' second volume detects within the Russian nation a powerful yearning for progress:

> Where is the one who could in the native language of our Russian soul proclaim this all-powerful word *forward*? Who—knowing all our strengths and peculiarities, and all the depth of our nature—could with one magical gesture direct us to a higher life? With what tears, with what love would a grateful Russian repay him. But centuries pass . . . and God does not send a person, who could proclaim it! (*PSS* 7, 23)

In the novel, Gogol himself strains to use the language of the Russian soul to proclaim this magical call to progress. His final work's extant fragments show that Gogol made the material improvement of life in

Russia a cornerstone of any stride "forward." He elaborates similar ideas in a longish entry from his "Notebook for 1846–51" about, as the first line announces, the "course of enlightenment in Russia." Gogol argues that its first wave made Russians incapable of practical life and led them to build castles in the sky. He adds that "the multiplicity of commissions and committees exacerbated the complexity, which became a heavy burden. In addition, all economic sense vanished. An awful waste of money" (*PSS* 7, 390). Perhaps because of his long exposure to bourgeois Europe, Gogol's solution to Russia's depressing backwardness was based on prosperity that in turn would lead to dignity and social welfare.

Thus in response to the criticisms about the satirical treatment of Russia's ills in the first volume, Gogol now proposes a positive agenda. To those who thought the author callously derisive, he now shows patriotic concern. He also accommodates complaints about his depiction of Russia in exclusively ugly terms. No more scummy ponds like Manilov's or dilapidated ruins like Pliushkin's abode: the noblemen's houses are now clean, freshly painted, pleasant, and surrounded by gorgeous nature. Gogol opens his second volume in the manner of Rudy Panko, ventriloquizing his readers' accusations:

> Why portray poverty, nothing but the poverty and imperfection of our life, digging out folks from some backwater, from faraway corners of our country? But what is to be done if the creator is simply like that and from the sickness of his own imperfection cannot bring himself to portray anything else than just poverty, nothing but the poverty and imperfection of our life, digging out folks from some backwater, from distant corners of our country? So here we are, again in the backwater, again in some corner. (*PSS* 7, 7)

Having readied the current volume's reader to expect, due to the author's incurable condition as a malcontent, more of the same old dreariness, the narrator springs a pleasant surprise:

> But what a backwater and what a corner!
>
> Like a gigantic wall of some endless fortress with ornamented corners and embrasures, there unrolled hilly elevations over a thousand *versts* long. They rose splendidly over the endless spaces of the plains, here in cliffs, like steep, lime-like and clayey walls, lined with streaming water and grooves; here in green protuberances, pleasing to the eye, covered with young lambskin-like shrubbery that was growing on felled trees; here, finally, in thickets of forest that by some miracle was spared from the ax. A river, obeying its banks, added bends and turning points or distanced itself into meadows in order to emerge from its windings into the sun, all aglitter like fire, then to hide in the groves of birches, aspens, and alders, and to run out of them majestically, escorted by bridges, wind-mills, and dams, which seem to be chasing her on each bend. (*PSS* 7, 7)

So here finally is a beautiful, grandiose image of Russian nature delivered in the ornate, hypotactic language of Gogol's earlier descriptions of the Dnepr or a Ukrainian night. Gone are the first volume's depressing vistas of "rubbish and wasteland" or "charred stumps" (*PSS* 6, 21).

Yet this showy display of artistry is not without certain jarring Gogolian touches, neatly tucked in all the verbal excess. For one, Russia materializes in this passage in the image of a fortress, of all things, locked from the outside not unlike a colossal prison. In contrast to the untamable Ukrainian river Psel in *Evenings on a Farm*, which willfully changes its course each year, this Russian river "obeys its banks" under the heavy escort of bridges and dams. This recalls Gogol's contrast in "Mazepa's Meditations" between the free Ukrainian people and the unfree Russians, chafing in the straitjacket of a repressive tsarist regime. It is also clearly Russia's Caucasian periphery that inspires Gogol, a locality that he extolled in "A Few Words about Pushkin" and juxtaposed to the boring plainness of Russia proper. The reference to a forest that "by some miracle" was saved from the ax hints at Russia's colonial policy of subduing the Caucasus through deforestation (Tolstoy writes about it in "Hadji-Murad").

Moreover, once the artist's gaze leaves the mountainous periphery and zooms in on Russia's endless plains, the dramatism visibly lessens: "Without end, without bounds, there unrolled spaces: behind the meadows, besprinkled with groves and water mills, one could see the stripes of green forests; behind the forests, through the air that was already becoming misty, there were yellow sands. And forests again, already bluish like the seas or an overstretched cloud; and the sands again, now paler, but still yellow" (*PSS* 7, 8). In contrast to the powerful spectacle of nature in the earlier passage, the Russian plains emerge in a monotonous procession of forests and sands, forests again, and then more sands.

While the previous passage describes nature in active terms (using verbs such as "go," "rise," "separate," "hide," "run," "chase"), the forests and sands in the second passage merely give off colors (*zelenet', sinet', zheltet'*). The narrator emphasizes horizonless space and silence, undisturbed even by birds (*PSS* 7, 9). The scene opens with a guest surveying the view from an elevation. The narrator says that amazement grips the guests, and he exclaims: "Dear Lord, how spacious!" Following the narrator's description of the locality, the guest reappears: "after two hours or so of looking, he could not articulate anything but 'Dear Lord, how spacious!' " (*PSS* 7, 8–9). This is precisely the point: the landscape is not "beautiful," the epithet that the context makes one expect, but merely "spacious."

After all, Gogol could not entirely escape his old tricks. Though satire may be safely buried, irony lives on. Equally alive are some of Gogol's cherished ideas about the kind of Russia that he would find congenial. Such a Russia would represent a merging of the south and the north. Since the north was too dreary in itself, it needed the vigor, energy, and diversity of the south to make it interesting. Gogol articulates this idea in a variety of ways and venues. He writes about it in "A Few Words about Pushkin" (1835). To Smirnova in 1844, he explains the nature of his national identity in terms of just such a confluence of Russian (northern) and Ukrainian (southern) spirit (*PSS* 12, 419). His statement of purpose from the "Notebook for 1846–51," which seems to apply to his work on the second volume of *Dead Souls,* conveys a similar sentiment: "to embrace both halves of the Russian people, the northern and the southern, the treasury of its spirit and character" (*PSS* 7, 387). Though when writing to Smirnova Gogol places equal value on both elements, in his private notebook, he casts the southern half of the "Russian" people, by which he likely means Ukrainians, as the "treasury of its spirit," a backbone of the entire nation. The same notebook contains a description of a Ukrainian village that asserts Ukraine's ethnic superiority over Russia.[5] Even toward the end of his life, Gogol's preference for Ukraine and his belief in its centrality to the "Russian" world were undiminished from the times of *Evenings on a Farm* and Gogol's historical research on East Slavic history.

Yet Gogol de-Ukrainianizes his notion of the south in the extant fragments of *Dead Souls,* volume two. He tempers his enthusiasm for cross-dressing Ukrainians as Russians that earned him no accolades after *Taras Bulba* and proposes a more subtle miscegenation between the south and the north. The lengthy landscape description that opens the first chapter presents this merger in geographic terms. The locale of the second volume of *Dead Souls* is a symbolic meeting place of the mountainous south and the northern plains. The novel's positive hero, Kostanzhoglo, demonstrates the successful marriage of the two domains. His name is non-Russian but seems vaguely southern (Gogol earlier contemplated "Skudronzhoglo"—even more of a tongue twister for a Russian; *PSS* 7, 185). Kostanzhoglo's servants are Cossacks, which brings in an understated Ukrainian element and alludes to the domestication of these once-anarchic warriors. In his appearance, Kostanzhoglo is a quintessential southerner: swarthy, black-haired, dressed in a camel-hair frock coat, and bearing "an imprint of a passionate southern origin" (*PSS* 7, 61). In describing his nationality, the narrator rehearses the epithet leveled against Gogol himself ("incompletely Russian"), yet transforms it from an accusation to a mere statement of fact: "He was not quite Russian [*ne sovsem russkoi*]. He himself did not know where his ancestors came from. He did not bother with genealogy, finding it useless for farm work. He was even completely certain that he was Russian and did not know any language besides Russian" (*PSS* 7, 61). Kostanzhoglo, in short, emerges as an exemplar not only of economic success but also of a Russianized periphery or, more precisely, as a national amalgam of the empire's disparate sections that surpasses in quality its individual components. Gogol fashions his positive hero as living proof of the desirability and efficacy of the idea of a "greater" Russian nation, thus experimenting again with the notion that inspired the unappreciated Russification of his Cossacks in the revisions of *Taras Bulba.*

With markedly less intensity, Gogol replays in the drafts to the second volume some of the first volume's exegeses of Russianness. No longer exclusively bad, the Russians are said to unite both positive and negative traits. In describing General Betrishchev, Gogol reverses his former tendency by turning voluble and emphatic on the positives and more reticent and vague on the negatives: "[I]n addition to lots of merits he also had lots of shortcomings. One and the other, as usually happens with a Russian, intermixed inside of him in some sort of picturesque disorder. In decisive minutes: magnanimous, brave, boundless generosity, wisdom in all things. And together with it: capriciousness, vainglory, and those petty peculiarities, without which no Russian can do while he sits idle" (*PSS* 7, 38). The profligate Khlobuev pronounces another truth about Russian

nature: "A Russian, I can see by my own example, needs someone to goad him to action. . . . Otherwise he falls asleep and becomes apathetic" (*PSS* 7, 83).

While in the first part of *Dead Souls* Gogol allowed himself double entendres on the subject of the Russian people's proclivity for powerful expressions, which he associates with curses, in the second part he softens this idea, without exactly erasing it. A certain nobleman, Petukh, whose own name means "a rooster," addresses his servants as Emelian the Scatter-Brain and Antoshka the Thief. The narrator takes up this opportunity to note: "The master did not like cursing; he was a decent chap. But a Russian likes a spicy word, like a shot of vodka to help digestion. What is to be done? Such is his nature: it does not like anything insipid" (*PSS* 7, 52). The "aptly uttered Russian word" from the first volume unites here with the notion of a curse from which it originated to create a combination that loses its double edge. The notion of a Russian song, the topic of yet another nationalistic digression in the first volume, also reappears, though, again, in a muted tone. Petukh's peasants start singing a Russian song that "overflowed boundlessly, like Rus." Listening to it, even Chichikov, the narrator claims, "felt that he was Russian" (*PSS* 7, 55).

A good indicator of the second volume's direction is the fate of its con-man protagonist Chichikov. A bit older, his frock coat worn out, he appears in the house of Tentetnikov and introduces himself as a traveler across Russia, inspired by some unnamed needs and simple curiosity. He still plans on buying dead souls, though he goes about it more circumspectly. After many an edifying speech by Kostanzhoglo about the virtues and especially the potential profits of agriculture, Chichikov decides to buy Khlobuev's ruined estate with the aid of Kostanzhoglo's loan and to begin a peaceful life as a landowner. He comes to the brink of a genuine transformation, almost espousing Kostanzhoglo's lifestyle and values:

> Chichikov's face even started to look somewhat nicer from these thoughts. Thus even the very thought of the lawful [missing word in Gogol's manuscript] makes a man nobler. But, as always happens to people, after one thought, a contradictory one suddenly descended upon him: "And maybe I could do this: . . . first I'll sell the best land in parcels, then I'll pawn the estate together with the dead souls. Maybe I'll even slip away without paying back Kostanzhoglo." A strange thought.

> And he did not really think it up: it just appeared, all by itself, goading him, and smiling, and winking at him. An indecent fidget! Who is the creator of such suddenly appearing thoughts? (*PSS* 7, 89)

As if against himself—Gogol knew this feeling very well—inopportune thoughts come to Chichikov's mind. These thoughts imperil his moral reformation in much the same way that certain ironic impulses and renegade ideas jeopardized Gogol's reformation into a straitlaced Russian nationalist. There may well have been a grain of truth in Gogol's insistent linking of his character's failings with the condition of his own soul.

The final extant chapter of the second redaction leaves Chichikov in this morally precarious situation. Perhaps Gogol finally managed to wrest his protagonist from the inferno of pettiness and dishonesty. Or perhaps he did not: concomitant with his transformation into an agriculturalist, Chichikov continues brewing a few other schemes, whose denouement disappeared with the burned chapters. The *former* version's conclusion to the second volume certainly left Chichikov unreformed. Published in the *PSS* as "Concluding Chapter" (*PSS* 7, 97–127), it reveals that Chichikov's journey to spiritual recovery led him to an even more egregious depravity than buying up dead souls. He is thrown into jail for forging a will of some old woman and cheating her relatives out of their inheritance. Again, a moment of spiritual transformation presents itself when Chichikov begs his old friend Murazov to save him from jail and Siberia. Soulful stirrings awaken once again as he swears to mend his ways and work the land with the sweat of his brow, following Kostanzhoglo's recipe for correct living. Yet just as Murazov is pleading his case to the judge, an eminently demonic legal adviser Samosvistov saves Chichikov through the devilish manipulation of the court bureaucracy. In a second Chichikov forgets his former resolutions: "The village and its peacefulness became paler for him, while the city and its noise—again brighter, clearer. Oh, life!" (*PSS* 7, 117).

Ironically enough, though the criminal Chichikov avoids Siberia, Tentetnikov, innocent by comparison, does not. According to the chapters that Gogol read to Shevyrev in 1851, Tentetnikov gets in trouble for the book on Russia that he was writing and for a friendship with some misguided student. The editors of *PSS* link this motif with the affair of the Petrashevtsy, a circle of liberal youths, who after a mock execution were exiled to Siberia in 1849 (*PSS* 7, 421). Yet unlike Chichikov, Tentetnikov

is an ardent patriot. According to Arnoldi's account of the 1849 reading, Tentetnikov gave such a stirring speech about the war of 1812 that he moved its venerable veteran, General Betrishchev, to tears (*PSS* 7, 412). Why would Gogol send such a positive character to Siberia? Are we witnessing the transformation of the figurative walls of the Caucasus that opened the novel into prison walls for righteous patriots? Is Gogol rehearsing his own exile to Siberia for his books on Russia, which some of his readers recommended?

Though this development of the plot definitely seems disturbing, this issue will forever remain murky, owing to the absence of the actual text. In the final chapter of the first redaction, Gogol addresses the rule of law in Russia. A certain noble, just judge, speaking to the employees of the court, equates the current crisis in Russia with a national war against an invader, like the War of 1812, in terms of both the situation's gravity and the patriotic feat needed to prevent the country's collapse:

> The point is that we are faced with the task of saving our fatherland. Our land is perishing not from the encroachment of twenty foreign nations but from ourselves. Next to lawful rule, a different rule has formed itself, much stronger than the law. Separate conditions have been established, even the prices are universally known. And no ruler, even the wisest of all lawmakers and rulers, can correct the evil and control bad civil servants by putting them under the supervision of other civil servants. All will be unsuccessful until each of us realizes that he should arm himself against untruth just as the nation armed itself against the [enemies] in the period of an uprising. As a Russian, as related to you by the ties of blood . . . I urge you to remember the duty that a person has in each walk of life. (*PSS* 7, 126–127)

The remains of *Dead Souls* thus end on a message that Russia is deeply out of joint. While Gogol may have found positive heroes to convey a sense of patriotic concern for Russia, his picture of it is nonetheless far from rosy. Instead of *troika*-like exuberance and energy, the final image shows the country on the brink of apocalyptic doom. I opened this chapter with Nikitenko's equation of a hypothetical philosophy of Russian life with a philosophy of total despair. Though Gogol himself searched for an uplifting meaning in Russian life, in his fiction he kept circling back to something closely resembling Nikitenko's conclusion. This could be the reason why the text breaks off unfinished. If Gogol were to live

up to the optimistic previews he offered in the first volume, he would have to start anew. He did but grew dissatisfied again. As it stands, the extant conclusion, instead of sounding a triumphant hymn, ends on a jeremiad.

Official Nationality in *Selected Passages:* The Published Version

As his work on the continuation of *Dead Souls* grew increasingly difficult, Gogol transferred his energies to letter writing. The year 1844 saw a doubling of his letter production by comparison with the few years previous. This feverish epistolary activity was reflective of Gogol's problems with fiction, which in turn he came to associate with his spiritual and moral crisis.[6] In the spring of 1845, claiming that he was dying, he rushed off a note calling in a confessor (*PSS* 12, 489). In July of the same year, as the *PSS* editors speculate, he burned the first redaction of the second volume of *Dead Souls* (*PSS* 7, 400). The sheer bulk of Gogol's correspondence in these years is symptomatic of Gogol's creative impotence. Gogol's total epistolary output, produced in twenty-three years of letter writing (excluding a few school years), amounts in the *PSS* to roughly 2,000 pages. In only five years between the publication of *Dead Souls* and the appearance of *Selected Passages* (1842–1847), he penned about 40 percent of it (800 pages). One thing that certainly was not then being written, or at least written to Gogol's satisfaction, was the second volume of *Dead Souls.*

In his rush to perform a feat of civic patriotism and to emphasize his commitment to Russia, which was widely questioned after the first volume of *Dead Souls,* Gogol abandoned his work on the troublesome second volume and decided to accomplish these goals in nonfiction. His haste may have also been caused by the enormous pressure from his friends, who called upon Gogol to clarify his position and "close the mouth" of his enemies by producing the novel's second volume as soon as possible. In their view, Gogol was at war and needed to parry the blows of his opponents. Pletnev, Shevyrev, Aksakov, and even Smirnova all rushed Gogol in his work and tried to impress a battlefield mentality on him.[7] *Selected Passages* represents Gogol's attempt to accommodate these demands in a nonfictional form.

The volume that appeared in early 1847, *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends,* consisted of essayistic and didactic articles written

in the form of letters. The title is largely a misnomer. As Ruth Sobel has shown, only 24 percent of the text consists of "letters" with identifiable addressees that bear some resemblance to Gogol's existing letters.[8] None of the texts in the volume are actual passages from Gogol's correspondence, and some, which I have not seen mentioned, contain ideas that Gogol took from other people's letters to him.

The earliest indication of Gogol's plan to publish the volume comes from July 1846 (*PSS* 13, 84–85, 91–92). Only three and a half months later, all thirty-two articles, which amount to about 200 pages in the *PSS*, were ready. This burst of production was uncharacteristic of Gogol, who usually worked more slowly. It is very likely that Gogol for some time may have been conducting his correspondence with an eye toward future publication, or he may have been treating it as a forum in which to develop his ideas, which is not uncommon for writers. His letters from this period are much more impersonal and formal than Gogol's usual epistolary style—indeed, as if he were writing articles. Though Gogol informed Pletnev, who was entrusted with the publication, that he was recalling his own letters from his correspondents for the purpose of the publication, no extant letters from this period show him making such requests. It is possible that he copied certain "prototype" letters before sending them. As always, Gogol could not do without a bit of mystification.

In addition to a greater formality of tone, the letters from the years 1843 to 1846 show a new thematic. No longer a friendly exchange of news, stories, and impressions, they obsessively focus on big social issues confronting Russia and on questions of moral life, that is, the complex of problems that underlay Gogol's work on both the *Dead Souls* sequel and *Selected Passages*. What these letters also share with the second of these projects are a sermonizing tone and the author's insistent self-fashioning as a wise sage and a prophet. It is truly amazing that an author whose fiction sparkles with irony would in his letters, as William Todd perceptively observed, lack all sense of self-irony.[9] While some of Gogol's addressees, especially his women friends, enjoyed Gogol's confessional and edifying effusions, his other correspondents grew irritated or took offense. In 1844 Danilevsky offered Gogol tongue-in-cheek thanks for "a whole boxful of morals" and later complained: "morality and nothing but morality—well, even a saint would get sick of it!"[10] After Gogol in 1844 sent Sergei Aksakov a French edition of Thomas à Kempis's *Imitatio Christi*

along with condescending reading instructions, the old man, usually quite patient with Gogol, snapped back that he was reading à Kempis before Gogol was born.[11] Still, Gogol continued to moralize and proffer advice to everyone about everything, even a daily routine for newlyweds (*PSS* 12, 205–206, 347–349). He asked that his letters be reread (much like the Bible) and shared with others. The same spirit pervades *Selected Passages*, in which Gogol addressed his recipes for personal righteousness and Russia's welfare to entire Russia.

Gogol placed enormous hopes on the book. Already when sending Pletnev the first part of the manuscript, he expected the second edition to follow immediately and instructed Pletnev to secure a sufficient amount of paper right away (*PSS* 13, 91–92). He was certain that the book was "exceedingly important for everyone" and represented his first good, useful work. He asked Pletnev to inform the book's censor, Nikitenko, that the book's goal was to "inspire reverence for all that our church and our government established as law for everyone" (*PSS* 13, 112). When Nikitenko nonetheless found problems with it, Gogol pressed his friends to bring the book to the tsar's personal attention, which they dissuaded him from doing. Gogol was convinced that his book was impeccably in line with official government views and made arrangements to present it to the entire Romanov family, a separate copy for each person, including children (*PSS* 13, 113). When the troubles with censorship continued, Gogol wrote a complaint to the tsar (which was delivered), claiming that the book was meant to express the author's gratitude to him and that Gogol was certain it corresponded entirely to the spirit set by the authorities (*PSS* 13, 424–425). He put it to Pletnev in the following way: "I am not publishing this book for my personal or others' pleasure; I am publishing it from a conviction that through it I am fulfilling my duty and serving my service" (*sluzhu svoiu sluzhbu; PSS* 13, 175).

For once, Gogol describes the goal of his work correctly. In *Selected Passages* the author does indeed genuflect before the tsar, the Church, and the Russian nation, paying homage to the values of Official Nationality. Nonetheless, the censorship excluded five articles and softened many passages that dealt with "abuses in general and the dark sides of social life" (*PSS* 8, 783). The censored articles and passages will be the subject of the next section. Paradoxically enough, Nikitenko, Gogol's censor, himself construed Russia's national philosophy in much darker terms than Gogol, as the epigraph shows. Though Gogol acknowledged Russia's

problems, he at least strove to encourage his readers and imbue them with optimism. Far from "total despair," *Selected Passages* beams total hopefulness. Yet an image of Russia as rife with corruption and poverty was not the kind of message that the Russian authorities felt inclined to promulgate, no matter how nobly patriotic and politically innocuous the author's zeal for reform.

Concomitant with the larger social and national goals, the book served a crucial objective in Gogol's own public relations work. It was supposed to exonerate Gogol from charges of two-facedness in his relation to Russia and to convince everyone that he was a heartfelt Russian patriot. Thus in setting up the work, Gogol resorted to various devices that were aimed to authenticate his sincerity. The very form of a letter is one of them. Articles in support of various causes can be written for calculated reasons and without much personal investment. A letter to a friend, by contrast, is assumed to be sincere. Since its creative origins are in theory untainted by the prospect of publication, a letter appears free of any self-interested motives connected with the author's public image or his participation in journalistic skirmishes.

Another device to demonstrate patriotism was Gogol's rejection of his entire previous creation, the very source of the accusations of his lack of love for Russia. Gogol claims in the preface that *Selected Passages* is to provide the type of spiritual nourishment that his previous works failed to give and thus to redeem their "uselessness." Yet far from renouncing his literary works, Gogol is merely using a Rudy Panko trick to get the readers on his side before convincing them of a contrary idea. Upon closer inspection, Gogol appears to have used his discussion of various topics in *Selected Passages* to argue the correctness of his artistic choices and of his diagnosis of what Russian literature and culture needed. The work abounds in self-justification. Gogol's discussion of Fonvizin's and Griboedov's comedies, for example, obliquely absolves the satirical and ironic *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls* (*PSS* 8, 395–401). Gogol's regret that Pogodin's genuine patriotism appeared dubious in his writings affirms the notion that one's public image, such as that of Gogol as a false Russian patriot, may be a perverse distortion (*PSS* 8, 232). A manipulative treatise on Pushkin as an enthusiast of autocracy furnishes Gogol with a lofty precedent for his own hymns to the tsar (*PSS* 8, 248–261). Praise of Aleksandr Ivanov's incredibly slow work on his masterpiece "The Appearance of Christ to the People" is meant to summon sympathy for Gogol's own painstaking labor on the continuation of *Dead Souls* (*PSS* 8, 329–337). In fact, far from renouncing his works, Gogol was making plans, concurrently with preparing *Selected Passages* for publication, for new editions of the first volume of *Dead Souls* and *The Government Inspector,* his two most maligned works. He insisted, however, on postponing their publication until after *Selected Passages* appeared, convinced that this new work would provide the appropriate framework for understanding the former ones and ensure their renewed popularity (*PSS* 13, 91, 106, 119).

To gain his audience's sympathy, Gogol also solemnly announces his impending death. He claims that the idea of *Selected Passages* dawned on him when his life was hanging by a thread. His letters were meant as his dying gift and his final good deed. Though he recovered, he was now about to undertake a perilous pilgrimage to the Holy Land, so he wished to bequeath his parting words to his Russian brothers. As further proof of his moribund condition, Gogol opened the volume with his will, which included highly disturbing burial instructions and many stunningly self-important provisions. This was another of Gogol's pity-inspiring, sincerity-authenticating devices. As he himself claims about the poet Derzhavin's awe for Catherine II, "the old man would not tell lies with one foot in the grave" (*PSS* 8, 252). Like Derzhavin's, Gogol's patriotism is pure and disinterested. Who has time for prevarication on the brink of death?

Such meticulous enunciation of the authorial ethos is meant to prepare the reader for accepting the very serious message of *Selected Passages.* The work paints a picture of deep social rifts in Russian society that can be bridged by strengthening a sense of civic duty in accordance with, and by the authority of, Christian ethics. *Selected Passages* exudes disarming naïveté in its supposition that once people understand what is good, they will act accordingly. Gogol tries to make his readers understand the character of the country and its problems and proposes ways of fixing them, goading them to carry out his agenda by invoking Christian precepts. Even more than in his actual letters, Gogol speaks authoritatively, sometimes with insulting condescension. His solutions sound less like advice and more like strict tasks that he, from his all-knowing station in various German spas, feels competent to disburse to people in all walks of life. The frequency of the imperative verb forms in *Selected Passages* probably exceeds that of any secular Russian book with the possible exception of how-to manuals.

