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Modern Literature and the Construction of National Identity as European: The Case of Ukraine

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In 1911, Serhii Yefremov (1876–1939), a literary critic associated as perhaps no other with the Ukrainian national movement, had the following to say of Ukrainian literature after the appearance of the first literary work published in the vernacular Ukrainian, Ivan Kotliarevsky's *Eneida* (1798), his travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*: 'Traversing from this time onward the phases of common European development and succession of literary forms, Ukrainian literature is marked, above all, by a struggle for national individuality' (Yefremov, 1995: 32).² To Yefremov, six years before the emergence of the short-lived Ukrainian independent state of 1917–21, it was so obvious as scarcely to merit elaboration that the emergence of a literature signalling by its linguistic choice its allegiance to the ordinary people of Ukraine was part of a project to develop a national identity and, at the same time, an entry into a process recognizably European.

In the following I would like to consider and agree with Yefremov's contention, and to pose the question of whether the Ukrainian case might not be exemplary of a more general phenomenon: that literatures justifying the label 'national' possess features which make it reasonable to consider them to be 'European' – regardless of whether the countries to which they pertain lie within the borders of geographical Europe, at Europe's boundaries on the Urals or the Caucasus, or outside it altogether, as in the case of the literatures of former colonies. The hypothesis appears *a priori* to have sufficient merit to justify testing: the connection between the development of national high cultures (of which

1 The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of two Australian foundations: the Ukrainian Studies Support Fund of the Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (Melbourne) and the Ukrainian Studies Foundation in Australia.

2 For proper names, the Library of Congress (LC) system of transliteration has been adapted for readability, except in citations, where the LC system is used without modification. This and all subsequent translations are the author's, except as noted.

national literatures, usually composed in a standardized national language, are an important part) and national movements, whose aim is the formation of nations and nation-states, is well known;³ the emergence of large-scale communities of identity and solidarity – nations – and the organization of geopolitical space into nation-states on the Western European model are processes commonly associated with modernity (Eisenstadt, 2003: 493–518, especially 505–6); and modernity, whether we conceive of it as a universal paradigm or prefer to focus on its various culturally distinct inflections, is itself a configuration of the cultural and political worlds whose origin lies in Western Europe. Thus, we might expect the formation of a national literature, by virtue of its role in nation-building and thereby in the process of modernization, to possess a European dimension.

The advent of modernity, associated in particular with the Enlightenment, involved processes of scientific and intellectual progress and attendant economic and social changes, including secularization and the entrenchment of individualism. The prototypes of these processes took place in societies, or parts of societies, on the Atlantic seaboard of Europe, creating an almost irresistible association between modernization and (Western) Europe. The cliché of ‘breaking open a window to Europe’, applied to Peter I’s imposition of a selection of West European bureaucratic, military and cultural practices on the elite of Muscovy, implies the presence of a ‘wall’ between a core, ‘modern’ and Western Europe and the remainder of geographical Europe. The symbols of wall and window reflect a way of thinking about, and favourably evaluating, the ‘core’ Europe and the values of intellectual and material progress that are assumed to define it. From this perspective, the remainder of geographical Europe is visualized as engaged in a perpetual, less rather than more successful, operation of imitating and catching up (Wolff, 1994: 9–13). This predicament encouraged many in Central and Eastern Europe to resort to such defensive topoi as ‘we always were part of Europe’, reiterated memorably by Mikhail Gorbachev in his invocation of the ‘Common European Home’ (Gorbachev, 1987: 194–97), or ‘we were always Europe’s defensive bulwark against barbarians from the East’, invoked by Yefremov (Iefremov, 1995: 19) no less emphatically than by Milan Kundera seventy-eight years later (1984: 33–38), or the claim that the ‘geographical centre of Europe’ (however that might be defined) is a point located somewhere on one’s own territory, far to the east of the ‘core Europe’ of the common imagination. (As the Wikipedia, that inexhaustible source of untested information, assures us, the distinction of being Europe’s geographical centre is claimed for points in Lithuania, Estonia, Slovakia, Ukraine, Poland and Belarus – see Wikipedia, 2006.)

3 Gellner (1983: 32–38) has provided the classical formulation of this idea. See also Smith (1991: 61 and 84) and Carey-Webb (1998).

