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Source: *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 1/4, POLTAVA 1709: THE BATTLE AND THE MYTH (2009-2010), pp. 569-615

Published by: [Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41756516>

Accessed: 26-08-2015 18:24 UTC

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Obsessions with Mazepa*

TARAS KOZNARSKY

IT IS GENERALLY AGREED that the contours of modern Ukrainian identity were defined in the first half of the nineteenth century. The pivotal role that Ivan Mazepa played in this process has been overlooked, for a variety of reasons. I will argue in this paper that Ukrainians, particularly the gentry and intelligentsia, could not help but confront Mazepa as the alpha and omega of their identity, the ultimate mirror, the “other,” as nemesis, stigma, and temptation.

This article pursues a three-pronged exploration of the Mazepa phenomenon as an obsession of both Ukrainians and Russians in their cultural negotiations of the first half of the nineteenth century and in their mutual perceptions and conceptualizations of nation and historical destiny. The first section examines the name Mazepa as a common Russian stereotype, in which duplicity and cunning are essentialized qualities of the Ukrainian “national character.” This usage is traced in compendia of idiomatic expressions, dictionaries, ethnographic descriptions, private sources, and popular works (Aleksandr Shakhovskoi’s opera-vaudeville, *Kozak-stikhovorets* [The Cossack Poet] and its reception serve as a revealing case). I argue that the stigmatized presence of Mazepa in perceptions of the Ukrainian character (what I term the “curse of Mazepa”) generates a complex (and interconnected) repertory of coping and responding, in which mechanisms of compensation and mimicry play the most important roles. In my examination of mimicry, following the pioneering investigation by Homi Bhabha, I focus on what I call “identity artifacts”—identity aberrations (internalized by the performer and expected by the observer) in exterior elements, such as accent and name, and the performative act itself—which evoke a sense of otherness that, depending on the aberration, may be contextualized and subsumed as almost negligible (e.g., Little Russian regional color) or appear as significant indications of suspect sentiments and compromised loyalties

* Preparation of this article was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada).

(e.g., deeply concealed “Mazepist” thinking). The position of the Ukrainian subject within the Russian imperial discourse produced a cycle of performative acts, at the core of which lies a compulsory affiliation with Mazepa (the curse of Mazepa): thus, the denunciation of the hetman—the imperial symbol of treason—required of Ukrainians is met with the observer’s suspicion of dissimulation, while the performers’ resultant feelings of historical trauma and shame associated with Mazepa are complicated by nostalgia for the autonomist traditions of the abolished Hetmanate.

In the second section I focus on the mixed reception of Aleksandr Pushkin’s seminal historical poem *Poltava* (1828), emphasizing issues of Russian nationality and historical veracity. I view Pushkin’s poem as a nationally minded Russian response to previous explorations of Mazepa and treason in earlier works by Voltaire, Kondratii Ryleev, and Adam Mickiewicz. Close examination of both positive and dismissive reviews reveals *Poltava* as an indicator of and participant in the shaping of the grand narrative of Russian imperial history, where Mazepa fits as a demonized and lowly foil to the monumental character of Peter I. I explore why Pushkin’s handling of the hetman’s character triggered a number of negative reviews, in particular Faddei Bulgarin’s and Nikolai Nadezhdin’s, which pointed to the tendentiousness of the poet’s characterization and its lack of historical veracity. In my examination of the reception of *Poltava* I attempt to distill a specifically “Ukrainian” reception of this work by closely examining the mechanisms of compensation and identity artifacts imbedded in the defensive review by Mykhailo Maksymovych, and refer to other public and private statements of Ukrainian *literati* regarding Pushkin’s poem.

Finally, in the third section of this article I extend my examination of the critical reception of the Pushkin poem to literary works that engage with the theme of Mazepa, and in the cases of Bulgarin and Maksymovych, serve as direct “reparations” for Pushkin’s *Poltava* while revealing their identity artifacts (hidden agendas). I then turn to the historical novel *Ivan Mazepa* by Petr Golota (Petro Holota), which embellished historical and ethnographic data through fantasy and cliché in order to portray Mazepa as a fallen hero of the Ukrainian people, for whose treason (and their naïve affection for him) they are burdened with his curse. My examination of these texts and a brief glance at the vast Mazepiana of the romantic period (nearly all of which was produced by Ukrainians in the Russian language) confirm the pivotal position of this historical figure and character in shaping Ukrainian-Russian historical reciprocity and destiny, and the mechanisms of mimicry and compensation imbedded in how Ukrainians configured their identities in the Russian Empire. I argue, therefore, that Ukrainian literary texts on Mazepa should be viewed as minefields of identity artifacts, laden with the required declarative rhetoric of loyalty and tempered by the poetics of treason—the obsessive Ukrainian connection with Mazepa as a complex of shame and nostalgia, guilt and affinity.

THE CURSE OF MAZEPA

Ukrainians, in defining themselves as a people/nation with its own inherent repertory of qualities—that is, national physiognomy, to invoke the term of the romantic era, or “auto-image,” in imagological terms, and as a group vis-à-vis other groups that constituted the body of the Russian Empire (Russians, Poles, etc.)—were repeatedly, even obsessively, forced to disassociate themselves from Mazepa and associate themselves with the hetman. No other name, word, or concept held such emotional sway or visceral power as Mazepa, Mazeppa, mazepa, the ghost and the spirit. Like a neurologist’s hammer, the word goes straight to the nerve of the “Ukrainian patient,” causing an instant reflex: a shivering, a twitching and a grimacing, followed by corollary adjustment reflexes. Ironically, however, the “Russian doctor” wielding the hammer also grimaces and twitches, as his own fate is also at stake, contingent on his ability to locate the nerve, to diagnose, and to treat the condition of the “patient.”

A revealing variation of this continuous cycle of interactions imbedded in Ukrainian-Russian mutual perceptions and conceptions is found in a historical anecdote about one of Nicholas I’s trips to Kyiv. At St. Nicholas Cathedral the tsar, admiring the church’s design and architecture, asked the head priest who had built the church. “Mazepa,” the priest replied timidly, and the word froze on his lips. “So, do you pray for him?” the tsar asked. “Yes, we [all] pray at that point in the service [по уставу] when we declare: for the builders and benefactors of this holy church,” replied the priest, encouraged by the benevolent expression on the tsar’s face. “Pray, pray!” Nicholas said with a sigh and made an abrupt departure.¹

The dramatic, ideological, and psychological economy of this brief episode is striking indeed: both participants are engaged in acts of complex monitoring and self-monitoring. The priest knows that in the eyes of the emperor he is connected to the hetman both as a Little Russian and as a representative of the house of worship that bears the stamp of Mazepa (even if his coat of arms or inscriptions had been defaced). He is participating in (submitting to) a diagnostic imperial ritual. What options does he have? To lie or act in a bewildered fashion, to faint or explain to the tsar that he is not what the emperor thinks, to recuse himself, or to pray? The priest chose to tell the truth timidly (“робко”); that is, he displayed his utter submission and fear of authority while referring to the impersonal norms (“по уставу”) governing his role. What options were open at this moment to Nicholas, who was participating in the same ritual as the ultimate authority? To become enraged, defrock the priest, call the gendarmes, and exile this “Mazepist” to Siberia; to revise the code—that is, the rules of the service; to rehabilitate the hetman; or to demolish the church? (The Soviet authorities would do just that during their anticlerical campaigns of the 1930s, targeting, in particular, Mazepist churches in Ukraine.)

Even the tsar's choices were far from unlimited in this moment of imperial authority, as his "patient" fatefully watched him acting out his role: to represent the majestic and the awesome, the benevolent and the inevitable. Nicholas chose to maintain decorum: sighing softly ("с легким вздохом," indicating his regretful recognition of the Mazepa problem), he exited the church quickly, terminating the encounter. Both agents-actors, trapped in their prescribed roles, disentangle and part (having properly enacted their roles), the tender kiss of schizophrenia perhaps lingering on their fair foreheads.

This episode, however anecdotal and whoever the actual transcriber,² captures the essence of the Mazepa question, inextricably located at the heart of the Ukrainian-Russian historical encounter and Ukrainian-Russian cultural and national reciprocity. This issue may be called "the curse of Mazepa," the axis formed by the tautological, indeed ritualistic, required performance of public renunciation of Mazepa, on the one hand, and, on the other, the imperial audience's expectation of dissimulation in this same performance, underneath the decorum, behind the masks, effigies, and artifacts—and this concerns both parties, which act and observe simultaneously. Inevitably, the very renunciation of Mazepa serves to reenact his treason, with the corollary effects of stigmatization, compensation, transference, and mimicry—the mechanisms on which this article will focus.

The symbolic, psychological, and discursive ambivalence attached to Mazepa is best illustrated by the following examples. Aleksei Levshin, a graduate of Kharkiv University, provided a "physiognomic" description of the Ukrainian people (*Malorossiiane*) in his travelogue, *Pis'ma iz Malorossii* (Letters from Little Russia), stressing their shared ancient roots with the Russians and their political and personal virtues, including military valor, patriotism, honor, religiosity, and morality.³ In Levshin's view, there is no contradiction between the Little Russians' pride in the glory of their ancestors and ardent love for their motherland (Little Russia), on the one hand, and their affiliation with and loyalty to the Russian Empire, on the other. According to Levshin, the Little Russians hate "those among them who have blackened their names by despicable actions. There is nothing more terrible for them than the name of Mazepa. They fall into a rage whenever they hear this curse [ругательство]."⁴ This passage reveals how Mazepa is imprinted upon the identity of Ukrainians both from within (one of them: "из них") as a stigma, and from the outside—as a curse. Note that the terrible name "Mazepa" was not used as a curse by Ukrainians, but was applied to Ukrainians by Russians as an ethnic label implying perfidy, stubbornness, and an inclination to treason.⁵

That what I have termed the "curse of Mazepa" took root in popular Russian "conventional wisdom" to define and classify Ukrainians is evident from Evgraf Filomafitskii's review of a Kharkiv performance of *Kozak-stikhotvoretz* in 1817. Shakhovskoi's work, written in an atmosphere of patriotic fervor just

before the War of 1812, remained popular well into the 1830s.⁶ Before turning to Filomafitskii's reaction, I will briefly examine the play.

Kozak-stikhotvorets presents the naïve pastoral world of a Ukrainian village whose inhabitants are barely aware of the crucial events of the Northern War: the defection of Mazepa and the Battle of Poltava (1709). The play focuses on the love triangle involving a local girl named Marusia, her beloved Cossack-poet Klymovs'kyi, who is fighting in Peter's army, and the village official, Prudyus, who tries to force Marusia into marriage with him. The political imperial gaze enters the village in the guise of a captain, Prince**, who is traveling incognito with his aide, Demin, for the purpose of surveillance, which Shakhovskoi casts in benevolent terms: rather than arresting traitors and imposing emergency measures (requisitions of food, horses, etc.), the disguised inspectors have come to find out whether the tsar's decrees are being followed to the letter (note the implication of possible treason), and to ensure that the village is receiving monetary compensation for the destruction wrought by the war ("разорение от войны").⁷ Although the playwright does not mention Mazepa, he profiles another poet, the simple-hearted Russian patriot, Cossack Klymovs'kyi. Even though the hetman (Mazepa? Skoropads'kyi?) had disbanded Klymovs'kyi's regiment, he "so much wanted to fight for our Tsar" that he joined Kochubei's regiment; Kochubei being a symbol of martyrdom and loyalty to Russia, whom the vile Mazepa had destroyed. During the Battle of Poltava, Klymovs'kyi reports, "we made the villainous adversaries of the Tsar jump as though they were dancing the *kozachok*."⁸ In benevolent "poetic" reciprocity, the Russian tsar "desires to see the poet whose simple songs, filled with vigor and feeling, are very much to his liking," and invites him to come to Moscow.⁹ One such song ends the play: "With honor and glory we fought on the battlefield. We shall live our lives faithfully and truthfully. Russian bliss is the Tsar on his throne. In times of woe, we shall find protection in him."¹⁰

Shakhovskoi thoroughly refocused the imperial gaze cast upon Ukraine: the discourse of condemnation and disciplining inextricably tied to Mazepa (the play is set during the Battle of Poltava) is replaced by a non-threatening concoction of pastoral, triumphalist, and comedic discourses. Instead of looking directly at the issue of Mazepa, the imperial gaze is shifted from the events of Poltava to the rural periphery—in popular culture the realm of hospitality, small-time swindling, and romantic pursuit. The utter avoidance of Mazepa's name is deliberate and logical, as this accursed name would destroy the merry pastoral. The only historical figures that are mentioned are Peter I, Iskra, and Kochubei. Thus, the Russian-Ukrainian historical relationship becomes framed by the tropes of loyalty and patriotic self-sacrifice, and the issue of treason is relegated to the nonthreatening rural background. The playwright introduces the curious character of Cossack Klymovs'kyi, a historical figure about whom there is virtually no known biographical information, aside from the attribution

to him of the popular song, “*Īkhav kozak za Dunai*” (A Cossack beyond the Danube).¹¹ A perfect substitute for the Russian-Ukrainian historical encounter, Klymovs’kyi provides a void (an empty signifier, empty of history) filled by Shakhovskoi with patriotic concoctions, such as the song quoted above and a blend of sentiment and folkloric stylization.¹² The imperial benevolence of Peter I is mirrored by the naïveté and loyalty of the Cossacks, as the menace and mutual distrust inherent in the Russian-Ukrainian encounter are subsumed into the realm of comic incident. Yet Shakhovskoi’s avoidance of Mazepa makes his presence that much more palpable. While neither Klymovs’kyi nor Prince** make any direct references to Mazepa, the former mentions fighting against the “царские злодеи,” while the latter arrives in the Cossack village to ascertain whether the tsar’s orders are being thoroughly obeyed. Mazepa thus looms as a hidden threat from within the Ukrainian pastoral, refracted in the farcical figure of Prudyus, a greedy, scheming local crook whose machinations are revealed and punished. Prudyus repents, begs for mercy, and is forgiven when the Cossacks intercede on his behalf: “God be with him; he’s a fool.”¹³ Coming full circle, the threat of villainy (the unmentionable Mazepa) is downgraded and overwritten with royal benevolence and compensation for the declarative loyalty of the Cossacks. Yet, is the faithful Klymovs’kyi intended to represent a typical Ukrainian Cossack or is he an exception: a substitution, myth, or effigy? At the end of the play Prince** declares that Klymovs’kyi deserves the honor of seeing the tsar, as he is “a good poet, brave warrior, and someone who is not villainous toward his adversaries.”¹⁴ Even amidst this apotheosis of imperial justice, the curious villains lurk, suspended between forgiveness and condemnation. We can only speculate as to what degree Ukrainian spectators felt discomfort at the historical farce imbedded in Shakhovskoi’s play, not to mention the in-your-face ethnocultural stereotypes that claimed to represent them on stage.¹⁵

Without a doubt, the play was sensed as a fusion of crudely ameliorated and embellished ethnic stereotypes, through which lurked the curse of Mazepa. In reviewing the vaudeville, Evgraf Filomafitskii, an ethnic Russian born in Iaroslavl province and a graduate of Kharkiv University, was quick to point out the shortcomings in Shakhovskoi’s attempt at representing Ukraine.¹⁶ Blasting *Kozak-stikhotvorets* for being neither Russian nor Ukrainian either in language or in character, Filomafitskii focused his criticism on the portrayal of the Ukrainian national character, which he found bitterly unfair:

What is this play based on? On cruelty toward fellow humans and embezzlement of state funds.... As for cruelty and perfidy, they seem to be the author’s invention, and very offensive to Ukrainians [выдумка очень обидная для малороссиян].... If the author’s intention was to show the duplicity of Mazepa in the character of Prudyus, then a single

individual should not place a black mark on an entire nation. Moreover, this individual is so despised here that to call a Ukrainian a Mazepa is more offensive to him than when it was in the past to call a Jew a Samaritan. Therefore, Ukrainians are not partakers in his cruelty and treachery.¹⁷

What I find most revealing in this review is Filomafitskii's understanding of the powers of generalization and classification.¹⁸ His reading of the character Prudyus as a substitute for Mazepa indicates his intuitive grasp of the working of stereotypes used to label Ukrainians and to define the Russian-Ukrainian historical and cultural encounter. While Shakhovskoi's intent in *Kozak-stikhotvorets* was not to slander Ukraine (on the contrary, this writer found positive and colorful ethnographic material in Ukrainian topics),¹⁹ the mechanisms of ethnic stereotyping of the time were intrinsic to the repertory of characterizations of ethnicities, especially in popular theatrical genres, such as vaudeville and comedy, Shakhovskoi's specialty. Filomafitskii dissociates these ethnic stereotypes from Ukrainians as an "entire nation." As proof that Ukrainians have nothing to do with Mazepa's perfidy, the critic refers to their offended reaction to his name/label. Thus, despite a Ukrainian's loyalty to Russia, such loyalty could only partly obscure his link to Mazepa, although the implicit perfidy could be compensated for at least partially by the ritualistically repeated reaction of offence at and dissociation from Mazepa.