Yet Gogol was teaching himself as much as his compatriots through

this book, claiming that "by teaching others you learn yourself" (*PSS* 8, 281). This is why so much of Gogol's advice pertains directly to his own problems. The preeminent one among them was finding a relation to Russia that would allow him to love it. Since Russia in its current condition did not inspire love in him, he created its future ideal, attainable if his advice is heeded, that would warrant this emotion. The movement of *Selected Passages*, to push slightly Ruth Sobel's formulation, is from Russia's reality as an anti-Utopia to its future ideal as a Utopia.[12]

Only strong civic values can in Gogol's view cure the main evil that besets Russia's anti-Utopian reality: the rampant corruption in public institutions. These values begin within a family. Gogol accords a special role to women, making family their civic post of sorts, through which they can influence the society at large. In "A Woman in Society," Gogol exhorts women to curb their spending, since their extravagance leads their husbands to accept bribes. In "What Can a Wife Be for Her Husband in Simple Home Life" Gogol provides detailed instructions about household budgeting. Though himself unmarried and quite likely never initiated into any intimacy with a female, he sermonizes about the purpose of this basic social institution. A wife is given to a man to take care of the burdens of the daily grind so that her husband can all the better serve the fatherland in the civil service (*PSS* 8, 340). Abram Terts argues that *Selected Passages* combines the functions of the Apocalypse, making Russia the bulwark against universal catastrophe, and those of the *Domostroi*, a sixteenth-century Russian text that provides edification as to civic responsibilities, family life, and household management.[13] Yet I would argue that for Gogol the Apocalypse is threatening Russia as well. Russia's fight against its own sins is particularly important, since the battle for spiritual redemption has already been lost elsewhere, most significantly in western Europe. However, Terts is right that Gogol in *Selected Passages* stages the overcoming of the Apocalypse precisely through *Domostroi*-type remedies.

Gogol wished to transform Russia from a society of class conflict into a harmonious national community. The article "A Russian Landowner" attempts to rebuild an old patriarchal connection between landowners and peasants, an issue that Gogol concurrently picked up in the sequel to *Dead Souls*. Gogol advises the landowner to explain to his peasants the nature of their common relation, invoking the divine law that made him their master. He should then assure the peasants that he makes them work not for personal gain, a point that he should bolster by burning

some paper money, but because God entrusted him with this task. God will punish a landowner for each lazy peasant, Gogol writes, as well as those peasants who renege on their duty to the landowner. The author also agrees with the folk wisdom that casts a rich farmer and a good man as synonyms. Gogol thus propagates a vaguely Protestant notion that a good Christian life cannot help but be a prosperous one as well (*PSS* 8, 323–324). The connection that Gogol elaborates in the second volume of *Dead Souls*, between moral and prosperous living, reverberates in this article of *Selected Passages*. The gap that most seriously inhibits Russia's becoming a nation—between the landowners and the peasant masses—can be bridged if both classes realize their common interests. Eventually, social cohesion will lead to national cohesion.

The overriding concern with promoting a sense of citizenship and patriotic duty (preached by way of Christian duty) also illumines many articles that concern the social and national role of culture. One of the opening pieces, "On What the Word Is" reminds word-wielders, to use Robert Maguire's phrase, that a word is a gift from God.[14] It is a writer's deed and his service to society, so he must use it cautiously and heed its impact on readers. Incredibly—for an author who continuously apologized and made excuses for his works, also in this very volume—Gogol stresses that incorrect use of the word is inexcusable: "If a writer starts to justify himself by various circumstances that caused his insincerity, or insufficient premeditation, or excessive haste, then each unjust judge could make excuses for taking bribes and trading in justice by blaming his tight circumstances, his wife, large family" (*PSS* 8, 229). A writer should never write in anger, which corrupts his word, presumably by making it spiteful and satirical, like the word of *Dead Souls*. Characteristically, Gogol dispenses advice that is relevant to his own situation, even as he himself has trouble abiding by it.

Gogol banishes satire as an admissible form of the word in "Subjects for a Lyric Poet in Our Times": "Satire has no impact; a simple picture of reality viewed through the eye of a man of the world cannot arouse anyone. Our age dreams like a *bogatyr'*" (a mythic Russian hero; *PSS* 8, 278). Timely subjects for lyric poetry concern the past that should be made relevant to the present. He recommends the events from the Old Testament or ancient Russian history. Lyricism should be used as a weapon that excoriates social vices, like laziness, or as praise of social virtues, like a refusal to take bribes. A lyric poet of the time, according

to Gogol, should applaud the Russian *bogatyr'* of the time, someone who transforms himself into a new and better person, a "warrior of the good" (*PSS* 8, 281). Such a poet will become his nation's Christ-like savior.

In "On the Lyricism of Our Poets," Gogol asserts that the roots of lyricism, like those of the word, are divine. Russian poets instinctively, as a result of their "Russian soul," sense this natural link between lyricism and religious feeling, which makes them unique among poets of other nations. The biblical lyricism drives Russian poets to two major topics, the first of which is Russia, which they imbue with boundless love and majesty. Their poetry prophesies "a design of Providence that so clearly is sensed in the fate of our fatherland" (*PSS* 8, 250). A Russian poet is able to foresee "a beautiful new building" of modern times, to envision a fruit from a seed (*PSS* 8, 250–251). In a typically Gogolian convoluted mix of metaphors, which usually assists his attempts to assuage an unpleasant assertion, the author admits that Russia's greatness so far remains in the realm of potentiality. Russian poets, in sum, do not reveal Russia in its current shabbiness but merely intimate its coming Utopia.

The second major topic for Russian lyric poets is their sincere, passionate love for the tsar. Gogol seems particularly adamant on this point. He invokes unnamed detractors and skeptics who question this love's genuineness only to quash them with the force of his own conviction. The obverse of this strategy, of course, is that Gogol ends up giving quite some weight to suspicions of self-interested motives and lack of candor in the Russian singers of the tsars, like Derzhavin or Lomonosov. Claiming that Russian poets' love for their tsar amazed even foreigners, Gogol, whether by mistake or for the purpose of conscious misinformation, quotes Mickiewicz, who in his Paris lectures on Slavic literatures noted this topos in Russian poetry and supposedly gave it a positive assessment. In fact, the opposite is true. Mickiewicz criticizes this aspect of Russian poetry, finding Lomonosov's and Derzhavin's odes to Russia's rulers cumbersome, monotonous, and a sign of servility.[15]

Gogol also enlists Pushkin to the company of enthusiastic tsar-glorifiers. As always, Gogol's approach to Pushkin is entirely self-serving. In this instance, he makes him into a staunch supporter of autocracy. As in "A Few Words about Pushkin," so now the poet represents for Gogol a legitimizing precedence, a shield to protect whatever he himself is doing at the moment. Presuming a quite stunning, considering the meager extent of their acquaintance, insight into Pushkin's inner workings, Gogol

claims that during his lifetime Pushkin did not want to publicize his ardent love for the tsar to avoid allegations of insincerity and flattery. In a later article in the collection, "On Theater," Gogol vouches for deep springs of Christian feeling in Pushkin's soul and attempts to make this rather secular poet into a deeply religious one. For Gogol, Russian poets, and Pushkin preeminently among them, rightly expect that the monarch "inevitably . . . will finally become pure love," thus actualizing his God-like image (*PSS* 8, 255). Again, this is a forecast for the future rather than a statement of fact. Like a medieval Russian author, Gogol concerns himself less with the tsar's actual persona than with what it ought to be, as Sobel noted.[16] The same may be said of his view of the Russian poets, whom he presents as devotees of Orthodoxy and autocracy.

Alongside the discussion of poetry in "On the Lyricism of Our Poets," Gogol proposes a treatise on autocracy "as it ought to be." Despite its lavishly pro-tsarist stance, the article underwent severe censorship cuts. A state without a monarch, Gogol proclaims, is like an orchestra without a conductor. The censor eliminated a comment that the conductor may sometimes appear not to be doing much, save for lightly "waving his baton"; it could probably be perceived as an allusion to the tsar's uselessness or perhaps his oppression (like wielding a knout?) (*PSS* 8, 253: 678n16).[17] In contrast to majestically monarchic Russia, the example of the kingless, inorganic United States of America inspires in Gogol metaphors of "carrion" and "automaton." While European monarchy is tainted by legalistic, secular constraints that make the king into the state's highest functionary, Russia has preserved monarchy in its pristine form, whereby the tsar serves as a representative of God on earth and a spiritual shepherd of his nation (here Gogol enunciates the traditional view of the Russian Orthodox Church). Russian poets, by imbuing their image of the tsar with religious significance, correctly divined his essence. Gogol also takes up the occasion to offer an encomium to the house of the Romanovs. The refrain of universal love—of the people for the tsar and of the tsar for the people—resounds throughout. The love of the Russian people that prompted them to elect the Romanov dynasty in 1613 became almost physically encoded, Gogol writes, and united them by "a relation of blood" (*PSS* 8, 257) with their monarch (the censor eliminated a reference to the Romanovs' persecution and execution of the traditional Russian nobility, the boyars; *PSS* 8, 258: 681n1). Gogol stresses the unanimity of the election and the supreme wisdom of the choice.

In sum, "On the Lyricism of Our Poets" brings praise and support to all elements of the doctrine of Official Nationality. Gogol presents Russia's poetic tradition as a majestic embodiment of the values of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality." All three combine in a tightly woven matrix, one flowing into another. Russia's religion makes the people realize the full spiritual significance of the monarch; the monarch loves his people, at least in theory, as decreed by God; the poets' Russian soul makes them sing hymns to both the tsar and Russia that are infused with semireligious ardor. Gogol strains to conjure up from this network of special interrelationships a sense of national uniqueness, whose religious and political bases are firm and traditional, unlike those of western European nations.

Gogol's idea about Russia's traditional, patriarchal foundations causes him to assert in "On *The Odyssey* that Is Being Translated by Zhukovsky" that this ancient apotheosis of patriarchy will find special resonance in Russia. Obviously untroubled by Russia's single-digit literacy rates, Gogol predicts that *The Odyssey* will become "national reading," binding readers of various classes into a national community (*PSS* 8, 238). Gogol attaches to Zhukovsky's translation a significance that Shevyrev and Konstantin Aksakov ascribed to his own novel, *Dead Souls,* though for a different reason. *The Odyssey* will nourish the incipient national community by moral teaching and respect for the authorities. The epic's simple vision of social relations will also shame malcontents who dwell on Russia's imperfections and propose complex, unnatural solutions. Along with Russian lyric verse that inspires love for Russia and the tsar, and with the Bible that, according to Gogol, teaches all Russians how to be Russians (since being Russian means being the best of Christians), Zhukovsky's *The Odyssey* emerges in *Selected Passages* as another useful cultural artifact that binds a national community and defines its values. In Gogol's presentation, these three types of texts further nationalism just as they cooperate with and support the current political system. Gogol's brand of nationalism in *Selected Passages* completely affirms the political status quo, which corresponds to the role that the government ideologists wished nationalism to play.

In "Quarrels," Gogol accuses the Westernizers of seeing only Russia's façade—and of failing to perceive the cupola of the metaphoric Russian house—an oblique reference to religion that the Westernizers excluded from their secular vision of Russia. In *Selected Passages,* Gogol harps precisely on that "cupola" of Russia, its Orthodox superstructure. The entire

book has a religious framework, as is often pointed out, beginning with a reminder of imminent death, in this case, the author's "Will," through religious "Enlightenment," to a message of resurrection and life eternal in "Easter Sunday."[18] Religious justification underpins many apparently secular problems that Gogol discusses, such as civic virtue. As within the doctrine of Official Nationality, religion emerges as a supreme value in the work. Yet it deserves stressing that the primary goal of *Selected Passages* is not to provide a vehicle for the author's supposed religious monomania: Gogol subordinates religion to a larger concern with Russia as a nation.

"Enlightenment," which comes roughly halfway in the collection, makes the Orthodox Russian Church into the most sound Russian institution, one that is about to "shed its light" across the Russian land and the whole world. Orthodoxy represents for Gogol the supreme law of the land: "It contains everything that is needed for a truly Russian life in all its forms, from the life of the state to that of a simple family. It sets the tune and the direction for everything; it is the lawful and right path to everything" (*PSS* 8, 284). The Western Church, in Gogol's estimation, is unfit to meet the challenges of modernity, since its influence has been unduly narrowed. Only the Russian Church is capable of enlightening all spheres of contemporary life. Gogol reminds his readers that the very Russian word for "enlightenment" has been used by Orthodoxy for over a thousand years, and even its meaning is unique among the world's languages. The Russian word *prosveshchenie,* unlike the term "enlightenment," places a special emphasis on light piercing through and through (due to the prefix *pro–*), illuminating the depths, not just the surface of things. True enlightenment, he argues, uses the light of Christ. The article has a crucial polemic edge. An 1840s Russian reader apprehending the title "Enlightenment" would most likely associate it with secular knowledge or education. Gogol subverts this expectation by using this title for an article on the Russian Church. He promotes replacing Russia's current intellectual course, largely Western and secular in origin and orientation, with a turn to Russian Orthodox religiosity. Gogol revives medieval Russian messianism, which viewed Russian Orthodoxy as the sole path to salvation.

Gogol puts a Christian outlook at the center of intellectual and artistic life in Russia. He presents secularization as inimical to Russianness in the article "What, Finally, Is the Essence of Russian Poetry and Wherein Lies Its Uniqueness." Literature can encourage the emergence of national self-

consciousness by reconnecting Russia with its ancient religious heritage and by calling Russians to their Christian duty. Russian poets should incite not to military battles but to battles for the soul. Gogol considers Christian rebirth as the essential task of contemporary Russian culture. He posits Russia's need to expand its narrow nationalism by embracing a loyalty to the heavenly "fatherland." Russia's Christianity, for Gogol as for the Slavophiles, represents at once its openness to national values and to the highest ideals of humanity.

Gogol considered "What, Finally, Is the Essence of Russian Poetry" a very important article in view of its "explanation of the make-up of a Russian" (*PSS* 13, 110). Having surveyed Russia's main authors and works, Gogol concludes that Russian literature fulfilled neither edifying nor descriptive roles with respect to Russian society. However, Russians themselves lack nationality. Gogol likens Russian writers to a master of a house that is on fire, who carries out his most precious belongings to save them from the flames, not knowing where to put them. Like such a master, Russian writers have been gathering kernels of Russianness to save them for the future national edifice that can house them. These kernels are: a certain keenness or sensitivity *(chutkost')*, especially detectable in Pushkin; a "truly Russian mind" *(istinno russkoi um)*, which manifested itself in Krylov's works; and youthful daring *(udal')*, well revealed in Iazykov's poetry. Yet by treating Russian writers as "builders" of Russianness (*PSS* 8, 405), Gogol introduces ambivalence as to whether these are actual qualities or literary inventions. Gogol may well be anticipating a modern understanding of a nation as a discursive construct, an imagined community.

An earlier article in the volume, "Four Letters to Various Persons concerning *Dead Souls*," presented Russia as an inhospitable post-station amid bleak surroundings, a place where warm brotherly welcome is not to be had (*PSS* 8, 289; I discussed this article in Chapter 4). To counter this pessimistic image, Gogol closes his article on the essence of Russian poetry with an image of a national homecoming. If Russian poets take up the language of Orthodox spirituality, they will strike a native chord with their audience, who will say: "This is our Russia. It feels cozy and warm here. Now we truly feel at home, under our own roof, and not in foreign lands" (*PSS* 8, 409). However, Russia remains for Gogol an ongoing project, a nation under construction, whose true potential lies in the future. A renewal of the country's religious spirit is a necessary precondition for this homecoming.

In the final article in the volume, "Easter Sunday," Gogol asks, "Are we better than other nations?" and answers that the Russians are no better.[19] Yet he claims that some mystical force prompts a Russian to prophesy Russia's superior status. Russia brims with potential:

> We are still a molten metal that has not yet been cast in its form. We still can throw away, reject what is not appropriate for us and introduce all that other nations, already formed and hardened, no longer can. There is much in our native nature, forgotten by us, which is akin to Christ's law. One proof of this is that Christ came to us without a sword, invited by our hearts that were prepared for his word. This suggests that the beginnings of a Christian brotherhood were already inherent in our Slavic nature. (*PSS* 8, 417)

Russia is not yet a nation, but its "unformed" condition gives it special opportunities. By joining the community of nations belatedly, Russia can more rigorously separate the grain from the chaff in its national makeup and constitute itself as a superior nation, a task in which *Selected Passages* offers assistance. According to Gogol, Christianity, which was so germane to Russia's origins and still unites all Russians, represents this precious ore that will ennoble the "molten metal" of the nascent Russian nation and transform it into a superior national alloy. Orthodoxy in *Selected Passages* replaces the southern element from *Dead Souls*' sequel as an ennobling agent in the tempering of the Russian nation.

Though the book dwells on various class hostilities, its triumphant finale denies their existence. Russian Orthodox Slavic brotherhood does not know, Gogol now claims, the kind of class warfare that periodically splits asunder western European societies. A Russian also displays superhuman power to remake himself, suddenly to awaken and wage battle with his imperfections. All these factors cause Gogol to conclude that the holiday of Easter Sunday, which symbolizes Christian brotherhood and is currently celebrated in Russia and elsewhere falsely, will for the first time ever reach its proper glory in Russia. The closing image of *Selected Passages* thus connects Russia's coming to itself with a feast of Christ's resurrection. The birth of the Russian nation is contingent upon its Christian rebirth.

Selected Passages proposes a comprehensive and fairly coherent national agenda. Gogol confronts Russia's lack of social cohesion and of nationality—even though the former aspect was badly misshapen by the censor—and proposes concrete remedies for both problems. He re-

nounces the derision and satire that represented his former reaction to Russia's multifarious shortcomings, ones that revealed themselves in his fiction. He now wields his word to sustain and nourish, not to pique and ridicule. He gives very overt support to the ideology of Official Nationality, putting special emphasis on the role of Orthodoxy and Christian teaching in general, in transforming Russian society into a worthy nation. Yet his optimistic national philosophy remains in the realm of a national Utopia. Gogol's diagnosis of the apparent determinants of Russianness—such as love for the tsar or the depth of religious feeling—remains a discursive invention, a wishful image of the Russia in which Gogol could take pride.

The "Terrors and Horrors" of *Selected Passages:* The Censor's Cut

Gogol bitterly resented the censorship's roughshod treatment of his work. In a letter to Pletnev he referred to the published book as "a bone that was gnawed clean by Nikitenko" (*PSS* 13, 212). Gogol's outrage was justified: five articles were not passed, and others suffered numerous changes and cuts, which resulted in a much blander text. He complained to Smirnova: "The most important letters, which were meant to constitute the vital part of the book, were excluded. They were aimed to acquaint us better with the miseries inside Russia that have been caused by our actions and to address ways of improvement" (*PSS* 13, 198). Even though Gogol brimmed with enthusiasm for the official government ideology while writing it, *Selected Passages,* paradoxically, turned out to be Gogol's most censored book. Where Gogol erred, as far as the official organs were concerned, was in dragging Russia's various social, economic, and moral problems into plain view. The spirit of Official Nationality demanded that Russia be praised as it is, not as it can or should be. Nationalism in the government's version was a way to affirm the status quo, not to undermine it by exposing conflicts and abuses or by shaking the boat of state administration with various reforming agendas.

One of the excluded pieces bore the red-flag title "The Terrors and Horrors of Russia." In it, Gogol responds to his countess correspondent who despairs about Russia's various unnamed "terrors and horrors" that make her consider settling abroad. Gogol assures her that Europe is even worse and admonishes her not to turn away from the ills of her country

but to work for their reform. Gogol makes personal salvation of a Russian possible only within the Russian state, which he makes into a kind of Christian universe. He claims that all Russians should serve their country as if they were serving "another, heavenly state, the head of which is Christ Himself" (*PSS* 8, 344). True, there are "terrors and horrors" in Russia, but Gogol predicts that within ten years Europe will come to Russia not to buy tallow and hemp but wisdom (*PSS* 8, 345). Though the article teaches a constructive attitude toward Russia's "horrors," the censors must not have appreciated that Russia was spoken of in these terms and must have disliked the mention of Russians' eagerness to escape abroad. An implication that the economy of Russia's *current* relations with the rest of Europe consisted in the exchange of Russian hemp for Western wisdom also seemed hardly flattering.

Women had a huge role to play in Gogol's vision of a smoothly running society. The unnamed countess was reminded of it, as was the wife of a governor (Aleksandra Smirnova was the original addressee) in another banned article, "What Is a Wife of a Governor." Gogol convinces the addressee of her power to improve provincial society. He advises her to look upon the city as a doctor looks upon a hospital. Again, Gogol dispenses advice that pertains very much to his own situation and that in this case was even given him by someone else—Pletnev.[20] Gogol writes that the influence of the gubernatorial pair lies first and foremost in the area of social mores. They should commit themselves to fighting luxury, "Russia's plague, the source of all the bribes, injustices, and all manner of abomination" (*PSS* 8, 310). For example, Gogol advises the governor's wife to appear at all public functions in the same dress, thus setting the example of modesty for other women. The gubernatorial couple should also improve the functioning of government administration. Gogol gives the example of civil servants whose wrongdoing is being investigated by the court. It is imperative, Gogol writes, that they be relieved of their duty for the duration of the investigation so that they cannot abuse the system any further and attempt to steer the course of justice. He praises his correspondent for firing a mental asylum overseer who was selling buns that were intended for the patients (*PSS* 8, 315).

The problem of Russia's "terrors and horrors" returns in different phrasing. Gogol quotes back to his correspondent a sentence from her letter to him: "It is sad, even woeful, to look at the condition of Russia from up close, but there's no point of talking about it. We should look

toward the future, which remains in God's hands, with hope and a bright eye" (*PSS* 8, 320). Gogol begs to differ. Russians should not merely muse about the future; they should look long and hard at the present, from whence a road to the bright future starts. Gogol implores his correspondent not to spare him any woeful pictures of abominations. They used to make him despondent but now they fill him with a desire to help. The governor's wife should fight, rather than fear, the abominable phenomena of Russian life.

Again, despite his best intentions, Gogol unwittingly puts his foot in his mouth. Why would censors agree to publicize news that Russia's condition inspires dejection in its highest administrative officials? Or an image of Russian life that stresses its abominations? Why mention criminal civil servants and thus undermine people's trust in public officials? Bread being stolen from mental patients in care of the state—what message does this send to the nation about the functioning of public institutions? Gogol's cavalier sprinkling of such unsavory details about life in Russia most likely caused the ban on this and other articles.

Gogol continues his appeals to high officials in another article rejected by the censorship, "To a Person Holding an Important Office." The context of Gogol's letter implies that his correspondent does not relish being sent to a distant Caucasian outpost. Gogol urges him to accept the transfer, quoting a Christian precept of humility. In a later article, apparently to the same addressee, "A Farewell," Gogol uses an argument of heroic glory. One should seek out a strong rather than a weak enemy: "There is not much glory for a Russian to fight a peace-loving German, since it is a well-known fact that he will flee. No, to engage in battle with a Circassian, whom all fear as indomitable—this is a glory one can brag about!" (*PSS* 8, 368: 705n29). Despite Gogol's encouragement of such colonialist ventures, the censorship may have reacted negatively to the mention of Russia's volatile southern frontier and the idea that the Caucasian warriors might be popularly regarded as indomitable. The passage was excised.

In "To a Person Holding an Important Office" Gogol proposes a set of civil rather than military tasks that could further public welfare in the southern periphery. The author of *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls* agrees that Russia's hinterland is a difficult place. The article's diagnosis of problems echoes the prince's tirade that closes the remains of the second volume of *Dead Souls*. A second government of sorts has

established itself in the provinces next to the lawful one, Gogol writes to his well-positioned friend:

> There are many abuses. Such extortion has taken root that it does not lie within human powers to excoriate it. I know that a second, unlawful course of action has formed itself alongside the state laws and that it has almost become the lawful one, since the [actual] laws remain only for appearances. And if only you inspect closely that at which others glance superficially, not suspecting anything, the wisest person's head will reel. (*PSS* 8, 350)

In proscribing a course of action in this treacherous environment, Gogol advises his friend to adopt what seem like Chichikov's rounds of visits to public servants. He believes that in order to root out corruption, his friend should get to know personally all the government officials in town. Once the high-ranking friend finds the parties guilty of corruption through these personal interviews, he should reproach them in their guilt not before society but before their own Russian nature, which their crooked deeds defiled.

Despite his concern with civil servant offenders, Gogol's analysis of the system of administrative institutions in Russia's districts causes him to conclude that it is perfect: "[O]ne senses that God himself worked through the hands of the tsars. Everything is complete, sufficient, and organized in such a way as to facilitate good deeds" (*PSS* 8, 357). Gogol uses this argument of divine intervention in the creation of Russia's administrative system to campaign, in effect, for curbing further growth of the bureaucracy. The system is so superb, he writes, that there is no need for even one extra administrative post. Gogol in particular rejects the system of checks and balances, which appears to him more appropriate for colonial and nonnational societies. For to appoint a new civil servant to control another means, as Gogol says, "to create two thieves in the place of one" (*PSS* 8, 357).

In the article's continuation Gogol mentions another rift in Russian society, the one between the tsar and the nobility. He deplores the spirit of mutual mistrust and the nobles' suspicion about the government's efforts to diminish their importance and lead them to ruin. Gogol claims that western Europeans spread such pernicious rumors in order to estrange the Russian tsar from the nobility. Gogol asks his friend to assure the nobles with whom he comes in contact that they are the flowers of

the nation and that—as if Gogol had direct insight into the sovereign's heart—the tsar loves them.

Western accounts of the situation in Russia represent a discourse against which Gogol fashions his national philosophy. He refers to critical press coverage of Russia in the West and encourages his correspondent to openly confront the country's problems with the people he meets in the provinces, who should not be learning about them from the "false" and ill-intentioned Western press. He writes: "Give them the whole truth. Tell them that Russia is indeed wretched, that it remains wretched due to extortion and falsehood that have never before raised their heads with such insolence, that the tsar's heart feels such pain that no one can imagine, or feel, or know" (*PSS* 8, 361). This honest assessment of Russia's problems should lead Russians to reform their country. Rehashing the argument from the judge's speech in the conclusion to the second volume of *Dead Souls,* Gogol calls his compatriots to treat this vitally important task of reform with the urgency of a military campaign against an invader.