In most 'non-core' parts of geographical Europe, social and educational changes led to the formation, by the outbreak of the First World War, of a fairly extensive but nonetheless elite social stratum competent to communicate according to the norms and in the languages of 'core' Europe. Such elites were scholarly and intellectual, political and diplomatic, aristocratic and high bourgeois, and literary and artistic. One of the most important spheres of their social self-manifestation was high culture, a domain that was, in important respects, international and cosmopolitan. The depth of the reception of Darwin in the Germanophone lands; the Europe-wide success of Scandinavian drama; the popularity of thick Russian novels across continental Europe and in the English-speaking countries; the borderless reception of Nietzsche; and the eruption in disparate European locations of artistic avant-gardes linked by name, tone and ethos – all of these bespeak the construction of a Europe-wide receptive, discursive and creative space. Yet this European high-cultural unity came into being divided into national variants, each of which fits snugly into a particular, national, narrative. In 1898, the Ukrainian writer, scholar and critic Ivan Franko (1856–1916), himself an energetic actor on the pan-European cultural stage (he wrote and published in Ukrainian, Polish, German and Russian), was able to observe in his essay 'Internationalism and Nationalism in Contemporary Literatures',

Simultaneously with the *internationalization* of literary tastes and concerns that enables us with equal interest to read and enjoy the works of writers of high talent – German, French, American, Italian, Swedish, Czech and Polish as well as our own – simultaneously with this, so to speak, bringing to a common denominator of all true literary creativity and, indeed, of the spiritual, social and moral concerns of our times, there proceeds also the *nationalization* of each individual literature, the emergence into ever bolder relief of its specific national character and its authentic qualities. (Franko, 1976–86: vol. 31, p. 34)

The modernist movement that emerged in Ukrainian letters in the first decade of the twentieth century illustrated the aptness of Franko's observation. On the one hand, it was recognizably akin to *fin-de-siècle* movements further west. The aestheticism of the 'Young Muse' group, its proclamation of a cult of beauty, its cultivation of the lifestyle of an artistic *bohème* and its echoes of the clichés of popular Nietzscheanism identified it as part of the Europe-wide phenomenon of *décadence* that both Franko (1976–86) and Yefremov so earnestly decried.⁴ On the other hand, works by the more accomplished writers to whom the

4 Franko articulated his anti-modernist position in his poem 'Dekadent' ('The Decadent', 1898) (Franko 1976–86: vol. 2, pp. 185–86) and the review 'Manifest Molodoi Muzy' ('Manifesto of the Young Muse, 1907') (Franko 1976–86: vol. 37, pp. 410–17). Yefremov did so in his polemical essay 'V poiskakh novoi krasoty' ('In Quest of a New Beauty, 1902) (Iefremov, 1993: 73–103).

label 'modernist' can plausibly be applied – Olha Kobylanska and Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, for example – also manifested a serious, if critical, appropriation of local realities and of the (largely populist and realist) traditions of Ukrainian nineteenth-century letters. Similarly, Ukrainian futurism in the 1910s and the 1920s, especially as embodied in its central figure, the poet Mykhail Semenکو, demonstratively evoked Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, displayed a perhaps less deliberate affinity with the vorticism of Wyndham Lewis, and was in dialogue with the Russian futurist movement. But at the same time it assumed an entirely logical place within the narrative of *Ukrainian* literary history, as a provocation and challenge, not merely to 'bourgeois art' but also to the patriarchal and rustic preoccupations of the nineteenth-century Ukrainian literature that had already become canonical (Ilnytzkyj, 1997; Mudrak, 1986).

These cultural parallels and affinities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrate the fact that, in the Ukrainian case at least, the evolution of a national literature was also a process of engagement with Europe. Participants in the Ukrainian literary system oriented themselves to the norms of 'core' Europe, whether by deliberate choice or through spontaneous assimilation to the European cultural environment. Similarly, the emergence of modern Ukrainian letters at the end of the eighteenth century as a national literature (and *pars pro toto* of a national high culture) was also, already, the figuration of this literature and high culture as European. Ernest Gellner has accustomed us to think of the formation of high cultures ('well-defined educationally sanctioned and unified cultures') as a significant step in the process of social and political nation-building, for in conditions of modernity they 'constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify' (Gellner, 1983: 55). It would follow that the constitution of modern Ukrainian literature as *European* is part of the same process as the shaping of modern Ukrainian national identity as European.