From Levshin to Filomafitskii, the curse of Mazepa comes full circle: the name Mazepa as directly applied to Ukrainians evokes the stigma of imputed treachery and villainy, while representations of stereotypical Ukrainian cunning and duplicity (*khokhol*) evoke his name indirectly, and in both cases these qualities are implied as essential elements of the Ukrainian national character.²⁰ In other words, in the Russian popular imagination the Ukrainian national character (or national physiognomy—the most explored, debated, and meddled-with category of romantic thought) is given a name, and this name is Mazepa—and it is a curse. This becomes clearer when we examine Ivan Snegirev's fundamental compendium of popular wisdom, proverbs, and sayings that were thought to capture the inner life of the Russian people, its character, and values. Under the rubric of ethnographic sayings and satirical ethnic/national labels Snegirev lists a large number of intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic labels common in the Russian Empire, which emerged as a result of historical encounters and economic and cultural relationships among various groups. He explains that "Ukrainians and Lithuanians [i.e., Belarusians] deride Russians or even their compatriots [e.g., assimilated ones] as *moskals*, *burlaks* [vagabonds], and *katsaps*. The Russians in turn call them *Mazepists* [Мазепинцами], people imbued with the *ghost/spirit of Mazepa* [Мазепинным духом], *serfs*, *khokhols*, and *forelocks* [чубами; emphases in the original]."²¹ While the ethnic labels that Ukrainians apply to Russians focus on territorial (*moskal'*) or physical features (beards worn by

Russians, as in *katsap*),²² the list of Russian hetero-images of Ukrainians leads off with two featuring the curse of Mazepa, which are directly associated with the traits of perfidy and treachery.²³ In 1879, when Vladimir Dal' published his huge collection of Russian proverbs, the taxonomy of qualities and the ordering of "folk wisdom" remained the same: "Малороссы—Мазепинцы, хохлы, чубы..."²⁴

The demonization of Mazepa and Mazepists percolates into historiography as well. In Ivan Golikov's popular work, *Deianiia Petra Velikogo, mudrogo preobrazovatel'ia Rossii* (The Deeds of Peter the Great, the Wise Reformer of Russia), mention of Mazepa invariably involves a residue of stereotypical labeling: the very first mention of the hetman is replete with references to "this monster," "most ungrateful criminal," and "cunning and insidious one" whose actions prove "the vileness and viciousness of the soul of this monster." Those who ended up in Mazepa's camp (e.g., the defenders of Baturyn against Menshikov's forces) are by extension featured as "hardened/cruel Mazepist beasts."²⁵ The twitching nerve is exposed, a deep emotional root coming to the surface of purportedly rational historical narratives.

Among the various means to which Ukrainians resorted in order to divert or dissipate the curse, two strategies are especially revealing. The first and most common one was to dissociate Mazepa from the Ukrainian people and Cossackdom, portraying the hetman as a grafted-on Pole, who had become the hetman thanks only to the permutations of historical fortune and whose treason was both a manifestation of Polish perfidy (physiognomically speaking) and Polish intrigue (politically speaking). Thus, in *Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii*, an anonymous polemical tract on the origins and destiny of Ukraine camouflaged as a chronicle, we read: "Hetman Mazepa was a born Pole from Lithuanian families."²⁶ In Ukrainian nineteenth-century historiography this dubious attribution was bolstered by emphasizing his Jesuit education and service at the Polish court.²⁷ A second and fascinating effort to diminish the impact of the curse was cautiously advanced by Mykhailo Maksymovych on the margins of his archaeological pursuits. In a Russian-language article entitled "Vydubitskii monastyr'," which was published in the historical-literary almanac *Kievlianin*, Maksymovych provides a footnote on the sponsorship of churches by Maria Mahdalyna Mazepa (the hetman's mother), adding the following:

Some think that the name of the criminal hetman, subjected to anathema, became a curse. This is a mistake. The common noun *mazepa* (derived from *mazat'*, to soil) was used much earlier as a [Ukrainian] swearword, an equivalent of the Russian "mug" [*харя или рожа*], and was probably borrowed from Polish.²⁸

Maksymovych thus performs a discursive act, undercutting the specific and

personal curse of Mazepa as a Russian essentializing label-stereotype of a Ukrainian by internalizing it—that is, absorbing the word into Ukrainian as a native obscenity and thus denying its specific historical, ethnic, and physiognomic directionality, pun notwithstanding. In Maksymovych, Mazepa's face becomes a generic Ukrainian mug—just another word—on par with some Russian common nouns, perhaps with a slight Polish coloring (or borrowing). In this interpretation, a common Ukrainian noun “predefines” the treachery of historical Mazepa, rather than the proper name “Mazepa” expanding onto and defining common traits of the national character of Ukrainians.

From Maksymovych, the rediscovered common noun “mazepa” entered dictionaries (if not the vocabulary) of the Ukrainian vernacular. Pavlo Bilets'kyi-Nosenko, in his significant corpus of Ukrainian vernacular (compiled 1838–43), provides the following definition of the vernacular common noun *mazepa*: “A mug [харя], mask (an archaic word). See also *машкарка* (painted face/mask).”²⁹ In a peculiar and almost inevitable way, the Ukrainian internalization of the curse of Mazepa only served to highlight its meaning: a soiled person, a painted face, and a mask. And the curse works both ways, through pervasive, compulsive, and spastic workings of mimicry. The imperial eye, to use Mary Louise Pratt's vivid phrase, stares at the object of surveillance, absorbing this Ukrainian object into its classificatory system (i.e., taxonomy of national groups and ethnocultural values). The restless Ukrainian object is assimilated into the core of Russianness³⁰ by virtue of common/shared origins, its pronounced Slavic physiognomy, shared Orthodox faith, and the historic voluntary reunion with Great Russia in 1654, when Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi and the Cossack Host swore an oath to the Muscovite tsar in Pereiaslav. The admission of Ukrainians into the top echelons of secular and clerical imperial institutions only confirmed the indivisibility of the Great and Little Russias, and was eagerly promoted by Ukrainians as the paradigm of what Zenon Kohut has termed “Russo-Ukrainian unity and Ukrainian distinctiveness.”³¹ Thus, at the surface of power representation, in the field of the panoramic imperial gaze the Ukrainian object is the same as the Russian. Or rather, to use Homi Bhabha's keen and succinct formulation describing mimicry, “almost the same, but not quite.”³² It is precisely the degree of this “not quite” that is most elusive in qualitative and quantitative terms. Unlike the racially bound mimicry that takes place in some colonial settings, the Ukrainian element as manifested among educated and socially mobile groups (the gentry, intelligentsia, whose members themselves were participants in and shapers of the imperial discourse) was barely visible or detectable (when not intentionally manifested): a touch of an accent (as when Turgenev, registering Gogol's Ukrainian pronunciation of the sound “ò,” commented: “I didn't notice any other peculiarities of the Little Russian accent [in him], less pleasant to a Russian ear”); a particular physical feature, as when Nikolai Berg (of Baltic German origin) reminisced about Gogol: “For someone

familiar with the physiognomies of the *khokhols*, a *khokhol* was instantly visible here.³³ What is a *khokhol* face? And what of the peculiarity of a last name? Ievhen Hrebinka, upon entering the metropolitan literary scene, transformed himself into Grebenkin (Ukr. *hrebinka*, Rus. *grebenka* “comb”). When Petr Pletnev, the Russian critic, editor, rector of St. Petersburg University, and tutor to the royal children, wrote to his friend Iakov Grot (of German descent) about befriending the young aspiring Ukrainian litterateur Panteleimon Kulish, their epistolary exchange featured a sidebar of ethnocultural scanning that includes the meaning of the surname Kulish (meaning “thick gruel”), discussion of whether Kulish’s Russian pronunciation was good enough to teach Russian to *inorodtsy* (non-Russians), and whether his character might be just a bit too Ukrainian (“since Little Russians are cunning, masters of pretending”).³⁴ What we see in each of these instances may be termed identity artifacts (*en pendant* to Bhabha’s “identity effects”)—those slight aberrations of color and shading that the observer perceives or expects in another’s identity.

While the public discourse admitted Ukrainians as forming one nation with the Russians—the differences between them, even on the level of the common folk, were believed to be eroding and were expected to disappear with the progress of history—in the private sphere the mechanisms of “common sense” and stereotyping entailed expectations of quintessential Ukrainian qualities that could suddenly veer, to use Bhabha’s phrase, from farcical, comical, and colorful Ukrainian quirks to the menace of Mazepism.³⁵ Thus, even negligible aberrations held the threat of becoming manifestations of menacing distinctiveness, all the more alarming and stigmatic to the Russian national body for emerging from within the perceived Russian nation.³⁶ Operating within the imperial public realm, Ukrainians knew that they were entitled to Russianness (to be Russians) even as they were being surveyed for any trace of Ukrainian identity artifacts (differences). Even though the sources of these artifacts (e.g., Mazepa, nostalgia for Ukraine’s bygone autonomy, animosity toward Russians) could be considered taboo, Ukrainians were expected to reveal (betray) such artifacts precisely for the purpose of public disavowal through comical domestication, trivialization, or even exaggeration of these differences (Ukrainianness as anecdote and farce) or through solemn compensatory displays of loyalist zeal to externalize and openly anathemize (exorcise) any Mazepist essence. But in becoming a taboo, this essence was not voided or emptied of meaning. On the contrary, it was transformed into a magical presence that could spring from terror all the way to obsession. Such is the tautological, self-referential, and obsessive circle of Ukrainian-Russian reciprocity that, even in the ritual of disavowal, identity artifacts are sensed implicitly or are explicitly present. Such is the realm of Ukrainian mimicry: a minefield and battlefield of discursive forms. In the combative process, in which the imperial discourse and national identity take shape, camouflage becomes a dominant mode of representation: the soiling, face-painting, and masking—the very spirit and ghost of Mazepa

("Мазепин дух"). And if one is expected to live in conflict between the adopted normative form of self-representation and a supposed hidden agenda, what choice does one have but to wear a mask?³⁷ This situation conditions a compartmentalization of one's identity into functional, performative modes of self-perception and self-representation (with often incompatible logic, nexuses of rhetoric and desires), which are enacted according to a particular social situation (what Kappeler refers to as situational identity).³⁸

In this context, a Ukrainian could disavow and exorcise the ghost of Mazepa even while obsessing about and harboring his spirit. If Levshin and Filomafitskii argued that Mazepa was thoroughly despised and reacted to as a curse by Ukrainians, Mikhail Pogodin, the future seminal Russian historian and ideologue, described the attitudes of the Ukrainian gentry in 1822 (based upon conversations with his Ukrainian friend, Mykhailo Shyrai, a fellow student at Moscow University) as follows:

Today they don't even have a trace of their former liberties. Little Russians call themselves true Russians while all others [i.e., other Russians] are *moskals* to them. Moscow, therefore, was something separate/alien [to them]. They call Old Believers *moskals* too. They love Mazepa. In the past they did not provide conscripts [to the Russian army], but had their own regiments. Thus, there were Chernihiv, Siversk regiments, etc. This was much better. And now an Irkutian stands next to a Kyivan—what sense does that make!³⁹

His phrase "They love Mazepa" (Мазепу любя́т) is not elaborated.⁴⁰ Was it posited by Shyrai, or was this Pogodin's own observation? Had Shyrai responded to a query from Pogodin? We can only speculate here. Nonetheless, this passage suggests a sentiment at the core of the Ukrainian perception of themselves and their past (i.e., their relation to their origins). This nostalgic sentiment relates to the Ukrainian past as an era of liberty and national integrity, and Mazepa as synonymous with love of freedom, a key quality in Ukrainian conceptualizations of their history, the engine of their historical agency, and a guiding force of their fate. In this framework, the integration of Ukraine into the imperial administrative grid is incongruous and jarring. In his diary Oleksii Martos, a military engineer during the Napoleonic wars, recorded a flood of sentiment upon visiting Galați, where he searched for Mazepa's grave. In Martos's oft-quoted passage, Mazepa reemerges as a "friend of liberty" (друг свободы), and an enlightened humane ruler of "a free, and hence, happy, people." This is in marked contrast to Pushkin's later "друзья кровавой старины," the rebellious Cossacks as friends of bloody, olden times, in *Poltava*. For Martos the ritual of anathemizing Mazepa is nothing less than "a disgusting ceremony" (гнусная церемония).⁴¹

While defending his imperial fatherland against its grave enemy (he wrote at

approximately the same time as Shakhovskoi), Martos vents feelings in which his imperial patriotism and sense of duty appear nearly overridden by the powerful call of his Ukrainian identity, which stands in contrast, if not opposition, to the imperial system of values. This private emblematic meaning of Mazepa was widespread as a symbol of Ukraine's love for liberty and the past age of the Hetmanate in Ukrainian gentry circles. Even in the family of the most loyal and assimilated count, Viktor Kochubei, a descendant of Mazepa's archenemy—the victimized General Judge—this memory of the Hetmanate was kept alive, as Johann Georg Kohl recorded: “In ancient times the possessor of such a noble residence as Dikanka would have been a tolerable *independent prince* [emphasis added]. He would have had a number of armed men in his service, ready to mount and follow him on a foray into Tartary or Turkey, or to back him at a contested election for the office of *hetman* [emphasis in the original]. The days of the Cossack republic are not that remote.”⁴² Perhaps even more ironically, in the town of Poltava, the site of Petrine glory, Kohl notes that “the nobles still preserve many tokens of their golden age of independence. In many houses portraits can be found of all the Khmel'nitskis, Mazeppas, Skoropadzki, and Rasumovskis, who, at various times have held the title of hetman, and manuscripts relating to those days are treasured.”⁴³

The ever-looming curse of Mazepa and feelings for the hetman compel us to make a challenging, and necessary, venture into the interdictory discourse of mimicry and to tackle the positioning, directionality, and intent of the exchange of gazes that is Ukrainian-Russian reciprocity.

WHO WON THE BATTLE OF POLTAVA?

In the 1880s, after Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé resigned from his post as the French ambassador in St. Petersburg and began dedicating his energies to literary pursuits, he published a book of historical vignettes on imperial Russia that included his essay “Mazeppa, la légende et l'histoire” (The True Story of Mazeppa).⁴⁴ In concluding his essay, which discusses Mazepa in the European popular imagination, Pushkin's poem *Poltava*, and the “true” Mazepa as the epitome of the Ukrainian people's struggle for liberty, de Vogüé embellishes with baffling ambiguity:

The hetman was not destined to reign, at all events in the manner he wished; but poetry reserved for him a kingdom he knew not of—one more enviable, and certainly more permanent than those which are the sport of policy. Does he justly merit it, this enigmatic personage, astute, cruel, and treacherous, but also brave, generous, eloquent, and impassioned? Ask not for history's verdict upon this singular man. The

people hate him, women loved him, the church anathemizes him, poets absolve him. Unless the world greatly alters, I fear the women and the poets will always have the last word.⁴⁵

Fittingly inconclusive about what we are to think of Mazepa, this passage encapsulates the protean nature of this historical figure across a wide spectrum of imaginations and representations, with wildly discrepant, unreconcilable ghosts, clones, and incarnations. De Vogüé's "wily Mazepa, a singular personification of the land known as Ukraine," "where Cossacks galloped over the steppes, tied upon wild horses...has every feature of the prudent Ulysses, as the rhapsodists of Ukraine have every feature of their great predecessor [i.e., Homer]."⁴⁶ At the same time, de Vogüé found Mazepa's anathema "a ceremony not without impressiveness," and believed that the hetman's "obstinate pursuit" focused on "the subjection of Little Russia to the aristocratic caste, and consolidation over that caste of his own authority..."⁴⁷

Which women and which poets have had the last word: the legendary Madame Falbowska, whose affair with the young page resulted in him being sent naked into the wild steppes and back to fashionable boudoirs in the shape of kitschy clocks or figurines; the hot-headed Motria Kochubei, whose love elicited a garland of precious letters and gifts from the old hetman; her godfather; or the worldly Princess Dulska, who might have mediated Mazepa's decision to switch sides and ally himself with Charles XII? Voltaire, Byron, Hugo, Pushkin, Zaleski, Padura, Słowacki, or Rudansky? Their last words on the subject of Mazepa are incompatible, and in fact are never really the final ones—that is, they provoke responses, both critical and poetic, and trigger rewritings, translations, and reappropriations.

