

Is Gogol's 1842 Version of *Taras Bulba* Really “Russified”?

Oleh S. Ilnytskyj

The established orthodoxy of Gogol scholarship holds that the 1842 redaction of *Taras Bulba* is “Russified,” i.e., an expression of Russian nationalism and, by extension, a sign of Gogol's retreat from Ukrainian patriotism, which was symbolized by the original 1835 *Mirgorod* edition of the tale. This view reinforces the notion that Gogol is an exclusively Russian writer because he transferred his national loyalties. My paper, an abridged version of a longer work (minus several examples), challenges this interpretation as well as the uses to which *Taras Bulba* is put in shaping Gogol's “national” persona. Analysis centres on the meaning and inter-relationship of several key words (*Ukraina, russkaia zemlia, russkii, svoi tsar*) that serve as the mainstay of the Russocentric exegesis.

According to Soviet scholars, *Taras Bulba* represents the distinctive qualities of the “Russian soul” and “Russian feeling” (*russkoi dushi, russkogo chuvstva*).¹ Donald Fanger claims the rewritten novel shifted “the patriotic burden from Ukrainian to proto-Russian” and that “the [earlier] patriotic Ukrainian emphases [were] changed to Russian ...”² Geoffrey Hosking characterized “the Cossacks of the Ukrainian frontier” as “a romantic portrait of the alternative [N.B.] Russian ethnos.”³ Meanwhile Simon Karlinsky observed that “Russian governments—from that of Nicholas I to the present-day Soviet one—value it for its insistence on the eternal unity of the Russian and Ukrainian people under Russian rule and its implicit opposition to any Ukrainian separatist tendencies.”⁴

Karlinsky calls the tale “one of the most ultra-nationalistic works in all literature,” which portrays “Cossacks as staunch defenders of Orthodoxy and passionate Russian patriots” (p. 79). Judith Deutsch Kornblatt promoted the thesis that Gogol “does not present the Cossacks in contrast to Russians, but as though they themselves *are* the Russians.”⁵ And Saera Yoon says “the earlier Ukrainian story [1835] [is transformed]

¹ N. V. Gogol, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 2 ([Moscow]: Izdatelstvo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1937), 725–726. This edition is henceforth abbreviated PSS. It is available on-line at <<http://feb-web.ru/febupd/gogol/default.asp?febupd/gogol/texts/ps0/ps0.html>>. My quotations are taken from there.

² Donald Fanger, *The Creation of Nikolai Gogol* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979), 97–98; 192–93. Emphases added.

³ Geoffrey A. Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552–1917* (London: Fontana Press, 1998), 297.

⁴ Simon Karlinsky, *The Sexual Labyrinth of Nikolai Gogol* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976), 77.

⁵ Judith Deutsch Kornblatt, *The Cossack Hero in Russian Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992) 45. Emphasis in the original.

into an epic-historical novel ... that promotes Russian virtues in the face of an encroaching Western civilization [Poland].” Yoon describes the Cossacks of the Mirgorod *redaction* as “separate and disinterested in Russia,” but the Cossacks of 1842 “completely internalize a form of the Russian identity. They... adopted the patriotically charged epithet ‘Russian’ to describe themselves.” For Yoon this becomes evidence of “Gogol’s transformed ideological position.”⁶

The most sophisticated expression of the Russification idea—and the one on which I will focus here—belongs to Edyta Bojanowska. In her excellent book she states that Gogol’s “only fiction that glorifies Russian nationalism remains the 1842 *redaction*”⁷ of *Taras Bulba*.

Gogol greatly expanded the *Mirgorod* version of *Taras Bulba* and changed its national profile.... The 1835 version celebrated the Cossacks as freedom-loving Ukrainians fighting for the preservation of their religion and customs that had come under assault from Catholic Poland. The word “Ukraine” (*Ukraina*) appears frequently (PSS 2, 283, 285, 299, 310, 311, 327, 344, 349); the concepts of a “nation” (*natsiia*) or a “Cossack nation” are also mentioned (PSS 2, 348, 349). The Ukraine of the 1835 *Taras* is contiguous with the Ukraine of Gogol’s historical writings whose echoes resound in the narrative: an entity that was a *nation* by virtue of its cultural specificity and unique historical experience. *This changes in 1842*. Though in the least reworked passages *some* references to Ukraine *remain*, Gogol’s overall *strategy* is to *eliminate* them and to identify the *place of action* as “Russia” (“eastern Russia” or “the original Russia”; PSS 2, 64, 46, 78) and the protagonists’ *national identity* as “Russian” or “southern Russian” (PSS 2, 41, 46, 47, 48, 65, 124, 133, 138–140). The Cossacks’ “physiognomy” remains unique, yet this *no longer signals their national separateness*. Gogol now presents this uniqueness as a peculiar stamp, a flourish that the Cossacks *impart* to a *general Russian nature*. The Cossacks come to express *Russianness*, which the text bounds, as I mentioned, to Orthodoxy and East Slavic *ethnic ties* that have historically *united* the Muscovites, the Ukrainians, and the Belorussians. Their heirs all form a nation of “brothers” (PSS 2: 65) ...⁸

Bojanowska believes that Gogol renounces “his earlier [Ukrainian] autonomist leanings” (256). In place of pitting “Ukraine against Russia and accentuat[ing] national differences” (371), he embraces a nationalistic Russian ideology, based on the amalgamation of “East Slavic Orthodox domains into a ‘greater’ Russian nation” (304).

Bojanowska’s emphatic “Russian” interpretation loses some of its edge in light of certain ambiguities, which she admits exist. For example, there is not “a single ethnically Russian character in” *Taras Bulba* (256)—an obvious problem for the “amalgamation” thesis. She draws attention to the odd fact that Gogol chose to glorify

⁶ Saera Yoon, “Transformation of a Ukrainian Cossack into a Russian Warrior: Gogol’s 1842 *Taras Bulba*,” *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 49, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 431, 432.

⁷ Edyta M. Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol: Between Ukrainian and Russian Nationalism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007), 255. “PSS” is also Bojanowska’s abbreviation for Gogol’s *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (cf. n. 1 above); the number “2” indicates vol. 2. Owing to length constraints, I shall not comment on some of the arguments she raises. For my review of her book, see “The Nationalism of Nikolai Gogol: Betwixt and Between?” *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 49, nos. 3–4 (September–December 2007): 349–68.

⁸ Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, 266 (emphases added). See also 256–57.

"Russian nationalism" by embedding it "in a theme from Ukrainian history, the topic on which his Ukrainian nationalism had run at its highest" (255). She recognizes uncertainties in Gogol's use of *ruskii* ("this [word] can in fact be read to mean Ukrainian" [304]) as well as the meaning of *tsar*, saying that "troubling incongruities" arise in "the [Russian] nationalistic message" of the novel's "grand conclusion" (304). But despite these misgivings, she remains true to the "Russified" reading, persuaded that *Taras Bulba* is about an "idea of Russia" (i.e., a "greater" Russia) and that Gogol's goal is to tie "Ukraine's national potential to Russia" (371).

This paper makes a case for a diametrically opposite interpretation. It treats the novel's incongruities—i.e., Gogol's apparent inability or unwillingness to espouse forthrightly the Russian nationalist position attributed to him, as well as scholarship's reliance on overly vague definitions of "Russian" (proto-Russian, alternative Russian, Orthodox East Slav)—as aporias that invite a reassessment of the standardized reading. I propose that *Taras Bulba* is really about an *idea of Ukraine*, whose origins Gogol establishes in Kyivan Rus'—which, *for him*, is not "Russia." The novel does not depict two nations—Ukrainians and Great Russians—brought together into a "greater" Russia through the intermediacy of a Russian tsar. It is an account of Ukraine *alone* as a Cossack-Rus' state on the cusp of a political rebirth. As an alternative to the view that Rus' and Cossack Ukraine must exclude each other—"In the 1842 edition the Cossacks no longer celebrate their Ukrainian uniqueness but rather their loyalty to the concept of Rus'" (Bojanowska, 256)—I show that Gogol treats them as *complementary* societies that together form a historically "greater" Ukraine, which he names *Ukraina or rus-skaia zemlia*.