The censor would have had problems with a whole gamut of issues that Gogol's best-intentioned article uncovers and that the authorities would have preferred to sweep under a rug. Gogol's starry-eyed idea of taking an honest and public stock of the country's difficulties could not but have been deemed unpassable in Russia's traditionally anti-*glasnost'* political climate. The notion of an unofficial second circuit of power that subverts the rule of law represented another hot-button issue, as did an admission that the nobility mistrusted the tsar. Gogol's utter lack of faith in the integrity of the civil servant was also highly censorable.

Finally, Western criticisms of Russia were conscientiously screened from the Russian public, which is why Gogol's mention of it would have displeased the censor. Even though Gogol rebuts the foreigners' charges, foreign views were considered so dangerous that even the Russians' rebuttals were often produced purely for Western consumption and were not disseminated in Russia itself. The tradition of such differential image control stretches in the modern era from Kantemir to Prince Viazemsky.[21] Was Gogol unaware that Western challenges to the order of things in Russia were best not to be broached? In the *Selected Passages* article on Karamzin he paints the writer as someone who did not always tow the government line and was nonetheless published and honored in Russia.[22] Gogol uses Karamzin's example to disprove the false foreign rumors that "Russia does not love the truth" (*PSS* 8, 267: 683n18, n1). The censor

cut both the mention of Karamzin's less-than-complete contiguity to the official ideology and the report of the Western rumors.

The fourth banned article was pathetically titled "One Must Love Russia." Rather than announce how love for Russia fills each Russian heart, Gogol presents it like a severe commandment, as if Russians needed exhortation to love their country. It appears that Gogol, who himself was struggling at the time to muster warm feelings toward Russia, ascribed the dynamic of his own struggle to the rest of his countrymen. The article encapsulates Gogol's circular nationalistic argument that imprinted itself on the entire book. Gogol opens with a premise that love of one's brother is necessary for one's salvation in Christ. Yet a soul craves to love that which is beautiful, and humanity is far from perfect. Somewhat illogically, Gogol switches from this line of thought to assert a new possibility—to love Russia and not humanity: "If only a Russian will love Russia, he will also love everything that is in it" (*PSS* 8, 300). That "everything" includes "unseemliness, untruths, and bribes" (*PSS* 8, 300) that are, however, fundamentally un-Russian.

Gogol claims that his countrymen do not yet love Russia since all they do is complain and grow despondent (incidentally, this had been Gogol's own attitude until quite recently). A true patriot, Gogol now teaches, will throw himself into reforming the country (the volume's author implicitly sets himself as the example). Gogol impresses upon his readers the necessity of loving Russia by couching it in Christian ethics: "Not having loved Russia, you will not love your brothers, and not having loved your brothers, you will not love God, and not having loved God, you will not be saved" (*PSS* 8, 301). Thus Gogol's syllogism makes love of Russia tantamount to love of God, and vice versa. If anyone wishes to save himself from the flames of hell, he had better start loving Russia. Having opened with the general Christian precept of brotherly love, in the end Gogol makes such love impossible unless it is mediated by one's love for Russia. Such painstaking argumentation to incite something that has been taken for granted may very well have offended the Russian censor.

The next excluded article that was meant to follow "One Must Love Russia" in the volume uses the same rhetoric of urgent precept: "One Must Travel through Russia." Gogol again proffers advice that is relevant to himself and in fact was given him by his Russian friends, who recommended it as a way of arriving at a truer image of the Russian nation. Even the circumstance of the correspondent seems to match Gogol's own

situation, since, like the writer, he has resided abroad for about ten years. Gogol warns his correspondent to expect many changes, since ten years in the development of prodigious Russia correspond to half a century of changes in any other country. As preparation for this reacquaintance tour of Russia, Gogol's friend should empty his mind of all preconceived ideas and "arm himself" with brotherly love for Russians (*PSS* 8, 304). Gogol recommends to ignore the sights, to focus on the people from all different strata of society, and to conduct detailed interviews attempting to find out absolutely everything about their condition and problems. Gogol believes that the very contact with such an illustrious visitor who takes interest in their affairs will help harmonize the strained relations between the classes. This idea of a nongovernmental, grassroots campaign to learn about the true state of Russia and to meddle in fixing its problems surely must have caught the censor's eye. In conclusion, Gogol pontificates: "Great is the ignorance of Russia within Russia" (*PSS* 8, 308) and reiterates a stark phrase from the opening: "Your monastery is Russia!" (*PSS* 8, 301, 308). Gogol makes Russia into a monastery in the sense of a place for good works and acts of love. This encapsulates a key idea of *Selected Passages,* which consists in endowing the cause of Russian nationalism with the imperative force and nobility of Christian ethics.

In addition to these five articles that were banned entirely, the censorship made changes and cuts to the texts that did appear. With particular vehemence it persecuted all references to the tsar, the civil servants, and administrative abuses. Random mentions of famines raging in Russia were also eliminated or softened, much as news of natural disasters was later censored in the Soviet period (*PSS* 8, 306, 234: 671n35). In the article on the painter Aleksandr Ivanov, Gogol's numerous references to Russian artists' strained financial circumstances that he phrased in terms of "dying from hunger" were all replaced with references to "suffering need" (*PSS* 8, 328: 695n21, 332: 697n7, 337: 698n2). His recommendation that people knowledgeable about art replace ignorant state bureaucrats in making the decisions that affect Russian arts was also eliminated (*PSS* 8, 335–336: 697n33). Gogol's identification of various social ills as Russian peculiarities was frequently changed to references to the general spirit of the times (*PSS* 8, 341: 691n13, n21; 348: 701n9, n17, n24). The censor also tinkered with a demeaning definition of Russia's national specificity that had crept, as if straight from *Dead Souls,* into Gogol's discussion of Fonvizin's comedy: "These are such ideals of crudeness which only Russians, and not other nations, can attain" (*PSS* 8, 397: 710n24; the censor eliminated the notion of Russians' uniqueness). An image of drunken crowds filling the streets of Russia on Easter Sunday was also excised (*PSS* 8, 410: 713n21).

The censor managed to blunt much of Gogol's critical edge with regard to circumstances in Russia while he left fairly intact his prophecies of national greatness and his invocation of the ideals of Official Nationality. Russian Apocalypse and anti-Utopia suffered cuts, while the *Domostroi* and the Utopia were allowed to flourish. This resulted in a much tamer book than Gogol envisaged and greatly diminished a sense that the author realized the gravity of problems facing Russia. "The bone gnawed clean by Nikitenko," as Gogol came to regard his book, was thus deprived of some of the most "meaty" elements of Gogol's agenda for Russia's reform. For Gogol, this experience with the censorship meant that the new, positive way of approaching Russia that he had just worked out, which consisted in patriotic campaigning for change and inspiring love for Russia, was causing him even greater problems than his former incarnation as a satirical scourge. The message that the authorities gave to Gogol, and which they gave to other patriotic activists before and after, was that Russia did not need civic initiative and independent-minded reformers but obedient subjects who minded their own business.

A Public Slap in the Face: The Reception of *Selected Passages*

Gogol was deeply interested in the reception of *Selected Passages,* in view of the enormous hopes he placed on the book's impact. Before the work's publication, he made arrangements to receive most journals and asked his friends to report to him all opinions, including their own. Alas, already the letters of his friends made evident that the author of *Selected Passages* had failed to become a national Messiah. Only a few applauded the book. Pletnev saw in it no less than "the beginning of truly Russian literature" that will spread Russia's fame beyond its borders.[23] Smirnova called the book a "treasure" that overshadowed all of Gogol's earlier writings. Yet she also conveyed reports that Gogol's Moscow friends were displeased and accused Gogol of "Catholicism and formalism."[24]

She was right about his Moscow friends. Shevyrev told Gogol that his book showed him more as a Catholic than an Orthodox Christian, that he appeared too self-important, was wrong about Pushkin and Karamzin,

and should not have publicly humiliated Pogodin (Gogol took an overt aim at Pogodin in "On What the Word Is" and "To My Nearsighted Friend"). Sergei Aksakov found Gogol's edifying manner inappropriate, his arrogance galling, and deplored numerous mistakes and wrongheaded ideas that amply demonstrated the perniciousness of Gogol's protracted stay in morally and intellectually insalubrious foreign lands. Aksakov's son Konstantin, who had written the impassioned brochure about *Dead Souls,* summed up *Selected Passages* with one word: "falsehood." Konstantin felt that Gogol was lying both to himself and to his audience. He especially resented Gogol's "contempt" for the common Russian people that revealed itself in "The Russian Landowner." He blamed Gogol's prolonged stay in Catholic Rome for this harmful new direction.[25]

Gogol pilloried his former friend Pogodin in his book.[26] Though Gogol never invoked Pogodin's name, his identity was widely recognized. Gogol went so far as to claim in one vicious article that Pogodin needed this "public slap in the face" for his own good (*PSS* 8, 348). Pogodin, deeply hurt, treated Gogol to a private slap in the face, criticizing in his letters to Gogol the book's various ideas, ignoring those that concerned him personally. Pogodin charges that Gogol's Christianity is a mere patina, not a deeply internalized religious essence. For example, Gogol is extremely judgmental in his book; instead of turning the other cheek, Gogol delivers slaps in the face. The Mother of God, Pogodin writes, could not perform such miracles as Gogol expects of a society woman. A fifth gospel could not muster the impact that Gogol expects of Zhukovsky's *Odyssey* translation. Pogodin ridicules the idea that peasants could read it and reach moral improvement. In his view, Gogol does not confront the truly vital problems in Russia, and his opinion on landowner-peasant relations is naive to an extreme.[27] Pogodin was also annoyed by Gogol's genuflecting before the doctrine of Official Nationality in *Selected Passages.* In his diary, he notes Gogol's presence in his house in 1848 in these sarcastic terms that make Gogol into a Poprishchin-like pretender: "Orthodoxy and Autocracy is in my home: Gogol held the All-Night Vigil—perhaps he plans on ascending to the throne?"[28]

Apart from criticisms from his friends, Gogol received public slaps in the face in the periodical press. *Selected Passages* created the hugest scandal of Gogol's turbulent career. Yet almost uniformly, the reviews barely acknowledged the burning public issues that Gogol raised in his work. Not only did Gogol fail to convince his audience of his ideas; he

also failed to inspire—at least in print—a debate about them. Censorship constraints may have been largely to blame for it. Thus whatever upheavals Gogol's book created in Russian society did not reach the printed page and erupted to the surface almost by chance, as with Belinsky's exchange of letters with Gogol, which took place abroad and did not involve the services of the tsarist postal service. Since Belinsky's Salzbrunn letter circulated informally in hundreds of copies in Russia, it nonetheless did achieve the status of a public statement.

Nearly all published reviews focused almost exclusively on the two introductory texts, the preface and Gogol's will, and basically ignored the rest of the book. The content of Gogol's work proved far less captivating to the audience than the mental state of its author, to which the introductory pieces gave a most disturbing insight. Nearly all reviews condemned Gogol's decision to publish his will and parsed it mercilessly, exposing the signs of the author's irrationality, vanity, and possible mental derangement. One reviewer suspected Gogol of some vague calculation or of "Little Russian" trickery to dupe the audience; a few accused Gogol of Catholic or even Jesuit tendencies. The preachy and dogmatic tone met with almost unanimous disapproval. Absolutely everyone disapproved of Gogol's rejection of his former literary works. Russia declined Gogol's offering of didactic precepts and said it awaited fiction, where his true talents lay. Gogol may have attempted to reject his literary creation, but literary creation, not a modern *Domostroi,* was what Russia expected of Gogol.[29]

The two most substantial published responses, and ones that attempted to defend a few aspects of the book, were authored by Stepan Shevyrev (in *The Muscovite*) and Prince Viazemsky (in *The St. Petersburg News*). Of the two, Shevyrev honed in most directly on Gogol's nationalist philosophy. In his view, Gogol's previous work, especially the first volume of *Dead Souls,* portrayed the dark side of Russian life; he now expected its optimistic picture to follow. In his review of *Selected Passages,* he invokes Gogol's Ukrainian "period" and the stories "Rome" and "The Portrait" as proofs that Gogol is indeed capable of showing beauty and nobility. Yet Gogol's portrayal of the Russians, Shevyrev sourly notes, has so far been one-sided and focused entirely on their vulgar and coarse features.

For Shevyrev, *Selected Passages* confirms that Gogol did understand the greatness inherent in the Russian nation. In fact, Shevyrev claims that a

perception of this greatness underlies Gogol's depiction of Russian faults: "Gogol laughs at Russians' banality so marvelously, so sincerely, and so courageously, precisely because he feels deeply their higher nature, their glorious destiny, the existence of the bases that ought to make them great for the benefit of the entire world."[30] *Selected Passages,* Shevyrev contends, proves wrong all those who brand Gogol as a malevolent, anti-Russian Ukrainian, by revealing the author's true love for Russia. Yet Shevyrev also perceptively notes that Gogol does not praise the Russian nation for what it is but only for what it can become. Gogol's contribution consists in identifying the core resources and specificities of the Russians (Gogol articulated them in "What, Finally, Is the Essence of Russian Poetry") that foretell their *future* greatness as a nation.

Despite Shevyrev's appreciation of Gogol's love for Russia and his efforts to solve the mysteries of its national life, his review concludes on a tone of sharp condemnation. Why is it, he asks, that Gogol could not convey the same content in works of art? Why do Sobakeviches and Manilovs continue their literary life, while their positive counterparts from the second volume of *Dead Souls* ended up in the flames? In a rather unprecedented lapse of journalistic decorum, Shevyrev addresses Gogol brusquely in the informal second-person singular:

> Admit that you [*ty*] often found pleasure in this chuckle, that you reeled with laughter rather excessively, for which we reproached you before, that you enjoyed too much your gift to amuse others and often forgot about the hidden tears that weighed on your soul. Forgetting them took away from your laughter profundity and power. Thus it sometimes resounded with something empty and unctuous. Why ever, feeling in yourself another, higher side of the Russian man, have you not given it room within the spacious bounds of your fantasy? Why have you betrayed the other, better, half of your thought? We would not have accused you had you not done so yourself . . . : "I wanted to try out what a Russian would say if you treated him to his own triviality." In art one must not "try out" anything; art should be free from any personal calculation. This makes it seem as if you did not always laugh freely and sincerely, responding to the call of your inspiration, does it not? And to what did it occur to you to treat a Russian? To his triviality? Some treatment! Some hospitality from the artist![31]

Shevyrev appears to have run out of patience in waiting for Gogol's about-face, the imminence of which the author himself announced in *Dead Souls.* The critic appears clearly incensed that Gogol expressed beauty and nobility so effortlessly in his Ukrainian works (which he mentions earlier in the article), while the same goal poses such tremendous problems to the writer in his Russian works. Though Shevyrev applauds the ideas expressed in *Selected Passages,* he is hardly grateful to the author, since these ideas should have been expressed in the highest, most valuable and long-lasting of forms, one that is natural to Gogol and corresponds to his talent: art. Gogol's laughter, which was received with such delight by critics, Shevyrev among them, when he made his debut in *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka,* now begins to haunt him. This was likely caused by the qualitative difference between the benevolent laughter of Gogol's Ukrainian works and the satirical, derisive laughter of his Russian ones. Yet in the responses by Shevyrev and other increasingly more nationalistic Russians, there was also a sense that a country of Russia's stature deserved something more ennobling and monumental than laughter, however sympathetic its underpinnings.

In Shevyrev's view, Gogol bore responsibility for a harmful influence on Russian culture, evident in the formation of the so-called Natural School of hyperrealist young writers who idolized Gogol and focused on Russia's social problems. Shevyrev paints this group as cynical and disrespectful, the monster child of Gogol. These writers responded to Gogol's one-sided portrayal of Russia, limited to its trivial and ugly aspects, and decided to emulate it. Even Gogol, Shevyrev claims, took fright at such a perverse following and in *Selected Passages* cut himself off from it by rushing to explain his true vision of Russia: "Not feeling in himself enough strength to seal in an artistic creation the higher side of a Russian, Gogol wanted to express at least didactically that he admits this side's existence and that he sees in it our true reality that has not yet materialized, but he hopes that it will."[32]

Prince Viazemsky echoes Shevyrev's sentiments regarding Gogol's disassociation from his misguided followers and also from the Westernizer critics who announced him as the founder of this new school. Though the name did not appear, this pointed directly at Belinsky. Like most reviewers, Viazemsky appears positively gleeful about Gogol's snubbing of his main glorifier. Gogol's book was "useful and needed," both for Gogol personally, as a rejection of his past and some unwelcome associations, and for Russian literature, as a denounciation of a certain harmful trend. Viazemsky considers Gogol's sincerity in *Selected Passages* genuine and respects Gogol for sharing his spiritual torment with others.

He also appreciates that Gogol took up many vital questions of contemporary social life. However, he disagrees with many of Gogol's ideas, especially much of his practical advice. For example, Viazemsky casts Gogol's article on the landowner and the peasant as an "idyll" whose recommendations could hardly usher in a golden age of their mutual relations.[33] Still, he reproaches those who would stone the author for expressing ideas with which they disagree.

Unlike Shevyrev, who tried to fit Gogol into a Slavophile mold, Viazemsky appears irritated by the way in which various ideological factions clutch Gogol to further their own causes. Both the Westernizers and the Slavophiles misconstrued Gogol's work, yet according to Viazemsky, the Slavophiles' cult of Gogol seemed the more incredible of the two:

> It is more or less understandable that people who unthinkingly proclaimed some doctrine about Western foundations sought in Gogol their ally and their justification. He was for them a denouncer of national shortcomings and social maladies. . . . They did not understand Gogol but could at least interpret the creations of his fancy for their own benefit. But it is inconceivable that those who reject and protect us from foreign influence, those who want us to tread our separate path to improvement, to grow and strengthen in our own foundations, found anything to cheer in Gogol's images. In them, at least in these homogeneous images that open with *The Government Inspector* and end with *Dead Souls*—everything is dark and empty. [Gogol] haunts us, he touches us to the quick not just on our external and customary sore spots; no, he penetrates deeply inward, he turns all our nature, our soul, inside out and finds not a single healthy place. A severe doctor, he rubs salt in the wounds, but does not lift the patient's spirit or give him hope. No, he leads to a despondent grief, to a terrible awareness.[34]

This is perhaps the most chilling description of the effect of Gogol's caustic satire on national Russian sensibilities. Viazemsky denies the possibility of building a positive nationalist philosophy of Russia on the basis of Gogol's art. In Gogol's ruthless anatomy of Russian life, Viazemsky sees instead "bright sides" (Shevyrev), a thoroughly diseased organism ("not a single healthy place"). Later in the review Viazemsky deplores Gogol's extremism in his view of Russia, noting that "our world is not a paradise, but neither is it hell."[35] It is significant that Viazemsky and Shevyrev, who used to defend Gogol against accusations of lack of patriotism, now grow impatient and disenchanted with Gogol's unsympathetic national images.

Just like Shevyrev, Viazemsky creates a dichotomy of the triviality *(poshlost')* that reigned in Gogol's previous works on Russia's bureaucratic milieu and the opposite trend toward larger human concerns that revealed itself in *Selected Passages.* Though approving of this new direction, Viazemsky discourages Gogol from producing any more such books. *Dead Souls* solidified in Russian literature certain harmful tendencies, such as the discontent that characterizes the young writers, that need to be overcome. Gogol has spoken his word of love to the Russians in his recently published correspondence, but Viazemsky reminds the author that Russia awaits this word in a literary form.

The main organ of the Westernizers, *Notes of the Fatherland,* rejected *Selected Passages* and, in contrast to Shevyrev and Viazemsky, held on to Gogol's previous fictions as the greatest manifestation of contemporary Russian literature. For added emphasis, the brief, three-page review of *Selected Passages* was followed—and dwarfed—by a ten-page review of a book of illustrations to *Dead Souls.* To the editors, Gogol's article "Four Letters to Various Persons concerning *Dead Souls*" proved that despite his own pronouncement in the preface Gogol hardly rejected his fictions.[36] Belinsky, snubbed in the book, criticized it in *The Contemporary.* He pointed out Gogol's contradictions and ridiculed some of his ideas, such as Gogol's tasks for the society lady or his great expectations for Zhukovsky's *Odyssey* translation. But overall, the review was rather tame, considering Belinsky's explosive temper and the extent of Gogol's insulting ingratitude (I have discussed Belinsky's comments on Gogol's letters about *Dead Souls* in Chapter 4). Belinsky confessed to a friend that even though he wrote it with censorship in mind, Nikitenko still cut it to a third of its original size and eliminated from his review many excerpts from Gogol's book (*SSBel* 8, 222–239, 687–688). This further testifies to the explosive aspects of Gogol's work, even in its censored form, and to the fact that it barely made it to print (the journalistic censorship was more stringent than the book censorship, which explains Belinsky's problems with quoting the already published text). In general, Gogol dealt a heavy blow to his Westernizing admirers and humbled himself before his detractors from the conservative camp. Bulgarin gloated in his victory.[37]

Though Gogol had always kept Belinsky at arm's length, he apparently regreted that he offended him. He wrote to Belinsky that he did not mean to insult him by accepting criticisms from the conservative press. Yet he also regreted that anger blinded the critic to the book (*PSS* 13, 326–328). Belinsky replied with the famous Salzbrunn letter, one of Lenin's favorite

Russian nineteenth-century texts (*PSS* 8, 743). The letter has been given the status of such an authoritative indictment of *Selected Passages* that the *PSS* editors appended it to the volume containing the work, which makes it the single piece of correspondence addressed to Gogol that appears in the edition. Only recently did Russian scholars begin the task of peeling Belinsky's invective off of *Selected Passages* and looking at it without this lens.[38]

In the Salzbrunn letter, Belinsky claims that ideological objections rather than personal spite motivated his rejection of Gogol's book. He explains that the possibility of circumventing the tsarist postal censorship (both men were abroad at the time) allows him to speak freely. While the Slavophiles' endorsement was hardly unanimous, as the Aksakovs' reaction demonstrates, they could find many of Gogol's ideas congenial. However, Gogol had absolutely nothing to offer for the Westernizers in *Selected Passages,* and Belinsky's pointed critique of Gogol's national philosophy makes this clear.

Belinsky admits that the Westernizers' hopes for Gogol as a beacon of Russia's progress proved misplaced. As many others, Belinsky blames the falsity of Gogol's ideas about the country's character and its needs on his prolonged stay abroad. He assures Gogol: "Russia sees its salvation not in mysticism, asceticism, or pietism, but in the successes of civilization, enlightenment, and humaneness" (*PSS* 8, 501). Russia needs not prophecies and prayers but a sense of human dignity, laws and rights, individual liberties, property rights, and the abolishment of serfdom and corporal punishment. Belinsky, unmindful of echoing Gogol's own ideas, harangues against the virtual "corporations" of thieves that operate out of their hideouts in the governmental bureaucracy. In the face of such profound problems, Russia's most celebrated writer, in Belinsky's retelling, "teaches the barbarian landowner, in the name of Christ and the church, how to acquire more money at the expense of the peasants by calling them 'unwashed mugs'!" (*PSS* 8, 502). Incensed, Belinsky piles upon Gogol the famous epithets: "Preacher of the knout, apostle of ignorance, champion of obscurantism, panegyrist of Tatar customs—what are you doing? Look under your feet: you stand at the abyss" (*PSS* 8, 503).

Belinsky rails against Gogol's gestures toward Official Nationality. He warns Gogol that the Russian public, which Belinsky equates with his like-minded liberals, is quick to reject great authors who "sincerely or insincerely give themselves over to the service of Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality" (*PSS* 8, 506). Contrary to Gogol, Belinsky believes that the Russian nation's natural instincts tend toward atheism, rather than deep religiousness. As an institution, the Russian Orthodox Church has always served as a pillar of secular power, hence of inequality and unfreedom. Belinsky points out that Orthodox priests are uniformly despised by the Russian people as dissolute obscurantists who care only about their material well-being. He derides Gogol's doctrine of mutual love between the tsar and the Russian people: autocracy may appear "divinely beautiful" only from Gogol's "beautiful distance" and seems much less so up close. The Russian public, Belinsky asserts, expects its authors to defend it from "the darkness of Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationality" (*PSS* 8, 507). If Gogol loves Russia, he should rejoice at his book's utter failure, in view of its decidedly harmful agenda. If he wishes to regain his audience's favor, he should go back to writing fictions that resemble his old ones.

Gogol replied to Belinsky's impassioned letter very calmly. He regrets Belinsky's righteous tone, reminding him that he does not hold a monoply on truth. Though the critic could be partly right, Gogol informs him of about fifty other letters in response to *Selected Passages* that contradict Belinsky's ideas but also appear partly right. The one lesson Gogol has learned from the work's reception is that he does not know Russia and must remedy this problem by returning to it (*PSS* 13, 360–361). In closing, Gogol wishes Belinsky well.

However, Gogol's initial reaction to Belinsky's Salzbrunn letter was not nearly so stoic. A draft of Gogol's initial letter to Belinsky, amid irritated protestations, engages Belinsky's ideas more concretely (*PSS* 13, 435–446). Gogol accuses Belinsky of essentializing the European civilization upon which the celebrated Westernizer wished to base the foundations of modern Russia. According to Gogol, European civilization does not represent any organic, unitary whole but an explosive mix of warring ideological factions. Europeans themselves, Gogol notes, are no longer sure what their civilization is. To Belinsky's charge that Gogol's residence abroad prevents him from knowing Russia, the writer counters that Belinsky, residing in St. Petersburg and writing his paltry little articles, has even less right to feel competent on this subject. Gogol reaffirms his belief in the religiosity of the Russian people and decries Belinsky's wholesale criticism of the Orthodox clergy. For Gogol, Belinsky's view of the landowner smacks of the eighteenth century. Gogol maintains that the peasant

will be much better off when the landowner is in charge rather than the civil servant, whom Gogol describes as a perennially corrupt, self-interested leech. He clarifies that he does not oppose mass literacy but that his current concern lies with the literate petty bureaucrats who perpetrate so much evil and abuses. Alluding to Belinsky's materialism, Gogol upholds his duty to invoke higher ideals and values and to remind his readers of spiritual concerns.