The term 'national literature' as invoked in this discussion calls for clarification. It does not correspond to the ethno-nationalist and primordialist 'national literature' imagined, say, by August Koberstein in 1827 in his *Outline of the History of German National Literature*, where German national literature is defined as encompassing 'works ... that, whether through their form or their inner essence carry a characteristically German stamp that differentiates them from the literary creations of other nations, regardless of language' (Koberstein, 1847: 1). Rather, a national literature is a literature functioning within and for a community that is, actually or potentially, a modern nation, addressing in the first instance a readership congruent with the literate membership of that nation and responding to the nation's aesthetic, intellectual and perhaps political needs, as articulated, explicitly or implicitly, by national elites. In this account, then, a prerequisite for the existence of a national literature is the existence, in at least some individuals,

of an identity that can be labelled a 'national identity' – and a corresponding national ideology, whether focused on cultural maintenance and development, or oriented towards creating a political nation and state. Thus, for example, the rich dramatic and lyrical literature of the baroque composed and published in Ukraine in the eighteenth century is surely enough encompassed by the concept of 'Ukrainian literature', but not 'Ukrainian national literature'. This latter appellation may properly be applied, however, to the tradition grounded in 1798 by Ivan Kotliarevsky's travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Before analysing that founding moment, it is useful to recollect certain perspectives on cultural history that saw Europe as a space across which a certain common rhythm of cultural episodes could be observed. These perspectives emerged in the context, after the Second World War, of the apogee of comparative literary studies, which drew much of its inspiration from formalist theory. Genre and style, as well as the phenomenon of tradition and continuity, pre-national, trans-national and trans-linguistic, held the attention of scholars of literature. The representative books of this direction in literary scholarship included Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis* (1946), Ernst Robert Curtius's *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948) and René Welleck and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature* (1949). The impact of these studies was multiplied, no doubt, by the post-totalitarian and Cold War yearning for alternatives to national philologies, with their nationalist associations, on the one hand, and Marxist models of culture, on the other.

Much of this work focused attention on the cultures of Mediterranean and Western Europe. As if to correct this geographical bias, in the late 1960s the Slavist Dmytro Chyzhevsky wrote a short comparative history of Slavic literatures that linked cultural developments in the Slavic lands to the cultural history of 'core' Europe. At the centre of Chyzhevsky's narrative were styles characteristic of particular periods and the chronological succession of these period-defining styles. Chyzhevsky regarded the essentials of the narrative to hold true for the whole of Europe, though he made allowances for differences and asynchronicities occasioned by the specifics of local situations. Style for Chyzhevsky embraced philosophical and thematic preoccupations as well as aesthetic forms. The story – a somewhat Hegelian one, godfathered, perhaps, by Heinrich Wölfflin and his distinctions between Renaissance and baroque – was that of an oscillation between two stylistic poles, one corresponding to order and reason, the other to freedom and passion; of a cyclical recurrence of different instantiations of classicism and romanticism. Early Middle Ages, late Middle Ages, Renaissance, baroque, classicism, romanticism, realism and 'modernism' (in the Central European sense, as a synonym of *fin de siècle*): such were the stations of Chyzhevsky's account up to the beginning of the twentieth century (Tschizewskij, 1968: 27). Today, we might add two more: high modernism and postmodernism.

Chyzhevsky's account of a more or less uniform evolution of literary style from the Iberian peninsula to the Urals projected the image of a European high culture whose homogeneity outweighed its diversity. Chyzhevsky left out of consideration the issue of religious divides, later so central to Huntington's division of humanity into 'civilizations' and his discovery of a 'fault line' dividing Europe into a 'Western' and an 'Orthodox' civilization (Huntington, 1993: 25 and 29–30). For Chyzhevsky, the rift between Catholic and Orthodox was a matter of ideological difference that in no significant way diminished the overarching coherence of the European cultural space. According to Chyzhevsky's vision, the Catholic and Orthodox polemicists of Ukraine and Belarus in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were united by their participation in a single cultural process. They were in equal measure exponents of the Renaissance period and style, or the baroque period and style, and the fact that they wrote in several languages (Latin, Polish, 'Ruthenian' or Old Church Slavonic) was of less significance than the unity expressed in the stylistic similarities among them. Chyzhevsky placed considerable emphasis on this unity, even invoking a somewhat transcendentalist diction for the purpose:

The grounds of the unity of styles are many. First is a circumstance that is often overlooked: that the Slavic literatures belong to the great unity of occidental ['abendländischen'] literatures, just as the Slavic peoples belong to this occidental unity (and this is overlooked even more often, or indeed, denied). (Tschizewskij, 1968: 22)

For Chyzhevsky, then, European identity as a form of conscious self-definition was not a key issue: the Europeanness of the literary cultures of societies beyond the Mediterranean and Atlantic core was there to be observed, regardless of whether it was proclaimed or even experienced. Thus, it did not matter to Chyzhevsky whether Comenius or Kochanowski or Skovoroda had a European 'identity' in the sense that they might consciously have ascribed importance to their 'being European'. Rather, for the student of culture, they are European figures because they fit into the European stylistic paradigm.