In this sense *Taras Bulba* has a lot in common with what Bojanowska called Gogol's "fairly risky direction of ... historical thinking about Ukraine" (127) during the 1830s. Whereas Bojanowska, like most scholars, construes the array of terminology in the novel (e.g., *Ukraina, rus-skaia zemlia, iuzhnaia pervobytnaia Rossiia*) as ideological vacillation in favour of Russian nationalism, I deal with this as ordinary practice, completely in line with nineteenth-century historical writing—an innocuous and unavoidable way of identifying Ukraine and East Slavdom.⁹ If one is to glean Gogol's political and patriotic views from the revised novel, then the focus should not be on verbal shifters like *Rossiia* and *ruskii*, whose meaning is relative and entirely dependent on context, but on the modifiers "north/south" to which Gogol consistently turns as markers, respectively, of Russian and Ukrainian nationality. The novel is ideologically homogenous because it rigorously invokes only Ukrainian territories to the exclusion of Great Russian areas in the empire. With respect to national difference, I also take the absence of Great Russians as significant

⁹ I cannot develop this idea in detail here for lack of space, but, as an example, compare the usage of *Rossiia* and *ruskii* in Mykhailo Maksymovych's writings. See M. O. Maksymovych, *Vybrani tvory z istorii Kyivskoi Rusi, Kyieva i Ukrainy*, ed. P. H. Markov (Kyiv: Vyshcha shchkola, 2004). Like Maksymovych (cf. 48–49), Gogol adheres to the scholarly terminology of his day, in which *Rossia* is frequently used to mean East Slavdom, while Ukraine and Russia are differentiated with the adjectives "southern" and "northern." These terminological tendencies are evident in Gogol's "Vzgliad na sostavlenie Malorossii" (1832 [?], pub. 1835), where the first references to Ukraine as "south *Rossiia*" is followed by this statement: "Эта земля, получившая после название Украины" (PSS 8: 45). As Bojanowska aptly notes: "Since history writing featured too many hot buttons, Gogol resorted to geography to make his point" (*Nikolai Gogol*, 132).

and reject giving them a virtual presence through the mechanism of defining words like *russkii* and *tsar* in the “Great Russian” manner, for which the novel makes no allowance. I will prove that Gogol’s “imagining” of the Cossack nation has nothing in common with an all-inclusive Russia. I conclude that interpretations of *Taras Bulba* are guided too much by ethnocentric Russian cultural and political perspectives and too little by the Ukrainian.

“Ukraina” and “Russkaia zemlia”

Bojanowska’s Russification thesis has a quantitative aspect. The purportedly fewer uses of the word *Ukraina* lead to a qualitative deduction about the “national profile” of the novel. She says that in the 1835 version “the word ‘Ukraine’ (*Ukraina*) appears frequently,” but in the 1842 edition, “in the least reworked passages,” only “some references to Ukraine remain.” She claims that the “overall strategy is to eliminate” the word *Ukraina* and “to identify the place of action as ‘Russia’ (‘eastern Russia’ or ‘the original Russia’¹⁰ [...]) and the protagonists’ national identity as ‘Russian’ or ‘southern Russian’” (266; my emphases). But does Gogol’s text support these statements and conclusions? We can answer the question by looking at the frequency with which *Ukraina* appears in both redactions.

Table 1

Word Form	Frequency	Version	Word Form	Frequency	Version
Украина	2	1835	Украина	1	1842
Украине	2	1835	Украине	8	1842
Украину	3	1835	Украину	2	1842
Украины	2	1835	Украины	2	1842

Table 1 shows that the 1835 edition has nine occurrences of the word; the 1842 version has thirteen.¹¹ Hence the word *Ukraina* does not simply “remain” but becomes more frequent. This means there was no “strategy” to “eliminate” the word—but, quite possibly, to increase it. Ideological interpretations of the novel need to contend with this fact. In any event, a key mainstay of the “Russification” thesis is simply wrong.

Four out of nine instances of *Ukraina* from the 1835 *Taras Bulba* were carried over into 1842 (table 2 shows them in italic). Nine out thirteen uses of the word in the 1842 redaction are entirely new. Table 2 (a list of all twenty-two uses of the word) reveals that Gogol sometimes made minor changes to capitalization (lines 7–8) but felt no obligation to alter the adjacent *Ukraina*. Line 5 illustrates that he inserted *po vsei Ukraine* into a phrase that did not have it in 1835.¹² Lines 16–17 show that the distinction between Muscovy and Ukraine survives into the second edition. If Gogol’s strategy was to “unify” two countries, then all the preceding editorial decisions were clearly counterproductive.

¹⁰ Gogol actually writes “the southern original Russia [*Rossia*].”

¹¹ See PSS 2: 43, 44, 62, 77 (2x), 79, 106, 107, 124, 125, 147, 160, 165.

¹² The 1835 version reads: “И что ксендзы ездят из села в село в таратайках ...”

Table 2: All Occurrences of the Word "Ukraina" in Context: 1835 and 1842 Editions

... то мы поведаем, чтобы знала вся Украина, да и другие земли ...	1835
Кто сказал, что моя отчизна Украина? Кто дал мне ее в отчизны?	1842
... спорным, нерешенным владением, к каким принадлежала тогда Украина.	1835
Украине не видать тоже храбрейшего из своих детей, взявшихся защищать ее.	1842
... расскажу: и ксендзы ездят теперь по всей Украине в таратайках ...	1842
... думам, уже не поющихся более на Украине боролатыми старцами-слепцами	1842
... не наши, что арендаторствуют на Украине! ей-богу, не наши! то совсем	1835
... не наши, те, что арендаторствуют на Украине! Ей-богу, не наши! То совсем	1842
... начались разыгрываться схватки и битвы на Украине за унию.	1842
Несмотря на свою печаль и сокрушение о случившихся на Украине несчастиях ...	1835
Вот какие дела водятся на Украине, панове!	1842
... чтоб таких полковников было побольше на Украине!	1842
... как сделали они уже с гетьманом и лучшими русскими витязями на Украине.	1842
... зливается воля и козачество на всю Украину!	1835
... зливается воля и козачество на всю Украину!	1842
... полуазиатский угол Европы. Московию и Украину они почитали ...	1835
... полуазиатский угол Европы: Московию и Украину они почитали ...	1842
... сударственных магнатов, и очистить Украину от жидовства, унии	1835
... войска показалось на границах Украины. Это уже не была какая-нибудь ...	1835
... войска показалось на границах Украины. Это уже не была какая-нибудь ...	1842
Хоть неживого, а доведу тебя до Украины!	1842
... эту военную школу тогдашней Украины, представит своим сотоварищам...	1835

Bojanowska errs when she says that in eliminating the word *Ukraina* Gogol identified "the place of action as 'Russia.'" A glance at table 2 shows that the locative form *na Ukraine* increases from two in 1835 to eight in 1842—a total that does not include such expressions as *do Ukrainy* and *po vsei Ukraine*. In contrast, the word *Rossiiia* is used only twice in 1842 (once in 1835) and in both cases it is modified by an adjective ("southern original *Rossiiia*," "east *Rossiiia*" [location of the Sich]). This is done consciously to set Ukraine apart from *Rossiiia* as a whole, and to continue the differentiating practice evident in the distinction between *Moskoviia* and *Ukraina*. Significantly, it was only in 1842 that Gogol adds the phrase *iuzhnaia pervobytnaia Rossiiia* (replacing line 3 in table 2) to denote Ukrainian lands, thereby implicitly demoting the unmentioned "northern" *Rossiiia* (a.k.a. *Moskoviia*) to separate and "un-original" status. Gogol's *Rossiiia*, clearly, emerges not as one "greater" single Russian nation, but a binational East Slavic territory, where original political statehood (*Rossiianness*, if you will) belongs to Ukraine. Gogol essentially reiterates his early 1830s view of Ukrainians, whom he described as the "original [NB], indigenous

inhabitants of *south Rossiia*,” a *society* speaking a language with a “*pure* Slavic *southern* physiognomy” very close to the *Rus'ian*¹³ language of that time:

Большая часть этого общества [i.e., the Cossacks] состояла однако ж из *перво-обитных, коренных* обитателей *южной России*. Доказательство – в языке, который, несмотря на принятие множества татарских и польских слов, имел всегда *чисто славянскую южную физиономию, приближавшую* его к тогдашнему *русскому* ... (PSS 8: 47)¹⁴

It is meaningful that *Taras Bulba* constructs *Rossiia* in terms of difference and gives Ukraine political primacy. As in his “Glance at the Making of Little Russia,” Gogol associates Ukraine with southern Rus' instead of establishing connections with the Muscovite “north.”

The reason “Russia” may appear to be the “place of action” is because the phrase *rusaskaia zemlia* appears eleven times in 1842—yet not once in 1835. Nevertheless, even at that frequency the phrase is used *less* often than *Ukraina* and never replaces any occurrence of *Ukraina* in the 1835 edition. This raises a question: can *rusaskaia zemlia* legitimately be read as “Russian land” or “Russia,” as is the norm among scholars and translators?¹⁵ Doubts are warranted, because, in revising the novel, Gogol introduced an analogy between the Cossacks and Rus'—*not* Muscovy or the Great Russians. In other words, he made Ukrainians *Rus'ians* (not *Russians*).¹⁶ Moreover, he is known to have insisted on a categorical difference between southern and northern Rus'.¹⁷ Consequently the rough parity in the use of *Ukraina* and *rusaskaia zemlia* more readily suggests a synonymic bond between them rather than an allusion to “Russia,” be it Muscovy or *Rossiia* as a whole. The place of action in *Taras Bulba* bears variable names, but it always refers to the same southern, non-Russian space. A few examples will reinforce the point.

The 1842 edition has several equivalents for *Ukraina* besides *rusaskaia zemlia*: *Getmanshchina*, *Zaporozhe*, *Sech*, or *Sich*. All are common, overwhelming the two geographically modified uses of *Rossiia* and leaving no doubt as to where events unfold. Take the speech of the “faithful comrade”:

¹³ Bojanowska is wrong to translate this as “Russian” (cf. *Nikolai Gogol*, 141). Gogol clearly has in mind a southern redaction of Church Slavonic.

¹⁴ All emphases in this and subsequent quotations from *PSS* in this article are mine unless noted otherwise.

¹⁵ Bojanowska redefines “Russian” (putting it in quotation marks) to mean “a supratemporal cultural community of Orthodox East Slavs” (*Nikolai Gogol*, 256), which includes the Great Russians.

¹⁶ The use of *rusaskaia zemlia* for Rus' is attested in Gogol. Cf. the following historical note: “Князь часто в критические минуты говорили, напоминали о том, что *Русь* гибнет, а враги радуются. На сейме, собранном Мономахом, явно сказано: да будет *земля русская* общим для нас отечеством” (PSS 9: 62).

¹⁷ “И вот *южная* Россия ... совершенно отделилась от *северной*. Всякая связь между ими разорвалась; составились два *государства*, называвшиеся одинаким именем – Русью ... Но уже сношений между ими не было. *Другие законы, другие обычаи, другая цель, другие связи, другие подвиги составили на время два совершенно различные характера*” (“Vzgliad na sostavleniie Malorossii,” PSS 8: 44–45). Cf. Bojanowska, *Nikolai Gogol*, 143–55.

Хоть неживого, да довезу тебя! ... Пусть же хоть и будет орел высмывать из твоего лоба очи, да пусть же степовой *наш* орел, а не *ляшский*, не тот, что прилетает из *польской земли*. Хоть неживого, а довезу тебя *до Украины!* (PSS 2: 147; my emphases)

Так говорил верный товарищ. Скакал без отдыху дни и ночи и привез его, бесчувственного, в самую *Запорожскую Сечь*. (PSS 2: 147)

The congruence of Ukraine and the Sich is indisputable. Interesting also is the mention of the "Polish land," which illustrates the opposition that Gogol establishes between Ukraine and Poland, an antithesis that is completely absent when he uses *Ukraina* and *rusaskaia zemlia*. Most scholars would argue that *polskaia zemlia* is to "Poland" what *rusaskaia zemlia* is to "Russia," but that clearly is not supported by Gogol's practice. He embeds *rusaskaia zemlia* in a wholly Ukrainian environment, without a hint of Russianness. Consider the following passages, which occur within the span of three pages (PSS 2: 77, 78, 79). To save space, I have removed all intervening text that is irrelevant to this argument:

"А вы разве ничего не слышали о том, что делается на *Гетьманщине?* [...]" (PSS 2: 76)

"Слушайте! еще не то расскажу: и ксендзы ездят теперь *по всей Украине* в таратайках ... Вот какие дела водятся на *Украине*, панове! А вы тут сидите на *Запорожье* да гуляете [...]" (PSS 2: 77)

"Как! чтобы жида держали на аренде христианские церкви! ... Как! чтобы попустить такие мучения на *русской земле* от проклятых недоверков! чтобы вот так поступали с *полковниками и гетьманом!* Да не будет же сего, не будет!" (PSS 2: 78)

"Как можно, чтобы мы думали про *запорожцев* что-нибудь нехорошее! Те совсем не наши, те, что арендаторствуют на *Украине!* Ей-богу, не наши! То совсем не жида: то черт знает что." (PSS 2: 79)

Bearing in mind the emphasized words, it is perfectly obvious that events are not taking place in Russia and do not portray "a supratemporal cultural community of Orthodox East Slavs" despite the appearance of *rusaskaia zemlia*. The Hetmanate, the Zaporizhzhia, *Ukraina*, and *rusaskaia zemlia* are all one and the same unified and contiguous space. This is the land of the Cossacks, the Zaporozhians and the hetmans. And, as the novel will make clear, it is also the land of their Rus' fathers and grandfathers.¹⁸ Chapter twelve of the 1842 edition corroborates the linkage between the Cossacks, *Ukraina*, and *rusaskaia zemlia*:

Отыскался след Тарасов. Сто двадцать тысяч *козацкого войска* показалось на границах *Украины* ... поднялась вся *нация*, ибо переполнилось терпение *народа* ... (PSS 2: 165)

Нечего описывать всех битв, где показали себя *козаки*, ни всего постепенного хода кампании: все это внесено в *летописные* страницы. Известно, какова в *русской земле* война ... (PSS 2: 166)

¹⁸ Bulba states: "Хочется мне вам сказать, панове, что такое есть *наше* товарищество. Вы слышали от *отцов и дедов*, в какой чести у всех была *земля наша*: и грекам дала знать себя, и с Царьграда брала червонцы, и города были пышные, и храмы, и *князя, князя русского рода, свои князя*, а не католические недоверки" (PSS 2: 133).

The repeated close collocation of *Ukraina* and *rusaskaia zemlia* creates, in effect, a reciprocal definition. The second of the two paragraphs above, with its reference to chronicles, also explains why Gogol (and Bulba [cf. note 17]) characterizes the Ukrainian land by the adjective *ruskii*: this is a replication of the chronicle tradition. In case the reader missed the first cue, the next paragraph reiterates this: *V letopisnykh stranitsakh izobrazheno podrobno* (PSS 2: 167). *Ruskii*, in effect, is an elevated, archaic reference to Ukraine, a word made relevant by the invocation of chronicles and Rus' (but not Russia).