By publishing *Selected Passages* Gogol managed to offend in some measure almost everyone and found himself in an alienated position. His message of patriotic reform failed to elevate him to the status of a national prophet. Questions about the sincerity of his love for Russia remained. Most important, Gogol's audience emphatically rejected his turn to nonfiction and made it amply clear that he would have to earn its grace through art.

Gogol's Defense: "The Author's Confession"

Gogol abandoned drafting his extensive reply to Belinsky and chose not to reply to the critic's specific points. Instead, he wrote a general response to the reception of *Selected Passages*. It resembles the postscripts and explanatory texts that he wrote in connection to his other controversial works. Like Belinsky's Salzbrunn letter, the text circulated in copies during Gogol's lifetime but was published only posthumously. It appears in the *PSS* as "An Author's Confession," even though Gogol referred to it as "the tale of my writing" or "of my authorship."[39] The *PSS* editors date the work to May or July of 1847 and see it as a response to Belinsky's review in *The Contemporary*. However, the *PSS* seems to have predated the letter and unduly narrowed Gogol's concerns. The "Confession" appears to follow, not precede, Gogol's abandoned draft of his letter to Belinsky, dated late July or beginning of August. It includes a more polished version of the ideas that the writer seemed to be just working out in that earlier draft letter.[40] Hence, to the extent that it responds to Belinsky, it does so in the context of his Salzbrunn letter, not his review. Moreover, Gogol does not seem narrowly focused on Belinsky's criticisms but appears intent on responding to the various ideas expressed on the topic of *Selected Passages* and his "authorship" in general.

In "An Author's Confession," Gogol defends himself and his book and charts his moral, artistic, and intellectual development in ways that justify

his current authorial and public persona. Like all of Gogol's commentaries on himself as an author, it represents a mix of facts and dissimulations, psychologically plausible motivations and pure mystifications. As always, Gogol subordinates his arguments and ideas to the demands of authenticating and supporting the image of himself that he was currently fashioning. In fact, the text's stylistic and rhetorical structure has led Robert Maguire to treat it as another Gogolian fiction.[41] Whether or not this is so, "An Author's Confession" resembles a fiction to the extent that all of Gogol's self-commentary is to some extent disingenuous and calculated.

In "An Author's Confession," Gogol groups the critics of *Selected Passages* into three types: those who saw in the author uncanny hubris, those who viewed him as misguided but fundamentally well-intentioned, and those who looked upon him as a good Christian who has found the correct outlook. The third type is unattested in the book's published critiques but was part of its unofficial reception, according to Prokopovich's letter to Gogol.[42] While Gogol deplores that the author, rather than the book, stood at the center of the debate, his defense of it hinges precisely on the personality of the author. He presents *Selected Passages* as a mirror of a man, his desire for good and his inner struggle with imperfections. Gogol basically redefines the book, which most people justifiably treated as a presumptuous gospel and a set of irritating instructions for moral and civic life, into a personal confession, a record of the self, a project of self-education rather than national edification. This retreat inward exemplifies Gogol's typical response to attacks, as, for example, when he attempted to recast the characters of *The Government Inspector* or *Dead Souls* as the emanations of his deeply flawed soul.

In answering the question why he turned from fiction to the kind of writing that *Selected Passages* exemplifies, Gogol sketches an entire "tale" of his "authorship." He claims, this time truthfully, that he had felt an ardent desire to serve from an early age. From early on he never regarded literature as his main occupation; he penned his early work without any concern for their social goals and impact. His melancholy disposition led him to seek gaiety in the play of his fantasy, which made these early works light and humorous. While Ukrainian subject matter is what typified Gogol's early work for his critics, Gogol redefines it by references to his immaturity, which is aimed to discourage the nationalistic comparisons with his works on Russia. Gogol writes that when he finally hit upon literature as his calling, he began to ponder its larger social ramifications.

Encouraged by Pushkin, he began planning serious works. Here Gogol for the first time announces that he received the plots of his major works from Pushkin, by which he seems intent on enveloping his much criticized creations in the esteemed poet's mantle. In this new stage of his authorial odyssey, Gogol encountered a major obstacle that consisted in his insufficient love for Russia: "I still did not know that he who wants to serve Russia sincerely needs to have much love for it, love that would overshadow all other feelings, that one needs to have much love for humanity in general and must become a real Christian, in the full meaning of this word" (*PSS* 8, 441). Not finding such love in himself, he could not serve Russia properly, which is why he decided to go abroad.

Justification for his stay abroad occupies much space in "An Author's Confession" and features some of the most blatant dissimulations, in light of Gogol's actual correspondence from this period (I discuss it mostly in Chapter 4). He claims he never had any curiosity to visit foreign countries but that even as a young boy he foresaw the future need for this onerous sacrifice for the sake of his service to the fatherland. He eventually set out to foreign countries not to experience delight *(naslazhdat'sia)* but to suffer (*naterpet'sia; PSS* 8, 450) and began to miss Russia immediately. This is Gogolian prevarication at its purest. Dozens of letters show Gogol's elation and delight when he found himself abroad, especially in Italy. Far from it being time of ascetic self-denial and longing for Russia, Gogol spent the happiest and most carefree days of his life in Rome and steadfastly refused to return to Russia not for any concern about his inadequate preparation to serve it but simply because he enjoyed living in the West. Gogol insists in his highly manipulative "Confession" that his act of leaving Russia was dictated by a sense of patriotic duty and, paradoxically, his desire to learn more about Russia. It is amazing that Gogol would risk such far-fetched arguments, but it is even more amazing that some have taken them at face value. What seems more plausible is that needing to bolster his loyalty to Russian nationalism, Gogol seeks to excuse his deeply resented prolonged foreign sojourn by couching it in patriotic-sounding excuses.

Yet Gogol's power of persuasion must be given its due. He does build a case for his convoluted logic and in the process manages even to reproach the Russians themselves for insufficient Russianness. Gogol claims that he could learn about Russia only abroad, since inside the country every Russian had a different idea of it. Searching raw data, anecdotes

from people's personal experience, and tangible reality, Gogol found only vague philosophical quarrels and ratiocinations. He notes that the provinces give even less material to a student of Russia, since the provincials care only for translations of French novels. Besides, they treat outsiders as potential spies (here, incidentally, Gogol proves as unfeasible his own optimistic agenda for a traveler-interviewer in "One Must Travel through Russia"). Only the Russians Gogol met abroad supposedly provided the writer with what he needed. Only from a distance was he able to achieve an integral view of Russia. Of course, it is unclear from the text what accounts for this handicap of Russians in Russia or why Gogol felt he had to rely on intermediaries at all, instead of observing Russian life for himself.

Having delivered the tale of his authorship, Gogol circles back to his original question about why he published *Selected Passages.* He asserts a consensus that in the mind of the public moral questions currently overshadow political, scholarly, and all others. This seems less a diagnosis than a discursive act of creating an audience: the reception of *Selected Passages* revealed that Gogol's Russian public showed no particular craving for moral themes. Gogol creates his imaginary audience, attuned to his own interests. He then constructs an ideal author, a "writer-creator" who creates new images and reflects life as he sees it, as opposed to writers who merely copy reality as it is. The writer-creator must understand his nation "in both its root and its branches," be a good citizen of the world, and have a diverse repertoire that includes powerful lyric vision and powerful sarcasm (to criticize human imperfections) (*PSS* 8, 456). *Selected Passages,* Gogol writes, represented a stage in his journey to reach this ideal. In closing, he reiterates some of the book's key ideas and claims that the undeniable desire of the author to serve the cause of goodness redeems any imperfections it might have. Gogol casts *Selected Passages* as a record of his self-education, advising his readers to take from it what they like and discard the rest, rather than argue with the author.

Despite his defense of *Selected Passages* in "An Author's Confession," Gogol's letters about his last publication show a record of gradual disenchantment and growing shame. He wrote to Zhukovsky that the thought of his book, so bombastic and full of exaggerations, makes him cover his face from shame (*PSS* 13, 232). In a letter to Shevyrev, Gogol

bitterly complained that people treat him as a hypocritical Tartuffe, two-faced about the things that are most holy (*PSS* 13, 238). Writing to Prince Viazemsky, Gogol admitted that the book has "a certain false tone," but he attributed it to the (false) fact that it was meant to appear posthumously. At the time of the letter, in February 1847, Gogol still cherished hopes of a second edition and planned to put up a fight to reintegrate the censored articles. He therefore asked Viazemsky to look over the complete draft and offer his corrections, in particular, to rephrase passages where the author speaks as if he forgot that he is merely a "civil servant of the eighth class" (*PSS* 13, 227–228). Gogol was deeply troubled that his meticulous authorial self-fashioning had completely missed target. In another letter to Zhukovsky, he regretted "making a Khlestakov out of himself" (*PSS* 13, 243). However, he kept insisting on the book's usefulness, since after all it allowed him to learn about the Russians, who need to be piqued to start talking.

Yet in the end, no measure of patriotic education and moral reconstruction made Gogol capable of completing his magnum opus, the planned trilogy of *Dead Souls*. *Selected Passages* failed to obviate for his audience the need for fiction, as it failed to provide stimulus for this fiction's continuation. Ultimately, the kind of overarching, contemporary national philosophy of Russia that Gogol sketches out in his essays did not translate itself into an artistic form. While Gogol's nonfiction stresses religion as Russia's prime natiogenetic factor, his fiction, such as *Taras Bulba* and the remnants of *Dead Souls*' second volume, always circles back to the southern element as the foundation on which to build a national community.

It deserves emphasis that Gogol never formed a view of Russia as an actually existing nation. Russia always appeared to him as an ongoing project, a community that was in the process of formation and self-definition. As a nationalist, he viewed this as the most essential task facing the country, and he mobilized all his resources to guide it in this transformation. Time and again, however, Russia rejected Gogol's solutions and suggestions. Russian nationalism was developing in the direction of granting ethnic Great Russians primacy, whereas Gogol encouraged models that aimed to transcend the borders of the Russian ethnos to include Orthodox East Slavs. Russian nationalism also stressed its reliance on the state, and after the ideology of Official Nationality took root, it

became successfully co-opted by the government as legitimation of the political status quo. Gogol, by contrast, perceived a nation in Herderian, cultural terms. Much as he thought he supported Official Nationality, his idiosyncratic interpretation of it got him into trouble with the censor, especially in his most overt paean to the doctrine in *Selected Passages*. Russia was not responding well to Gogol's notions of it, and Gogol was running out of ideas on how to please it that would in some measure, however contrived, allow him to remain honest to himself. The future national Utopia that Gogol so carefully constructed in *Selected Passages* fell on deaf ears and only made the Russians angry. His civic zeal was harshly dampened by the authorities.

In the end, Gogol left nationalist politics and took refuge in religion. In August 1847 he advised A. P. Tolstoi to act as if he "lived in God, not in Russia." The human task is to live according to Christ's teaching, and "God himself will take care of Russia" (*PSS* 13, 355). As is characteristic of Gogol's penchant to give others advice that pertained to his own situation, this statement intimates that Gogol himself, after the failure of *Selected Passages*, chose to leave Russia up to God and to focus instead on becoming a better Christian. Yet Gogol did not wholly dissociate religion from nationalism. Christianity, and specifically its Russian version, remained for Gogol the one indisputable marker of Russianness, at least of his own Russianness.

Having failed to transform the broad Russian public into true Russians, Gogol tried to fulfill this role on a more modest scale. In 1849 he took upon himself the task of inducting a young aristocratic lady, Anna Velgorskaia (the sister of his dear friend Iosif who died in Rome), into the mysteries of Russianness. He ordered her to use Russian language instead of French and sent her books about Russia. Yet he warned her that to become fully Russian language and the knowledge of the country would not suffice: she needed to become Russian in her soul. Gogol posed a vital question in his letter to Anna: "Now words such as nationality are in fashion, but so far these are only shouts that make people's heads spin and blind them. What exactly does it mean to become truly Russian? . . . In what does [Russian nature] consist? . . . The high value of the Russian nature consists in its ability to accept more deeply than others the lofty word of the Scriptures that directs man to perfection" (*PSS* 14, 109). Russia's "outer" life is full of depravity, abuses, and con-

flict, yet its "inner" life shines with the light of Christ. Gogol asks his young charge to turn to God, who is "the source of everything Russian" (*PSS* 14, 111).

This letter shows the culmination of the ideas toward which Gogol had been inexorably moving since the early 1840s. Russianness for Gogol became ever narrowed—or, in another sense, broadened—to a particular receptivity to the Christian message. It became synonymous with Christianity in general and Russian Orthodoxy in particular. Herein, finally, Gogol found a way to love Russia. Escaping Russia for most of his life, toward the end of it he finally found it a home. In September 1850, he wrote to his friend that he did not wish to leave Russia, since "apart from it seeming like my native land, there is something higher than the native land in it, as if this were the place from which it is closer to my heavenly native land" (*rodina nebesna; PSS* 14, 204). Russia became for Gogol his native land only thanks to what he regarded as its connection to the heavenly realm. While the Russia of the demonic, denationalized St. Petersburg, of provincial dens of corruption, of Sobakeviches and Chichikovs, of petty clerks, and of bureaucratic swindlers failed to arouse Gogol's love, the Russia that lay beyond these earthly manifestations, in the spiritual essence of Russian Orthodoxy, finally gained his sincere devotion.

Conclusion

From 1903 to 1904 the Russian journal *Questions of Philosophy and Psychology* published a series of articles that diagnosed Gogol as mentally ill. Their author, V. Chizh, treats Gogol's fictions as a record of the author's derangement. Chizh dates the onset of the illness to the year 1836, which, as I have shown, marks the year when Gogol made his transition from amateur Ukrainian to professional Russian writer. The difference between Gogol's portrayal of Ukraine before 1836 and his portrayal of Russia after this date, the former exuberantly favorable and the latter harshly critical, represents for Chizh a clear and indisputable symptom of Gogol's deep psychiatric problem. From what Chizh writes, it appears that Gogol was sane when writing about Ukraine, but insane when writing about Russia. Furthermore, the doctor-turned-critic suggests that Gogol's stunted sexual drive and the resultant atrophy of the relevant organ made the writer incapable of sexual intimacy, which in turn explains his cynical and satirical bent of mind.[1]

In a less clinical form, and before Soviet literary criticism managed to establish the dogma of Gogol's fervent love for Russia, others had remarked upon Gogol's sympathy toward Ukraine and his antipathy for Russia. Vasily Rozanov portrayed Gogol's unsparing irony as the source of a harmful trend in Russian literature. In Rozanov's view, Gogol lacked all respect for humanity, and his works exuded "deadness." The Gogolian tradition epitomized a zombielike presence in Russian letters, to which, luckily, there existed an antidote: the life-affirming Pushkinian tradition.[2] Another critic, Semyon Vengerov, claimed that Gogol had not a drop of love for Russia, which appeared in his works as "a dead kingdom of dead souls," yet had inexhaustible reserves of love for Ukraine, even for a half-

brute like Taras Bulba.[3] Gogol's contemporary French reviewers were also taken aback by his portrayal of Russia. Both Prosper Mérimée and Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly were struck by Gogol's merciless satire of Russia's entire national and social organism. To the extent that Gogol's Russia was a colossus, d'Aurevilly wrote, it was "a colossus of stupidity and triviality."[4]

After Gogol's death many crowned the writer Russia's national genius. Faddei Bulgarin, however, dismissed the idea out of hand. He objected to placing Gogol at the apex of Russian national culture. In the spirit of *The Bee*'s platform on Gogol during his lifetime, Bulgarin asserted that Gogol did not know Russia, the Russian language, or Russian ideas, that he notoriously lied about Russia, failed to show a single instance of nobility in Russian life, and in general took Ukrainian trash with which he was familiar and attempted to pass it off as Russian. Commenting on one editor's regret that Gogol, despite his dogged search, did not manage to find a brighter side in Russian life, Bulgarin proclaimed it the height of irony: what kind of a Russian patriot has to go through such suffering and travail in order to find what is in plain view? He categorically rejected any effort to discuss Gogol in terms of Russian nationalism, since "national writers are those who, though they found dark sides to our way of life, also perceived its bright side, and portrayed it vividly in a *pure* Russian language, in forms of *high* art." In Bulgarin's opinion, Gogol did not meet these basic criteria for the title of a national writer.[5]

Though I do not share these critics' censorious attitude, my own analysis of Gogol's portrayal of Russia shows their skepticism about Gogol's nationalist legacy to be largely justified. Gogol's fiction on Russia offers a national rebuke rather than apotheosis. The Petersburg stories portray the imperial capital as a denationalized modern Babylon, rife with venality and corruption. In *The Government Inspector*, the Russian heartland is infected with this pernicious Petersburg ethos. While folkloric stylization and historicity, the hallmarks of his nationalism, distinguish Gogol's image of Ukraine, his image of Russia has no such layering. Only contemporaneity existed in Gogol's fiction on Russia, its principal theme being a huge and corrupt government bureaucracy. Such a Russia inspired Gogol's biting satire. Even though *Dead Souls* on its surface aspires to nationalist revelation, it continuously balances on the edge of parodic implosion. It presents Russian uniqueness as a catalog of faults and vices. The novel's nationalistic digressions collapse upon contextualization; the

previews of optimistic future volumes, which never materialized, only draw attention to the nationalist inadequacies of the book he did publish.

Following the critical storm caused by his comedy and novel, Gogol attempted to develop a positive attitude toward Russia and to awaken in himself a love for it. In his unfinished sequel to *Dead Souls* he renounced his own satiric impulses, offering positive characters and constructive solutions to Russia's problems. His clearest message of Russian nationalism can be found in his nonfiction, *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends*, which contains Gogol's comprehensive national philosophy fashioned in the spirit of Official Nationality. He replaced his former condemnation of Russia as a nation with the idea that Russia had not yet attained true nationhood, though he claimed it was imminent. Yet despite his best intentions and his emphatic support of government ideology, *Selected Passages* became Gogol's most censored publication due to the various social, economic, and moral problems that it brought into plain view. Gogol's public was also critical and called upon him to eternalize the glory of Russia in fiction, not passages from correspondence. Yet before he could lay his benediction on Russia, Gogol felt he had to transform it into a nation according to his own vision. Otherwise, he did not find much in it that qualified for the nationalistic affirmation that his audience craved.

Despite public assurances of his personal commitment to Russian nationalism, Gogol proved incapable of delivering its message as an artist. Though the question of Gogol's personal identity is tangential to this book, which focuses on the nationalist discourse that he produced, my analysis suggests that Gogol's Russian nationalism was not a deeply and sincerely held conviction, but a rather contrived aspect of his public persona. It was a civic project that grew out of his decision, around 1836, to become a Russian writer, and out of his conviction that nationalism represented a writer's principal form of social utility. Yet this public agenda seemed to collide with Gogol's personal impulses and ideas. My comparison between Gogol's public pronouncements and his private correspondence, his published texts and private notes or drafts, his contacts with Russian nationalists and Polish anti-Russian conspirators, as well as the ubiquitous ideological tensions in his writings on nationalist issues, yields a record of startling contrasts, protective masks, evasions, and dissimulations. While professing complete conformance to various popular orthodoxies of Russian nationalism, Gogol often subverted them. His

treatment of Russian nationalism is as far from an uncomplicated apotheosis as it can be. On the contrary, nearly all of his pronouncements on this subject feature a treacherous false bottom.

Gogol's relation to Ukraine was less conflicted, though it too evolved over time. In *Evenings on a Farm* Gogol celebrates Ukraine as a nation on the Herderian model: united by organic culture, historical memory, and language. The stories' prefaces, despite ingratiating bows in the direction of the Russian public, present the zone of Ukrainian-Russian contact as an area of clashes and antinomies, not homogenization. Panko's guests resist acculturation to the metropolitan core and cultivate their Ukrainian uniqueness with pride and tenacity. The stories themselves depict an absolute separation between the Russian and Ukrainian worlds. The Ukrainian nationalism in *Evenings* undermines the metropolitan schema of imperial hierarchies and ideologies: the Russian core is recast as foreign periphery and a source of corrupt administrative power. Using humor as his Aesopian disguise and shifting ideological conflict to secondary plot lines, Gogol conceals the stories' politics. Yet this political dimension nonetheless generates a powerful message of the irremediable fractures in the Russo-Ukrainian body politic and a celebration of Ukraine's viability as a nation. The poetic apotheosis of Ukraine in *Evenings* made Gogol popular with Russian readers, but he proved unable to treat them to the similarly enamored vision of Russia that they anticipated of him.

Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism peaked while he was researching Ukrainian history. In his view Ukraine possessed exactly the kind of cultural wholeness, proud tradition, and self-awareness that Russia lacked. In an effort to demonstrate Ukraine's legitimacy as a nation, Gogol opposed or undermined many notions of official Russian historiography. Gogol's unpublished fragment "Mazepa's Meditations" shows best the author's politically risky exploration of Ukrainian history in that it validates Ukraine's historic right to independence. Gogol explored kindred ideas more circumspectly in his published fiction and nonfiction on Ukrainian historical themes. The strength of Gogol's commitment to Ukraine before 1836 is also reflected in his plans to move to Kiev in order to devote himself to ethnographic and historic research on Ukraine.

Only when these plans fell through did Gogol decide to become a Russian writer, a role that he understood as concomitant to serving Russian nationalism. However, Gogol's only fiction that can be said to glorify

Russian nationalism is, ironically, his 1842 reworking of a tale about Zaporozhian Cossacks, *Taras Bulba*, which he significantly Russified. Gogol's ideal Russians were, in effect, Ukrainian Cossacks, whom he presented as staunch supporters of Russian Orthodoxy and autocracy. They emerge in the tale as the backbone of the greater Russian nation based on the brotherhood of Orthodox East Slavs. While he Russified his Cossacks, Gogol also Ukrainianized the idea of Russia. The cradle and treasury of Slavdom in Gogol's view, Ukraine could reorient Russia toward its Slavic roots and thus serve as an antidote to excessive Westernization, so inimical to an incipient national culture. This tendency in late Gogol to tie Ukraine's national potential to Russia clashed with his earlier, more exuberant and occasionally defiant Ukrainian nationalism, which pitted Ukraine against Russia and accentuated national differences. However, Gogol's new vision of the greater Russian nation did not resonate with his readers, who demanded a glorification of Russianness that would be grounded in ethnically Russian characters and subject matter.

To add to *Taras Bulba*'s complexity, for all its championing of Russian nationalism, the work subverts itself, much like *Dead Souls*, through an intrusion of irony, a mode that is fundamentally incompatible with nationalist discourse. While on the surface Gogol glorifies the patriotic-religious imperatives of Russian nationalism, he at the same time undermines them. The most powerful ironic counterpoise to the work's message of militant nationalism comes in the plot line of Andrii, who rejects the Cossack ethos and transcends his ethnic and religious bonds. He thus provides the tale with a powerful *antinationalistic* discourse. Not only do the relative values of Russian and Ukrainian nationalism fluctuate across the panoply of Gogol's writings; he at times calls the very idea of national allegiance into question.

Despite sacrificing his Ukrainian nationalism in the 1842 *Taras Bulba* on the altar of the Russian one, Gogol's notions of what constitutes a worthy, viable nation were rooted in his conception of Ukraine, as he developed it in the years 1830 to 1836. When trying to create a sympathetic image of Russianness, Gogol kept reaching for the Ukrainian particulars that he held dear: folk songs, love of revelry, Cossack abandon, variegated southern nature. His lifelong cultural belonging to Ukraine contrasted with his civic commitment to Russian nationalism. Gogol's conflicted and equivocal relation to Russian nationalism and the strength and formative influence of his commitment to Ukrainian nationalism

point to the need for reassessing the relative importance of each. While other scholars have only timidly, if at all, broached the notion of Gogol's Ukrainian nationalism, my analysis prompts much bolder conclusions as to its importance. Gogol's Russian nationalism, in turn, which despite the views of some skeptics has been largely taken for granted, needs deemphasis and qualification. Nationalistic sentiment, by which I mean an idealized portrayal of a nation that aims to assert its value and uniqueness, can be found only in Gogol's works on Ukraine. Russian nationalism existed for Gogol only as a project, albeit one to which he devoted considerable energies in the last decade of his life. Though he put in relief the decline and degeneracy of contemporary Ukraine in stories such as "Shponka," Gogol's larger vision of Ukraine contained a kernel of worthiness and nostalgia for its past glory. His Russia, however, had no such underlying essence, much as he exerted himself to augur its future attainment. While nationalistic affirmation came to Gogol effortlessly in his works on Ukraine, he struggled to achieve it in his fictions on Russian themes, and ultimately failed.

By focusing on nationalism, my work adds an important analytical perspective to Gogol studies that has been almost entirely ignored in the West and has been treated impressionistically and with bias in Russia. The Western interpretive community, prone to seeing Gogol in terms of timeless universal values, has focused on his artistry and narrative originality, while implicitly or explicitly treating nationalism as an unduly narrowing lens, a trivial, almost indecent issue. The destructive force of nationalism in the twentieth century has no doubt contributed to this critical aversion. In the nineteenth century, however, nationalism gave rise to a productive, though not always benign, cultural ferment that produced innumerable works of art and new cultural practices (e.g., folkloric stylization). This book demonstrates that by dismissing this question, Russian and Western scholars have turned away from a phenomenon that underlies most of Gogol's work and its contemporary reception. In part, an overwhelming concern with the problematic nature of Gogol's realism has deflected the question of nationalism. Yet Gogol's readers were equally obsessed, if not more so, with the question of whether Gogol's works were true to *Russian* life as they were with the question of their faithfulness to life in general. Far from being a tangential concern, nationalism figures prominently in Gogol's emergence on the literary scene with his Ukrainophile *Evenings on a Farm*, assists him in his entry into Russian

culture with *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls*, and culminates in his reformist essays in *Selected Passages*.

Gogol's complex positioning in Russian and Ukrainian nationalism often illuminates his fictional devices, artistic choices, authorial personas, and bizarre behavior. The lyric paeans to Russia that Gogol added to *Dead Souls* make sense only if we consider his conviction that Russia had high nationalistic expectations of him—expectations that the novel otherwise failed to meet. The Russification of *Taras Bulba* reflects Gogol's reliance on the Ukrainian ethnos in defining a worthy nation. The incinerations of the *Dead Souls* sequel had much to do with Gogol's frustrated efforts to find a positive attitude toward Russia and at the same time retain some measure of artistic integrity. Finally, Gogol's willing transition, shepherded by prominent figures in Russian culture, from Ukrainian writer to Russian genius is more understandable in the context of Russian and Ukrainian identity politics within a Russocentric empire. My focus on Gogol's engagement with nationalism thus restructures Gogol's creative biography and yields new interpretative insights into nearly all of his works.