But if we speak of *national* literatures in the sense defined earlier, we invoke identity. What I would like to suggest now is that, when the time arrived at which it became possible to speak not merely of Ukrainian literature but of Ukrainian national literature, the national identity subtended by that literature contained an aspect that was a European identity. To put it another way: at the instant when the makers of Ukrainian literature began to imagine the corpus of texts that it constitutes as addressing and reviving a nation, rather than charting a path to salvation, or praising the powerful of this world, they also stepped into what

Chyzhevsky would see as the quintessentially European succession of stylistic and cultural periods.

What, then, are for this discussion the salient features of the commencement of a Ukrainian national literature with Ivan Kotliarevsky? Two contexts need to be borne in mind, both connected to the newly colonial status of the Ukrainian lands within the Russian Empire. The first is the demise, towards the middle of the eighteenth century, of the (unquestionably European) baroque high religious culture of the Ukrainian lands, in part because its leading institutions, including an autonomous church and the Kyiv Mohyla Academy, were abolished under the centralist absolutism of the eighteenth-century tsars, in part because of its dissonance with the cultural temper of the Enlightenment. The second context is the provincialization of the Ukrainian lands and the emasculation of their cultural centres that accompanied the triumph of imperial centralism and, parallel to this, the generalization throughout the empire of the cultural norms and practices of the capital.

The particular Russian evolution of a domestic culture at this time was explicitly modelled on that of 'core' Europe (French fashions and French, later German, intellectual and literary precepts). The cultural elite of the Russian Empire stepped into the Chyzhevskian stylistic curve at the point when European culture was experiencing the period labelled 'classicism' by Chyzhevsky. Scholars have demonstrated how episodes in the evolution of Russian writing of the time may be further classified, to which end they have borrowed terminology derived from engagement with the literature of Western Europe: 'moralistic-didactic sentimentalism', 'sentimental aestheticism' and 'neoclassicism', to quote one instance (Neuhauser, 1973: 11–39). Whatever the validity or otherwise of these designations, what is important for our discussion is the fact that no plausible classificatory principle has gained acceptance in the scholarship other than one whose orientation points are Western European.

Kotliarevsky (1769–1838), writing in his provincial Poltava, did so in an environment where there was no longer any legitimate cultural grid sustained by education or public taste other than the classicism – call it this, out of deference to Chyzhevsky – of the Russian Empire. What Kotliarevsky accomplished in these circumstances was a mobilization of the resources of Ukrainian culture, by then much depleted by the provincialization and loss of prestige that was the outcome of a century and a half of imperial rule. I have analysed elsewhere in detail the audience- and identity-constructive strategies of *Eneida* (Pavlyshyn, 1985). In brief, the poem took at face value classicism's restriction of the thematic material of 'ordinary people' to the 'lower genres' of the generic hierarchy. Aeneas and the Trojans were represented as Zaporozhian Cossacks, an estate extinct by the time of Kotliarevsky's writing, having been disbanded by Catherine II. *Eneida*