Particularly troublesome for the thesis that *Taras Bulba* has a “changed ... national profile” (Bojanowska, 266) are the new instances of *Ukraina* that appear in the 1842 edition and have no equivalence in the 1835 version. As mentioned, there are nine such cases. Perhaps the most startling introduction of the word comes from the lips of Andrii. In 1835 Gogol had him renouncing his father, brother, mother, and fatherland. In 1842, instead of a vague fatherland, Andrii betrays Ukraine by name: “*Kto skazal, chto moia otchizna Ukraina?*” In this way Andrii’s treason is made exclusively Ukrainian, suggesting, by extension, that it is this land (not *Rossiiia*) that demands his primary loyalty.¹⁹ Three paragraphs later the 1842 edition invokes *Ukraina* again when Andrii kisses his Polish *tsaritsa* and his former Cossack self “dies.” At this point Gogol emphasizes that Andrii’s betrayal leaves Ukraine defenseless, because, she, a mother figure, is abandoned by one of her bravest children:

И погиб козак! Пропал для всего козацкого рыцарства! Не видать ему больше ни Запорожья, ни отцовских хуторов своих, ни церкви [Б]ожьей! *Украине* не видать тоже храбрейшего из своих детей, взявшихся защищать ее.” (PSS 2: 106)

Bojanowska takes the view that in the 1842 redaction the Cossacks are less of a *nation*, that the unity of East Slavs through Orthodoxy becomes more important than their “national separateness.” She notes two instances of the word “*natsiia*” in the 1835 version but cites no examples for 1842, creating the impression that Gogol might have downgraded “Ukraine” from its earlier “national” status. This is a flawed presentation, because the idea of nationhood is strongly highlighted in 1842. The Cossacks (their numbers increase from 30,000 to 120,000) are not just a “little group or detachment” pursuing selfish goals, but members of an “entire nation,” elements of a long-suffering “people.” They fight to redress more than the injuries to their religion, which is referred to as the “faith of their *ancestors*” (not a formulation found in 1835). In particular, this *natsiia* stands up for its rights, mores, and customs. Compare the 1842 and 1835 texts:

¹⁹ Bojanowska (p. 297) refers to this moment in *Nikolai Gogol* but does not acknowledge that Gogol added the word “Ukraine” to dramatize the national moment in the novel.

1842 Version

Напрасно король и многие рыцари, просветленные умом и душой, представляли, что подобная жестокость наказаний может только разжечь мщение *козацкой нации*. (PSS 2: 164)

Отыскался след Тарасов. Сто двадцать тысяч *козацкого* войска показалося на границах *Украины*. Это уже не была какая-нибудь *малая часть или отряд*, выступивший на добычу или на угон за татарами. Нет, поднялась *вся нация*, ибо переполнилось терпение *народа*, - поднялась отмстить за посмеянье *своих нравов*,²⁰ за оскорбление *веры предков и святого обычая*, за посярмление *церквей*, за *бесчинства* чужеземных панов, за *угнетенье*, за *унию*, за *позорное владычество* жидовства на христианской земле – за все, что копило и сугубило с давних времен суровую ненависть *козаков*. (PSS 2: 165)

1835 Version

Он очень хорошо видел, что подобная жестокость наказаний может только разжечь мщение *козачьей нации*. Но король не мог сделать ничего против дерзкой воли государственных магнатов ... (PSS 2: 348)

След Тарасов отыскался. Тридцать тысяч *козацкого* войска показалося на границах *Украины*. Это уже не был какой-нибудь *отряд*, выступавший для добычи или своей отдельной цели: *это было дело общее*. Это *целая нация*, которой терпение уже переполнилось, поднялась мстить за оскорбленные *права* свои, за униженную религию свою и *обычай*, за вероломные *убийства* гетманов своих и полковников, за *насилие* жидовских арендаторов и за все, в чем считал себя оскорбленным угнетенный *народ*. (PSS 2: 349)

As is obvious, Gogol corrected and expanded the later version, making it, among other things, more eloquent ("mshchenie *kozachei natsii*" is polished to "mshchenie *kozatskoi natsii*"). *Ukraina, natsiia, narod*, and the Cossacks make up a single semantic matrix, with the Cossack movement transforming itself into a national phenomenon. These sections disprove the view that "The Cossacks' 'physiognomy' remains unique, yet this *no longer signals their national separateness*" (emphasis added). Both national and religious themes remain in these passages, but the 1842 version clearly tips the scales in favour of national concerns. In parsing the word *natsiia*, Bojanowska at one point writes: "While *natsiia* ... unambiguously means 'a nation' and carries a political overtone, *narod* ... is more vague and politically innocuous, as it may mean 'a people' or 'a nation,' depending on the context" (139–40). If we go by her own definitions, *Taras Bulba* obviously politicizes Ukraine, treating it unambiguously as a nation.

This is an appropriate place to touch on a related claim. Bojanowska has the 1842 *Taras Bulba* emphasizing "ethnic ties," "historical unity," and support for "a nation

²⁰ In the print edition of PSS the underlined phrase above is gibberish: "за позорное своих унижение" (2: 165). My correction comes from N. V. Gogol, *Sobranie sochinenii v semi tomakh* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1967). Because of this error, Bojanowska (291) leaves out "svoikh *nравov*" (our mores) in her English translation. She also leaves out "Ukraina" and "ancestors."

of ‘brothers’—tendencies that allegedly chip away at the Cossacks’ separateness and subsume them “in the larger category of the Russians” (268). This is part of the argument that Gogol changes “the protagonists’ *national identity*” to “‘Russian’ or ‘southern Russian’” (266). To bolster this idea Bojanowska relies twice (266, 268) on a passage in which the Ukrainian is called a “southern *rossiianin*.”²¹ She elaborates:

Even the characteristic Ukrainian straight-face humor that Gogol had used elsewhere to set the Ukrainians *apart* from the *Russians* here becomes *attenuated* within a statement that *asserts the kinship* of the two *ethnicities* (“a sharp feature that even now distinguishes a southern Russian from his other brothers ...”). (268; emphasis added)

Again, I believe Bojanowska overstates the case to shore up the “Russification” thesis. Gogol’s sentence emphasizes *difference* and *separateness*—not kinship and unity. He states: “the ‘southern *rossiianin*’ [i.e., the Ukrainian] is *different to this very day* [*otlichatsia donyne*] from his ‘other brothers’ [*drugikh brat’ev*],” who, oddly, remain unspecified and without a geographic site. Surely, even when using “southern *rossiianin*,” Gogol is establishing past and present *differences* for Ukrainians in *Rossia*, just as he did when he called Ukraine “the *southern* original *Rossia*” and Ukrainians her “original and indigenous inhabitants.” The accent lies on the differentiating word “southern,” not on the unifying concept *rossiianin*. Moreover, neither the word *Rossia* nor *rossiianin* foreground *ethnic* unity; they suggest civic or political commonalities. If Gogol’s purpose was to underscore Slavic kinship and establish for the protagonists a “greater” Russian national identity, the words *ruskii* (*yuzhnyi ruskii*) or Rus’ would have served him better. As it stands, in the only instance of the novel where a Great Russian brother *appears* to be invoked, the best Gogol can muster is a formula that *distinguishes* imperial subjects in the state rather than “amalgamating” them into an “all-Russian” nation. Ukraine as a part of *Rossia* is a contemporary fact for Gogol. However, the ideology of his novel is geared toward separating Ukraine and establishing its uniqueness.