This study grounds Gogol firmly in his historical moment. The theoretical-historical account of Russian and Ukrainian nationalism in Chapter 1 seeks to recreate the ideological matrix in which Gogol functioned. Gogol's close association with the proponents of Official Nationality and his contacts with the Slavophiles and the Westernizers, all vying to enlist him for their version of the national cause, underscore his centrality to nineteenth-century Russian nationalism. Since Gogol was for some time an employed academic seeking promotion, the politics of the Ministry of Education and the government's platform for the study of Russian and Ukrainian history must be taken into account when analyzing Gogol's historical writings, especially the ideological differences between the published versions and private pronouncements. Official imperial historiography, especially Karamzin's *History*, which has never before been brought to bear on Gogol's writings on Ukrainian history, is a key context for understanding these texts' subversive championing of Ukrainian nationalism.

My detailed study of Gogol's contemporary reception seeks to enrich this contextual fold. This reception explains a great deal about the writings of an author who was keenly attuned to the critiques of his work. In fact, I demonstrate that beyond embedding metaliterary commentary

in his fiction, Gogol composed a plethora of explanatory commentaries on *The Government Inspector, Dead Souls,* and *Selected Passages* precisely in response to these works' reception. Texts such as "Leaving the Theater," "The Denouement of *The Government Inspector,*" "Four Letters to Various Persons concerning *Dead Souls,*" or "An Author's Confession" react to specific points raised by Gogol's reviewers. Reading them without this context leads to a fragmentary view. These polemical encounters between Gogol and his readers offer insight into the dynamic of the literary process that elevated Gogol and his works into a powerful presence in Russian culture. They also reveal that the fashioning of Gogol's nationalist agenda proceeded not in the seclusion of his study, but in public negotiations with his audience.

In surveying the opinions of Gogol's critics I have included not only those of the liberal intelligentsia, which subsequent literary criticism has tended to highlight, but also those of the conservative press. But why pay attention to such reactionaries and lackeys as Bulgarin, so memorably ridiculed by Pushkin? Why does it matter what they said about Gogol? First, this sector of Gogol's audience happened to be keenly attuned to the nationalist import of Gogol's works. Certainly, the imperfect ethnic and political credentials of many conservative critics may have increased their zeal as Russian nationalists. Sękowski and Bulgarin, after all, were Poles, and Bulgarin was a veteran of Napoleon's campaign against Russia. Second, these journalists matter because their views were reaching about 13,000 subscribers, while the readership of Gogol's defenders was roughly half as numerous.[6] Certainly, this data in itself is no proof of the *readers'* views. However, as regards the resonance of *critical* opinions about Gogol in Russian society, the conservative press has to be given its due as the dominant opinion shaper.

This relates to the larger question of the literary history of the imperial period as it was shaped by the values and judgments of the liberal Westernizing intelligentsia and the Soviet critics that continued its traditions. My experience with Gogol's reception convinced me of the need to be skeptical about this powerful critical discourse and to be aware of its blind spots. The master narrative about the march of progressive ideas in Russian culture seems to have pushed to the margins more than seems warranted. Its effects continue to be felt in how we approach Russian literary history today. Yet many old assumptions, such as that of the nonexistence of bourgeois culture in Russia, deserve a second look. There is much

more work to be done in recovering synchronic moments, cultural phenomena, and noncanonic literary and critical production that seem to have been occluded by the progressive paradigm. A fuller picture of the literature of the imperial period would require that we revisit such margins and reexamine their very marginality.

My study of Gogol's reception also illuminates the question of Russia's relation to Ukraine, and particularly the educated Russians' view of this relation. Standard accounts would have us believe that Russians thought of Ukraine as simply an organic part of Russia. Yet this seems to have been wishful thinking more than an empirical claim. When pressed, Russians thought the gulf between the two countries deep enough that to displace Gogol's comedy to Ukraine meant to expunge it from Russia. Russian nationalists were thus equally likely to treat Ukraine and Russia as national opposites. For them, whether Gogol was a Ukrainian or a Russian writer was by no means a moot question. Certainly, to become a Russian was an option that was available to a Ukrainian, but this status had to be earned. And many were unsure that Gogol did earn it.

Nonetheless, Gogol indubitably retains significance for both Russian and Ukrainian literatures. By virtue of his embeddedness in the cultural patterns and concerns of both, Gogol belongs to both traditions. His nationalistically inflected fiction and nonfiction participate in both Ukrainian and Russian nationalism. Because Gogol functioned within an imperial culture, which happened to be Russocentric, he had to mitigate his Ukrainianness relative to his outward, if not always genuine or convincing, professions of Russianness. The greater his artistic renown, the more loudly his audience demanded that he become "fully Russian": imperial culture had limited tolerance of peripheral alterity once it was "adopted" by the metropolitan high culture. My account of Gogol's reception shows that the Russian center approached the cultures of its peripheral satellites in ways that were purely instrumental and sought to facilitate Russia's pursuit of its own national culture. The "parasitic" nationalization that Gogol observed in ancient Rome also characterized the Russia of his time.

The example of Gogol shows that Russification of an ethnically distinct periphery was a two-stage process. The metropolis welcomed the cultural emanations of the periphery that showed talent, at which point quaint local particularism was tolerated. Then it appropriated the deserving (and willing) authors into Russian culture, the culture of the dominant eth-

nicity, a process that required a more stringent acculturation to the core. Gogol fared well in the first stage of this process, following *Evenings on a Farm,* but the second one was rife with problems and traumas. As Oleh Ilnytsky claims, high culture was appropriated as Russian irrespective of its ethnic roots. Gogol's less talented contemporary, Kvitka-Osnovianenko, was not seen as a Russian writer despite his prodigious output of Russian prose and a very late transition to writing in Ukrainian. Ilnytsky writes: "The ruling position that the Russians enjoyed in the empire gave them not only the power to choose, which in itself represents an asset of a national Russian culture, but also to determine the criteria and the discourse of the literary canon for the purpose of defending their cultural hegemony."[7] The receptivity to the cultural output of the peripheries was a way of neutralizing its difference and circumscribing it within Russianness.

My study of Gogol confirms a close tie between nationalist and imperialist discourses in Russian culture. Many aspects of Gogol's nationalism would remain opaque without reference to the imperial context in which he functioned. What I termed Russia's unique national-imperial identity in Chapter 1 explains Russia's readiness and ability to absorb Gogol into its own nationalism and culture. In fact, Gogol helped shape this discourse, especially by advocating the idea of an imperial nation, Slavic and Orthodox and inclusive of Ukrainians, in *Taras Bulba*'s later version. His popular works on Ukrainian themes offered a living proof of the relevance of the literature on non-Russian themes for Russian national culture.

Yet beyond the very theme of Ukraine and a whole range of stylistic, linguistic, and narratological patterns, Gogol's ways of encoding nationality in literature are also based in large measure on Ukrainian traditions. By transposing these elements to Russian culture, Gogol Ukrainianized it. Abram Terts is right to accord Gogol's Ukraine "a unique role in the Russian nationalist revival of the nineteenth century and in the very formation of the Russian national culture."[8] I therefore cannot entirely agree with Peter Sawczak's opinion that Gogol's literary practice of inscribing "Ukrainianness" in the text of "Great Russianness" "breaks apart the self-sufficient integrity of the 'great' literature of imperial Russia by continuously combining it with 'Ukrainianness.' "[9] Imperial Russian culture was never so self-sufficient and integral that an intrusion of Ukrainianness might have such a disintegrating effect.

The confluence of the imperial and national projects in Russian culture meant that attempts to define nationness have always had to confront the country's status as an imperial power, surrounded by ethnically and culturally distinct peripheries that participated in shaping Russian identity. Russian attitudes to the reality of the empire, conversely, have been bound up with nationalistic imperatives, not infrequently resulting in assimilative cultural projects, such as the Russification of Ukraine. My study of Gogol is meant to contribute to the incipient scholarly effort to understand the participation of Golden Age culture in this nexus of imperialist and nationalist concerns. It also aims to encourage further research on the origins of Russian nationalism that takes cognizance of its receptivity to the ethnic heterogeneity emanating from the empire's peripheries.

This study shows Gogol's inscription of peripheral alterity into Russian culture. As such, it questions the legitimacy of a monolithic view of this culture and of its Russianness. While Gogol is a high-profile case, a study of other artists and periods would uncover a considerable amount of artistic production informed by hyphenated identities and hybrid cultural influences. Ethnic heterogeneity underlies much of Russian culture's development and is consistent with Russia's national-imperial identity. This heterogeneity should receive closer scrutiny if we are to understand what is "imperial" about imperial Russian culture and how its "Russianness" came to be defined.

Notes

Bibliography

Acknowledgments

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Notes

Introduction

1. "Vy v dushe russkii, ili vy khokhlik?" A. O. Smirnova, letter to Gogol of September 26, 1844, *Russkaia starina* 59 (1888): 59.
2. Nikolai V. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 12 (Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1937–1952), 357; hereafter *PSS.*
3. Such an approach to Gogol originated with his contemporary nationalistic reviewers, such as Vissarion Belinskii, Stepan Shevyrev, and Konstantin Aksakov, and permeates Russian scholarship to this day. It characterizes such classic studies of Gogol as Andrei Belyi's *Masterstvo Gogolia* (Moscow: Gos. izd. khudozh. literatury, 1934); G. A. Gukovskii's *Realizm Gogolia* (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1959); and Vladimir Nabokov's *Nikolai Gogol* (1944; New York: New Directions, 1961). However, this view of Gogol is much too diffuse to lend itself to a comprehensive list. Western scholarship has largely accepted this Russified Gogol.
4. O. V. Novitskaia, *Rossiia i russkie v poeme N. V. Gogolia "Mertvye dushi"* (Moscow: Moskovskii gos. universitet, 1999), 14.
5. Publishing in 1835 his first stories on Russian themes, Gogol did not renounce his interest in Ukraine. In 1842, the year when his last fiction on a Russian topic appeared (*Dead Souls*), he completely reworked the 1836 version of *Taras Bulba,* his epic tale from Ukrainian history. As late as 1841, he was working on a tragedy from the history of Ukrainian Cossacks that he claimed would represent his crowning achievement (he later destroyed it). Throughout his life, Gogol amassed a collection of 750 folk songs, nearly all Ukrainian. Gogol's letters demonstrate his lifelong interest in publications about Ukraine. He maintained friendships with Ukrainians, who included notable figures in Ukrainian culture (e.g., Mykhail Maksymovych or Osip Bodiansky. Toward the end of Gogol's life, he insisted that Ukrainian songs

be sung during evenings at the Aksakovs (the last documented instance dates from October 31, 1851; Gogol died on February 25, 1852; *PSS* 14, 27).

6. Oleh Il'nyts'kyj, "Hohol' i postkolonial'nyi kontekst," *Krytyka* 29 (2000): 9–13; see also Peter Sawczak, " 'Noch' pered Rozhdestvom' Mykoly/Nikolaia Gogolia: K voprosu o 'maloi literature,' " *Russian Literature* 49 (2001): 259–270.
7. N. I. Petrov's pioneering inclusion of Gogol in his *Ocherki istorii ukrainskoi literatury XIX stoletiia* (Kyiv: Tip. I. Ia. Davidenko 1884) has been validated more recently by George G. Grabowicz ("Ukrainian-Russian Literary Relations in the Nineteenth Century: A Formulation of the Problem," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al., 214–244. [Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Univ. of Alberta, 1992]; see 225). On Ukrainian postcolonial critics of Gogol, see note 6 above. The recent Ukrainian monographs on Gogol, though full of fascinating minutiae, fall short of being systematic and objective. Between V. Ia. Zviniatskovskii's *Nikolai Gogol'. Tainy natsional'noi dushy* (Kyiv: Likei, 1994) and Iurii Barabash's *Pochva i sud'ba. Gogol' i ukrainskaia literatura: u istokov* (Moscow: Nasledie, 1995), the second work has greater scholarly value.
8. Aleksandra Efimenko's "Natsional'naia dvoistvennost' v tvorchestve Gogolia," *Vestnik Evropy* (June 1902): 229–244. Efimenko's cognate terms are "national bifurcation" or "split" (*"natsional'naia razdvoennost'/ dvoistvennost'"*). With less tragic overtones, this basic view survives to this day. See Iurii Barabash, "Gogol' i Shevchenko: antinomii natsional'nogo soznaniia," *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR. Seriia literatury i iazyka* 55.1 (1996): 43. George S. N. Luckyj's study of Gogol's biography, *The Anguish of Mykola Hohol a.k.a Nikolai Gogol* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1998), similarly argues that Gogol was a "tortured soul" as a result of his "deracination" and that his divided loyalty to Ukraine and Russia led to his "psychoneurotic condition" (8, 25).
9. In Russian: "obshcheruss na malorusskoi osnove." D. N. Ovsianiko-Kulikovskii created this oddity in his *Gogol'*, in *Sobraniie sochinenii*, vol. 1 (1910; The Hague: Mouton, 1969).
10. Though it charts a different course, this book owes much to the larger context of Gogol scholarship. Donald Fanger explained much about Gogol's quest to become a writer. William Todd positioned Gogol within Russian society and the institutions of Russian literature. Robert Maguire explored Gogol's texts from the angels of religion, visual arts, and theories of language. Simon Karlinsky studied the impact of Gogol's homosexuality on his art. Among Russian critics, Iosif Mandelshtam revealed the Ukrainian patterning of Gogol's Russian prose. Vasily Gippius put Gogol in the rich context of contemporary imperial culture. Grigorii Gukovsky studied the ideological mechanism of Gogolian texts. Yuri Mann explored the intricate artistic patterns and thematic leitmotifs in Gogol's prose. See Donald Fanger, *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol Cambridge* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979); William Mills Todd III, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986); Robert Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994); Simon Karlinsky, *The Sexual Labyrinth of Nikolai Gogol* (1976; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992); I. D. Mandel'shtam, *O kharaktere gogolevskogo stilia* (Helsingfors, 1902); V. V. Gippius, *Gogol* [1924], trans. Robert A. Maguire (Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 1989), Gukovskii, *Realizm Gogolia;* and Iurii Mann, *Poetika Gogolia. Variatsii k teme* (Moscow: "Coda," 1996).

1. Nationalism in Russia and Ukraine

1. See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (1983; New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992). For a useful compendium of definitions and theories of nationalism, see John Hutchinson and Anthony D. Smith, eds., *Nationalism* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1994).
2. Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minneapolis Press, 1998), 6.
3. Ibid., 123.
4. Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 7.
5. Calhoun, *Nationalism*, 5.
6. Eric Kaufmann, "Ethnic or Civic Nation? Theorizing the American Case," in *Nationality and Nationalism*, vol. 4, ed. Athena S. Leoussi and Steven Grosby, 324–349 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004).
7. Roman Szporluk, "Ukraine: From an Imperial Periphery to a Sovereign State," in *Russia, Ukraine, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 2000), 367.
8. On literacy rates, see William Mills Todd, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), 100, 233n181.
9. I view "ideology" according to the sociological, rather than the epistemological, tradition. Hence, my usage of the term does not have a pejorative connotation of "false consciousness" or "mystification." Instead of concerning myself with the truth and falsity of ideas and beliefs, I focus on how they function in social life, in particular, how they constitute and reflect power relations between socially significant groups (for the purpose of this study, this can mean ethnic groups or nationalist factions).
10. Geoffrey Hosking claims that Russia has yet to form its national identity, since in the past empire building obstructed nation building in Russia (*Russia: People and Empire, 1552–1917* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ.

Press, 1997]). See also Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001). On the eighteenth-century dating, see Hans Rogger, *National Consciousness in Eighteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1960); and Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992).

11. While *natsional'nost'* unambiguously means "nationality" or "nationness" (i.e., the quality of being a nation), *narodnost'* is based on *narod,* which may additionally connote "people" or "folk" (like the German *Volk* and its derivations). In translating these terms, I was guided by the context. I render the more widespread term *narodnyi* as "national" without citing the Russian word if the context points to this meaning (e.g., by juxtaposing Russian *narodnost'* with that of other nations). A text usually makes clear when *narod* is meant to refer to all of Russian society, in which case it acquires the sense of a "nation," or when the word's meaning is narrowed to refer to only a certain segment of it ("a simple folk," or "nonnoble population"). When encountering the rarer *natsional'nost',* I often indicate the Russian usage. If a text thematizes a distinction between *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost',* or *narod* and *natsiia,* I provide both terms in Russian. Gogol's texts feature all Russian terms for "nation" and "nationality" (*narod, narodnost', narodnyi, natsia, natsional'nost',* and *natsional'nyi*).
12. For most of the eighteenth century the government held monopoly over publishing. Academic presses printed secular books, while the Orthodox Church had separate facilities. Though they enjoyed some autonomy, both were parts of the structure of government. Private presses were allowed in Russia by Catherine's decree only in 1783, but the state continued to exercise control over publishing through censorship (Gary Marker, *Publishing, Printing, and the Origins of Intellectual Life in Russia, 1700–1800* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985]). On occasion, the state even mandated the consumption of culture. In an effort to sell a backlog of books, in 1743 the state ordered all public officials to purchase five or six rubles' worth for every hundred they earned in salary (Paul N. Miliukov, *Ideologies in Conflict,* pt. 2, trans. and ed. Joseph Wieczynski [Gulf Breeze, Fla.: Academic International Press, 1975], 147).
13. In the eighteenth century this more colloquial form of Russian forced out Russian Church Slavonic, the stilted and bookish language of the earlier predominantly ecclesiastical culture. Yet only with Karamzin's pioneering efforts at the turn of the century did Russian literary language approach a written version of conversational idiom, which was fashioned on the language of the elite salon culture. The Imperial Academy of Sciences played an important role in standardizing Russian.
14. Andrew Wachtel, "Translation, Imperialism, and National Self-Definition in Russia," *Public Culture* 11 (1999): 49, 50.

15. Rogger, *National Consciousness,* 276–281; Greenfeld, *Nationalism,* 222.
16. Jane Burbank, "Imperiia i grazhdanskoe obshchestvo. Imperskaia konstruktsiia Rossii i Sovetskogo Soiuza," in *Imperskii stroi Rossii v regional'nom izmerenii (XIX-nachalo XX veka)* (Moscow: Moskovskii obshchestv. nauchnyi fond, 1997), 26. Quoted from the author's English version.
17. Quoted in S. A. Vengerov, *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Izd. Prometei, 1913), 18.
18. Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *Nicholas I and Official Nationality in Russia, 1825–1855* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1959), 124–164. On the doctrine's genesis, see Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy,* vol. 1 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995), 275–278.
19. Cynthia H. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Uvarov, 1786–1855* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1984), 110.
20. Roman Szporluk, *Communism and Nationalism: Karl Marx versus Friedrich List* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988), 207.
21. Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime,* 2nd ed. (1974; New York: Collier Books, Macmillan, 1992), 83.
22. Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History,* trans. Alfred Clayton (New York: Longman, 2001), 116–117.
23. Geoffrey Hosking, quoted in Roman Szporluk, "The Fall of the Tsarist Empire and the USSR: The Russian Question and Imperial Overextension," in *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective,* ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, 65–93 (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); quotation from 70.
24. Kappeler, *The Russian Empire.*
25. Yuri Slezkine, "Naturalists versus Nations: Eighteenth-Century Russian Scholars Confront Ethnic Diversity," *Representations* 47 (1994): 170–195.
26. Kappeler, *The Russian Empire,* 242.
27. Richard Pipes's idea, invoked by Bruce Parrott in "Analyzing the Transformation of the Soviet Union in Comparative Perspective," in *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective,* ed. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, 3–29 (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); quotation from 10.
28. Burbank, "Imperiia"; James Cracraft, "Empire versus Nation: Russian Political Theory under Peter I," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10.3–4 (1986): 532, 538, 540; Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation;* Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalist Imagination and Geographical Expansion in the Russian Far East, 1840–1865* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1999), 12–13.
29. Some examples are Susan Layton, *Russian Literature and Empire: Conquest of the Caucasus from Pushkin to Tolstoy* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press,

1994); Monika Greenleaf, *Pushkin and Romantic Fashion: Fragment, Elegy, Orient, Irony* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994); Katya Hokanson, "Literary Imperialism, Narodnost' and Pushkin's Invention of the Caucasus," *The Russian Review* 53 (1994): 336–352; Monika Greenleaf and Stephen Moeller-Sally, eds., *Russian Subjects: Empire, Nation, and the Culture of the Golden Age* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1998); Wachtel, "Translation, Imperialism, and National Self-Definition"; Ewa M. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge: Russian Literature and Colonialism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2000); Andrei Zorin, *Kormia dvuglavogo orla . . . Literatura i gosudarstvennaia ideologiia v Rossii v poslednei treti XVIII—pervoi treti XIX veka* (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2001); and Harsha Ram, *The Imperial Sublime: A Russian Poetics of Empire* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2003).

30. Edward Keenan, "Muscovite Perceptions of Other East Slavs before 1654—An Agenda for Historians," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter,* ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al., 20–38 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Univ. of Alberta, 1992).
31. Vasyl' Sypovs'kyi, *Ukraïna v rosiis'komu pys'menstvi, 1801–1850* (Kyiv: Ukraïns'ka Akademiia nauk 1928).
32. I use "Ukraine" and "Ukrainian" as umbrella terms for the area roughly corresponding to today's Ukraine and for earlier forms of group identification encountered in this area. This is meant to avoid introducing multiple terms that, though more precise historically and geographically, would require lengthy explanations (*ruskie,* Ruthenians, sub-Carpathians, etc.).
33. Jaroslaw Pelenski, "The Contest for the 'Kievan Inheritance' in Russian-Ukrainian Relations: The Origins and Early Ramifications," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter,* ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al., 3–19 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Univ. of Alberta, 1992).
34. The Hetmanate (northwestern Ukraine), the Zaporozhian Sich (southwestern Ukraine, below the rapids of the Dnepr), and the Sloboda (eastern Ukraine) were organized on the basis of the Cossacks' military republics. The Sich, named after the Cossacks' fortified capital, operated independently to the extent that it pursued its own foreign policy until 1775, when it was disbanded by Catherine (Stephen Velychenko, "Empire Loyalism and Minority Nationalism in Great Britain and Imperial Russia, 1707 to 1914: Institutions, Law, and Nationality in Scotland and Ukraine," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39.3 [1997]: 420).
35. See Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s–1830s* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute [dist. by Harvard Univ. Press], 1988).
36. Velychenko, "Empire Loyalism," 438.

37. The insult "malorossiiskaia prolaza" (Velychenko, "Empire Loyalism," 421) bears an association with vermin and recalls the English idiom "worm one's way into" a career or position. Such stereotypes of Ukrainians were encountered in Gogol's inner circle. P. A. Pletnev, Gogol's close friend, voiced the opinion that sly careerism (khitrost' i prolaznichestvo) represents the Ukrainians' defining quality (V. V. Gippius, ed., *N. V. Gogol': Materialy i issledovaniia,* vol. 1 [Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1936], 170).
38. Dominic Lieven, "The Russian Empire and the Soviet Union as Imperial Polities," *Journal of Contemporary History* 30 (1995): 617.
39. Marc Raeff, "Ukraine and Imperial Russia: Intellectual and Political Encounters from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter,* ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al., 69–85 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Univ. of Alberta, 1992); quotation from 80.
40. Szporluk, "Ukraine," 362, 372–374.
41. Ukrainian schools were forced to supply a quota of talented students to Russian universities, which helped accelerate the decline of Ukrainian universities in the nineteenth century (David B. Saunders, *The Ukrainian Impact on Russian Culture, 1750–1850* [Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Univ. of Alberta, 1985], chap. 3). It was very difficult, complained one Ukrainian, to find venues in the Russian empire for printing "in a language in which 10 million people speak" (Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko, letter of October 3, 1839, in *Tvory v shesty tomakh,* vol. 6 [Kyiv: Derzhavne vyd. khudozhn'oï literatury, 1957]). The censorship regarding anything written in Ukrainian was so severe that the censors, finding one of Kvitka's works objectionable, refused to even return their copy to the author (Kvitka's letter to Pogodin of June 2, 1834). Ukraine also offered dangerous scholarly topics. Kostomarov's dissertation on the Uniate Church was deemed so controversial that all copies were destroyed, and the author was ordered to write a new one on a different topic (James T. Flynn, "The Affair of Kostomarov's Dissertation: A Case Study of Official Nationalism in Practice," *Slavonic and East European Review* 52.127 [1974]: 188–196).
42. Thompson, *Imperial Knowledge,* 18–19.
43. The reasons include Ukrainian elites' easy access to the imperial bureaucracy and the primacy of political and strategic goals over economic ones in the imperial center's relations with Ukraine. Moreover, in social, economic, and cultural terms, the Ukrainian periphery long remained more developed and more Westernized than the Russian metropolis. The Russians pursued a policy of integration rather than discrimination, regarding Ukrainians as basically Russians. See Andreas Kappeler, "*Mazepintsy, Malorossy, Khokhly:* Ukrainians in the Ethnic Hierarchy of the Russian Empire," in *Culture, Na-*

tion, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945), ed. Andreas Kappeler et al., 162–180 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003), 178–179. Kappeler allows for a restricted use of the term "colonial" with respect to Ukraine in *The Russian Empire*, 322.