endowed them with qualities on the one hand mythic, on the other – burlesque. To render the Cossacks attractive to his contemporary and subsequent readerships, Kotliarevsky deployed the full repertoire of carnivalesque devices: his text revelled in descriptions of their excessive eating, drinking and carousal. The now defunct Cossack caste was offered to the reader as an object of historical identification and of nostalgia for a lost liberty and vitality. Even more significant was Kotliarevsky's utilization of the classicist precept that 'low genres' admit the use of 'low style' in order to introduce – for the first time – vernacular Ukrainian as a language of literature. The old baroque literature of the Ukrainian lands had been composed in a scholarly language not used in any natural speech. Kotliarevsky, by composing an ambitious and successful literary work in the language of ordinary people, projected a new audience for his work, co-extensive with the speakers of his language, and not including those all-imperial readers unversed in Ukrainian. Kotliarevsky's language continues to be the delight of readers to this day: informed by his personal researches into the vocabulary and locution of ordinary folk, the verse of *Eneida*, with its long and delicious lists of synonyms, its consummate use of iambic tetrameter, its epigrammatic couplets, many built on comical barbarism, and its general *joie de vivre* reintroduced the Ukrainian language to the educated reader as an instrument capable of fine tuning and virtuoso performance. More importantly, it stood as evidence of the participation of both the educated descendant of the Cossack elite and the untutored, but linguistically adept, peasant in a single cultural community: the nation. By filling, brilliantly, one slot in the panoply of genres anticipated by classicist poetics, Kotliarevsky's *Eneida* presented an implicit challenge to fill the many vacant positions in that range, inviting the reader to view the national literature as a project: incomplete as yet, but with a potential for completion.

By positioning itself within a (potential) system of literature whose boundaries were drawn by the shared cultural features of its Ukrainian participants, *Eneida* defined itself as a work belonging to Ukrainian *national* literature. Did it also define this national literary system as European? It did indeed. Not only did it presuppose as its (potential) members individuals possessing the fruits of a 'core' European education, including a good purchase on the ancient mythological system, the canonical ancient literary texts and the principles of classicist poetics. It also expected the members of the national literary system to share 'core' European Enlightenment convictions and values: the poem was anti-feudal, secularist and anti-clerical, though, given the realities of censorship in the Russian Empire, it could not afford to be anti-monarchical. Furthermore, it shared, as must be evident even from our brief discussion of the language of *Eneida*, a respect for what Johann Gottfried Herder less than two decades earlier had begun to celebrate as the spirit of the *Völk*. Clearly, with its pre-romantic dimension, *Eneida*

announced its participation in that succession of periodic styles that Chyzhevsky assumed to be the essential narrative of European culture.

By demonstrating the possibility of a modern national literature, Kotliarevsky challenged others to join the project of producing one. Scarcely had *Eneida* begun to be published (its last part appeared as late as 1842, four years after Kotliarevsky's death) than it begat a flood of imitations, which, in turn, showed up in bold relief the paucity in the newly established vernacular literature of works of tonalities other than the comic and the low-brow (Grabowicz, 2004: 401–9). In 1840, the publication of Taras Shevchenko's anthology *Kobzar* ('The Minstrel') was immediately acclaimed by contemporaries as an epochal event in Ukrainian letters, manifesting as it did the possibility of Ukrainian lyric poetry of unprecedented beauty, as well as emotional and ideological force. For all his respect for Kotliarevsky, Shevchenko wrote in 1847, not long before his arrest and ten-year exile, '*Eneida* is good, but nonetheless a joke in the Muscovite manner', and urged his readers, rather than revelling in Kotliarevskian humour, to seek the spirit of their people in folk epics (*dumy*) and folk songs (Shevchenko, 1989: 427). A similar sense of the urgency of the task of augmenting the literature with new genres, stylistic registers and themes is palpable in Panteleimon Kulish's epilogue to his *Chorna Rada* ('The Black Council', 1857), the first historical novel in Ukrainian. Though Kulish (1819–97) envisaged the evolution of Ukrainian literature as part of what he called a common Russian literature, he chose to write the novel in Ukrainian, setting aside the difficulties of writing in an as yet unformed medium and reconciling himself to a much diminished readership for the sake of 'the development of the south-Russian language and its elevation to the high level of historical narrative' (Kulish, 1996: 121). The normative models behind this process of 'filling out' the national literature were, of course, the established and voluminous literatures of the established nations of Europe.⁵ Parallel to expanding the scope of Ukrainian literary production, Ukrainian writers sought to consolidate their shared project across the border between the Romanov and Habsburg Empires that divided them. From the late 1820s to the mid-1840s, writers, folklorists, poets and historians formed a romantic circle centred on the new university in Kharkiv. Their work was keenly followed in the 1830s by their West Ukrainian counterparts, whose first programmatic work, the poetic and folkloric almanac *Rusalka dnistrovaia* ('The Undine of the Dnister', 1837), included a bibliography that collegially listed the publications

5 In 1956, Chyzhevsky controversially labelled the Ukrainian literature of the greater part of the nineteenth century as 'incomplete', connecting this feature to the 'incompleteness' of the Ukrainian nation (Čyževs'kyj, 1997: 367–68). Grabowicz (1981) argued in his extended review of Chyzhevsky's book that a national literature, like any system, is by definition complete and the application to it of the attribute of 'incompleteness' constitutes a logical fallacy.

of the Kharkiv group. Decades later, commencing in the 1870s, the Ukrainian movement drew strength from the connection between writers and intellectuals in Kyiv and Lviv, the latter city, located as it was in Austria-Hungary, serving as a centre for Ukrainian scholarship and publishing in response to the restrictions on Ukrainian cultural activity in the Russian Empire.