“*Ruskii*”

В *русских* избах проклятые кацапы везде поразводили тараканов. («Иван Федорович Шпонька и его тетушка»)

... шея его ... казалась необыкновенно длиною, как у тех гипсовых котенков ... которых носят на головах целыми десятками *русские иностранцы*. («Шинель»)

Не было ремесла, которого бы не знал *козак* ... пить и бражничать, как только может один *русский*. («Тарас Бульба»)

All English translations of *Taras Bulba* convey every instance of *ruskii* as “Russian” and each occurrence of *rusaskaia zemlia* as “Russia” or the “Russian land.” Most scholars adhere to these meanings as well. What such interpretations have in

²¹ “[Веселость это] ... резкая черта, которою *отличается* донине от других братьев своих *южный россиянин*” (PSS 2: 65).

common is the refusal to grant *russkii* a "Ukrainian" and/or "Rus'ian" status. The exception to this rule is Yuri Barabash:

The frequently used concepts in *Taras Bulba*—"Rus'," "*rusaskaia vera*," "*rusaskaia zemlia*," "*rusaskaia dusha*"—should not mislead us. For Gogol these [words] are synonyms of everything native [*rodnogo*] Ukrainian that has roots in Kyivan Rus', and under no circumstance in anything officially "all-Russian" and especially not in anything "Great Russian."... It is absolutely obvious that Taras in [his] famous speech about comradeship—when speaking about "*zemlia nasha*," about "*kniiazia russkogo roda*"—has Kyivan Rus' in mind.²²

The word "*russkii*," of course, appears in many of Gogol's works and frequently does mean "Russian." It figures conspicuously in the opening of *Dead Souls*, where it clearly (but redundantly) identifies two Great Russian peasants. In *Taras Bulba*, naturally, the word cannot carry the same connotation because of the different cultural context. Gogol's entire literary career was based on differentiating Ukrainians and Great Russians (a fact brilliantly demonstrated by Bojanowska)—and *Taras Bulba* is no exception.

The 1835 edition uses *russkii* three times;²³ it also had a single instance of *vostochnaia Rossiia*, a reference to (south)eastern Ukraine where the Sich was located. In short, these words were not special measures taken in 1842 for purposes of Russification; they were part of Gogol's lexicon even during his so-called Ukrainian period.²⁴ True, the second edition uses *russkii* many more times (twenty-four to be exact) in a variety of combinations, among them eleven times in "*rusaskaia zemlia*." But if this word refers to Ukraine/Rus', it enhances the Ukrainian patriotism of the 1842 work rather than diminishes it. But what is the evidence that *russkii* means "Ukrainian"?

First, we should note that *Taras Bulba* is true to the diverse terminology of Gogol's time (and beyond) when conveying the meaning "Ukraine/Ukrainian."²⁵ The words *Ukraina/ukrainets* were in use, but the adjective *ukrainskii* was relatively rare both in

²² Yu. Barabash, *Pochva i sudba: Gogol i ukrainskaia literature. U istokov* (Moscow: Nasledie, 1995), 141. Bojanowska cites Barabash in *Nikolai Gogol*, 304.

²³ (1) "[P]усское духовенство"; (2) "голстая русская купчиха"; (3) "состоявший из польских и русских дворян."

²⁴ Speaking of the early period, "*rusaskaia zemlia*" appears in *Strashnaia mest* (1832) twice, as does the adjective "*russkii*." These words appear along with the expressions "*narod ukrainskii*," "*ukrainskii narod*," "*ukrainskii kraj*," "*po Ukraine*," and "*v Ukraine*." These collocations simply underscore that the semantics of "*russkii*" was "Ukrainian" already in Gogol's early period and was not invented in *Taras Bulba* to "Russify" the novel.

²⁵ Zenon E. Kohut writes that "an important factor in Western nationbuilding was the elite's identification of a specific territory and people by a single name. In the Ukrainian case establishing such a name was particularly complex, because, as Mykola Kostomarov pointed out over a century ago, throughout history Ukrainians had used a multiplicity of names for self-identification. [The t]erms used most frequently were "Rus'," "Little Russia" (*Mala Rus'*, *Mala Rossiia*, *Malorossiia*), and "Ukraine" (*Ukraina*). "Rus'" was, of course, the most ancient name originating with the Kievan realm. It included the concept of "Rus'" territory, dynasty (the Rurikides), and church (the metropolitan of Kiev and all Rus')" ("The Development of a Little Russian Identity and Ukrainian Nationbuilding," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 10, no. 3–4 [December 1986]: 562, 564).

general usage and in Gogol's work;²⁶ Shevchenko, for example, never used it in his poetry.²⁷ The Ukrainian language was known either as *malorosiiskii yazyk* or *yuzhno-russkii yazyk*. There was a *Yuzhno-russkii sbornik* (Kharkiv, 1848) and a *Yuzhno-russkii almanakh* (Odesa, 1900). *Rus'ka khata* (Lviv and Chernivtsi) appeared as late as 1877. Taras Shevchenko published the *Bukvar yuzhnorusskii* (1861). Nikolai (Mykola) Kostomarov wrote about the "dve russkii narodnosti," one Ukrainian, the other Great Russian.²⁸ The Ukrainian land was called *Yuzhnaia Rossiia* or *Yuzhnaia Rus'* as well as *Malorossiia*. For our purposes, the most interesting example comes from Gogol's chief historical source—*Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii*—which uses *ruskii* (with one "s") to designate its Ukrainian subject matter alongside the word *Ukraina*. Therefore the presence of *russkii* and *yuzhnyi rossiiianin* in *Taras Bulba* must be seen as a matter of standard practice. It cannot be construed as Gogol's furtive betrayal of Ukraine for Russia.²⁹

One of the most transparent uses of *russkii* to mean "Ukrainian" in the high style surfaces in the phrase "*russkimi vitiiaziami na Ukraine*" (PSS 2: 124). Here both *russkii* and the noun *vitiiaz* (knight) raise the tone. The national location is explicit ("*na Ukraine*"), and everything that precedes these three words refers to Ukrainian military men:

Ты хочешь, видно, чтоб мы не уважили первого, святого закона *товарищества*: оставили бы собратьев своих на то, чтобы с них с живых содрали кожу или, исчетвертовав на части *козацкое* их тело, развозили бы их по городам и селам, как сделали они уже с *гетьманом* и *лучшими русскими витязями на Украйне*. (PSS 2: 124)

To argue that Gogol is treating Ukrainians *as* Russian, or portraying "a general Russian nature" while referring to hetmans and Cossacks, is to strain credibility to the utmost.

²⁶ Gogol used the adjective "*ukrainskii*" in his article "O malorossiiskikh pesniakh" and in some of his tales.

²⁷ Cf. Oleh S. Ilnytskyj and George Hawrysch, *A Concordance to the Poetic Works of Taras Shevchenko*, vol. 3, 1901–1905 (New York and Toronto: Shevchenko Scientific Society in the U.S. and Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 2001). Shevchenko used "*rus'ka zemlia*" in the poem "Z peredsvita do vechora" for Rus', and the word "*rusychi*" to denote its people.

²⁸ N. Kostomarov, "Dve russkii narodnosti," *Osnova* (St. Petersburg), no. 3 (1862): 33–80. The article opens with this statement: "... *Основа* поднимает знамя *русской* народности, но *отличной* от той *русской*, какой многими исключительно присвоено это название. О ея существованіи не можетъ быть сомнѣнія, коль скоро она сама о себѣ заявляетъ. Итакъ тѣ, которые говорили: *русская* народность, и понимали подъ нею что-то *единственное*, самосущее, ошибались; они должны были говорить: *русскія* народности. Оказывается, что *русская* народность не едина; ихъ двѣ, а кто знаетъ, можетъ быть ихъ откроется и болѣе, и тѣмъ не менѣе онѣ – *русскія*" <<http://litopys.org.ua/kostomar/kos38.htm>>. Here Kostomarov repeats what he had written much earlier, in 1843: "Но народность Малороссии есть особенная, отличная от народности великороссийской" ("Obzor sochinenii, pisannykh na malorossiiskom yazyke," in M. I. Kostomarov, *Tvory v dvokh tomakh*, vol 2 [Kyiv: Dnipro, 1967], 377).