44. S. Aksakov's letter to his son Ivan, quoted in Gippius, *N. V. Gogol'*, vol. 1, 217. Aksakov sums up his account: "Khomiakov, Solov'ev, and I feasted our eyes upon this display of nationality *(natsional'nosti)*, but without much sympathy. One could sense disdain in Solov'ev's smile, in Khomiakov's laughter—good-natured mockery, and I simply felt absurd and funny looking at them, as if at Chuvash or Cheremis natives . . . and nothing more."
45. See George Grabowicz, "Ukrainian Studies: Framing the Context," *Slavic Review* 54 (1995): 674–690; see also his book of essays *Do istorii ukraïns'koï literatury* (Kyiv: Osnovy, 1997); Serhy Yekelchyk, "The Location of Nation: Postcolonial Perspectives on Ukrainian Historical Debates," *Australian Slavonic and East European Studies* 11.1–2 (1997): 161–184; and Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 2001).
46. Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine*, xii.
47. See Andrea Rutherford, "Vissarion Belinskii and the Ukrainian National Question," *The Russian Review* 54 (1995): 500–515. Paul Bushkovitch treats the larger question of Russian reaction to Ukraine in "The Ukraine in Russian Culture 1790–1860: The Evidence of the Journals," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 39 (1991): 339–363. Unfortunately, Bushkovitch takes the mere presence of Ukraine as a topic as proof of the Russians' philo-Ukrainian attitudes and treats the specifics of what the Russians are saying superficially. His dismissal of Belinsky and Sękowski as anomalies, even though the latter's journal enjoyed the highest circulation in the empire, is unconvincing.
48. Grabowicz, "Ukrainian Studies," 679.
49. David B. Saunders, "What Makes a Nation a Nation? Ukrainians since 1600," *Ethnic Groups* 10 (1993): 117.
50. Greenfeld, *Nationalism*, 238. Saunders's data corroborates this claim *(Ukrainian Impact)*. Szporluk refines this point by noting that these Ukrainians were advocating a more open imperial identity rather than an ethnic Russian nation ("Ukraine," 370).
51. Quoted in Hokanson, "Literary Imperialism," 338. Viazemsky's role in coining the term is confirmed by *Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, 17 vols. (Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1950–1965).
52. Kazimierz Brodziński, "O klasyczności i romantyczności, tudzież o duchu poezji polskiej," *Pamiętnik Warszawski* 11 (1818). At the time of its publication, Viazemsky was serving in Poland and closely followed its literary scene (George G. Grabowicz, "The History and Myth of the Cossack Ukraine in Polish and Russian Romantic Literature" [Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1975], 368).
53. George S. N. Luckyj, *Between Gogol' and Ševčenko. Polarity in the Literary Ukraine: 1798–1847*, Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies, vol. 8. (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1971), 127.
54. See, e.g., Frederic Cooper and Ann L. Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1997); or Jane Burbank and David Ransel, eds., *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1998).

2. From a Ukrainian to a Russian Author

1. S. Durylin, *Iz semeinoi khroniki Gogolia* (Moscow: Gos. Akad. khudozh. nauk, 1928).
2. On "Nikola," see ibid., 70. The impressive size and quality of Troshchynsky's library can be glimpsed from an appendix in G. I. Chudakov, *Otnoshenie tvorchestva N. V. Gogolia k zapadno-evropeiskim literaturam* (Kyiv: Tip. Imperatorskogo universiteta sv. Vladimira, 1908), 146–182.
3. *PSS* 10, 186, 312, *Literaturnyi vestnik* 1 (1902): 24–25.
4. I. D. Mandel'shtam, "Malorossiiskii element v stile Gogolia," in *O kharaktere gogolevskogo stilia* (Helsinki: Novaia tip. Guvudstadobladet, 1902), 194–241.
5. On Gogol's milieu and family history, see Leon Stilman, *Gogol*, ed. Galina Stilman (Tenafly, N.J.: Hermitage Publishers, 1990); Stilman's article "Nikolai Gogol and Ostap Hohol," in *Orbis Scriptus. Dmitrij Tschizhevskij zum 70. Geburstag*, ed. D. Gerhard et al., 811–825 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1966); and O. Okhlobyn, "Ancestry of Mykola Gogol (Hohol)," *Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in the U.S.* 12 (1969–1972): 3–43.
6. See Durylin, *Iz semeinoi khroniki*, 57–70. Gogol asked his mother not to address her letters to him using the name "Ianovsky" since no one knew him in Petersburg by this name (*PSS* 10, 219). He realized that the November Uprising made Polishness a liability. In April 1831, he informed his sister, who was engaged to a Pole, that the Poles were now "suspect" (*PSS* 10, 196).
7. Gogol signed with "G. Ianov" the *Literaturnaia gazeta* version of "Mysli o geografii," later republished in *Arabesques* (*PSS* 8, 761).
8. Gogol's Ukrainian circle was quite sizable and close-knit, including as many as twenty-five Nizhyn graduates (*PSS* 10, 179, 427n). Their free-spirited evenings often included singing Ukrainian songs.
9. When contemplating a post in the provinces, Gogol assured his mother: "God forbid if I were to go to [the Russian provinces]. I think that if I were to go, then only to Little Russia" (*PSS* 10, 173). Her erroneous attribution

of some anonymous publication to her son inspired this comment: "The sphere of this novel's action is in the depth of Russia, where I still haven't set my foot. If I were to write anything in this vein, I'd surely choose Little Russia, which I know, rather than countries [*strany*] and people about whose mores, customs, and occupations I know nothing" (*PSS* 10, 188). Gogol often contrasted Petersburg society with the Ukrainian one, noting, for example, the greater hermeticism of the former (*PSS* 10, 195–196).

10. Sir Walter Scott's *Old Mortality* (1816), for example, published in Russian in 1824 and very popular there, purports to have been written by an innkeeper and published by a Jedediah Cleishbotham. Pushkin also adopted this device in his *Tales of Belkin* (1831).
11. A. I. Markevich, "Zametka o psevdonime N. V. Gogolia 'Rudyi Pan'ko,' " *Izvestiia otdeleniia russkogo iazyka i slovesnosti Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk* 3.4 (1898): 1270.
12. V. Ia. Zviniatskovskii discusses the circumstances surrounding Gogol's prank as well as the possible encouragement of Pushkin and Zhukovsky in *Nikolai Gogol'. Tainy natsional'noi dushi* (Kyiv: Likei, 1994), 127–136.
13. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 8.
14. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992).
15. Vasyl' Sypovs'kyi's compendium of this literature, which mentions about 500 works, surveys a variety of its topics and genres; see *Ukraïna v rosiis'komu pys'menstvi, 1801–1850* (Kyiv: Ukraïns'ka Akademiia nauk, 1928).
16. Gavriel Shapiro, *Nikolai Gogol and the Baroque Cultural Heritage* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1993).
17. Other examples of the *suplika* are Hulak-Artemovsky's opening to "Solopii ta Khivria" (1819) or Somov's *Oboroten'* (1829). Taras Koznarsky discusses the function of the *suplika* in "Kharkiv Literary Almanacs of the 1830s: The Shaping of Ukrainian Cultural Identity" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 2001).
18. See Somov's tales; Hulak-Artemovsky's prose published in *The Ukrainian Herald;* and Kvitka-Osnov'ianenko's "Letters to the Publishers," published in *The Ukrainian Herald* in 1816–1817, as well as his "Letters to the Old Man of Luzhitse," published in *The Herald of Europe* in 1822.
19. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes,* 4.
20. Iu. M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1990), 123–150.
21. Ibid., 136.
22. Durylin, *Iz semeinoi khroniki,* 26. Gogol's father also used this term in his plays.

23. George G. Grabowicz, "The History and Myth of the Cossack Ukraine in Polish and Russian Romantic Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1975), 495.
24. Gogol's use of Ukrainian sources has been extensively studied. See annotations to *PSS,* vol. 1; V. V. Gippius, " 'Vechera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki' Gogolia," in *Trudy Otdela Novoi russkoi literatury* (Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1948), 9–38; V. Perets, "Gogol' i malorusskaia literaturnaia traditsiia," in *N. V. Gogol'. Rechi posviashchennye ego pamiati* (St. Petersburg: Tip. Imperatorskoi akad. nauk, 1902), 47–55; B. Katranov, "Gogol' i ego ukrainskie povesti," *Filologicheskie zapiski* 5 (1909): 8–32; 6 (1909) 33–58; 1 (1910): 20–40; V. A. Rozov, "Traditsionnye tipy malorusskogo teatra XVII–XVIII v. i iunosheskie povesti N. V. Gogolia," in *Pamiati N. V. Gogolia. Sbornik rechei i statei* (Kyiv: N.p., 1911), 99–169; N. K. Piksanov, "Ukrainske povesti Gogolia," in *O klassikakh* (Moscow: Moskovskoe t-vo pisatelei 1933), 43–148; Pavlo Fylypovych, "Ukraïn'ska stykhiia v tvorchosti Hoholia," *Pratsi Instytutu Slov'ianoznavstva Ukraïns'koï Vil'noï Akademiï Nauk* 13 (1952): 5–27; N. Ie. Krutikova, *Hohol' ta ukraïns'ka literatura* (Kyiv: Derzhavne vydavnytstvo khudozhn'oï literatury, 1957); Iu. Barabash, *Pochva i sud'ba. Gogol' i ukrainskaia literatura: u istokov* (Moscow: Nasledie, 1995); and Paul Karpuk, "Gogol's Research on Ukrainian Customs for 'Dikan'ka' Tales," *The Russian Review* 56.2 (1997): 209–232.
25. George G. Grabowicz, "Between Subversion and Self-Assertion: The Role of Kotliarevshchyna in Russian-Ukrainian Literary Relations," in *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter (1600–1945),* ed. Andreas Kappeler et al., 215–228 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2003); quotation from 215.
26. Quoted in ibid., 224.
27. Ibid., 222, 224, 227.
28. To the Ukrainians, the untrimmed beard that traditional Russians wore in conformance to their religious custom identified them as a group (see also "bearded *moskal'*" in *Evenings, PSS* 1, 182). To dub such full beards as goat-like was meant as ridicule. Ievhen Hrebinka, Gogol's Ukrainian contemporary, would sometimes refer to a Russian man, especially one who annoyed him with ignorance of or hostility toward things Ukrainian, simply as *tsap* (Ievhen P. Hrebinka, *Tvory v tr'okh tomakh,* vol. 1, [Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1980], 566, 596).
29. Robert Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994), 8.
30. On the function of "bounded space" in Gogol, see ibid., 3–97.
31. *Istoriia Rusov* (1846; Kyiv: Dzvin, 1991). I discuss this source in more detail in Chapter 3.

32. According to Grabowicz, the story epitomizes Gogol's mythic approach to history. Gogol first acquires a structure of history (the "idea" or "feel" of the past) and only then selects historical events that could embody it. For Grabowicz, following Lévi-Strauss, this movement from structure to event represents a "structural definition of myth" ("The History and Myth of the Cossack Ukraine," 472).
33. A. S. Pushkin, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh,* vol. 5 (St. Petersburg: Bibliopolis, 1993–1994), 317.
34. Walter Scott, *Waverley* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), 173, 165. The performance of Gogol's bard resembles that of Scott's bard quite closely. Gogol could have borrowed the 1827 Russian translation of *Waverley* from Troshchynsky's library or purchased a copy in a Petersburg bookstore (Chudakov, *Otnoshenie tvorchestva N. V. Gogolia,* 151).
35. See Larry Wolff's discussion of this "voyage of illusion," as he calls it, in *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994), 126–141.
36. The role of a Ukrainian *golova,* or village chief, consisted in mediating between peasants, landowners, and government authorities and was an elective function. However, Gogol's story never mentions that the *golova* was elected and instead stresses his dependence on the commissar, who backs and supervises him, thus foregrounding the *golova*'s link to imperial power.
37. Mikhail Epshtein, "Ironiia stilia: Demonicheskoe v obraze Rossii u Gogolia," *Novoe literaturnoe obozreniie* 19 (1996): 129–147.
38. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind,* 142.
39. Mikhail Lemke, *Nikolaevskie zhandarmy i literatura 1826–1855 gg.* (St. Petersburg: [Orlov], 1909), 224.
40. Evhen Malaniuk, "Hohol-Gogol," *The Ukrainian Review* 14.3 (1967): 59.
41. On the generic features of the story cycle genre, see Forrest L. Ingram, *Representative Short Story Cycles of the Twentieth Century: Study in a Literary Genre* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971). Grabowicz treats "Shponka" and "A Bewitched Place" in such a teleological manner, which causes him to see Gogol's portrayal of Ukraine as determined by an inevitable decline brought about by a curse ("The History and Myth of the Cossack Ukraine," chap. 9).
42. Anna Berehulak states this view in "Gogolian Myth and the Colonial Ethos," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 20.1–2 (1995): 33–42. For Peter Sawczak, Gogol's parodic depiction of Ukraine reflects his complicity with the colonial status quo, but Sawczak at the same time argues that by inscribing Ukrainianness within the imperial Russian culture Gogol implodes this culture from within (" 'Noch' pered Rozhdestvom' Mykoly/Nikolaia Gogolia: K voprosu o 'maloi literature,' " *Russian Literature* 49 [2001]: 259–270). Gogol is less concerned, however, with destabilizing Russian culture than he is with giving a Ukrainian one a firm footing. Myroslav Shkandrij, closest to my position, argues that Gogol maneuvers between colonial and anticolonial discourses, but Shkandrij ultimately places Gogol within his section on imperial discourse rather than counterdiscourse (*Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times* [Montreal: McGill-Queen's Univ. Press, 2001]).

43. Stephen Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), 239.
44. Gippius, " 'Vechera na khutore bliz Dikan'ki' Gogolia," 11. As regards the Ukrainian language, critical literature often quotes G. P. Danilevskii's 1886 account of his 1851 meeting with Gogol, during which Gogol supposedly criticized Shevchenko and literature written in Ukrainian and insisted that all Slavs should write in Russian (*Istoricheskii vestnik* 26 [1886]: 478–479). Though in 1851 Gogol may have indeed defended the correctness of his own choice, this account needs to be taken with a grain of salt. It is kept in the form of a dialogue and includes comments on the speakers' tone of voice and even positioning in the room. That Danilevskii would recall such details thirty-five years later seems unlikely. His claim that he recorded his impressions shortly afterward in his diary have not been verified. What he intended as a factual document reads more like fiction, of which Danilevskii was a skilled practitioner. The vehemence of the account's Russocentric sentiment is corroborated by none of Gogol's other pronouncements. It meshes quite well, however, with the 1880s imperial policy of Russification that Danilevskii, being an active collaborator of the government and himself a Ukrainian who wrote exclusively in Russian, no doubt supported (Danilevskii served in the Ministry of Education and for two decades headed the official paper called *The Government Herald* [*Pravitel'stvennyi vestnik*]). Though a kernel of truth may be buried in Danilevskii's story, the account is not reliable evidence of Gogol's views.
45. Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine,* 108.
46. Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997).
47. [V. A. Ushakov], rev. of *Vechera na khutore bliz Dikanki,* vol. 1, *Severnaia pchela* 219, 220 (1831). David Saunders demonstrates that this review was mistakenly attributed to Bulgarin, first by Zelinskii, then by Debreczeny. The "V" signed below the article points to the authorship of V. A. Ushakov, one of the journal's editors (David B. Saunders, "Contemporary Critics of Gogol's *Vechera* and the Debate about Russian *narodnost'* (1831–1832)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5.1 [1981]: 66–82, 67n3; Paul Debreczeny, "Nikolay Gogol and His Contemporary Critics," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 56.3 [1966]: 5–65).

I avoid as much as possible in this book using V. A. Zelinskii's collection of contemporary critical responses, owing to its unmarked cuts (*Russkaia kriticheskaia literatura o proizvedeniiakh N. V. Gogolia,* 3 vols. [Moscow: V. Rikhter, 1903]).

48. N. A. Polevoi, rev. of *Vechera na khutore bliz Dikanki,* vol. 1, *Moskovskii telegraf* 5 (1831): 91–95. Paul Debreczeny attributes Polevoi's hostility to *Evenings* to his rivalry with *The Northern Bee*'s owner, Bulgarin (Debreczeny, "Nikolay Gogol and His Contemporary Critics," 6).
49. N. A. Polevoi, rev. of *The Government Inspector,* 2nd ed. (1841), by N. Gogol, in N. A. Polevoi and Ks. A. Polevoi, *Literaturnaia kritika. Stat'i i retsenzii, 1825–1842* (Leningrad: Khudozh literatura, 1990), 336.
50. [N. I. Nadezhdin], rev. of *Vechera na khutore bliz Dikanki,* vol. 1, *Teleskop* 5 (1831): 558–563.
51. A. Tsarynnyi [A. Storozhenko], "Mysli Malorossiianina, po prochtenii Povestei Pasichnika Rudogo-Pan'ka," *Syn Otechestva* 25 (1832): 41–49, 101–115, 159–164, 223–242, 288–312.
52. N. Polevoi, rev. of *Vechera na khutore bliz Dikanki,* vol. 2, *Moskovskii telegraf* 2 (1832): 263.
53. "Plemia poiushchee i pliashiushchee." Pushkin, *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 5, 317. Pushkin earlier welcomed Panko's stories in a short notice in *Literaturnye pribavleniia k Russkomu invalidu,* see *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 5, 260.
54. [O. I. Senkovskii], rev. of *Vechera na khutore bliz Dikanki,* 2nd ed., *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 15 (1836): 3–4.
55. S. Shevyrev, rev. of *Mirgorod,* by N. Gogol, *Moskovskii nabliudatel'* 1 (1835): 404; emphasis mine.
56. Ibid., 402–403.
57. V. G. Belinskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v deviati tomakh,* vol. 1. (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1976), 125; hereafter *SSBel.*
58. [F. B. Bulgarin], rev. of *Vechera na khutore bliz Dikanki,* 2nd ed., *Severnaia pchela* 26 (1836).

3. The Politics of Writing History

1. Louis O. Mink, "Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument," in *The Writing of History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding,* ed. Robert Canary and Henry Kozicki, 129–149 (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1978); quotation from 138.
2. On the Herderianism of Gogol's historical articles, see Susanne Fusso, *Designing Dead Souls: An Anatomy of Disorder in Gogol* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1993), 5–19.

3. My characterization is based on Anatole G. Mazour, *Modern Russian Historiography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975), chap. 1–2.
4. Joseph L. Black, *Nicholas Karamzin and Russian Society in the Nineteenth Century: A Study in Russian Political and Historical Thought* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1975), 132–135.
5. P. A. Viazemskii, "Proekt pis'ma k ministru narodnogo prosveshcheniia, grafu Sergeiu Semenevichu Uvarovu, s zametkami A. S. Pushkina" (1836), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii kniazia P. A. Viazemskogo,* vol. 1 (St. Petersburg: Izd. grafa S. D. Sheremeteva, 1878), 225.
6. Seymour Becker, "Contributions to a Nationalist Ideology: Histories of Russia in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 13.4 (1986): 331–353; quotation from 333.
7. Caryl Emerson, *Boris Godunov: Transpositions of a Russian Theme* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), 34.
8. Damiano Rebecchini [Rebekkini], "Russkie istoricheskie romany 30-kh godov XX veka. Bibilograficheskii ukazatel'," *Novoe literaturnoe obozreniie* 34.6 (1998): 419.
9. The English translator-editor eliminated a lot of the Russian original's tendentiousness, softened its xenophobic passages, supplied the epigraphs, and made Poles and Russians into less black-and-white categories (Mark Al'tshuller, *Epokha Val'tera Skotta v Rossii: Istoricheskii roman 1838-kh godov* [St. Petersburg: Gumanitarnoe Agentstvo "Akademicheskii proekt," 1996], 79–85).
10. S. Shevyrev, "Gomer nashikh vremen" [rev. of Sir Walter Scott], *Moskovskii vestnik* 5 (1827): 409–432.
11. P. Viazemskii, "Ob al'manakhakh 1827-go goda," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 2, 32; Ks. A. Polevoi, rev. of "Chernaia nemoshch'," by M. Pogodin, *Moskovskii Telegraf* 4 (1829): 312–328.
12. Rebecchini, "Russkie istoricheskie romany," 421.
13. On censorship, see Charles A. Ruud, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804–1906* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1982); N. A. Engel'gardt, "Ocherki nikolaevskoi tsenzury," *Istoricheskii vestnik* 85 (1901): 850–873; 86 (1901): 156–179, 583–603, 970–1000; and Mikhail Lemke, *Nikolaevskie zhandarmy i literatura 1826–1855 gg.* (St. Petersburg: [Orlov], 1909).
14. Rev. of *Iurii Miloslavskii,* by M. Zagoskin, *Severnaia pchela* 7–9 (1830).
15. N. Polevoi, rev. of *Ruka Vsevyshnego Otechestvo spasla* (1834), by N. Kukol'nik, *Moskovskii telegraf* 1 (1834): 498–506.
16. Petr Ia. Chaadaev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i izbrannye pis'ma,* vol. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), 330. Herzen is quoted in Cynthia H. Whittaker,

The Origins of Modern Russian Education: An Intellectual Biography of Count Uvarov, 1786–1855 (DeKalb: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1984), 106.

17. Lemke, *Nikolaevskie zhandarmy,* 410–411.
18. Dale E. Peterson, "Civilizing the Race: Chaadaev and the Paradox of Eurocentric Nationalism," *The Russian Review* 56 (1997): 550.
19. Whittaker, *The Origins of Modern Russian Education,* 37; see also 34–56, 108–110.
20. Ibid., 108.
21. These were "On the Teaching of Universal History," "On the Middle Ages," "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," and "On Little Russian Songs."
22. *Gogol' v vospominaniiakh sovremennikov* (Moscow: Gos. izd. khudozh. literatury, 1952), 83–86.
23. He alludes to it as early as September 1833 and then mentions it explicitly in November 1833 (*PSS* 10, 277–278, 294, 466; *PSS* 10, 284). Other references to Gogol's "History of Little Russia" appear in his 1834 letters to Maksymovych and Sreznevsky (*PSS* 10, 297, 298–300). In 1834 he announced his forthcoming "History of Little Russia" in various journals (*PSS* 9, 76–77).
24. Sharon J. Varney, "Gogol as a Historian" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Virginia, 1995), 44.
25. Ibid., 333.
26. I disagree with Varney's classification of "Al-Mamun" as an example of scholarly discourse. In my view, the heightened didacticism of the piece disqualifies it from this category, as she herself has defined it.
27. Stephen Baehr, "From History to National Myth: *Translatio imperii* in Eighteenth-Century Russia," *The Russian Review* 37 (1978): 1.
28. Ibid., 10.
29. Iu. M. Lotman and B. A Uspenskii, "Echoes of the Notion 'Moscow as the Third Rome' in Peter the Great's Ideology," in *The Semiotics of Russian Culture* (Ann Arbor: Dept. of Slavic Literatures, Univ. of Michigan, 1984), 53–67, L. V. Pumpianskii, " 'Mednyi vsadnik' i poeticheskaia traditsiia XVIII veka," in *Vremennik Pushkinskoi komissii,* vol. 4–5 (Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1939), 91–124.
30. Nikolai Fedorovich Koshanskii's *Obshchaia retorika* (1818; 10th ed. 1849) and *Chastnaia retorika* (1832; 7th ed. 1849) served as popular textbooks (*Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' Brokgauz i Efron v 12 tomakh: biografii* [Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1991–]). See also Monika Greenleaf, *Pushkin and Romantic Fashion: Fragment, Elegy, Orient, Irony* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994), 59.
31. Robert Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994), 287–288.

32. Baehr, "From History to National Myth," 2–3.
33. Larry Wolff, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on the Mind of the Enlightenment* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994).
34. "Konspekt knigi Gallama 'Evropa v srednie veka,' " *PSS* 9, 173–272; see, e.g., 179–180, 184–186, 197. The outline is three-quarters the size of Gogol's longest original work, *Dead Souls.*
35. On Thierry's indebtedness to Scott and English literature's treatment of the Norman conquest, see Claire A. Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick, N.J. Rutgers Univ. Press, 1990), 91–93.
36. Donald Ostrowski demonstrates that anti-Tatar rhetoric began in Muscovy by the Church's prompting only in the mid-fifteenth century. Muscovy's prior relations with the Mongols had been quite amicable (Ostrowski, *Muscovy and the Mongols: Cross-Cultural Influences on the Steppe Frontier, 1304–1589* [New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998], 244–248).
37. Rev. of *Histoire de la Conquête de L'Angleterre par les Normandes,* by Augustin Thierry (1825), *Moskovskii vestnik* 6.23 (1827): 330.
38. Mazour, *Modern Russian Historiography,* 33–34, 43–45, 60, 91.
39. O. I. Senkovskii, "Skandinavskie sagi," *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 1 (1834): 1–77.
40. The published article is "O dvizhenii zhurnal'noi literatury v 1834 i 1835 godu," *PSS* 8, 159. The unpublished notes are "O rossakh" and "Opisanie grecheskogo puti," *PSS* 9, 46–47.
41. M. P. Alekseev, "Drama Gogolia iz anglo-saksonskoi istorii," in *N. V. Gogol': Materialy i issledovaniia,* vol. 2, ed. V. V. Gippius, 242–285 (Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1936), 247, 282.
42. The Gogol and Kapnist families were neighbors and friends. Gogol remained friendly with Kapnist's children and corresponded with his daughter, Sofiia Kapnist-Skalon, until the end of his life. He lamented the old writer's death (*PSS* 10, 45, 393–394; *PSS* 11, 430).
43. Vsevolod Setchkarev, *Gogol: His Life and Works,* trans. Robert Kramer (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1965), 166.
44. Peter abolished the position of the Patriarch and in its place established the Synod, thus basically making the Church into a branch of the government. He also eliminated many church rituals that until then had been an important part of Russian culture.
45. On Gogol's expertise in Ukrainian history, see Paul Karpuk, "N. V. Gogol's Unfinished Historical Novel 'The Hetman' " (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1987), esp. chap. 2–6.
46. Stephen Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1992), 132.