Imperial prohibitions notwithstanding, the amplitude of Ukrainian literature increased throughout the nineteenth century and especially at the turn of the twentieth. Inaugurated by Kotliarevsky as a literature that justified being regarded as both national and European, Ukrainian literature continued to be so. It was a national literature because, in the first instance, it projected through its use of the Ukrainian language the utopian possibility of the union of a new high culture and the lives of people of all classes in a single cultural and, indeed, political community – a nation. It was also national because it was so perceived by its enemies. The tsar's government, by its decrees of 1863 and 1876 that prohibited almost all publishing and teaching in Ukrainian, acknowledged that a Ukrainian literature existed and was part of a national project that *a priori* challenged the legitimacy of the empire. This national literature bore many features identifying it as European: it derived its intellectual stimuli from the same sources as did the other European literatures, both established and nascent (the heritage, early in the century, of the Enlightenment, of Herder and of German idealism; later, of Darwin, the social Darwinists, Marx and Nietzsche); it experienced, like other European literatures, changes of fashion that Chyzhevsky would describe as transitions from romanticism to realism, and from realism to modernism; and finally, it was European because of its absorption into a national project, which during the nineteenth century became Europe's most characteristic form of political and cultural self-expression, whether propelling movements for national liberation or fuelling state nationalisms and imperialisms.

But the question must also be asked whether a literature may reasonably be regarded as European if substantial voices within it demand not participation in Europe but distance from it. The most revered of Ukrainian poets, Taras Shevchenko (1814–61), stepped outside the European literary paradigm in startling ways and made a case for a national authenticity that was *not* European, Europe being for him so complicit in Russia's colonial project that it deserved only condemnation and sarcasm. To be sure, Shevchenko's early ballads displayed demonstrable similarities to the genre made popular throughout Europe in the wake of Gottfried August Bürger's *Lenore* (1797) (Fylypovych, 1980; Smyrniw, 1970) and scholars have shown that, for all its seeming freedom and flexibility, the prosody of Shevchenko's verse, when analysed, turns out to rest on a familiar European syllabo-tonic base (Chamata, 1974). But the overlaps between the themes and forms conventional in European romantic verse and those adopted by

Shevchenko are far less striking than the differences. For virulence and anger, his anti-tsarist invectives seek their equal. We look in vain for European antecedents or parallels of his poems that, on the one hand, rework biblical motifs as frames for biting political satire and, on the other, present a Christian religiosity stripped of ritual and mystery and embedded in everyday life. In the long narrative poem *Haidamaky* (1841), which takes as its theme the Ukrainian anti-Polish rebellion of 1768, the violence depicted and the extremities of passion attributed to the characters are but slightly ameliorated by the voice of the narrator, stylized as a conventionally humane and somewhat sentimental observer with a pan-Slav outlook. The work is a historical horror narrative, barbaric in its intensity. We could continue to enumerate the ways in which Shevchenko's poetry appears to step outside the frame of the European verse tradition and taste. But more importantly, Shevchenko's poetry both imagines and calls for a Ukrainian national community that is emphatically *not* European in its orientations and sympathies.