In this section, I will focus on Pushkin's narrative poem *Poltava*. Part of the chain of the ever-recurring Mazepa theme, this work plays a pivotal role as one of the more enduring "last" words. Yet, the meaning of the poem (and its namesake) have been debated since the time of its publication, with critics and scholars tackling its genre and stylistic orchestration, peculiarities of characterization, narrative voicing and focalization, sources and intertextual tensions, ideological tenor, personal motivations, and psychological roots. A few key aspects of the "Poltava" debate are worth summarizing here. In terms of genre and its place in Pushkin's creative evolution, *Poltava* has often been described as a work of a transitional nature, indicating the poet's shift from the romantic, Byronic phase of his widely acclaimed and imitated "Southern Poems" to the more mature (or national) period of his later works such as *Boris Godunov* or *Mednyi vsadnik* (The Bronze Horseman).⁴⁸ In terms of genre, it has been suggested that the poem combines "the romantic plot of a lyrical poem with the narrative of a heroic epic...dedicated to a grand event of national history."⁴⁹ In terms of Russian cultural-ideological momentum and Pushkin's

active shaping of his position in the literary field, *Poltava* reveals Pushkin grappling with the role of national poet, a desideratum of a young national culture in the Russian Empire, while at the same time dealing with post-Decembrist political anxieties and the early reconciliatory hopes of Tsar Nicholas's rule.⁵⁰ Moreover, the feverish writing of the poem occurred at a time of personal worries and political trouble linked to investigations into the authorship of two of his works (excerpts from "Andre Chenier" and "Gavriliada") that circulated anonymously in manuscript form.⁵¹ This cluster of often contradictory impulses, motivations, desires, and strategies determines the complexity of *Poltava* and the ambiguity of its "true" intent, role, and meaning. If Svetlana Evdokimova firmly places the poem in the evolution of Pushkin's historical views as "a glaring and assertive hymn to Russian nationalism," other recent studies of the work discover the presence of irony or even an undermining of the authority of Pushkin's narrator as inherent in his text or in the context of his literary and personal circumstances.⁵² Last but not least, scholars have explored the sources of *Poltava* and the poem's polemical intertextual engagement with Mazepa and treason in Voltaire's *History of Charles XII*, Byron's *Mazeppa*, Ryleev's *Voinarovskii*, and Mickiewicz's *Konrad Wallenrod*.⁵³

My aim here is not to settle accounts with *Poltava*. Rather, I am interested in examining Mazepa as the trigger of a stigma and a curse, of compensatory gestures and mimicry in the pre- and post-*Poltava* contexts. It is generally agreed that the immediate public response to the poem marked a change in Pushkin's position in the literary field of the time. After the unprecedented success of his "Southern Poems," which had prompted the idolization of the poet and numerous imitations, the new and "most mature" work received a critical mixed bag of puzzlement, encouragement, faint praise, direct hostility, and even derision. Available materials from the private sphere (such as the correspondence of Pavel Katenin, Sergei Aksakov, Mikhail Pogodin, Evgenii Boratynskii, Aleksandr and Nikolai Iazykov, and others) confirm this mixture of attitudes and opinions.⁵⁴ If Ivan Kireevskii's math is correct, out of twenty contemporary reviews of *Poltava*, more than half the authors pondered whether the characters and events as presented actually conformed to history.⁵⁵

A brief survey of the immediate reception presents a more complex picture of the public response to *Poltava*. While it is true that some critics were puzzled by its title and genre (Why didn't Pushkin write an epic, they wondered) and found the combination of the lyrical, dramatic, and epic elements discrepant, these issues did not prevent them from giving high praise to the poem (Del'vig, Kireevskii, and Belinskii, the reviewers of the Russian journals *Galateia* and *Atenei*).⁵⁶ According to Kireevskii and the Polevoi brothers, the most astute thinkers on the question of nationality (*narodnost'*) of the time, such "defects" were more than compensated for by the poem's Russian tenor: "From beginning to end, the Russian soul is present, the Russian mindset, which we have never observed so fully in any other poem by Pushkin."⁵⁷ For these critics, this quality

in *Poltava* heralded a new period in Pushkin's evolution and a promising direction in Russian letters. However, this quality was not easy to pin down: if one critic's heart trembled while reading Kochubei's reply to his torturers ("this is a Russian voice reaching straight into our hearts"), another (Somov) found this same passage more befitting a piece of folklore than a historical narrative.⁵⁸

Pushkin's "Russianness" in *Poltava* was intuitively sensed by his contemporary critics in his choice of historical theme (a glorious event in the reign of Peter I), his characterization of Mazepa, Kochubei, Peter, and Charles XII, and the general emotional, ethical, and ideological tenor in his presentation of characters and events. These assessments were further developed by Vissarion Belinskii in his monumental survey of Pushkin's oeuvre, which cemented the Russian poet's place as the national genius and the high ranking of *Poltava* in the canon of Russian literature. Moreover, according to Belinskii, the most grandiose Petrine epic, as formed by Pushkin's "Stansy," numerous places in *Poltava*, "Pir Petra Velikogo," and *Bronze Horseman*, provides not only a phenomenal monument to the two great reformers of the Russian Empire and poetry, but serves as a litmus test of Russianness itself: "The degree to which any Russian heart has a right to be called truly Russian should be determined by the degree of awe [тpенет] one experiences while reading this Petrine epic."⁵⁹ We don't know whether Nicholas I trembled while reading anything literary, but he reportedly valued "Poltava."⁶⁰

For some critics, the poem's Russian spirit and mindset served as authenticating features of *Poltava*, while others found Pushkin's venture into history fraught with distortion, intellectual recklessness, and lack of authenticity. The fact that the poem was initially a "fiasco" should be understood as the result of several factors. *Poltava* had limited commercial success compared to Faddei Bulgarin's unprecedented bestseller, *Ivan Vyzhigin*. The poem also marked Pushkin's tumble from his pedestal as the idol of the reading public to a writer whose mature work perplexed more often than satisfied.⁶¹

Perhaps the most important factors in the poem's muted reception were two lengthy reviews that were published in influential periodicals: a condescending but understanding one by Faddei Bulgarin, in *Syn otechestva* (Son of the Fatherland), and the openly harsh and derisive review by Nikolai Nadezhdin in *Vestnik Evropy* (Messenger of Europe). Their main grounds for blasting *Poltava* were Pushkin's treatment of Mazepa, which both critics found overly and simplistically negative and utterly biased. Pushkin's own intention, as declared in the introduction to the first edition of the poem, was to present a historically accurate character, in contrast to past attempts to make him a hero of liberty (i.e., Ryleev's and Byron's portrayals) and to primitive attempts to turn him into a melodramatic old coward (Alad'in's tale). While recognizing the "remarkable" nature of the hetman, Pushkin's verdict was unequivocally negative: "an ambitious man, inveterate in duplicity and evil."⁶²

Is his Mazepa so bad? I shall not address here whether Pushkin's hetman is

overdone or how the real Mazepa differed from Pushkin's evil projections.⁶³ The point of departure for the present investigation lies in another dimension: does Pushkin's portrayal of Mazepa register as "so bad," and if so, to whom and why? After all, Pushkin's Mazepa did not bother the "Ukrainophile" Polevoi,⁶⁴ and some readers today (see n. 52) find much complexity, ambiguity, or even subversion in this character. Whose reading is correct? Let us look at the reaction of the "neutral" de Vogüé, whose ruminations began this exploration of *Poltava*. For the French writer, Mazepa, who "has every feature of the prudent Ulysses," personifies liberty-loving Ukraine to such a degree that "wandering beggars, who never even heard his name [!], seem naturally inspired with his grandeur and sincerity [!]."⁶⁵ De Vogüé was fully immersed in the Western popular tradition of Mazepa (from Voltaire to Byron and Hugo and beyond), familiar with the historical scholarship on Mazepa by the likes of Kostomarov and Solov'ev, and sympathetic to the plight of Ukraine in the "talons of the imperial eagle."⁶⁶ He saw Mazepa's act as a decision urged by the Cossack elites, with the hetman's "vehement manifestos" exhorting "Little Russia...to fight for Cossack freedom."⁶⁷ Did the French writer object to Pushkin's *Poltava*? Not at all: in de Vogüé's view, Pushkin had grasped "that intuitive truth" that "is sometimes more true than historical fact itself."⁶⁸ Did he take issues with the poet's portrayal of Mazepa? For de Vogüé, "the portrait of the old *conspirateur* is magnificent, like those dark visages with which Tintoretto has peopled the palaces of Venice."⁶⁹ Clearly, reader reaction to Pushkin's poem in general and to his portrayal of Mazepa in particular was (is) conditioned by a reader's background, horizon of expectations, ideology, and motivations. Hence, the exact same passage may be described as portraying a "duplicitous and mindless old man" (Nadezhdin) or a Tintoretto-like magnificent "dark visage."⁷⁰ At this point the possible agendas of the key players in the *Poltava* controversy—Bulgarin and Nadezhdin—will be considered.

Faddei Bulgarin's review of *Poltava* begins with praise for Pushkin as a brilliant follower (versus imitator) of Byron and a supreme master of Russian poetry. He points out, however, that while Pushkin may claim free license with his invented characters, historical characters demand a fullness and verisimilitude that Pushkin did not supply. Kochubei, for example, is presented not as a patriot but as a tattle-tale possessed by a thirst for revenge, whose lower instincts are even baser than those found in Mazepa, who followed the urgings of the Cossack Host to rise up against Peter.⁷¹ Bulgarin's overall verdict on Pushkin's Mazepa strikes hard:

In the poem, instead of being presented according to the historical record, Mazepa is cruelly slandered. One song, composed by Mazepa and published in the *History of Little Russia* by Bantysh-Kamens'kyi, depicts the character of Mazepa more powerfully than all the quarrelsome

epithets applied to him by the author of *Poltava*. Most strangely, the author wants to present Mazepa as a mindless and vengeful *starichishka* [little old man], who raised the banner of rebellion because Peter the Great gave his moustache a yank during a feast.⁷²

Why did Bulgarin object so strongly to Pushkin's Mazepa? Bulgarin was a Pole who was fully integrated into the imperial system, a successful Russian man of letters, a loyal Russian subject—perhaps too loyal, as he was also an agent of the Third Department of the Ministry of the Interior and the editor of an influential daily—what could be more exemplary? But owing to his Polish background, he was viewed with some suspicion and occasionally reminded of his origins—especially because of his success, influence, and visibility. Nicholas I reportedly never liked or trusted him.⁷³ Aleksandr Bestuzhev recalled both Faddei Bulgarin and Osip Senkovskii (Poles in Russian letters, so to speak) as subversive opportunists “that from dawn to dusk laughed at Russians, who, as they said, should be charged money for being fooled.”⁷⁴ *Vestnik Evropy* jokingly classified *Ivan Vyzhigin* as a phenomenon of Polish literature.⁷⁵ Reviewing Bulgarin's historical novel *Dimitrii Samozvanets* (1830), Anton Del'vig accused him of treating Russians dismissively while favoring the Poles. Orest Somov wrote condescendingly that “Mr. Bulgarin writes like a foreigner who has acquired the mechanics of the Russian language; i.e., he knows the rules...but is unfamiliar with all the means, the riches of this language.”⁷⁶

A target of Pushkin's epigrams and a public figure that by default was labeled as odious by Soviet scholarship, Bulgarin only recently has been treated with a degree of the complexity he deserves. While in the post-Decembrist climate his publicly expressed views turned increasingly conservative and his motivations, more mercantile, we can only speculate about his personal opinions and loyalties. That he was perfectly aware of the ambiguity of his position and well-practiced in the art of mimicry may be inferred from the response of the Third Department to Nikolai Novosil'tsev's report against him. The Department defended its active collaborator, acknowledging Bulgarin's Russian patriotism (“not a single Pole would have written a laudatory word about Peter I and Suvorov”) and total lack of Polish patriotism. The author of the response noted that he never published anything about Poland in his journals, did not subscribe to a single periodical from Warsaw, and had no connection to Lithuania, where he was raised.⁷⁷

Why, then, did Bulgarin object so strongly to Pushkin's Mazepa? Was it because he was a Pole, to put it bluntly? His stance may have been influenced by his growing comfort on the literary Olympus owing to the phenomenal success of *Ivan Vyzhigin*. I would argue that his expectations of Mazepa as a historical figure, while far from being apologetic, were very different from Pushkin's. Bulgarin was aware of the Polish popular and literary takes on Mazepa as the

epitome of the Cossacks and a somewhat wild hero, as summarized by Bohdan Zaleski in the introduction to his ballad “Dumka Mazepy” (1824): Mazepa “loved Polish women and didn’t like Poles, sang with a *kobza* and longed for war.... No hero real or imagined, in history and romances, has fought for so many years, loved so many times, and experienced so many adventures. He was also a poet, but what Ukrainian hetman wasn’t!... It could not have been otherwise with a militant people who love their ancestors above all.”⁷⁸ In this context, both Byron’s and Ryleev’s poems must have rung truer to Bulgarin—the first, the creation of a poet whose genius earned him free license, and the second, as a true manifestation of *narodnost’*. His review of *Voinarovskii* began thus: “Here is a veritably national poem! Emotions, events, depictions of nature—everything in this work is Russian, written just to the point.”⁷⁹ What are the emotions, events, and depictions of nature that resonated with Bulgarin? The sufferings of an exiled soul longing for his native land amidst the unforgiving expanse of Siberia; the proud, ambitious, and ardent hetman who inspired the protagonist to side with him, and the unfortunate criminal tortured by his conscience on his deathbed, and Voinarovs’kyi’s undying patriotism and stoicism. “It is a pure spring, reflecting a noble, elevated soul, filled with love for his motherland and humanity,” Bulgarin summarized in his evaluation of Ryleev’s poem. Thus, it is not surprising that for Bulgarin, Pushkin’s Mazepa was a reduction and distortion of the historic figure, while the triumphalist stance of *Poltava* was less appealing than the national longing and suffering found in *Voinarovskii*.⁸⁰ Moreover, the sacrifice of personal honor for the sake of a nation’s salvation and the stigmatic poetry of treason as captured in *Konrad Wallenrod* no doubt also resonated with Bulgarin.

In sum, Bulgarin’s cultural background, his ideologies (both those practiced in public and those confined to the private sphere), his deeply ambiguous personal motivations—all these factors likely shaped his reaction to *Poltava* and prompted his rewriting of the Mazepa theme in the eponymous novel (to be discussed in the following section).

By far the most vicious attack on Pushkin’s *Poltava* came from Nikolai Nadezhdin, which was staged as an investigative debate between several stylized characters. The Byronic Mazepa served as a departure point for the critic’s attack, just as it had for Bulgarin. Nadezhdin compares the infernal, titanic image of Hetman Mazepa in Byron to Pushkin’s “duplicitous, soulless little old man, a *starichishka*.” The critic asks: “If Mazepa truly were the way Pushkin represents him in his poem, would he be even worthy of poetic exploration?” Quoting the concluding lines of Mazepa’s song, “Let there be glory eternal, that we have our liberties through our sword,” the critic finds Mazepa a powerful player of the Petrine era: “The very curse hanging over his memory reveals in him a strength of character that only lacked a worthy direction to acquire true grandeur: old philanderers are worthy of derisive laughter, not curses.”⁸¹

The veracity and dignity of other characters are also doubted. The infamous “Mazepa moustache” in *Poltava*, Mazepa’s supposed reason for rebelling, is mocked with relish. After dispensing with these exaggerated albeit not entirely baseless jabs, Nadezhdin launches a zealous general attack: “Pushkin’s poetry is simply a parody.... In all truth, Pushkin may be called a genius of caricature.”⁸² Finally, the critic applies the Poltava metaphor to the poem and the poet: “*Poltava* is a veritable Poltava for Pushkin! He was predestined here to experience the fate of Charles XII!”⁸³ Even compared to his other caustic reviews of Pushkin’s works, there is something over-the-top, something irrational and personal in Nadezhdin’s outburst, as if he were trying (should we now use the moustache analogy?) to get at the genius who had offended him deeply with his dismissive attitude and epigrams. Pushkin reportedly laughed off the attack, Pogodin found it devastating, and some minor critics imitated the dismissive tone and formulae of the review.⁸⁴ Why was Nadezhdin so irritated by Pushkin’s Mazepa? We can speculate about the degree of his Ukrainian sympathies or those of his employer, Mikhail Kachenovskii, the editor of *Vestnik Evropy* (they are more evident in Nadezhdin’s review of Gogol’s *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*). The critic’s attack on *Poltava* seems to betray his irritation with Pushkin’s recent work in general, for which the poem provided a convenient base.

Having surveyed the metropolitan response to *Poltava* as a combustible mixture of attitudes and agendas, we now turn to the Ukrainian reception of the poem. What can we infer from the limited and often scattered information available today? Mykhailo Maksymovych and Orest Somov defended it, Ievhen Hrebinka and Opanas Shpyhots’kyi translated it into Ukrainian, Mykola Hohol’ (Nikolai Gogol) mocked it, Shevchenko reportedly disliked it, and Andrii Tsarynyi-Storozhenko noted: “A Ukrainian Clio could not have been satisfied with *Poltava*.”⁸⁵ A closer look is in order.