47. My discussion of Ukrainian histories is based on Zenon E. Kohut, "The Development of Ukrainian National Historiography in Imperial Russia," in *Historiography of Imperial Russia: The Profession of Writing History in a Multinational State*, ed. Thomas Sanders, 453–477 (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1999). On Gogol's knowledge of these sources, see his letters to Sreznevsky in *PSS* 10, 298–300, 321.
48. Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process*, 131.
49. N. Polevoi, rev. of *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* (1822), by D. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Moskovskii telegraf* 5 (1830): 74–97, 224–257. I discuss it in detail in my "Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 2002), 259–261. Polevoi's sympathy for Ukrainian nationalism played a role in Uvarov's campaign to close down his journal (David B. Saunders, "Contemporary Critics of Gogol's *Vechera* and the Debate about Russian *narodnost'* (1831–1832)," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5.1 [1981]: 73n20).
50. Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process*, 232–239; the long quote comes from p. 233.
51. N. Gogol, "Ob izdanii istorii Malorossiiskikh kazakov," *Severnaia pchela* 24 (1834).
52. Gogol gave up his work on a comedy, "Vladimir of the Third Degree" ("Vladimir tret'ei stepeni"), in anticipation of his problems with the censorship: "I suddenly stopped, having seen that the pen leads me in such directions that the censorship will never pass" (*PSS* 10, 262–263). As I have argued above, "Alfred" may have shared the same fate. Some of Gogol's sketches on Ukrainian history also seem to fit this category.
53. Such metonymic circumlocutions that are calculated for a political message appear frequently in Gogol's writings. *Arabesques* offers another example: "the present-day Polish West of Russia" (*PSS* 8, 129). While saying "Polish lands" might seem simpler, the authorities would have been more gratified by a formulation, however awkward stylistically, that presented Poland as Russia's property.
54. "[The southern territories of Russia], having once been its best property, became from the middle of the thirteenth century as if alien to our northern fatherland" (N. M. Karamzin, *Istoriia gosudarstva Rossiiskogo*, 12 vols., 1816–1826, reprint in 4 vols. [Moscow: Kniga, 1988], vol. 4, 127). Hereafter I will quote Karamzin's work in text as *IGR*, followed by volume and column numbers (e.g., *IGR* 4, 127). The volume numbers refer to the original twelve-volume edition rather than its four-volume 1988 reprint.
55. Kohut, "The Development of Ukrainian National Historiography," 455.
56. See ibid., 453–457; and Serhii Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 2005), 135. M. P. Pogodin publicized his theory in *Issledovaniia, zamechaniia i lektsii o russkoi istorii*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Univ. tip. 1856), 420–438. Pogodin could have also been inspired by Sękowski's 1843 argument that the original population of Kievan lands was killed or dispersed by the Mongols, after which the land was resettled by immigrants from Lithuania and later the Poles (rev. of *Mikhailo Charnyshenko* [1843], by P. Kulish, *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 57 [1843]: 50–64; Pogodin references this article in his 1856 text).
57. Velychenko, *National History as Cultural Process*, 71–75, 131–137.
58. Maciej Stryjkowski, *Kronika polska, litewska, żmódzka i wszystkiej Rusi* (1582), vol. 1 (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1985).
59. Karamzin, *IGR* 4, 128–129; D. N. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* (1822; Kyiv: Chas, 1993), 16–17. As regards the material presented in this chapter, the 1993 reprint of the 1846 edition from which I will quote shows no differences with the 1830 edition that Gogol was using.
60. Gogol was apparently working with pp. 364–368 (Gediminas's conquest of southern Rus) and 385–386 (his death) of Stryjkowski's first volume. In addition, there survives Gogol's 1839 note about Lithuania's wars with Rus that was compiled from Stryjkowski's chronicle (*PSS* 9, 74–75).
61. While Gogol takes some motifs from Karamzin, he puts an entirely different spin on them. The poverty, savagery, and former vassalage to the Rusians seem to belittle the Lithuanians in Karamzin's eyes. For Gogol, such inauspicious attributes augment the achievement of these spunky warriors. Karamzin attaches importance to Gediminas's policy of noninterference only insofar as it protected Orthodoxy; hence Kiev continued to depend on Moscow in church matters. His concern lies with the survival of links with the new northern locus of Russian history, to which Ukraine would in time be reunited. Gogol makes no mention of these matters.
62. Bantysh-Kamenskii, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*, 18.
63. Edward Keenan found a complete lack of interest on the part of the Muscovites in their Slavic brethren prior to the 1650s. See Keenan's "Muscovite Perceptions of Other East Slavs before 1654—An Agenda for Historians," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter*, ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al., 20–38 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Univ. of Alberta, 1992).
64. Paul Karpuk notes this anachronism in his "Did Gogol Write a History of Ukraine" (unpublished article).
65. Nikolai V. Gogol, *Sochineniia N. V. Gogolia*, 7 vols., ed. N. Tikhonravov and V. Shenrok (Moscow: Nasledniki br. Salaevykh, 1889–1896); hereafter TS; Gogol, *Sobraniie sochinenii*, 9 vols. (Moscow: Russkaia kniga, 1994); hereafter *SS'94*. The most recent academic edition of Gogol, with Yuri Mann as its

main editor, began appearing in 2001 (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem,* 23 vols. [Moscow: Nasledie, 2001–]). At the moment this book goes into print, only the first and fourth volumes have been published. The new edition's general preface does not mention any significant shift from the *PSS* edition's handling of Gogol's historical miscellanea; specifics will be announced in the relevant volume. A useful collection of materials omitted in Gogol's editions appears in *Neizdannyi Gogol',* ed. I. A Vinogradov (Moscow: Nasledie, 2001).

66. Varney, "Gogol as a Historian," 67.
67. G. P. Georgievskii, *Pamiati V. A. Zhukovskogo i N. V. Gogolia,* vol. 3 (St. Petersburg: Tip. Imperatorskoi Akad. nauk, 1909), 186–202.
68. S. A. Vengerov, *Pisatel'-grazhdanin. Gogol',* in *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 2 (St. Petersburg: Izd. Prometei, 1913), 153–154.
69. In his notes about two Kievan princes, Iziaslav and Vsevolod, Gogol focuses on their battles with the Polovtsians, the Pechenegs' successors (*PSS* 9, 53–57). He accentuates Vladimir Monomakh's expulsion of the Pechenegs and the Torks and his transaction of nineteen peace treaties with the Polovtsians (*PSS* 9, 57–58). Gogol also praises Mstislav for pushing the Polovtsians as far as the Volga (*PSS* 9, 58).
70. *SS'94* 8, 766. First published in 1909, in Georgievskii's *Pamiati V. A. Zhukovskogo i N. V. Gogolia,* these excerpts were omitted in the *PSS* and were recently republished in *SS'94* 8, 41–49.
71. Jaroslaw Pelenski, "The Sack of Kiev of 1169: Its Significance for the Succession to Kievan Rus'," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 11.3–4 (1987): 303, 316.
72. Jaroslaw Pelenski, "The Contest for the 'Kievan Inheritance' in Russian-Ukrainian Relations: The Origins and Early Ramifications," in *Ukraine and Russia in Their Historical Encounter,* ed. Peter J. Potichnyj et al., 3–19 (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, Univ. of Alberta, 1992), 13.
73. S. T. Aksakov, *Istoriia moego znakomstva s Gogoliem* (Moscow: Tip. M. G. Volchaninova, 1890), 24.
74. Troshchynsky's library that young Gogol used had a huge section of Walter Scott in translation (G. I. Chudakov, *Otnoshenie tvorchestva N. V. Gogolia k zapadno-evropeiskim literaturam* [Kyiv: Tip. Imperatorskogo Universiteta Sv. Vladimira, 1908], 151–152). In 1827 Gogol sent his sister a Walter Scott novel from St. Petersburg (*PSS* 10, 412). He called Scott a great genius in his article "O dvizhenii zhurnal'noi literatury v 1834 i 1835 godu." In 1836 Gogol claimed he was "rereading all of Walter Scott" (*PSS* 11, 60). P. V. Annenkov even claimed that Scott was the only European writer Gogol really knew well (V. V. Gippius, ed., *Gogol'. Vospominaniia, pis'ma, dnievniki* [1931; Moscow: Agraf, 1999], 78–79).
75. S. Mashinskii asserts Scott's importance for Gogol, and yet devotes his analysis to their differences (*Istoricheskaia povest' Gogolia* [Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1940], 125–130). Al'tshuller also discounts Scott's impact on Gogol (*Epokha Val'tera Skotta,* 258–261).

76. John Mersereau Jr., *Baron Del'vig's "Northern Flowers," 1825–1832* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1967), 197; quoted by Stephen Moeller-Sally in his "0000: or, The Sign of the Subject in Gogol's Petersburg," in *Russian Subjects: Empire, Nation, and the Culture of the Golden Age,* ed. Monika Greenleaf and Stephen Moeller-Sally, 325–346 (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1998), 339.
77. Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997), xiii.
78. Ibid., 255.
79. Ian Duncan, Introduction to *Ivanhoe,* by Walter Scott (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), xix.
80. On "A Few Chapters" as the novel's alternative beginning, see Karpuk, "N. V. Gogol's Unfinished Historical Novel," 30–34.
81. Indeed, the view of Mazepa as a traitor was promoted not only by Russian nationalists but also by Ukrainian populists (e.g., Kostomarov), who argued that the hetman represented the interests of the Cossack elites, not the Ukrainian people. Only in the 1920s did émigré Ukrainian historians begin to reconsider Mazepa's significance. See Orest Subtelny, "Mazepa, Peter I, and the Question of Treason," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2.2 (1978): 158–183. Ia. I. Dzyra's 2002 article, which reprints Gogol's text though fails to analyze it, will hopefully reverse this fragment's bad fortune in Ukrainian scholarship (Ia. I. Dzyra, "Mykola Hohol', 'Rozdumy Mazepy,' " *Ukraïns'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* 2 [2002]: 76–83).
82. "I congratulate you with a new fellow countryman—a new acquisition of our fatherland. It is Faddei Benediktovich Bulgarin. Fancy this: he is already publishing a Little Russian novel by the title of 'Mazepa.' That's what we have to suffer!" (1833 letter to Danilevskii, *PSS* 10, 260).
83. Hubert F. Babinski, *The Mazeppa Legend in European Romanticism* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1974).
84. George G. Grabowicz, "The History and Myth of the Cossack Ukraine in Polish and Russian Romantic Literature" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1975), 429.
85. Some modern historians also consider this aspect of Russia's political organization central in understanding its history. The notion of the patrimonial regime is key to Richard Pipes's *Russia under the Old Regime,* 2nd ed. (1974; New York: Collier Books, Macmillan, 1992).
86. Drafts of "The Hetman" also refer to the ethnic kinship between the Ukrainians and the Poles (*soplemennye narody; PSS* 3, 576).

4. Confronting Russia

1. The fiction on Ukrainian themes included two volumes of *Evenings on a Farm Near Dikanka* (1831–1832), republished in 1836, and *Mirgorod* (1835); other historical fiction on Ukraine appeared in *Arabesques* (1835). The three stories on Russian themes were "The Portrait," "Nevsky Prospect," and "Diary of a Madman."
2. By Vengerov's count, from the time Gogol left Ukraine until he basically finished his draft of *Dead Souls* (1829–1840), Gogol spent only about fifty days in Russia outside of its capitals, mostly on his way to and from Ukraine (S. A. Vengerov, *Pisatel'-grazhdanin. Gogol'* in *Sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 2. [St. Petersburg: Prometei, 1913], 127–135).
3. On Russian culture's image of Petersburg as Babylon, see K. G. Isupov, ed., "Dialog stolits v istoricheskom dvizhenii," in *Moskva-Peterburg: Pro et contra. Dialog kul'tur v istorii natsional'nogo samosoznaniia. Antologiia* (St. Petersburg: Izd. Russkogo Khristianskogo gumanitarnogo instituta, 2000), 24–25. On the role of Petersburg in Russian culture, see Julie Buckler, *Mapping St. Petersburg: Imperial Text and Cityshape* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 2005).
4. L. V. Pumpianskii, " 'Mednyi vsadnik' i poeticheskaya traditsia XVIII veka," *Vremennik Pushkinskoi komissii,* vol. 4–5 (Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1939), 91–124.
5. G. A. Gukovskii, *Realizm Gogolia* (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1959), 92, 292. Though Gukovsky absolves the Russian nation from Gogol's criticism of the empire, I do not see Gogol making this distinction in the story.
6. The *PSS* editors selectively recovered manuscript variants for their "canonical" version of "Diary of a Madman" (*PSS* 3, 193–214). This has resulted in a text that corresponds neither to any of the story's published texts (*Arabesques* or *Collected Works* of 1842) nor to its manuscript version. However, I wish to consider the Gogolian text as it was available to his contemporaries. I will therefore recover the published version from the *PSS* variants, noting in each instance the appropriate page number. See the variants in *PSS* 3, 553–571, and the explanation of the editorial decision in *PSS* 3, 698–700.
7. Mikhail Epshtein, "Ironiia stilia: Demonicheskoe v obraze Rossii u Gogolia," *Novoe literaturnoe obozreniie* 19 (1996): 129–147.
8. Robert Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994), 3–93.
9. On the un-Russianness of what Alexander Gershenkron calls a high economic time horizon, see his article "Time Horizon in Russian Literature," *Slavic Review* 34.4 (1975): 692–715.
10. Olena Pchilka, *Pereklady z N. Hoholia* (Kyiv, 1881), 28; Pchilka's interpretation was brought to my attention by B. Katranov, "Gogol' i ego ukrainskie povesti," *Filologicheskie zapiski* 1 (1910): 31–32.
11. Edyta M. Bojanowska, "Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 2002), 122–132.
12. S. T. Aksakov, *Istoriia moego znakomstva s Gogoliem* (Moscow: Tip M. G. Volchaninova, 1890), 16; I. I. Sreznevskii, "Putevye pis'ma I. I. Sreznevskogo k materi ego Elene Ivanovne Sreznevskoi," *Zhivaia starina* 1 (1892): 49–77.
13. In a letter to Danilevsky, Gogol wrote: "What can I tell you about Italy? It seems to me that I came by to see old Little Russian landowners" (*PSS* 11, 95).
14. Rev. of *Arabesques* (1835), by N. Gogol, *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 9 (1835): 8–14; rev. of *Arabesques* (1835), by N. Gogol, *Severnaia pchela* 73 (1835).
15. For a sample of texts, see the anthology *Moskva-Peterburg: Pro et contra.*
16. Privately, Gogol dubbed Moscow more harshly as a "foul-mouthed fat old wench, smelling of cabbage soup" (*PSS* 10, 301).
17. Some examples are K. Ryleev's series of feuilletons "A Provincial in Peterburg," *Nevskii zritel'* (1821) or "Letters of a Provincial Lady from the Capital," serialized in 1830 in *Severnaia pchela.*
18. On Gogol's knowledge of the manuscript, see Richard Peace, *The Enigma of Gogol: An Examination of the Writings of N. V. Gogol and Their Place in the Russian Literary Tradition* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 151, 327n1. Gogol's plot bears an uncanny resemblance to Kvitka's.
19. Donald Fanger, *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1979), 136. Fanger, however, does not offer reasons to think that "Gogol's symbolic presentation [of Petersburg] . . . pointedly leaves open the possibility that worthier values, if attached to the national symbol, might produce a real magnificence" (135).
20. P. V. Annenkov's reminiscences, quoted in V. V. Veresaev, *Gogol' v zhizni. Sistematicheskii svod podlinnykl svidetel'stv sovremennikov* in *Zhizn' geniev,* vol. 3 (1932; St. Petersburg: Lenizdat, 1995), 229.
21. Gukovskii, *Realizm Gogolia,* 388.
22. P. P. Karamygin's recollection, reported in Vereasaev, *Gogol' v zhizni,* 228.
23. Incidentally, Gogol's Ukrainian audience also accused Gogol of a slanderous portrayal of Ukraine. See my discussion of Storozhenko's review (pen name Tsarynny) of *Evenings* in Chapter 2. A. S. Danilevskii wrote to Gogol that Mirgorod patriots hated him for tarnishing in *Mirgorod* the name of a great province. They reportedly breathed a huge sigh of relief that Gogol took to a Russian theme in *Dead Souls* (*Perepiska N. V. Gogolia v dvukh tomakh,* vol. 1 [Moscow: Khudozh. literatura 1988], 69).
24. For analyses of contemporary reception, see *PSS* 4, 545–550; Paul Debreczeny, "Nikolai Gogol and His Contemporary Critics," *Transactions of the*

American Philosophical Society 56.3 (1966): 17–29; and Fanger, *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol,* 125–142.

25. Veresaev, *Gogol' v zhizni,* 229.
26. Ibid., 232.
27. F. F. Vigel', letter to M. Zagoskin of May 31, 1836, "Iz perepiski M. N. Zagoskina," *Russkaia starina* 111 (1902): 100–101; referenced in *PSS* 4, 545. Vigel' recanted his low opinion of Gogol after *Selected Passages* (Veresaev, *Gogol' v zhizni,* 238).
28. I. A. Zaitseva, "K tsenzurnoi i stsenicheskoi istorii pervykh postanovok 'Revizora' N. V. Gogolia v Moskve i Peterburge (po arkhivnym istochnikam)," in *Gogol': Materialy i issledovaniia,* ed. Iv. V. Mann, 118–135 (Moscow: Nasledie, 1995).
29. Jurij Striedter, "Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and Laughter within and around Gogol's *Inspector General,*" unpublished manuscript.
30. O. Senkovskii, rev. of *Revizor* (1836), by N. Gogol, *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 16 (1836): 38.
31. F. Bulgarin, rev. of *Revizor* (1836), by N. Gogol, *Severnaia pchela* 97–98 (1836).
32. Vengerov, *Pisatel'-grazhdanin. Gogol',* 131–136.
33. The remarks appear in a review of an unauthorized sequel to *The Government Inspector* titled *The Real Government Inspector,* staged in Petersburg in the same year. Rev. of *Nastoiashchii revizor* (1836) [by Tsitsianov], *Severnaia pchela* 171 (1836) [signed P. M.]. Debreczeny identifies *The Real Government Inspector*'s author as Tsitsianov ("Nikolai Gogol and His Contemporary Critics," 65).
34. N. A. Polevoi and Ks. A. Polevoi, *Literaturnaia kritika. Stat'i i retsenzii, 1825–1842* (Leningrad: Khudozh. literatura, 1990), 336.
35. P. A. Viazemskii, *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh,* vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1982), 154.
36. Nikolai I. Nadezhdin, "Teatral'naia khronika," in *Literaturnaia kritika. Estetika* (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1972), 474.
37. V. P. Androsov, rev. of *Revizor* (1836), by N. Gogol, *Moskovskii nabliudatel'* 7 (1836): 121–131.
38. Ibid., 161–162.
39. Herzen welcomed Gogol's play as a scathing critique of the social order. In his view, *The Government Inspector* and *Dead Souls* exposed the two enemies of the Russian people, the civil servant and the landowner, respectively. He claimed that no one before Gogol wrote such a "full course of the pathological anatomy" of the Russian civil servant. Herzen considers it the height of irony that the tsar Nicholas I was rolling from laughter at the performance of *The Government Inspector.* See his 1851 *Du développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie* in Aleksandr I. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh,* vol. 7 (Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1956), 98.

40. V. I. Ivanov, "Gogol's *Inspector General* and the Comedy of Aristophanes," in *Gogol from the Twentieth Century: Eleven Essays,* ed. Robert Maguire, 200–214 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1974), 201; quoted in Fanger, *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol,* 136.
41. Vladimir Nabokov, *Nikolai Gogol* (1944; New York: New Directions, 1961), 54–55.
42. Veresaev, *Gogol' v zhizni,* 235.
43. Nabokov, *Nikolai Gogol,* 58.
44. M. S. Shchepkin's letter to Gogol of May 22, 1847, in *Perepiska N. V. Gogolia,* vol. 1, 468–469.
45. Vengerov, *Pisatel'-grazhdanin,* 9.
46. Gogol continued to use Zhukovsky's financial services throughout his life. In addition to the help mentioned above, Zhukovsky also obtained royal grants for the schooling of Gogol's sisters and procured for him a 4,000 rubles loan from the tsar (*PSS* 11, 251–253, 277). Gogol importuned Zhukovsky also for aid for his friends, Russian artists in Rome (*PSS* 11, 344–346).
47. N. M. Iazykov wrote to S. T. Aksakov in June 1845: "Gogol should live at least a hundred years, and we should guard him for Russia like the apple of our eye, at least so long as we live" (V. V. Gippius, ed., *N. V. Gogol'. Materialy i issledovaniia,* vol. 1 [Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1936], 159). This sentiment also pervades the Aksakov family's attitude toward the writer (see Aksakov, *Istoriia moego znakomstva*).
48. William Mills Todd, *Fiction and Society in the Age of Pushkin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1986), 187.
49. V. V. Gippius, *Gogol* [1924], trans. Robert A. Maguire (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1989), 118.
50. Peace, *The Enigma of Gogol,* 229.
51. As befits an author obsessed with food and the alimentary tract no less than with nationness, the stomach becomes a nationally inflected image in Gogol's novel. The Madeira of which Chichikov partakes at Nozdrev's represents another instance of a Russianized, hence cheapened and perverted, Western fashion, much like Manilov's scum-covered pond. The narrator informs us that the merchants, adjusting the wine for the Russian landowners' taste, mix it with rum or simply "the tsar's vodka," confident in the digestive prowess of "Russian stomachs" (*PSS* 6, 75).
52. Peace, *The Enigma of Gogol,* 251–252.
53. The beneficial impact of Gogol's Ukrainian linguistic background on the development of the Russian literary language was evident already to his contemporaries (S. Shevyrev, "Vzgliad na sovremennuiu russkuiu literaturu,"

Moskvitianin 3 [1842]: 179–180). See also I. D. Mandel'shtam, "Malorossiiskii element v stile Gogolia," in *O kharaktere gogolevskogo stilia* (Helsinki: Novaia tip. Guvudstadobladet, 1902), 194–241; Andrei Belyi, *Masterstvo Gogolia* (Moscow: Gos. izd. khudozh. literatury, 1934), 212–213; Boris Eikhenbaum, *Lermontov* (Leningrad: Gos. izdatel'stvo, 1924), 135.

54. See Gogol's "On Little Russian Songs" (*PSS* 8, 96). I discuss the article and other folklorists' views, including those of Maksymovych, in my dissertation, "Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism," 103–106.
55. Epshtein, "Ironiia stilia," 133–134.
56. A similarly ambivalent attitude toward Russia comes through when Gogol praises A. I. Turgenev for capturing an "important truth," which may be imperfectly translated as: "one is sick for Russia while living abroad, but one is sick from Russia immediately upon returning to it" ("zhivia za granitseiu, toshnit po Rossii, a ne uspeesh priekhat' v Rossiiu, kak uzhe toshnit ot Rossii" *PSS* 11, 108).
57. Iurii Mann, *V poiskakh zhivoi dushi* (Moscow: Kniga, 1984), 137.
58. Todd, *Fiction and Society,* 167.
59. For a detailed analysis of *Dead Souls*' reception, see Mann, *V poiskakh.* Mann does not, however, focus on national issues.
60. Aksakov, *Istoriia moego znakomstva,* 38.
61. A. Smirnova, letter of November 3, 1844, in *Perepiska N. V. Gogolia,* vol. 2, 124.
62. N. Grech, rev. of *Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili Mertvye dushi* (1842), by N. Gogol, *Severnaia pchela* 137 (1842): 546–547. Bulgarin frequently commented on the novel in his regular column "Zhurnal'naia vsiakaia vsiachina"; see, e.g., *Severnaia pchela* 135 (1843); 274 (1843); 288 (1846); 261 (1845). On the Moscow censor see Mann, *V poiskakh,* 147.
63. O. I. Senkovskii, rev. of *Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili Mertvye dushi* (1842), by N. Gogol, *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 53 (1842): 32.
64. V. A. Zelinskii, *Russkaia kriticheskaia literatura o proizvedeniiakh N. V. Gogolia,* vol. 1 (Moscow: V. Rikhter, 1903), 185–211. Polevoi's review appeared in *Russkoi vestnik.*
65. K. P. Masal'skii, rev. of *Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili Mertvye dushi* (1842), by N. Gogol, *Syn otechestva* 6 (1842): 26.
66. Rev. of *Sochineniia* (1843), by N. Gogol, *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 57 (1843): 22, 28.
67. A good example here is Gogol's friend of Slavophilic leanings F. V. Chizhov, who in a friendly 1847 letter to Gogol confessed that *Dead Souls* offended his national sensibility as a Russian so deeply that he was unable to savor the novel's purely artistic aspects (V. V. Gippius, ed., *Gogol'. Vospominaniia, pis'ma, dnievniki* [1931; Moscow: Agraf, 1999], 234).

68. M. Sorokin, writing for *The St. Petersburg News,* was one of the few positively inclined reviewers without a personal connection to the author (see his review of *Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili Mertvye dushi* (1842), by N. Gogol, *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti* 163–165 [1842]). Another such positive review came from the unlikely quarters of *The St. Petersburg City Police News* (*Vedomosti S. Peterburgskoi gorodskoi politsii*; see Mann, *V poiskakh,* 149–152).
69. Zelinskii, *Russkaia kriticheskaia literatura,* vol. 2, 285, 291–292, 295.
70. O. V. Novitskaia claims that "the vices of Gogolian heroes are [in fact] national virtues, as if turned inside out" (*Rossiia i russkie v poeme N. V. Gogolia "Mertvye dushi"* [Moscow: Moskovskii gos. universitet, 1999], 130).
71. Zelinskii, *Russkaia kriticheskaia literatura,* vol. 2, 300, 303.
72. Ibid., 304.
73. Chernyshevskii, "Ocherki Gogolievskogo perioda russkoi literatury," quoted in V. I. Shenrok, "Literaturnye otzyvy sovremennikov o pervom tome 'Mertvykh dush,' " *Russkaia starina* 10 (1894): 155.
74. *Russkaia kriticheskaia literatura,* vol. 3, 12–13.
75. Ibid., 24–25.
76. Ibid., 25–26.
77. See Shevyrev's letters of March 26, 1843, July 29, 1846, and October 20 and 29, 1846, in *Perepiska N. V. Gogolia,* vol. 2, 296–299, 322, 325–326, 330–332.
78. Shevyrev later polemicized with other critiques of *Dead Souls.* He claimed that some unjustly accused Gogol "of almost criminal hostility towards Russia" by misconstruing his comical passages. Shevyrev declared that Gogol will triumph over his detractors in the next volumes, which will surely show the bright side of Russian life. Moreover, he argued, a Christian readiness to confront one's shortcomings was a deeply Russian trait. In that, Shevyrev went so far as to imply, Gogol resembled St. Peter. (S. Shevyrev, "Kriticheskii perechen' proizvedenii Russkoi slovesnosti za 1842 g.," *Moskvitianin* 1 [1843]: 282–286).
79. Iu. F. Samarin's 1843 letter to K. S. Aksakov, *Russkaia starina* 65.2 (1890): 421–425.
80. K. S. Aksakov, "Neskol'ko slov o poeme Gogolia: 'Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova' ili 'Mertvye dushi,' " in *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1995), 84.
81. Peter K. Christoff, *An Introduction to Nineteenth-Century Russian Slavophilism,* vol. 3 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982), 96; Andrzej Walicki, *The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in Nineteenth-Century Russian Thought,* trans. Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 289. Both are quoted in Ruth Sobel, "K. Aksakov's Essay on Gogol's *Dead Souls*—A Short Evaluation," *Russian Literature Triquarterly* 23 (1990): 267.