²⁹ In one of Gogol's historical notes, Ukrainian (Kyivan) territories are designated as the "*russkii* southwest": "Влияние России на *юго-запад русский* стало значительно меньше" (PSS 9: 65). See also n. 30 below.

There are other episodes in the novel proving that *russkii* can only mean "Ukrainian." Take the passage about Kyiv's high society in the 1842 version, which is virtually identical to the 1835 version:

Эта бурса составляла совершенно отдельный мир: в круг высший, состоявший из польских и русских дворян, они не допускались. Сам воевода Адам Кисель ... не вводил их в общество и приказывал держать их построже. (PSS 2: 54)

The historical framework eliminates any possibility that Gogol might be speaking in one breath about Polish and Great Russian gentry. Moreover, there is proof that these *russkie* are indeed Ukrainians: in only a slightly different context Gogol labeled them *malorossiiane*. Here is a scene depicting Andrii's wanderings through Kyiv (preserved without changes in the 1842 version):

Иногда он [Андрий] забирался и в улицу аристократов, в нынешнем старом Киеве, где жили малороссийские и польские дворяне ... (PSS 2: 56)

As a digression, I draw attention to Gogol's historical notes, which contain jottings about King Władysław II Jagiełło's unification of Poland, *Malaia Rossiia*, and Lithuania. He records that three equal hetmans were established for each "*natsiia*": "Hetman koronnyi polskii; Hetman litovskii; Hetman *russkii*." The last, of course, is a reference to Ukraine/*Malaia Rossiia*.³⁰

Now that we have seen how "*russkii*" functions, we can turn to a paragraph in the first chapter of *Taras Bulba*, which features the word in the phrases "*russkaia priroda*" and "*russkaia sila*"—typically understood and translated as "Russian nature" and "Russian power." For many critics this is the ultimate proof of Gogol's Russian patriotism.

Бульба был упрям страшно. Это был один из тех характеров, которые могли возникнуть только в тяжелый XV век на полукочующем углу Европы, когда вся южная первобытная Россия, оставленная своими князьями, была опустошена, выжжена дотла неукротимыми набегами монгольских хищников; когда, лишившись дома и кровли, стал здесь отважен человек; когда на пожарищах, в виду грозных соседей и вечной опасности, селился он и привыкал глядеть им прямо в очи, разучившись знать, существует ли какая боязнь на свете; когда бранным пламенем объялся древле мирный славянский дух и завелось козачество – широкая, разгульная замашка русской природы, – и когда все поречья, перевозы, прибрежные пологие и удобные места усеялись козаками, которым и счету никто не ведал, и смелые товарищи их были вправе отвечать султану, пожелавшему знать о числе их: "Кто их знает! у нас их раскидано по всему степу: что байрак, то козак" (что маленький пригорок, там уж и козак). Это было, точно, необыкновенное явление русской силы: его вышибло из народной груди огниво бед. (PSS 2: 46)

Gogol's modern-day narrator describes here the revival of the Kyivan Rus' lands through the agency of the Cossacks, who, thanks to their courage, become the very embodiment of the former *Rus'ian* temperament and power (hence *russkaia priroda*,

³⁰ See "1386. Ягайлом соединяются Польша, Малая Россия и Литва" (PSS 9: 79). Another note has the following: "1342. Установление русского воеводства. Из северн[ой] части Галиции оно распространилось впоследствии до вершины Днепра" (PSS 9: 78). Here, again, we have a clear reference by Gogol to Ukraine using the word *russkii*.

russkaia sila). Observe that the Cossacks speak to the sultan in Ukrainian, which requires a parenthetical translation for Russophone readers. They are heirs to the original Slavic state, Kyivan Rus' (here “*yuzhnaia pervobytnaia Rossiia*”), which was abandoned by its princes (“*ostavlennaia svoimi kniaziami*”). The ancient, peaceful Slavic spirit—tempered by the dangerous southern environment—reacquires the characteristics (“*zamashka*”) of the *Rus'ian nature* in the form of Cossackdom (“*kozachestvo*”). Bojanowska, referring to this section, writes: “The warlike Cossacks now represent ‘the broad, robust [*razgul'naia*] manifestation of the *Russian nature*’... [Gogol] now presents these saviors [of Europe] not in *opposition to the Russians* but as ‘an extraordinary phenomenon of *Russian power*’” (268; emphases mine). In her reading the Cossacks and Russians are *two separate peoples*, with the former acquiring the features of the latter while surrendering their own. In other words, Bojanowska sees an integration of Ukrainians and Russians in line with the “amalgamation” ideology that purportedly governs the text. In actual fact, however, there is only *one* nation here (“*kozaki/kozachestvo*”) that traces its lineage and temperament to Rus' princes through the adjective *russkii*. This nation manifests in its current (Cossack) guise all the noble qualities of the “southern original” Rus' state. Bulba will make this absolutely clear at the end of his “comradeship” speech when he links the Cossacks—through the uninterrupted memory of their “fathers and grandfathers”—to Kyivan Rus' (cf. note 18).

Where Gogol portrays a single uninterrupted national history, Bojanowska sees “Cossacks [being] subsumed in the larger category of the Russians” and “Cossacks expressing ‘Russianness’” (268). Through these phrases, she becomes a victim of her own mistranslation: *russkii* as “*Russian*” instead of *Rus'ian*.³¹ However, Gogol’s “larger category” (or nation) is not some expanded entity that consists of Little Russians and Great Russians. It is a fusion of Cossack Ukraine and Rus' (“*russkaia zemlia*”), both of which are congruent with the “southern original *Rossiia*.” “*Russkaia priroda*” and “*russkaia sila*” are not mentions of Russia “proper” but southern attributes, i.e., manifestations of the Cossacks’ Rus'ian heritage. The Cossacks appear, (“*vozniknut*”), rise (“*stal*”), are born (“*zavelos*”), and settle (“*selilsia*,” “*uselialis*”) on the very same territory that the Rus'ian princes vacated. The Cossacks come to manifest in the *present* the Rus'ian power of the *past*. None of this has anything to do with Great Russians, since they are not in the novel and, according to Gogol, as we saw above, do not share in the “southern original” heritage of Kyivan Rus'. *Taras Bulba* embodies an idea Gogol expressed in 1834 in the journal *Severnaia pchela*, when he was announcing his impending history of Little Russia: namely, that Ukraine acted for almost four centuries separately from Great Russia (cf. Bojanowska, 124–26).

“*Svoi tsar*”

Bulba’s farewell remarks just before his death are key to the Russocentric reading:

³¹ Interestingly, when Bojanowska discusses one of Gogol’s historical notes about Kyiv, she, correctly (in my estimation) translates “*russkii*” as “Russian” (with one “s”), namely, as referring to Rus', not Russia. The phrase in question is: “Влияние России на юго-запад русский стало значительно меньше,” which Bojanowska translated as the “influence of Russia on the *Russian* southwest became significantly smaller” (*Nikolai Gogol*, 152; see also 128).