Defending the poem, Maksymovych specifically addressed Bulgarin and Nadezhdin’s attacks that centered on Pushkin’s inadequate and “untrue” Mazepa. He argued that whatever patriotism Mazepa purports to express in his song (written in his youth), it is undermined by his actions: “The critic [Bulgarin] believes Mazepa was a [Ukrainian] patriot. But does history really represent him as such? Not at all! All his actions do not in the slightest show a devoted love for Little Russia. History reveals him as a cunning, enterprising man driven by ambition and profit.”⁸⁶ Maksymovych presents, as one of the better passages of the poem, Pushkin’s intense portrait of the old hetman (which had led critics to object to the representation of Mazepa as a *stari-chishka*), and endorses every negative characteristic with extensive references to Bantysh-Kamens’kyi’s *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*. Maksymovych also “verifies” both the “moustache episode” (as a motive for revenge in Mazepa’s rebellion) and Motria Kochubei’s genuine love for her elderly godfather-hetman.

In sum, the purpose of Maksymovych's review was to prove that Pushkin's characterization of Mazepa was historically correct. Moreover, as the author of the renowned collection *Malorossiiskie pesni* (Little Russian Songs; published just two years before *Poltava*), Maksymovych was an authoritative Ukrainian expert—who was in a better position to know the history and traditions of his native land? But did he find in Pushkin's Mazepa a Tintoretto-like visage or a despicable old goat? Was he sincere in his defense of *Poltava*, acting on his genuine admiration of the poet, or was he securing a place for himself in Pushkin's literary circle, which would have been important for him as an editor of the Moscow-based almanac *Dennitsa* (Daybreak; 1830–31), which featured Pushkin's coveted verses?⁸⁷ There are clues to indicate that Maksymovych's unambiguous support of Pushkin's treatment of Mazepa may have been tinged with Ukrainian mimicry. This mimicry lies in the compensatory mechanisms of positioning Ukrainian identity between the rock of the Mazepa curse and the hard place of *imperium*.

Maksymovych comes close to fully embracing Pushkin's Mazepa and *Poltava*—almost, but not quite. He raises one sticking point at the conclusion of his review. While he sees no contradictions of historical truth in Pushkin's characters, he objects to the poet's depiction of Ukrainians as “the friends of bloody olden times.” On the contrary, Maksymovych argues, “Ukrainians did not want to unite with the Swedes and did not impatiently await Charles, as Pushkin says.” He corrects Pushkin, noting that the Ukrainians always preferred the Russians to the Swedes, Turks, or Poles, and that once they learned of Mazepa's treason, they instantly abandoned him and also destroyed up to half of the Swedish forces stationed in Ukraine.⁸⁸

Maksymovych's strategy of contrasting the personal treason of the egotistical power-hungry Mazepa with the loyalty, valor, and victimhood of the Little Russian people in the Northern War epitomizes compensation and mimicry, the Ukrainian mechanisms for coping with the curse of Mazepa. That his position on Mazepa may have been more complex than publicly declared may be inferred from his inclusion of “Duma Het'mana Mazepy” in the corpus of *Little Russian Songs* (1827) and more directly from a letter to his friend Petro Lebedyntsev, the editor of the Kyiv-based *Eparkhial'nye Vedomosti*, which was written more than three and half decades after his review of *Poltava*. Contributing a document written by Hetman Ivan Skoropads'kyi, Mazepa's successor, with his comments to the newspaper, Maksymovych writes: “And there was an urge [in me] to say that it seems it is time to lift the anathema curse in Kyiv from the one whose monuments are so many in the city...who gilded at his own expense the domes of the Lavra's great cathedral...by whose cares the ancient Pereiaslav eparchy was resumed..., etc., etc. For 157 years he has been cursed every year...could this curse not be lifted, finally, by the gracious royal will?”⁸⁹ In this contorted manner, Maksymovych resorts to the impersonal

mode, avoiding direct engagement with the taboo, and manages to avoid the cursed name through his use of demonstrative pronouns. A few sentences later Maksymovych retreats from his idea, calling his thoughts “tipsy.” Nothing could reveal the touchiness of the Mazepa subject for Maksymovych more vividly. I will return to Maksymovych’s compensatory dealings with the curse of Mazepa when I discuss his narrative poem *Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi* (1834).

In sum, the reception of Pushkin’s *Poltava* tells us not only much about the complexity of the protean poet’s evolution vis-à-vis imperial power, his audience, and the evolving professional literary field in the Russian Empire of the late 1820s–30s, but also reveals ambiguous and conflicting identities of readers and participants of the literary process, which are triggered precisely by the presence of Mazepa at the very center of the Ukrainian-Russian relationship and identity formations.

THE RHETORIC OF LOYALTY AND THE POETICS OF BETRAYAL

Pushkin’s contemporary critics noted that *Poltava*, in contrast to the so-called “Southern Poems,” ended up on the margins of the literary mainstream and that “no Pushkin epigone has chosen the poem as a model for his mosaics/arabesques.”⁹⁰ True, there were no direct imitations of *Poltava*,⁹¹ and with good reason: first, given the particularity, even singularity, of this historic event (unlike the generic actions and invented characters of the “Southern Poems”), *Poltava* was much less susceptible to formulaization; second: why would someone imitate a work that was not successful and was seen as an indication of a decline of Pushkin’s genius? Yet, the actual place of his narrative poem in the literary process of the time is more complex. It appeared at the very peak of a wave of romantic narrative poems, most of which imitated Pushkin’s earlier models, spurned by the poet in his later works.⁹² *Poltava*’s departure from these models also made it less conducive to the efforts of epigones. Pushkin’s poem was itself a multifaceted response both to specific literary texts (Byron, Ryleev, and Mickiewicz) and the ideological agendas and popular opinions generated by these texts. Indeed they provoked not only critical responses but literary ones. Thus, a corrected assessment of *Poltava* should read as follows: the work “did not find *worthy* imitators and followers.”⁹³ In this section, I will discuss a few such unworthy followers; that is, literary responses to *Poltava* as a text that participated in the shaping of the themes of Mazepa and Peter, Ukraine and Russia—again, with particular emphasis on identity configurations and identity artifacts.

As we have seen in the previous section, Mykhailo Maksymovych lent his markedly Ukrainian voice in support of Pushkin’s *Poltava*, focusing on the veracity of the poet’s treatment of Mazepa, his only quibble directed at the

representation of the Ukrainian people as “the friends of bloody olden times.” Maksymovych’s review was not his only response to Pushkin’s poem. In 1833 he anonymously published *Bogdan Khmel’nitskii*,⁹⁴ a poem that made no impact in the literary field. It is a derivative and weak work that has received only brief mentions in a few scholarly publications that trace broader literary contexts: Vasyl’ Sypovs’kyi’s survey of Russian-language *Ukrainica*, Viktor Zhirmunskii’s survey of romantic poems of the Pushkinian age, and Sokolov’s article on this phenomenon.⁹⁵ One contemporary review of the poem appeared in *Severnaia pchela* (The Northern Bee). While the critic, V. Minskii, had a few minor quibbles with the novelistic (i.e., imitative and inauthentic) plot of the work, the character of Khmel’nyts’kyi seemed to him “to have been poured out of a soul that felt all the misery suffered by Ukraine before her union with Russia.”⁹⁶ Another small objection concerned the fact that Maksymovych brought his protagonist only to the moment of his personal apotheosis (i.e., his triumphant entry into Kyiv in 1648) rather than to the moment of resurrection of the entire land (i.e., the Pereiaslav pact of 1654, which is eulogized only in the epilogue).⁹⁷ These and a few other negative comments do not, according to Minskii, detract from the poem’s positive features, which form the lion’s share of the text: the poet’s superior geographic and ethnographic competence are displayed in the descriptions of landscapes, customs, and the details of Cossack life, while the poet’s “knowledge of the heart” is revealed in “the ardent love of our grandfathers (I am myself a Little Russian) for the savior of Little Russia.”⁹⁸ Concluding his review, Minskii praised the work as “a remarkable phenomenon in our literature, and a precious gift to literate Little Russians. Perhaps the poet of Khmelnitskii might encounter judges as judicious as the current publisher of *Vestnik Evropy* toward the works of Pushkin—this would not diminish the virtues of his poem.”⁹⁹

This review is fascinating in a number of aspects. First of all, Minskii directly declares the Ukrainian identity and agenda of the poem—the laudation of Khmel’nyts’kyi as the savior of Ukraine through the union with Russia. Moreover, this agenda elicits the critic’s admission of his own Ukrainian identity and the pleasure he derives as a reader familiarizing himself anew with Ukrainian *realia*. However, rather than detracting from the “objectivity” of his judgment, this admission is used to lend authority for his support of the work’s strong points (i.e., its knowledge of things Ukrainian). The critic calls the poem a contribution to the metropolitan literary field and a precious gift for Ukrainians. This phrasing demonstrates Minskii’s keen understanding of the literary nomenclature (i.e., the position of a poem like *Bogdan Khmel’nitskii* in the mainstream and for the Ukrainian “fringe”) and of the differences between the agendas and reception horizons of the two audiences, upon which the poem acts in different ways. Last but not the least, his reference to *Vestnik Evropy* is particularly telling. Why did he include it? That was the very journal

in whose pages Pushkin's nemesis, Nadezhdin, had attacked *Poltava*. Minskii understands both the inherent thematic and, perhaps, even the ideological connection between Maksymovych's poem to *Poltava*, as well as the "failure" of the latter model in the realm of historical authenticity (the latter is directly connected to Pushkin's representation of Mazepa). Thus, by his tongue-in-cheek comment Minskii both tacitly recognizes the main flaw of *Bogdan Khmel'nytskii* (lack of historical veracity and deficiencies in characterization) and attempts to head off its exposure to devastating criticisms, the likes of which plagued Pushkin's *Poltava*.

How does *Bogdan Khmel'nytskii* relate to *Poltava*? At the core of this relationship lies the opposition between Mazepa and Khmel'nyts'kyi. In his review Maksymovych dispensed with Mazepa as a villain, yet protested against the mischaracterization of the Ukrainian people as Mazepists. In his poem, however, he provided the "necessary corrective" by highlighting the true bond between the Ukrainian people and their god-sent hero Khmel'nyts'kyi, who leads Ukraine to her union with Russia. In doing so, Maksymovych was tapping into the enduring tradition whereby Ukrainian Cossack elites and their descendants cultivated a special nomenclature of Cossack heroes, which served as a symbolic index of their special virtues and deserved privileges; that is, their status in the Russian Empire. The figures of Nalyvaiko, Khmel'nyts'kyi, and Polubotok epitomized, respectively, victimhood in the Ukrainian struggle for liberty, heroic apotheosis, and the righteousness of the Cossack nation as featured in the most ideologically saturated treatment of Ukrainian history, *Istoriia Rusov*. The cult of Khmel'nyts'kyi as a public ritualistic manifestation of loyalty and dignity was the most important component of the Ukrainian elites' attempt to consolidate their identity and secure their privileged position in the national and social taxonomy of the Russian Empire.¹⁰⁰

The cult of Khmel'nyts'kyi was the strongest possible antidote to the curse of Mazepa, both in terms of popular perceptions of Ukrainians in the Russian Empire and the shaping of Ukrainian identity and self-esteem. Maksymovych was fully versed in these issues and mechanisms. In his survey of Russian literature for 1830, published in *Dennitsa na 1831 god* (which he edited), Maksymovych mentioned Khmel'nyts'kyi's name as though it were part of the common wisdom of every citizen of the empire. Concluding his comments on the proliferation of Russian novels on a hopeful note, Maksymovych added: "But...what will be, will be; and that will be as God provides, as the great Bogdan would say."¹⁰¹ In other words, Maksymovych presents Khmel'nyts'kyi as a hero/source of a widespread proverb. Would any educated Russian instantly recognize who this "great Bogdan" is? Possibly. Would it occur to every educated Russian to connect this providential wisdom with "the great Bogdan"? Probably not—(great who?). In the Russian discourse proper, the distinctions among various Cossack leaders most likely barely registered. In his

1817 travelogue Ivan Dolgorukov wrote with disdain about the institution of the Little Russian hetman. As far as Dolgorukov was concerned, the grave mounds situated alongside the roads in Ukraine only reminded him of the “misdeeds [проказы] of Khmel’nitskii, Doroshenko, and Mazepa.”¹⁰² Needless to say, no Ukrainian would have lumped these figures together sacrilegiously in such a phrase. With that small quotation inserted in his review of current Russian literature, Maksymovych sought not only to make a contribution to the common metropolitan vocabulary, but, more importantly, to insert a legitimate, symbolically loaded, and markedly Ukrainian hero into the universal Russian imperial pantheon of “greats.” This hero is meant to replace the definition of Ukrainians as the “spirit of Mazepa” and provide an alternative and ideologically opposite name for Ukrainians, around which they could mobilize, to use Bourdieu’s term, their identity and position themselves as a group privileged in the national taxonomy of the Russian Empire.

The inscription of Bohdan Khmel’nyts’kyi, this Ukrainian name of the ultimate Ukrainian hero, into the pantheon of the empire, is the ultimate point of Maksymovych’s poem, as evident from the introduction: “Bogdan Khmel’nitskii, the liberator of Little Russia from the yoke of the Poles, the creator [виновник] of happiness of the millions who enjoy their hearts’ full freedom under the beneficial reign of the Russian tsars, a man whose illustrious deeds garnered him immortal glory.”¹⁰³ This formula and sentiment couldn’t have been more ideologically apt in the aftermath of the 1831 Polish uprising. In the composition of the character of Khmel’nyts’kyi we observe a labored design, indeed a collage, which builds upon a repertory of Cossack features and literary clichés. In the first canto, the hetman appears to a Cossack fugitive in the middle of nowhere, “in Tatar dress of some rank, his features resembling a young Pole.”¹⁰⁴ This hybridity of appearance¹⁰⁵ indicates the emergence of the chosen hero from a position of “otherness,” a liminality that imbues him with an experience that enables him to transcend the confines of enslaved Ukraine and peer into the geopolitical constellations (i.e., envision diplomatic alliances) and intuit the providential path for Ukraine. After questioning the fugitive and listening to the list of injustices and miseries that have befallen his people, Khmel’nyts’kyi goes to his native Chyhyryn, where he declares to the welcoming crowd: “the voice of misery will be silenced, and the unappeasable Sarmatians [i.e., the Poles] will fall.”¹⁰⁶

Since a frontal declarative representation of a hero is unsustainable in a romantic narrative poem, Maksymovych works hard at propelling the plot, which I will summarize briefly here. Khmel’nyts’kyi learns of his father’s death, which was caused by the local magnate, Czaplicki, and rushes to his castle for revenge. He manages to enter the dining hall to kill the villain. Suddenly (as befits a romantic narrative), he is stopped by Czaplicki’s daughter (a different, “other”) Maria, who appeals to his humanity, which she contrasts to her

father's viciousness. Khmel'nyts'kyi is presented as an ardent young man, who vacillates between rage and compassion, his hesitation allowing his enemies to snap to attention and subdue the young rebel. Maria's pleas to her father have no effect. This sets the stage for a nocturnal prison scene as a liminal space between life and death, where the immobilized and exhausted hero struggles spiritually. The masked Maria enters his cell, testing her beloved's spiritual strength and feelings for her, and she helps him escape. The pursuit by Czaplicki's soldiers leaves Khmel'nyts'kyi wounded in the wilderness, and Maria is brought back to her father. As in the Mazepa legend, the dying young hero is saved by simple rural dwellers.

Nursed back to health, Khmel'nyts'kyi sets aside his romantic feelings and departs for the Zaporozhian Sich to rally the Cossacks to war against the oppressor. The stature and chosenness (charisma) of the hetman is tacitly recognized by the Sich leaders. At the Sich, he has a dream, in which "a young woman in torn robes is struggling with a violent giant and apparently losing strength."¹⁰⁷ Khmel'nyts'kyi rushes into battle, and after an exhausting fight, kills the enemy and suddenly sees the virginal creature of his dream calling "[my] hero!" to him. In response to the hero's questioning, the virgin reveals her identity: she is Ukraine liberated.¹⁰⁸ A series of battles ensue, in which Khmel'nyts'kyi (not unlike Peter I) appears as a supreme martial leader and the vehicle of God: destroying armies, punishing traitors, uniting the Cossacks, and liberating his land from oppressors. Khmel'nyts'kyi's triumph brings him to Kyiv, where he receives a loaf of bread from his people, with the inscription "from the liberated to the liberator." The metropolitan sprinkles the hetman with holy water while the nation proclaims him *Bohdan*—that is, the God-given one. This immense national triumph is complemented by a personal romantic triumph: it turns out that Maria (like another Maria) escaped from the paternal castle and found refuge in a Kyivan convent, where, her virginity intact, she prepares to take monastic vows. Through intuition, the metropolitan has chosen her to present the bread to Khmel'nyts'kyi, and the hero is reunited with his beloved. Thus, as is only possible in romantic poems, the hetman ends up with two (fused) liberated virgins: Ukraine and Maria, while holy Ukraine ends up with two (merged) beloved ones/liberators: the immortal Bohdan and the Russian tsar (this future union is underscored several times in the poem).