Shevchenko's poetry draws a boundary between members of the (potentially national) community and others destined to remain outside it. In constructing Poles as 'others', Shevchenko continued a tradition extending back to the Cossack chronicles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Doing the same for Russians – who in Shevchenko's poetic corpus are called Muscovites, a term used with different degrees of anti-colonial animus – by contrast, had very little precedent and contradicted the perceived self-interest of Shevchenko's main audience, the descendants of Cossack officers who had received gentry rank and its attendant privileges in the Russian Empire. They, like Panteleimon Kulish and the best-known Ukrainian who wrote in Russian, Nikolai Gogol, were potential carriers of a 'common Russian' identity. In stark contrast to this, Shevchenko produced a rhetorical and symbolic basis for exclusive identification with a Ukrainian ethno-cultural nation. But the list of 'others' against whom Shevchenko drew a line of demarcation did not end with next-door neighbours. While the anger of Shevchenko's poetry had as its primary target the Russian Empire, its official representatives and its local collaborators, the empire itself was seen as colluding with Europe. On the one hand, Europe shaped the mind-set that enabled Russia to be an empire; on the other, Russia used Europeans to help implement its colonial projects. In Shevchenko's poetry, Europe was represented by the less than sympathetically invoked figure of 'the German' (*nimets*) – a term that, in the Middle Ages, designated all foreigners from the West who did not speak a Slavic language. The concordance to Shevchenko's works enables us to ascertain that, of the nineteen mentions of the *nimets* in Shevchenko's poetry, not one places him in a favourable light (Ilytzyk and Hawrysch, 2001). In his programmatic 'Friendly Epistle' (1845), Shevchenko drew a satirical contrast between home-grown and foreign wisdom, and caricatured those of his countrymen who became enthusiasts

of European thought (in this instance, Johann Gottlieb Fichte's philosophy, with its concepts of ego and non-ego):

We are not we, I am not I!
I have seen all, all things I know:
There is no hell, there is no heaven,
Not even God, but only I and
The stocky clever German,
And no one else.⁶

But the poem goes beyond mere mockery: it gives reasons for its anti-European *ressentiment*. There is the economic and psychological fact of the colonial exploitation of Ukrainian lands: on the territories once subject to the Zaporozhian Sich, the Cossack military republic symbolic in its own time and after its destruction in 1775 of anarchic freedom, 'the clever German/plants potato beds' (Shevchenko, 1989: 253; Shevchenko, 1961: 78). To function as an empire (serving its economic interests, to be sure, but, more importantly, profaning the memory of a glorious past by putting to ignoble uses its chief relic, the Cossack steppes), Russia calls upon European agricultural know-how. That, Shevchenko bitterly suggests, is how the heritage of the European Enlightenment is put to use in his homeland. Furthermore, Europe is castigated in the 'Friendly Epistle' as the possessor of a monopoly over knowledge that imposes labels upon Shevchenko's countrymen and deprives them of the confidence to invent their collective identities themselves:

'Good, brother!
But who, then, are you?' 'We don't know –
Let the German speak!' ...
The German would say, 'You are Mongols'.
'Mongols, that is plain!
Yes, the naked children of golden Tamburlaine!
The German would say, 'You are Slavs'.
'Slavs, Slavs indeed!
Of great and glorious ancestors the unworthy seed.'
(Shevchenko, 1989: 252; Shevchenko, 1961: 76)

More than a century later, Edward Said would dub such colonial control over knowledge, including self-knowledge, 'Orientalism'.

6 'I mertvym, i zhyvym, i nenarodzhonym zemliakam moim v Ukraini i ne v Ukraini moie druzhnicie poslaniie' (Shevchenko, 1989: 252); translation adapted from Taras Shevchenko, 'To My Fellow-Countrymen, in Ukraine and Not in Ukraine, Living, Dead and as yet Unborn, My Friendly Epistle' (Shevchenko, 1961: 74).

Does such angry resistance to Europe on the part of the chief pillar of the Ukrainian national literature justify revising the view that Ukrainian literature, in becoming national, became European? It does not. To be sure, Shevchenko's political vision identifies Europe as the source of the colonial despoilment suffered by the people of Ukraine. But his poetry knows another Europe, humane and admirable: the Europe that embraced Christ and the early Christian church; the Europe of such dissidents and truth-seekers as Galileo and Jan Hus; and the Europe of such national awakeners as Pavel Šafárik, Václav Hanka and Ján Kollár. Even more importantly, Shevchenko's project of resistance envisages, as the object that it is called upon to protect, a secular community defined by culture and history – a community that is inconceivable without that most potent of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European inventions, the nation. George Grabowicz saw as the utopian postulate of Shevchenko's poetry an emotionally charged, family-like sense of belonging. This *communitas*, Grabowicz argued, Shevchenko offered as an antithesis to *structure* – any form of ideological hierarchy or state authority. Grabowicz understood Shevchenko to celebrate the former and deprecate the latter: through his critique not only of the tsardom, but even of the Ukrainian Cossack leadership, Shevchenko denied the very possibility of any benevolently structured social order and organization (Grabowicz, 1982: 77–120) – including, therefore, the order and organization of the nation-state. But the absence from Shevchenko's oeuvre of an explicit image of such an order did not discourage those who, like Borys Hrinchenko, read his poetry as a call for its establishment (Hrinchenko, 1980: 115–27). Shevchenko, from such a perspective, had no alternative but to promote the national project – which, in his time, was the European project *par excellence*.