“Прощайте, товарищи! – кричал он им сверху. “Вспоминайте меня и будущей же весной прибывайте сюда вновь да хорошенько погуляйте! Что, взяли, чертовы *ляхи*? Думаете, есть что-нибудь на свете, чего бы побоялся *козак*? Постоите же, придет время, будет время, *узнаете вы*, что такое *православная русская вера*! Уже и теперь чуют дальние и близкие народы: подымается из *русской земли свой царь*, и не будет в мире силы, которая бы не покорилась ему!” (PSS 2: 172)

As Taras's body is engulfed in flames, the authorial voice adds:

А уже огонь подымался над костром, захватывал его ноги и разостлался пламенем по дереву... Да разве найдутся на свете такие огни, муки и *такая сила*, которая бы пересилила *русскую силу*! (PSS 2: 172)

These paragraphs purportedly contain evidence of Russian ultra-patriotism, defense of the Russian faith, and the unity of the Ukrainian and Russian people under Russian authority. George Grabowicz has written: “the Cossacks—as we see at the end of *Taras Bulba*—become a foreshadowing of imperial Russian Orthodox power.”³² Myroslav Shkandrij extrapolates an even more specific meaning: “Ukrainian salvation depended on the coming to power of the Romanov dynasty in 1613.”³³ Bojanowska views this scene as confirmation that Ukrainians will come “[u]nder the leadership of the mighty Great Russian tsar” (256).³⁴

Clearly, for those who read *Taras Bulba* as a Russian nationalist paean, the words *rusaskaia zemlia* and *tsar* are mutually reinforcing. *Tsar* seems to be prima facie evidence for treating *rusaskii* as “Great Russian.” To defend a “Ukrainian” interpretation of *rusaskii*, one would need to decouple *tsar* from its “Great Russian” associations. *Taras Bulba* actually does this with the little word *svoi*, but most readers are conditioned to ignore it.

Taras predicts: “*one's own [svoi] tsar will rise from the rusaskaia zemlia.*” First, we should note that this is hardly a declaration of “unity,” “amalgamation,” and other forms of Ukrainian subordination to the Great Russians. Moreover, the sentence cannot be referring to a “Russian land,” because Gogol associates “*rusaskaia zemlia*” with southern Rus' of the Cossacks. Furthermore, (1) the Great Russians (to cite Yurii Barabash) already *had* a tsar when Taras utters his prophetic words and hence would not be anticipating his “rising” from the “Russian land” in the near future; and (b) for the Cossacks and Taras the Russian tsar would not be “*svoi*.”³⁵ Surely, had he intended it, Gogol could have expressed unification with Russia more clearly, as did all contemporary histories. Some translators simply ignore “*svoi*” or replace it with the word “Russian” to uphold the “Russian” reading of the novel.³⁶ Scholars, in their turn,

³² George G. Grabowicz, “Three Perspectives on the Cossack Past: Gogol, Ševčenko, Kulis,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5, no. 2 (June 1981): 189.

³³ Myroslav Shkandrij, *Russia and Ukraine: Literature and the Discourse of Empire from Napoleonic to Postcolonial Times* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 107.

³⁴ Later Bojanowska adds: “Taras forecasts a broadened scope of the war, with the Russian tsar as its new participant” (*Nikolai Gogol*, 293).

³⁵ Barabash, *Pochva i sudba*, 141.

³⁶ Peter Constantine renders the sentence this way: “Word has already spread through every nation: A Russian Czar will spring forth from the Russian earth”(Nikolai Gogol, *Taras Bulba*, trans. Peter Constantine (New York: Modern Library, 2004), 141.

typically sidestep or rationalize away these difficulties, unwilling to state the most obvious: Taras is predicting that the Rus'ian land (“*Ukraina-russkaia zemlia*”) will raise its own tsar. The novel is not a call to unity with Great Russians. Only Barabash acknowledges this forthrightly, saying that, given demonstrated Cossack self-reliance, it is more reasonable to assume that the reference to a tsar signals “the ancient dream of Ukrainian Cossackdom about *its own* statehood—the direct descendant of the state traditions of Kyivan Rus’.”³⁷ Unlike the “Russian” interpretation, this Ukrainian one makes logical sense.

In fact, the obsession with linking “*tsar*” to Muscovy and a host of hypothetical Russians (proto-, alternative, or a supratemporal cultural community) deflects attention away from *Taras Bulba*’s obvious concern with “its own” Ukrainian things (e.g., “*prava svoi, svoi nrawy, svoia tserkov, svoe dukhovenstvo, svoi kniazia*”; “*nash orel, nasha zemlia*”). In his novel Gogol is especially interested in the problem of one’s own, native Ukrainian leadership, as Bovdiug’s words attest:

А вот что скажет моя другая речь: большую правду сказал и Тарас-полковник,
– дай [Б]оже ему побольше веку и чтоб таких полковников было побольше на
Украине! (PSS 2: 125)

Taras is described earlier (PSS 2: 48) in these words: “*Taras byl odin iz chisla korenykh, starykh polkovnikov.*” As we saw already, Gogol accentuates the fact that Rus’ was “abandoned by *her own princes*” (“*iuzhnaia pervobytnaia Rossiia, ostavlen-naia svoimi kniaziami*”). In his comradeship speech, Taras mentions that the Rus’ian land (“*zemlia nasha*”) had at one time its own rulers (“*byli kniazia, kniazia russkogo roda, svoi kniazia, a ne katolicheskije nedoverki*”). In this context, it is understandable why Bulba would anticipate an indigenous (*svoi*) leader rising again from the Rus’ian land. In place of the Catholic heretics, Ukraine will have its own ruler, as in the days of yore.³⁸ It is also telling that as the Cossacks sail off at the end of the novel, they “spoke about *their own otaman*” (“*govorili pro svoego atamana*”). Through the use of the word *russkii*, everything points to a pride in native leadership and history, not to an interest in a simulated unification with Great Russians.

Although the meaning of “*svoi tsar*” is now clear, we still need to ask why Gogol chose to designate the ruler of Rus’-Ukraine by this particular word instead of, say, *polkovnik* or *hetman*. A number of explanations suggest themselves. Taras may have wanted to endow the Ukrainian leader with status equivalent to the Muscovite tsar, the better to frighten the Poles. Gogol may have chosen the word for the benefit of Great Russian readers to help them appreciate the calibre of leadership the Cossacks will

³⁷ Barabash, *Pochva i sudba*, 141. Bojanowska cites his words and concedes that “Barabash has valid reasons to regard the mention of the Russian [sic] land’s rising tsar as ambiguous” because, she continues, “instead of using ‘*rossiiskii*’ to describe the ‘Russian’ land, which would unambiguously mean (Great) Russian, Gogol opts for *russkii*, [which] can in fact be read to mean Ukrainian, since ‘Rus,’ from which this adjective comes, was also an old designation for Ukrainian lands” (*Nikolai Gogol*, 304).

³⁸ In Taras’s farewell speech (quoted at the beginning of this section), the addressee (“*uznaete vy*”) can be plausibly understood to be the Poles. This means that at that at the end of the novel Gogol continues to maintain the opposition between Orthodox Ukrainians and Catholic Poles, threatening the latter with a Ukrainian tsar rather than Russian unity. The Russians may very well be one of the “*blizkie narody*” about to witness Ukraine’s might.

have. More dangerously, it hints at possible political parity between Ukraine and Muscovy, recalling Gogol's words in "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia" about the two being separate states ("*gosudarstva*"). The word may simply be a stylistic flourish, i.e., an attempt to maintain the exalted tone of the conclusion—quite similar to another moment in the novel when Andrii turns to the Polish girl and exclaims, rather incongruously for a Ukrainian, "*Tsaritsa!*" But the most probable explanation is that Gogol simply borrowed "*tsar*" from his historical source, *Istoriia Rusov ili Maloi Rossii*, where the word figures as a title for the princes of Kyivan Rus' (Volodymyr the Great³⁹ and Volodymyr Monomakh⁴⁰) and is even associated with Hetman Bohdan Khmelnytsky.⁴¹ Thus there are two "tsars" in Kyivan Rus'." And since in Taras's mind (and, more importantly, Gogol's) the Cossacks and Rus' are one, the sudden evocation of a "tsar" is most appropriate. The Rus'ian *kniaz*i will return to Ukraine under the historical name *tsar*. In general, the difference between *Istoriia Rusov's* "*tsar ruski*" (Monomakh's sobriquet) and *Taras Bulba's* "*podymaetsia iz russkoi zemli svoi tsar*" is negligible.