In the epilogue Maksymovych completes his "treatment" of Ukrainian history and directly engages with Pushkin's *Poltava*: "In this way, a virtuous, extraordinary man accomplished a marvelous deed. In this manner fought, loved, and lived the friend of glory, the friend of holy Ukraine!" In this passage the poet strives mightily to overwrite both Pushkinian notions of mutinous Ukraine: "the friends of bloody olden times" and Mazepa, the harbinger of "a bloody liberty." Instead, he promotes the hero as a true Ukrainian agent of history, who, for the common good, "united two lands into one" and "gave his

people to the co-religious tsar Alexei...so that he rules this people with love and protects their rights attained by blood and sword" (a phrase that may be linked to the last lines of the song of Mazepa).¹⁰⁹ Unlike Mazepa of *Poltava*, who disappears without a trace, this hero "rested in peace in a laurel-shaded tomb." The flow of history is also dealt with. In *Poltava*, after the passage of a hundred years, nothing is left of the proud men of the past, and in the last lines of the poem, Ukraine is folded into a broader expanse of southern nature, furnished with local ethnographic decorative detail (a jingling blind bard and young Cossack lasses). Maksymovych's poem concludes with the following passage: "Many, many years have passed since the Hetman died.... Yet, who is not protected by the law [covenant]?... Thus, you, o holy motherland, flourish under the golden scepter of the just Nicholas!"¹¹⁰

Maksymovych's poem should be understood as a direct literary response to Pushkin and a poetic elaboration on his review of *Poltava*. Drawing on ideological and literary clichés (some of which are directly borrowed from Pushkin's work), this poem offers a portrait of "holy Ukraine" and Ukrainians as a nation striving for liberty from foreign oppression and obtaining it, as well as happiness and fulfillment, thanks to the dynastic union with the Russian tsar. This union is bolstered by the spiritual and emotional union between the nation and her leader-liberator; this true Ukrainian hero is thus promoted to the ranks of the universal pantheon of immortals. As a literary character and ideological symbol, the irresistible Khmel'nyts'kyi in Maksymovych's poem is a composite portrait that combines the features of an ardent and sensitive young lover, a struggling hero who all too often finds himself in a liminal state, a man of political wisdom, and a seer with prophetic visions, a vehicle of God—and a God-given, tsar-like Cossack Mars and Moses rolled into one. In other words, the poem offers the most attractive and purposeful, Ukrainian in tenor and yet ideologically correct, compensation for the curse of Mazepa that was reinforced in the metropolitan culture by *Poltava*.

At the very time that Maksymovych was "compensating" for *Poltava*, Bulgarin was busy with his own Mazepa work, which was meant, presumably, to remedy Pushkin's cruel misrepresentations of the hetman. In 1833–34 he published his take on this historical figure, the eponymous novel that happens to be his last work in the genre. As Mark Al'tshuller remarked, in his *Mazepa*, Bulgarin purposefully chose to avoid direct competition with both Byron and Pushkin by avoiding similar settings, situations, and characters.¹¹¹ There is no Peter I among his characters (except for one episodic appearance, literally, on a street in St. Petersburg), no detailed descriptions of the Battle of Poltava (except for a short authorial digression on the course of events), no Motria/Maria. Instead, Bulgarin introduced a number of other historical and fictional characters (Ognevik, Palii, Maria Lomtikovskaia, Princess Dul'ska, etc.). In the introduction, Bulgarin explained his task as a novelist: to instruct while

entertaining the reader, noting that the main aim of his work was to present a sketch of Mazepa's character as gleaned from the works of history and legend. How did he score in the realm of historical verisimilitude? Did he repair the injustices that Pushkin had inflicted on the hetman? Bulgarin proposed to view Mazepa as "one of the most intelligent and educated men of his age," who ruled the Cossack host "magnificently and autocratically" and "who lacked only one thing that prevented him from becoming great—virtue."¹¹²

In his novel, Bulgarin resorts to extensive historical commentaries, setting the stage for Mazepa's motives and actions. The Ukrainian people had been subjected to aggression for centuries, yet they preserved the "sacred memory of Rus' independence" and threw off the Polish yoke under the leadership of Hetman Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi, who was faithful to Russia. However, his successors constantly violated the oath, "betraying the Russian tsars, inciting the people, dooming their own motherland, and injuring the common state, Russia."¹¹³ According to Bulgarin, the particular local patriotism, nationality, and administrative traditions in Ukraine were the key political forces that Mazepa exploited brilliantly to his advantage: Ukrainians did not like Russians (*moskals*), and while "intelligent Ukrainians eagerly wanted their land to be under Russian sovereignty, none of them wished Ukraine and Russia to be merged together."¹¹⁴ In Bulgarin, this general sentiment spurs Mazepa's arguments put forward to his closest associates and to those he wanted to convert into allies (revealing Peter's policies and plans as a grave threat to Ukraine's liberty).

In his characterization of Mazepa's eloquence Bulgarin makes use of both the song of Mazepa and the speech he gave to his army before joining Charles XII.¹¹⁵ Mazepa's first revelation of his plan to his devoted nephew, Voinarovs'kyi, is projected by Bulgarin with all possible heroic, patriotic eloquence: "In my old age, it befalls to me to accomplish a deed that my predecessors attempted without success.... I decided to break away from Russia and to found an independent state.... Now or never!" Mazepa's understanding of the historical moment is clear and logical: "If I were in Peter's place, I would not have agreed, for any profits, to keep in my realm a separate military semi-republic that can cause much more harm than benefit."¹¹⁶ Voinarovs'kyi responds ardently to Mazepa's call: "Independence or death."¹¹⁷ Bulgarin presents Mazepa's act of siding with the Swedish king and his propaganda (*злoбные манифесты*) as a catalyst of massive civil unrest, resulting in Ukrainians splitting into two camps: those who believed that the "hetman is good [*благ есть*]" and those who maintained that "he flatters and deceives the people" (even though all right-thinking people in the end side with the Russian tsar).¹¹⁸

Why were these elements, these "correctives" to Mazepa so important to this writer? Bulgarin was no Ukrainian patriot, but a demonstratively loyal Russian citizen and a Polish *intelligent* by origin. If he was steeped in the

art of mimicry, his was a markedly Polish mimicry, as I indicated earlier: he embraced imperial universalism, carefully gauged his opinions on Poland, and avoided public connections with it altogether. However, in his treatment of the Ukrainian historical crisis he had no need to maneuver around a dangerous identity artifact. He mimics being a perfect Russian, blasting the Polish yoke over Ukraine, sympathizing with the Zaporozhians' free spirit, and grasping the logic of the Petrine transformation of "Asiatic Russia." He is almost a good imperial Ukrainian (Little Russian) in his presentation of Ukraine; that is, a Ukraine that was indivisibly united with the Great Russians and together constituting the core of Russia. No one could accuse Bulgarin of any hidden Ukrainian Mazepism. His "Mazepism" is thus open: it is a rational consideration of political tendencies that reach a conclusion that the Ukrainian mimicry-laden discourse tries to mask (i.e., the national tenor of Mazepa's actions). Hence, while Bulgarin in numerous episodes and passages embellished his text with a goodly measure of declarative rhetoric of imperial loyalty, he complicates them with the addition of "neutral" (measured and rational) historical logic and "non-neutral" (sympathetic) poetics of national strife and trauma. While the "instructive" aspect of Bulgarin's *Mazepa* provides a fascinating avenue for an investigation of identity performance and mimicry in the entertaining realm of invented characters, Bulgarin's tale may be described as a wild (i.e., popular in its design) concoction of exaggerated melodrama and Gothic elements, embellished with fiery passions, operatic intrigue (lost babies, siblings unsuspecting that they are related), lasciviousness, incest (between Mazepa's daughter and his "lost" son), murder, gory deaths, anti-Semitic stereotypes, and so on.¹¹⁹ In his review published in *Moskovskii telegraf*, Nikolai Polevoi dismissed Bulgarin's novel as a failure, neither creating an engaging piece of fiction nor capturing the true character of Mazepa.¹²⁰ Polevoi did not mention the writer's attempts to explain the hetman's motivations and political atmosphere in Cossack Ukraine. Instead, the critic purposefully focused on the novel's weakest point¹²¹—characterization—finding Bulgarin's Mazepa "a fairly cunning crook and no more," and thus devoid of interest. In contrast to this "petty" depiction, Polevoi argued (as if extending Bulgarin's own desideratum expressed in the novel) that the author should have "brought to the scene a man strong in mind and spirit, yet corrupt, blinded by ambition and a false affection for his motherland."¹²² He pointed to the exaggerated, melodramatic, and even repulsive qualities of most of the invented characters, with Ognevik, Mazepa's lost son and a "lousy little Cossack [Дрянной казачишка]," taking center stage in the novel rather than the rebellious hetman. Finally, Polevoi notes Bulgarin's identity artifacts: aside from a truthfully depicted sly Jesuit, "all the Poles are presented as some kind of madmen!"¹²³ Moreover, Bulgarin's trivial and petty perspective on historical events, as Polevoi insisted, is epitomized in his treatment of Peter I: "How, for example, does Peter appear [in

the novel]? Guess! He beats a scrivener with a stick in the middle of a street! This is what the author chose among all the immense deeds of Peter!... In the novel the Battle of Poltava resembles a report rather than a poetic picture."¹²⁴ In these scathing remarks, we should note Polevoi's not so subtle pointing to Bulgarin's dissimulation, which leads to distortions in his depiction of his Polish compatriots and in his suspiciously petty episode involving Peter.

Perhaps the most fascinating fictional treatment of Mazepa from the romantic age is found in Petr Golota's four-part historical novel *Ivan Mazepa*, whose subtitle identifies it as a historical novel based on folk legends (Moscow, 1832). The novel was quickly followed by his further explorations of the Ukrainian Cossack theme in keeping with the national index of guilt, suffering, and glory, as reflected in Golota's titles: *Nalivaiko, ili vremena bedstvii Malorossii* (Nalyvaiko, or Little Russia's Time of Calamity; 4 vols., Moscow, 1833) and *Khmel' nitskie, ili prisoedinenie Malorossii* (Khmel' nyts'kyis, or the Annexation of Little Russia; 3 vols., Moscow, 1834). In his recent monograph on the Russian historical novel, Dan Ungurianu described Golota as "a leading purveyor of Little Russian novels dealing with the struggle of the Ukrainian people against Polish oppression in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," who was notable for his use of the Ukrainian vernacular in the dialogues between the characters and as a predecessor of Gogol's *Taras Bul'ba*.¹²⁵ While Golota may be called a predecessor of *Bul'ba*, he was also a successor and "exaggerator" of the Gogolian Little Russian theme of *Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka*, and his caricaturish descriptions of the drinking, dancing, and brawling *Volk* are interspersed with middlebrow cavalier behavior and emotionally overwrought conversations.¹²⁶ Golota was riding the so-called Ukrainian trend in the metropolitan literary scene, which followed Gogol's success, capitalizing on his competence in the use of the vernacular and ethnographic detail. Aimed at a wider audience, Golota's *Ivan Mazepa* is a grab bag of literary and ethnic clichés and ethnographic detail combined with historical commonplaces and national sentiments.

Mazepa is introduced as a young Ukrainian Cossack transplanted by the vicissitudes of fate to Poland, where he receives an education and courtly grooming under the watchful eye of Jesuits, who notice "the presence of genius in his beautiful yet gloomy face," and "something lofty concealed in his soul that could be useful for Catholicism" (1:13).¹²⁷ While making progress at the Polish court, Mazepa is nonetheless presented as an ardent Ukrainian patriot, who saves a group of captive Zaporozhians (by killing their Polish guard and slashing their chains) and rallies them to rush back "to be useful to the native land" (1:27). At the same time, Mazepa cannot overcome his youthful passion and ends up, almost by chance, in an adulterous relationship with the young wife of a powerful Polish magnate. While the famous horse ride is absent, Mazepa manages to return to his native land, saved by some ordinary Cos-

sacks, who quickly learn of his identity and greet him as a celebrity (1:124). In his role as a Cossack hero, Mazepa is depicted as an exemplary pirate, who leads the Zaporozhians on a raid against the “mountaineers”: he gnashes his teeth, slices the air with his saber, and “hell in its entirety is reflected on his forehead.” Launching the attack, the militant and merciless Mazepa is “like a bloodthirsty tiger, and like a behemoth, he drank innocent blood” (1:129, 133). This wild description, one guesses, is an oblique compliment to his power and determination in war. Mazepa is also portrayed as an ambitious geopolitical and national thinker, who desires to transform the Zaporozhian Sich into a well-governed, civilized, Rome-like republic that would ensure his people’s future grandeur (1:123, 144). Throughout the novel Mazepa oscillates between irreconcilable extremes: a genius and a vicious fighter; a man of honor and manipulative man of the world; a loyal friend and a testosterone-driven male who cannot resist female charms; a patriot and a power-craving politician. At times Mazepa appears to be a dashing and imposing young fellow, who instantly impresses everyone around him with his wit, style, and speech. At other times he is a gloomy figure “with a wild fire flickering in his little piercing eyes” (1:118) and a drawling manner of speech when he is uneasy.

As Mazepa consolidates his power through the course of the novel, the narrative oscillates between positive and negative characteristics: between attraction and aversion, admiration and shame. Mazepa, a keen politician, becomes indispensable to the Muscovite court. Yet, despite having spent his formative years with Jesuits, he knows how to use his talents for evil purposes, and the text suggests that “perhaps this ambitious man even desired the destruction of Russia” (3:37). At the same time, once he attains the position of hetman through evil machinations, Mazepa strives to make amends for his misdeeds (not unlike Pushkin’s Godunov), focusing on Ukraine’s national wellbeing: his first actions in office are to secure the rights and privileges of his people. Having gathered all the Ukrainian lands under his administration, he emerges as a true *pater patriae*, which was reflected in a popular saying: “from Bogdan to Ivan, we did not have a [true] Hetman” (4:3–4).¹²⁸ It is noteworthy that Golota does not hesitate to depict the rapport between Mazepa and his nation. In the novel, the hetman was slated to become an “adornment of history” if it were not for the (melodramatic) excesses of his ambitious and enterprising character, which took hold of his nature under the influence of the Jesuits: the stereotypical Roman Catholic and foreign “other” is to blame for his corruption (especially convenient in the post-1831 ideological climate). It is only after he decides to become an ally of Charles XII that Golota’s Mazepa turns into a despot, an oppressor of his people, and slanderer of the Muscovite administration: “Mazepa threw away his mask and appeared as *Mazepa*” (4:108). Golota spends very little time describing Mazepa in his fallen state. As in much of fictional Mazepiana, the character of Peter I is avoided in the novel, and the events of

the war and the Battle of Poltava are summarized in one paragraph.¹²⁹ Yet the hetman's retreat, exile, and death are described in some detail as a series of fateful events causing deep grief among the Ukrainians.

Is Golota a Ukrainian "nationalist," a self-declared Mazepist? Not at all. Evidently, the Moscow censors were not bothered by Golota's representation of the hetman. The reasons lie in the novel itself. Mazepa *is* the hero of the work, and in this middlebrow, cliché-ridden novel he is depicted as an adventurer in the realms of politics, war, and erotic pursuits. Mazepa's fall and curse are conditioned by human weakness, a Ukrainian lack of civilization, and alien corruption. The novel is set entirely in a Ukrainian, discord-riddled world in conflict with Polish, Tatar, and Ottoman foes. The Russian presence is introduced only in the narrator's politically correct historical digressions. It is precisely this context that makes this Mazepa fictionally excusable. As for the presentation of Mazepa's Ukrainian patriotism, glory, and rapport with the nation, did Golota know more about his hero than specialists such as Bantysh-Kamens'kyi and Maksymovych? Yes and no: his work claims to be "a historical novel taken from popular legend." In terms of historical data, Golota employs and embellishes available sources, such as Bantysh-Kamens'kyi's *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*. In fact, he contradicts the default descriptions of the Ukrainian polity during the age of Mazepa as found in Bantysh-Kamens'kyi, who stressed the Cossack elites and the Ukrainian people's hatred of Mazepa. Did Golota know something that eluded the eminent historian and archaeographer? He most certainly did not know more history or have access to other documentary evidence. Frankly, he did not need it. His "excess" of information came from within the realm of fiction and "popular legend"—that is, stereotype and cliché.¹³⁰ In other words, Golota does not work from the historical data; he works from the ethnic stereotype itself, filling it in as he sees fit. The novel includes curious sketches of Warsaw streets, Doroshenko's court, the Zaporozhian Sich, and the Hetmanate capital of Baturyn, expanding on historical and ethnographic information through exaggeration, cliché, intuition, and sheer fantasy.

Golota's description, in the closing pages of the novel, of Charles XII in tears and Ukrainians in grief as they bury and honor Mazepa is followed by the following remarkable address: "Madmen! How much more comforted would you have been had you not followed your idol who, by acting for himself alone, dishonored his motherland so that, unfortunately, even today we are derisively called *Mazepas* to indicate the duplicity of a treacherous heart" (4:144). While the novel ends with a "proper" exclamation by one prophetic character, "Glory to Peter! Anathema to Mazepa!" (4:145), in Golota's direct authorial address we see a revealing explanation of the novel's ambiguity of characterization, sentiment, and national tenor. Thus, the novel is an extended explanation of why Ukrainians are *Mazepas* in the Russian popular imagination. Despite (or irrelevant to) the ideological surface of historical narratives, concepts,

and public statements castigating Mazepa and compensating for the curse of Mazepa, Golota “knows” (or, rather, shows) something more, something that comes from the interditory realm of ghosts and silences, from underneath the closely watched façade of mimicry. His novel captures an elusive and somehow tacitly present sentiment for Mazepa, in which shame and pride, pathos and caricature, guilt and stubborn empathy, are fused. As Pogodin wrote in his diary, “They love Mazepa.”