82. [Petr Pletnev], "Chichikov, ili Mertvye dushi Gogolia," *Sovremennik* 27 (1842): 52–53, 55–56.
83. When Belinsky wrote a scathing review of his brochure, Aksakov responded with a weak, hair-splitting defense ("Ob"iasnenie," published in *The Muscovite*), which in turn brought another attack by Belinsky ("Ob"iasnenie na ob"iasnenie po povodu poemy Gogolia 'Mertvye dushi' "). See Belinsky's texts in *SSBel* 5, 56–62, 139–160; see Aksakov's text in *Estetika i literaturnaia kritika,* 85–94.
84. See Belinsky's spoof of Sękowski's review, "Literaturnyi razgovor, podslushannyi v knizhnoi lavke," *SSBel* 5, 125–138. In it, Belinsky ridicules Sękowski's presumption that he could teach Gogol grammar, reminding him that as a Pole he lacked the necessary qualifications. In a snide skirmish with *The Northern Bee,* Belinsky counters its complaint about Gogol's reprehensible heroes by noting that all of *Ivan Vyzhygin*'s heroes (the novel by Bulgarin, *The Bee*'s publisher) were also idiots and scoundrels ("Literaturnye i zhurnal'nye zametki," *SSBel* 5, 292).
85. See also Belinsky's attack on Shevyrev's review in "Literaturnye i zhurnal'nye zametki," *SSBel* 5, 327–332. Gogol found Belinsky's article noteworthy enough to send it to his friend, the poet Nikolai Iazykov (*PSS* 12, 192).
86. Gogol was inconsistent in his evaluation of the novel's reviews. In one letter he states that Mizko's review is the best; elsewhere he chooses Pletnev's review in *The Contemporary* (*PSS* 12, 191–192, 210).

    Gogol's interest in provincial readers is well accounted for. He valued *The Northern Bee* and *The Library for Reading* for their feeling for the provincial readership. When in Italy, he kept asking his friends about the opinions on his works of these two popular journals. In 1838 he recommended their reviews of his works to his mother, claiming that though they do not always praise him, their remarks are almost always justified (*PSS* 11, 189). In *Selected Passages,* Gogol was soon to agree with Bulgarin's and Sękowski's critique of *Dead Souls.*
87. [N. D. Mizko], "Golos iz provintsii o poeme Gogolia 'Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili Mertvye dushi,' " *Otechestvennye zapiski* 27 (1843): 28–29.
88. Ibid., 46–48; italics mine.
89. [V. Maikov], rev. of *Pokhozhdeniia Chichikova, ili Mertvye dushi,* 2nd ed. (1846), by N. Gogol, *Otechestvennye zapiski* 49 (1846): 57. On the reviewer's identity, see Mann, *V poiskakh,* 252.
90. Sto-odin [A. Galakhov], "Pis'mo k N. V. Gogoliu po povodu predisloviia ko vtoromu izdaniiu 'Mertvykh dush,' " *Otechestvennye zapiski* 2 (1847): 77–82. On the reviewer's identity, see Mann, *V poiskakh,* 253.

5. Nationalizing the Empire

1. Carl Proffer, *The Simile and Gogol's "Dead Souls"* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), 183–200.
2. Dmytro Chyzhevs'kyi, "The Unknown Gogol'," *Slavonic and East European Review* 30.75 (1952): 476–493.
3. George Grabowicz dismisses a view that *Taras Bulba* represents a "sublime statement of patriotism" without, however, discussing his reasons ("The History and Myth of the Cossack Ukraine in Polish and Russian Romantic Literature" [Ph.D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1975], 510; "Three Perspectives on the Cossack Past: Gogol', Ševčenko, Kuliš," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5.2 [1981]: 171–191). Though Simon Karlinsky sees in the work merely a glorification of national and religious chauvinism, he has been very perceptive in detecting its numerous problematic tensions (*The Sexual Labyrinth of Nikolai Gogol* [1976; Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992]).
4. Iurii Mann, *Gogol'. Trudy i dni: 1809–1845* (Moscow: Aspekt Press, 2004).
5. Wasyl I. Hryshko, "Nikolai Gogol' and Mykola Hohol': Paris 1837," *The Annals of the Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences in the United States* 12.1–2 (1969): 113–142. Hryshko's source of Zaleski's letter is *Kievskaia starina* 78.9 (1902): 116–118. The quotes from Zaleski are translated by Hryshko (125–126).
6. Ibid., 121, 133.
7. V. V. Veresaev, *Gogol' v zhizni. Sistematicheskii svod podlinnykh svidetel'stv sovremennikov,* vol. 1 of his *Zhizn' geniev,* 5 vols. (1932; St. Petersburg: Lenizdat, 1995), 262; *PSS* 11, 173; *PSS* 12, 18.
8. A. O. Smirnova-Rossetti, letter to Gogol of May 6, 1944, *Russkaia starina* 58 (1888): 607.
9. Paweł Smolikowski, *Historya zgromadzenia zmartwychwstania pańskiego,* vol. 2 (Cracow: Ksiegarnia spółki wydawniczej polskiej, 1893). References concerning Gogol appear on pp. 104–135.
10. Veresaev, *Gogol' v zhizni,* vol. 3, 272.
11. Smolikowski, *Historya,* 127, 134.
12. Letter from A. Ivanov to F. Chizhov from October 1845, in M. Botkin, ed., *Aleksandr Andreevich Ivanov. Ego zhizn' i perepiska 1806–1858* (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. M. Stasiulevicha, 1880).
13. Veresaev, *Gogol' v zhizni,* vol. 3, 272n. Shenrok, on the other hand, dismissed out of hand and without argument the authenticity of Gogol's remarks (V. I. Shenrok, *Materialy dlia biografii Gogolia,* vol. 3 [Moscow: Tip. A. I. Mamontova, 1895], 549). To my knowledge, among Russian scholars only Mann supports the credibility of these accounts (*Gogol'. Trudy i dni,* 479, 510–516).

14. See Daria Borghese, *Gogol a Roma* (Florence: Sansoni, 1957), 161; Diego Angeli, *Bonaparte a Roma* (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1938), 300.
15. My discussion is based on Louis Pedrotti, "The Scandal of Countess Rostopchina's Polish-Russian Allegory," *Slavic and East European Journal* 30.2 (1986): 196–214.
16. A. V. Nikitenko, *Dnevnik v trekh tomakh,* vol. 1 (1826–1857) (Leningrad: Gos. izd. khudozh. literatury, 1955), 299.
17. Pedrotti, "The Scandal," 196–197. By urging Rostopchina to publish her allegory, Gogol was testing the limits of the 1828 censorship statute, according to which censors were supposed to take only surface meanings into account (see Charles A. Ruud, *Fighting Words: Imperial Censorship and the Russian Press, 1804–1906* [Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1982]).
18. Pedrotti, "The Scandal," 209–210.
19. For a very basic discussion of the Russification of *Taras Bulba,* see Wasyl Sirskyj, "Ideological Overtones in Gogol's 'Taras Bulba,' " *The Ukrainian Quarterly* 35.3 (1979): 279–287.
20. Paul Karpuk argues that Gogol eliminated this detail to avoid chronological anachronism ("Reconciling Chronological Inconsistencies in Gogol's 'Taras Bul'ba,' " *Russian Language Journal* 151–152 [1991]: 93–110).
21. Richard Peace interestingly interprets the story about the two Ivans in relation to *Taras Bulba* in *The Enigma of Gogol: An Examination of the Writings of N. V. Gogol and Their Place in the Russian Literary Tradition* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981). For an examination of intertextual ironies between *Taras Bulba* and other *Mirgorod* tales, see Frederick T. Griffith, Stanley J. Rabinowitz, *Novel Epics: Gogol, Dostoevsky, and National Narrative* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1990).
22. See V. A Voropaev, "Gogol' i 'russko-ukrainskii vopros,' " *Moskovskii zhurnal* 1 (2002): 12–15; and Pavlo Mykhed's polemic in " 'Privatizatsiia Gogolia'? Vozvrashchaias' k russko-ukrainskomu voprosu," *Voprosy literatury* 3 (2003): 94–112.
23. Peace, *The Enigma of Gogol,* 52.
24. *Istoriia Rusov* (1846; Kyiv: Dzvin, 1991), 61–62. For other parallels between Bulba and Khmelnytsky, see Romana Bahrij-Pikulyk, "Superheroes, Gentlemen or Pariahs? The Cossacks in Nikolai Gogol's *Taras Bulba* and Panteleimon Kulish's *Black Council,*" *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 5.1 (1980): 37–38. See also Bahrij-Pikulyk's "The Use of Historical Sources in *Taras Bul'ba* and *The Black Council,*" *Studia Ucrainica* 2 (1984): 49–64.
25. *Istoriia Rusov,* 40, 56.
26. A similarly insensitive tone assists the narrator's description of the Cossacks' raids on the Turks and desecration of their mosques (*PSS* 2, 148).
27. Gogol portrays the Jews with common anti-Semitic stereotypes as dishonorable, treacherous, filthy, and above all, greedy. His anti-Semitism, however, is less vicious than that of other fiction writers on Ukrainian themes, such as Bulgarin or Somov. After all, Gogol's Iankel emerges as a rather sympathetic character who remains loyal to Bulba, though he could easily sell him to the Poles in Warsaw. As my discussion of the planning of the Warsaw trip has shown, Iankel appears as a much brainier fellow than Taras. His character is developed to an extent that far exceeds the Russian fictional standards contemporary to Gogol. Despite all the rhetoric about Jewish women's sacrilegious couture, it is a Jewish woman who nurses Taras to health from his Dubno wounds (*PSS* 2, 147).

28. See V. Ia. Zviniatskovskii, *Nikolai Gogol'. Tainy natsional'noi dushy* (Kyiv: Likei, 1994), 285.
29. See also Romana Bahrij-Pikulyk, "*Taras Bul'ba* and *The Black Council:* Adherence to and Divergence from Sir Walter Scott's Historical Novel Pattern" [Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Toronto, 1978], 109–114).
30. Though Kamanin and Mashinskii posit some Cossack *dumy* as possible sources for the Andrii plot, none of them feature the motif of filiocide. See I. M. Kamanin, "Nauchnye i literaturnye proizvedeniia N. V. Gogolia po istorii Malorossii," *Pamiati Gogolia. Nauchno-literaturnyi sbornik,* pt. 1. (Kyiv, 1902), 116; and S. Mashinskii, *Istoricheskaia povest' Gogolia* (Moscow: Tip. R. K. Lubkovskogo Sovetskii pisatel', 1940), 76.
31. G. A. Gukovskii, *Realizm Gogolia* (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1959), 193.
32. Robert Maguire analyzes *Taras Bulba* within a group of texts that reveal Gogol's concern with the word, which the quote above exemplifies. See also Maguire for a discussion of the work's Christian themes (*Exploring Gogol* [Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994], 273–280). In the next section, I will discuss the Christian subtexts that involve Andrii, which Maguire does not discuss.
33. Zviniatskovskii, *Tainy natsional'noi dushy,* 233.
34. Iurii Barabash, *Pochva i sud'ba. Gogol' i ukrainskaia literatura: u istokov* (Moscow: Nasledie, 1995), 141; ellipsis and emphasis Barabash's.
35. For Robert Maguire, the interrogative form of the simile comparing Russia to *troika* in *Dead Souls* also introduces an ambiguity (*Exploring Gogol,* 254).
36. Griffith and Rabinowitz, *Novel Epics,* 48.
37. Rev. of *Mirgorod* (1835), by N. Gogol, *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 9 (1835): 29–34; rev. of *Mirgorod* (1835), by N. Gogol, *Severnaia pchela* 115 (1835).
38. See Pushkin's, Belinsky's, and Shevyrev's comments in V. A. Zelinskii, *Russkaia kriticheskaia literatura o proizvedeniiakh N. V. Gogolia,* vol. 1 (Moscow: V. Rikhter, 1903), 139, 125, 68.
39. Ibid., vol. 3, 44–54.
40. Rev. of *Sochineniia* (1843), by N. Gogol, *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 57 (1843): 21–28.
41. Zelinskii, *Russkaia kriticheskaia,* vol. 1, 188.

42. Michał Grabowski, "Pis'mo Grabovskogo o *Sochineniiakh* Gogolia," *Sovremennik* 41 (1846): 49–61.
43. Stephen Moeller-Sally, *Gogol's Afterlife: The Evolution of the Classic in Imperial and Soviet Russia* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2002), 84–97.
44. P. Kulish, "Epilogue to *The Black Council:* On the Relation of Little Russian Literature to Common-Russian Literature," in *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995,* ed. R. Lindheim and G. Luckyj, 105–121, (Toronto: Toronto Univ. Press, 1996).
45. Andrea Rutherford, "Vissarion Belinskii and the Ukrainian National Question," *The Russian Review* 54 (1995): 500–515.
46. Voropaev, "Gogol' i 'russko-ukrainskii vopros,' " 15.
47. Maguire, *Exploring Gogol,* 285–289.

6. The Failure of Fiction

1. Iu. F. Samarin, letter to Gogol of July 12, 1846, *Russkaia starina* 63 (1889): 163–176.
2. Sergei Aksakov writes: "We really did not like his journeys to foreign countries, to Italy, which, as it seemed to us, he loved too much. Gogol's belief that he needed to be away from Russia in order to write about it seemed incomprehensible to us. We thought that Gogol's love for Russia was discontented, that the Italian sky, a free life among artists of all kinds, the wonderful climate, the poetic ruins of the past, were all casting an unfavorable shadow on our nature and our life." Aksakov considered Gogol's life abroad harmful for his talent and his Russianness. He referred to it as "a flight from the fatherland" and even "a betrayal." He resented Gogol's requests for information, advising him to obtain it from simply living in Russia (S. T. Aksakov, *Istoriia moego znakomstva s Gogoliem* [Moscow: Tip. M. G. Volchaninova, 1890], 36, 77, 164, 172). Gogol found the Aksakovs' friendship suffocating, claiming that they can literally love a person to death (*PSS* 13, 313).
3. Gogol had made gestures of expiation for his literary works before. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, he planned to devote the income from the 1846 edition of *The Government Inspector* as charitable aid to low-ranking civil servants (*PSS* 4, 109–111). He donated all proceeds from his *Collected Works* for scholarships for talented students at the St. Petersburg and Moscow Universities. He stuck to his decision despite fierce opposition from his friends who reminded Gogol of his own less-than-ample means and his duties to his mother (see the letters from late 1844 in *PSS* 12 and 661n.).
4. Gogol rejects satire also in his "Notebook for 1846–51": "Why did I turn out to be a teacher? I don't remember myself. It seemed to me that whatever was best was disappearing, that a writer's pen should serve the truth, and that the merciless sting of satire, in addition to fighting the abuses, touched also that which should be holy" (*PSS* 7, 375).
5. "Low cherry orchards and sunflowers next to fences and ditches, a straw roof of a cleanly painted hut, and a red-rimmed window, pleasing to the eye. You are the ancient root of Rus, where the feeling is more heartfelt and the Slavic nature more gentle, where the locks of hair and eyebrows are darker. A Slav is good-looking also without a beard: curled up mustache, a high hat with a red top, tightly wrapped waist, and loose trousers [*sharovary*]" (*PSS* 7, 378).
6. William Mills Todd "Gogol's Epistolary Writing," in *Columbia Essays in International Affairs. The Dean's Papers, 1969,* vol. 5 (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1970), 74.
7. P. A. Pletnev's letter of October 27, 1844, in *Perepiska N. V. Gogolia v dvukh tomakh,* vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1988); Sergei Aksakov's letter of March 6–8, 1843, in *Perepiska,* vol. 2; Konstantin Aksakov's letter of August–September 1845, in *Perepiska,* vol. 2; A. O. Smirnova's letters of September 19, 1845, and January 14, 1846, in *Perepiska,* vol. 2, and of March 1, 1845, in *Severnyi vestnik* 1 (1893): 248; S. P. Shevyrev's letters of March 26, 1843, July 29, 1846, and October 20 and 29, 1846, in *Perepiska,* vol. 2.
8. Ruth Sobel, *Gogol's Forgotten Book* (Washington, D.C.: Univ. Press of America, 1981), 162–163.
9. Todd, "Gogol's Epistolary Writing," 70.
10. *Perepiska,* vol. 1, 80, 88.
11. *Perepiska,* vol. 2, 53.
12. Sobel, *Gogol's Forgotten Book,* 173.
13. Abram Terts [Andrei Siniavskii], *V teni Gogolia,* in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh,* vol. 2 (Moscow: SP "Start," 1992), 51–52.
14. Robert Maguire, *Exploring Gogol* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994), 273–294.
15. See *Literatura Słowiańska. Kurs drugi* in Adam Mickiewicz, *Dzieła,* vol. 9 (Warsaw: Czytelnik, 1997).
16. Sobel, *Gogol's Forgotten Book,* 47. See also Philip Harttrup, "Nikolai Gogol and the Medieval Orthodox Slavic World-View" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Toronto, 1998), chap. 5.
17. The canonical *PSS* text restores the passages that the censor cut or emended and supplies the published, censored equivalents in variants. As before, my interest in the reception requires that I concern myself with the text that was available to Gogol's contemporaries, which is why I discuss the published and censored versions of *Selected Passages* separately. I will therefore quote the published text as recovered from the *PSS* variants. My citation system in this section works as follows: "*PSS* 8, 253: 678n16" means a canonical text on page 253 of volume 8, whose publication variant appears on page 678, in a note to line 16.

18. Ruth Sobel examines the religious outlook of *Selected Passages* in *Gogol's Forgotten Book,* 57–90. Many religious motifs are identified in the notes to the 1994 edition of Gogol (*SS'94* 6, 419–471; the *PSS* largely ignores this aspect). Iurii Barabash examines the work in terms of Ukrainian baroque homiletic tradition ("Gogol' i ukrainskaia barochnaia propoved' XVII veka," *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR. Seriia literatury i iazyka* 51.3 [1992]: 3–17; see also his *Gogol'. Zagadka 'proshchal'noi povesti'* [Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1993]). Giuseppe Ghini focuses on the apocalyptic aspect and biblical sources in "Il libro delle spese a la fine del mondo. *I brani scelti dalla corrispondenza con gli amici* di N. V. Gogol' tra sapienza e apocalittica," *Studi urbinati. B Scienze umane e sociali* 69 (1999): 421–464.
19. The censor cut out the continuation of this passage: "We are no better than anyone, and our life is even more disordered than theirs. 'We are worse than everyone'—this is what we should always say about ourselves" (*PSS* 8, 417: 715n10).
20. Pletnev wrote to Gogol on October 27, 1844: "Do not despise that which in Russia is petty and ugly. As a Russian, you should look upon it with the eyes of a doctor" (*Perepiska,* vol. 1, 249). On December 24 Gogol repeats the medical metaphor in reference to Russia's social malaise in his letter to Smirnova on which the *Selected Passages* article is partly based (*PSS* 12, 418).
21. I have in mind the following polemics, the subject of my ongoing research: Kantemir's *Die so gennante Moscowitische Brieffe* (1738) that rebutts Locatelli's *Lettres moscovites* (French edition, 1735); Catherine II's *Antidotum* (1770) that reacts to Prince de Chappe's views of Russia; Grech's *Examen se m. le marquis de Custine intitulè, La Russie en 1839* (1844) that counters de Custine's famous book; Tiutchev's French essays; and P. A. Viazemsky's critique of the 1853–1855 Western coverage of the Crimean War in his *Lettres d'un veteran russe de l'anne 1812 sur la question d'Orient.*
22. Gogol may have taken this idea from Mickiewicz's lectures on Slavic literatures (Mickiewicz, *Dzieła,* vol. 9, 344), which he invokes in the work (*PSS* 8, 258).
23. *Perepiska,* vol. 1, 271–272.
24. A. O. Smirnova, letter to Gogol of January 11, 1847, *Russkaia starina* 67 (1890): 282.
25. *Perepiska,* vol. 2, 80–81, 95–97.
26. Ibid., vol. 2, 344–346. There was much bad blood between Gogol and Pogodin in this late period. Pogodin harassed Gogol incessantly for articles for *The Muscovite,* unwilling to accept that Gogol was done with journalism. During one of Gogol's stays in Pogodin's house, their relations became so strained that Gogol locked himself in the attic and limited contacts with his host to curt notes exchanged through a servant.
27. Ibid., vol. 1, 411–419.

28. Quoted in Terts, *V teni Gogolia,* 42.
29. Among the reviews of *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski z druz'iami* that exemplify this general trend are: L. Brand's review in *Severnaia pchela* 67 (1847): 266–267; 74 (1847): 294–295; 75 (1847): 298–299; *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* 80 (1847): 42–50; E. I Guber's review in *Sanktpeterburgskie vedomosti* 35 (1847): 166–167; *Finskii vestnik* 14 (1847): 33–37; N. F. Pavlov, "Pis'ma N. F. Pavlova k Gogoliu," *Sovremennik* 3 (1847): 1–19; 4 (1847): 88–93 (a reprint from *Moskovskie vedomosti*).
30. S. Shevyrev, rev. of *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski z druz'iami* (1847), by N. Gogol, *Moskvitianin* 1 (1848): 12.
31. Ibid., 27.
32. Ibid., 29.
33. P. A. Viazemskii, "Gogol' i Iazykov," in *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh,* vol. 2 (Moscow: Khudozh. literatura, 1982), 180.
34. Ibid., 172–173.
35. Ibid., 175.
36. Rev. of *Vybrannye mesta iz perepiski z druz'iami* (1847), by N. Gogol, *Otechestvennye zapiski* 52 (1847): 69–71.
37. See, e.g., F. B. Bulgarin, "Zhurnal'naia vsiakaia vsiachina," *Severnaia pchela* 8 (1847).
38. A. Ivanov-Natov, "Novoe prochtenie *Vybrannykh mest iz perepiski s druz'iami,*" *Transactions of the Association of Russian-American Scholars in the U.S.A.* 17 (1984): 171–191; I. I. Garin, *Zagadochnyi Gogol'* (Moscow: Terra-Knizhnyi Klub, 2002).
39. It was Shevyrev who edited Gogol's fragments for posthumous publication and replaced Gogol's own fictional label "a tale" with the more sincere-sounding "confession."
40. The ideas that echo Gogol's discarded draft of a letter to Belinsky include Gogol's assertion that he does not oppose "national enlightenment" (a reference to mass literacy) but merely thinks that books edifying the civil servant seem at present more useful. Another is Gogol's claim that he does not reject European civilization but merely recommends that Russia know itself better before importing foreign ideas (*PSS* 8, 435–436).
41. Robert Maguire, "Gogol's 'Confession' as a Fictional Structure," *Ulbandus Review* 2.2 (1982): 175–190.
42. N. Ia. Prokopovich, letter to Gogol of May 12, 1847, *Perepiska,* vol. 1, 124.

Conclusion

1. V. Chizh, "Bolezn' Gogolia," *Voprosy filosofii i psikhologii* 69 (1903): 647–681.
2. V. Rozanov, "Pushkin i Gogol'," in *Legenda o velikom Inkvizitore F. M. Dos-*

toevskogo, s prilozheniem dvukh etiudov o Gogole (1906; 3rd ed., Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1970), 253–265.

3. S. A. Vengerov, *Pisatel'-grazhdanin. Gogol'*, in *Sobranie sochinenii,* (St. Petersburg: vol. 2 Izd. Prometei, 1913), 125–126.
4. In the Russian translation from the French: "*koloss tuposti i poshlosti*" (see "Neizdannye i zabytye stat'i o Gogole," in V. V. Gippius, ed., *N. V. Gogol': Materialy i issledovaniia,* vol. 1 [Moscow: Izd. Akad. nauk SSSR, 1936], 266). The article first appeared in 1859. Prosper Mérimée wrote on Gogol in 1851 in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (see "Neizdannye i zabytye stat'i," 269). Bulgarin published excerpts from Mérimée's article in *Severnaia pchela* 277, 283 (1851).
5. F. B. Bulgarin, posthumous article on Gogol, *Severnaia pchela* 99 (1852): 394; emphasis Bulgarin's. Though himself a Pole, Bulgarin criticized Gogol for his imperfect knowledge of the Russian language and for corrupting it with Ukrainianisms.
6. In the late 1830s and the early 1840s, the conservative *Library for Reading* had about 5,000 to 7,000 subscribers, and *The Northern Bee* had about 3,000. *The Moscow Telegraph* in the 1830s had a circulation of about 3,000. Among both the Westernizer and Slavophile journals defending Gogol, *The Notes of the Fatherland* increased its subscribers from 1,200 in 1839 to 4,000 in 1847, and *The Muscovite* in the early 1840s had about 1,000 subscribers. *The Contemporary* under Pletnev reached its nadir of 233 subscribers in 1846. See William M. Todd, "Periodicals in Literary Life of the Early Nineteenth Century," and Chester Rzadkiewicz, "N. A. Polevoi's *Moscow Telegraph* and the Journal Wars of 1825–1834," both in Deborah Martinsen, ed., *Literary Journals in Imperial Russia* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), 55, 65; Louise McReynolds, *The News under Russia's Old Regime: The Development of a Mass-Circulation Press* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Univ. Press, 1991), 20; A. G Dement'ev et al., eds., *Russkaia periodicheskaia pechat' (1702–1894)* (Moscow: Gos. izd. politicheskoi literatury, 1959), 241; and *Ocherki po istorii russkoi zhurnalistiki i kritiki,* vol. 1 (Leningrad: Izd. Leningradskogo gos. ordena Lenina univ. im. A. A. Zhdanova, 1950), 544.
7. Oleh Il'nyts'kyj, "Hohol' i postkolonial'nyi kontekst," *Krytyka* 29 [4.3] (2000): 11.
8. Abram Terts [Andrei Siniavskii], *V teni Gogolia*, in *Sobranie sochinenii v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 2 (Moscow: SP "Start," 1992), 268.
9. Peter Sawczak, " 'Noch' pered Rozhdestvom' Mykoly/Nikolaia Gogolia: K voprosu o 'maloi literature,' " *Russian Literature* 49 (2001): 263.

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