Gogol's decision to follow *Istoriia Rusov's* terminology is not surprising. However, it is quite amazing that he chose *not* to borrow the history's most conspicuous argument, namely, that Little and Great *Rossii* are one. He avoids *Istoriia Rusov's* repeated description of Ukrainians and Russians as people "of the same faith and tribe" ("*edinovernnyi i edinoplemennnyi*"), choosing instead to emphasize difference and political self-sufficiency.⁴² Gogol's other important source, Bantysh-Kamensky's *Istoriia Maloi Rossii*,⁴³ is also focused sharply on the Ukrainian-Russian unity theme. In both histories Russians are given a clear presence. They have none in *Taras Bulba*. The absence of Great Russians speaks volumes about Gogol's ideological orientation and goes counter to his 1834 plan of writing a history of Ukraine that would demonstrate not only its "original character" but eventual unification with *Rossii*.⁴⁴ Bantysh-Kamensky's history (cf. the full title) solidly focused on Ukraine *after* unification with Russia, and its "original status" is a postscript. In Gogol's case the

³⁹ G. Koniskii, *Istoriia Rusov, ili Maloi Rossii* (Moscow, 1846). The reference to Volodymyr (Vladimir) as *tsar* reads: "И сей Владимиръ ... соединивъ все другія Славянскія Княжества ... былъ одинъ надъ ними *Самодержцемъ* и назывался Великимъ Княземъ Рускимъ и Царикомъ надъ всеми Князьями ..." (<<http://litopys.org.ua/istrus/istrus02.htm>>).

⁴⁰ "Владимиръ Второй, названный Мономахомъ по дѣду его съ матерней стороны Императору Греческому, Константину Мономаху, по которому и онъ признавъ отъ Греческой Имперіи *Царемъ Рускимъ* и получилъ на то дѣдовскую корону, со всеми другими *Царскими* регаліями" (*Istoriia Rusov* <<http://litopys.org.ua/istrus/istrus02.htm>>).

⁴¹ *Istoriia Rusov* draws a parallel between Hetman Khmelnytsky (described as "leader of the *Russy*") and Caesar by quoting a poem that accompanied the Hetman's posthumous portrait. See <<http://litopys.org.ua/istrus/istrus09.htm>>.

⁴² In his article "A Glance at the Making of Little Russia," published in Uvarov's *Zhurnal Ministerstva narodnago prosveshcheniia*, Gogol did use phrases reminiscent of *Istoriia Rusov*: "Какое ужасно-ничтожное время представляет для России XIII век! Сотни мелких государств *единоверных, одноплеменных, одноязычных, означенных одним общим характером* и которых, казалось, против воли соединяло родство" (PSS 8: 40).

⁴³ *Istoriia Maloi Rossii so vremen prisoedineniia onoi k Rossiiskomu Gosudarstvu pri tsare Aleksee Mikhailoviche, s kratkim obozreniem pervobytnago sostoiianiia sego kraia* (Moscow, 1822).

⁴⁴ "Obiavlenie ob izdaniia istorii Malorossii" (PSS 9: 76).

priorities are reversed. He, obviously, was more interested in embracing the “original state of Little *Rossia*” than making a clear-cut case for unification.

Conclusions

I have tried to demonstrate that Gogol’s terminology has an internal logic and works as a well-defined signifying system, which always points to Ukrainian reality and the history on its territory, including Rus'. The prevailing wisdom, in contrast, holds that *Taras Bulba* transmogrifies two nations into a single “Russian” one. I believe this traditional position is completely untenable under closer examination. *Taras Bulba* is about *one* nation (the Ukrainians) depicted through the prism of *two* historical periods (Cossack and Kyivan Rus') and *three* terminological traditions (*Ukraina – russkaia zemlia – yuzhnaia Rossiia*). The inconsistency of Gogol’s terminology is not a sign that he shifted “the patriotic burden from Ukrainian to Russian,” but simply a sign of the times, when there was no single designation for Ukraine. Gogol’s stubborn insistence on a difference between Ukrainians and Great Russians, between the empire’s south and north, is the true lesson of *Taras Bulba*. It turns out that rather than backing away from his Ukrainophile positions of the 1830s, as most critics maintain, Gogol actually reinforced them in the 1842 redaction by establishing roots for the Ukrainians in Rus'. This was an ideological gesture that directly challenged Great Russian self-representations and official imperial historiography. At the end of the novel it is not unity with Russia that Gogol extols, but the impending restoration of a mighty native leadership in a historically greater and independent Rus'-Ukraine.

20 April 2008

OLEH S. ILNYTZKYJ is a professor of Ukrainian literature at the University of Alberta and the former editor of *Canadian Slavonic Papers* (2001–2010). He is the author of *Ukrainian Futurism, 1914-1930: An Historical and Critical Study* (1997, Ukrainian trans. 2003) and of articles about Russian-Ukrainian unity myths and about the works of Nikolai Gogol, Taras Shevchenko, Mykhail Semenko, Mykola Khvylovy, and other Ukrainian modernist writers; and the co-author of *A Concordance to the Poetic Works of Taras Shevchenko* (2001) and *A Concordance to the Complete Works of Hryhorii Skovoroda* (2009).

ANATOLIY KRUGLASHOV is a professor and the head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at Chernivtsi National University; the director of the Scientific Research Institute of European Integration and Regional Studies there; and a professor at the European Humanities University (2006–2011) in Vilnius. He is the author of a monograph about Mykhailo Drahomanov's political ideas (2000) and of many articles dealing with Ukraine and European integration, Russian and Ukrainian political thought, Ukrainian politics and regional ethnopolitics, and Ukraine's relations with Romania, Moldova, and Belarus. He has edited numerous collections of articles, including the series *Politychni ta sotsiologichni studii*.

PAUL R. MAGOCSI has been the professor of Ukrainian history at the University of Toronto since 1980. Among his several hundred publications are over thirty books, including *The Shaping of a National Identity: Subcarpathian Rus', 1848–1948* (1978), *Galicia: A Historical Survey and Bibliographic Guide* (1983), *Ukraine: A Historical Atlas* (1985), *A History of Ukraine: The Land and Its Peoples* (1996, revised ed. 2010), *Historical Atlas of Central Europe* (2002), *Encyclopedia of Rusyn History and Culture* (co-editor, 2002), *The Roots of Ukrainian Nationalism: Galicia as Ukraine's Piedmont* (2002), and *Ukraine: An Illustrated History* (2007).

DAVID R. MARPLES is a Distinguished University Professor of history at the University of Alberta and the director of Stasiuk Program on Contemporary Ukraine at the CIUS. He is the author of sixteen books on twentieth-century Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia. The most recent are *Holodomor: Causes of the Famine of 1932–1933 in Ukraine* (2011), *Russia in the Twentieth Century: The Quest for Stability* (2011), *Heroes and Villains: Creating National History in Contemporary Ukraine* (2007), *The Lukashenka Phenomenon: Elections, Propaganda, and the Foundations of Political Authority in Belarus* (2007), and *Historia ZSRR: Od Rewolucji do rozpadu* (2006).

YOSHIE MITSUYOSHI teaches European history at Fukuoka University, Japan. She is the author of a Ph.D. dissertation on women in Western Ukraine in 1939–50 (University of Alberta, 2004) and articles in Japanese and European academic journals about Stalinist gender policies and historical memory in Ukraine.

COLIN NEUFELDT is an associate professor of history at Concordia University College of Alberta and a lawyer in Edmonton. He is the author of “The Fate of Mennonites in Ukraine and the Crimea during Soviet Collectivization and the Famine (1930–1933)” (Ph.D. diss., University of Alberta, 1999) and articles on related subjects in the *Journal of Mennonite Studies* and *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*.

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.