The reviewer of *Moskovskii telegraf* (most likely Nikolai Polevoi, whose positive review of *Poltava* and scathing one of Bulgarin’s *Mazepa* were examined earlier),¹³¹ was somewhat generous in his assessment of Golota’s debut, praising it mildly while blasting the current trend of popular Russian novels. Even though he suggested that “not many will have the patience to read this book,” he ranked it above “many [novels that are] lauded and translated into foreign languages.”¹³² A prime factor in the critic’s evaluation was his belief that Golota, a middling writer of Ukrainian background, was inspired by the “exemplary sketch of Mazepa’s character found in Pushkin’s *Poltava*...the inimitable oeuvre of the premier Russian poet.”¹³³ The reviewer claims that his thesis may be supported by close examination of the characters of Kochubei, Orlyk, and even Mazepa. Can we concur with this statement? My discussion of the novel shows that Golota’s *Mazepa* is a composite and discrepant character. Moreover, most of the novel is focused on the young Mazepa before he became hetman, and depicts him as a corrupt man of heroic material. Did Polevoi see Pushkin’s *Mazepa* as a someone who could have been a hero, were it not for his corruption? How do we reconcile these two statements, likely made by the same Nikolai Polevoi on the pages of *Moskovskii telegraf*: the dismissal of Bulgarin’s “vindication” of Mazepa and the quasi-approval of Golota’s treatment of the hetman? While this discrepancy reflects Polevoi’s personal affinities and the state of journalistic and literary groupings of the time, his positive response to Golota corresponds to his views of provincial offerings of Ukrainian litterateurs. Finally, Polevoi’s view of Ukrainians as a colorful people, ethnically and culturally different from and even hostile toward Russians, yet firmly absorbed into the Russian Empire,¹³⁴ might explain his take on Mazepa and Pushkin’s *Poltava* devoid of mimicry: for the critic, there is no problem in viewing the hetman as a powerful adversary of Peter whose actions reflected the general predispositions of Ukrainians and their “false affinity with their motherland”—a quality that, for him, the logic of history and Russia’s imperial progress overrode (and a quality that the Ukrainian elites tried to elude in their takes on the hetman).

How do these responses, perceptions, and rewritings of the Mazepa theme and the compensations and correctives to (and extensions of) Pushkin’s *Poltava* fit in the literary and ideological context of the early 1830s—the period of the Ukrainian trend in Russian literature, of the commercial shift in Russian letters,

and of intensive attempts to refine the contours of Russian cultural and national identity by writers and intellectuals alike? As George Grabowicz remarked, the onset of the Ukrainian fashion in Russian literature in the late 1820s and early 1830s was represented by first-tier literary figures (Ryleev, Pushkin, Gogol), and percolated throughout the 1830s from the literary mainstream down to second- and third-rate literary production, samples of which were discussed earlier in this section.¹³⁵ In Russian literature the theme of Mazepa and its symbolism and semantics were set along the lines of Pushkin's *Poltava*, which after its initially cool reception shifted closer to the center of the canon of Russian national literature (emerging throughout the 1830s and early 1840s with Belinsky's help, as noted earlier). Neither Bulgarin's corrective nor Makymovych's compensation could overwrite the curse of Mazepa.

The semantics of Mazepa, congealed throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in common wisdom and popular stereotypes, became part of the general vocabulary. It was through Pushkin's *Poltava* that this emotional and stereotypical residue became part of the high metropolitan literary discourse, acquiring the status of a historical-geographic reference point. For example, when Pavel Svin'in, the editor of *Otechestvennye zapiski* (Notes of the Fatherland; 1818–31, 1838), published a travel sketch of Poltava, he included a quotation from Pushkin to present the picture of the battle more vividly.¹³⁶ Even historiography on the subject of Peter I, Mazepa, and the Northern War often reads like a barely concealed quotation from *Poltava*. In Nikolai Pavlenko's recent biography of Peter I the chapter on Mazepa begins thus: "Ivan Stepanovich Mazepa was one of those people for whom nothing was sacred. In him were concentrated virtually all the vices of human nature: suspiciousness and sneakiness, haughtiness and greed, extreme egotism and vengefulness, duplicity and cruelty, lasciviousness and fearfulness," and so it goes—a concentrated popular stereotype and literary quotation in the guise of scholarship.¹³⁷ Perhaps this gravitation toward tendentiousness and emotional engagement with the subjects of a historical narrative is rooted in *Poltava*, which demonized Mazepa while fleshing out the process of the sacralization of Peter I.

Some critics of Pushkin's poem were puzzled as to why there is so little of Peter in the poem. As Bulgarin noted, there is a superb portrait of the monarch, but no character.¹³⁸ The reasons for this should be clarified: there might be little of Peter, quantitatively speaking, in Pushkin's text, and nothing of his character, but the relatively "scarce" lines dedicated to him, qualitatively speaking, carry much more weight than many extended passages. Belinskii had remarked that the appearance of Peter in the battle "strikes the reader...whose hair stands on end, makes such an impact, as if he had witnessed the appearance of a miracle: as if some god, in rays unbearable for mortal eyes, were passing by, surrounded by thunder and lightning."¹³⁹ This sacred figure of Peter requires a frontal, tri-

umphal, and rhetoricized representation: God does not have a character. Thus, in Poltava, the cradle of Russian powers, “God and Peter were the judges, and they endorsed the lot of *Ross* [*zhrebii Rossa*],” as Aleksei Merzliakov extolled in his poem “Poltava.”¹⁴⁰ Peter receives this sacral treatment in Pushkin’s *Poltava* as well. God is best described in scripture, not novels or narrative poems. Perhaps not surprisingly, Peter was the focus of a number of such “frontal” declarative depictions, essayistic in nature: Faddei Bulgarin’s sketch of the tsar’s character, entitled “Ocherk kharaktera Petra Velikogo” (1827), Mikhail Pogodin’s inspired essay, “Petr Velikii” (1841), Belinsky’s long-winded review of Golikov and *Petriana* (1841), and Nikolai Polevoi’s popularizing work, *Istoriia Petra Velikogo* (1843).¹⁴¹ In this mode of representing Peter, Mazepa is only relevant as a demonized figure, at once dangerous and dismissible.

Yet, just as the romantic period and the active shaping of a Russian national identity were indivisibly linked to the figure of Peter I,¹⁴² the issue of coping with Mazepa was crucial to the shaping of a Ukrainian national identity in the 1830s and 1840s. The romantic period was marked by the most intensive Ukrainian proliferation of Mazepa: Ukrainian in how Mazepa was dealt with (in ideological tenor and sensitivity, stressing imperial loyalty), but written mostly in Russian, for reasons both stylistic and ideological. It is impossible to avoid bumping into images of the hetman adorning the walls in the homes of Ukrainian *pany* and in the texts or dreams of the Ukrainian intelligentsia: en face and in profile, in a number of guises, direct representations, virtual presences, or interdictory ghosts: in the Ukrainian vernacular poem about Kochubei (1828); in Dmytro Bantysh-Kamens’kyi’s second edition of *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* (Moscow, 1830; with a dedication to His Majesty Nicholas I and Mazepa’s song eliminated from the appendices); in the Ukrainian folkloric corpus of Izmail Sreznevs’kyi’s *Zaporozhskaia starina* (Zaporozhian Antiquity; Kharkiv, 1833–38); in Gogol’s imagined (and embarked on) history of Ukraine (1834–35); in Oleksii Martos’s (unfinished?, lost) history of Ukraine (1830s); in Petr Golota’s historical novel *Ivan Mazepa* (1832); and in Ievhen Hrebinka’s Ukrainian translation of *Poltava* (1836). The wave continues into the 1840s: in Ivan Kul’zhyns’kyi’s patriotic drama *Kochubei*, which practically canonizes its eponymous protagonist and vilifies Mazepa (published in *Ruskaia beseda*/Russian Conversation, 1841); in Aleksandr Kuzmich’s novel *Kazaki* (published in *Maiak*/Lighthouse, 1842; book edition, 1843, followed by his novelistic take on Khmel’nyts’kyi in 1846); in Mykola Sementovs’kyi’s novel *Mazepa, getman malorossiiskii* (*Maiak*, 1845; book edition released as *Kochubei, general’nyi sud’ia*, 1845); in Shevchenko’s poem, “Rozryta mohyla” (The Open Grave; 1843); in Hryts’ko Karpenko’s poem “Poslednie chasy byvshego malorossiiskogo getmana Mazepy” (The Last Days of the Former Little Russian Hetman Mazepa; 1845); and in the last history of Ukraine as Little Russia, *Istoriia Malorossii* (5 vols., 1842–43) by Mykola Markevych.¹⁴³ In each of these works the process

of coping with the curse and the mechanisms of mimicry and compensation play a key role in projecting and handling the audience, which often results in dual orientations and discrepant messages. Despite the “irreversible” logic of universal history, in addition to the essentially “Petrine” rhetoric of the empire, the poetics of trauma, loss, and mortal guilt, of taboo desire and the path of fate, nativism, translation, and treason—all these elements resonated powerfully in the hearts and minds of the Ukrainian elites, linked to and entangled with the name of Mazepa.

NOTES

1. *Kievskaiia starina*, no. 12 (1884): 660.
2. The contributor, under the pseudonym S. N. I., has been identified as S. Isaievych, a historian and ethnographer who contributed several articles to *Kievskaiia starina*. See Maryna Paliienko, “*Kievskaiia starina*,” vol. 1, *U hromads’komu ta naukovomu zhytti Ukraïny (kinets’ XIX–pochatok XX st.)* (Kyiv, 2005), 239.
3. Aleksei Levshin, *Pis’ma iz Malorossii* (Kharkiv, 1817), esp. 65–72.
4. *Ibid.*, 65–66.
5. I explore the workings of Ukrainian and Russian ethnic labels and stereotypes in greater detail in my (unpublished) study “My, moskali ...: On Gogol, Ethnic Stereotyping, and Ukrainian-Russian Cultural Reciprocity in the 1830s–1840s.” While the role of mythologizing is of primary importance in the examination of Mazepa in the historical and national imaginations of Ukrainians and Russians, in this article I focus on the name Mazepa as a label and stereotype, and the mechanisms of coping with such epithets. Both myths and stereotypes constitute “common knowledge” and are used by cultural groups to draw (and remove) boundaries between themselves and the “other.” I examine not so much the narrative structures (myths) that define the role of Mazepa in history but the *value* attached to this character and his motivations, and to his metonymic and even synecdochic connection with Ukrainians as a people perceived by Russians, as well as in their self-perception. On the myth of Mazepa, see Thomas Grob’s survey article, “Mazepa’ as a Symbolic Figure of Ukrainian Autonomy,” in *Democracy and Myth in Russia and Eastern Europe*, ed. Alexander Wöll and Harald Wydra (London, 2008), 79–97. On the literary myth of Mazepa, see Dmytro Nalyvaiko, “Mazepa v ievropeis’kii literaturi XIX st.: istoriia ta mif,” *Slovo i chas*, no. 8 (2002): 39–48; no. 9: 3–17; and Hubert F. Babinski, *The Mazeppa Legend in European Romanticism* (New York, 1974).
6. Abram Gozenpud, introduction to *Komedii; stikhotvoreniia* by Aleksandr Shakhovskoi (Leningrad, 1961), 26–27.
7. “Я послан с места *сражения* (!) за тем, чтобы узнать *все*, что здесь делалось (!); проведать, *вполне* ли исполнялась Его воля, и не было ли каких *притеснений* жителям [emphasis added].” Aleksandr Shakhovskoi, *Kozak-stikhotvoretz*:

- anekdoticheskaia opera-vodevil' v odnom deistvii*, 3rd ed. (St. Petersburg, 1822), 14.
8. “Заставили Царских злодеев доброго козачка попрыгать.” *Ibid.*, 24–25.
 9. *Ibid.*, 13, 71.
 10. *Ibid.*, 72: “С честью и славой бились ми в поли,/ Вирой и правдой вик проживем;/ Русское счастье – Царь на престоли:/ В нем ми защиту в гори найдем.”
 11. This attribution is largely a result of tradition and speculation. The most comprehensive information on Klymovs’kyi is found in Hryhorii Nud’ha, ed., *Pisni ta romansy ukrains’kykh poetiv*, 2 vols. (Kyiv, 1956), 1:316–32. The song was a fixture of Russian popular culture and the *pesenniki* (songbooks) of the time. In a patriotic ending that was added on, a Cossack declares that his service to the tsar is his manly duty as he leaves “to defend the borders from vicious enemies.” See *Noveishii izbrannyi pesennik, ili, Sobranie luchshykh, otbornykh i vsekh, dosele izvestnykh... pesen, sluzhashchikh k nevinnomu uveseleniiu i preprovozhdeniiu vremeni: v dvukh chastyakh* (Moscow, 1821), 1:151–54.
 12. Shakhovskoi’s perception of Klymovs’kyi was most likely shaped by Nikolai Karamzin’s brochure “Panteon rossiiskikh avtorov” (Pantheon of Russian Authors, 1802), in which the Russian writer and historian characterized Klymovs’kyi as a naïve poet and Pythian voice of wisdom, who was revered by his Cossack compatriots. (Klymovs’kyi’s poetic tract in the manuscript, “On Magnanimity and Truth,” garnered praise from Karamzin.) See Nikolai Karamzin, *Sochineniia v dvukh tomakh* (Leningrad, 1984), 2:106–7. At the end of his short paragraph, Karamzin exhorts: “Authors of Russia depicted here! Don’t be ashamed to see Klymovskii in your company.”
 13. “Нехай Бог з ним, вин дурень.” Shakhovskoi, *Kozak-stikhotvorets*, 70. In this phrase, the Mazepa label (treachery, menace) is fused with the *khokhol* label, which is stereotypically defined in the Russian popular imagination as a combination of cunning and stupidity: “хохол глупее вороны, а хитрее черта” (A *khokhol* is stupider than a crow, but craftier than the devil). See Ivan Snegirev, *Russkie v svoikh poslovitsakh: razsuzhdeniia i izsledovaniia ob otechestvennykh poslovitsakh i pogovorkakh*, 4 vols. in 2 (Moscow, 1831–34), 4:173.
 14. “...не злодей своих злодеев.” Shakhovskoi, *Kozak-stikhotvorets*, 71.
 15. Abram Shchepkin recalls the 1820s: “At the theater, there was the belief that a Little Russian should be played invariably as a monkey, with as much grimacing and distortion as possible” (this refers primarily to Shakhovskoi’s popular play, especially the portrayal of Prudyus). See *Mikhail Semenovich Shchepkin, zhizn’ i tvorchestvo*, ed. Oleg M. Fel’dman, 2 vols. (Moscow, 1984), 2:259.
 16. For general information on Filomafitskii, see Myroslav Romaniuk, ed., *Ukrains’ka zhurnalistyka v imenakh: Materialy do entsyklopedychnoho slovnyka*, 17 vols. thus far (Lviv, 1994–), vol. 2 (1995), 233–34.
 17. “Если сочинитель в Прудюсе хотел представить вероломство Мазепы, то

одно лицо не должно очернять целой нации; да и лицо это здесь в таком презрении.” Cited in Pavlo Fedchenko, ed., *Istoriia ukrains'koï literaturnoi krytyky ta literaturoznavstva: Khrestomatiia*, 2 vols. (Kyiv, 1996–68), 1:35. The review was published in *Ukrainskii vestnik*, no. 12 (1817).