It is scarcely surprising, given the weight of Shevchenko in Ukrainian culture, that the paradoxical combination embodied in his work of autarkism (articulated as resistance to Europe) and dependence upon Europe for the very structures through which such resistance is articulated has remained a staple of Ukrainian cultural discourse. In the last decade of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first, Ukrainian high culture, especially literature, was divided into two camps. In one, represented by such figures as Yuri Andrukhovych, Yuri Izdryk and members of the literary movement called the 'Ivano-Frankivsk phenomenon', a veritable love affair with a largely mythical Europe could be observed. The other camp, embracing such no less significant figures as Yevhen Pashkovsky, Viacheslav Medvid, Oles Uliianenko and Serhii Zhadan, as well as the grand master of contemporary Ukrainian prose, Valerii Shevchuk, focused on the local and the native, and rejected, sometimes stridently, the value of Europe (and the West more generally) as a model for political, social and artistic practice. However, an encounter with the texts of these advocates of cultural autarky makes it clear how

difficult it is to describe their art and thought except through such concepts as modernism and postmodernism, burdened though they are with European and Western heritage (Pavlyshyn, 2004, 2007).

Our inquiry might be extended beyond the Ukrainian case to examine the reconfiguration of literatures into national literatures in other nascent or renaissance cultures, noting that the 'nationalization' of literature, to use Ivan Franko's term, coincides with its Europeanization. One careful and knowledgeable scholar identified classicism as the point of entry into the rhythm of European period styles for many East Central European cultural systems (those of Hungary, the Czech lands, Slovakia, Serbia and Croatia):

A change is visible from the 1760s and 1770s in the literatures of the East Central European zone that brings forth a literature possessing a new quality.... This change corresponds, to be sure, with an intensification of certain 'western' classicist tendencies, but also with efforts to create or establish a ... national literature appropriate to the times. (Fried, 1981: 58; see also Czigány, 1984)

Other studies suggest that the literatures of the profoundly ancient cultures of Georgia and Armenia obtain a modern national aspect as they begin to exhibit features familiar from European romanticism – a process accelerated by the cultural traffic generated by Russian colonial expansion into the Caucasus in the early decades of the nineteenth century (Hacikyan *et al.*, 2005: 51–76; Rayfield, 1994: 146–61). In Belarus, the role of Kotliarevsky's *Eneida* appears to be replicated by Pauluk Bahrym's *Aeneid Inside Out*, written after 1812 and published in 1845 (McMillin, 1977: 79–80).

Beyond the borders of geographical Europe, too, literatures acquire European aspects in consequence of colonial experience, prolonged contact, or deliberately chosen Westernization. Histories of the modern Arabic literature of Egypt sometimes divide their subject matter into periods titled 'neo-classicism', 'romanticism' and 'modernism', though these significantly postdate their European counterparts (Badawi, 1993; Starkey, 2006). Accounts of the literatures of South and Central America have used the names of European style periods (Carter, 1978) and drawn analogies between Latin American developments and European ones (Jrade, 1998). In descriptions of Turkish literature, we can encounter such terms as 'realism' and 'surrealism, neosymbolism, theatre of the absurd, stream-of-consciousness' (Halman, 1982: 25). From an anti-colonial perspective, we might see in this phenomenon confirmation of the ubiquitous hegemony of Europe and the West: the emergence of a new national literature requires an international literary system in which to manifest itself, but this international literary system is so profoundly implicated in European colonial projects that participation in it is synonymous with succumbing to Europeanization. On the one hand, we could see

the evolution of a national literature to be possible only within the framework of a national project – a programme to construct a new cultural and political nation where none was before, or to reconfirm and modify an existing one. In the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the nation became the pre-eminent organizing principle for secular group identification throughout the world. On the other hand, given that, for all its subsequent global development, the nation was a European invention, it is reasonable to conclude that becoming national contains a significant element of becoming European. Likewise, writing a literature as part of a nation-building project means constructing a national literature that, from certain perspectives, inevitably appears European.

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