18. I use this term in reference to Pierre Bourdieu’s exploration of “classification struggle” as a competition of groups in society for the privileged placement of their social and cultural capital in the taxonomy of groups, on which their right and access to power and social mobility/distinction depend. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass., eighth printing, 1996).
19. See, for example, his tale about Marusia Churai, a legendary composer of Ukrainian folk songs: “Marusia, malorossiiskaia Safo,” in *Sto russkikh literatorov*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1839–45); 1:770–830.
20. Interestingly, both Levshin and Filomafitskii were ethnic Russians who spent significant time in Sloboda Ukraine (*Slobozhanshchyna*) and were closely linked to the circle of Kharkiv University graduates and teachers who formed the first wave of the romantic Ukrainian intelligentsia. Perhaps the issue of ethnic stereotyping and offensiveness was too “touchy” for Ukrainians to tackle directly. One response to Shakhovskoi’s vaudeville came from Ivan Kotliarev’kyi, who removed the historical and ethnic tensions from the love triangle between two young villagers and a local government official, and shifted the agency from the young suitor to the girl in his play *Natalka Poltavka* (Natalka from Poltava).
21. Snegirev, *Russkie v svoikh poslovitsakh*, 4:171–72.
22. The origins of this word have been debated before. See, for example, the Wikipedia article s.v. *katsap* with reference to Max Vasmer’s etymological dictionary of Russian, <http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%9A%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B0%D0%BF> (accessed 16 February 2012). See also N. M. [Nykandr Molchanov’skyi], “O proiskhozhdenii slova ‘katsap,’” in *Kievskaiia starina*, no. 12 (1901):472–77. Molchanov’skyi gives a wide variety of hypotheses (Turkic, Hebrew, etc.). However, the current consensus links this derogatory label to the Ukrainian word *tsap* (male goat) as the most plausible etymology, based on the perception of a bearded Russian by a Ukrainian, who unlike the Russian, customarily wore a moustache but no beard. See Nikolai Shanskii, ed., *Etimologicheskii slovar’ russkogo iazyka* (Moscow, 1963–), vol. 2, issue 8 (1982), 103; and *Etymolohichnyi slovnyk ukrains’koï movy* (Kyiv, 1982–), 2:408. The epithet *katsap* most likely originated in the eighteenth century; the word is not registered in the earlier compendia of Ukrainian language, such as *Slovnyk ukrains’koï movy XVI–pershoï polovyny XVII st.* (Lviv, 1994–); or *Slovnyk staroukrains’koï movy XIV–XV st.*, 2 vols. (Kyiv, 1977–78). According to *Etimologicheskii slovar’ russkogo iazyka*, this label is first found in Russian in Nikolai Gogol. In a short glossary of Ukrainian words that follows the introduction to the second volume of *Dikanka stories*, Gogol provided the following definition: “Кацап, русский человек с бороною” (bearded Russian

- man). Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati trekh tomakh* (Moscow, 1995–), 1:147. The connection of *katsap* and *tsap* comes across, for example, in Ievhen Hrebinka's letter of 7 March 1834 to his close friend Mykola Novyts'kyi, where he substitutes the former label with the latter: "Я дернул одного *цана* за рукав..." (I pulled one *tsap* by his sleeve; emphasis added). Ievhen Hrebinka, *Tvory u triokh tomakh* (Kyiv, 1980–81), 3:566.
23. How widespread were these two labels among the "common folk" or peasants? We can only speculate. It is probable that the content and ordering of the lists of ethnic labels reflect not so much the actual usage among the widest strata of the population as the compiler's concept of what the Russian perception of the other was/should have been. Thus, in my opinion, the Mazepist labels belong not so much to the peasants as to the middle and educated classes, who were very much aware of the painful aspects of the Ukrainian-Russian historical encounter. On the shaping of popular sayings and the reciprocity of Ukrainian-Russian stereotypical characterizations, see my study "My, moskali..."
 24. Vladimir Dal', *Poslovitsy russkogo naroda*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (St. Petersburg and Moscow, 1879), 1:430 (s.v. "Rus'–Rodina").
 25. See "о происхождении сего изверга," "неблагодарнейший злодей," "хитрый коварник," "доказательства гнусности и злости сего изверга," and "ожесточенные твари мазепинские," in Ivan Golikov, *Deianiia Petra Velikogo, mudrogo preobrazovatel'ia Rossii*, 2nd ed., 15 vols. (Moscow, 1837–43), 11:3, 6, 10, 127.
 26. "Тетман Мазепа был природный Поляк из фамилий Литовских." See *Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii* (1846; reprint, Kyiv, 1991), 184. Written most likely in the first decades of the nineteenth century, this text circulated in scores of manuscript copies before it was published in 1846. An excellent examination of this work is found in Volodymyr Kravchenko, *Narys z ukrains'koi istoriohrafii epokhy natsional'noho vidrozhennia (druha polovyna XVIII–seredyna XIX st.)* (Kharkiv, 1996).
 27. See, for example, Dmytro Bantysh-Kamens'kyi, *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1822), 3:6–7. Tatiana Tairova-Iakovleva refutes these stereotypes of Mazepa's origins and "predispositions" in her monograph *Mazepa* (Moscow, 2007), 11–31.
 28. *Kievlianin*, no. 2 (1841): 26. Maksymovych based his explanation on a seventeenth-century polemic that chastised a proponent of the Uniate Church, Kasiian Sakovych, as "объеретичальный мазепа" (a *mazepa*/dirty mug turned heretic; *ibid.*). Of course, Maksymovych obscures the fact that the actual ethnic label of Mazepa (even more so, Mazepa's spirit) functions as a specifically Russian epithet applied to Ukrainians in order to underscore duplicity as a key element of their national character. Prior to being called Mazepists and bearers of Mazepa's spirit, restive Ukrainian Cossacks had been labeled, according to *Istoriia rusov*, Vyhovites (*Vyhovtamy*)—i.e., followers of Ivan Vyhovs'kyi, after the successor of Khmel'nyts'kyi realigned the interests of the Cossack Hetmanate with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and fought against the Muscovites. See *Istoriia Rusov*, 150.

29. Pavlo Bilets'kyi-Nosenko, *Slovnnyk ukrains'koï movy*, ed. V. Nimchuk (Kyiv, 1966), 218. S.v. “машкара” Bilets'kyi-Nosenko lists the following: “Маска. Харя. Личина. См. Гуня. Мазепа. Луда. Окрута. По-арабски: масхара,” 222. Borys Hrinchenko's standard dictionary of Ukrainian, compiled at the end of the nineteenth century and published in 1907–9, provides a more neutral vernacular definition of *mazepa*: “someone who is soiled (from *mazaty*), and generally untidy, crude, and stupid; a simpleton.” See Borys Hrinchenko, *Slovar' ukrainskogo iazyka*, 4 vols. (1907–9; reprint, Kyiv, 1958–59), 2:396.
30. Or, to use Andreas Kappeler's examination of the ethnic groups that constituted the core population, the “innermost circle” of the empire, i.e., its full-fledged subjects, who were defined by their East Slavic origins, Orthodox faith, and connection of cultures and languages/dialects. See his article “*Mazepintsy, Malorossy, Khokhly*: Ukrainians in the Ethnic Hierarchy of the Russian Empire,” in *Culture, Nation, and Identity: The Ukrainian-Russian Encounter, 1600–1945*, ed. Andreas Kappeler, Zenon Kohut, et al. (Edmonton, 2003), 162–81.
31. See Zenon Kohut, “The Question of Russo-Ukrainian Unity and Ukrainian Distinctiveness in Early Modern Ukrainian Thought and Culture,” in *Culture, Nation, and Identity*, 57–86.
32. See his pioneering essay entitled “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Imperial Discourse” in Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London, 1994), 85–92, esp. 86, 90. Bhabha's work serves as the basis for my exploration of the mechanisms of Ukrainian mimicry.
33. *Gogol' v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*, ed. Semen Mashinskii (Moscow, 1952), 532, 500.
34. In a 1945 letter published in vol. 2 of Konstantin Ia. Grot, ed., *Perepiska Ia. K. Grotas P. A. Pletnevym*, 3 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1896), Grot asks Pletnev: “У Кулеша, как малороссиянина, каков-то выговор?” (What kind of accent/pronunciation does Kulish have, as a Little Russian?; 532). Clearly in response to this query, Pletnev writes back (p. 641): “Хорошо, что ты пишешь о Кулеше (имя его по-малороссийски значит: *суп из круп*)” (It's a good thing that you are writing about Kulish [his name in Little Russian means “barley soup”]). Worrying that Pletnev is too charmed by his new friend, Grot advises him: “Не совсем мне нравится, что ты, еще не узнав хорошенько Кулеша, уже совершенно *предался ему*. Мне кажется, что это *противно благоразумию*. Малороссы народ *хитрый: мастера прикидываться*. Сохрани Бог, чтоб я в этом *подозревал* Кулеша; напротив, ты дал мне о нем самое высокое мнение” (It isn't exactly to my liking that you completely opened your heart to Kulish, without having figured him out completely. It seems that this goes against prudence. Little Russians are cunning people, masters of pretending. God forbid I would suspect Kulish of this; you characterized him for me most highly. 632–33; emphasis added). Mechanisms of imperial surveillance, control, and premonition stand out particularly in the last passage: the phrase “*предался ему*” (has dedicated yourself to him) evokes the verb *предать* (to betray); the invocation of common sense (“*благоразумие*”) and

- emphatic denial of suspicion (“подозревать”) only emphasize the voice of “conventional wisdom” that finds the Little Russian people cunning and duplicitous.
35. Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, 91.
 36. Or, as Aleksei Miller points out, the threat of Ukrainian nationalism was perceived by the proponents of a joint/common-Russian nation as an act of terrorism from within the national body itself (“диверсией изнутри ‘национального тела’”). See Aleksei Miller, “*Ukrainskii vopros*” v politike vlastei i rusском obshchestvennom mnenii (vtoraia polovina XIX v.) (St. Petersburg, 2000), 39.
 37. Bourdieu discussed this process of the shaping of a collective habitus, which necessitates acting in particular ways, and in which the process of “making the right choices” becomes internalized and converted into a disposition; an internalized “free”-seeming choice. See Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 101, 170.
 38. See Kappeler, “*Mazepintsy, Malorossy, Khokhly*,” 174–75.
 39. Nikolai Barsukov, *Zhizn’ i trudy M. P. Pogodina*, 21 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1888–1906), 1:153.
 40. Serhii Plokyh, who examined the manuscript of Pogodin’s diary, which served as a source for this comment, confirmed that no further information is provided there.
 41. Oleksii Martos, “*Zapiski inzhenernogo ofitsera*,” *Russkii arkhiv* 2 (1893): 345; A. S. Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (1937–49; reprint, expanded to 19 vols., Moscow, 1994–97), 5:23.
 42. Johann Georg Kohl, *Russia: St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kharkoff, Riga, Odessa, the German Provinces on the Baltic, the Steppes, the Crimea, and the Interior of the Empire* (London, 1842), 518.
 43. *Ibid.*, 527.
 44. Eugène-Melchior, Vicomte de Vogüé, “*Mazeppa, la légende et l’histoire*,” in *Le fils de Pierre le Grand; Mazeppa; Un changement de règne* (Paris, 1884). The essay was first published in *Revue des Deux Mondes* (November–December 1881). The quotations are from an English translation of this book: Viscount E. Melchior de Vogüé, *The True Story of Mazeppa; The Son of Peter The Great; A Change of Reign*, trans. James Millington (London, [1884?]).
 45. de Vogüé, *True Story of Mazeppa*, 71.
 46. *Ibid.*, 4–5; 6.
 47. *Ibid.*, 43.
 48. See Anton Del’vig’s 1831 review of *Boris Godunov* in A. Del’vig, *Sochineniia* (Leningrad, 1986), 269; Pavel Annenkov’s description of *Poltava* in his A. S. Pushkin: *Materialy dlia ego biografii i otsenki proizvedenii* (St. Petersburg, 1873), 198–99, n. 204 (in which he draws a contrast between *Poltava* and *Mednyi vsadnik*).
 49. Viktor Zhirmunskii, *Bairon i Pushkin; Pushkin i zapadnye literatury* (Leningrad, 1978), 201. Nikolai Izmailov addresses this notion of hybridity in terms of Pushkin’s evolution: “The literary genesis of *Poltava* can be defined as, on the one hand, a departure from the romantic, i.e., subjective...lyrical poem, yet on the other, a

- decisive rejection of the classicist epic; thus it is a creation of a new, synthetic genre of historical narrative based on a complex combination of different and seemingly even contradictory generic and stylistic elements." N. Izmailov, *Ocherki tvorchestva Pushkina* (Leningrad, 1975), 114. This observation of the poem's transitional nature, its generic and stylistic hybridity, goes back to the critical evaluation of *Poltava* by the poet's contemporaries—e.g., Anton Del'vig, Ivan Kireevskii, and Vissarion Belinskii. Aleksandr N. Sokolov attempted to revisit the transitional and hybrid notion of *Poltava* and resituate this work in the context of the lyrical and civic romantic poem of the 1820s in his article, "Poltava Pushkina i zhanr romanticheskoi poemy," in *Pushkin: Issledovaniia i materialy*, ed. Mikhail P. Alekseev, 19 vols. (Moscow, 1956–[1991]), 4:154–72.
50. See Lina Steiner, "My Most Mature Poëma': Pushkin's *Poltava* and the Irony of Russian National Culture," in *Comparative Literature* 61, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 97–127, esp. 97–102.
 51. See Dmitrii Blagoi, "Poltava' v tvorchestve Pushkina (sotsio-literaturnyi analiz)," in Mstislav Tsiavlovskii, ed., *Moskovskii pushkinist* (Moscow, 1927–), esp. 33–48, 51–54.
 52. Svetlana Evdokimova, *Pushkin's Historical Imagination* (New Haven, Conn., 1999), 173. Lazar Fleishman argues that the poem represents a narrative laboratory of the mature Pushkin, where a complex (prose-like) network of focalizations of the narrator with various characters is employed, thus conditioning the narrator's overt and saturated valuation of the characters and events. See his article, "Poeziia kak proza: narrator v pushkinskoi Poltave," in *Analysieren als Deuten: Wolf Schmid zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Lazar Fleishman, Christine Gözl, and Aage A. Hansen-Löwe (Hamburg, 2004), 229–336. While offering new insight into *Poltava*, Fleishman's analysis tends to "absolve" Pushkin from a direct authorial presence and involvement in his work—i.e., Pushkin's connection to his implied author and narrator in *Poltava*, thus, for example, minimizing the importance of the description of the Battle of *Poltava* and Peter I. This approach, in my opinion, obscures the poet's entanglement in the ideological and political climate of the late 1820s–early 1830s. Lina Steiner explores the ironies imbedded in Pushkin's literary stance; Steiner, "My Most Mature Poëma.'" Virginia M. Burns sees, in Pushkin's narrative choices and in the system of the poem's poetic tropes, remarkable depth in the characterization of *Mazepa* that goes beyond (or even contra) the ideological surface of the perception of the hetman as an unambiguous epitome of evil. See Virginia M. Burns, *Pushkin's "Poltava": A Literary Structuralist Interpretation* (Lanham, Md., 2005). I have had the good fortune to attend presentations by Polina Rikoun and Ivan Eubanks, who expand on the contradictions in the narrative voicing of *Poltava* as undermining the traditional understanding of Pushkin's characterization.
 53. See Izmailov, *Ocherki tvorchestva Pushkina*, 10–33; Blagoi, "Poltava' v tvorchestve Pushkina," 9–28; Mark Aronson, "Konrad Vallenrod i Poltava (k voprosu o Pushkine i moskovskikh liubomudrakh 20-kh–30-kh godov)," in *Pushkin: Vremennik*

- pushkinskoi komissii*, 6 vols. (Moscow, 1936–41), 2:43–56; and George Grabowicz, “The History and Myth of the Cossack Ukraine in Polish and Russian Romantic Literature” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1975), 419–21, and 424–42 for a general discussion of *Poltava*.
54. See, for example, commentaries in Ekaterina O. Larionova, ed., *Pushkin v przhiznennoi kritike 1828–1830* (St. Petersburg, 2001), 391, 396–97, 400, 406, 487, and other pages, where numerous private opinions are cited.
 55. See Ivan Kireevskii, “Obozrenie russkoi slovesnosti 1829 goda,” in I. Kireevskii, *Kritika i estetika* (Moscow, 1979), 63. In his view, the public and critical misunderstanding around Pushkin’s poem only indicates the immaturity of Russian letters “which had not caught up with the main direction of *Poltava*” Ibid., 65.
 56. See *Pushkin v przhiznennoi kritike*, 130, 146, and elsewhere.
 57. Ibid., 128.
 58. Ibid., 128, 208.
 59. Vissarion Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13 vols. (Moscow, 1953–59), 7:547.
 60. See Blagoi, “Poltava’ v tvorchestve Pushkina,” 47.
 61. In notes from the Boldino estate, Pushkin bitterly ponders how he may have erred: “The most mature of my poetic tales, the one in which almost everything is original...*Poltava*, the work preferred by Zhukovskii, Gnedich, Del’vig, and Viazemskii to everything else I have written thus far, did not meet with success.” Cited in *Pushkin v przhiznennoi kritike*, 289. On Pushkin’s gauging of his reception and position in Russian letters, see Abram Reitblat, *Kak Pushkin vyshel v genii: istoriko-sotsiologicheskie ocherki o knizhnoi kul’ture pushkinskoi epokhi* (Moscow, 2001).
 62. See Pushkin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5:335. On Ryleev’s treatment of Mazepa, see Abram Khodorov, “Ukrainskie siuzhety poezii K. F. Ryleeva,” in *Literaturnoe nasledie dekabristov*, ed. Vasilii G. Bazanov and Vadim E. Vatsuro (Leningrad, 1975), 121–41. On Byron’s “Mazeppa,” see Babinski, *Mazeppa Legend*, 21–46.
 63. Those who are interested in the newer, truer, Mazepa may wish to consult recent Mazepiana, ranging from illuminating scholarly publications by Tatiana Tairova-Iakovleva, Serhii Pavlenko, Rostyslav Radyshevs’kyi, and Volodymyr Sverbyhuz, among others, and the valuable collection edited by Giovanna Siedina, *Mazepa e il suo tempo: storia, cultura, società / Mazepa and His Time: History, Culture, Society* (Alessandria, 2004); to zealous defenses of the hetman (e.g., Valerii Shevchuk’s *Prosvichenyi volodar: Ivan Mazepa iak budivnychiy Kozats’koï derzhavy i iak literaturnyi heroï* (Kyiv, 2006); and didactic publications such as Ol’ha Kovalevs’ka’s book in question-and-answer format, *Ivan Mazepa: u zapytanniakh ta vidpovidiakh* (Kyiv, 2008).
 64. See David Saunders, “Contemporary Critics of Gogol’s *Vechera* and the Debate about Russian *Narodnost’* (1831–1832),” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5, no. 1 (1981): 73.
 65. de Vogüé, *True Story of Mazeppa*, 6.

66. Ibid., 37. On Mazepa in the Western tradition, see Babinski, *Mazeppa Legend*. For a remarkable study on the interaction of the literary, visual, and popular cultures, see Patricia Mainardi, "Many Ways to Ride a Horse: Mazeppa," in her *Husbands, Wives, and Lovers: Marriage and Its Discontents in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, Conn., 2003), 178–212.
67. de Vogüé, *True Story of Mazeppa*, 65.
68. Ibid., 10.
69. Ibid., 12. Interestingly, de Vogüé recounts the plot of the first two cantos of *Poltava* in sufficient detail, yet omits the third one, in which the battle proper and the escape of Charles XII and Mazepa are described.
70. Viacheslav Koshelev made an interesting attempt to explain the ambiguity, even inner conflict, in Pushkin's depiction of the hetman, pointing out that Mazepa's character type is that of a poet with a rebellious attitude toward societal and moral norms. This, according to the scholar, is behind the hetman's (forbidden) attraction to Maria (not unlike Don Juan's attraction to Donna Anna in *Malen'kie tragedii*). In Koshelev's interpretation, therefore, Pushkin's Mazepa fuses the qualities of the poet (a role Mazepa had abandoned for the sake of power) with features of the (anti)hero of a moral tale. See Viacheslav Koshelev, "Duma getmana Mazepy i poema Pushkina *Poltava*," in *Russkaia literatura*, no. 2 (St. Petersburg, 2006), 22–36.
71. *Pushkin v prizhiznennoi kritike*, 136.
72. Ibid.
73. See Mark Al'tshuller, *Epokha Val'tera Skotta v Rossii: istoricheskii roman 1830-kh godov* (St. Petersburg, 1996), 123.
74. Cited in Abram Reitblat, "Bulgarin i Senkovskii: rannii period vzaimootnoshenii," in *Belarus' i belarusy ŭ prastory i chaste: zbornik da 75-hoddzia profasara Adama Mal'dzisa*, ed. Siarhei Zaprudski, Aliaksandar Fiaduta, and Zakhar Shibeko (Minsk, 2007), 208.
75. See the anonymous jabbing rebuttal in *Severnaia pchela*, no. 140 (1829), under the rubric "smes'" [p. 3].
76. Del'vig, *Sochineniia*, 219, and Orest Somov, "Obozrenie rossiiskoi slovesnosti za vtoruiu polovinu 1829 i pervuiu polovinu 1830 goda," in *Severnye tsvety na 1831 god*, no. 7 (1830): 69–70.
77. *Vidok Figliarin: pis'ma i agenturnye zapiski F. V. Bulgarina v III Otdelenie*, ed. A. Reitblat (Moscow, 1998), 312–16.
78. See Bohdan Zaleski, *Wybór Poezyj*, ed. Józef Tretiak (Cracow, 1920), 88. Tretiak's introduction and the same ballad are featured in Kazimierz Wójcicki, *Przysłowia narodowe; z wyjaśnieniem źródła początku, oraz sposobu ich użycia, okazujące charakter, zwyczaje, i obyczaje, przesady, starożytności, i wspomnienia oyczyste*, 3 vols. (Warsaw, 1830), 2:94–107.
79. *Severnaia pchela*, no. 32 (14 March 1825), under "novye knigi"
80. Bulgarin maintained a friendship with Ryleev, and at the time of the uprising (1824–25) he took possession of part of Ryleev's archive in order to preserve it.

81. Ekaterina Larionova, ed., *Pushkin v prizhiznennoi kritike 1828–1830* (St. Petersburg, 2001), 166–67.
82. *Ibid.*, 168.
83. *Ibid.*, 172.
84. *Ibid.*, 405–7, 201–2. Nadezhdin recalled this episode later: “I don’t remember whether it was with particular cruelty, but I did attack his *Poltava* very strongly when the poem appeared” (406).
85. See *Syn Otechestva*, no.147 (1832): 45. On Gogol, see Iu. Barabash, “Pushkin’ kak tekst v gogolevskom kontekste,” in *Gogol’ i Pushkin: Chetvertye Gogolevskie chteniia: Sbornik dokladov* (Moscow, 2005), 54–67. I discuss Ukrainian translations of *Poltava* in a longer study, “Empire, Identity, and Cultural Exchange: The Shaping of Ukrainian Cultural Discourse, 1820s–40s,” unpublished.
86. Larionova, *Pushkin v prizhiznennoi kritike*, 183. Maksymovych also questions whether his motherland is Ukraine or Poland. *Ibid.*, 185.
87. As Maksymovych later recalled, Pushkin thanked him for his review (and used some of its arguments in his rebuttal notes, published in Maksymovych’s almanac), while his mentor, Moscow University professor Aleksei Merzliakov (also, interestingly, the author of the classicist poem/ode entitled “Poltava”; 1827), reproved him for writing it. See Mykhailo Maksymovych, “O narodnoi istoricheskoi poezii v drevnei Rusi (pis’ma k M. P. Pogodinu),” in Mikhail Maksimovich [Mykhailo Maksymovych], *Sobranie sochinenii*, 3 vols. (Kyiv: 1876–80), 3:491.
88. *Ibid.*, 188. Ironically, Pushkin’s depictions of the rebellious strata of Ukrainian Cossacks as the “friends of bloody olden times” and Ukraine’s “muffled mutiny” (Україна глухо волновалась) were elaborated by Ivan Shcheblykin, who saw in these details the virtue of historical perceptiveness: “Pushkin does not accept the official version of Mazepa,” according to which Mazepa was a “loner-schemer,” with the Ukrainian people loyal to the Russian tsar. In the opinion of this Soviet-era scholar, Mazepa made cunning use of the widespread “anti-tsarist” movement among the Ukrainian masses. If we remove the Soviet ideological filter, this observation points to the literary and intellectual debate (even struggle) about whether Mazepa may be considered a representative of Ukraine and, hence, whether the Ukrainian people should be viewed as participants in Mazepism—i.e., Mazepa’s treason (the curse of Mazepa). See I. Shcheblykin, “Tema Mazepy kak polemicheskaiia tema v russkoi literature 20–30-kh godov XIX veka,” *Traditsii i novatorstvo russkoi literatury: sbornik trudov*, pt. 1 (1973), 118.
89. Mykhailo Maksymovich, *Lysty* (Kyiv, 2004), 154. Maksymovych’s letter to *Eparhial’nye Vedomosti* is dated 10 July 1865.
90. Kireevskii, “Obozrenie russkoi slovesnosti 1829 goda,” 65.
91. Izmailov made the following dramatic statement: “*Poltava* did not generate a single imitation, did not create a literary school, and remained a lonely and grandiose expression of Pushkin’s genius.” *Ocherki tvorchestva Pushkina*, 124.
92. Aleksandr N. Sokolov counted fifteen such poems in the year 1828. See his “*Poltava Pushkina*,” 158.

93. Sokolov agreed with Boris Tomashevskii's assessment. *Ibid.*, 169.
94. To my knowledge, this attribution has not been questioned, even though it rarely makes it into discussions of Maksymovych's works (he is mostly valued as a folklorist, ethnographer, historian, literary scholar, and archaeographer). See Zhirmunskii's summary on attribution in his *Bairon i Pushkin*, 419. Even if further research discovers the author of the poem or disproves Maksymovych's authorship, this would not change the main thrust and direction of my argument: that *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii* is a purposeful literary response to Pushkin's *Poltava* that aims to compensate for the curse of Mazepa with a poetically expanded and ideologically gauged (in the aftermath of the Polish uprising) cult of Khmel'nyts'kyi.
95. See Vasilii Sipovskii [Vasyl' Sypovs'kyi], *Ukraina v rosiis'komu pys'menstvi*, pt. 1, 1801–1850 (Kyiv, 1928–), 176–77; and Sokolov, "Poltava Pushkina," 170–71.
96. *Severnaia pchela*, no. 45 (27 February 1833), under the rubric "Novye knigi."
97. This situation is "remedied" in Ievhen Hrebinka's drama *Bogdan* (1843), which was also an act of poetic engagement with *Poltava*. Hrebinka ends with the Pereiaslav oath ceremony amid the general jubilation of the people.
98. *Severnaia pchela*, no. 47 (1 March 1833).
99. *Ibid.*
100. On the importance of the cult of Khmel'nyts'kyi, see Serhii Plokhyy, *Tsars and Cossacks: A Study in Iconography* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), esp. chapters 4 and 5.
101. "Но... что будет, то будет; а будет то, что Бог даст! говорил великий Богдан." See *Dennitsa na 1831 god* (Moscow, 1831), iii.
102. Ivan Dolgorukov, "Puteshestvie v Kiev v 1817 godu," *Chteniia v Imperatorskom Obshchestve istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh pri Moskovskom universitete* (ChOIDR) 2 (April–June 1870): 63.
103. [Mykhailo Maksymovich], *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii* (St. Petersburg, 1833), v.
104. *Ibid.*, 2.
105. For a discussion of the role of dress codes in the Mazepa myth, see Zbigniew Białas, "Dressing Mazeppa: Costumes and Wounds," in *East-Central European Traumas and a Millennial Condition*, ed. Zbigniew Białas and Wiesław Krajka (Boulder, Colo.; New York, 1999), 191–207.
106. *Bogdan Khmel'nitskii*, 18.
107. *Ibid.*, 67.
108. *Ibid.*, 70.
109. *Ibid.*, 120–21.
110. "...прямого сердцем Николая!" *Ibid.*, 121.
111. Al'tshuller, *Epokha Val'tera Skotta v Rossii*, 126.
112. Faddei Bulgarin, *Sochineniia* (Moscow, 1990), 369, 373.
113. *Ibid.*
114. *Ibid.*, 439.
115. *Ibid.*, 559–60, 591–92. The song, which was preserved in the archives as part of Kochubei's incriminating report to Peter I, was published in the appendices to

the first edition of Dmytro Bantysh-Kamens'kyi's *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* (Moscow, 1822) and in Mykhailo Maksymovych's celebrated collection *Malorossiiske pesni* (Moscow, 1827). It laments the fate of mother-Ukraine, which is torn apart by inner strife, conflicting loyalties, and the egotism of her sons, calling them to unity and to arms in order to protect the liberty that had been earned by the sword. Mazepa's speech was "quoted" in *Istoriia Rusov*, a widely circulated early nineteenth-century polemical text masquerading as a chronicle, which aimed to defend the antiquity, nobility, and dignity of the Ukrainian elites. In justifying his decision to align with Charles XII, Mazepa says: "We stand now, brothers, at the edge of two abysses, each ready to devour us." While the most striking details in the speech are spurious, it is likely that it recreates an actual event that was described in the contemporary diary of a Slovak Protestant pastor named Daniel Krman. See his *Itinerarium (Cestovný denník z rokov 1708–1709)* (Bratislava, 1969), 644. Bulgarin used both Bantysh-Kamens'kyi's work and *Istoriia Rusov* as his primary sources for the historical Mazepa.

116. Bulgarin, *Sochineniia*, 375–76.
117. *Ibid.*, 375.
118. *Ibid.*, 542, 597.
119. For a brief but useful overview of the novel, see Al'tshuller, *Epokha Val'tera Skotta v Rossii*, 126–31. The scholar notes both Bulgarin's interesting historical-journalistic digressions and his failure to create believable and well-rounded characters. *Ibid.*, 128.
120. The review is not signed; Belinskii quoted it as the work of Nikolai Polevoi. See Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 8:108–11.
121. Bulgarin was Polevoi's literary and journalistic adversary at that time.
122. *Moskovskii telegraf*, pt. 1, no. 4 (1834): 654.
123. "Поляки представлены точно какими-то сумасшедшими!" *Ibid.*, 656.
124. *Ibid.*, 657.
125. Dan Ungurianu, *Plotting History: The Russian Historical Novel in the Imperial Age* (Madison, Wis., 2007), 269. Vasyl' Sypovs'kyi provides a detailed retelling of the plot with a few evaluative comments, but he offers no analysis of the work. Sipovskii, *Ukraina v rosiis'komu pys'menstvi*, 166–74.
126. See Belinskii's scathing review of Golota's novel *Khmel' nitskie, ili prisoedinenie Malorossii* in Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 1:160–62. He called this work "a lousy farce" in which the protagonist acts like a madman and speaks like a character in a second-rate theatrical production. The author of another review was more benevolent toward Golota's novel *Nalivaiko, ili vremena bedstvii Malorossii*. See *Severnaia pchela*, no. 120 (1833).
127. All references to this work are based on Petr Golota, *Ivan Mazepa: Istoricheskii roman, vziatyi iz narodnykh predanii*, 4 pts. (Moscow, 1832–33).
128. "От Богдана до Ивана не було у нас Гетмана."
129. This avoidance, in my opinion, indicates once again the sacralization of Peter I in

- the literary discourse. In post-*Poltava* literary works, in which the hero or antihero is Mazepa, the introduction of the tsar's character would appear unseemly, causing issues with characterization, optics, and perspective.
130. In terms of narratives and characters, Golota drew on Byron, Voltaire, Pushkin, and possibly even Constant d'Orville's novel, *Memoirs d'Azéma* (1764), which was translated into Russian and published in several editions (1784, 1790, and 1796) under the title *Prekrasnaia Rossiianka* (The Beautiful Russian Woman).
 131. The tone and some of the concepts in this text mirror Polevoi's take on Kyrilo Topolia's play entitled *Chary* (Spells), which he reviewed in the Russian periodical *Biblioteka dlia chteniia* (Library for Reading), no. 25 (1837): 51–72.
 132. *Moskovskii telegraf*, pt. 6, no. 24 (1832): 557. This phrase is very likely a jibe at Bulgarin's bestseller *Ivan Vyzhigin*.
 133. *Ibid.*
 134. See his review of Bantysh-Kamens'kyi's *Istoriia Maloi Rossii* in *Moskovskii telegraf* 5, nos. 17–18 (1830): 74–97, 224–57.
 135. Hryhorii Hrabovych [George G. Grabowicz], "Teoriia ta istoriia: 'horyzont spodi-van'' i rannia retseptsiiia novoi ukrains'koï literatury," in his *Do istorii ukrains'koï literatury: doslidzhennia, ese, polemika* (Kyiv, 1997), 90–91.
 136. Pavel Svin'in, "Poltava (Iz zhivopisnogo puteshestviia po Rossii)," *Otechestvennye zapiski* 42 (1830): 14. Accompanied by quotes from *Poltava*, this piece was later included in Svin'in's collection of travel sketches entitled *Kartiny Rossii i byt raznoplemennykh ee narodov*, pt. 1 (St. Petersburg, 1838), 296–98, 303.
 137. Nikolai Pavlenko, *Petr Velikii* (Moscow, 1990), 320. See also Denys Zhurav'ov, *Mazepa: liudyna, polityk, lehenda* (Kharkiv, 2007), 317–18.
 138. *Pushkin v pryzhiznennoi kritike*, 138.
 139. Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 7 (1955), 417. Svetlana Evdokimova makes an argument about Pushkin's depiction of Peter in *Poltava* as a sacred figure (in structural and thematic symmetry to the demonized Mazepa) without acknowledging Belinskii. See Evdokimova, *Pushkin's Historical Imagination*, 182–88.
 140. *Vestnik Evropy*, no. 12 (1827): 289.
 141. See Bulgarin, *Sochineniia*, 5 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1827), vol. 1, pt. 1, 182–91; Mikhail Pogodin, *Istoriko-kriticheskie otryvki* (Moscow, 1846), 333–63; Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 5:91–152; Nikolai Polevoi, *Istoriia Petra Velikago*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1843).
 142. Aronson contends that the immediate post-Decembrist period, 1826–30, was marked by the most frequent evocation of Peter in the Russian literary discourse. See his article, "Konrad Wallenrod i Pushkin," 45.
 143. Thomas Grob wrongly contends that "a genuine Ukrainian interest in the figure of Mazepa emerges rather late." Grob, "Mazepa' as a Symbolic Figure," 87. As I have argued here, this interest was pivotal to shaping a Ukrainian national identity, yet it had to be properly masked and articulated through the filters of mimicry and compensation.